



## **CABINET**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 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.

### **Part 1**

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Chairpersons Announcement/s
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Forward Work Programme 2023/24 (*Pages 5 - 6*)
5. Public Question Time  
Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services, [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk) no later than noon 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.

### **Matters for Decision:**

6. Nomination of an Elected Member to the National Adoption Services Committee (*Pages 7 - 10*)
7. Setting Council Tax Base 2024/25 (*Pages 11 - 16*)
8. Audit Wales Digital Strategy Review - Organisational Response (*Pages 17 - 66*)
9. Corporate Plan "Reset, Review, Recover" 2022-2027 Annual Report Period: 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 (*Pages 67 - 128*)

### **Matters for Monitoring:**

10. 2023-2024 Strategic Change Programme - "Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet" - Progress Update (*Pages 129 - 186*)
11. Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023-2024 - Half Year Progress Report (*Pages 187 - 198*)
12. 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).
13. Access to Meetings - Exclusion of the Public (*Pages 199 - 204*)  
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.

### **Part 2**

14. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Skills and Multiply Round 2 (Exempt under Paragraph 14) (*Pages 205 - 234*)
15. Glamorgan Further Education Trust Fund (Exempt under Paragraph 14) (*Pages 235 - 252*)
16. The Harold and Joyce Charles Trust (Exempt under Paragraph 14) (*Pages 253 - 268*)

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

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

**Wednesday, 22 November 2023**

**Cabinet Members:**

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

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<b>Meeting Date 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item and Type</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b><u>SPECIAL</u></b> 7 December 2023	Freeports Outline Business Case	Nicola Pearce

<b>Meeting Date 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item and Type</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>13 December</b>	Third Sector Grants	Louise McAndrew
	Quarter 2 Performance Indicators	Sheenagh Rees, Caryn Furlow, Shaun Davies
	Treasury Management	Huw Jones
	Revenue Monitoring Report (Q2)	Huw Jones
	Capital Monitoring Report (Q2)	Huw Jones

	Celtic Leisure Report	Chris Saunders
	2023/24 Treasury Management Mid Year Update Report	Huw Jones
	Homeless Structure	Chele Howard
	Adult Social Care Transformation	Angela Thomas
	Pontardawe Arts Centre	Chris Saunders

Meeting Date 2023	Agenda Item and Type	Contact Officer
<b><u>SPECIAL</u></b> <b>20<sup>th</sup></b> <b>December</b>	Budget (Out for Consultation)	Huw Jones



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

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

### **Cabinet**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Service**

#### **Nomination to National Adoption Service Committee**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Nomination of an elected member to the National Adoption Services Committee**

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

To nominate Cllr Sian Harris as Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services to be the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the Council”) to the National Adoption Services Committee.

#### **Executive Summary:**

All local authorities in Wales are required to enter into one of five specified regional collaborative bodies to ensure that effective joint arrangements are in place between local authorities in Wales for the delivery of adoption services. These directions led to the creation of

Western Bay Adoption Service comprising Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and Swansea.

The directions also required the creation of a national Governance Board, Advisory Group, and Director of Operations, to have oversight of the regional collaboratives. The National Adoption Services Committee is intended to fulfil that requirement and it is also stipulated that those bodies should exercise similar defined functions in respect of fostering services.

It is proposed that Councillor Sian Harris as the relevant Cabinet Member be appointed as the Council's nominee to the National Adoptions Services Committee.

**Background:**

The National Adoption Services Committee is a committee underpinned by a legal agreement, which was approved by elected members in Autumn 2022 and will be made up of elected members representing all 22 Welsh Local Authorities.

All local authorities have now formally approved this agreement and an inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee is being planned. Thereafter, it is proposed that the Joint Committee will meet twice yearly on a virtual basis.

It has been identified that the ongoing effective operation of the National Adoption Service requires formal co-operation between the 22 Welsh local authorities; the Joint Committee will facilitate this. As the capacity and functions for the national co-ordination of Foster Wales also sits within a combined Central Team, the remit of the Joint Committee will also include Foster Wales.

The Joint Committee will provide the mechanism for all local authorities to discharge an executive and oversight role for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales. It will approve / receive:



- (a) The Annual Reports of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales and the annual programme of work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales;
- (b) The budget for the office of the Director and national work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales; and
- (c) The agreement, and any changes to the agreement, for the host authority support of the office of the Director and national work for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales. The agreed host authority is Cardiff Council.

**Financial Impacts:**

There are no financial impacts associated with this decision.

**Integrated Impact Assessment:**

A first stage impact assessment is not required as this matter relates to an appointment process alone.

**Valleys Communities Impacts:**

No implications.

**Workforce Impacts:**

No implications.

**Legal Impacts:**

There are no legal implications or impacts.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

Failing to appoint an elected member to the National Committee will mean the views of the Council will not be facilitated at these meetings.

**Consultation:**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cllr Sian Harris, as Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services be appointed as the Neath Port Talbot Council nominee to the National Adoption Services Committee.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

This decision is required to fulfil the Council's responsibilities under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015

**Implementation of Decision:**

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

**Appendices:**

None

**List of Background Papers:**

None

**Officer Contact:**

Craig Griffiths  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services



## Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

### Cabinet

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### Report of the Chief Finance Officer – Huw Jones

#### **MATTER FOR DECISION:**

#### **CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2024-25**

**Wards Affected: All**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To formally set the Council Tax Base for the 2024/25 financial year.

#### **Background**

2. The Council Tax Base is an amount required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to be used in the calculation of Council Tax by billing authorities and major precepting authorities and in the calculation of the amount of a precept payable by each billing authority to a major precepting authority. The Base is a measure of the tax-raising capacity of an authority. It is expressed in terms of the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in an authority's area, taking into account exemptions, discounts, disablement relief, and the authority's estimate of its collection rate for Council Tax.
3. The rules for the calculation of the Council Tax Base are contained in The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 which amend The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995. The amendments in the 2016 Regulations have been made as a consequence of amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 by section 139 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Those amendments enable billing authorities to apply a higher amount of Council Tax ("a premium") in respect of long-term empty dwellings and dwellings that are occupied periodically. It must be

noted that this authority is due to consider charging council tax premiums from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, following a consultation exercise which closed on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

The calculation of the Council Tax Base is required to be made before 31<sup>st</sup> December. The Tax Base must also be notified to all Precepting Authorities (e.g. Police Authority) by that date. Although this is still the statutory timetable, this year the Assembly requested a provisional calculation be supplied by the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in order to meet the deadline for the calculation of the distribution of Revenue Support Grant for 2024-25.

### **Calculation**

4. The gross Council Tax Base calculated for 2024-25 is 49,823.95 and using a collection rate of 98% produces a net Council Tax base of 48,827.47 This means that for next year and for every £1 levied in council tax terms will generate £48,827 to meet the Council's Budget Requirement. The detailed calculation is contained in Appendix 1.

It is also necessary to calculate the Council Tax Base in respect of areas which are served by Town and Community Councils, and these are summarized in the following table:

Town and Community Council	Council Tax Base
Blaengwrach	374.67
Blaenhonddan	4,423.35
Briton Ferry	1,901.05
Clyne & Melincourt	285.81
Coedffranc	3,716.76
Crynant	686.29
Dyffryn Clydach	1,324.84
Glynneath	1,390.47
Neath	6,587.24
Onllwyn	381.02
Pelenna	404.68
Resolven	741.19
Seven Sisters	641.10
Tonna	972.13
Cilybebyll	2,009.79
Cwmllynfell	390.23
Gwaun Cae Gurwen	1,345.52

Town and Community Council	Council Tax Base
Pontardawe	2,556.76
Ystalyfera	1,610.61

### **Financial Impact**

5. The Council must approve the Council Tax Base by 31<sup>st</sup> December of the preceding financial year. The gross tax base is used by the Welsh Government to distribute Revenue Support Grant to individual Authorities. Together with the Council Tax level it determines the quantum of Council Tax proceeds available to fund the Council's Budget and Services. This will be dealt with as part of the Budget Requirement and Council Tax setting reports that will be considered by Council in February 2024.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 9 There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment in respect of this item.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

10. No implications.

### **Workforce Impacts**

11. No implications.

### **Legal impact**

12. There is a statutory requirement to agree and set the Council Tax Base for the forthcoming financial year prior to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Risk management Impact**

13. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

### **Consultation**

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

## **Recommendations**

15. It is recommended that members approve the 2024/25 net Council Tax Base
- of 48,827.47 for the whole of the County Borough; and
  - for each Town and Community Council area the amount shown in paragraph 4 of this report.

## **Reason for Proposed Decisions**

16. To determine the Council Tax Base for 2024/25.

## **Implementation of Decisions**

17. The decisions are urgent ones for immediate implementation, subject to the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Chair (and is therefore not subject to the call-in procedure). This will also enable the Council to forward the tax base to the Welsh Government within the required timescales.

## **Appendices**

18. Appendix 1 - Calculation of Council Tax Base

## **List of Background Papers**

19. Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/2561)  
Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/2935)  
Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3094) (W268))  
Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 2016 (SI 2016/969) (W238))  
Local Government Finance Act 1992  
NAW Letter - Council Tax Dwellings Return (CT1) for 2024/25  
Council Tax Dwellings (CT1) Return 2024/25

## **Officer Contact**

20. Mr. Huw Jones – Chief Finance Officer  
email: [h.jones@npt.gov.uk](mailto:h.jones@npt.gov.uk)

Mrs. Ann Hinder - Principal Council Tax Officer  
(Tel. 01639 763908) - email: [a.hinder@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.hinder@npt.gov.uk)

	Band A Disabled	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Band I	Total
New Builds		5	32	72	35	9	0	0	0	0	153
Ratio to band for new builds	"5/9	"6/9	"7/9	"8/9	"9/9	"11/9	"13/9	"15/9	"18/9	"21/9	
			25								
	Band A Disabled	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Band I	Total
Chargeable dwellings											
A1 Chargeable dwellings		13,004	26,600	11,434	7,215	4,419	1,365	525	108	21	64,691
A2 Dwellings subject to Disability		64	340	156	109	89	28	16	20	7	829
A3 Adjusted Chargeable Dwellings											
	64	13,280	26,416	11,387	7,195	4,358	1,353	529	95	14	64,691
B1 Dwellings with no discount	54	5,181	15,526	7,471	5,096	3,514	1,113	426	70	10	38,461
B2a Dwellings with 25% Discount (exclude 2nd homes/empty)	9	8,086	10,849	3,897	2,084	817	227	82	14	2	26,067
B2b Dwellings with a 50% Discount (exclude 2nd homes/empty)	1	13	41	19	15	27	13	21	11	2	163
B3a Dwellings with other than 25% or 50% Discount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B3b Dwellings with empty prop or 2nd home discount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B3c Dwellings with empty prop or 2nd home premium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B4 Total Adjusted Chargeable Dwellings (sum B1 to B3c=A3)	64	13,280	26,416	11,387	7,195	4,358	1,353	529	95	14	64,691
Discount and premium adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B5 Total variable discounts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calc of chargeable dwellings with discounts and premiums											
C2 Total discounted dwellings	61.25	11,252.00	23,683.25	10,403.25	6,666.50	4,140.25	1,289.75	498.00	86.00	12.50	58,093
C3 Ratio to band	"5/9	"6/9	"7/9	"8/9	"9/9	"11/9	"13/9	"15/9	"18/9	"21/9	0.000
C4 Band D equivalents (=C2xC3)+D8	34.03	7,501.33	18,420.31	9,247.33	6,666.50	5,060.31	1,862.97	830.00	172.00	29.17	49,823.95
E1 Band D equivalents excluding premiums	34.03	7,501.33	18,420.31	9,247.33	6,666.50	5,060.31	1,862.97	830.00	172.00	29.17	49,823.95
Collection Rate											98.00%
Council Tax Base @ 98% Band D Equivalents											48,827.47



## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER – C.OWEN

**Wards Affected: All Wards**

**Matter for Decision**

**Audit Wales Digital Strategy Review – Organisational Response**

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

1. To provide Members with an overview of the findings and single recommendation from the recent Audit Wales thematic review of the NPT Digital Data and Technology Strategy – full report contained within Appendix 2.
2. For Members to consider the proposed organisational response, which officers will issue to Audit Wales (if approved) Appendix 3.

#### **Executive Summary**

3. In January 2023, Audit Wales informed the council that they would be carrying out a thematic review of Digital Strategies across all 22 councils in Wales. The final scope of the review is contained in Appendix 1.
4. Given the extensive work that was underway to develop an innovative new NPT Digital Data and Technology Strategy, with an agreed timeline to report to Council for adoption in July 2023, it was agreed that the Audit Wales review would take place after the strategy had been considered by Council.
5. The Neath Port Talbot [Digital Data and Technology \(DDaT\) Strategy](#) was formally approved and adopted by Council on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## Background

6. The Audit Wales Digital Strategy Thematic Review set out to answer the question *'In developing its digital strategy has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle and put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?'*
7. The objectives of the review were as follows:
  - *provide assurance that the councils' digital strategies will help to deliver well-being objectives in a way that secures value for money in the use of resources;*
  - *provide assurance that councils are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principal in the design of their digital strategies;*
  - *explain how councils are using/planning to use digital technology to meet people's needs and deliver better outcomes; and*
  - *inspire and empower councils and other public sector bodies by identifying and sharing examples of notable practice/ approaches where relevant.*
8. During July 2023, Audit Wales undertook a comprehensive audit of the supporting documentation and evidence which was used to develop the NPT DDaT strategy.
9. The audit was also informed by interviews with Digital Services senior officers and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the development of the council's digital strategy, as well as a sample of Cabinet Members and senior officers from key portfolios / service areas impacted by the digital strategy.
10. A draft report was issued to officers in September for review and following a collaborative engagement with Audit Wales to clarify a number of areas, the final report was received on the 27th October – Appendix 2.
11. The key findings contained within the report are as follows:

*We found that the Council's strategic approach to digital is informed by a good understanding of its digital provision and the Council drew on a range of data from external sources.*

*The Council's strategic approach to digital is well aligned with its other key plans and strategies and those of its partners and it has strong arrangements to communicate its strategic digital approach.*

*The Council has committed resources to support delivery of its digital strategy but does not yet know its long-term cost implications.*

*The Council is developing comprehensive arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of its digital approach, however the absence of a clear timeframe to deliver its digital strategy will make it difficult for the Council to assess progress and value for money.*

*The Council reviewed its previous digital strategy, learnt from this and shares its learning.*

12. The report is generally very positive and contains a single recommendation for consideration as follows:

*If the Council continues with the approach of not stating a timeframe to deliver its Digital, Data and Technology strategy, it should put in place arrangements to:*

- *clearly articulate its short, medium and long term outcomes and intended benefits;*
  - *cost its short, medium and long term ambitions and match them with available resources; and*
  - *assess if it is delivering the strategy and its intended outcomes at the intended pace.*
13. As officers were still in the process of developing the new delivery plan to underpin the new DDaT Strategy which had just been adopted at the point of the Audit, they were not able to include this in their review. It should be noted that one of the key findings confirms that *the Council is developing comprehensive arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of its digital approach.*
14. Officers are confident that the robust programme delivery arrangements that have now been put in place are meeting all the areas highlighted in the recommendation and have included details in the proposed organisational response (Appendix 3).

#### **Financial Impacts:**

15. There are no financial impacts.

#### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

16. Not required.

#### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

17. There are no Valleys Community Page 19

**Workforce Impacts:**

18. There are no workforce impacts.

**Legal Impacts:**

19. There are no legal impacts.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

20. There are no risk management impacts.

**Consultation:**

21. There is no requirement for consultation on this item.

**Recommendations:**

22. For Cabinet to consider and approve the Organisational Response document (Appendix 3) which officers will issue to Audit Wales.

**Reason for Decision:**

23. To ensure that the Council has considered and responded to the findings Thematic Digital Strategy Review.

**Implementation of Decision:**

24. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Audit Wales Digital Strategy Review Final Brief

Appendix 2 – Audit Wales Digital Strategy Review Final Report

Appendix 3 – NPT Organisational Response to Audit Wales

**List of background papers:** None

**Officer Contact:**

Chris Owen

Chief Digital Officer

Tel: 01639 686217

[c.m.owen@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.m.owen@npt.gov.uk)

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## Project Brief – Digital Strategy Review – Neath Port Talbot Council

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: July 2023

Document reference: 3661A2023

This document has been prepared for the internal use of the twenty-two principal councils in Wales in accordance with statutory functions under section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

No liability is accepted by the Auditor General or the staff of the Wales Audit Office in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party in respect of this report.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 Code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to Audit Wales at [infoofficer@audit.wales](mailto:infoofficer@audit.wales).

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

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.



# Contents

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# Project brief

## Background

- 1 Digital is key to delivering a wide range of council services in a more economic, efficient and effective way. It follows that it is also an important means of councils delivering their wellbeing objectives and carrying out sustainable development.
- 2 Digital strategies also have a significant impact on how people access services, whether through improved access to services or the potential for 'digital exclusion' where services are 'digitised' but as a consequence some members of the public may be unable to access them.
- 3 This work also builds on our previous 'springing forward' review that looked at the topics of assets and workforce that we undertook during 2021-22. We are undertaking this audit at each of the 22 principal councils in Wales.

## Legal basis

- 4 We are carrying out this audit under the duties contained within:
  - section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) to help enable the Auditor General to be satisfied (or not) that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources and;
  - section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to help enable the Auditor General to assess the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its well-being objectives.

## Audit objectives

- 5 Our objectives for this audit are to:
  - provide assurance that the councils' digital strategies will help to deliver well-being objectives in a way that secures value for money in the use of resources;
  - provide assurance that councils are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principal in the design of their digital strategies;
  - explain how councils are using/planning to use digital technology to meet people's needs and deliver better outcomes; and
  - inspire and empower councils and other public sector bodies by identifying and sharing examples of notable practice/approaches where relevant

## Audit questions

- 6 **Appendix 1** contains the audit questions and audit criteria.

## Audit scope

- 7 The audit will cover the Council’s strategic approach to digital, and specifically the extent to which this has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle; and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of the council’s resources.

## Audit criteria

- 8 The proposed audit will use the audit criteria set out in **Appendix 1**, which also shows how the criteria relate to the audit questions. This has been informed by our cumulative knowledge as well as the question hierarchy and positive indicators we have developed to support our Sustainable Development Principle examinations.

## Audit methods

- 9 The audit will be informed by interviews with senior officers and cabinet members responsible for the development of the council’s digital strategy, as well as a sample of cabinet members and senior officers with responsible for key portfolios/service areas impacted by the digital strategy. We will also review the documents set out in **Exhibit 2** below.

## Output

- 10 The audit will produce the following output(s):
- Local report for each principal council
  - National summary report
- 11 We also intend that our findings will help inform a Good Practice Exchange Event on the topic of digital in the autumn of 2023.

## Timetable

- 12 **Exhibit 1** shows the high-level timetable of the main audit stages.

### Exhibit 1: audit timetable

Stage	Date
Issue project brief	03/07/2023
Issue draft local report	22/09/2023
Issue final local report	20/10/2023
Publish national summary report	31/10/2023

## Audit Wales contacts

13 **Exhibit 2** sets out the Audit Wales team that will be working on this audit.

### Exhibit 2: Audit Wales contacts

Name	Contact details
Gary Emery – Audit Director	<a href="mailto:Gary.Emery@audit.wales">Gary.Emery@audit.wales</a>
Tim Buckle – Auditor Manager	<a href="mailto:Timothy.Buckle@audit.wales">Timothy.Buckle@audit.wales</a>
Allison Rees – Senior Auditor	<a href="mailto:Allison.Rees@audit.wales">Allison.Rees@audit.wales</a>
Debra Allen – Executive Assistant	<a href="mailto:Debra.Allen@audit.wales">Debra.Allen@audit.wales</a>

## Fieldwork schedule

14 We will conduct our fieldwork in line with the organisation’s stated language preference. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate language preferences of individuals during the audit, if we receive these at the point of setting up fieldwork.

## Document request

15 We will undertake a review of the documents listed below. The list is not exhaustive and we may request additional documents during the course of the project. Where documents in the list below are publicly available please direct us to their online location. Where we already have copies of the documents, we will confirm this at the project set up meeting. Also, we would be grateful if you could provide us with any additional documents that you feel may be relevant to this work.

### Exhibit 3: initial document request

Document title
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital strategy or equivalent</li><li>• Evidence base used to inform the digital strategy</li><li>• Evidence of extent and methods of involvement activity in developing the digital strategy including any evidence of stakeholder mapping</li><li>• Evidence of how the digital strategy is communicated within the council and to partners</li><li>• Implementation plans for the digital strategy</li><li>• Service plans that relate to key elements of the digital strategy</li><li>• Savings plans that relate to the digital strategy</li><li>• Key corporate plans and strategies – including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– asset management plan,</li><li>– workforce plan</li><li>– well-being statement</li><li>– carbon reduction plan</li><li>– learning and development plans</li><li>– medium term financial plan</li></ul></li><li>• Public Services Board Well-being Plan</li><li>• The Council's Annual Self-Assessment Report</li><li>• Monitoring reports or equivalent in relation to the digital strategy</li><li>• Budget monitoring reports including service area budget reports that relate to key elements of the digital strategy</li><li>• Reports setting out the details of any partnerships relevant to the delivery of the digital strategy and/or reports of any reviews of these partnerships</li></ul>

## Interviews

16 **Exhibit 4** sets out the initial list of people we would like to interview during our work. We will confirm specific details of who we would like to interview during the project set-up meeting for and contact you again to arrange mutually convenient dates and times when we begin the evidence gathering stage.

### Exhibit 4: interviewees

Title
Senior officer responsible for the development of digital strategy Chris Owen, Chief Digital Officer
Sample of two senior officers with responsibility for key services impacted by the digital strategy Diane Mulligan, Chief Accountant - Financial Services

**Title**

Ian Finnemore / Nita Sparkes, Social Services Officer - Social Care Case Management Transformation

Cabinet member with the portfolio covering digital strategy and with a portfolio covering a key service impacted by the strategy  
Cllr Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice

Cabinet member with a portfolio covering a key service impacted by the strategy  
Cllr Sian Harris, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services

# Appendix 1

## Audit questions and criteria

Main audit question: **In developing its digital strategy has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle and put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?**

L2 questions	L3 questions	Criteria
1. Is the Council's digital strategy informed by a good understanding of current and future trends?	1.1 Is there is a thorough understanding of the 'as is' (i.e. current demand/ issues to be addressed) and the reasons why/ underlying causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council has drawn on a broad range of information from internal and external sources to develop a thorough understanding of the 'as is' and how it is likely to change. This includes information (including data) relating to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– service sustainability/ resilience and resourcing challenges,</li><li>– the needs of citizens and communities.</li><li>– the underlying causes of current demand/issues to be addressed.</li><li>– analysis of future trends and how they might impact. E.g. social, economic/political, environmental, cultural or technological. They might include known trends e.g. ageing population, depleting natural resources and particularly</li></ul></li></ul>

	<p>1.2 Is there a thorough understanding of the long-term factors that will impact and the challenges and opportunities that may result (e.g. risks and opportunities)?</p>	<p>technological advances They might also include those with a higher level of uncertainty e.g. jobs and skills needed in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis of the ‘as is’ and how it is likely to change is well informed by involvement activity, as appropriate, that reflects recognised good practice (e.g. <a href="#">National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales</a>, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales advice and guidance).</li> <li>• The Council uses its evidence base effectively to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify actions in its strategic approach to digital that are likely to be most effective and why, including how they could address the root causes of problems.</li> <li>– Inform decisions around its use of digital technology that seek to balance the need to meet short- and longer-term objectives.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>2. Does the Council have a clear vision of what it wants to achieve through the use of digital technology?</p>	<p>2.1 Is the council planning over an appropriate timescale?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has considered what long term means in planning its approach to digital – i.e. how far ahead it can/should plan and why (at least 10 years with consideration of longer-term trends as appropriate)</li> <li>• The Council has considered how actions can deliver the best impact over that timeframe in terms of outcomes and most effective use of resources. This could include consideration of appropriate intervention points linked to the Commissioner’s definition of prevention. (click on the following link for details: <a href="#">Taking account of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the budget process – The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales</a>)</li> <li>• The Council has set out measures for its digital strategy that reflect short and long-term impacts and value for money, with milestones that reflect progress as appropriate</li> <li>• The Council has set out how its digital strategy will be resourced over the longer term as far as is practical (See also criteria relating to integration)</li> </ul>



	<p>2.2 Has the Council thought about the wider impacts its digital strategy could have, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how it could contribute to each of the seven national well-being goals?</li> <li>• how delivery will impact on the other things it is trying to achieve (i.e. its well-being objectives and wider priorities)?</li> <li>• how delivery will impact on other what other public bodies are trying to achieve (i.e. their well-being objectives)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has considered how its digital strategy can make a contribution across the well-being goals.</li> <li>• Staff developing the digital strategy understand what colleagues and partners do and how their work relates, and have sought to integrate their work with that of their colleagues from across the Council and with partner organisations</li> <li>• Integration is evident in the alignment of the digital strategy with other key corporate strategies and service plans. For example medium term financial plan, workforce plan, asset management strategies, well-being statement and carbon reduction plans.</li> <li>• The digital strategy is aligned with other strategic intents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– customer experience,</li> <li>– management of demand/ reductions in demand failure and prevention</li> <li>– design and implementation of new service delivery models.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The council’s digital strategy aligns with the plans/strategies of local and national partners including the Welsh Government’s Digital Strategy for Wales <a href="#">Digital strategy   GOV.WALES</a> and well-being plans.</li> </ul>
	<p>2.3 Is there a wide and common understanding of what the council is trying to achieve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors and senior officers responsible for implementing the digital strategy have a common and clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and the intended impact on service delivery</li> <li>• The Council’s digital strategy is clearly communicated to staff and partners who may help deliver it</li> </ul>
<p>3. Is the council working effectively with the right people and partners to design and deliver its digital strategy</p>	<p>3.1 Has the Council identified who it needs to involve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has a good understanding of who will be directly and indirectly affected by its digital strategy and who it needs to involve.</li> <li>• The Council has effectively involved the full diversity of views in developing its digital strategy, including from non-traditional sources and from those it may have previously failed to reach.</li> </ul>

	<p>3.2 Is the council effectively involving the full diversity of people affected by its digital strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has provided genuine opportunities for people to influence design and delivery of its digital strategy from an early stage, including representatives of groups who share protected characteristics.</li> <li>• The Council has used the results of involvement to shape the design and delivery of its digital strategy</li> </ul>
	<p>3.3 Is the Council collaborating effectively with the right partners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is collaborating to ensure it delivers better outcomes and value for money through its digital strategy and has put appropriate arrangements in place to support this, for example for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sharing or pooling expertise and resources</li> <li>– sharing information</li> <li>– ensuring effective monitoring, evaluation and accountability including consideration of value for money</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>4. Has the council resourced delivery of its digital strategy so it can deliver long-term/preventative benefits?</p>	<p>4.1 Does the Council understand long-term resource implications?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has assessed the costs and benefits of using digital technology to invest in long-term, preventative approaches and the cost (both financial and in terms of outcomes) of not doing so.</li> <li>• The Council has thought about the resources it will need to deliver its digital strategy over the medium and longer term (whole life costs) and how it could manage risks/ meet those costs including for example planned ‘invest to save’ initiatives and managed reductions in technical debt.</li> <li>• The Council has calculated and set out any savings it intends to make through implementing its digital strategy</li> </ul>
	<p>4.2 Does the Council allocate resources to deliver better outcomes over the long-term?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action (inc. preventative action) that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and/or use of resources over the longer term is promoted and supported, even: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs.</li> <li>– where the benefits are likely to be accrued by or attributed to another organisation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

5. Is the Council monitoring and reviewing progress?	5.1 Is the Council monitoring and reviewing progress towards, short, medium- and longer-term objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council monitors the costs and benefits of delivering its digital strategy from a value for money perspective</li> <li>• The Council is measuring the wider contribution the digital strategy is making across its own/ partnership objectives</li> <li>• Progress is measured against short, medium and long-term objectives</li> </ul>
6. Is the Council learning lessons from how it works?	6.1 Does the Council review the effectiveness of its digital strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of its digital strategy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effectiveness of its collaborative activity</li> <li>- effectiveness of its involvement activity, including the impact of the strategy on service users including those who are digitally excluded</li> <li>- the impact of the strategy on those who share protected characteristics</li> <li>- the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the digital strategy overall in helping the council to achieve its strategic objectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Council has reviewed lessons learned from its response to the pandemic and is applying this learning to its digital strategy</li> </ul>
	6.2 Does the Council share lessons learned from its approach to its digital strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council shares and applies any lessons learned from the development and delivery of its digital strategy widely across the organisation, and with partners where relevant</li> </ul>

# Appendix 2

## Fair processing notice

Date issued: May 2023

## Auditor General for Wales – Privacy Notice

This privacy notice tells you about how the Auditor General for Wales (AGW) and staff of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) process personal information collected in connection with our work.

### Who we are and what we do

The AGW's work includes examining how public bodies manage and spend public money, and the WAO provides the staff and resources to enable him to carry out his work. "Audit Wales" is a trademark of the WAO and is the umbrella identity of the AGW and the WAO.

### The purposes of the processing

We will use personal data when exercising our powers and duties, which chiefly concern the audit of public bodies and activities to support such work.

### Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Our DPO can be contacted by telephone on 029 2032 0500 or by email at [infoofficer@audit.wales](mailto:infoofficer@audit.wales).

### The relevant laws

We process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Our lawful bases for processing are the powers and duties set out in the Public

Audit (Wales) Acts 2004 and 2013, the Government of Wales Acts 1998 and 2006, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and various legislation establishing particular public bodies, such as the Care Standards Act 2000. Further details are available in our publication, [A guide to Welsh public audit legislation](#), which is available on our website.

Depending on the particular power or function, these statutory bases fall with Article 6(c) and (e) of the UK GDPR—processing necessary for compliance with a legal obligation, for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority. Where we process special category data, the additional legal basis for processing this will ordinarily be Article 9(2)(g) of the UK GDPR (together with paragraph 6 Schedule 1 Data Protection Act 2018) relating to the exercise of a statutory function for reasons of substantial public interest.

## How we obtain your personal data

The personal data that we collect and process as part of our work may be obtained from you directly (e.g., if we contact you to ask you specific questions or for further information in connection with our work), or from relevant bodies, including those that we are auditing, through the exercise of the Auditor General's access rights.

## Who will see the data?

The AGW and relevant WAO staff, such as the study team, will have access to the information you provide. Your data may be shared internally within Audit Wales for the purposes described in this notice.

Our published report may include some of your information, but we will contact you before any publication of information that identifies you—see also “your rights” below.

We may share information with:

- a) Senior management at the audited body(ies) as far as this is necessary for exercising our powers and duties;
- b) Certain other public bodies/public service review bodies such as the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, Care Inspectorate Wales (Welsh Ministers), Health Inspectorate Wales (Welsh Ministers), Estyn and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, where the law permits or requires this, such as under section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## How long we keep the data

We will generally keep your data for 6 years, though this may increase to 25 years if it supports a published report—we will contact you before any publication of information that identifies you—see also “your rights” below. After 25 years, the records are either transferred to the UK National Archive or securely destroyed. In practice, very little personal information is retained beyond 6 years.

## Our rights

The AGW has rights to information, explanation, and assistance under paragraph 17 of schedule 8 Government of Wales Act 2006, section 52 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, section 26 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and section 98 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Further information can be found in our [Access Rights leaflet](#) available on our website. It may be a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, for a person to fail to provide information that falls within the AGW's access rights, but such an offence does not apply to surveys of the general public, which are not conducted using the statutory access rights above.

## Your rights

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You may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office to obtain further information about data protection law, or to complain about how your personal data is being handled at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, or by email at [casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone 01625 545745.





Wales Audit Office,  
1 Capital Quarter,  
Tyndall Street,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4BZ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

We welcome correspondence and  
telephone calls in Welsh and English.



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

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## Digital Strategy Review – Neath Port Talbot Council

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: October 2023

Document reference: 3877A2023

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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

This document is also available in Welsh.

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# Report summary

## Report summary and recommendation

### Exhibit 1: report summary

The exhibit below summarises the reason we undertook this audit, our key findings and recommendations for the Council.

#### Why a strategic approach to digital is important

- 1 Digital technology is key to delivering a wide range of council services in a more economic, efficient and effective way, is also an important means of councils delivering their wellbeing objectives and carrying out sustainable development.
- 2 Having a clearly articulated strategic approach to digital can bring several benefits such as:
  - establishing a common vision for use of digital and the intended outcomes for local communities linked to the council's strategic objectives;
  - helping to ensure that councils' use of digital technology is aligned with their key strategic objectives and other plans and strategies and is informed by a good understanding of current and future trends;
  - reducing the risk of duplication both within councils and with partners;
  - consideration of resourcing digital over the short, medium and longer term together; and
  - providing a framework against which to monitoring progress over the short, long and medium term.

#### The focus of our audit

- 3 We looked at the extent to which the Council's strategic approach to digital has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of the Council's resources.

#### Our key findings

- 4 We found that the Council's strategic approach to digital is informed by a good understanding of its digital provision and the Council drew on a range of data from external sources. The Council's strategic approach to digital is well-aligned with its other key plans and strategies and those of its partners and it has strong arrangements to communicate its strategic digital approach. The Council has committed resources to support delivery of its digital strategy but does not yet know its long-term cost implications. The Council is developing comprehensive arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of its digital approach, however the absence of a clear timeframe to deliver its digital strategy will make it difficult for the Council to assess progress and value for

money. The Council reviewed its previous digital strategy, learnt from this and shares its learning.

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## **Our recommendation for the Council**

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### **Monitoring benefits**

- R1 If the Council continues with the approach of not stating a timeframe to deliver its Digital, Data and Technology strategy, it should put in place arrangements to:
- clearly articulate its short, medium and long term outcomes and intended benefits;
  - cost its short, medium and long term ambitions and match them with available resources; and
  - assess if it is delivering the strategy and its intended outcomes at the intended pace.

# Detailed report

## What we looked at and why – the scope of this audit

- 1 We reviewed the Council's strategic approach to digital, and specifically the extent to which this has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle; and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of the Council's resources.
- 2 Our findings are based on document reviews and interviews with a sample of Cabinet Members and officers. The evidence we have used to inform our findings is limited to these sources. We undertook this review in July 2023.
- 3 We set out to answer the question '**In developing its digital strategy has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle and put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?**' We did this by exploring the following questions:
  - Is the Council's digital strategy informed by a good understanding of current and future trends?
  - Does the Council have a clear vision of what it wants to achieve through the use of digital technology?
  - Is the Council working effectively with the right people and partners to design and deliver its digital strategy?
  - Has the Council resourced delivery of its digital strategy so it can deliver long-term/preventative benefits?
  - Is the Council monitoring and reviewing progress?
  - Is the Council learning lessons from how it works?
- 4 **Appendix 1** sets out the detailed questions we set out to answer along with the audit criteria we used to arrive at our findings.

## Why we undertook this audit

- 5 This audit was undertaken to help fulfil the Auditor General's duties under section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 6 We sought to:
  - provide assurance that councils' digital strategies will help to deliver well-being objectives in a way that secures value for money in the use of resources;
  - provide assurance that councils are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in the design of their digital strategies;
  - explain how councils are using/planning to use digital technology to meet people's needs and deliver better outcomes; and



- inspire and empower councils and other public sector bodies by identifying and sharing examples of notable practice/approaches where relevant.

## The Council's digital strategy

- 7 Council approved its Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) strategy in July 2023. The strategy is intentionally not timebound.
- 8 The Council's vision is: 'Neath Port Talbot Council will adopt the best Digital, Data and Technology to transform services for residents, businesses, elected members, staff and visitors.' The vision is supported by four strategic aims:
  - continue to put all residents, businesses, elected members, staff and visitors at the centre of what we do.
  - become smart and connected as a council and as a place, joining up and using the data we hold to improve our understanding of what matters to our residents (aligned to corporate plan).
  - fully capitalise on the transformational benefits that Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) offers, by ensuring it becomes fully embedded in how council operates – across people, processes and technology.
  - ensure all DDaT services are robust, responsive, inclusive, scalable and secure. This will enable the council to undertake its day-to-day business, meet its statutory obligations and support business transformation through the innovative application of DDaT across service areas.
- 9 The DDaT strategy includes four strategic delivery themes. These are:
  - digital by design;
  - using the right technology;
  - data and research led decision making; and
  - our people.
- 10 Since 2021, the Council has increased the revenue budget for digital services by £500k. In 2023-24, the Council set up a Digital Transformation reserve of £1.2 million to provide funding to support digital transformation.

## What we found: The Council has an integrated and well-articulated digital strategy, but does not have a clear timeframe to deliver it which makes it more difficult for the Council to assess progress and value for money

### **The Council's strategic approach to digital is informed by a good understanding of its digital provision and it has drawn on a range of data from external sources to inform its approach**

- 11 The Council has a good understanding of its digital provision which has shaped and informed its DDaT strategy. In 2021, the Council commissioned an external provider to conduct a wide-ranging review of its digital services. The review included extensive staff consultation to understand digital capacity and capability in the Council. The Council used the findings of this review to inform its DDaT strategy.
- 12 The Council drew on extensive internal data to inform its DDaT strategy and used external evidence sources to gain a broader view of the current situation in the County such as digital exclusion rates, the digital infrastructure and regional and national digital priorities. The Council used data from the Tax Reform Group of The Chartered Institute of Taxation which identifies factors leading to digital exclusion. The DDaT Strategy reflects the importance of digital inclusion and collaboration to reduce digital exclusion. Considering a wider range of information and data is helpful for the Council to have a greater understanding of challenges, opportunities and risks for digital within the County Borough.
- 13 The Council sought the views of its citizens in 2021 through its 'Let's Talk' campaign on what is important to them following the pandemic. This campaign gathered views on their future digital needs, particularly citizens' concerns on digital exclusion. While this public engagement gathered citizens views on digital which the Council reflected in its DDaT strategy, this consultation was not specifically on the DDaT strategy.
- 14 As the Council has not specifically consulted its citizens on its DDaT aspirations, it has not specifically involved or consulted with the full diversity of the population and its representative groups. By not involving the full diversity of citizens in developing the Council's strategic digital approach, the Council risks designing approaches that do not meet citizens' needs and therefore do not secure value for money.
- 15 However, a key strategic aim of the DDaT strategy is 'digital by design' i.e. designing and developing digital services based on residents and businesses needs. The Council intends to gain a greater understanding the current situation and future digital needs by involving and consulting at individual digital project

design level. The Council are also developing 'user personas' to represent the needs of different groups under this Digital by Design strategic theme. The Council plans to consult and involve on individual digital projects. However, this approach can bring risks. The Council has resourced the development of a new strategic approach without fully consulting on it. This potentially could result in a further resource commitment to amend a strategic approach that does not meet the needs of its citizens.

### **The Council has strong arrangements to communicate its strategic approach to digital**

- 16 The Council is using different and proactive ways to inform staff of its DDaT strategy. Following Council approving the DDaT strategy in July 2023, the Digital Service intend to produce short videos on the 'what/how/why' of the strategy. These videos will be available for all staff on the intranet. The Council's Business relationship officers engage with services to further promote the roll-out of the strategy and respond to questions. Many of the Council's partners also received a copy of the draft strategy for comment. Communicating the Council's strategic approach to digital to staff and a range of stakeholders increases the likelihood of their being a common understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and therefore increases the likelihood of it being delivered.

### **The Council's strategic approach to digital is well-aligned with its other key plans and strategies and those of its partners**

- 17 There is strong alignment between the Council's DDaT strategy and the Council's corporate priorities. There is close alignment between the Council's Corporate Plan which states its digital intentions in 5 years and in 20 years, the Strategic Change Programme, the Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy and 'The Future of Work – Strategic Workforce Plan'. The Council's vision for digital aligns with the Public Services Board. All mention the importance of digital in becoming a smart and connected Council and as a place. The Council considered the Welsh Government Digital Strategy for Wales in its consideration of its own digital ambitions and priorities as well as engaging with the Centre for Digital Public Services. Aligning its strategic approach to digital both across the Council and with partners should help the Council identify opportunities to share resources, avoid duplication of efforts and deliver multiple benefits.
- 18 The Council works in partnership in delivering its digital strategic ambitions. Throughout the DDaT strategy, the importance of partnership working and collaboration is clear. For example, the Council identified a need to modernise how it manages and feeds data, research and analysis into its decision-making. To achieve this, the Council identified working with partners from academia, public health, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and the community. This should

help the Council access evidence to inform future policies and strategies. The Council is also a key partner in the Swansea Bay City Deal's Digital Infrastructure Programme and the partnership works collaboratively to assist each other deliver its digital transformation strategy. Working in partnership can result in a sharing of knowledge, expertise and/or resources that can lead to better outcomes whilst also improving value for money.

### **The Council has committed resources to support delivery of its digital strategy but does not yet know its long-term cost implications**

- 19 The Council has increased its resourcing of digital, created a Digital Service and allocated specific funding to support future digital transformation. Since 2021, the Council has increased the revenue budget for digital services by £500k. The Council has set up a Digital Transformation reserve of £1.2 million to provide funding to support digital transformation. While this demonstrates the Council's commitment and recognition of the importance of digital, the Council allocated this amount before approving its new strategy. Therefore, the Council cannot be assured it has allocated a suitable amount of funding to deliver its digital ambitions.
- 20 The Council understands the enabling role of digital and its importance in supporting the workforce deliver more efficient and effective services. The Council completed a restructure of its former IT service and created a Digital Service and allocated £100k towards the restructure. The Digital Service, alongside its HR and Organisational Development service, is intended to support the workforce in improving digital capacity and capability as well as providing improved career development, progression and succession planning. This approach has the potential to provide the Council with additional digital support and stability in delivering its digital transformation.
- 21 The Council set up a new operating model to support the Council's digital vision and ambitions. This model focuses on six key areas one of which is Governance Controls. As part of Governance Controls, the Council is seeking to understand the long-term cost implications in delivering its digital ambitions. Once the long-term costs are known, the Council should be better informed and can use this information to more accurately allocate resources.

### **The Council is developing comprehensive arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of its digital approach, however the absence of a clear timeframe to deliver its digital strategy will make it difficult for the Council to assess progress and value for money**

- 22 The Council is putting in place comprehensive arrangements to monitor its digital strategy on an annual basis and its individual digital projects. At the time of our fieldwork, some of the arrangements were new, or under development so it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

- 23 The Council is developing an annual delivery plan to support the DDaT strategy. The delivery plan will contain measures and metrics to help it track progress. There will be specific performance indicators in the delivery plan that should complement the quantitative and qualitative measures already identified by the Council. This information should provide the Council with information to determine progress on an annual basis. It will also be important for the Council to be able to monitor and evaluate the value for money of the DDaT strategy.
- 24 The Council intend to review the DDaT strategy annually. This should help the Council gain assurance the strategic approach remains current. It should also provide the Council with greater flexibility to adapt and update the strategy in line with the challenges and opportunities at the appropriate times.
- 25 The Council established a Digital Transformation Board to drive the prioritisation of activities, ensuring alignment to corporate priorities, with escalation and reporting through to Corporate Directors Group and Cabinet Policy and Resources Sub Committee. The Board consists of digital service officers and representatives from each directorate. Representation across Council services can reduce the risk of duplication of efforts, it can identify opportunities for different services to collaborate to deliver multiple benefits and ensure a common understanding of the Council's digital priorities.
- 26 The Council has a Digital Services Pipeline Tracker. This Tracker contains digital projects and records the stage each project is at in its implementation. This should allow the Council to determine the timeliness of implementing each project and intervene if projects are behind schedule.
- 27 A fundamental element in understanding the future success and impact of a digital project and wider strategy is understanding the perceived financial and/or non-financial benefits at the outset. For the Council to have this information, it developed a Digital Transformation Board Service Request form which services can complete to request funding from the £1.2 million Digital Transformation reserve. The form had not been used at the time of our fieldwork and the Council had not allocated any funding from this Reserve. The form requires services to identify the benefits of the digital proposal, such as improvements to customer satisfaction levels, operational efficiencies, whether it will generate savings and/or improve productivity. Ensuring that digital projects articulate the intended benefits at the outset will help the Council assess whether the benefits are being realised when monitoring progress.
- 28 The Council has not set a clear timeframe to deliver the DDaT strategy. This presents several challenges for the Council if it is to be able to:
- adequately resource the delivery of its strategy over the short, medium and long-term
  - clearly articulate its short, medium and long term outcomes; and
  - judge if it is delivering the strategy at its intended pace.

- 29 By not having a clear timeframe to deliver the strategy, it will be difficult for the Council to gain assurance its digital strategic approach is delivering what the Council wants, when it wants it delivered and to adequately determine if the Council is securing value for money.

### **The Council reviewed its previous digital strategy, learnt from this and shares its learning**

- 30 The Council reviewed its previous digital strategy and digital provision and used the output of this review and its recommendations to shape and influence its current digital strategy.
- 31 The Council has a positive approach in sharing lessons learnt. This has included sharing lessons at external seminars on developing its target model to align with Welsh Government's Digital Strategy for Wales and from its approach to digital recruitment. This willingness to share ideas and lessons learnt also provides an opportunity for the Council to learn from others.

# Appendix 1

## Audit questions and audit criteria

Below are the questions we sought to answer in carrying out this audit, along with the audit criteria we used to arrive at our findings.

Main audit question: **In developing its digital strategy has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle and put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?**

### Exhibit 2: audit questions and audit criteria

Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
1. Is the Council's digital strategy informed by a good understanding of current and future trends?	1.1 Is there is a thorough understanding of the 'as is' (ie current demand/issues to be addressed) and the reasons why/underlying causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has drawn on a broad range of information from internal and external sources to develop a thorough understanding of the 'as is' and how it is likely to change. This includes information (including data) relating to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– service sustainability/resilience and resourcing challenges.</li> <li>– the needs of citizens and communities.</li> <li>– the underlying causes of current demand/issues to be addressed.</li> <li>– analysis of future trends and how they might impact, eg social, economic/political, environmental, cultural or technological. They might include known trends eg ageing population, depleting natural resources and particularly technological advances. They might also include those with a higher level of uncertainty eg jobs and skills needed in the future.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The analysis of the 'as is' and how it is likely to change is well informed by involvement activity, as appropriate, that reflects recognised good practice (eg <a href="#">National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales</a>, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales advice and guidance).</li> </ul>
	1.2 Is there a thorough understanding of the long-term factors that will impact and the challenges and opportunities that may result (eg risks and opportunities)?	

Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council uses its evidence base effectively to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– identify actions in its strategic approach to digital that are likely to be most effective and why, including how they could address the root causes of problems;</li> <li>– inform decisions around its use of digital technology that seek to balance the need to meet short and longer-term objectives.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>2. Does the Council have a clear vision of what it wants to achieve through the use of digital technology?</p>	<p>2.1 Is the Council planning over an appropriate timescale?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has considered what long term means in planning its approach to digital – ie how far ahead it can/should plan and why (at least ten years with consideration of longer-term trends as appropriate).</li> <li>• The Council has considered how actions can deliver the best impact over that timeframe in terms of outcomes and most effective use of resources. This could include consideration of appropriate intervention points linked to the Commissioner’s definition of prevention. (More details can be found in: <u><a href="#">Taking account of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the budget process – The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales</a></u>).</li> <li>• The Council has set out measures for its digital strategy that reflect short and long-term impacts and value for money, with milestones that reflect progress as appropriate.</li> <li>• The Council has set out how its digital strategy will be resourced over the longer term as far as is practical (see also criteria relating to integration).</li> </ul>
	<p>2.2 Has the Council thought about the wider impacts its digital strategy could have, including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has considered how its digital strategy can make a contribution across the well-being goals.</li> <li>• Staff developing the digital strategy understand what colleagues and partners do and how their work relates, and have sought to integrate their</li> </ul>



Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how it could contribute to each of the seven national well-being goals?</li> <li>• how delivery will impact on the other things it is trying to achieve (ie its well-being objectives and wider priorities)?</li> <li>• how delivery will impact on other what other public bodies are trying to achieve (ie their well-being objectives)?</li> </ul>	<p>work with that of their colleagues from across the Council and with partner organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration is evident in the alignment of the digital strategy with other key corporate strategies and service plans. For example medium-term financial plan, workforce plan, asset management strategies, well-being statement and carbon reduction plans.</li> <li>• The digital strategy is aligned with other strategic intents such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– customer experience;</li> <li>– management of demand/reductions in demand failure and prevention; and</li> <li>– design and implementation of new service delivery models.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Council's digital strategy aligns with the plans/strategies of local and national partners including the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy for Wales Digital strategy and well-being plans.</li> </ul>
	2.3 Is there a wide and common understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors and senior officers responsible for implementing the digital strategy have a common and clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and the intended impact on service delivery.</li> <li>• The Council's digital strategy is clearly communicated to staff and partners who may help deliver it.</li> </ul>

Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
<p>3. Is the Council working effectively with the right people and partners to design and deliver its digital strategy</p>	<p>3.1 Has the Council identified who it needs to involve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has a good understanding of who will be directly and indirectly affected by its digital strategy and who it needs to involve.</li> <li>• The Council has effectively involved the full diversity of views in developing its digital strategy, including from non-traditional sources and from those it may have previously failed to reach.</li> </ul>
	<p>3.2 Is the Council effectively involving the full diversity of people affected by its digital strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has provided genuine opportunities for people to influence the design and delivery of its digital strategy from an early stage, including representatives of groups who share protected characteristics.</li> <li>• The Council has used the results of involvement to shape the design and delivery of its digital strategy.</li> </ul>
	<p>3.3 Is the Council collaborating effectively with the right partners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is collaborating to ensure it delivers better outcomes and value for money through its digital strategy and has put appropriate arrangements in place to support this, for example for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sharing or pooling expertise and resources;</li> <li>– sharing information;</li> <li>– ensuring effective monitoring, evaluation and accountability including consideration of value for money.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
<p>4. Has the Council resourced delivery of its digital strategy so it can deliver long-term/preventative benefits?</p>	<p>4.1 Does the Council understand long-term resource implications?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has assessed the costs and benefits of using digital technology to invest in long-term, preventative approaches and the cost (both financial and in terms of outcomes) of not doing so.</li> <li>• The Council has thought about the resources it will need to deliver its digital strategy over the medium and longer term (whole life costs) and how it could manage risks/meet those costs including, for example, planned 'invest to save' initiatives and managed reductions in technical debt.</li> <li>• The Council has calculated and set out any savings it intends to make through implementing its digital strategy.</li> </ul>
	<p>4.2 Does the Council allocate resources to deliver better outcomes over the long-term?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action (including preventative action) that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and/or use of resources over the longer term is promoted and supported, even:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs;</li> <li>– where the benefits are likely to be accrued by or attributed to another organisation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Level 2 questions	Level 3 questions	Criteria
5. Is the Council monitoring and reviewing progress?	5.1 Is the Council monitoring and reviewing progress towards, short, medium and longer-term objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council monitors the costs and benefits of delivering its digital strategy from a value for money perspective.</li> <li>• The Council is measuring the wider contribution the digital strategy is making across its own/partnership objectives.</li> <li>• Progress is measured against short, medium and long-term objectives.</li> </ul>
6. Is the Council learning lessons from how it works?	6.1 Does the Council review the effectiveness of its digital strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of its digital strategy including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– effectiveness of its collaborative activity;</li> <li>– effectiveness of its involvement activity, including the impact of the strategy on service users including those who are digitally excluded;</li> <li>– the impact of the strategy on those who share protected characteristics;</li> <li>– the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the digital strategy overall in helping the Council to achieve its strategic objectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Council has reviewed lessons learned from its response to the pandemic and is applying this learning to its digital strategy.</li> </ul>
	6.2 Does the Council share lessons learned from its approach to its digital strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council shares and applies any lessons learned from the development and delivery of its digital strategy widely across the organisation, and with partners where relevant.</li> </ul>





Audit Wales

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.  
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

## Organisational response

**Report title:** Digital Strategy Review

**Completion date:** October 2023

**Document reference:** 3877A2023

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Ref	Recommendation	Organisational response Please set out here relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Please set out by when the planned actions will be complete	Responsible officer (title)
R1	<p>If the Council continues with the approach of not stating a timeframe to deliver its Digital, Data and Technology strategy, it should put in place arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clearly articulate its short, medium and long term outcomes and intended benefits;</li> <li>– cost its short, medium and long term ambitions and match them with available resources; and</li> <li>– assess if it is delivering the strategy and its intended outcomes at the intended pace.</li> </ul>	<p>The NPT Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) Strategy has intentionally not been time bound to a three or five year period.</p> <p>Given the considerable rate of change in DDaT, NPT have decided to embrace an Agile approach to the creation of the DDaT strategy, where we will regularly review and iterate the strategy to capitalise where appropriate on emerging opportunities for the Council.</p> <p>This approach will allow us to remain current and provide us with greater flexibility to adapt and update the strategy in line with the challenges and opportunities at the appropriate points.</p> <p>The Audit Wales findings highlighted that the Council is ‘developing comprehensive arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of its digital approach’.</p> <p>Following on from the adoption of the DDaT Strategy by Council, officers have now implemented comprehensive governance arrangements to assess and monitor the impact of our DDaT strategy.</p> <p>The robust governance arrangements address our ability to clearly articulate benefits, align</p>	<p><b>Annual Business plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 / 24 - complete</li> <li>• 2024 / 25 - in development</li> </ul> <p><b>Forward Budget Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 / 24 – complete</li> <li>• 2024 / 25 - in development</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium term financial plan 23-28</b> – Full alignment from Digital Transformation Board / Pipeline</p> <p><b>Digital Transformation Board</b> – Cross organisation prioritisation of Digital programmes of work. Board established October 23 and monthly meetings taking place.</p> <p><b>Multi-year Digital Transformation Pipeline</b> – Established with an extensive programme of work resourced and timetabled. Regular review via bi-weekly team leader stand ups and monthly</p>	Chief Digital Officer



resources to our prioritised programmes of work, and to assess delivery against the overarching DDaT Strategy.

Specific arrangements include:

- Digital Transformation Board
- Prioritised multi-year digital pipeline
- Annual Business plans (aligned to fiscal year)
- Annual Budget plan
- Medium term financial plan alignment

Transformation Board reviews to track progress and risks.

**DDaT Strategy Progress Reporting and Scrutiny**

- Annual report to Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee
- Quarterly reports to Corporate Directors Group
- Updates as required to Corporate Management Group
- Quarterly updates to Directorate Management Teams

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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Cabinet

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### Report of Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

Mr N Daniel

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Corporate Plan “Reset, Review, Recover” 2022-2027 Annual Report Period: 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To present the Corporate Plan “Reset, Review, Recover” 2022-2027 Annual Report for the period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 for endorsement and if considered appropriate, for Cabinet to commend the Annual Report to Council for adoption.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The attached Annual Report has been amended following the withdrawal of this item from the Cabinet agenda of 8<sup>th</sup> November due to a formatting issue. The issue has now been rectified with the addition of the detail contained on Page 51. This is the only amendment.
3. The Annual Report provides an account of progress made against the four well-being objectives and actions set out in the council’s Corporate Plan – “Recover, Reset, Renew” 2022-2027 for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
4. The report is required to meet duties set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
5. In preparing this Annual Report for the 2022-2023 financial year, the council is required to consider whether the current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered.

6. The well-being objectives will remain but we will look to review our Corporate Plan outcomes and priorities for action for the period 2024-2027 over the autumn/winter period which will be informed by the output from the recent Let's Keep Talking campaign.
7. Following an assessment of the work undertaken during 2022-2023, overall we were on track in delivering the work to contribute to the four well-being objectives.

## **Background**

8. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the council to set well-being objectives which seek to maximise the council's contribution to the national well-being goals, whilst also embracing the sustainable development principle. The council is also required to report each year on the extent to which the well-being objectives it has set have been achieved.

## **Our progress**

9. Under each of the four well-being objective there are actions we planned to take to deliver improvements during 2022-2023. Of the 76 actions included within the Corporate Plan 88% (67) were on track. Of the suite of 60 performance measures 34 have comparable data of which 77% either achieving their target or improved/maintained performance.

Some of our key achievements during 2022-2023 include:

- Implementation of Additional Learning Needs Education and Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- 34% of all 0-4 year olds have accessed Flying Start
- 657 children and young people accessed enhanced fully funded and low cost play and leisure opportunities
- Utilised £2m of council budget to support those impacted by the energy crisis
- 39 organisations supported through the Food Poverty Grant
- £4.25m approved to 'Clean up and Green up' our towns, valleys and villages
- Secured over £17m via UK Government's Levelling Up Fund
- Developed our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- Successfully awarded the Freeport bid

- Supported over 800 individuals into training, work experience or employment
- Secured UK Government Shared Prosperity Funding to deliver a wide range of anchor projects and grant schemes
- Launched the 'Invest in NPT' website
- Worked with schools, colleges and local employers to offer 1,876 training weeks for traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience
- Continued to deliver on our Swansea Bay City Deal projects

### **Financial Appraisal**

10. The council's net budget for 2022-2023 was £338.020m. The actual net expenditure, or outturn position for the council excluding schools, shows a net underspend of £1.607m after ring fenced reserves.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

11. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment for this item.

### **Valleys Communities Impact:**

12. The Annual Report provides an update on the progress made in delivering actions to support valley communities.

### **Workforce Impact**

13. The Council has developed and agreed a Strategic Workforce Plan - The Future of Work Strategy 2022- 2027. The Plan is aligned to the Corporate Plan and ensures we have the right number of people with the right skills and attitudes in place at the right time to deliver council services and functions. This will be achieved through delivering the workforce actions needed in the short, medium and long term as well as embedding the corporate priorities, vision and values.

### **Legal Impact**

14. This Annual Report discharges duties in Section 3 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **Risk Management**

15. The Corporate Plan Annual Report must comply with provisions within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Failure to produce a compliant report can lead to a Certificate of Non-Compliance by Audit Wales and statutory recommendations the Council would be obliged to address. The risk of non-compliance is considered low as the Report follows the same format as previous years when a Certificate of Compliance has been achieved.

### **Consultation**

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

### **Recommendations**

17. It is recommended that Cabinet considers the draft Corporate Plan “Reset, Review, Recover” 2022-2027 Annual Report for the period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 for endorsement and commends the Annual Report to Council for adoption.
18. It is recommended that the Leader of Council be given delegated authority to make such changes as may be needed to the Annual Report prior to publication, provided that such changes do not materially alter the content of the document considered by Council.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

19. To meet the statutory requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **Implementation of Decision**

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

### **Appendices**

21. Appendix 1 – Draft Corporate Plan “Reset, Review, Recover” 2022-2027 Annual Report for the period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

### **List of Background Papers**

22. Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan “Recover, Reset Renew” 2022–2027
23. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

### **Officer Contact**

Noelwyn Daniel, Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

E-mail: [n.daniel@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.daniel@npt.gov.uk)

Caryn Furlow-Harris, Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support.

E-mail: [c.furlow@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.furlow@npt.gov.uk)

Louise McAndrew, Corporate Strategic, Planning and Governance Officer

E-mail: [l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk](mailto:l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk)

Shaun Davies, Corporate Performance Management Officer

E-mail: [a.s.davies@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.s.davies@npt.gov.uk)

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# RECOVER, RESET, RENEW



Corporate Plan Annual Report 2022-2023



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council



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# Foreword

2022-2023 delivered another year of highs and lows, not only felt throughout our communities in Neath Port Talbot but across the world. We have seen inflation and energy costs rise to unprecedented levels, forcing many of our residents, businesses and support organisations into a cost of living crisis.

This council has again, as we saw during the Covid pandemic, worked to administer / provide over £9 million of financial support to residents via its Hardship Relief Scheme, cost of living support scheme and administration of the fuel support scheme. We have also been able to provide signposting to community hubs, foodbanks and support services.

We have also witnessed the suffering of those fleeing Ukraine following the invasion by Russia and we have worked, like many other local authorities across the UK, to provide a humanitarian response and housed a number of vulnerable families here in our county borough through the hosting of a Welcome Centre on behalf of Welsh Government, hotels and with nominated families.

Whilst it has been difficult to navigate through yet more uncertainty Neath Port Talbot has a significant amount of regeneration projects and investment coming to the area, which in time we hope will provide a wealth of jobs and supply chain opportunities for local people and businesses.

From the approval of planning for the Afan Valley Wildfox development and the announcement of our successful bid for the Celtic Freeport, to the continuing progress being made in the Neath Valley to house the Global Rail Centre of Excellence, it is evident that Neath Port Talbot continues to thrive and together we can achieve remarkable things.

**Councillor Steve Hunt,  
Leader of the Council**





# Introduction

The 2022-2023 Annual Report provides a balanced overview of progress made against the four well-being objectives, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-2027 – Recover, Reset, Renew.

This Annual Report is part of our statutory duty to report under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.



The following well-being objectives were approved by Council in 2022.

- ↳ 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.

Under each well-being objective a number of improvement outcomes and priorities were set out. The improvement outcomes provided the overall position we are aiming to achieve by 2027 and the priorities set out the strategic actions we will take to deliver that improvement during the twelve month period.

Whilst reviewing our progress for 2022-2023 we reflected upon our well-being objectives and their relevance at the current time. In preparing this Annual Report for the 2022-2023 financial year, the council is required to consider whether the current well-being objectives remain relevant or whether changes to those objectives should be considered. The well-being objectives will remain the same for the coming year (2023-2024) but we will look to review our Corporate Plan outcomes and priorities for the period 2024 - 2027 following the Let's Keep Talking campaign.

Our Corporate Plan 2022-2023: Recover, Reset, Renew set out our plans to move on from the turbulent times which unfolded as a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our services were, and continue to be stretched and whilst we continue to be ambitious in our plans for the future, we need to be realistic in relation to the achievement of our well-being objectives and the availability of funding and resources to sustain those plans.

In that review, we will also take into account the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act which has now been given Royal assent. As part of the four principles being brought into being we will revisit our well-being objectives to ensure 'decent work' is replaced with 'fair work' in accordance with the Act. Our current well-being objectives enable us to demonstrate contribution to the seven national wellbeing goals, take into account our ongoing recovery work following the pandemic and enable us to drive forward the following priorities over the short, medium and long term. This is illustrated in the table set out on page 8. All four of our well-being objectives are broad in nature and all four contribute to all seven national well-being goals.

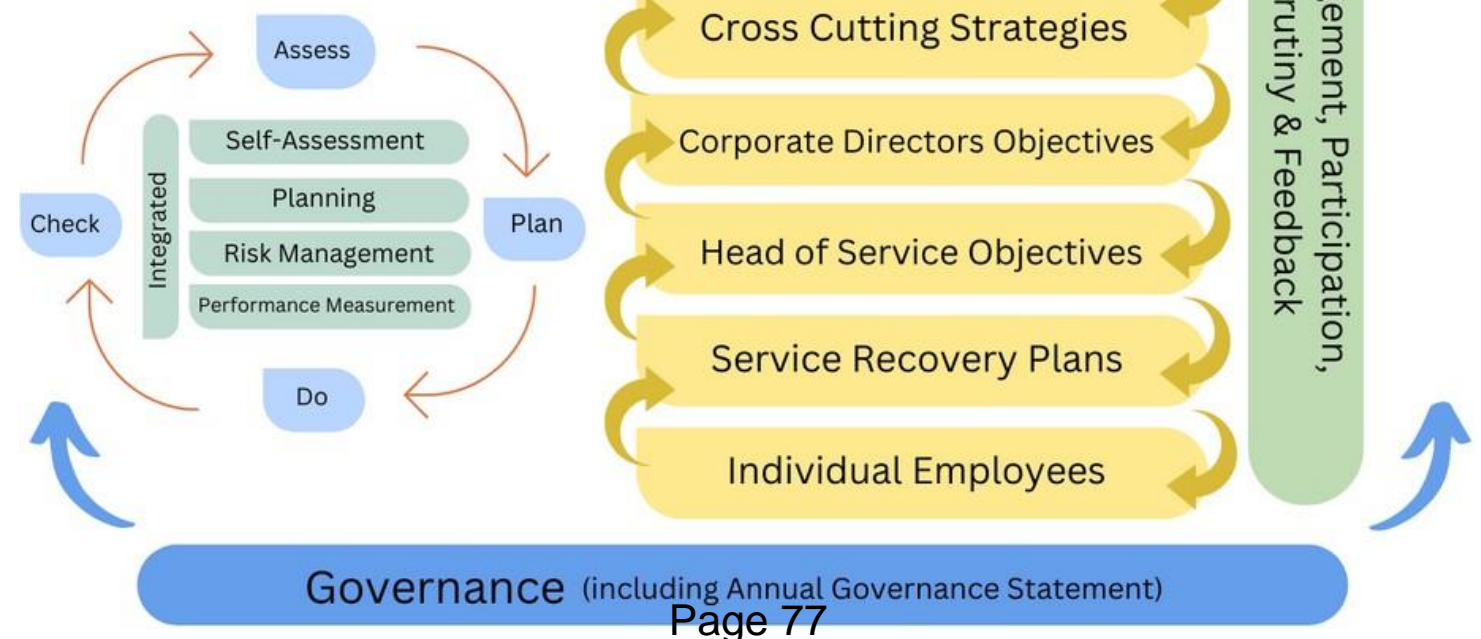
# Managing Performance

During 2022-2023 our Corporate Performance Management Framework (CPMF) was updated to set a clear direction for the council that links/joins up all council business from employee level up to council level, and where everybody is clear how they contribute to achieving the council's vision, purpose and priorities.

It is imperative that our planning (including financial and workforce planning), performance and risk processes are robust and interwoven into our decision making at every level of the organisation. Reliable, timely and accurate information is important for us and to those who hold us to account to know how we are performing and meeting our priorities.

Our revised CPMF:

- Supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan vision, purpose and priorities;
- Helps improve services and outcomes for people;
- Helps embed self-assessment throughout the organisation;
- Helps to ensure the council is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively to deliver value for money;
- Further strengthens planning, performance and risk culture across the organisation;
- Helps inform decision making and improve planning;
- Improves performance scrutiny;
- Improves the integration of key planning activities;
- Helps identify poor performance; and
- Joins up all council business from employee/individual level up to council level, where everybody is clear how they contribute to achieving the council's vision, purpose and priorities.



# Council Governance

The council has a number of process in place to ensure our governance is robust.

## Self-Assessment

To ensure the council meets its statutory duty under the Local Government & Elections Act (2021), an annual self-assessment has been produced to demonstrate our governance arrangements and progress. Our self-assessment sets out our strong relationship with our stakeholders through engagement, participation, scrutiny and feedback.

This important relationship is an integral part of how we operate on an ongoing basis - enabling the delivery of good quality services and supporting improvement. It is also important for those who hold us to account to know how we are performing and if we are meeting our objectives. Our stakeholders include service users, the public, local businesses, employees, elected members, community organisations, partners and trade unions.

The self-assessment covers the following key strategic themes:

1. Corporate Planning (Role of Council)
2. Workforce Planning (Getting the Best from the Workforce)
3. Leadership (Leadership & Management)
4. Procurement (Procurement & Commissioning)
- 5 Risk Management (Effective Risk Management)
6. Digital, Data & Technology (Data & analytics / Assets & Technology)
7. Financial Planning (Managing Expenditure / Managing Income)
8. Physical Assets & Facilities

View the council's 2022-2023 Self-Assessment [Here](#)

The corporate self-assessment asks us to determine:

- ↳ How well we are doing?
- ↳ How do we know?
- ↳ What are we going to do to improve?

The self-assessment for 2022-2023 includes an update on a number of improvements areas identified in 2021-2022 and sets out improvement areas for 2023-2024. A number of performance measures are also included in the self-assessment that provide an overview of progress for a selection of services/enables.



# Council Governance

## Annual Governance Statement

In addition, our governance arrangements are also set out in our Corporate Performance Management Framework and Annual Governance Statement.

The council has adopted the 2016 Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) to develop our Annual Governance Statement. The 2016 framework explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the council to carry out its functions effectively and highlights the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the council is directed and controlled.

The Annual Governance statement for 2022-2023 sets out 13 improvement areas for 2023-2024.

All of the arrangements below feed back into our performance cycle and inform our self-assessment, planning and decision making processes.

### Strategic Level

- ↳ 2022-2027 Corporate Plan progress
- ↳ Corporate Plan Annual Report
- ↳ Organisational Development Programme Board
- ↳ Council Annual Self-Assessment report
- ↳ Progress on our cross cutting plans and strategies
- ↳ Chief Officer Objectives
- ↳ Budget monitoring
- ↳ Risk Management
- ↳ Annual Governance Statement
- ↳ Council level compliments and complaints data
- ↳ Key Performance Indicators

### Service Level

- ↳ Service Recovery Plan (SRPs)
- ↳ Benchmarking
- ↳ Ad-hoc service reports

### Individual Level

- ↳ Annual performance appraisals

View the council's 2022-2023 Annual Governance Statement [Here](#)

### **Internal Corporate Governance Group**

The council's Corporate Governance Group meets on a quarterly basis to ensure that the governance arrangements of the Council are robust and fit for purpose, and report back to Corporate Directors Group.



# How our Well-being Objectives contribute to the National Well-being Goals



## Neath Port Talbot Council's Well-being Objectives / 2022-2023

- WBO 1** - Best start in life
- WBO 2** - All communities are thriving and sustainable
- WBO 3** - Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations
- WBO 4** - Jobs and skills

7 National Well-being Goals

	WBO 1	WBO 2	WBO 3	WBO 4
A Prosperous Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Resilient Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓
A more equal Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓
A healthier Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Wales of cohesive communities	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language	✓	✓	✓	✓
A globally responsible Wales	✓	✓	✓	✓





# How our Well-being Objectives embed the Sustainable Principle

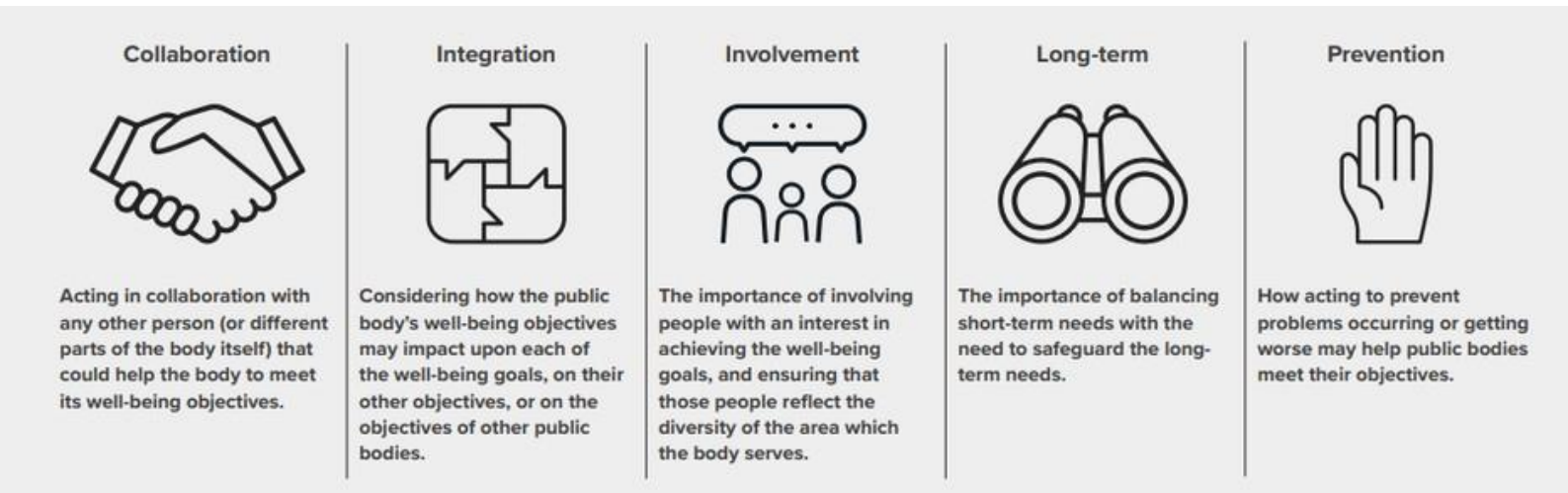
## Neath Port Talbot Council's Well-being Objectives / 2022-2023

**WBO 1** - Best start in life

**WBO 2** - All communities are thriving and sustainable

**WBO 3** - Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations

**WBO 4** - Jobs and skills



The general purpose of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, is to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales, take the needs of future generations into account. The Act is designed to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with sustainable development principles. The work we do to achieve our corporate vision takes into account the Well-being of Future Generations five ways of working and is embedded across the council to contribute to the vision.

**Strategic level** - We will initiate a strategic change programme to ensure we are embracing a 'one council' strategic approach to achieving the vision.

**Corporate level** - corporate strategies will be realigned to support the achievement of the vision and the delivery of the strategic change programme.

**Operational level** - Every service and function within the council will align their service recovery plans to maximise their contribution to achieving the vision that we have set.

**Individual level** - All employees feel valued and motivated and understand how they play a part in our strategic and operational approaches. Training and development for all employees, supporting the delivery of the corporate plan, focusing on the key priorities and making best use of the training resources available.

# Partnership Working

## Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board (PSB)

During the summer of 2022, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board published its second local assessment of well-being which was informed by the findings of the council's Let's Talk survey undertaken during 2021.

The findings of 'Let's Talk' along with local and national data and information provided a clear picture of well-being in our area highlighting our assets and our challenges.

NPT and Swansea Public Services Boards jointly commissioned Swansea University to provide a summary analysis of the information gathered. Elements of this have been included in the summary document which draws out the key themes of the assessment. Full details can be seen here [nptwellbeing.wales](http://nptwellbeing.wales) – [Well-Being-Assessment](#)

Due to the joined up approach in developing the Well-being Assessment, the Public Services Board aligned their well-being objectives with those of the council, in order to progress in an efficient way and provide overarching added value as a Public Services Board.

A series of steps have been agreed which will help the Board to meet the well-being objectives. These steps will be driven by a governance structure of existing partnerships where possible, which will work together in an integrated way, building on existing work and relationships to deliver the work on behalf of the Public Services Board. Following the twelve-week consultation period, which ran from December 2022 to March 2023, the Well-being Plan was published on 4th May 2023. It can be viewed [here](#).



## Corporate Joint Committee



Formally constituted in January 2022, the Corporate Joint Committee for South West Wales covers the local authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea.

The Committee will improve the regional planning, co-ordination and delivery of transport, land use planning, economic development and energy covering South West Wales. The Committee is made up of representation from Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire Council and Swansea Council, as well as the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

The Corporate Joint Committee has been created as a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

# Swansea Bay City Deal

The City Deal is expected to give the Swansea Bay City Region a permanent uplift in its Gross Value Added (GVA) of £1.8 billion and will generate almost 10,000 new jobs over the next 15 years. The investment is divided across a portfolio of nine headline projects and programmes delivering a total of 35 individual projects throughout the counties of Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire.

There are a number of City Deal projects based within Neath Port Talbot these include:

## Homes as Power Stations

The Swansea Bay City Deal Homes as Power Stations (HAPS) project is a regional 5 year programme led by Neath Port Talbot Council on behalf of the City Deal local authorities, which aims to deliver smart, low carbon, energy efficient homes through a coordinated approach across the region, ultimately leading to a reduction in fuel poverty and its impact on health and wellbeing and contributing to carbon emission reduction targets and alleviating the housing shortage to address the housing need.

The HAPS programme targets both new build projects and the retrofit of existing buildings. The aim is to provide proof of concept in the public sector at relatively small scale with the intention of scaling up activity across the region and sectors. The 'pathfinder' project is currently on site at the former Hafod Care Home in Neath – this is a collaborative project between Neath Talbot CBC, Pobl and Swansea University – SPECIFIC.

## Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth

The Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth programme is made up of seven inter-linked projects under four themes:

- The award winning, energy positive Technology Centre building on Baglan Energy Park, providing flexible office space for start-up companies and indigenous businesses, with a focus on the innovation, ICT and R&D sectors. The excess energy from solar and other renewable technologies will be converted into hydrogen at the nearby Hydrogen Centre to be used to fuel hydrogen vehicles
- A specialist facility which will support the steel and metals industry in Port Talbot, Wales and the UK, while reducing its carbon footprint.
- Decarbonisation projects including a low emission vehicle charging network, as well as air quality monitoring and a hydrogen stimulus project
- An Industrial Futures project to address the gap between demand and supply for businesses and available land in the Port Talbot Waterfront Enterprise Zone, with a hybrid building providing production units as well as office space to support start-ups and indigenous businesses in the innovation and manufacturing sectors



# Well-being Objective 1

## Best Start in Life

Of the 21 key actions we had detailed in the Corporate Plan to deliver during 2022-2023, we were 'on track' with 16 actions and 5 were 'just off' track.



Published our **Welsh In Education Strategic Plan**

**2,426** childcare spaces available



34% of 0-4 year olds accessed Flying Start support



Launched the Children and Young People's Engagement and Participation Strategy

**1189** Benefited from the funded **FREE CHILD-CARE OFFER**

**657**



Children and young people engaged in fully funded play activities as a result of the Welsh Government Playworks Holiday Fund.

Roll out of free school meals to Years 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 7). From September 2023 we will provide free school meals to all primary school pupils – a year ahead of our target.

**1275** Young Carers Awareness sessions delivered

19.7% of Year 1 pupils are receiving education through medium of Welsh and more Year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language (13.1%)



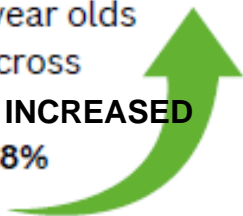
2.2% of Year 11 leavers were Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). **Our second lowest ever figure.**

Continual reduction in the number of children on the Child Protection Register.

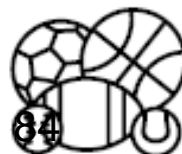


**658** pupils across primary and secondary schools have accessed School Based Counselling Support.

Number of 16-24 year olds in employments across Neath Port Talbot **INCREASED** from 50.6% to 65.8%



Apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds **working in the council** increased **from 19 to 28**



46% of children take part in sport three or more times a week. Highest rate in Wales

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 1 Best Start in Life



Supporting our children and young people is critical to ensure we remove inequalities and provide the best start in life.

### Why is this important?

Covid-19 has had a significant, adverse impact on children and young people, with disruption to their learning and consequences for their social development and physical and mental wellbeing; 35% of children aged 7-24 live in the 20% most deprived wards in Wales; 84% of children entered nursery without the appropriate literacy, language and communication skills to access the curriculum; 27% of pupils of school age are entitled to free school meals; Flying Start aims to offer support to at least 25% of all children aged 0-4 in the most deprived wards in each local authority. This is not a universal offer, however, needs based referrals, strong links with our multiagency partners and local need targeting within the Flying Start Outreach Programme allows the programme's eligibility to reach much further to those who need it most; A significant percentage of pupils finish statutory education without the expected levels in language, mathematics and science; Over half of the pupils who are eligible for free school meals do not achieve a grade C or above in either language or mathematics; Too many children and young people are being excluded from schools on a fixed term and permanent basis; At least a quarter of children in our schools have a known or identified Additional Learning Need; 2,237 young people aged 16-24 are economically inactive in Neath Port Talbot – some of these consider themselves unfit for work due to mental health issues; and The Welsh Government has set a target that 1 million people will speak Welsh by 2050 and we need to play our part in helping to achieve this.

### Summary Progress during 2022-2023

Overall we, are on track in delivering this well-being objective for 2022-2023. Some of our key achievements during the year include the ahead of schedule roll out of free school meals to those in years 3 and 4, the expansion of Flying Start seeing an additional 129 children and their families access the full programme, and at least 225 beneficiaries outside of eligible Flying Start areas benefitting from the programme's "Outreach" engagement, including funded childcare, specialist Midwifery and intensive early years parenting. This has increased Flying Start coverage to 34% of all 0-4 year olds. We have also published our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which details our plans for growth over the next 10 years and the percentage of 5 year olds receiving education through the medium of Welsh and the percentage of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language is increasing year on year.

We are adhering to Welsh Government's timeline for the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Education and Tribunal Wales Act 2018 and the conversion of Statements to Individual Development Plans (IDPs). During the academic year 2022-2023 the majority of learners within the mandated cohorts have had their Statements of SEN converted to Individual Development Plans.

# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

We are continuing to work towards completing the Band B projects of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (previously 21st Century Schools and Education Programme). During 2022-2023, the council's Cabinet also considered the next phase (Band C) which will enable funding applications to be submitted to Welsh Government.

Our Education services have made massive strides to ensure children and young people were able to return to school and play settings alongside implementing the role out of the new Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Act 2018 (ALNET) which is still being rolled out across the borough.

Whilst schools across Neath Port Talbot were reopened to all pupils, attendance rates across primary and secondary age groups are still struggling and whilst provisional academic year 2022-23 attendance rates show a slight increase on the previous year, they are still lower than pre-pandemic attendance rates with 291 (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) – January 2023) children still being educated at home.

Some learners established a pattern of not attending school during the pandemic that they and their families have found difficult to revert from. Many of these challenges existed before the pandemic, but some have deepened since, and as a result some families have become harder to reach and engage. There is more work to do to increase school attendance rates and reduce school exclusions, which has risen from 525 in 2021-2022 academic year to 760 in 2022-23 academic year.

During the academic year 2022-2023, the School Based Counselling Service has supported 658 pupils over 3894 counselling sessions. Of the 109 primary aged pupils accessing support, 70 were below the statutory Year 6 age. Neath Port Talbot is consistently ranked highly in the top few authorities across Wales in terms of recording positive outcomes as a result of therapeutic intervention. The top presenting issues for counselling support are Anxiety, Family and Anger. In response to this, the service has developed training for school staff to best meet the needs of those pupils presenting with issues around 'anger'. In addition, the service is providing self-care groups and will be picking up one to one counselling work with parents.

The Inclusion Service has developed a multi-disciplinary forum so that guidance can be offered to schools from different professional perspectives. The 'forum team' will ordinarily consist of a school-based counsellor, a wellbeing service practitioner, an educational psychologist and a practitioner from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). During 2022-2023, 140 cases were discussed. Of these cases, 42% empowered school support, 23% resulted in Inclusion Service input and 35% resulted in other referrals including CAMHS, CAMHS School Liaison, Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Team Around the Family.

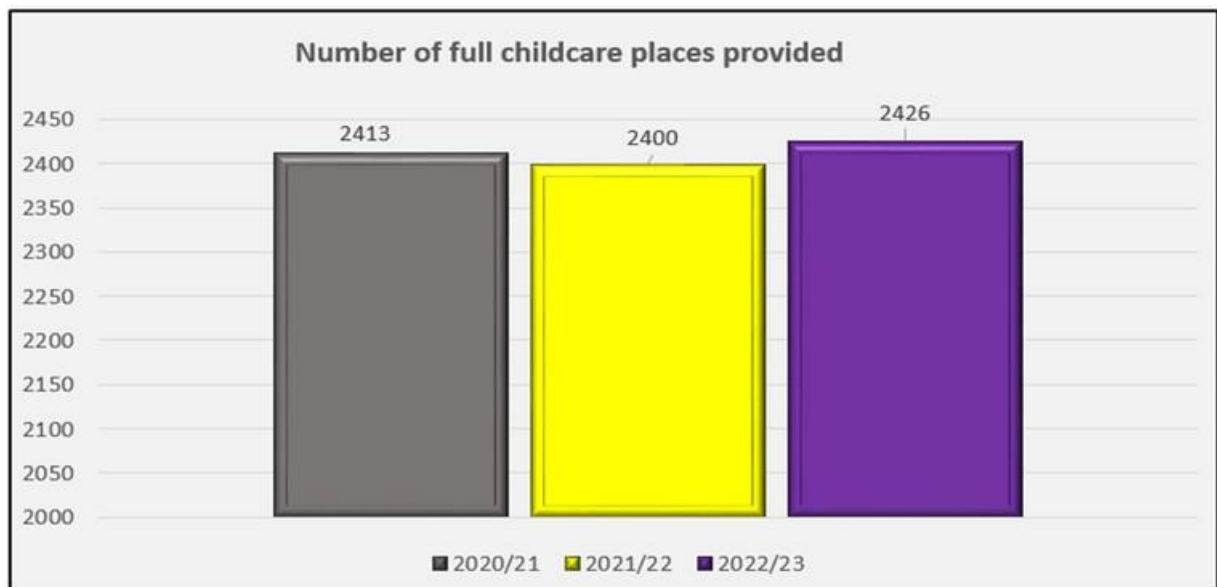


## Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

### Progress on our 2022- 2023 Corporate Plan Actions and Measures:

Of the 21 key actions we had detailed in the Corporate Plan to deliver during 2022-2023, we were broadly on track with 17 and 4 were 'just off' track. Our Corporate Plan measures have been linked to the relevant actions.

- We have supported our school leaders to ensure all schools re-opened fully following the pandemic and have well established development plans to focus on recovery. In addition, council services have supported schools to help pupils and families recover.
- Significant progress has been made in ensuring a more equitable early year's offer by exceeding its Flying Start expansion goal of engaging an additional 127 children aged 0-4, taking the total amount of children accessing early years support to 502. As a result, our Flying Start programme has exceeded the national target of 25% coverage, increasing to 34% of 0-4year olds accessing Flying Start support. Two small additional areas of Margam and Port Talbot are now within the Flying Start footprint, with Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen now being fully eligible.



Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

The total number of childcare places provided across Neath Port Talbot is 2,426, increasing from 2,400 the previous year.

As per Welsh Government requirements, we have commissioned the services of a software company to develop an online Individual Development Plan (IDP) platform. A designated 'IDP Systems and Process Officer' has been appointed to lead this piece of work ensuring the specifications requirements are met. In addition to the consideration of council maintained IDPs, between 1st September 2021 and the 31st of August 2022, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Inclusion Panel also considered 197 Statutory Assessments (SA) under the previous Special Educational Needs (SEN) Framework. During this period, 168 Statements of SEN were also issued and no appeals to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) were lodged. 100% of Statements of SEN and/ or IDPs were produced within the statutory timescale 'excluding 'exceptions'. Exceptions refer to those cases where advice requested from professionals is submitted outside of timescales, which is outside of the control of the Additional Learning Needs Support Service (ALNSS), along with those cases where further dialogue is needed with parents/carers following the issue of the proposed plan.

# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

- The Inclusion Service and NPT Schools have a robust quality assurance framework in place to monitor and review the impact of IDPs. Inclusion Service Managers work with Swansea Bay University Health Board to quality assure Health provision. The ALNSS Manager undertakes the quality assurance of all local authority maintained IDPs and an Inclusion Service Officer is currently working with school clusters to develop a quality assurance framework for school maintained IDPs.
- We enhanced free and low cost play and leisure opportunities for children and young people and outcomes included:
  - ↳ 657 children and young people engaged in fully funded play activities as a result of Welsh Government Playworks Holiday Fund. The fund has been used to improve the quality of play provision with a focus upon closing identified gaps in provision. Activities have included open access play sessions, family play opportunities, sports camps and summer play schemes for children and young people with additional support needs.
  - ↳ The Physical Activity and Sport Service are based in a school setting for primary and secondary to provide sporting and physical activities opportunities.
  - ↳ Physical Activity and Sports Team, in partnership with Early Years and Flying Start Childcare Team provided Physical Literacy and active play workshops to children and their families within childcare settings across Neath Port Talbot .
  - ↳ Results of the School Sport Survey, a national survey of pupils from years 3 to 11, looking into attitudes, behaviours and opportunities for young people in sport, show Neath Port Talbot scored highest in Wales in the following three key areas:
    - The number of children who take part in sport three or more times per week (46%);
    - Those participating in community club sport outside of school (71.6%);
    - Those participating in community sport at least once a week (62.3%).
- Services across Inclusion and the Think Family Partnership ensure that there is a clearly articulated offer to parents and professionals. The Inclusion Service has also ensured capacity across Early Years to meet the requirement of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act. The Inclusion Service offer of support has been effectively shared with schools and families through our website and social media in addition to face to face workshops.
- All primary schools have begun working under the Curriculum for Wales. All secondary schools are preparing for a September 2023 start for years 7 & 8. Levels of engagement in curriculum workshops and training are very high. The renewed focus on developing a shared understanding of progress is priority at local and national levels. This process is being supported at local, cluster and national levels.



# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

- Inclusion Service staff regularly attend the community 'Supporting Additional Needs Parent/ Carer Forum' on a half termly basis to improve communication and consultation. These sessions are always productive and those who attend are invited to contribute honest views in relation to what the service is doing well and what could be done better. Families are also provided with a number of ways to contact the service should they need to, including a central email address and via the Inclusion Service website. Families are also signposted to SNAP Cymru, a national charity that offers support, guidance and advocacy to children and young people with additional learning needs and their families.
- Free school meals are now available to all pupils from Reception to Year 4 and will be rolled out to all primary school pupils from September 2023.
- We worked to ensure those children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family, some of this work included:
  - ↳ Working collaboratively with families to build resilience and prevent problems escalating by providing early offers of help and support. There has been a continual reduction in the number of children on the Child Protection Register with the number stabilising at 43 at the end of March 2023.
  - ↳ Supporting families at an earlier stage through the strengthening of support services and the recruitment of a full time principal officer with responsibility for prevention and family support.
  - ↳ We work in partnership with our colleagues in adult services to ensure that we respond to challenges such as the current cost of living crisis and ensure that families have access to support when they need it.
  - ↳ Our approach is about what matters to children and families and to understand the impact we have and the difference we make we have a dedicated Strategic Lead for Participation and Engagement. Listening to the voice of the child is paramount in all the work we do. In May 2022, we were successful in achieving the Children in Wales National Participation Standards Kitemark. We also promote Children's Rights through the development of Children's Rights Champions across the service by working to the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
  - ↳ Worked with partner agencies: statutory, third and voluntary sector. Effective practice in response to need, threat, risk, harm would not be possible without partnership working and there are many forums in place to bring key partners together to respond to current and emerging trends, patterns and themes, these being: Partnership Interface Meeting, Local Operational Safeguarding Group, Strategic SAFE Partnership Group.



# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

- ◆ To ensure those young people leaving full-time education have a clear pathway to move into further training or education or work NPT Employability, Skills and Training and Youth Service continue to provide a service working alongside The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), schools, colleges, and other external agencies to encourage engagement. The Youth Support Multi Agency Group continues to meet quarterly bringing together a range of partners to discuss youth unemployment and youth homelessness.

The percentage of 16-24 year olds in employment across Neath Port Talbot has risen from 50.6% in 2021-2022 to 65.8% in 2022-23, a significant positive increase.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

- ◆ We make sure it is clear for young people leaving full-time education how they move on to further training or education in a number of ways including:

- ↳ Schools work with Careers Wales to ensure pupils have opportunities to discuss pathways after school.
- ↳ The Youth Service also provide additional support if required to pupils and after the school journey.
- ↳ Skills and Training provide summer schools for those who need additional support after school finishes at year 11 and engagement courses for young people. Apprenticeships are also available through this route.

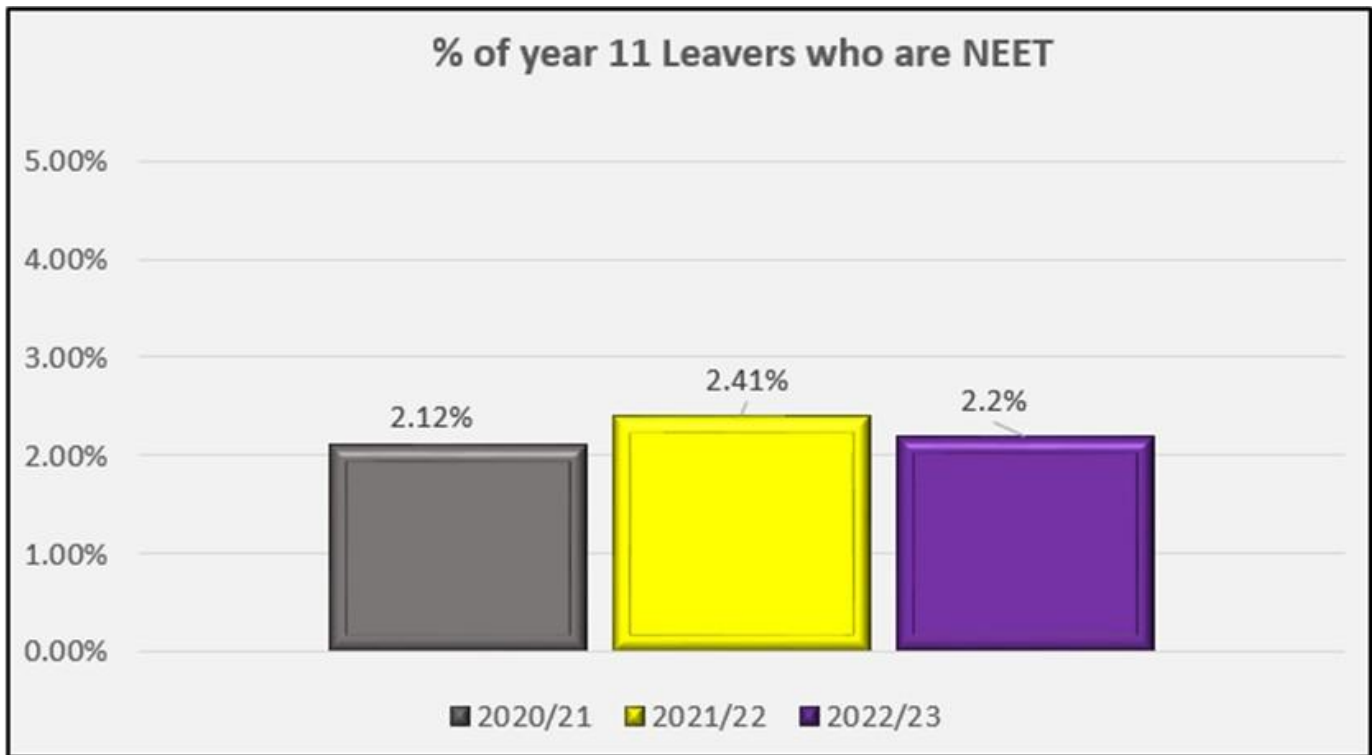
- ◆ We continued with our work to support young people leaving fulltime education to help them move on to further training or education or work.
- ◆ We are currently implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET) across the post 16 sector and are working collaboratively with partners to increase the number of young people with ALN who are accessing education, training or employment post 16. A draft post 16 protocol has been developed which includes an enhanced transition framework (MATSM - Multiagency Transition Screening Meetings). This has been successfully piloted in Llangatwg Comprehensive School and will be rolled out to all secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot.

The number of young people who present as not in education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18 has risen from 3.6% in 2021-2022 to 4.3% in 2022-2023.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:



# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life



- We have increased the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the council to young people (aged 16-24) from 19 in 2021-2022 to 28 in 2022-2023, of which 26 have finished their apprenticeship and achieved a qualification. We are currently working with Wildfox, Freeports and local businesses as part of the skills mapping exercise to ensure that work experience, volunteering, apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships are explored as a pathway into local industries for people in Neath Port Talbot.
- We continue our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation which includes working with young people, foster carers, our colleagues in Housing and continually reviewing our accommodation needs for young people.

The number of young people who transitioned from year 11 and were Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) totalling 35 his equated to 2.2% of Year 11 leavers and is our second lowest ever NEETs figure. This is also the closest we have ever been to the Welsh average which for 2022-23 is 2.1% and ranked 13th in Wales.

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Plan  
Measure:

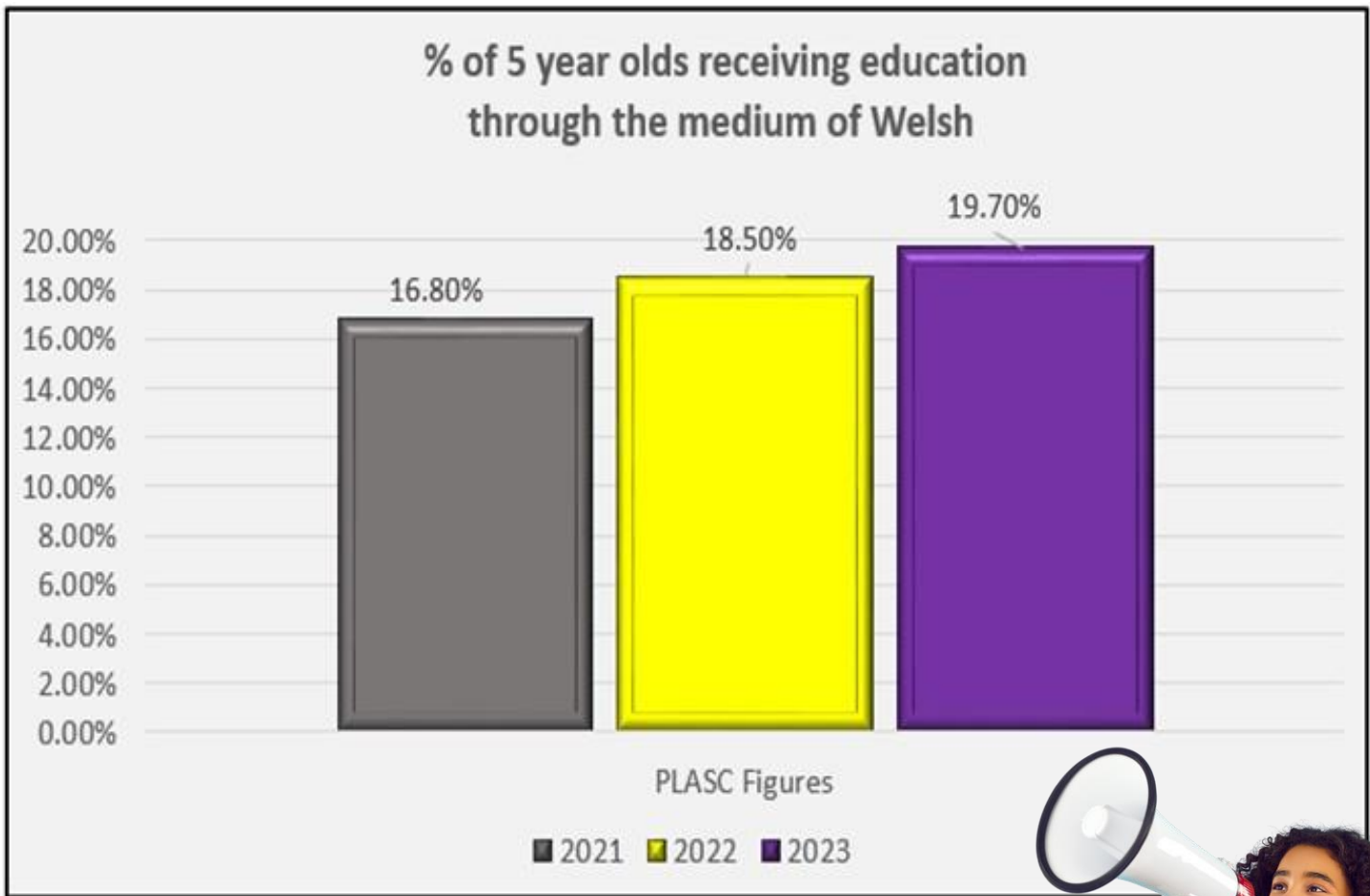


## Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

- The Children and Young People’s Leadership Group has been established with work underway to develop a Children and Young People’s Plan and Early Years Strategy so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, meet people’s needs and that our communities are child friendly.
- We continued to provide opportunities to enable all learners, families and carers to benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh. We implemented the final year of the previous Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) action plan and achieved targets.

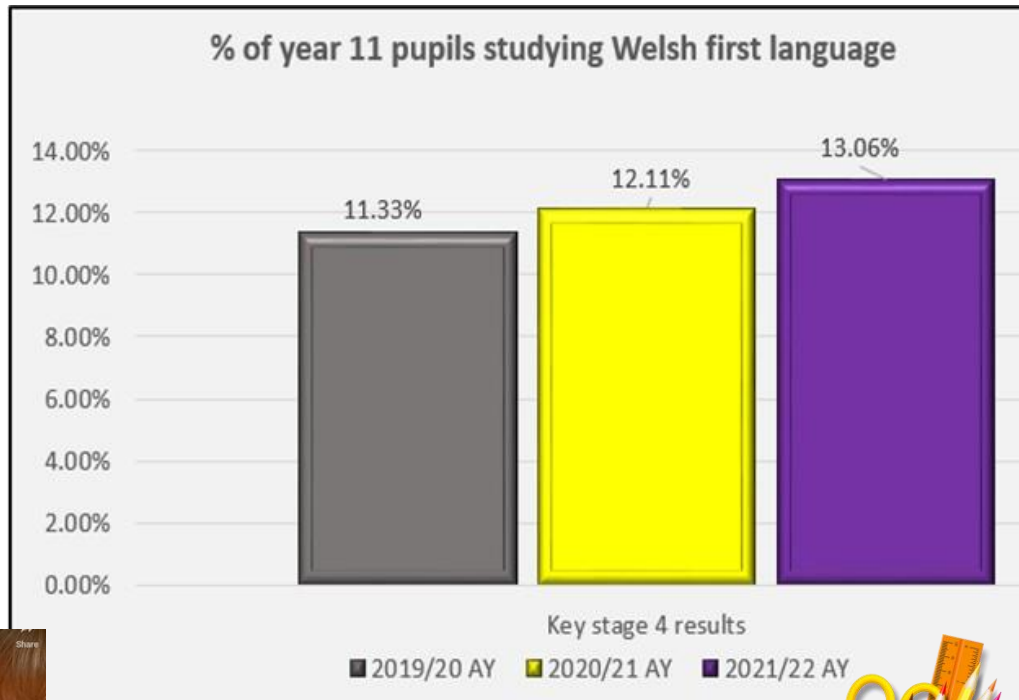
19.7% (287 pupils) of our 5 year olds are receiving education through medium of Welsh, which has increased from 18.5% (279 pupils), with 13.1% (208) of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language which has also increased from 12.1% (196 pupils).

**Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measures:**



## Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

- With the development and implementation of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) we will further strengthen our commitment to the Welsh Language, our traditions and culture. We have met our first year targets and opened the first Welsh-medium starter school Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles (see link below). The Plan details how we intend to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we will plan for future growth over the next 10 years (January 2022 - January 2032).
- We are working collaboratively with colleagues across Swansea Bay University Health Board and the FEI sector and are making good progress in reviewing our joint planning, commissioning and service delivery arrangements for children who have additional needs.



### Embracing Welsh Language for future generations



**Take a look at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles - Neath Abbey - YouTube**



The newly refurbished Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles is located in Neath Abbey has been developed as part of Neath Port Talbot Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Providing pupils with an exciting and motivating learning environment embracing the principles of the new curriculum for Wales, with the aim of promoting the Welsh language, wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

The exciting development reflects the council's vision for promoting and ensuring access to Welsh language learning for pupils in Neath Port Talbot. All children should benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh.

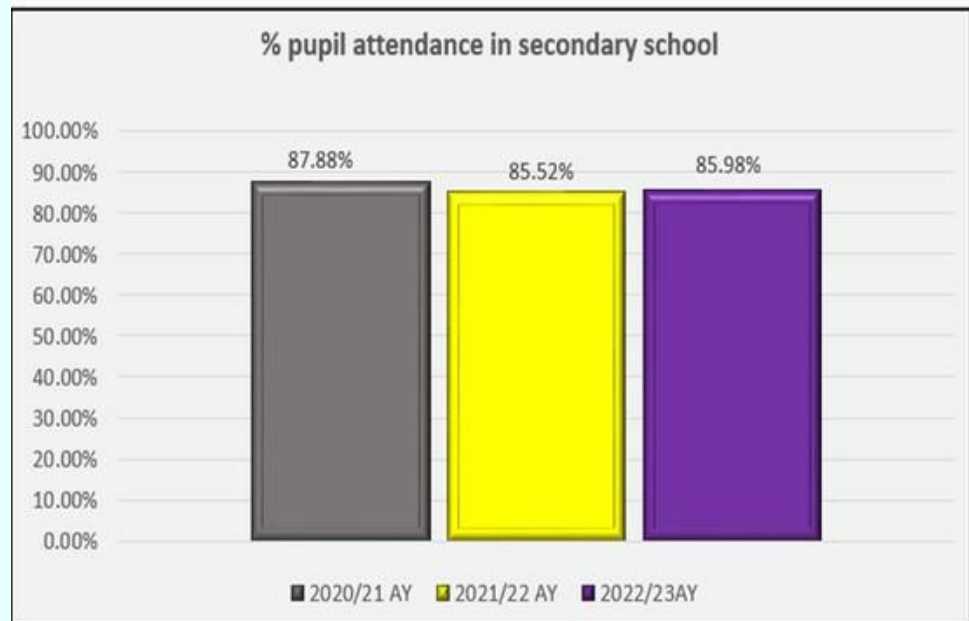
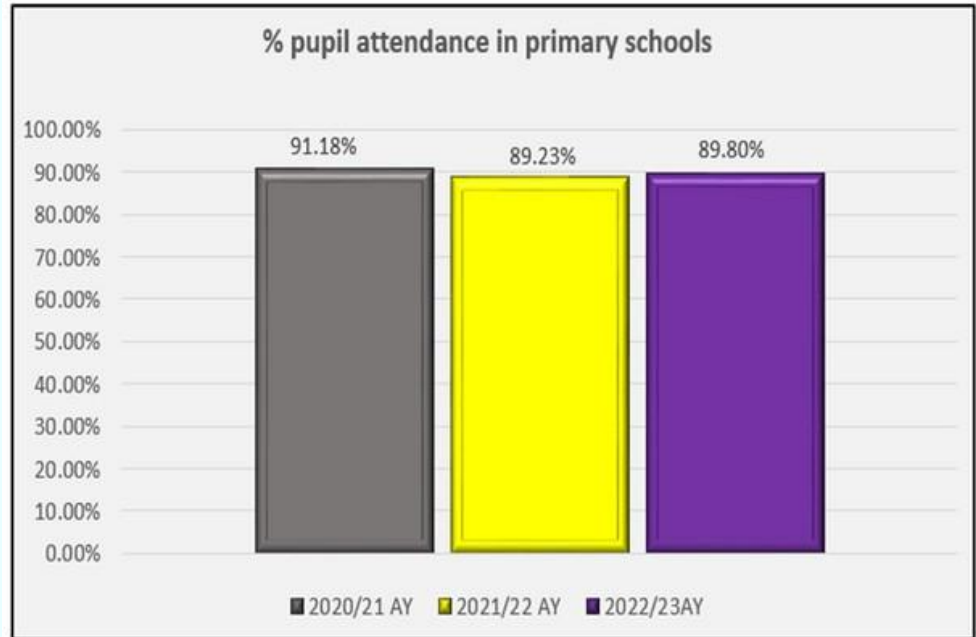
***"Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tregeles will provide high quality provision and support that will enable all learners, their families and the wider community to benefit from access to Welsh-medium education and experiences."***

## Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

### More work to do:

There were 4 actions assessed as 'just off' track for 2022-2023, these were:

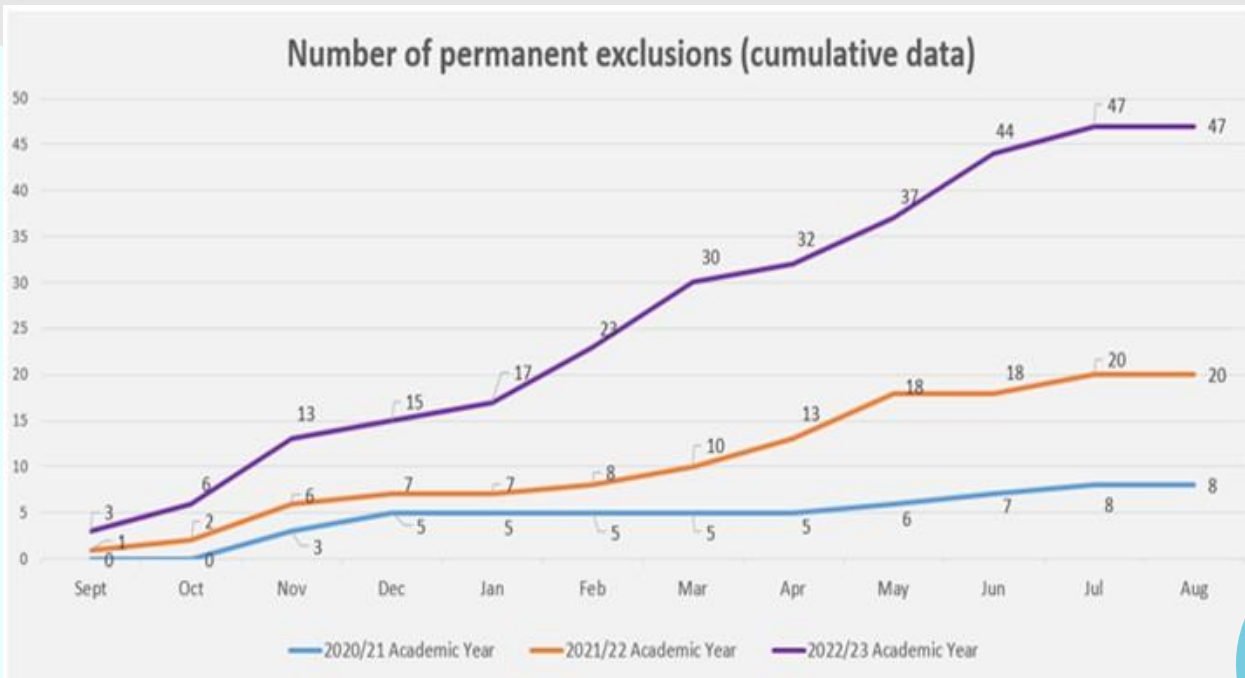
- Provisional attendance data for the 2022-2023 academic year shows attendance figures have risen on the previous year by around half a percent and final figures will be published in the coming months, however, the increase is not at a rate comparable with other local authorities around Wales who have achieved a higher increase. It has also been noted that there is a significant attendance gap between pupils who are categorised as eligible for free school meals and non-free school meals, and again between pupils designated as having Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and those non- SEN/ALN.



## Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

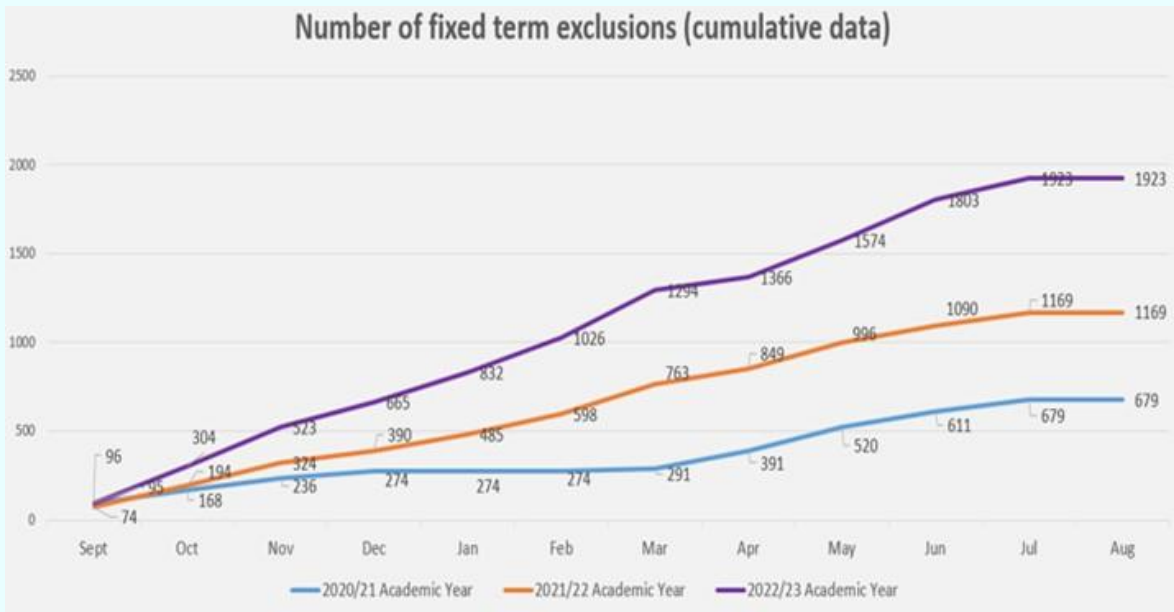
### More work to do:

We have seen the number of pupils excluded from school rise by 235 pupils to 760 pupils in the 2022-23 academic year, taking the total exclusion figure to 3.62% from 2.47% in 2021-2022. The number of exclusions has also risen sharply as shown below.



Linking Corporate Plan Measure:

Linking Corporate Plan Measures:



The number of pupils not within the education system data is not available at the moment

% of children, young people and families accessing early intervention support - data is not available at the moment.



# Well-being Objective 1 - Best Start in Life

### More work to do:

Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) panel has reported an increase in complexity of need in referrals placing additional pressures on early intervention services to meet these needs. In addition, council monitoring information highlights that non-engagement with services by children and families is an area of concern. As a result, the council is undertaking a review of the EIP panel process to ensure early intervention and support is delivered effectively. This review will be used to inform and develop the work of the EIP and support services. The continued successful development of the EIP panel support service is a key priority for the service.

To ensure there is effective early intervention in place for our children, young people and families our Adult Community Learning team has worked with schools and provided Family Learning and progression routes in 9 schools. Sessions have been particularly successful where parents have progressed onto a range of courses e.g. Food Safety, Childcare, Child Psychology, Classroom Welsh, and Cooking on a budget, ADHD, Autism Awareness. All parents engaged in current sessions have completed at least one Literacy/Numeracy accredited course last term. In addition, a programme of song and rhyme sessions at all eight council libraries has provided opportunities for young children and their families to develop literacy skills together, as well as providing the children with an opportunity to develop social interaction and communication skills.

There is more work required to develop systems to support young carers identified in schools and develop a young carer's forum. The current demand for Young Carers Group has exceeded our venue and staffing capacities resulting in the offer being once a fortnight rather than weekly. In addition, transport to Young Carers Group provision is a barrier and there is currently insufficient funding to meet the demand. However some of our positive progress during 2022-23 included:

- ↳ Awareness raising sessions to enable us to identify potential young carers delivered to 20 primary schools where 629 young people attended and 6 secondary schools where 562 young people attended. Sessions have also been delivered to targeted groups including LGBTQ+, Speech & Language Club and Youth Clubs where 84 young people attended. In total Young Carers Awareness sessions were delivered to 1,275 young people during this period.
- ↳ We currently have a very successful and enjoyable provision which the Young Carers and families really appreciate. 211 young people were referred to the Young Carers provision and 36 weekly group sessions were delivered with an average attendance of 15 young carers a night. 94 of these Young Carers needed support with their transport to access the provision.
- ↳ Young Carers are represented on the Youth Council; Young Carers are allocated 2 designated seats on the Youth Council. We have continued to implement the Young Carers ID card. 22 Young Carers were part of the ID Card Pilot scheme during this period.



# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

We were on track in delivering what we had planned to do for 2022-23 for this well-being objective. Of the 15 key actions we had planned to deliver during the year, we were 'on track' with 14 and 1 was 'just off' track.

**£139,000** provided to **39 organisations** through the **Food Poverty Grant**

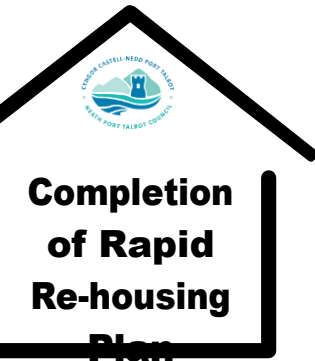
Welsh Government Warm Spaces fund help provide **32 Warm Spaces** within communities which had **5,819 attendances**



**88** businesses registered with **29** NPT Buy Local



**efc employers for carers** has been implemented across the council



98% of households had access to the internet with download speeds of at least 30Mbit



Increased Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs) from 6 to 14, who supported 1,127 people and helped set up 13 new community groups.



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



Reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents

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

**Fly tipping incidents have reduced over last 2 years from 1,566 to 886**



**1,849** children received community safety; domestic abuse & cyber-crime lessons through our Crucial Crew.

Number of carers needs assessments undertaken increased from 167 in 2021-22 to 225 in 2022-23



Supported individuals either from **jobless households** or who have a **long term health condition / disability**

**2,810** micro-enterprises in 2022 compared to 2,750 in 2021

**120** high risk domestic abuse victims had **extra support and their homes were made safer/ more secure**



## 2022-2023 Reflection

# Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

Ensuring our communities are thriving and sustainable means people live healthy, long and good lives in communities where people get along together and support one another.

### Why is this important?

Covid-19 had an adverse impact on many people with more people becoming lonely and isolated. There has been a disproportionate impact on young people, women and people from BME backgrounds; there were 144,000 people living in NPT in 2021.

This is expected to grow to 147,000 by the mid-2030s. The population is ageing – the number of people retired is growing but the number of young people is declining. People are living for longer and living healthier lives but life expectancy and health life expectancy is below the rest of Wales and the gap between those who are best and worst off is significant. GVA (Gross Value Added) is lower than the Welsh average. 27% of children are eligible for free school meals; There are estimated to be over 20,000 unpaid carers in the county borough. There is a need for more affordable housing of a good quality; and we expect to see a 35% increase in those aged 65+ who will be living alone by 2035.

### Summary Progress during 2022-2023

Overall we are on track in delivering this well-being objective for 2022-2023. Covid-19 has had an immense impact on the social care system, including the increasing demand on domiciliary care to enable individuals to remain in their own homes rather than enter a care home and providers facing recruitment challenges to meet that increasing demand. As at March 2023, the council supported 694 people through the delivery of 9,315 hours of domiciliary care per week, this figure includes both externally commissioned provision and in-house provision (Community Wellbeing Team - CWT).

It is likely that this demand will continue to increase over the coming years to support our ageing population. Some of the achievements during 2022-23 include increasing the number of local area coordinators from 6 to 14. These local area coordinators supported 1,127 people and helped set up 13 new community groups. As a council we administered over £9m of UK and Welsh Government funding via the Fuel Support Scheme, Unpaid Carers Grant and Self-Isolation Scheme; we increased the number of carers needs assessments undertaken from 167 in 2021-22 to 225 in 2022-23.



## 2022-2023 Reflection

# Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

To allow us to transform homelessness services and to meet Welsh Government's requirements as highlighted in the "Ending Homelessness – High Level Action Plan 2021-26" our Rapid Rehousing Plan has been developed and published during the year, moving away from the use of temporary accommodation. The Plan takes into account the current position of homelessness across the county borough and sets a whole system transformation, the steps required in line with Welsh Government's expectations and covers a transition period of five years to enable the desired outcomes to be achieved.

Whilst we have strengthened our housing and homelessness arrangements which included leasing 39 units of interim accommodation for homeless households (an increase on the 27 units we made available in 2021-22), the percentage of households prevented from becoming homeless has reduced. Also to note the percentage of people (16+) living in households in material deprivation has increased in the borough and across Wales. (Source of data is Stats Wales - (Welsh Government)).

The council's Cabinet approved extra funding of £4.25m to "clean up and green up' towns, valleys and villages and the cleanliness of our streets has improved with fewer fly tipping incidents; there were fewer anti-social behaviour incidents during the year, 120 high risk domestic abuse victims had extra support and their homes were made safer/ more secure (however, the number of high risk domestic abuse incidents increased further during 2022-23) and the Paws on Patrol scheme continues to go from strength to strength with 1,442 members now signed up . In addition to the work undertaken to invest in our schools over recent years, during 2022-2023 we have welcomed a variety of capital investment within our communities and exciting opportunities into the county borough as a whole, and have seen a number of visions come into fruition.

We will further progress our work to develop a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer.

### **Progress on our 2022- 2023 Corporate Plan Actions and Measures:**

- Of the 15 key actions we had detailed in the Corporate Plan to deliver during 2022-2023, we were on track with 14 and 1 was 'just off' track. Our Corporate Plan measures have been linked to the relevant actions below.
- We developed our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (and mapping community vulnerabilities) and this information will provide a foundation for identifying community needs and developing interventions to address those needs effectively.



## 2022-2023 Reflection

# Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

- We continued to work with the community and other partners to identify opportunities for additional informal care and support networks to be developed. Some of this work included:
  - ↳ During 2022-23 the Prevention and Early Intervention Service had 26 approved volunteers with 21 providing support to individuals referred to Adult Social Services.
  - ↳ Implementation of a befriending service as part of Adult Social Care's Prevention and Early Intervention offer. This is the first volunteering provision established within Adult Social Care and follows on from the success of the Safe and Well Scheme during the pandemic.
  - ↳ Unpaid carers are an invaluable asset, and in recognition of this a dedicated team has been established to enable focused work to be undertaken to explore existing service approaches and enhance operational relationships between services, unpaid carers and commissioned providers.
  - ↳ An internal review into unpaid carer processes and procedures has commenced and is planned to be completed by late 2023.
  - ↳ We increased the number of carers needs assessments (unpaid or paid carers) undertaken from 167 in 2021-22 to 225 in 2022-23.
  - ↳ 'Employers for Carers', a Carers' Trust initiative has been implemented across the council, to ensure staff that who provide unpaid care for others are recognised and supported within the workplace.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measures:

National Survey for Wales data shows that 30% of people surveyed in Neath Port Talbot volunteer. This is a 1% increase on the previous year and above the All Wales figure of 29% for 2022-2023.

National Survey for Wales data shows that 17% of people surveyed in Neath Port Talbot feel lonely. This is one of the highest percentages in Wales and above the All Wales figure of 13%.



We had included five other National Survey for Wales measures in our 2022-27 Corporate Plan to assess our progress, however these were not surveyed during 2022-2023.

## Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measures:

- We increased the number of Local Area Coordinators (LAC) from 6 to 14 to support the community. Local Area Coordinators work with residents to make links to local support networks to improve well-being and reduce demand on care and health services. This increase means we can provide support across the borough as opposed to just in certain areas and this has brought greater consistency in the way we work. During 2022-23 the LAC service had 1,127 access their service, all would have received support with approximately 500 people receiving one to one support at any one time.
- We mapped and identified that there are 107 groups that are used as community hubs across NPT and we are in the process of creating a digital map of these hubs. During 2022-23, 13 new community groups have been set up with support from our Local Area Coordinators.
- Collaboration with Neath CVS (Council for Voluntary Services) and community and voluntary groups is ongoing, with the establishment of three forums facilitated by NPT CVS across the Primary Care Clusters. This work will help increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward.
- Funding to communities was provided through the provision of several grant schemes to help with the cost of living which included:
  - ↳ 39 organisations supported through the Food Poverty Grant which amounted to £139,000.
  - ↳ Welsh Government Warm Spaces Fund helped provide 32 Warm Spaces within communities which had 5,819 attendances, where people could congregate to take pressure off their own household energy costs. The council made many of its own premises available including libraries, and theatres.
  - ↳ We administered over £9m of UK and Welsh Government funding via Fuel Support Scheme, Unpaid Carers Grant and Self-Isolation Scheme.
  - ↳ A partnership with Warm Wales was initiated to deliver the council's £2m initiative identified to support the most impacted by the energy crisis.

National Survey for Wales data shows that 48% of people surveyed in Neath Port Talbot had an adult mental well-being score of 48, which is the same as our score for 2021-2022. Local Authority scores range from 46 – 50 with 15 of the 22 local authorities having scores of 48 or 49.

% of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area was not measured as part of the 2022-23 National Survey for Wales.

108 of our buildings or assets (e.g. bowling greens) are leased to Voluntary Sector groups and 17 to Town & Community Councils

The percentage of people (16+) living in households in material deprivation has increased from 14% in 2021-2022 to 21% in 2022-2023. The all Wales rate has increased from 11% to 16%. Source of data is Stats Wales (Welsh Government).

No up to date information is available to measure the people living in household income poverty relative to the Welsh median and no data is available to measure the gap in employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the overall employment rate. However, during 2022-23 our NPT employability team supported 137 individuals either from jobless households or who had a long term health condition /disability into employment.

## 2022-2023 Reflection

# Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

- Prevention and Early Intervention Service had 26 approved volunteers with 21 providing support to individuals referred to Adult Social Services.
- In July 2022, Cabinet approved extra funding of £4.25m to “clean up and green up” towns, valleys and villages. During 2022-23, 12 new operational posts were created to undertake works such as pathway edging, overgrowth clearance, additional cleansing etc. The Neighbourhood Services team delivered significant improvement across the borough. A Keep Wales Tidy survey found that 95.7% (All Wales performance is comparable at 96%) of our streets were clean in 2022-23 compared to 92.85% in 2021-22.



**£4.25 million approved to “clean up and green up” Neath Port Talbot.**

**95.7%** of our streets were clean in 2022-23 compared to 92.85% in 2021-22.

In December 2022 a £4.2m programme of additional works to ‘clean-up and green up’ was approved to make improvements to towns, valleys and villages.

The programme included £200,000 to be spent on improvements at public toilets, £445,000 on cleanliness (involving new electric street vacuums and sweepers), £142,000 on improved grass mowing, £800,000 on improved playgrounds and green spaces and £300,000 on improved bus shelters. A further £344,000 for footbridge maintenance, £201,000 on improved waste services (including extra vehicles), just over £1m will go on improved highways (jet patching of rural lanes, extra surfacing in the valleys and pothole machinery) and £150,000 on additional tree management work.

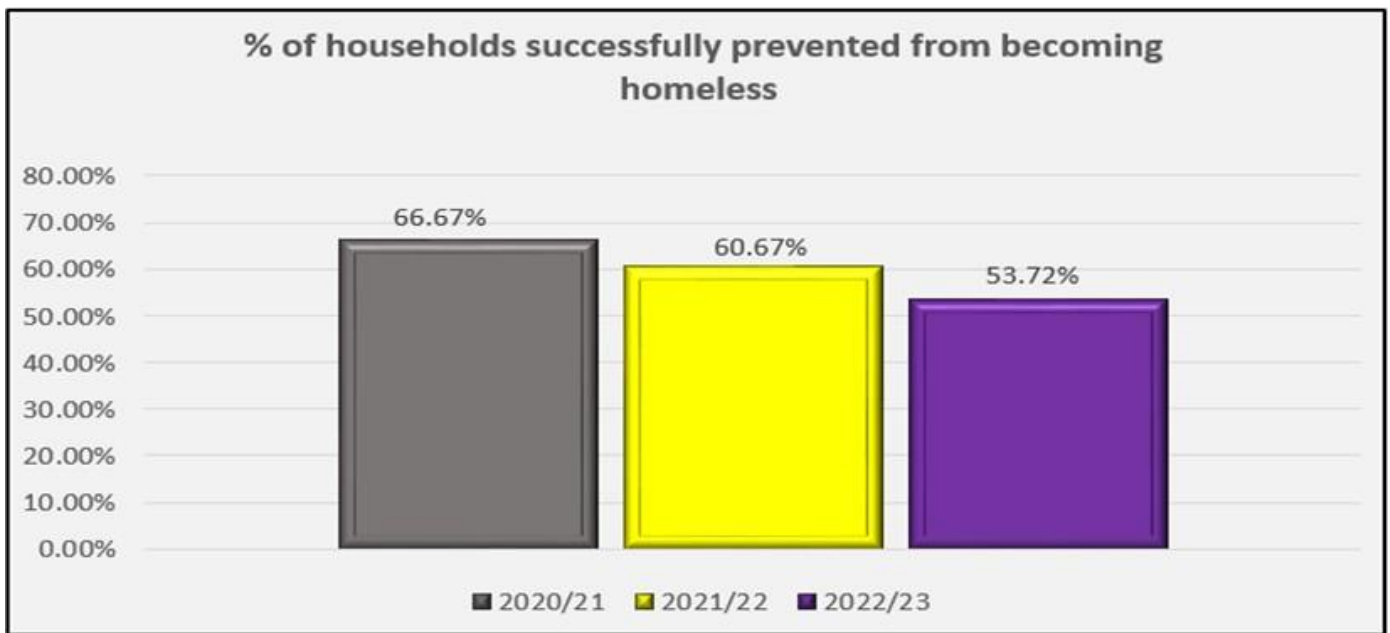
£200,000 was budgeted for improvements at Gnoll Country Park (rebuild/re-design of toilets, electricity hook-up and an adventure park), £50,000 for improved countryside structures and £290,000 for ad-hoc improvements at the Aberavon Seafront (including the sunken gardens), Neath Town Centre (planters and storage), repair/replacement of town and valley street signs, the Talbot Memorial Park and Victoria Gardens bus station.

The money, from additional Welsh Government funding and the council's approved spending programme, allowed this extensive clean up and green up programme to support one of the earliest priorities of council's Rainbow Coalition - to improve the “public realm”. This is a significant step forward in achieving the aim of improving the environment for communities and neighbourhoods across Neath Port Talbot, with residents telling us they want safe, clean and attractive neighbourhoods.

During 2022-23, 12 new operational posts were created to undertake works such as pathway edging, overgrowth clearance, additional cleansing etc., with the Neighbourhood Services team delivered significant improvement across the borough.

## Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

- We strengthened our Housing Strategy function and capacity and appointed an interim Head of Housing and Communities.
- We have worked to strengthen the council's response to homelessness and housing, completed, approved and began to implement the new Rapid Rehousing Plan. Improvements from these changes are expected to be realised from 2023-24.



Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless for 2022-23 was 53.72%, which was lower than previous year's performance and below our target (both at 60%).

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measures:



## Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

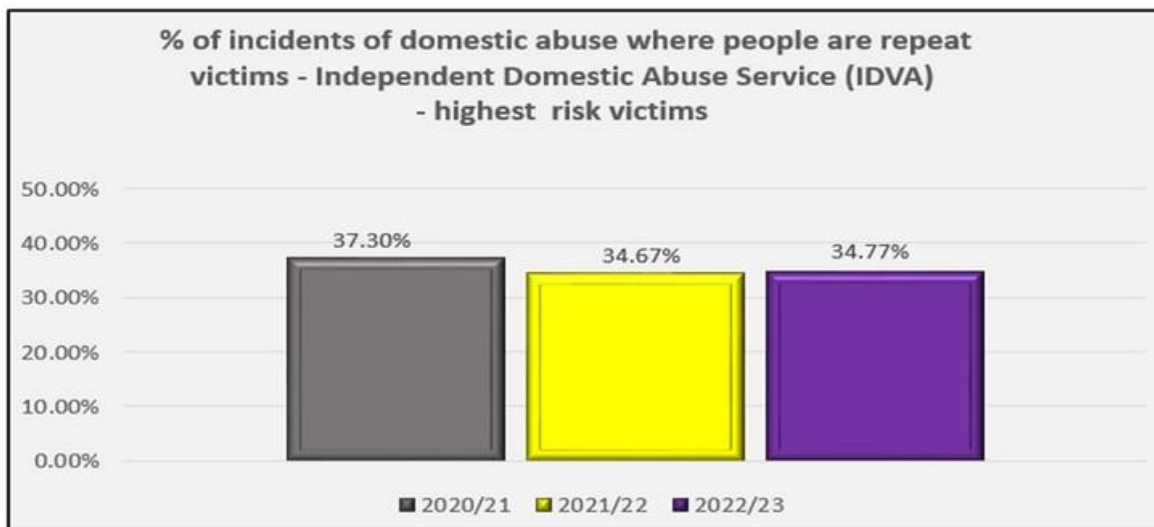
Linking Corporate Plan Measures:

- We continued to work through our Community Safety Partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs which includes responding to non-fatal overdoses by providing rapid interventions and support, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. This work included :

We saw a reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported across the county borough, down from 3,957 (police data) in 2021-22 to 2,278 in 2022-23. The reduction is mainly due to the Covid breaches data reported in 2021-22. People subject to the anti-social behaviour warning process also reduced from 11 in 2021-22 to 6 in 2022-23.

- ↳ Resetting and agreeing new service priorities for 2023-24;
  - ↳ 1,849 children received age-appropriate community safety lessons; domestic abuse, cyber-crime through our Crucial Crew work;
  - ↳ The Paws on Patrol Scheme continues to go from strength to strength. There are now 1442 members signed up, 163 new members in 2022-23. This scheme provides a number of benefits such as a 'neighbourhood watch' type of initiative and also brings together the community, both partners and residents, in working towards making our communities a safer place to live;

The percentage of incidents of domestic abuse where the people are repeat victims for 2022-23 is broadly as 2021-22 and better than 2020-21, albeit above our target of 31%. The increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents has risen since the pandemic, which has affected the figures. We will continue to support the rising cases of referrals. Despite the increase in cases being referred, engagement rates with positive outcomes stands at 68%. In addition, we were successful in a funding bid which enabled us to support 120 high risk domestic abuse victims to make their properties safer/more secure and offered holistic support.



- We began to take actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter and commissioned the preparation of a regeneration strategy for the physical regeneration of the primary towns and some of the secondary and tertiary settlements of NPT. The strategy will focus on creating quality and improved public spaces, strengthening the connections between people and their places and improve the places they live, work and play.



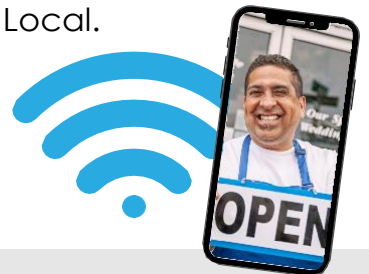
# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 2 - All Communities are Thriving & Sustainable

- The implementation of the Renting Homes Act saw many landlords leave the local market due to increased responsibilities on landlords. Affordability in the current climate has also been an issue. However, we have worked closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and private landlords to increase the number of interim and move on accommodation units. During 2022-23 we leased 39 units of interim accommodation for homeless households, this is an increase on the 27 units we made available in 2021-22. In addition, several new developments are at various stages of planning and construction to deliver additional interim and move on units.
- We have commissioned consultants to prepare a report to highlight ways in which the Council can enhance and develop local spend, while considering different procurement approaches such as the "Preston Model", Circular & Foundational Economy concepts to develop a tailored NPT Procurement Strategy to support local procurement and supply chain development. In addition, we secured funding to employ a Social Value Policy Officer to support the development of activities that support local job creation, upskilling of residents and promotion of employment opportunities to achieve a better quality of life and support economic growth. There are 298 businesses registered with NPT Buy Local.

### Linking Corporate Plan Measures:

98% of households had access to the internet with download speeds of at least 30Mbit per second in 2022-23.



In 2022 the ratio of enterprises to local units in NPT increased from 0.79 in 2021 to 0.80 (i.e. 80% of businesses operated from a single premises and 20% from more than one) in 2022. This means that the number businesses operating from more than one unit has fallen slightly.

There were 2,810 micro enterprises in Neath Port Talbot in 2022 compared to 2,750 in 2021. Whilst an increase, the overall proportion of micro businesses compared to all businesses has reduced slightly, by around a half a percent. At 87.8%, micro enterprises make up the majority of all businesses and are an important contributor to the economy. The slight increase in the number of businesses employing 10 is positive, indicating either business growth, or the attraction of larger start-ups or investors to NPT.

### More to do:

- One of our 2022-23 actions hadn't progressed as planned. A working group has been established to develop a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer, which is supported by NPT CVS with the aim of achieving a standardised approach to volunteer management across services. However, progress during 2022-23 stalled slightly, and the work has been rolled forward to 2023-24.



# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

Overall, progress has been made in delivering on activities impacting our environment, culture and heritage, with funding for a number of significant projects being approved as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. From a total of 18 actions, 15 actions are 'on track' with 3 'just off track'.



People who say they can speak Welsh (age 3 and over) has increased from 22.8% to 23.4%

**£2 million investment** in historic environmental assets including Margam Castle and Neath Abbey Ironworks



Development of the Heritage Strategy, Culture Strategy and Destination Management Plan



287 hectares and 30 km of council owned land managed for biodiversity, an increase of 126 hectares and 7km

94

Volunteers working on a variety of Neath Port Talbot Council owned nature sites.



Less residual waste ('black bag' waste) generated per person.

**65%** of people across NPT attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities 3 or more times a week

% of people aged 16+ participating in sporting activities 3 or more times a week **has risen to 38%** and adults active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week **has risen to 62%**

28 organisations supported via Third Sector Grants totalling **£528,760**

Shared Prosperity funding secured to deliver **£2.5million Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events**



**884** hectares of council owned land used for green space or local nature reserves, an increase of **64** hectares

A '**bee friendly**' approach to managing our verges and grasslands was adopted by the council



**£17,755,359**

Secured via UK Government's Levelling Up Fund for the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attraction.

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

### Why is this important?

Heritage is integral to our culture, people's sense of identity and sense of belonging which in turn impacts on people's health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Heritage and culture also contributes to the economy, supporting paid employment, helping to attract inward investment and generating value through voluntary action – part of our wider place shaping agenda. The Welsh language is a very important part of our heritage and culture. We support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambition to achieve a million people able to enjoy speaking Welsh by 2050. The importance of protecting our natural environment has, of course, never been so prominent.

The Welsh Government officially declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and a Nature Emergency in 2021, recognising the significance of these two interrelated challenges and the urgency in tackling them. The natural environment is vital to our communities and provides us with all our basic needs. It gives us all a better quality of life and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and Wales' natural beauty and heritage, giving people the choice to become more physically active. People come from far and wide to experience our environment and it is intrinsically linked with Welsh culture and language. While the area has many strengths, it also experiences relatively high levels of poverty, deprivation, ill-health and disability.

There is a strong focus on encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to adopt active lifestyles to improve physical and emotional wellbeing. There is also a need to grow more quality jobs in the local leisure and tourism industry and to continue the long tradition of fostering local talent to achieve success as elite athletes and to perform on the world stage.

### Summary Progress during 2022-23

Overall we, are on track in delivering this well-being objective for 2022-2023. Good progress has been made in delivering on activities impacting our environment, culture and heritage, with funding for a number of significant projects being approved as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

During 2022-2023 we saw the initial development stages and consultations for our key culture and heritage strategies and destination management plan. These documents will provide a blue-print for the future on how we want to develop and nurture our county to celebrate our culture and heritage and will allow us to apply for funding, attract investment and resources.

Other key achievements during the year included the approval of Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to initiate the Heritage, Culture and Tourism Fund, which can be accessed by public, private and voluntary sector partners, to deliver the priority heritage, culture and tourism projects and initiatives across the county. We have also seen an increase in visitor numbers to the borough in the last two years and numbers are now just below pre-pandemic levels with a 1.9% increase on pre-pandemic levels of staying visitors.

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

In September 2022, the council declared a climate emergency and called upon the UK Government to do the same. In doing so, we acknowledged the effects of climate change that can already be seen throughout the world, with more intense and frequent hurricanes and wildfires, severe flash flooding and sobering droughts.

In declaring the climate change emergency we will look to articulate further the wider actions we need to take to ensure Neath Port Talbot becomes carbon neutral by 2030. These actions will be included within the review of our Corporate Plan for 2024 onwards.



The council acknowledged the effects of climate change can already be seen throughout the world. The doorstep effect of climate change are detrimental to the residents of Neath Port Talbot and its time we demand change. Not just for our generation but for our children and grandchildren and all those who follow. The clock is ticking on the time for fossil fuels so let us not be those fools who rest on the inactions of others but rather chart and enhance a renewable course for Neath Port Talbot.

At the start of 2023 the new leisure complex opened in the heart of Neath Town Centre. Featuring a six-lane 25m swimming pool with associated learner pool, two group exercise studios, a 100-station gym, a health suite, retail floor space, child care facilities a café and a modern library. The library hosts 16 public computers, Wi-Fi throughout including Wi-Fi printing, a dedicated children's library, a family history research area and local studies collection, two meeting rooms and self-service kiosks. The build is designed to have a major beneficial impact on the town centre, increasing sustainability, vitality and footfall and providing a significant boost for health and wellbeing.

Physical activity related measures are showing positive results comparing to the rest of Wales and in relation to Welsh language, more people say they can speak Welsh. Further work will take place this year on the actions where we are 'just off track'. In the main these actions are to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture and actions around climate change awareness and our action planning for decarbonisation.

Whilst the 64% target for waste reused, recycled or composted has been achieved for 2022-23, performance of 64.73% is lower than the previous year. A Waste Strategy action plan was adopted in April 2023 with the aim of achieving 70% recycling target by 2024/25.

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

### Progress on our 2022- 2023 Corporate Plan Actions and Measures:

Of the 18 key actions we had detailed in the Corporate Plan to deliver during 2022-2023, we were on track with 15 and 3 were 'just off' track. Our Corporate Plan measures have been linked to the relevant actions below:

- The council's Third Sector Grant fund supported 28 organisations during 2022-2023 totalling £528,760. Many of the activities being run by voluntary organisations and community groups carried on with activities that were implemented during the pandemic. During the year the window for 2023-2024 funding opened with an unprecedented amount of applications being received, the total amount approved for funding was £692,610, which will support 43 organisations during 2023-2024.
- We were proud to host the Mayor's Citizens Awards in Margam Orangerie, celebrating the success of the work of volunteers and community groups, and the achievements of those making a difference across NPT. Some of the winners of those awards included:
  - The South Wales Miners Museum – winner of the Environment & Heritage Award
  - Carl Bradley's 'Boot Room' – winner of the Community Champion's award
  - Denise Francis & Afan Arts – winners of the Performing Arts Award
  - Jeremy Dummer, Cwrt Herbert Colts u15 Football Team – winner of the Volunteer of the Year award
- Over the course of the year, volunteer numbers increased to 94 working on a variety of council owned nature sites across Neath Port Talbot through the Connecting GI and Lost Peatlands project and projects at Craig Gwaldys Country Park. The Lost Peatlands project has been running outdoor learning sessions enabling local children to learn about and experience their local environment, learn about peatlands and the important wildlife in the area. In addition, family outdoor health and wellbeing sessions have been provided encouraging local families to get out into their environment and to encourage confidence in natural play. Projects at Craig Gwaldys have also supported the local schools to use the Park for outdoor learning.
- The council's large workforce plays a huge part in being ambassadors for the county borough contributing to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture. As part of workforce development and staff induction our training and development team have produced a training booklet and eLearning package.



# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

- A Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was developed (approved July 2023).

The strategy, which has been prepared following a county wide consultation and close working with partner organisations, will further develop three key strategic themes of increasing the number of Welsh speakers, increasing the use of Welsh and creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context.

The number of people who say they can speak Welsh (age 3 and over) in Neath Port Talbot has increased from 22.8% (31,400 people) to 23.4% (32,300) with 12% of people saying they speak Welsh daily increasing from 10.1%.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

- To ensure our work and development of the county borough takes into account our future generations we have a duty to carry out impact assessments when undertaking policy and service change. During 2022-2023, 164 officers and 46 Cabinet and Scrutiny members undertook training.
- We provided opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture which included:

31 school sessions and 31 community outreach sessions have been delivered providing opportunities to learn more about the history and heritage of the borough including object handling sessions and site visits / tours for adults and children (including talks, workshops, library & club sessions). The school sessions have been informed by the NPT conceptual model for the curriculum which has the 'four purposes' at the centre and which will require teachers to teach differently; it gives greater flexibility to schools in designing their curriculum.

4 meetings of NPT Heritage Network have been held in addition to local history society's forums. We have been proud to launch NPT's Young Archaeologists' Club (children aged 8-16) which began in February with 13 sessions taking place to date, including organised trips and an archaeological excavation with the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.

- We continue to drive forward the implementation of the council's Biodiversity Plan - Nature-Wise. Training has been provided for Margam Park staff and engineers, along with members training on biodiversity. A 'bee friendly' approach to managing our verges and grasslands was adopted by the council and has allowed for an increase in wildflower species and insects such as bees which pollinate them in support of the council's Biodiversity Duty Plan and the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan. The bee-friendly scheme continues to deliver key outcomes for the Plan, with additional sites being added on an ongoing basis.

We increased the area of council owned land (or within council control) used as green space, local nature reserves from 820 hectares in 2021-22 to 884 hectares in 2022-23.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

- The NPT State of Nature report has been published and is available [online](#). The NPT Nature Partnership continues to meet every 2 months with the NPT4Nature sub-group, which was established early 2022, to engage community groups with opportunities to access expertise and discuss ideas.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

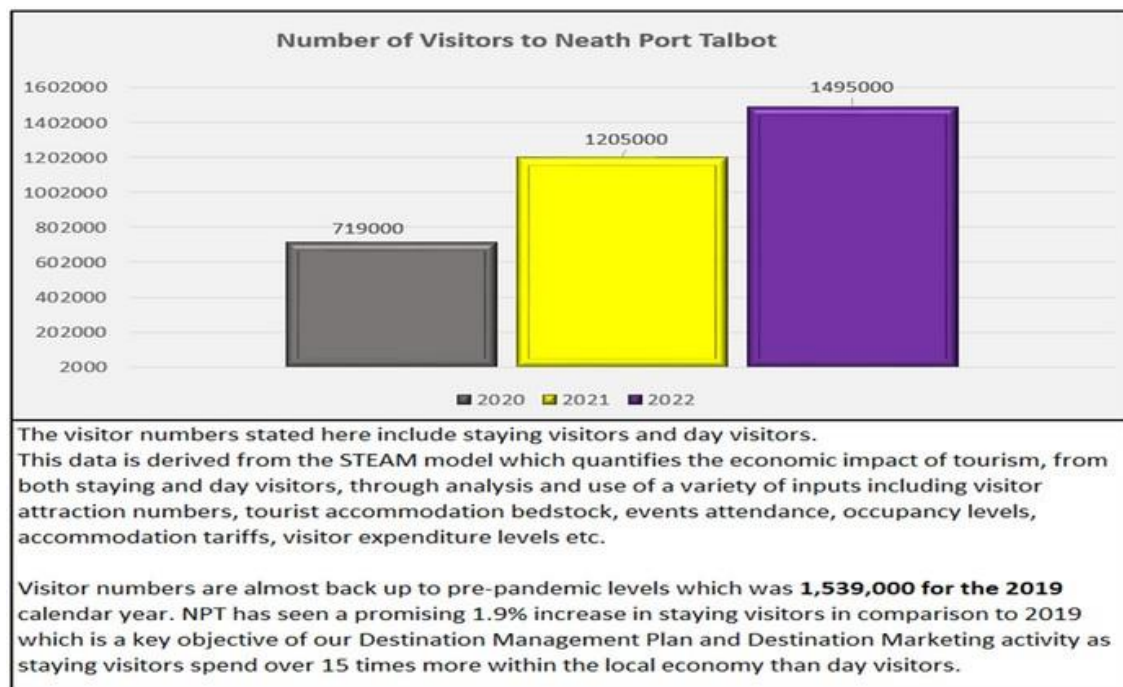
We increased the extent of council owned land (or within council control) that is protected through designation and/or is subject to appropriate management for biodiversity conservation as set out in an approved management plan from 160.8hectares and 23.12Km in 2021-22 to 287 hectares and 30Km in 2022-23.

- Strategic development progressed well to prepare the culture strategy, heritage strategy and destination management plan – approved by Cabinet in September 2023. The strategies are structured around a set of strategic themes and supported by a prioritised action plan of projects and initiatives which support the overall aims. The strategic direction is to create a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal chance to participate in the rich culture of the borough; be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous with a sense of belonging, citizenship and place. In addition, we are working in partnership with Natural Resources Wales to devise the Afan Forest Park masterplan which will guide investment in visitor infrastructure across the destination over the coming years.

2022-23 National Survey for Wales data shows that 65% of people surveyed in Neath Port Talbot attended or participated in arts, culture or heritage activities 3 or more times a week. This places NPT joint 9th of 22 councils across Wales.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Visitor numbers have increased significantly over the last two years and are now only slightly below pre-pandemic levels.



- We were on track in delivering our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment,
- Preparatory work continued following the decision to bring leisure services back under the direct management of the council, regarding the set-up of the project board.

# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

- We continued to seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment, culture and heritage which included:

- ↳ Grant funded projects delivered include Lost Peatlands Project – National Lottery Heritage Fund, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project – Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Fund (WG/EU), various nature projects including Stepping Stones – Welsh Government’s Local Places 4 Nature, Craig Gwladus – National Lottery Heritage Fund; National Nature Service case study, Coastal Communities Capacity funded by Welsh Government. Further funding has been secured from WG/NLHF for green infrastructure.
- ↳ £17.7 million secured via the UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to deliver the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor Project.
- ↳ Shared Prosperity funding secured to deliver £2.5million Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund between 2023 and 2025. Eligible for public, private and voluntary sectors to apply.
- ↳ £2 million has been invested in historic environmental assets including Margam Castle, Neath Abbey Iron Works, our Registered Parks and Gardens namely Jersey Park and Talbot Park.

**Linking Corporate Plan Measure:**

Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience



**Linking Corporate Plan Measures:**

2022-23 National Survey for Wales data shows that 62% of adults surveyed in Neath Port Talbot were active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week. This is an increase on the previous year and places NPT 6th across Wales.

2022-23 National Survey for Wales data shows that 38% of people (16+) surveyed in Neath Port Talbot participated in sporting activities 3 or more times a week. This is an increase on the previous year of 34% and places NPT joint 12th across Wales.

School Sport Survey, a national survey of pupils from years 3 to 11, found that 46% (2021-22 data) of pupils were participating in sport three or more times a week (hooked on sport) This is above the Welsh average of 39.5% and the highest rate of the 22 Welsh councils.

Up to date information relating to % students (aged 16-19) participating in at least three occasions of sport per week is not available.

The extent of council owned land (or land in council control) that is designated or meets the criteria for designation as a Site of Importance for Conservation (SINCs) has increased to 785ha from 782ha in 2021-2022.





## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations



- We started work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation as part of the culture strategy.
- We continued to strengthen planning and partnership arrangements and new partnerships are being developed so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture. Also, the NPT Destination Management Plan process has provided additional consultation to inform the Afan Forest Park Masterplan which is being produced in partnership with NRW (Natural Resources Wales).

£2m invested in protecting historic environment assets in 2022-23

Linking Corporate Plan Measure:

The percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions has improved from 64% in 2021-22 to 65% (259 of 399) in 2022-23

### More to do:

There were three actions assessed as 'just off' track for 2022-23, these were:

- Work is well underway in delivering a Strategic Framework for Communications and Marketing which will promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment and heritage.
- More work to do to increase the engagement of the workforce and citizens in the climate change agenda, however a variety of awareness events relating to the lost Peatlands project and the GI project include climate change messages.
- Work is ongoing to develop the council's Net zero 2030 Strategy & Action Plan (Costed Plan) which will support the refreshed DARE (Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy) Strategy. The DARE strategy is scheduled to be updated during 2023 with the following improvement programmes currently being developed and or updated:

- ↳ Solar PV Programme
- ↳ 21st Century Schools programme, net zero, new build programme
- ↳ Energy and Carbon Management Engagement Exercise – operational buildings
- ↳ Fleet – Electric transition programme

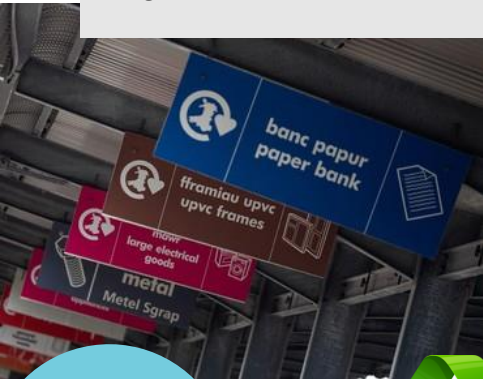
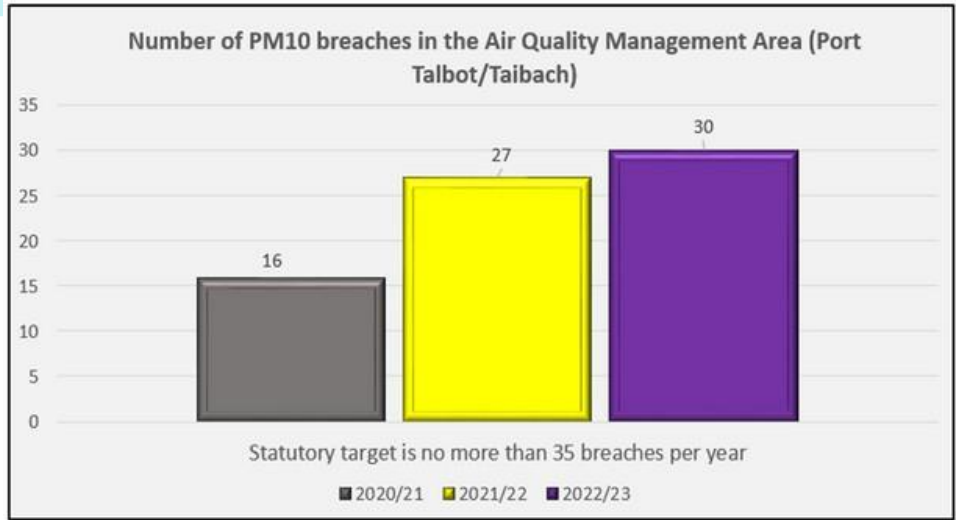
# 2022-2023 Reflection

## Well-being Objective 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture & Heritage Can Be Enjoyed By Future Generations

Linking Corporate Plan Measure:



Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot / Taibach) has slightly increased from 27 to 30 over the last 12 months, however this remains within the statutory target of 35.



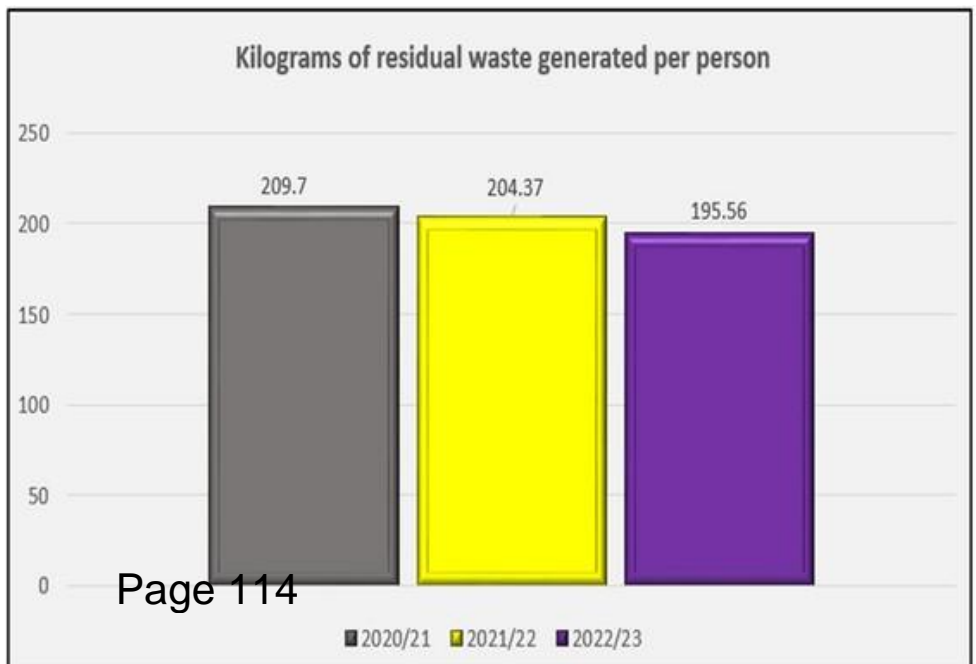
Linking Corporate Plan Measure:



Whilst the 64% target for waste reused, recycled or composted has been achieved for 2022-23, performance of 64.73% is lower than the previous year. A Waste Strategy action plan was adopted in April 2023 with the aim of achieving the 70% recycling target by 2024-25.



The amount of residual waste generated per person continues to decrease, for 2022-2023 the amount is currently weighted at 195.56 kilograms.



## Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

We were on track in delivering what we had planned to do for 2022-23 for this well-being objective. Significant progress has been achieved to deliver on the jobs and skills agenda over the last 12 months. Of the 22 key actions we had planned to deliver during the year, we were on track with 21 of the actions with one 'off track'.

### £32,660,854

Secured via UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply programme.



**309** jobs were created or safeguarded as a result of financial support by the local authority

Assisted **233** business start-up enquiries



Launched the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales

Supported over **800** individuals into training, work experience or employment



Increased council apprenticeships from **78 to 110**



Brought **97** long term problematic properties back into use

**515** Business enquires resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies



Worked with local employers to deliver **1,867** training weeks for **apprenticeship, traineeships & work experience** with companies



We have accessed £47.7m from the UK Government City Deal grant for the Supporting Innovation & Low Carbon Growth Programme & £15m for the Homes as Power Stations Programme.



Opened in Aberafan Shopping centre providing employment support, advice and training

# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

Within our Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 we set out how we plan to work with our partners to create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and support local people into those jobs.

### Why is this important?

The world of work is changing rapidly, disrupted by the explosion in digital technology advances and now by the response to the climate emergency; Covid-19 has caused an economic shock across the economy.

Businesses have been affected in very different ways. NPT has a distinctive industrial base, which includes the UK's largest steel producer and a wide range of SME manufacturers. NPT has a number of strategic employment sites and there are many opportunities for economic growth including new green jobs as industry and society decarbonizes. The area is well served by rail, road and the deep water harbour is a strategic asset. The local economy is reliant to a large extent on the activities of a small number of key industries. 88% of local businesses employ less than ten employees. Start-up rates and business survival rates are on a par with the Welsh average. There are significant numbers of people commuting into the county borough – possibly for the high quality of jobs. There are also significant number of people community out of the county borough for jobs of more modest value.

### Summary of Progress during 2022-23

Significant progress has been achieved to deliver on the jobs and skills agenda over the last 12 months. Overall we, are on track in delivering this well-being objective for 2022-2023.

As part of our continued commitment to the regeneration of our valley communities work on the £250m Welsh and UK Government funded Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) continued to progress during the year.

The 550 hectare facility, situated on the former Nant Helen opencast site and Onllwyn Washery in Neath Port Talbot, stretches into neighbouring Powys and will include two test loops, one being a 6.9km electrified high speed rolling stock track with a maximum speed of 177km/h and the other a 4km 65km/h test track. Other facilities at the site will include a dual-platform test environment, rolling stock storage and maintenance facilities, operations and control offices, staff accommodation and connections to the nearby main line.

This transformational project will create more quality jobs and is likely to be a catalyst for further new opportunities and investment into our communities. It will put this part of Wales on the map as the go-to country for UK and international train manufacturers, network operators, the wider industry and academics to research, test and develop the latest technologies in green transport for the global rail industry.

On the opposite side of the county borough, again placed in one of our valley communities already famous for its mountain bike trails, the Afan Valley will become home to the Wildfox Adventure Resort. The incredible investment plans for a £250m resort will include a 50-bed hotel, spa, restaurant, viewing area, 570 lodges and biking and walking trails.

It will be the first of a series of new Wildfox resorts across the UK and when completed, the resort could create up to 1,000 jobs in addition to the large number of jobs proposed

Page 146 During the construction phase.

# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

The 132 acres of land at Pen y Bryn, close to Croeserw and Cymmer will offer significant economic benefits to the area.

In addition to the above, our successes continued during 2022-23 some of which include continued progress with our City Deal projects; our employability programmes came together and supported 2,839 people and opened The Opportunity Hub in Aberafan Shopping Centre providing employment support, advice and training.

309 jobs were created and or safeguarded as a result of financial support by the council; we increased council apprenticeships from 78 to 110; we continued to support local businesses and business start-ups; brought 97 long term problematic properties back into use and we also secured funding of £1.25 Million from Welsh Government to further progress work to provide an Integrated Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station.

The one action which was 'off track' for 2022-23 related to working in partnership with Transport for Wales to explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot of the Fflecsi bus service in the upper Afan valley. This is currently on hold due to funding.

### **Progress on our 2022- 2023 Corporate Plan Actions and Measures:**

Of the 22 key actions we had detailed in the Corporate Plan to deliver during 2022-2023, we were on track with 21 and 1 was "off track".

Our Corporate Plan measures have been linked to the relevant actions below.

- We continued to support and work with developers to deliver the Global Centre of Rail Excellence and Wildfox Resort.
- We reviewed our training offer to help people adjust to the changing labour market and delivered a significant range of training support and opportunities. Individuals were also supported to develop CV's and prepare for job interviews. Some of the training opportunities included:

↳ Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus supported 132 people onto training;

↳ Workways+ arranged 143 training places;

↳ Our Economic Development team worked with employers to support individuals to complete 1,867 training weeks for apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience;

↳ Worked closely with Ukrainian families that have been housed in NPT and have provided training sessions to make links and build relationships.

↳ Skills and Training Unit was awarded Jobs Growth Wales+ contract. 124 learners commenced the programme (including 34 learners transferring from Traineeships). 79% (90) of these learners progressed into employment/further learning by 31st March 23;

↳ Adult Learning are working in partnership with support services to upskill individuals in preparation for employment and deliver our employability programme, currently working with 8 primary schools, engaging 58 parents /families.

# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

- ◆ The Learning and Training Development Team delivered and/or supported a range of training courses and 20,644 attendees' completed courses during 2022-23. Some outcomes are listed below.
  - We continued to develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and during 2022-23 there were 110 council employees on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes - an increase on the previous year figure of 78 with 22 employees achieving their apprenticeships in the year. We also supported 17 work experience council placements for pupils across a range of services and 77 employees achieved leadership and management qualifications. Further opportunities, skills and training were also provided through the employability schemes.
  - Developed a new programme to encourage secondary and tertiary education leavers to work in the Health & Social Care Sector (H&SC) and encourage greater knowledge and understanding of the roles in social care. The initial phase was a pilot of H&SC cohorts in 4 secondary schools in NPT and 2 tertiary colleges (Gower / NPTC Group). The programme includes offering experiential opportunities for students to understand what it is like to have dementia, poor eyesight or severe hearing problems. Also included, a tour of the Dementia Bus, sight and hearing inhibitors and materials to support lessons. A total of 223 staff and pupils completed the experience. During 2022-23, 86 Health and Social Care qualifications were completed across the council. We also supported 47 social work degree student places and 31 social work qualifications were completed.
- ◆ Our NPT Employability programmes came together and created an inclusive triage referral process where external agencies could refer into a single point of contact. We ensured we provided a personalised employment support service that meets the needs of both the work ready participant and those with complex barriers preventing them from entering the job market.
- ◆ NPT Employability supported 2,839 referrals during 2022-23 and supported 848 people, aged 16+ to gain training, volunteering, work experience, sustainable employment or support those who are experiencing 'in- work poverty'. The referrals included Workways+, CFW, CFW+, Salvation Army, Prime Cymru, Careers/Working Wales, Swansea Working, Employability Bridgend, our Youth Service, Cyfle Cymru to name but a few.
- ◆ Also, as part of NPT Employability programme, a Hub opened in December 2022 at Aberafan Shopping Centre funded by Communities for Work Plus. This Hub offers residents support with employment, volunteering and training. Known as the "Opportunity Hub" where we also provide a Warm Hub Space, we are able to bring the teams together to organise mini recruitments fayres in Construction, Health and Social Care and Security.
- ◆ We worked with local employers, schools and colleges to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work. Our Economic Development team worked with local employers to support individuals to complete 1,867 training weeks for apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience. A number of apprenticeships schemes were supported through the employability schemes, the Skills and Training Unit within the Education Directorate and our Corporate Learning, Training and Development Team.

## Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

In supporting our commitment to decarbonisation, in March 2023, we received confirmation that our [Celtic Freeport bid was successful](#). This opportunity will be a catalyst to put us at the forefront of the world's green energy revolution. Our residents will soon be working in the industry of the future, learning the skills for securing green, well paid jobs. The Celtic Freeport consortium comprises of Associated British Ports (ABP), Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire County Council and the Port of Milford Haven.

Accelerating Wales'  
Green Economy



The bid's strategically located tax and customs sites span almost 250 hectares in Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot and [will deliver an accelerated pathway for Wales' net zero economy generating over 16,000 new, green jobs and skill opportunities for future generations](#). From welders to data scientists, these will be well paid, long-term roles underpinned by fair working practices and inclusive workplaces.

**“This great news is the first step towards a much brighter future here in our county borough.**

**I look forward to working with our partners to make sure local people and businesses have the best possible benefit from what's now in front of us.”**

**Karen Jones, Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot Council**



# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

- Our Economic Development and Education officers across the employability teams completed an audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision. The findings will inform the Employability and Skills Strategy for NPT which is being developed with key partners, both internal and external, to set out a long-term Employment and Skills Plan for NPT.
- We strengthened the council's Business Support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers. Through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Anchor project the team has created 7 new posts and 4 existing posts have been enhanced to take on additional responsibilities.
- The Neath Port Talbot Local Investment Plan was developed and consulted on with internal and external stakeholders and informed the Regional Investment Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund. Cabinet agreed the Regional Investment Plan on the 28th July 2022, which was subsequently approved by UK Government in December 2022:
  - ↳ Five strategic anchor projects were approved to deliver key priorities of the Investment Plan addressing the challenges and opportunities of the county borough: 1.Place, 2.Valleys & Villages, 3.Sustainable Communities, 4.Enhanced Business Support for Growth & 5. Innovation, Employability
  - ↳ Five UKSPG grant schemes were developed to address the challenge and opportunities identified in the Investment Plan, not duplicating the anchor projects:1.Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund, 2. Sustainable Communities Growth Fund, 3. Valleys & Villages Prosperity Fund, 4. Business Investment Grants & 5. Third Sector Growth Fund
- We established the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan.
- We launched the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales in February 2023 which has seen an increase in users.
- We are on track in our work to develop new green jobs locally and regionally via NPT led City Deal projects such as Homes as Power Stations and Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth. We are also looking at opportunities from the emerging "green economy" and key projects such as Freeports and Celtic Sea (FLOW). Regionally, we have secured £56,250, alongside match funding of £75,000, to deliver a regional skills project with Microgeneration Certificate Scheme (MCS) certifiable green skills provision.
- We are on track with our work to target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough. This work included:
  - A brief for the NPT Clean Growth Hub Phase 2 (part of the SPF Business Anchor project) planned to be completed by the end of June 23.
  - The Neath Port Talbot led City Deal funded Homes as Power Stations Project Manager has commissioned a supply chain mapping exercise to map out the gaps in the renewable technology for housing supply chain.



# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

- The Homes as Power Stations Project Manager will launch the regional Supply Chain Fund to support businesses to diversify to form part of the renewable technology in housing supply chain.
- ♦ A number of projects have been delivered throughout our main town centres to aid recovery. Some of this work includes bringing back empty premises to use for both commercial and private accommodation (97 long term problematic private properties were brought back into use during 2022-23) and larger town regeneration projects such as the Plaza Cinema and the new leisure centre, library and retail development in Neath. As part of the Shared Prosperity Fund, we have launched the Valleys and Villages Prosperity Grant initiative, which will allow us to fund projects previously covered by the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme, enabling us to target and prioritise our outlying valley communities.
- ♦ Our Procurement team commissioned consultants to help develop a tailored NPT Procurement Strategy which will help enhance and develop local spend and further supporting employment of local people and development of local businesses.



**Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:**

During 2022-23, 22 tenders were awarded to SME (small medium enterprise) and local operators. 131 were issued during 2021- 22 which is not comparable as it included numbers from the passenger transport/home to school figures and 14 were issued during 2020-21. Figures though are increased compared to previous years and work continues to further promote arrangements in this area.

- ♦ We strengthened engagement with local businesses and as part of the delivery for the Shared Prosperity Fund Business Anchor project, a series of community events are being planned for valley and town centre locations to promote business support services and provide hands-on advice to new and existing businesses across NPT. Engagement work continued with Associated British Ports; the offshore company RWE (Rheinisch Westfälische Elektrizitätswerk); Wildfox and GCRE (Global Centre of Rail Excellence) to discuss ways in which we can support local sourcing; supply chain development and encourage local employment and training, i.e. a series of Meet the Buyer events will be delivered in 2023.
- ♦ We continued to support local businesses and supported them in their recovery. During 2022-23, the UK Government announced the Shared Prosperity Fund support for local authorities. Work started on developing a new project to support businesses. Alongside this development work, business services team continued to deliver its internal funding provision which supported 65 businesses investment projects with the potential to create/safeguard over 300 jobs and generate more than £1.1m of private sector investment to support the local economy.
- ♦ The Economic Development team recorded 515 business enquires resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies (this included supporting both social enterprises and micro businesses), assisted 233 business start-up enquiries and 309 jobs were created and or safeguarded as a result of financial support by the local authority.

# Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

- We completed our work to plan to target business support for areas where there is the greatest economic inactivity. A series of events are now planned for our rural and town centre communities. Branded 'Let's Talk Business' events will provide hands-on advice to new and existing businesses throughout the county borough.
- Building on the success of the previous Community Renewal Fund (CRF) project which established a Manufacturing/ Engineering Business Forum, further work is now planned as part of the delivery of the SPF Business Anchor project. This involves the continuation of the Business Forum as a mechanism for businesses to collaborate and share information, to setting up sub-groups to discuss key issues around ICT; Decarbonisation; Skills & Training and Funding. This will provide essential business intelligence to help inform the development of future economic development strategies and policies and shape further funding bids.
- We continued to develop plans to provide an Integrated Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station and we have secured funding of £1.25 Million from Welsh Government for 2023 – 2025 to further progress this work.
- We continued to support community transport car schemes to expand electric vehicle (EV) community cars with schemes in Cymmer, Glynneath and the Amman Valley. The community transport scheme is continuing to grow. The community transport service provides an enormous social and economic benefit to our communities. Some of this work includes:
  - ↳ An Electric Vehicle charge point is now installed and working at Cymmer Swimming pool and a zero emission electric vehicle is now in service;
  - ↳ A charge point was purchased for location at Glynneath Training Centre and installed in June;
  - ↳ Amman Valley schemes - have taken delivery of an electric car which will be used for the Community Car Club.

We have made 16,000 square foot of high quality and light industrial space available at our technology centre of which 26.5% has been occupied.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:



## Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

No data is currently available for the percentage of people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), however the percentage of year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) improved from 2.4% to 2.2% (2022 data), our 2nd lowest figure ever, the percentage of 16-18 year old who were NEET increased slightly from 3.6% to 4.3% and the percentage of young people in employment (16-24) significantly improved from 50.6% in 2021 to 65.8% in 2022.

% of working age adults qualified to level 3 or higher for 2022 is 62.9% which is lower than the All Wales figure of 66.8%. Our NPT figure is higher than the previous years figure of 56.5%, however, the data is not comparable to previous years due to the changes to the qualification questions in the Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

% of working adults with no qualifications for 2022 is 8.6%, which is just above All Wales figure of 8.3%. For the same reason above, previous years data is non comparable, however the 2021 figure for NPT was 10.8%.

Data for 2022-23 for the number of work based learning programmes in Neath Port Talbot is not available yet. However the 2021-22 academic year data reports 2,685 programmes.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Across the county borough the percentage of people who are economically inactive has risen from 25.1% (21,600) people in 2020/21 to 26.63% (22,900 people) in 2022/23, which has been impacted by the pandemic and the economic climate. The council has worked hard during 2022-23 through its employability programmes to positively impact these figures. All Wales levels have also seen an increase from 23.5% to 24.5%.

Across the county borough the percentage and number of workless households has risen from 19.8% (8,800) in 2020/21 to 22.7% (10,000) in 2022, which has been impacted by the pandemic and the economic climate. All Wales levels have reduced slightly from 17% to 16.6%.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:

Latest Gross Value Added data published by Stats Wales is for 2021 which shows that the GVA per head in £ in Neath Port Talbot has risen from 16,082 in 2020 to 17,713 (provisional data) in 2021.

County wide data for 2022 relating to new business start-ups, businesses ceasing trading and business survival rates is not available yet. We currently don't hold data on the percentage of businesses that are social businesses.

Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measures:

## Well-being Objective 4 - Jobs & Skills

- As part of the City Deal, we launched the Waterfront Property Development Fund, which will provide the funding necessary to bridge that gap between value and cost to address the shortage of new quality business space within the borough, particularly for our SME's and start-up businesses. In addition, we have launched our 'Place' Anchor Project as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), whereby the council has taken the initiative to construct new starter units ourselves for our valleys communities. We plan to construct units at Glyncorrwg, Cwmwgors and Nant y Cafn by 2025. We are also in the preliminary stages of a proposal to deliver several new workshops at our Sandfields Business Centre site.

In addition to the above, and linked to the corporate measure related to total operational costs of assets of the council, we have identified £576,000 worth of council staff accommodation savings that will be taken out of the budget over 3 years 2023-24 to 2025-26.

**Linking  
Corporate  
Plan  
Measure:**

### More to do:

The one corporate plan action which was 'off-track' for 2022-23 for this well-being objective related to working in partnership with Transport for Wales to explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot of the Fflecsi bus service in the upper Afan valley. This is currently on hold due to funding.

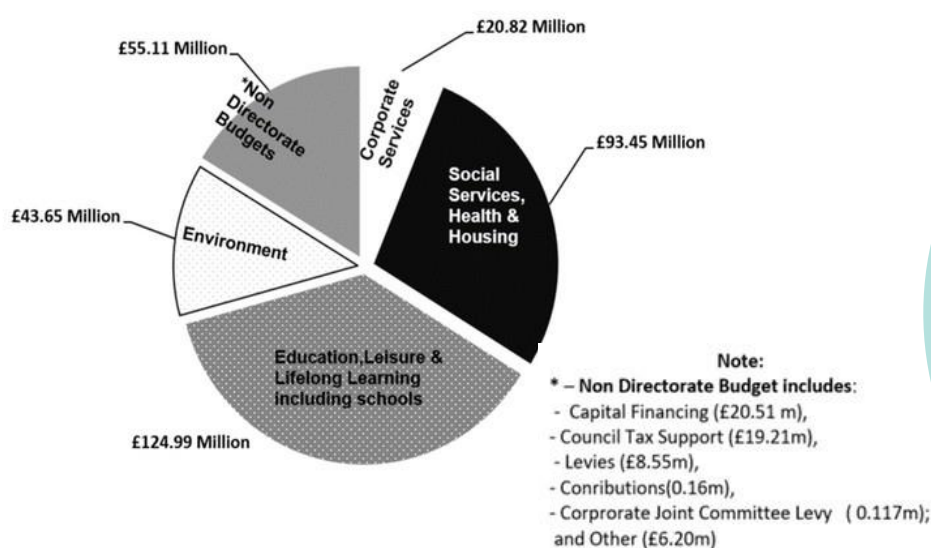


# Finance & Spending

The council's net budget for 2022-23 was £338.020m. The actual net expenditure, or outturn position for the council, showed a net underspend of £1.607m which was then utilised to create a strategic regeneration capacity building reserve (£1.5m) with the balance going into a contingency reserve (£107k).

Throughout 2022-23 we were successful in reclaiming £7m from the COVID hardship fund for a variety of schemes such as a free school meals, self-isolation scheme, Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) enhancement scheme and winter fuel payments.

**NPTCBC Total Net Budget 2022-23**



On 2nd March 2023, the council approved the 2023-24 budget of £360.977m following stakeholder consultation. In order to set a balanced budget a number of savings were identified (£14.352m) alongside a one-off use of reserves to the value of £3.5m and a council tax increase of 4.5%

Our Capital Programme also delivered c£44m of capital investment to improve facilities across the county borough. This includes:

- ↳ Completion of the council's Band B 21st Century Schools programme; Progress to the regeneration programme including completion of Harbourside, Neath Town Centre redevelopment, Plaza, and the Technology Centre.
- ↳ Further investment of £3.977m into Disabled Facility Grants to assist people to live at home;
- ↳ Investment of over £3m in Schools Capital Maintenance and Highways and Engineering Maintenance improvements.
- ↳ City Deal – progression of the Homes as Power Stations and the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth projects.
- ↳ Progression of the remodelling of the council's Waste Facility at Crymlyn Burrows as a Transfer Station with enhanced recycling capacity and facilities to accommodate the Council's expanding recycling operation.

# Equalities & Diversity

Helping meet the challenges faced by residents over recent years has been at the forefront of our work - not least in addressing the inequalities faced by many - notably as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis, education, accessibility and by society itself.

We aim for a society where everyone can take their rightful place, on an equal footing where barriers to leading full and rich lives are a thing of the past and opportunities abound for everyone to fully participate in the social, economic and environmental aspects of their communities.

Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020-2024 was just one contributory factor in our work to help achieve this. The Plan, developed during the pandemic, at the time of the international condemnation of the killing of George Floyd and the greater awareness of Black Lives Matter.

required us to re-evaluate our equality objectives and identify more immediate actions to address some of the inequalities experienced at that time.

Since this last iteration of the SEP our world has changed once again. These changes have brought with them different and/or greater challenges and inequalities for our communities and ourselves.

In order to help address the position we have begun a review of our equality objectives the outcome of which will help focus our work to reduce, and where possible, eliminate inequalities and better align the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 with our other statutory plans and in particular the Corporate Plan 2024-2027.

In light of recommendations from three Integrated Impact Assessment audits, undertaken during 2021-2022, an action plan has been developed to improve the approach, quality and effectiveness of our assessment process.

The action plan, which encompasses both specific and more general aspects of the assessment process is in the early stages of implementation.



# Welsh Language

Our commitment to the principle of the Welsh language standards continues and we strive to comply with them, as applied to us, in what remains a difficult financial and resource limiting environment.

Our Welsh Language Standards Annual Report highlights our work in implementing the standards as well as identifying areas where more work is required. Performance monitored by the Welsh Language Commissioner, and reported in the latest annual report for 2022-2023, identified improvements in compliance across a range of services.

Confidence in meeting the standards as applied to the council received a further boost with no complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner during 2022-2023.

In recent weeks, the Welsh Language Tribunal has upheld the decision of the Commissioner in relation to a complaint received originally in 2021.

The basis of the referral to the Welsh Language Tribunal was more than just a challenge to the Commissioner's decision; it was to address the concerns of the impact the interpretation of the Welsh Language Standards could have on any consultations that the council embarks on in any subject matter thus seeking further legal and practical guidance.

We recognise that Welsh is more than a language, it is part of our very being - whether born here or not. It is woven into the fabric of our lives - even if not instantly recognisable; our place names, forenames, colloquialisms, are all rooted in the Welsh language.

The second iteration of our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023-2028 goes beyond just the use of Welsh: it aims to permeate the fabric of our society, from helping ensure language courses are available for all who wish to learn and providing an environment in which it can be used, to celebrating and raising awareness of its place in our heritage and culture, our daily lives and as part of our visitor

Page 127 offer.



# Have your say on what matters to you

Your feedback on this Annual Report is valued and at a local government level this means a commitment to listen to all voices. It is key for those voices to be heard and to work together with our communities to explore and resolve issues of concern, promote and recognise achievements and face new challenges together.

Our council is strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in our decision making, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions. This commitment can be viewed in our [Public Participation Strategy](#).

Contact us via email: [policy@npt.gov.uk](mailto:policy@npt.gov.uk) or post:

Chief Executive,  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council,  
Civic Centre,  
Port Talbot,  
SA13 1PJ

*We want to hear  
from you!*

You may also want to become part of our Citizens' Panel. The Panel enables residents to take part in research relating to the council. This means you will be able to tell us what you think about council policies, priorities and/or services.

All feedback helps us to understand residents' perspectives and is used to help make decisions. You do not need any knowledge of council services to become a member of the panel. We are looking for a variety of views from a range of different people. You may be asked to take part in online questionnaires, informal discussions, workshops, telephone interviews and other forms of consultation.

If you would like to join please complete the recruitment questionnaire [www.npt.gov.uk/citizenspanel](http://www.npt.gov.uk/citizenspanel)

We also have a number of consultation/engagement events about various services which we promote in the press and on the website which you can access via the following link: <http://www.npt.gov.uk/haveyoursay>





## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS GROUP

#### Matter for Monitoring

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

**2023-2024 Strategic Change Programme – “Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet” – Progress Update.**

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present a progress update on the delivery of the Council’s Strategic Change Programme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

#### Background

2. The council’s Corporate Plan for 2022-2027 was published in May 2022 focusing on recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, resetting affected services, adapting to many new ways of working and the increasing demand on services and functions.
3. The Corporate Plan included a Strategic Change Programme, which was reviewed for 2023-2024 and approved by Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
4. That review was undertaken by Senior Management Teams and officers from across the council who considered a number of factors including:
  - the on-going pandemic and the demand on services and functions;
  - ensuring the Corporate Plan reflects the political priorities of the current Administration;

- latest performance data of services and functions;
  - the budget for 2023-2024; and
  - frequent changes in the council's external environment;
5. The Strategic Change Programme details key outcomes across each of the council's four well-being objectives to be achieved by 2027 and reflects our priorities for the current year, providing a strategic direction for travel.
6. Progress on the delivery of each of the four well-being objectives is contained on the attached highlight reports. An overall high level summary of progress is provided below:

### **Overall Summary Progress – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Overall we are on track at the half year stage to deliver the planned work for 2023-24 for our well-being objectives.

To work towards improving the 64 outcomes in the Strategic Change programme by 2027 to deliver on our four well-being objectives we have set 149 key priority actions for 2023-24.

84% (124 of 147) of the 2023-24 priority actions are on track for the first half of this year, with 23 priority actions 'just off' track. Progress information for two priority actions will be available as soon as possible.

20 of 50 performance measures have comparable data for this period. Most of the measures that are not comparable are either new measures or measures reported annually. Of the comparable measures, 12 of 20 are achieving target or outlook (increase, maintain or decrease i.e. decrease where lower figures are better). More comparable data will be provided at year end when annually reported measures are included in the full year assessment of performance.

## **Financial Appraisal**

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

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

8. There is no requirement for an IIA as this item is for monitoring purposes.

## **Valleys Communities Impact**

9. The revised Strategic Change Programme contains initiatives to support valley communities across the county borough.

## **Workforce Impact**

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

## **Legal Impact**

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

## **Risk Management**

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

### **Consultation**

13. There is no requirement to consult on this item as it is for monitoring purposes.

### **Recommendations**

14. It is recommended that Cabinet note the progress made on delivering the council's Well-being Objectives.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

15. This is a matter for monitoring therefore no decision is required.

### **Appendices**

16. Appendix 1 - Best Start in Life
17. Appendix 2 - All Communities are Thriving and Sustainable
18. Appendix 3 - Our Local Environment, Culture and Heritage can be Enjoyed by Future Generations
19. Appendix 4 - Jobs & Skills

### **List of Background Papers**

20. Corporate Plan 2022-2027 "Recover, Reset Renew"
21. Strategic Change Programme 2023-2024 – "Working in Partnership for Our People, Our Places and Our Planet"

### **Officers Reporting:**

Mrs Karen Jones, Chief Executive,  
Email: [chief.executive@npt.gov.uk](mailto:chief.executive@npt.gov.uk)

Mr Noelwyn Daniel, Director of Strategy & Corporate Services  
Email: [n.daniel@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.daniel@npt.gov.uk)

Mr Andrew Jarrett, Director of Social Services, Health and Housing  
Email: [a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk)

Ms Nicola Pearce, Director of Environment & Regeneration,  
Email: [n.pearce@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.pearce@npt.gov.uk)

Mr Andrew Thomas, Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning,  
Email: [a.d.thomas@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.d.thomas@npt.gov.uk)

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**CORPORATE PLAN / STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

**Half year progress April 2023 to September 2023**

**Well-being Objective 1**

**Best Start in Life**

Objective
All children get the best start in life

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>Page 135</p> <p>1. Worked with partners to ensure our youngest children are better prepared for transition to school.</p>	<p>a. Work with the childcare sector and partners to develop a more equitable Early Years offer to ensure our youngest learners transition into school successfully.</p>	<p>Work is currently on-going to develop a Children and Young People’s Plan and Early Years Strategy. This plan will articulate strategic priorities and actions for making a positive difference to lives of children, young people and their families in Neath Port Talbot. During quarter 1, a Request for Quotation process was undertaken to appoint a consultant to support us in developing a Children &amp; Young People's Plan and Early Years Strategy. PRD were appointed with work starting in July 2023. Throughout quarter 2, PRD have undertaken a desktop review of existing qualitative and quantitative data. Meaningful engagement with all stakeholders has been a key priority. To achieve this PRD held a series of stakeholder workshops to ensure partnership involvement throughout the process. Engagement with children, young people and families will take place throughout quarter 3. Work is on track to be completed during quarter 4. Completion of the strategy will enable strategic priorities and actions to be put in place to support a more equitable early years offer. Overall, transition arrangements into childcare, within childcare and into school are enabling most of our youngest learners to transition successfully. On-going continued workforce development is ensuring all stakeholders continue to work in partnership to effectively support children and their families with their journey using child centred, pedagogically appropriate approaches and process to support transition.</p> <p>Valuable transition arrangements are in place for all children attending childcare. However, local authority monitoring evidences that more support is required around transition into and within childcare settings. This is due in part to the impact of the Covid pandemic and the children’s previous experiences. The Early Years and Childcare team work closely with providers to provide training and support to further develop processes to enhance transition into childcare settings. In addition, the Early Years and Childcare Training and Transition Officer has spent time with individual settings supporting the transition of individual children into setting and to manage transitions within their day. The Training and Transition Officer has worked with the Early Years ALN (Additional Learning Needs) Transition and Partnership Officer to develop an Early Years Passport. This will contain appropriate documentation in relation the child. It will be a working document, started on transition into setting, updated accordingly during the child’s time at setting and then move with the child to school as part of their transition. Overall, transition into school is working well. To strengthen transition processes further, workforce development around the transition process across the early years sector is planned for quarters 3 and 4. This will include work to support the tracking of pupils’ progress in childcare settings and on-entry to school to support Curriculum for Wales development.</p>	
	<p>b. Work with Welsh Government and partners in the sector to increase access to childcare.</p>	<p>Valuable work has been undertaken by the Local Authority to continue to work with Welsh Government and partners in the sector to increase access to childcare. The local authority continues to provide support through the Early Years</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>and Childcare capital grant funding programme and the revenue for sustainability and quality improvement grant programme. In addition, free, high-quality training is available to all childcare providers across Neath Port Talbot, through the Early Years and Childcare team.</p> <p>Phase 2 Flying Start expansion commenced in April 2023. Valuable, high-quality support is being offered to the childcare settings by the Early Years and Flying Start Team. In addition, the team is focussing upon those settings that have newly joined the programme to offer Flying Start childcare within the expansion communities and across the wider Neath Port Talbot footprint. Ongoing training and support from the Early Years and Childcare team will ensure that all settings will meet the Flying Start Childcare guidance criteria within the next 2 years. To date 44 Flying Start providers are engaging with Flying Start Phase 2. Phase 2 of Flying Start expansion has been a success to date, with 103 children now registered for funded Flying Start childcare in expansion areas for Phase 2a, and Phase 2b beginning from September 2023.</p> <p>The Child Care Offer (CCO) continues to be promoted by the CCO team successfully. The CCO Outreach worker has attended various events including Cost of Living crisis events, school fetes, school nurseries and Communities for Work+ events. In addition, social media has been utilised to promote the Offer and inform families of when to apply. The Outreach Officer continues to promote the Offer to families and to large local employers. The CCO has now fully moved to an All Wales Digital System with one telephone number for families to phone regardless of where they live. The NPT team answer call routed to us via this system to support local families to apply for the Offer. Some families left the Offer at the end of August when their eligibility ended, but more families have joined the Offer starting from September 2023. At the end of quarter 2 there were 2,373 registered English and Welsh medium childcare places available in Neath Port Talbot. The number of registered childcare numbers have fluctuated post Covid, with providers not reopening, providers being impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) continuing with their database review and update, which includes closing off long standing paused registrations. At the end of quarter 2, 498 children aged 3 and 4 were accessing funded, part-time childcare.</p>	
<p>2. Completed the Welsh Government Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) roll out for all primary pupils.</p>	<p>a. Enabled access to UPFSM for all year 3 and 4 pupils by summer term 2023, and by January 2024 for Years 5 and 6.</p>	<p>All primary aged pupils have access to a free school meal from September 2023. The rollout of all Year groups has resulted in a daily average of over 7,235 primary school pupil meals being served. This number is expected to increase through the year.</p>	
<p>3. Enhanced facilities for young people including improved play and leisure services</p>	<p>a. Enhance free and low cost play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.</p>	<p>The 2022 NPT Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) has identified gaps in play provision across the local authority. Gaps include play provision in rural areas, provision for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or a disability and play provision provided through the medium of Welsh. The 2023/24 Welsh Government Playworks Holiday Fund has been used to fund providers to improve the quality of play provision for children and young people, with a focus upon supporting the delivery of free high quality play and closing identified gaps in provision. The Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG) approved all funding allocated to the providers through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Activities have included open access play sessions, family play opportunities and summer play schemes for children and young people with additional support needs. To date, all funded play activities have been delivered as planned. The overall impact of the provision provided will be evaluated by the PSIG as part of the wider evaluation of progress against the PSA Action Plan at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	



2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>4. Services for children and young people are aligned across sectors so that the needs of children and families are identified early and support is joined up across agencies and improving.</p>	<p>a. Work to develop parental engagement in Neath Port Talbot schools so that the schools are at the heart of their community.</p>	<p>Adult Learning finished the last academic year delivering Family Learning sessions and other courses across seven schools. Parents in all schools have completed at least one accredited unit. Adult Learning are working with Family Engagement Officers in Community Focused Schools to engage with schools within their clusters and have started delivering sessions in three schools. Adult Learning have also had initial meetings with another three schools with the intention to start delivering courses for parents or family learning sessions.</p> <p>Blaendulais Primary started with a small group of parents reluctant to complete any accreditation. They have engaged well in family learning sessions and now they are ready to complete an accredited unit. Numbers gradually increased and the group is now interested in completing other courses, such as Importance of Play.</p> <p>Adult Learning have established a group of parents in Awel y Mor, consistently completing various accredited courses. This cohort started through Family Learning, completing accredited units: Phonics, Story Sacks, and Science. They have completed some ALN (Additional Learning Needs) awareness courses: Autism, ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and Dyscalculia. We are also delivered Cooking on a budget in the school. Some of the parents from this cohort enrolled onto the Childcare Level 2 qualification.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>b. Ensure early help and support offer to children and families is clearly communicated.</p>	<p>The local authority co-ordinates its early intervention support for children and young people through its multi-agency Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) panel. EIP panel has reported an increase in complexity of need in referrals placing additional pressures on early intervention services to meet these needs. In addition, Local Authority monitoring information highlights that non-engagement with services by children and families is an area of concern. As a result, the local authority is currently undertaking a review of the EIP panel process to ensure early intervention and support is delivered effectively. This will include a focus upon understanding the barriers for children, young people and families accessing support. The outcomes of the review will be used to inform and develop the work of the EIP panel and support services. The continued successful development of the EIP panel support service is a key priority for the service. The EIP panel review process is currently on-going and on track to be completed by the end of quarter 4.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>c. What matters to children and families will be at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services</p>	<p>The Children and Young People's Leadership Group are developing a Children and Young People's Plan, which puts children, young people and their families at the centre of service delivery and ensures meaningful engagement and consultation to inform future planning.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>
	<p>d. Ensure children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family.</p>	<p><b>Awaiting progress information.</b></p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p>5. Children know and understand their rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>a. Work with schools and partners to adopt the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Participation and Engagement Strategy and support our schools to embed a framework for Children's Rights.</p>	<p>The Participation and Engagement Strategy has been finalised and includes an easy read version and a children/young person friendly version. A launch event and participation conference, in partnership with other services and led by children and young people, is planned for the new year. Training on participation to accompany the framework is being developed and will be available to all teams and school staff.</p> <p>The children's rights self-assessment tool, developed by the Childrens Commissioner for Wales, for leaders, professionals and governors in education settings, will be discussed with headteachers to build on current good practice. It will enable all schools to ensure they are embedding a rights based approach and identify further areas for development.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
6. Progressed our Strategic Schools Improvement Programme increasing the number of 21st Century learning and teaching environments available for children and young people.	a. Gain Welsh Government approval for the Strategic Outline Programme	N/A – Strategic Outline Plan to be submitted in January 2024	
	b. Further progress our Band C proposals with Welsh Government.	As above	
	c. Conclude the review of the organisation of schools in the Swansea Valley	Concluded. New scheme to be developed.	
7. Education reforms related to the curriculum are embedded and these changes will raise standards across our education system.	a. Work with and support schools and partners to ensure they are at an appropriate stage of readiness for curriculum reform in line with Curriculum for Wales (The Curriculum and Assessment Wales Act 2021).	All primary schools have begun working under the Curriculum for Wales. All secondary schools are preparing for a September 2023 start for years 7 and 8. Levels of engagement in curriculum workshops and training are very high. The renewed focus on developing a shared understanding of progress is priority at local and national levels. This process is being supported at local, cluster and national levels. The curriculum for Wales improves outcomes for pupils in all our schools and all pupils in Neath Port Talbot to realise the 4 purposes because of excellent teaching.	
8. Fully Implemented the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice 2021 across the Local Authority and in schools within Neath Port Talbot raising standards across our education system.	a. Ensure that the Local Authority (LA) and schools convert all Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Individual Development Plans (IDPs) within the specified timescales. Needs to be moved down	The Additional Learning Needs Support Service (ALNSS) is adhering to Welsh Government specified timescales and in September the majority of learners in the mandated cohorts had their Statements of SEN (Statements of Educational Needs) converted into IDPs (Individual Development Plans) within specified timescales. A small number are in the process of being converted and have statutory plans in place during this period.	
	b. Work with partners to ensure the Local Authority (LA) fulfils its statutory duties in delivering an equitable offer of post 16 provision for young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).	<p>A draft post 16 transition protocol for young people with additional learning needs has been produced. An enhanced transition framework is being established which includes a Multiagency Transition Screening Meeting (MATSM). The aim of the MATSM is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to support for young people who need enhanced transition into post 16 provision. This may include young people who have additional learning needs (ALN), face challenging circumstances, have mental health issues are disengaged from education or any other reason.</p> <p>This has been piloted in Llangatwg Secondary School and 31 children and young people were discussed with a number of organisations. The impact of this work and the success of this transition will be fully considered when the children and young people leave school in July 2024. This MATSM protocol will be rolled out to all secondary schools across NPT.</p>	
	c. A robust quality assurance framework in place to monitor and review the impact of Individual Development Plans.	Inclusion Service Managers are working with SBUHB (Swansea Bay University Health Board) to undertake a quality assurance exercise in relation to Health ALP (Additional Learning Provision). Following the restructure of ALNSS (Additional Learning Needs Support Service), there are now 3 designated Person Centred Review and IDP (Individual Development Plan) Officers whose role encompasses working with schools to develop quality assurance mechanisms for school maintained IDPs. This includes individual bespoke ADDS (additional training sessions for schools, usually held after school) sessions for schools as well as cluster working. The ALNSS Manager along with the Lead IDP Systems and Process Officer has undertaken the quality assurance of all local authority maintained Individual Development Plans with the support of a fellow Inclusion Service Officer.	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>9. A co-ordinated approach to meeting the mental health and well-being needs of our children and young people.</p>	<p>a. Work closely with schools and partner agencies to ensure that the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Well-being is embedded across the Authority.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing is being embedded in schools across NPT and is supported by the Local Area Coordinator. Primary, secondary and special schools are on board with the programme and are commencing or have completed the self-evaluation tool.</p> <p>Multi agency forums will continue to support our schools in developing their practice in this area. This multi-disciplinary problem solving approach continues to empower the trusted adults in the lives of CYP and has been cited as a good example of the NEST (Nurturing, Empowering, Safe and Trusted) framework in action. Half termly ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) supervision, joint termly planning across inclusion services for schools and the community model of service delivery all highlight the collaborative work that is currently underway in NPT to support the emotional health and wellbeing needs of pupils. The School Based Counselling Service (SBCS) will continue to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils through the Secondary School Based Counselling Service and Primary School Based Child Therapy Service. Therapists within the SBCS collaborate with other professionals around the child/young person in order to best their needs. The Manager of the SBCS has held a conference for all schools in collaboration with the local area coordinator for the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing. At the conference the focus was around staff wellbeing and the project was highlighted. An updated proposal has been provided to the Director of Education including data from academic year 2022-23 demonstrating the service's efficacy. The proposal is currently being considered in light of budget pressures. Following the event, 39 schools have signed up to participate in the staff wellbeing programme.</p> <p>52 primary schools (98.1%) and 8 secondary schools (100%) are on board with the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing. 2 special schools (100%) are also on board with the programme. 18 primary schools, 5 secondary schools and 2 special schools have commenced / completed the self-evaluation tool.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>10. Increased number of pupils in Welsh medium schools in line with our targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>a. Increase Nursery pupil numbers to 331 (22.8%) and Year 1 to 308 (21%).</p>	<p>Data will be available after PLASC –spring 2024</p>	<p>Yellow</p>
<p>11. Provided opportunities to enable all learners, families and carers to benefit from the opportunity to learn, appreciate and shape their lives through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>a. Deliver the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 5 year action plan and begin to progress targets.</p> <p>b. Ensure regular opportunities for learners, staff and the wider community to engage in activities that increase confidence in the Welsh language and promote Welsh modern culture and history, through engagement with Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus.</p> <p>c. Undertake an audit to see what Welsh medium provision is available within the LA (both within school and in the community) and geographical gaps will be identified and</p>	<p>5 Year action plan has been approved by Welsh Government. Targets have been fed into annual plan and are being progressed.</p> <p>Significant work has been undertaken already , notably 100% of NPT schools have engaged with Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus; a 10 week project has successfully been delivered with 3 EM pilot schools to embed Cynefin within the curriculum; Further development of the Welsh language within English-medium schools.</p> <p>A mapping out exercise of Welsh-medium provision has been completed (by Fforwm Iaith Abertawe a CNPT). Currently, there are 186 activities and resources available. Partners include Menter Iaith, Mudiad Meithrin, Tŷ'r Gwrhyd, Urdd, Cymraeg i Blant, Technocamps, Dysgu Cymraeg Ardal Bae Abertawe and Amgueddfa Cymru.</p> <p>Gaps in provision have been identified and work will take place to address these in the future.</p>	<p>Green</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>filled i.e. provision from Urdd, PASS, Youth Service etc.</p> <p>d. Undertake an audit of learning opportunities for non-Welsh speaking learners, parents/carers and grandparents or those who are hesitant in the language.</p>	<p>Gaps in provision have been identified and work will take place to address these in the future.</p>	
<p>12. Reduced the number of children and young people excluded from school.</p>	<p>a. Work with schools and partners ensuring as many pupils as possible physically re-connect and engage with school.</p>	<p>Continued close working with schools to try and reduce exclusions. Utilising the PSP (Pastoral Support Plan) and reduced timetable process to put plans in place that are built around the pupil. During this period recruitment for the Case Assessment and Progression (CAP) team commenced appointing the manager, 2 CAP officers and secretarial support all of whom will commence employment ready for the new academic year. The CAP team is intended to enable early identification of children who may be at risk of permanent exclusion and to pull together all partners involved to plan the most appropriate package of support for each individual. In this quarter the impact has not been felt as the CAP team haven't been in post. However, the use of PSPs has given schools more choice in the actions they can take to support those children at risk of exclusion.</p>	
<p>Page 140</p> <p>13. Improve attendance of pupils.</p>	<p>a. Improve attendance at primary and secondary phase, and a particular focus on attendance of vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Attendance compared to the previous academic year, saw an upward trend, however, attendance rates remain lower than pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Solution focus meetings held with all Education Welfare Officers. Regular data shared per school allocation. We have introduced Solution circle meetings. Working in partnership with our colleagues from other departments such as ALN (Additional Learning Needs)/Social Services/EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance)/Education Psychologist Service. Discussions with Headteachers have improved engagement with the ESO (Education Support Officer) service.</p> <p>First national education welfare officer event was held in NPT in conjunction with RCT (Rhondda Cynon Taff) including the Welsh Government to help improve attendance at school with a particular focus on ALN/FSM (Free School Meals)/CME (Children Missing Education).</p> <p>Joint training/solution focus/solution circles/sharing good practice to continue with RCT (Rhondda Cynon Taff) who have similar levels of deprivation as NPT.</p> <p>Attendance is a priority for all. Nearly all schools have attendance as a priority in their school development plans. Attendance Support Officers to commence in Qtr. 2</p>	
<p>14. Implemented a teaching programme so that every school is able to access the programme creating an exciting and innovative communities of teachers who can support each other and learn together.</p>	<p>a. Continue to support teachers through professional learning from the time they decide to become teachers through their whole career. That Neath Port Talbot schools continue to grow as learning organisations. We will continue to prioritise professional learning in our directorate plan and ensure that it is at the heart of the reform agenda.</p>	<p>The teaching and learning programme is developing well. The pilot group is continuing to trial innovative approaches and they are helping to shape how we will design an iterative curriculum. All headteachers have been informed through workshops of the process and they have been invited to nominate teachers who they believe will be able to lead the development within their own school. Two senior teachers have been seconded and they have begun to work in NPT schools at both primary and secondary level. Nominations for the next cohort are due in on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 and we are expecting to be over-subscribed. It is currently too early to see the impact on teaching across our schools.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>b. Strive for all pupils in Neath Port Talbot to realise the 4 purposes because of excellent teaching.</p>	<p>Along with the teaching and learning programme all schools in NPT are making good progress in terms of pupils realising the four purposes because of teaching evolving. This is based on a programme of sound self-evaluation carried out by schools with LA support to evaluate the progress pupils are making. Initial findings demonstrate that the older pupils are the more teaching narrows to focus on acquiring knowledge. As a result, teachers are evolving how they plan for progress in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding, capacities and attributes. This is beginning to result in pupils developing their knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes.</p>	
<p>15. Development of a leadership programme and a long-term view of 'talent spotting' and nurturing future leaders with a programme of individual coaching and mentoring.</p>	<p>a. Work to develop inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. We will support school leaders to better articulate what they do and why they do it in the context of the Curriculum for Wales. We will support them to lead strong and inclusive schools where a culture of professional learning and collaboration is central to school improvement. Neath Port Talbot will produce school leaders that will be capable of supporting each other to improve and contribute to educational improvements across Wales.</p>	<p>A future leaders programme has been shared with all headteachers and they have been invited to nominate potential senior leaders who they believe will benefit from this programme. It is aimed at deputy and assistant headteachers who do not currently have NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headteachers). They will be allocated an Education Support Officer who will use coaching and mentoring strategies on a one-to-one basis. This will be funded by the LA (using Welsh Government funding for leadership) and will mean that participants meet their mentor once every half term in the first year and once a term in the second year to work through a bespoke programme aimed at supporting their development via the leadership standards. Nominations for the next cohort are due in on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October and we are expecting to be over-subscribed.</p>	
<p>16. More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote in Welsh elections.</p>	<p>a. Undertake targeted key messaging with 16-17 year olds with specially designed paper and online materials for form classes.</p>	<p>Education resources developed and designed by the Electoral Commission have been disseminated to schools to enable them to be utilised as part of citizenship lessons. The aim is to provide young people with the knowledge and understanding they need to participate in the democratic process and give them the confidence to vote, and to understand that their vote matters.</p>	
	<p>b. Continue liaison contact with internal Neath Port Talbot groups including the Local Area Co-ordination LAC support network, Community of Practice network, Travellers Liaison, Youth Council and Youth Mayor as well as the Communication, Marketing and Digital teams.</p>	<p>Work has continued to create and maintain links and partnerships with internal key stakeholders to assist with engagement with under-registered groups (i.e. young people, students, home movers and travellers) aiming to link in with specific electoral event based activity where possible during the year. (See 16.4 below).</p>	
	<p>c. Maintain new links and partnerships with external groups and organisations including the Regional Community Cohesion network, Your Voice Advocacy, Democracy Box, Local Muslim community groups, BAME community groups, local media, Welsh Government, Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators.</p>	<p>Work has continued to create and maintain links and partnerships with external key stakeholders to assist with engagement with under-registered groups (i.e. young people, students, home movers and travellers) aiming to link in with specific electoral event based activity where possible during the year. (See 16.4 below).</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	d. Plan around key dates to help with promotional drives and other awareness days to aid face to face work (where possible) as well as online activity.	As detailed above, the intention has been to focus on the need to encourage under registered groups to register to vote and explain the voting process. In undertaking this type of work it is important to understand that there are no quick fix solutions and relies more on a willingness to maintain a steady consistent approach over the longer term. The focal points of this activity outside of electoral events tends to be Local Democracy Week in October and the Electoral Commission's 'Welcome to your Vote Week' in January/February.	
	e. Utilise traditional advertising mediums such as local radio as well as social media platforms to promote and tie in with specially designed resources supported by the Electoral Commission and Welsh Government where grant funding remains available.	Promotional activity including a targeted radio campaign and social media supported by specific Welsh Government grant funding and Electoral Commission branded resources prior to the May 2022 local government elections was undertaken and concluded. No major electoral events occurred in 2023. The next scheduled elections will be the Police and Crime Commissioner elections due to take place on 2 May, 2024, with a UK Parliamentary general election also likely to take place at some point during the year.	
17. Strong safeguarding and support procedures in place for children and young people.	a. Bring forward proposals to further develop Children's Social Services.	Work ongoing. <b>Awaiting additional progress information</b>	
18. Arrangements for supporting young people when they finish their statutory education are improved with all children going on to training, education or work.	a. Work with partners to retain young peoples' engagement in education, employment and training and to reduce youth unemployment within Neath Port Talbot.	<p>Skills &amp; Training Department have utilised Welsh Government JGW+ (Jobs Growth Wales plus) provision and funding to set up a Get Ready programme to support those who are NEET (Not in education, employment or training) and facing multiple barriers to engaging in work or training.</p> <p>Communities for Work Plus (CFW+) currently work with JCP, Dewis, Llamau and housing options, (to name a few) who refer young people in need of employment support to the CFW+ programme via our one stop triage referral process.</p> <p>The Youth Support Multi Agency Group met during quarter 1 and the Youth Engagement Strategy will be reviewed starting in quarter 2. The Youth Service Legacy Team work with a range of partners to give young people who are at risk of becoming NEET a diverse and broad options menu to help with their transition.</p> <p>Upskilling young people making them ready for progression within training or the workplace. Once a young person has found employment CFW+ continues to keep in contact with them and the employer, (if possible) to ensure that in work support barriers can be accessed if required. We have supported approx. 40 YP into employment and have maintained contact with them to address any further support needs.</p> <p>Networking and communication has increased as well as an awareness and increased understanding of services available.</p>	
	b. Support young people leaving full-time education to move on to further training or education or work.	<p>Skills and Training Get Ready for summer programme helps with transition yr. 11 pupils who are at risk of disengagement over the summer. The programme engages with learners in order to support and assist transition so that learners move into further education college or work based learning.</p> <p>Together with the Youth Service, Communities for Work Plus (CFW+) offer a drop in facilities for young people aged 16+ in Aberavon Shopping Centre.</p> <p>The Legacy Youth Workers continue to support year 11 pupils to transition from School into further education, employment or training. During quarter 1 the team supported 143 young people who were at risk of becoming NEET.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>Referrals will be processed during June in readiness for the programme which commences in July-August. It is anticipated that this year will be the highest ever Skills &amp; Training have supported learners on the Summer Programme.</p> <p>The Hub in the Aberavon Shopping Centre is open 9am -5pm Monday to Friday offering careers advice and 1-2-1 employment support. NPT Youth Service are present every afternoon. We also open up on a weekend when there events planned in the Shopping Centre or Viva Port Talbot. This quarter we have had 45 young people visit the Hub for support.</p>	
	<p>c. Increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the council and local employers to young people</p>	<p>Shared Prosperity Funding NPT Employability has given us the opportunity to offer all year 10's within our secondary educational system an offer of a work experience placement. While this work is based on Year 10 activity, employers were keen to keep in touch with some of the pupils and have asked some to return to the work place for employment or have been offered to apply for an apprenticeship. This will assist with Year 11 transition destination work.</p> <p>Communities for Work Plus (CFW+) link in with local employers and have ongoing discussions to source any work experience opportunities that may be available for the young people we support.</p> <p>We have Volunteer/Work Placement Officers who source local vacancies for young people to gain experience in their chosen work sector. During this quarter we have placed 18 young people into work experience opportunities with the NHS and we have also placed a further 6 into other sectors such as residential care, retail and local authority.</p>	
<p>19. All young people leaving care will have access to sustained appropriate accommodation.</p>	<p>a. Build on our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate supported transition.</p>	<p><b>Awaiting progress information.</b></p>	<p><b>TBC</b></p>
<p>20. Support young carers to access opportunities.</p>	<p>a. Explore what more we can do to support young carers.</p>	<p>The number of Young Carers attending the Young Carers Youth Club continues to rise with now over 72 young people attending.</p> <p>Young Carers Awareness raising sessions are delivered in schools with over 1,000 young people attending the sessions</p> <p>The young carers who attend the Youth Club are given a break from their duties and are able to speak to a youth worker to see if any additional help or support is needed. Young Carers ID Cards have been developed and given out to the young carers.</p> <p>More young people are aware of the issues around being a young carers and where to go for support.</p>	

Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total – April to September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
1	Number of full day childcare places provided	2400	2426	2373	Increase
2	% of 5 year olds receiving education through medium of Welsh	18.5% (279 pupils - 2021-2022 Academic Year)	19.7% (287 pupils -2022-2023 Academic Year)	Data not available yet	Increase
3	% of year 11 pupils studying Welsh first language	12.71% (2020-2021 Academic Year)	13.06% (2021-2022 Academic Year)	Data not available yet	Increase
4	% year 11 leavers who are NEET.	2.41% (2020-2021 Academic Year)	2.2% (2021-2022 Academic Year)	Available annually	Decrease
5	% pupil attendance in primary school.	89.23% (2021-2022 Academic Year)	89.8% (2022-2023 Academic Year – provisional data)	Provisional data for the month of September 2023 shows a slight increase on September 2022.	Increase
6	% pupil attendance in secondary school.	85.52% (2021-2022 Academic Year)	85.98% (2022-2023 Academic Year – provisional data)	Provisional data for the month of September 2023 shows a slight increase on September 2022	Increase
7	Number of pupils permanently excluded.	20 (2021-2022 Academic Year)	47 (2022-2023 Academic Year)	2023/24 Autumn term data will be available in January 2024	Decrease
8	Number of days pupils have been given a fixed exclusion.	2531 (2021-2022 Academic Year)	4097 (2022-2023 Academic Year)	803 (month of September 2023)	Decrease
9	Number of 16-18 year olds registered to vote.	1,833 (measured prior to May 2022 local elections)		No elections during 2023.	Increase



**CORPORATE PLAN / STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

**Half year progress April 2023 to September 2023**

**Well-being Objective 2**

**All communities are thriving and sustainable**

Objective
People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>Page 145</p> <p>1. Enhanced support is given to those who are at risk or living in poverty.</p>	<p>a. Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it and identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed.</p>	<p>Communications has remained a key element in the response to the Cost of Living crisis during the first six months of 2023-2024. NPT stakeholder e-bulletin issued in September 2023, highlighted new information about the support available from local and national organisations to help people who are struggling with the cost of living – e.g., The Digital Poverty Alliance scheme, NPT’s Christmas Jobs Fair, and the UK Government’s new website of energy saving advice: <a href="https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/energy-saving-advice/">https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/energy-saving-advice/</a></p> <p>NPT Council’s social media has been utilised to promote schemes such as the School Uniform Grant, Free School Meals, Food and Fun, as well as free activities for children and families during the summer holidays (July-August 2023).</p> <p>Recent social media activity in September has included promotion of the Port Talbot Opportunity Hub, NPT Employability recruitment events, the ‘Gathering Place’s’ community-driven initiative, as well as signposting to help and support available with the cost of living this winter <a href="https://beta.npt.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/help-with-the-cost-of-living/">https://beta.npt.gov.uk/housing-and-benefits/help-with-the-cost-of-living/</a></p> <p>In September, Warm Wales moved into ‘phase 2’ of their operation. They are taking an outreach approach in order to reach those members of the community not previously engaged with, taking a particular focus on those who don’t have access to the internet. Activities include attending community events and venues (such as Warm Hubs), as well as building networks to support with cross-referrals.</p> <p><u>Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)</u> – The Corporate Policy Support Officer (Tackling Poverty) took up their role in July-23; they have undertaken training, conducted research and attended webinars between August-September 2023.</p> <p>Initial areas of focus have been identified (gaps in help to address) – i.e., Pension Credit, Healthy Start Vouchers – and once the DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) is signed off, the officer will initiate the first targeted intervention campaign for winter 2023-24.</p> <p>During the warmer spring/summer months, NPT’s ‘Help with the Cost of Living’ webpage continued to receive views. Between 1st April and 30th September 2023, there were 8,451 views of the landing page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top 3 most viewed pages from the landing page were Household Bills (2,423), Emergency Support (1,325), and Claiming Benefits (1,132) – between 18<sup>th</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</li> </ul> <p>Welsh Government have confirmed that we will be receiving the Food Hardship Relief Scheme again also known as the Food Poverty Grant. It is estimated that the grant will be received in readiness for Quarter 3.</p>	<p>RAG Status</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>b. Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation, reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root cause of poverty.</p>	<p>In July 2023, the Corporate Policy Officer (Tackling Poverty) took up their post; they will be supporting the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership in revisiting the work begun prior to the pandemic with The Bevan Foundation in order to develop a poverty plan.</p> <p>The officer re-established contact with The Bevan Foundation (Aug-23) who have provided suggested reading material to support the officer in understanding the picture of poverty in the current climate, as well as the report produced by The Bevan Foundation about poverty in Neath Port Talbot (as a response to the symposium in 2019).</p> <p>Following completion of an agreed Action Plan for winter 23/24 (an output of the autumn poverty workshop – October 2023), and the identification of medium to long-term actions, the Corporate Policy Officer (Tackling Poverty) will explore options for The Bevan Foundation to support the work of the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership in identifying objectives and setting relevant actions to tackle poverty in Neath Port Talbot.</p> <p>While there is no impact to measure at the six-month mark, the relationship with The Bevan Foundation has been re-established and this will be taken forward in the next 3-6 months. The aim is to see how The Bevan Foundation can help NPT Council to tackle poverty.</p>	
	<p>c. Work with partners to help people experiencing hardship to improve their circumstances.</p>	<p>In Qtr. 1 the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership’s Steering Group reviewed the output of the Spring Workshop (March 2023), which identified 6 focus areas impacting citizens and communities in NPT as a result of the cost-of-living crisis: Energy, Food, Debt, Housing, Mental Health, and Basic Skills.</p> <p>The feedback was incorporated into the finalised Cost of Living Report (May/July-23), which was sent as an appendix to the Neath Port Talbot PSB’s (Public Service Board) letter to Welsh Government (July 2023) expressing concern at the level of hardship being experienced by the citizens of NPT as a result of the Cost of Living crisis.</p> <p><u>Hardship Relief Scheme</u> – This has continued to be delivered by Warm Wales throughout the first six months of the financial year (Apr-Sep 2023), with interventions including Argos vouchers, white goods, energy company payments, water payments, and home maintenance.</p> <p><u>Third Sector Discretionary Cost of Living Crisis Grant Scheme</u> – In Sep 2023, NPT Council partnered with Neath Port Talbot CVS to launch a one-off grant scheme aimed at supporting third sector organisations that have experienced increased demand for their services due to the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Members of the Partnership’s wider Reference Group were asked to align themselves to one (or more) of the 6 focus areas – 19 responses were received.</p> <p>Hardship Relief Scheme – Warm Wales delivered 1,013 interventions between Apr-Sep 2023.</p> <p>Third Sector Discretionary Cost of Living Crisis Grant Scheme – applications close on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023.</p>	
	<p>d. Identify how the council can bring its services closer to where people live, helping to sustain key local facilities that act as community hubs.</p>	<p>Work has been undertaken to scope out opportunities to utilise two council properties for community activities. Engagement with local communities in the Afan Cluster and with specialist groups has been completed and opportunities for enhancing existing community hubs are now being scoped.</p> <p>Community members feel listened to and have offered opportunities to improve their local community.</p>	
<p>2. Worked with communities to develop a clear and detailed</p>	<p>a. Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what’s strong about each</p>	<p>Mapping of community local assets has been completed in partnership with CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) and is available for staff to access this information via Geo Discover.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>understanding of what is strong about each community and what communities want to achieve for the future. People are involved in decisions that affect them; more people are involved in community life.</p>	<p>community) and mapping community vulnerabilities.</p>		
	<p>b. Coordination of funding opportunities for communities based on place-based model/needs.</p>	<p>SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) has given the Local Authority an opportunity to support communities via the Sustainable Communities Growth Fund. £1 million to support the poverty and equality themes.</p> <p>The fund has been open for the past 2 months and applications are being developed by applicants currently. The panel is in place and will meet on a monthly basis. A number of different organisations have enquired including business and the third sector.</p> <p>The council's Third Sector Grants supported 43 third sector organisations for 2023-2024, with a total grant of £722,310 being paid out across the year. The council's application window for the grant opened between August 7<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup> inviting applications for 1 year funding for 2024-2025.</p>	
	<p>c. Increase the number of people helped to connect with local information care and support networks by working the community and other partners to identify opportunities.</p>	<p>Strengthening of the Prevention and Early Intervention model within Adult Services continues to progress. A review of the community connecting team has commenced with a view to reshaping the offer of support to be able to meet community/service need.</p> <p>Development of "Our NPT" digital platform continues to be co-developed with a number of community groups. The platform will provide easy access to local information, learning and community groups.</p> <p>Community Groups are being supported to consider digitisation of their group activities where possible. 5 groups have already been supported.</p> <p>Housebound residents will be able to access community activities reducing isolation and loneliness.</p>	
	<p>d. Create a network of neighbourhood forums to increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward.</p>	<p>In partnership with Neath CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) 3 Neighbourhood forum sessions have been delivered across the Borough. Facilitated by CVS, the sessions provided an opportunity for community members to come together and talk about the issues/opportunities within their area. Approximately 30 people attended each event and feedback was very positive.</p> <p>The Aging Well officer has worked with and supported several older person's groups (55+) to talk about what is strong about their communities. Emerging key themes from the engagement work include Transport, access to information and access to timely primary health services.</p>	
	<p>e. Continue to promote and develop our 'NPTBuyLocal' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local business.</p>	<p>The NPTBuyLocal website is still accessible.</p>	
	<p>f. Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.</p>	<p>The Council continues to work with Consultants 'the Urbanists' to produce Place Plans for our three main town centres, but also several secondary towns such as Ystalyfera and Briton Ferry. In addition, Place Plans will also be produced for several tertiary settlements such as Taibach, Cwmafan and Gwaun Cae Gurwen. These Place Plans will provide a pipeline of Regeneration projects that will be able to take advantage of future funding streams. We also continue to consult with the Design Commission for Wales as part of this process</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
3. Improved the range and quality of informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents, including unpaid carers.	a. Bring forward proposals for the further development of adult and children social care services.	A review of unpaid carers is underway with a view to strengthening an earlier offer of support and identification with a view to avoiding crisis along with transitional support throughout the caring journey.	
4. Worked with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse.	a. Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour.	<p>The Community Safety Partnership Board has met during Q1 and Q2. The Board continues to be coordinated by the Principal Officer of Community Safety, co-chaired by the Strategic Manager for Partnerships and Community Cohesion, NPTCBC and Superintendent for CSP (Community Safety Partnership), South Wales Police.</p> <p>During December 2022, a development day was held to realign our priorities for the next 3 years. The priority areas are as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence</li> <li>2. Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>3. Substance Use</li> <li>4. Serious Violence</li> <li>5. Acquisitive Crime – including Crime Prevention and Community Engagement</li> <li>6. Community Cohesion</li> </ol> <p>At each meeting the board receive updates on each priority area – in the form of a highlight report and a verbal update. These updates are accompanied by performance reports from South Wales Police and updates from the other responsible authorities; Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board and the Probation Service. Information discussed at the meetings is shared with the West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board, and the Public Service Board to ensure clear communication lines, shared information and support to remove any barriers.</p> <p>The 6 priority areas have formed the basis for a new draft Community Safety Strategy which will go out to public consultation in the new year. The Board will continue to monitor emerging trends, patterns, and performance data. This information will be used to steer campaigns, community engagements, new projects and initiatives that the Community Safety Team will deliver on, in partnership with other responsible authorities and local partner agencies.</p>	
	b. Hold engagement events to promote community safety and crime prevention related campaigns/initiatives.	<p>The Community Safety Team commenced a trial of a new approach to community engagements; delivering bespoke crime prevention events in different areas of the borough, adjusting the partners who attend to meet the needs of the local communities, taking into account local intelligence and anecdotal information.</p> <p>Areas visited during Q1;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'A Safer Dulais Valley'</li> <li>• 'A Safer Cadoxton'</li> <li>• 'A Safer Glynneath'</li> </ul> <p>Also during Q1, Crucial Crew took place; Community Safety's flagship event, which has been running for 27 years. Each year, at least 1500 Year 6 pupils attend the event, and visit a series of 10 minute safety workshops.</p> <p>The aim of Crucial Crew is to make sure young people stay safe over their summer holidays and during their transition from primary to secondary school.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 149</p>		<p>Workshops include Fire Safety, Water Safety, Healthy Relationships, Road Safety, Railway Safety and many more.</p> <p>This year, we were also supported by Ysgol Cwm Brombils Year 10 drama students, who provided a 10 minute peer education production to every school, which was incredibly emotive and thought provoking.</p> <p>Various Paws on Patrol events were also held during Q1, to promote the scheme which encourages dog walkers to be our eyes and ears in the community, reporting in the issues they may see.</p> <p>In addition the above, our social media presences remains strong, with good reach and levels of engagement.</p> <p>Bespoke Community Safety Events continued with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'A Safer Sandfields'</li> <li>• 'A Safer Ystalyfera'</li> </ul> <p>The team also attended the Emergency Services family fun day at Victoria Gardens and issued crime prevention advice to over 400 people.</p> <p>Other events attended included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPT Family Play Day</li> <li>• Taibach Party in The Park</li> <li>• Paws on Patrol with Dogs Trust at Gnoll Park and Bryn Park</li> <li>• Fairyland Family Fun Day</li> <li>• Skewen Family Fun Day</li> </ul> <p>The team has engaged with over 4000 residents at in person events. This engagement ensures residents are better able to protect themselves from crime, but they also know what to report and how to report, should they find themselves victim of a community safety related issue such as; domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, burglary, theft etc.</p>	
	<p>5. Supported the development of more community groups with an increase in the number of volunteers.</p>	<p>a. Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support at the neighbourhood level.</p> <p>b. Work alongside the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service to encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups across the county borough.</p> <p>c. Finalise the Council's Volunteering Policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer.</p>	<p>Loneliness and Social Isolation strategy and implementation plan is being developed with the community and is due to be finalised by January 2024. Over 15+ groups have been involved in the development of the implementation plan.</p> <p>Funding to support initiatives is available to support implementation and will be facilitated by NPT CVS in the new year. The money will be available to community and grass roots groups and organisations.</p> <p>Partnership working with CVS continues to be strengthened with regular engagement in particular looking at Neighbourhood Forums, Social Prescribing and Volunteering.</p> <p>Meetings have taken place corporately to scope out the different volunteering offers across the Council with a view to collating the different policies and procedures and drafting a clear volunteering policy.</p>
<p>6. Developed our valleys, villages and towns.</p>	<p>a. Clean up, Green up initiative to be continued and extend work to improve</p>	<p>A £4.25m capital additional works programme was allocated to various different green up and clean up initiatives in 2022. During the first quarter of 2023/24, the delivery of a number of those initiatives has progressed including the renovation of play grounds such as Talbot Memorial Park and the adventure Playground at the Gnoll Estate Country Park</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 150</p>	<p>the cleanliness, environment and safety of towns, villages and valleys.</p>	<p>and delivery of new vehicles such as a new pot-hole pro machine, new road sweepers and street vacuums. Procurement exercises are also ongoing for certain initiatives, such as regenerating the playground at Aberavon seafront and arboriculture and bus shelter improvement works throughout the borough. The clean-up and green up initiative has already made a significant impact throughout our communities and more will be realised as the programme is being delivered.</p>	
	<p>b. Strengthen our neighbourhood management services.</p>	<p>The 12 additional neighbourhood services operational staff members have been focusing on cleaning up our communities through delivering services such as weed ripping, weed spraying, overgrowth cut back, pathway edging, preparation work for organised events and generally reacting to works demands from the community and members. This has resulted in some excellent feedback being received from members of the public, along with elected member for which the team now have more capacity to enable them to fulfil their roles as community champions.</p>	
	<p>c. Ensure effective engagement and communication of what is being delivered in valleys, villages and towns.</p>	<p><b>CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT:</b></p> <p><u>Let's Keep talking:</u></p> <p>The 'Let's Keep Talking' campaign ran from 29.6.23 to 8.10.23. Responses from this phase will be used to inform the draft budget and draft corporate plan for 2024 and beyond. Engagement activities were designed to ensure they were accessible to people across the county borough and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an online questionnaire</li> <li>• printed questionnaires in 40 public buildings across the county borough (21 of these in valleys communities)</li> <li>• Tai Tarian also distributed printed copies of the questionnaires and information to their Haven Housing for over 55s. There are 15 Haven schemes in Neath Port Talbot, 9 of which are in valleys communities</li> <li>• Attendance at 18 meetings and community events by Cabinet Members, The Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Services with officer support (6 of these took place in valleys communities although we were unable to identify any events in the Amman Valley to attend during the campaign)</li> <li>• A series of online focus groups to help us gain a better understanding of the issues in our valleys communities</li> </ul> <p><u>NPT Citizens' Panel:</u></p> <p>In August, officers met with Opinion Research Services (ORS) to discuss a relaunch and recruitment drive for the Citizens' Panel, to start in October during Local Democracy Week. Responses will be analysed and targeted recruitment will take place in the new year to ensure the panel is as representative of the adult population of Neath Port Talbot as possible (this will include geographic location).</p> <p><b>The NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP):</b></p> <p>The NPT CoP was established in 2019 and membership has grown to 60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work. Members of the CoP, such as the Local Area Coordinators, Youth Services etc. support the council to reach stakeholders in specific communities, such as the valleys. The NPT CoP continued to meet on a six-weekly basis from April to September and have been instrumental in supporting the council's consultation and engagement activity amongst their stakeholder groups.</p> <p><b>Communication activity:</b></p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
Page 151		<p>18 Vlogs with Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Members 88 Press releases posted on NPT website newsroom and issued to media</p> <p>Social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook – 789 posts</li> <li>• Twitter – 1202 posts</li> <li>• Instagram – 83 posts</li> <li>• LinkedIn – 65 posts</li> </ul>	
	d. Agree how place plans can be evolved to shape activity into the future years, ensuring such plans bring physical regeneration within the wider council offer and carefully targeting Shared Prosperity Funding and other funding sources.	<p>The council is working with consultants 'The Urbanists' to deliver Place Plans for our three main commercial town centres of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, and also what are considered to be our secondary towns and tertiary settlements e.g. Briton Ferry, Ystalyfera, Taibach, Cwmavon and Gwaun Cae Gurwen.</p> <p>These Place Plans will identify opportunities for improving the physical environment and street-scenes of these centres and settlements via a pipeline of regeneration projects. These will include improvements to commercial premises, the conversion of disused commercial space into residential accommodation, as well as new public realm projects and green infrastructure. The delivery of these programmes will be supported by the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns' Place making grants, as well as the UK Governments Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>Consultation on these Place Plans will commence late 2023/early 2024. Following this process, the Place Plans will form the frame for a wider NPT Regeneration Strategy, which will then dovetail with the council's Economic Recovery Plan.</p>	
	e. Refresh the Compact with the voluntary sector and the Charter with Town and Community Councils.	Discussion scheduled at Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum – 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 to set out timeline and approach to refresh the Compact with the voluntary sector. Discussions scheduled at Town/Community Councils Liaison Forum – 4 <sup>th</sup> December again to set out timeline and approach.	
	f. Create place plans for the 3 towns and 2 district centres and reset town centre stakeholder collaboration arrangements to ensure effective engagement by the council.	As above	
	g. Agree how town centre aspirations can be developed and fed into longer term plans and funding opportunities.	As above	
	h. Improved the quality of the public realm.	As above	
7. Council staff will understand the principles of community development and have the skills and confidence to put those principles into practice.	a. Develop a training programme for staff with regards to community development principles. Ensuring staff feel supported and confident in their delivery.	An eLearning video and training programme has been development to provide staff with an introduction to Neath Port Talbot including its heritage, history and culture. Once launched in early December this module will be available to staff as part of their induction.	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>8. Worked with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; helped residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes.</p>	<p>a. Working closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to increase the number of interim and move on accommodation units.</p>	<p>Leased units from Registered Social Landlords has increased by 26 units in the first 2 quarters. This now takes the total of leased units to 68.</p> <p>The increase number of units means there are less families placed in hotels for any period of time. Some families are initially placed in a hotel but will be moved to a self-contained unit in a much shorter time frame due to the increase</p>	
	<p>b. Implement the Rapid Housing Plan.</p>	<p>The Rapid Rehousing Coordinator has been in post since May. This is to implement a 5 year plan so the tasks highlighted in the plan will be worked on in a prioritised way over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Discussions have already started with Registered Social Landlords in terms of how current working practices will need to change in offer for the Rapid Rehousing Plan to be successful. Several papers on the proposals have either been to Cabinet/SMT (Strategic Management Team) etc., or will be over the coming months so all proposed changes are highlighted</p>	
	<p>c. Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function and increase the number of units of housing. Prioritise those in temporary accommodation in need of affordable housing and housing for those with care and support needs.</p>	<p>The service has submitted a business case that relates to necessary changes that mean the service can, moving forward, operate in a way that is fit for purpose taking into account the significant changes in demand and the housing crisis that is currently affecting the service that can be provided. Part of this business case includes developing a new strategic team to take forward the work plan within the new housing and homelessness strategy</p> <p>The business case is yet to have final sign off but the intention (subject to sign off) is to create the new team for the new financial year so further progress can be reported at the appropriate time</p>	
<p>9. Improved digital connectivity across Neath Port Talbot.</p>	<p>d. Continue to provide support to those that are unable to access the internet.</p>	<p>We have secured funding (SPF) to employ 3 Digital Inclusion Officers to work under the Digital Inclusion Ambassador. This has enabled the Digital Inclusion Ambassador to engage with the communities, to market the service and increase the number of sessions the service provides. Support given in these sessions include downloading and saving documents from and email, to assisting with applying for a bus pass online. Assisting participants to take their first steps online using the library computer and using google maps.</p> <p>During Adult Learners' week the team promoted the service. Recruiting new participants to join the groups by putting on demos and giving out learning packs across the public libraries.</p> <p>Engaging with 60 different participants with ongoing or one off support with digital inclusion across public libraries and community centres, Supporting with digital inclusion, digital skills, and accessing digital services/devices.</p>	



Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total to date April – September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
1.	Number of active volunteers (Safe & Well).	12	11	23	Increase
2.	Number of volunteer hours (Safe & Well).	New performance measure	Not previously collected	682.5	n/a – New Measure
3.	Number of social and micro enterprises supported.	New performance measure	N/A	481	n/a – New Measure
4.	Number of community owned or managed community assets.	New performance measure	108 of NPT Council buildings or assets leased to voluntary sector groups and 17 to Town and Community Councils	109 of NPT Council buildings or assets leased to voluntary sector groups and 18 to Town and Community Councils	n/a – New Measure
Page 153	% increase in mental well-being in adults.	New performance measure	National Survey for Wales - Mental wellbeing score 48 (15 of 22 Welsh local authorities in 2022/23 had a score of 48 or 49)	Annual Data	n/a – New Measure
	Number of people supported into employment with a long-term health condition/disability	New performance measure	New performance measure	42	n/a – New Measure
	Number of self-reported well-being following a period of intervention via Prevention and Early Intervention provision (Local Area Coordination, Community Independence Service or Community Connecting Team).	New performance measure	Not previously collected	Unable to report currently as in initial phase of piloting wellbeing measure tool	n/a – New Measure
8.	% of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live.	66%	Not measured by National Survey for Wales	Annual Data	Increase
9.	% of high risk victims who engage with the Independent Domestic Violence Service (IDVA).	67%	68%	69%	Increase
10.	Number of people subject to the Anti-Social Behaviour Warning process.	6	6	7	Decrease
11.	Number/% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless.	60.67%	53.7%	57.9%	Maintain
12.	Increase in people engaged with digital technology via digital inclusion initiatives to aid their independence.	New performance measure	New performance measure	385	n/a – New Measure
13.	% households with access to the internet.	98%	98%	98.7%	Increase

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**CORPORATE PLAN / STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

**Half year progress April 2023 to September 2023**

**Well-being Objective 3**

***Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations***

Objective
Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 155</p> <p>1. Worked with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough; by delivering the new culture strategy.</p>	<p>a. Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>Work has been undertaken over the past few months including a heritage volunteer event in Victoria Gardens to promote the work of local groups and societies. The turnout at the event was excellent, with an average of 30 people attending each stall.</p> <p>Working with Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services on a Networking and Celebration event, which will take place on the 28<sup>th</sup> October at the Plaza.</p> <p>Promoting local Heritage groups events through @HeritageNPT on Twitter and Facebook</p>	
	<p>b. Expand use of council's What's On database to amplify community messages.</p>	<p>The use of the 'What's On' pages to the NPT Heritage network has been encouraged with delivery of training sessions to help the groups with this. Guides have been produced to support groups to upload information to the 'What's On' pages. Points of contact has been determined to fix issues community groups were having.</p> <p>Library services have offered the groups and societies a digital What's On screen within the libraries to promote their meetings, talks and events after we were asked where they could put up their paper posters. We explained that we no longer have notice boards for paper copies and asked the groups to send us a digital copy of their poster instead – nothing received to date.</p>	
	<p>c. Finalise the Heritage &amp; Culture Strategies, agree priorities and determine partnership governance strategy.</p>	<p>Destination and Culture strategies were adopted by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> September. Governance structure is an early action of the culture strategy and meetings have been set up with Swansea University to determine scope. Framework and action plans created governance structure to be determined in Qtr.4</p> <p>Still determining how best to launch both strategies. An agreed action plan has been developed for future delivery.</p> <p>Draft Heritage Strategy presented at All Members seminar, which took place during September. The Strategy was then agreed by Cabinet and went out for final round of consultation which closed 5<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>National Lottery Heritage Fund recently announced Neath Port Talbot as a "Priority Place" – Only one in Wales.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	d. Promote the £2.5 million Shared Prosperity funded Heritage, Culture and Events fund and highlight opportunities to community groups;	<p>Project application and guidance documentation finalised. Support available to guide project applicants on eligibility and criteria. 2 Officers recruited as part of the project team in July 23. Officers will manage the fund and support project applicants.</p> <p>As at end of September, 27 expressions of interest received from a variety public, private and voluntary sector organisations. 1 project approved at September funding panel for Aspire To Be to deliver an 'Autumn Rugby League International Event' at Ynys Park, Cwmavon.</p>	
	e. Continue to seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance, culture and heritage.	<p>£300,000 secured from Visit Wales' Brilliant Basics Scheme to deliver car parking improvements at Neath Abbey Ruins, as part of a wider project proposal in partnership with Cadw. Project team, which consists of NPT Council and Cadw officers, have met to initiate discussions.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing relating to the wider project which aims to develop a visitor centre and visitor facilities which will provide a link between the Neath Abbey Ruins and Neath Abbey Ironworks - drawing the local heritage attractions together.</p>	
	f. Implement our Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.	<p>The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was adopted in July 2023 and has since been published.</p> <p>'Hyder-ish' sessions were due to commence in September but were postponed due to capacity. These are sessions for Welsh speakers that can help alleviate the pressure around speaking Welsh will distracting with activities. These will commence in November 2023.</p> <p>Economic Development's Business Services Team have added sections into their enquiry form if businesses would like assistance with Welsh language to raising awareness within the business community</p> <p>Discussion have started with People and Organisational Development Service to incorporate Welsh language levels into the iTrent system. To encourage staff to reassess their language skills against speaking, writing and understanding Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh language awareness, use and visibility are key components of both the Culture Strategy and the Destination Management Plan, which were adopted 20<sup>th</sup> September.</p>	
	g. Consider the State of Nature report to determine the priorities of Neath Port Talbot Nature Partnership.	<p>State of Nature report and Nature Recovery Action Plan (SON and NRAP) has been published by the NPT Nature Partnership. The NPT State of Nature and Nature Recovery Plan Report is published via the newly created website <a href="https://www.npt.gov.uk/state-of-nature">The State of Nature of NPT   Neath Port Talbot Nature   NPTLNP (naturenpt.cymru)</a> State of Nature in NPT is not considered resilient and the report includes actions for all partners.</p> <p>This report has been reviewed and recommendations have been included as part of the council's revised Biodiversity Duty Plan. The Plan is progressing through governance procedures and will be presented to full Council in November 2023. Additional work to improve resilience of our local nature will be necessary and will be looked at via a number of council actions to deliver improvements for biodiversity under the NPT SON and NRAP.</p> <p>The NPT Nature Partnership is presenting the State Of Nature report to Councillors at a Members Seminar in October 2023 and the Public Services Board in January 2024 with a launch event for SON and NRAP planned for February 2024. Through Welsh Government Local Places for Nature Funding, the NPT Partnership and NPT Council Countryside and</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>Wildlife Team have commenced delivery of a number of projects to address needed action of the SON and NRAP and are supporting local community groups to make a difference in their local area.</p> <p>In addition to this work the ‘Working with Nature’ project covers management of council owned nature sites including local nature reserves; support for volunteering at such sites, awareness raising activities connecting people to nature e.g. guided walks and biodiversity training for local people. Sites include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dyffryn Rhondda Railway Meadows</li> <li>2. Abercregan Meadow</li> <li>3. Giant's Grave</li> <li>4. Maes yr Afon C&amp;C parallel to Parr Avenue C&amp;C management</li> <li>5. Richard Burton Trail – patches that need vegetation/C&amp;C management</li> <li>6. Coed Bach and Y Cwm Meadow Cut</li> <li>7. Maerdy Playing Fields</li> <li>8. Eaglesbush Valley LNR</li> <li>9. Bryn Tip LNR</li> <li>10. Cwn Du Glen LNR</li> <li>11. Glanrhyd LNR</li> <li>12. Swansea Canal LNR</li> <li>13. Tonmawr Heathland Restoration Site</li> <li>14. Llandarcy Village Green</li> <li>15. Tonna Woodland</li> <li>16. Stratton Way Pond</li> <li>17. Shelone Woods</li> <li>18. Coed Cefnllan-isaf Pontardawe</li> <li>19. Tonmawr water treatment works SINC</li> <li>20. Wood street stepping stones site</li> </ol> <p>We have progressed the creation of new meadow sites at Dwr y Felin and Caewathan for people to enjoy as natural green spaces. There have been biodiversity improvements and additional biodiversity features at Talbot Park Stepping Stone nature reserve and Glyncorwg Primary School. These projects will be ongoing for this year and into next year.</p> <p>Local Nature Partnership Fund – a fund for nature improvements/ delivery of SON and NRAP Actions for community groups and organisations has been launched. Funding for the first round of projects will be confirmed in Quarter 3 with further rounds open into next year.</p> <p>Events and awareness raising initiatives can be viewed via the NPT Wildlife Social media pages or via the NPT Nature partnership website <a href="https://www.naturenpt.cymru/">The State of Nature of NPT   Neath Port Talbot Nature   NPTLNP (naturenpt.cymru)</a></p>	
	<p>h. Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>Destination Management Plan which was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> September has been co-produced with public, private and voluntary sector visitor economy partners. Culture Strategy has again been co-produced with a governance structure that is independent from the council. Partnership working is also a key component of the Heritage strategy.</p> <p>The SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) funded Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund is open to our strategic partners (in addition to private and voluntary sectors). The team are currently working with a range of partners including NRW (Natural Resources Wales), Bannau Brycheiniog, Cadw and partner organisations to develop proposals.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>In addition, an application has been submitted for National Lottery funding of £139,000 to develop the 'Canal Connections' project undertaking a feasibility study for the Neath and Tennant Canals to look at potential options for improvement.</p> <p>Strong relationship with NPTCVS, working in partnership to deliver a variety of heritage events.</p>	
	<p>i. Support those who have settled in Neath Port Talbot to promote their culture and heritage within the community.</p>	<p>Discussions are taking place with relevant service areas and external organisations, e.g. NPT BME Community Association, to explore opportunities to promote and celebrate the cultures and heritage of our communities.</p>	
<p>Page 158</p> <p>2. Worked with communities and partners to engender a greater sense of stewardship, encouraging them to take a more active role in the ongoing management and improvement of their local environment</p>	<p>a. Continue to support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.</p> <p>b. Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>The number of volunteers working on our sites have is currently around 79, in addition to benefits for nature at our sites through appropriate management and monitoring the volunteering opportunities benefit volunteers health and wellbeing, knowledge and skills development. Volunteers are working on a variety of sites throughout the county through the Connecting GI project, projects at Craig Gwladys Country Park, and through the Lost Peatlands Project. Volunteering continuing, albeit with a slight break on some sites due to a lack of funding. Welsh Government funding has now been secured and volunteering will be able to restart on those sites.</p> <p>Local Places for Nature funding for the Working with Nature project has been secured for 2 years. Contractors for both volunteer coordination and awareness raising/connecting people with nature have been confirmed and volunteering at sites as part of the Working with Nature Project is now restarting. Volunteering on Lost Peatlands sites has seen an increase in this quarter including corporate volunteering.</p> <p>Volunteer co-ordination and nature/well-being events are being planned as part of the Working with Nature Project funded by Welsh Government under Local Places for Nature (see above). In addition to those sites where volunteering is already supported through Lost Peatlands and Craig Gwladus Projects, additional sites are being made available for volunteering – more than ever before. Numbers of volunteers are expected to increase in following quarters.</p>	
<p>3. Embedded the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum and ensure all schools have access to environmental and outdoor learning opportunities.</p>	<p>a. Focus on supporting new school curriculum and develop opportunities out in the community for children to engage.</p>	<p>Continuing to meet with a school's learning teams directly and on training days.</p> <p>45 teachers over 2 sessions attended.</p> <p>11 school visits including 3 guided walks around Neath Town Centre</p> <p>18 School sessions delivered (490 participants) between June and September</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status															
	<p>b. Extend opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>‘Hands On History’ Sessions (informal learning) throughout libraries during school holidays as an off shoot of the Young Archaeologists Club (currently full with an increasing waiting list).</p> <p>Monthly local history talks program / events throughout libraries for adults. Talks to community groups and residential homes.</p> <p><b>Class visits/ Young Archaeologists Club / Hands on History :</b>            April – June: 261 young people engaged            July – September: 12 sessions: 180 participants engaged</p> <p><b>Local History Talks / Events / Community Sessions:</b>            April – June: 184 participants engaged            July – September: 21 sessions: 210 participants</p>																
	<p>c. Continue with Lost Peatlands to develop school grounds to improve biodiversity and in relation to Glynccorrwg Primary – provide a space for continued engagement with the outdoors through teacher led activities on school grounds.</p>	<p>Lost Peatlands Project continuing and significant improvements have been made to Glynccorrwg Primary School grounds, with additional funding also provided by Welsh Government Local Places for Nature. New outdoor learning lessons currently being planned for the new term. Glynccorrwg Primary School grounds have benefited from Lost Peatlands work.</p> <p>Lessons and additional features installed at Glynccorrwg Primary and other schools in the Lost Peatlands Project area, have been very successful.</p> <p>Schools lessons and trips have been very well received at all the schools in the Lost Peatlands area. School based learning objectives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How peatbogs are formed – deeper understanding of the role of sphagnum moss (links to peatbog gardens installed previously)</li> <li>• Properties and uses of peat – importance of peat free compost</li> <li>• Reasons and techniques for restoring peatlands – bog in a bottle, bog gardens, sphagnum moss water retention, dam experiments</li> <li>• Deeper understanding of peatbog fauna and flora – top 10 species</li> <li>• Understanding of climate as opposed to weather</li> </ul> <p>Children have been learning about peat bogs and their restoration and have even been up to our peat bogs to see them first hand. Significant improvement of school grounds has also been delivered, with Glynccorrwg seeing the most benefit – moving from almost entirely concrete play areas to including wildflower planted beds planted by the children. Further improvements are planned as part of the Local Places for Nature Project for subsequent quarters.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Current class size</th> <th>Max number of children taught from that class during one of the sessions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Croeserw</td> <td>20</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Glynccorrwg</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cymer Afan</td> <td>32</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pen Afan</td> <td>21</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School	Current class size	Max number of children taught from that class during one of the sessions	Croeserw	20	16	Glynccorrwg	23	23	Cymer Afan	32	29	Pen Afan	21	21	
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2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
4. Implemented our leisure strategy to improve access to high quality leisure and recreational opportunities.	a. Complete the transfer of Celtic Leisure back to the council by March 2024.	Internal working groups re-established and in plans formed. Costs increases around the staff transfer and ICT are a concern. Date of transfer being discussed as part of the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan).	
	b. Refocus the strategic business plan for leisure services delivered by the council and bring forward medium term business plan.	3 year medium term financial plan targets for reducing costs have been put forward for consideration. Individual sites working up the detailed business case and investment requests. Re-profiled MTFP targets have been submitted for all leisure sites for the next 3 years – making a significant saving.  Good progress with indoor leisure with excellent financial performance forecast this year and continued growth expected into 2024-25 and beyond.	
	c. Start work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation.	Work is directly linked to the future of Celtic Leisure. PASS (Physical Activity and Sport Service) and National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) teams are directly managed by Transition Executive to ensure work is closer aligned. PASS team now utilising leisure centres more, with NERS team working closer with colleagues within Celtic Leisure.	
	d. Improve adult participation in leisure and recreation.	Support provided to those referred to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) by GPs practices. The PASS team assist adults within a club environment but do not physically deliver adult participation (this would require an Active Adult) officer due to restraints of current workloads.	
5. Developed a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy	a. Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment.	Clear action plans approved as part of the Culture, Destination and Heritage strategies.  Discussions are underway to look at the reuse of Neath library. Bids are being developed for submission to SPF to support culture staff.	
6. Worked with partners to establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally; implemented and delivered our destination management plan.	a. Administer the Shared Prosperity Funded Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund to enable public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver priority projects as identified in the Culture strategy, Heritage strategy and Destination Management Plan.	Project application and guidance documentation completed. Project team commenced employment in early July 23.	
	b. Deliver the Shared Prosperity Funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place Campaign to raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and change perceptions of the area by residents and investors across the South Wales region.	Procurement exercise completed and external communications agency in place to work with the Visitor Economy Team to deliver the Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaign is now complete.  Planning of marketing activities across both campaigns is underway. The Destination Marketing campaign launched in August 2023 with the release of the 'Adventure Awaits' destination video. In addition, the Heart of Steel installation was placed at Margam Park between the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> August to encourage visitor interaction with the campaign. Good progress has been made to date with marketing targets.  Pride of Place campaign due to go live mid-October.	
	c. Deliver the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor Levelling	Gnoll Estate Country Park project at detailed design stage. Pre application consultation has been completed and planning applications submitted. Further planning applications to be submitted as required.	



2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
Page 161	Up Fund Project at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.	Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan scheme is currently in community consultation stage. The first of three consultation drop-in sessions commenced 28 <sup>th</sup> August. Online survey will remain live until early November. Negotiations with land owners are on-going.	
	d. Deliver priorities for the visitor economy as set out within the new Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan	Destination Management Plan approved by Cabinet on 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2023. Next phase of implementation will be to establish the Destination Management Leadership Group to deliver the plan over the next five years.	
	e. Strengthen the strategic approach to tourism and visitor economy	Destination Management Plan approved. As detailed above Destination Management Leadership Group to be established and a range of partners are engaged in developing projects which will deliver against the actions in the plan.	
	f. Agree Afan Forest Park Masterplan and strengthen partnership arrangements with Natural Resources Wales. Work closely with the Wildfox investors to maximise the benefits of that proposal.	Afan Forest Park Masterplan is in draft stage, requires further consultation with Natural Resources Wales. Meeting postponed to November 2023 to discuss partnership approach.  Advert has been issued for the lease of Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre, closing date December. An advertisement has also been issued to secure a short-term concession to be located in the car park, which will bridge the gap until a lease holder is secured for the main centre.	
	g. Create a masterplan for Aberavon Seafront	Procurement paperwork currently being drawn up to secure a suitably qualified consultancy to devise the masterplan.	
7. Delivered the Dramatic Heart of Wales Destination Marketing Campaign in order to raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and encourage overnight stays.	a. Deliver compelling marketing communications activities which engage with key visitor target markets in order to encourage the growth of the visitor economy.	As detailed above:  Procurement exercise completed and external communications agency in place to work with the Visitor Economy Team to deliver the Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaign is now complete.  Planning of marketing activities across both campaigns is underway. The Destination Marketing campaign launched in August 2023 with the release of the 'Adventure Awaits' destination video. In addition, the Heart of Steel installation was placed at Margam Park between the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> August to encourage visitor interaction with the campaign. Good progress has been made to date with marketing targets.  Pride of Place campaign due to go live mid-October.	
	b. Provide tailored support to businesses and organisations within the tourism sector in order to encourage the growth of the tourism sector and the employment it creates	During this quarter advice and assistance was provided to 14 tourism businesses. This includes 8 existing, 4 proposed and 2 new business. All enquires related to the development, funding or marketing of accommodation provision in the self-catering, caravan and camping sectors.	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>8. Extended our active travel network and improved public rights of way to encourage more people to walk and cycle.</p>	<p>a. To develop a Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Plan which sets out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot and demonstrates how the active travel network will be improved and extended through the County Borough over the next 5 years. At the same time, extending and improving our active travel network whilst also maintaining our public rights of way, both of which contribute towards a reduced reliance on private vehicles and encourage more people to walk and cycle.</p>	<p>The Active Travel Delivery Plan is being drafted to determine a strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot. Consultation has been undertaken with the internal active travel stakeholder group on developing priorities for the vision.</p> <p>A prioritisation exercise is ongoing by Transport for Wales (TfW ) for all future active travel routes in Wales. Once received this data will be reviewed and used to feed into the Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan.</p> <p><b>EXTENDING AND IMPROVING OUR ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK</b> In order to extend our network work is ongoing on the following schemes: Tonna hospital Link, Bryn to Goytre, Neath to Cimla, Dwr-y-felin, Newbridge Road Link, Sandfields Master Plan, Village road crossing.</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b> A programme of works has been established to record the speed and volume of traffic, along with cycle and pedestrian counts. Data is being captured to record baseline data and to capture evidence to demonstrate the benefits that improving active travel routes create. This will allow NPT to discharge out duties under the Active Travel Act.</p> <p><b>Promotion</b> NPT's website has been updated to promote Active Travel, publicise the revised ATNM and provide information on routes that have recently been completed. Staff attended the family fun day to promote active travel. Visitors were asked to complete a consultation – 48 Responses were received. Discussions are taking place on roundabout sponsorship to promote active travel.</p> <p><b>ATNM (Active Travel Network Map) Development</b> Route audits have been completed against a set of Welsh Government specified criteria to determine if they are suitable for walking, cycling or both for the majority of the routes shown on our Active Travel Network Map. An exercise is ongoing to review the audits and the updated information will be uploaded to DataMapWales.</p> <p><b>INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE REGIME</b> During the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan, the need for other important work has been identified in relation to the inspection and maintenance regime of Active Travel routes. There is presently disparity between the management of different types of Active Travel Provision, this needs to be rationalised to ensure that footways, cycleways and shared use paths are inspected and maintained in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The HAMP relates to the adopted highway, some Active Travel Routes are on land that is outside the adopted highway. A review will be undertaken into the inspection and management of footways, cycleways and shared use paths and looked at across the adopted highway network, un-adopted highway and other land. This review will take a significant amount of work to complete and will be completed over the coming year.</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>9. Increased the proportion of the council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods</p>	<p>a. Work with Cwmpas (Wales Co-op) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, developers of the</p>	<p>Procurement commissioned consultants to prepare a report to highlight ways in which the council can enhance and develop local spend, while considering different procurement approaches such as the "Preston Model", Circular &amp; Foundational Economy concepts to develop a tailored NPT Procurement Strategy.</p>	<p>Green</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
and services and which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy	'Preston Model') to review procurement supply chain strategy. Maximise the local social and economic benefits of council spend, prioritise goals and objectives for social value and community wealth building in Neath Port Talbot.	<p>Final report issued week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> September, to be reviewed with Procurement. Information on the SPF Business Anchor project and its activities to support local procurement, supply chain development and use of Social Value policies have been provided for consideration.</p> <p>Decision has been taken to mirror the 'Let's Talk Business' events. Similar style event to take place on October 19<sup>th</sup> which will take place in the community, offering advice and support to local businesses.</p> <p>Formation of working group with Legal and Procurement team to progress.</p>	
<p>10. Worked with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to extend our work to help nature recover and to improve the quality of and access to our natural environment; further implement our biodiversity plan.</p>	<p>a. Drive the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan.</p>	<p>Biodiversity Duty Plan implementation is currently being evaluated for 2020-2023 in line with legal requirements. A report on the implementation along with recommendations for a revised version of the Plan for 2023-2026 is currently being prepared for full Council approval by the end of the year. Current assessment has identified some areas for improvement.</p> <p>The analysis of the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan up until March 2023 has been completed. A report on this implementation, along with a revised Council Biodiversity Duty Plan is progressing through governance procedures and will be presented to full Council in November 2023.</p> <p>The assessment of the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan has identified a number of areas that required some improvement and additional actions have been added to reflect the NPT SON and NRAP and changes in UK and Welsh policy.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the plan service assessments of each service area have progressed, with most service areas being so far reported either Green or Amber – meaning there is some room for improvement in the duty implementation. The audit of Council owned land has also progressed with areas of biodiversity value being flagged on internal systems to ensure biodiversity if considered in any land changes etc.</p> <p>The amount of council owned land being managed with biodiversity in mind is currently improving with the ongoing roll out of the NPT Bee-Friendly Scheme. Showing that a simple change in management can result in a big difference for nature.</p>	
	<p>b. Further develop the Neath Port Talbot Nature Partnership</p>	<p>The launch of the NPT SON and NRAP (State of Nature report and Nature Recovery Action Plan) is planned for February 2024 and a PR contractor is delivering the organisation of a launch event. The Partnership continues to meet every 2 months throughout the year. NPT4Nature sub-group has continued to meet and provide community groups with opportunities to access expertise, discuss ideas and can increase their skills and knowledge on nature to ensure their works are good for nature. The focus of the NPT Nature Partnership has been the publication of the NPT State of Nature and Nature Recovery Action Plan and the launch of this in February is a key piece of work currently being undertaken. A Small grants fund for nature improvements/ delivery of State of Nature and NRAP Actions for community groups and organisations has been launched. Funding for the first round of projects will be confirmed in Q3 with further rounds open into next year.</p>	
	<p>c. Apply for and deliver external grant-funded projects to manage, improve and create new council sites for the benefit of nature and local communities</p>	<p>Grant funded projects delivered this year: Lost Peatlands Project – National Lottery Heritage Fund, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project – Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Fund (WG/EU) (coming to an end), various nature projects including management of nature reserves, community meadows – WG Local Places 4 Nature, Craig Gwladys – National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and Greening the Grey in Port Talbot – WG/NLHF Local Places 4 Nature (capital</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status																		
		<p>fund). Further projects are also currently being developed with the intention to apply for UKSPF and WG Coastal Capacity and Challenge Fund grants.</p> <p>The Connecting Green Infrastructure Project has ended its delivery this Qtr. and therefore further funding is being sought to continue to develop GI projects. Welsh Government Coastal Capacity and Challenge Fund Projects have been applied for and UKSPF funded projects are also being developed. Further NLHF grant is also being applied for Craig Gwladus.</p> <p><b>Projects:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>Grant funding amount/ Project value</th> <th>Areas</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project (Partnership Project) (until Feb 2025)</td> <td>£1.56million / over £2.8 million including match funding</td> <td>Upper Afan Valley and Upper Rhondda Valley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Connecting Green Infrastructure (Partnership Project) (Delivery ended July 23)</td> <td>£2.25 million</td> <td>Regional (NPT, Swansea, Carms)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Places for Nature (Confirmed until Mar 25)</td> <td>£500,100 for 23/24 £575,300 for 24/25</td> <td>NPT Wide – various sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Craig Gwladus – Coal and Community (Delivery until Mar 24)</td> <td>£181,225 / with match funding £213,113</td> <td>Craig Gwladus Country Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Returning Green to the Industrial Grey of Port Talbot (Delivery until Dec 24)</td> <td>£208,153</td> <td>Port Talbot – various sites</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project	Grant funding amount/ Project value	Areas	Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project (Partnership Project) (until Feb 2025)	£1.56million / over £2.8 million including match funding	Upper Afan Valley and Upper Rhondda Valley	Connecting Green Infrastructure (Partnership Project) (Delivery ended July 23)	£2.25 million	Regional (NPT, Swansea, Carms)	Local Places for Nature (Confirmed until Mar 25)	£500,100 for 23/24 £575,300 for 24/25	NPT Wide – various sites	Craig Gwladus – Coal and Community (Delivery until Mar 24)	£181,225 / with match funding £213,113	Craig Gwladus Country Park	Returning Green to the Industrial Grey of Port Talbot (Delivery until Dec 24)	£208,153	Port Talbot – various sites	
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d. Support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.	<p>The number of volunteers working on our sites is currently around 79. Volunteers are working on a variety of sites throughout the county through the Connecting GI project, projects at Craig Gwladus Country Park, and through the Lost Peatlands Project. Volunteering continuing, albeit with a slight break on some sites due to a lack of funding. Welsh Government funding has now been secured and volunteering will be able to restart on those sites.</p> <p>Local Places for Nature funding for the Working with Nature project has been secured for 2 years. Contractors for both volunteer coordination and awareness raising/connecting people with nature have been confirmed and volunteering at sites as part of the Working with Nature Project is now restarting. Volunteering on Lost Peatlands sites has seen an increase in this quarter including corporate volunteering. In addition to those sites where volunteering is already supported through Lost Peatlands and Craig Gwladus Projects, additional sites are being made available for volunteering – more than ever before. Numbers of volunteers are expected to increase in following qtrs.</p>																				
e. Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture	<p>Nature/natural heritage: Continued partnership working with the NPT Nature Partnership, NPT4 Nature and the PSB (Public Services Board) Group. A number of projects are being delivered in partnership with partners including Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and other councils such as RCT, as well as charities such as Coed Lleol. New partnerships are also being developed e.g. with Public Health Wales. Further work to do with partners outside of Environment Sector.</p>																				

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>Continued partnership working with the NPT Nature Partnership, NPT4 Nature and the PSB Group. The PSB has also made links with the NPT Nature Partnership. The NPT Nature Partnership will be presenting the State of Nature Report to the PSB in January. A number of projects are being delivered in partnership with partners including NRW, Swansea University and other councils such as RCT, as well as charities such as Coed Lleol. New partnerships are also being developed e.g. with NHS. Further work to do with partners outside of Environment Sector.</p> <p>Current Projects being delivered in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project – NPT Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and Coed Lleol</li> <li>• Connecting Green Infrastructure Project – NPT Council, Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire Council, Cwmaman Town Council and Coed Lleol.</li> <li>• Local Places for Nature is delivered in conjunction with the NPT Nature Partnership</li> <li>• Further projects are being developed with the NHS.</li> </ul>	
<p>Page 165</p> <p>11. Worked with partners to facilitate the transition from traditional energy sources to more sustainable energy sources with an emphasis on the delivery of the City Deal programme, and opportunities created through the establishment of the Swansea Bay Corporate Joint Committee to decarbonise industry, housing and transport; implement our revised decarbonisation and renewable energy plan.</p>	<p>a. Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan supported by a fully costed action plan to enable the transition of Neath Port Talbot to carbon net zero by 2030.</p>	<p>Appointed the Carbon Trust to support the energy/carbon reduction team formulate the Council's Net zero 2030 Strategy &amp; Action Plan (Costed Plan). Commencement meeting scheduled for January 2024 with the programme running for 12 months.</p> <p>The DARE strategy has been re-scheduled to be updated at the start of 2024, when additional net-zero staff have been appointed.</p>	
	<p>b. Implement measures to decarbonise the operation of the council including the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio.</p>	<p><b>Fleet Decarbonisation &amp; Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government targets set for the transition of car and light vans by 2025 and all other vehicles by 2030 are extremely challenging. The Council however have made very good progress in transitioning suitable vehicles thus far and continue to explore all options and trials when vehicles are due for replacement as part of the Councils annually approved vehicle renewals programme.</p> <p>Early independent evaluations of NPT's progress are that NPT are well ahead of the average for 'mixed' (not urban, not rural or valley authorities in Wales). NPT have 11.59% of fleet as ZE (Zero Emissions) , average mixed is 5.67% and 90% of vans purchased in the last year are ZEVs (Zero Emission Vehicles).</p> <p>At present thirty four (34) of the Councils vehicles have already transitioned too full electric and a further forty three (43) vehicles are scheduled to be transitioned to ultra-low emissions by the end of the financial year 2023/2024. The vehicles range from large goods vehicles to light vans and are assessed based on suitability, mileage, market research/trials and availability before procuring.</p> <p>Workshop technicians (94%) have successfully been upskilled completing a level 3 training qualification on the maintenance of electric and hybrid vehicles. This enables the fleet service to carry out service and inspections to the required standards on all vehicle types. Further training is planned in the future to achieve level 4 qualifications to enable the service to deliver more in-depth repairs in line with manufactures guidelines and to potentially offer more services externally to generate new income opportunities for the Council to offset overheads within the service area.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>There are a total of 62 electric vehicle charging points installed and operational in the depots and civic buildings. These comprise of a range of different chargers with various power outputs which charge vehicles at different rates Alternating Current AC and Direct Current DC power supplies.</p> <p>During this reporting period the back-office management of the charge points has also been rationalised from multiple charge point providers to Clenergy EV. This has made the management of the charging infrastructure more efficient, allows the fleet office to better facilitate charger breakdowns and simplifies recovering costs per vehicle for electricity, producing reports and data sets which are easier to access resulting in improved service delivery.</p> <p>Further chargers will be needed for future requirements such as the recycling transfer depot at Ffordd Amazon and provision has been put in place for all vehicles with the potential to be transitioned to EV at the site.</p> <p><b>Decarbonisation Operational Building Portfolio &amp; Electric Vehicle (Public Facing) Charging Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The following activity and measures have been developed and implemented to progress the decarbonisation of the operational building portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progression of the operational building rationalisation programme.</li> <li>• Celtic Trust - Instigated regular meetings to setup energy, carbon and water improvement, engagement activity and programme.</li> <li>• Sports Wales Grant – Successful £200k funding bid for LED lighting upgrade projects within three Leisure Centres.</li> <li>• BMS Optimisation reviews – Undertaken site survey reviews at the Quays/SRC and Neath Civic within the pilot programme.</li> <li>• Site energy best practice guidance - About to issue site energy/carbon good practice guidance across the operational building portfolio.</li> <li>• 21st Century school programme – Completed energy/carbon performance appraisal reports.</li> <li>• Energy Sparks – About to implement the Energy Sparks initiative throughout the school portfolio for applicable schools.</li> <li>• Solar PV programme – Progressing PV schemes at 14 schools, also undertaking solar PV feasibility investigation on the Quays/SRC. Installing PV system on the new catering blocks at Coedffranc and Sandfields Primary schools.</li> <li>• Completed net zero route map programme plans for the main civic accommodation sites.</li> <li>• Completed NPT (Public Facing) Low/Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Strategy for the council to ensure a co-ordinated approach to decarbonise journeys within NPT synchronised to the wider Swansea Bay City Region.</li> <li>• LED Lighting &amp; Control Upgrade schemes - Completed number of LED schemes predominately within civic accommodation and schools also looking to formulate a wider LED lighting programme.</li> <li>• Developing LED lighting upgrade scheme at Neath Civic and Quays/SRC led by Facilities Management supported by Energy.</li> <li>• Formulating a Carbon Literacy engagement strategy programme.</li> <li>• Satisfied the minimum energy efficiency scheme (MEES), implemented EPC programme across leased building portfolio. (Key purpose of the programme to ensure NPT owned leased out properties have an EPC rating of E and above).</li> </ul>	
	<p>c. Draft a Local Energy Plan which accords with the South West Wales Regional Energy Plan, in addition to developing a deliverable action plan</p>	<p>The Local Area Energy Plan has been progressed in accordance with the set programme, completed wider factor workshop, modelling and pathway refinement elements currently progressing action prioritisation for the master plan. Completion timeframe of February 2024.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>which reduces the council's carbon footprint and reduces our energy consumption.</p> <p>d. Continue to progress the delivery of Homes as Power Station, our City Deal projects; In addition to amending the Business Case for the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth programme, to secure an additional component in the form of a net zero training academy which will support the decarbonisation of our manufacturing sector and our economic aspirations associated with floating off-shore wind.</p>	<p><b>Homes as Power Stations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical monitoring contract awarded to Cardiff University School of Architecture</li> <li>• Financial Incentives Fund (£5.75m) round one launched and funding agreements to be awarded</li> <li>• Supply Chain Development mapping taken place, Supply Chain Fund (£7m) in development</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Innovation &amp; Low Carbon Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Net Zero Skills Centre of Excellence - Outline Business Case (OBC) approved by City Deal Joint Committee approved OBC for £5.3m to develop National Net Zero Skills Centre of Excellence to be incorporated in to the Advanced Manufacturing Production Facility</li> <li>• Property Development Fund (PDF) – a second call for applications is open until 31/12/2023</li> <li>• SWITCH – design development phase of the project in progress to construct the South Wales Industrial Transition from Carbon Hub on Port Talbot Harbourside</li> </ul>	
<p>12. Worked with partners to further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures</p>	<p>a. Engage with key partners to scope out the possibilities of joint working in the short, medium and long term with the view to making our communities more sustainable and resilient.</p>	<p>Since undertaking a Stage 1 Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA), (a broad assessment of potential flood risks from all sources of flooding), with planning authorities in the South West Wales region (Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Council, Pembrokeshire Council, Bannau Brycheiniog (formerly Brecon Beacons National Park Authority) and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) led by consultants JBA, the group has been waiting for Welsh Government to publish its revised Technical Advice Note (TAN 15) <i>Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion</i>. The advice contained within the revised TAN (anticipated to be released in Spring 2024) will help determine how we as region (and as an individual Authority) address flooding in the short, medium and long term.</p>	
<p>13. Increase awareness of the climate change and nature emergencies.</p>	<p>a. Increase engagement by the workforce and citizens with the climate change and nature emergencies.</p>	<p>Formulating a Carbon Literacy engagement strategy programme aimed at workforce and citizens.</p> <p>'Naturewise' training programme has been developed and is currently being rolled out to all staff. Training for members has also been undertaken on a variety of biodiversity topics. Nature training for the public, schools, community groups and even for professionals has been delivered through the Lost Peatlands Project together with Local Places for Nature with projects taking place across the county borough.</p>	
<p>14. Adopted the council's new Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and begin implementation.</p>	<p>a. To prepare, engage with stakeholders and undertake consultation on the RLDP Preferred Strategy, setting out the council's growth and spatial strategies for the county borough for 2021 – 2036, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing key issues, vision and objectives for the plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Key Issues, Vision and Objectives for the RLDP (Replacement Local Development Plan) drafted and engagement and consultations undertaken with stakeholders;</p> <p>Initial call for candidate sites completed and assessment of submitted sites undertaken;</p> <p>Extensive work undertaken on the viability and deliverability of development sites, leading to the identification of significant issues potentially impacting on the available range of strategic options for growth, the spatial strategy and the future implementation of the plan;</p> <p>Further discussions are on-going with stakeholders and WG about these issues and the need for an additional call for candidate sites which is likely to result in a delay to the plan preparation timescales.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting out appropriate strategic options and identifying the proposed scale of future growth in population, housing and employment to be planned for.</li> <li>• Agreeing and setting out the council's preferred spatial strategy for the built development necessary to address the level of growth.</li> <li>• Identifying proposed key strategic development sites to accommodate the growth.</li> <li>• Drafting key strategic planning policies to deliver the vision, objectives and strategy.</li> </ul>	Preparation of the Replacement Local Development Plan may be delayed.	

Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total to date April – September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
1.	% of persons (aged 3 and over) who say they can speak Welsh.	22.8%	23.4% (March 2023)	Available annually	Increase
2.	% of people (aged 3 or over) who say they speak Welsh daily.	10.1%	12% ( March 2023)	Available annually	Increase
3.	Total (£) external funding achieved to protect historic environment assets.	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	Available annually	Increase
4.	% of pupils participating in sport three or more times a week.	46%	Not available	Available annually	Increase
5.	% of pupils participated in sport in a community club at least once a week.	64%	62.3%	Available annually	Increase
6.	% of adults active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week.	56%	62%	Available annually	Increase
7.	% people participating in sporting activities 3 or more times a week	34%	38%	Available annually	Increase
8.	Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience	£557,000	£18,000,000	£300,000	Increase
9.	Number of visitors to Neath Port Talbot <i>Note: - Initial 2022 results across Wales are showing a decrease in day visitors in comparison to 2019, in NPT this represents a 4.5% decrease in 2022 as we continue to recover from the pandemic. However during the same period, NPT has seen a promising 1.9% increase in staying visitors in comparison to 2019 which is a key objective of our Destination Management Plan and Destination Marketing activity as staying visitors spend over 15 times more within the local economy than day visitors.'</i>	1,205,000 (2021 data) 1,539,000 in 2019 (2019 pre-covid data is used as baseline)	1,495,000 (2022 data)	Available annually	Increase



Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total to date April – September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
10.	Total value of grant aid awarded to local projects via the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	£10,000	n/a New measure
11.	Total cumulative reach of destination marketing and pride of place campaigns.	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	370,724 people reached	Increase by March 2025
12.	% of waste reused, recycled or composted.	66%	64.73%	Apr to Sep 2023 - 66.86% (Increase on Apr to Sep 2022 figure of 66.08%)	Increase
13.	Kilograms of residual waste generated per person.	204.37	195.56	Apr to Sep 2023 - 97.69 kg (Increase on Apr to Sep 2022 figure of 96.01kg)	Decrease
14.	Area of council owned land (or within council control) used as green space, local nature reserves.	820ha	971ha	971ha	Increase
15.	The extent of council owned land (or land in council control) that is protected through designation and/or is subject to appropriate management for biodiversity conservation as set out in an approved management plan.	160.8ha and 23.12km for linear habitats	287ha and 30km	287ha and 30km	Increase
16.	The extent of council owned land (or land in council control) that is designated or meets the criteria for designation as a Site of Importance for Conservation (SINCs).	782ha	782ha	782ha	Increase
17.	Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot/Taibach).	27	30	Apr to Sept - 16 breaches (Within the target of 18)	Statutory target of 35 – Maintain

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**CORPORATE PLAN / STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

**Half year progress April 2023 to September 2023**

**Well-being Objective 4**

**Jobs & Skills**

Objective
<i>Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and support local people into those jobs</i>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
Page 171  1. Worked through the Corporate Joint Committee to deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy.	<p>a. We will work collaboratively with the region to deliver the three ‘ambitions’ for the South West Wales economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Resilient &amp; Sustainable</li> <li>* Enterprising &amp; Ambitious</li> <li>* Balanced &amp; Inclusive</li> </ul>	<p>We are currently working with regional partners across South West Wales to develop and deliver numerous Regeneration Programmes funded by the UK and Welsh Governments, in order to feed into the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) and deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy. These include the Swansea Bay City Deal, Shared Prosperity Fund, Celtic Freeports and the Transforming Towns initiative. The inaugural CJC Economic and Well-being Sub-Committee was held as recently as the 9<sup>th</sup> October, further updates will follow in the Quarter 3 Highlight Report.</p>	
	<p>b. Map the economic development opportunities associated with Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) and maximise those opportunities to local companies, in addition to ensuring that a skilled workforce is developed through our various academic partners.</p>	<p>As part of the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Funding funded Business Anchor project, support is being provided to local companies to help upskill their workforce and maximise their opportunities for growth and diversification associated with Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW), e.g. the team are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering events in partnership with key developers to raise awareness of the opportunities available to local companies;</li> <li>• Engaging with FLOW system designers and developers to establish connections for local businesses and to provide insight of industry issues from both a business and developer perspective;</li> <li>• Setting up a forum of local companies to discuss key issues and encourage collaborative working;</li> <li>• Ensuring local companies are linked up to various supply chain portals and groups such as the Celtic Sea Cluster and those associated with offshore developers;</li> <li>• Meeting local colleges and universities to ensure they are aware of the work being undertaken and to ensure they add value to the process.</li> <li>• The Freeport Business Plan should be in place by December 2023</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the team have been engaging with projects such as FLOVENTIS Energy. As this project is separate to the Celtic Sea offshore wind license round, this is a great opportunity for local companies to get involved with a project that is pioneering new technologies to support the next generation of wind turbine technologies.</p> <p>This work will bring about the longer term impacts for the county borough and in turn will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise opportunities for local businesses from programmes such as FLOW, on-shore renewables; Freeports, etc.</li> <li>• Increase the ability of local companies to secure contracts and create highly skilled and well-paid employment.</li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen partnership working between businesses; academia and key developers.</li> <li>• Understand the gaps in skills and work plan in place.</li> <li>• Grow and diversify the local economy.</li> <li>• Encourage innovation and develop local supply chains.</li> </ul>														
	<p>c. Contribute to the development of the Regional Transport Plan ensuring the transport needs and priorities for Neath Port Talbot are fully addressed. This plan will form the basis of any future grant funded submissions to enable delivery.</p>	<p>The Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) for South West Wales has been mandated to produce a Regional Transport Plan (RTP) for the region by Welsh Government, in conformity with the Transport (Wales) Act (2006) and to complement Llwybr Newydd: Wales Transport Strategy (2022). The region was tasked with producing an Implementation Plan setting out how the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) will be developed and adopted.</p> <p>The guidance for the Corporate Joint Committee Regional Transport Plan (RTP) was issued on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023. An implementation plan is to be submitted to Welsh Government for approval by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. A draft has been prepared and has been submitted to the CJC for approval prior to submitting to Welsh Government. Key dates for the development of the RTP are shown below:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>13th July 2023</td> <td>Guidance for developing the RTP issued to CJC's</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31st October 2023</td> <td>CJC to submit implementation plan to WG</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29th February 2024</td> <td>CJC to submit RTP case for Change (including SMART objectives) to WG</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29th May 2024</td> <td>CJC to submit initial draft of RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG (before public consultation)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31st October 2024</td> <td>CJC to submit final draft of RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29th March 2025</td> <td>CJC to submit final RTP, RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30th June 2025</td> <td>WG decision on approval of RTP.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The timeline for developing the RTP is very restricted, especially considering the number of studies that have to be completed to feed into the RTP, the amount of public consultation that has to be completed and the timeframes for political/CJC approval. At present Welsh Government have not provided any funding to complete the RTP. There are no dedicated staff to deliver the RTP, existing staff will be expected to deliver the RTP on top of their current workloads.</p> <p>Prior to submitting the Implementation Plan to Welsh Government, the Plan was considered and endorsed by the CJC Regional Transport Sub Committee at its meeting on the 9th October 2023. The overarching aims of the Regional Transport Sub Committee is to drive an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system across the region; and they have the function to make recommendations to the Corporate Joint Committee on the development and delivery of the Regional Transport Plan.</p> <p>This implementation plan was subsequently considered by the Corporate Joint Committee at its meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October and has now been submitted to Welsh Government by their deadline of the 31st October 2023.</p>	13th July 2023	Guidance for developing the RTP issued to CJC's	31st October 2023	CJC to submit implementation plan to WG	29th February 2024	CJC to submit RTP case for Change (including SMART objectives) to WG	29th May 2024	CJC to submit initial draft of RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG (before public consultation)	31st October 2024	CJC to submit final draft of RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG	29th March 2025	CJC to submit final RTP, RTP, Integrated Well-Being Assessment and Regional Transport Development Plan to WG	30th June 2025	WG decision on approval of RTP.
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		<p>Whilst positive discussions have taken place with Welsh Government regarding the availability of funding to prepare the RTP, those discussions have not yet concluded nor has any funding been received.</p>	
<p>2. Delivered the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) programme in Neath Port Talbot.</p>	<p>a. The Strategic Funding Programmes Team will lead the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Neath Port Talbot ensuring the local allocation of funding is maximised to deliver priority projects addressing the challenges and opportunities of the county borough as described in the regional Investment Plan. 5 anchor projects have been approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Place</li> <li>* Valleys &amp; Villages</li> <li>* Sustainable Communities</li> <li>* Enhanced Business support for Growth &amp; Innovation</li> <li>* Employability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the Valleys and Villages Prosperity Fund (VVPF) - The VVPF seeks to address the challenges in our valleys and villages, the shortage of quality housing, commercial properties and public facilities in those areas across Neath Port Talbot and the current gap in provision of grant funding for such projects. The VVPF will fund projects that create sustainable growth in our valleys and village communities and enhance them as places to visit, work and live. A Project Manager and Project Development Officer have been recruited and commenced work in June. VVPF documentation has been finalised and the Fund has opened to receive Expressions of Interest and various promotional activities have commenced.</li> </ul> <p>The VVPF will fund projects that will both make positive impact to the sustainability of our rural communities in the short term, such as outdoor events and markets. It will also fund projects that will make a lasting and long term difference with projects such as active travel routes enabling travel to and from work and study, green spaces that make our valleys and villages better places to live, and new/improved recreational and community facilities addressing isolation, mental health and wellbeing and access to services for all residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategic Funding Programmes Office managed the open call for Skills, Multiply and Strategic Projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Skills projects were approved totalling £2.7m UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding</li> <li>• 7 Multiply Projects were approved totalling £2.9m UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding</li> <li>• 7 Strategic Projects were approved totalling £1.3m</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Grant Agreements have been issued to all approved projects and inception meetings held. Progress meetings have been scheduled to ensure all projects meet financial and output targets. The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Skills was launched and the assessment and moderation process is in progress. Multiply Round 2 was launched and is due to close on 14<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Multiply programme we aim to start delivering numeracy courses designed to support people into employment and to help those already in employment to upskill. These courses will start throughout Neath Port Talbot in October 2023. We are working in partnership with a variety of internal and external agencies and local businesses including Communities for work +, Skills and Training, Youth Service, Neath Port Talbot Social Services, Bespoke, Maximus, Community Lives Consortium, Schools in Neath Port Talbot, Workways+ and Swansea University to deliver specific numeracy interventions. We are creating ‘opportunity hubs’ in various venues throughout Neath and Port Talbot. We aim to reach the 21% of households who have no-one in employment in Neath Port Talbot and those that are the hardest to reach in the community (both geographically and those who are disengaged) . We will give them the confidence and skills to enter the workplace.</li> </ul> <p>For those who are in employment, this is often low paid and unskilled, so we will address this by offering Functioning Skills Qualifications (FSQ) building up to GCSEs, leading to access of better paid employment which will also enhance businesses and support their growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through our Adult Community Learning Service we have delivered ‘Managing money’ and ‘cooking on a budget’ sessions. These sessions have been completed successfully in various community centres, supporting people to live and deal with money independently and to foster a positive ethos around healthy eating.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of sessions delivered between April and September 2023:</b></p> <p>5 Cooking on a Budget which also includes Money Management – 100% pass rate.</p> <p>2 Money Management (Budgeting) – 100% pass rate.</p>	

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	<p>b. Neath Port Talbot Employability will provide a holistic joined up provision within Neath Port Talbot through a wide range of interventions. We will have a single front door service that will ensure our residents in Neath Port Talbot have the help, support and advice to meet their needs, as well as linking in with local businesses and the business team to access the right jobs. Sustainable Communities Growth Fund will be developed with a Growth Funding Officer in place. Youth and Poverty activity will move forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Youth Service's Shared Prosperity Funded Horizons Project has provided outreach enrichment activities for socially isolated young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and who do not leave their homes. This work 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.</li> </ul> <p>The Horizons Project also supports young people who need additional help to sustain their engagement on a reduced Jobs Growth Wales Plus programme of learning.</p> <p>Horizons has supported 107 young people who are furthest away from engaging during the period April - September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neath Port Talbot Employability has established a single front door triage referral process which captures a wide range of interventions to help and support individuals from comprehensive school age through to retirement age with wellbeing, employment, training, work experience and paid work opportunities. Support is offered to those who are economically inactive and unemployed, with consideration given to those who have protected characteristics. We have developed, with the aid of our Digital Team a database (POD+) that ensures all data for employability is stored at one central point and run reports to provide clear data intelligence for future use.</li> <li>Shared Prosperity Funding Sustainable Communities Growth Funding Officer has been appointed and will work with the central team to ensure that communities are notified of this grant funding. We are anticipating that Expressions of Interest and full applications will be scored by panel during October. Documentation has been developed to send out to community groups and organisation. One application has been approved to date, the next Panel meeting will take place in November 2023.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Worked with partners to take forward major development and investment opportunities and activities linked to the council's Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy.</p>	<p>a. Work with key and major developments to maximise any potential supply chain opportunities, attracting inward investment and linked economic benefits, on activity such as Floating Offshore Wind, re-development of Associated British Ports (ABP) Port Talbot Docks, Global Rail Centre of Excellence, Wildfox and Freeport opportunity. These range from awareness raising events, supply chain linked events and activity, linking investment enquiries, scoping low carbon opportunities, linking skills activity to relevant organisations and contacts, working across these on a strategic and operational level</p>	<p>We have secured funding from the Microgeneration Certification Scheme to deliver a project 'Integrating Skills and Competency in Green / Retrofit Through New Learning Pathways'. Planning meetings and confirming delivery with partners MOBIE/Supply Chain School</p> <p>As part of the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund funded Business Anchor, a Neath Port Talbot Manufacturing Group has been set up to discuss Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) supply chain opportunities and link these businesses with key developers and renewable energy operators. In addition, the group will also be undertaking further scoping work to feed onto developers in relation to the capabilities and capacity of the manufacturing sector to support FLOW and other industry issues and/or barriers.</p> <p>To date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26 businesses have attended 4 meetings.</li> <li>15 local and 2 regional manufacturing businesses have committed to attend the meetings.</li> <li>Meetings/discussions have taken place with 5 offshore wind developers, i.e. Marine Power Solutions, RWE, EQUINOR, LISARB and EDF.</li> </ul> <p>Officers have supported Global Centre for Rail Excellence, EDF, RWE and the Wildfox project in delivering 'Meet the Buyer' events to raise awareness of the investment and supply chain development opportunities.</p> <p>The application to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to become a strategic partner with UKRI on Launchpad to ensure there is a focus on the net zero ambitions of the region has been successful. The Launchpad is designed to help accelerate innovation and growth of local businesses connected with industrial decarbonisation.</p> <p>Successful application to UKRI to establish a Place Based Innovation Accelerator Account (PBIAA) to focus on the journey to net zero</p> <p>The project aims to bring together the education providers across South West Wales with the relevant sector bodies and associations to ensure that the training and skills are reflective of the industry needs. This will include having the facilities, resources, trainer capacity,</p>	

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		industry relevant experience, and equipment to transition to low carbon and renewable heat and energy technologies, bridging the gap between industry and competency expectations and the offer from local training providers.	
4. Delivered the Celtic Freeport across Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire.	a. Set up the Freeport company and Joint Investment Board and work in partnership with consortium members to develop the outline and full Business Cases required by the Treasury, to deliver the economic development aspirations associated with the Freeport.	<p>Economic Development continue to provide information for inclusion in the Freeports outline Business Plan. This work is ongoing with the Outline Business Plan (OBC) expected to be submitted in mid-November. It is estimated that 16,000 jobs will be delivered across Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire. The economic growth of net zero industries within underused industrial land in Neath Port Talbot will be stimulated and accelerated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a hub to encourage global trade and investment.</li> <li>• Attract new investment by focusing on innovation, research and development and the introduction of new technologies.</li> <li>• Support the creation and safeguarding of well-paid employment.</li> </ul> <p>Promote regeneration and infrastructure improvements within the port area and outer boundaries to achieve economic growth and long-term sustainability.</p>	
5. Ensured partnership working is robust in order to develop more green opportunities.	a. Continue to work with regional and local partners to develop new green jobs and skills.	<p>The Universities, Neath Port Talbot College and Regional Skills and Learning Partnership (RSLP) have been invited to join the Manufacturing Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) Skills Group. This sharing of business intelligence should help partners identify skills gaps and develop relevant programmes of support to support new green jobs.</p> <p>Shared Prosperity Funding Skills Open Call Round 2 Webinar held on 14 July 23 for business, this was open invitation to businesses in Neath Port Talbot - Approximately 20 Neath Port Talbot businesses attended.</p> <p>Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) funding delivery is moving forward working internally (business and Education and the College). Schools have been contacted and a website has been developed for the project. The progress report has been completed and submitted to the funding body MCS.</p> <p>Understand the capabilities and capacity of the potential supply chain; the skills requirements of the workforce and industry issues and/or barriers needed to support the FLOW and on-shore renewables sectors. Greater awareness of renewables and competence through retrofit. MCS web address : <a href="https://business.nptcgroup.ac.uk/net-zero-academy/building_net_zero_in_the_region/">https://business.nptcgroup.ac.uk/net-zero-academy/building_net_zero_in_the_region/</a></p>	
	b. Target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough	<p>A Manufacturing Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) Skills Group has been set up with local companies with the aim of working collaboratively to understand the capabilities of local industry to support FLOW, identify skills gaps and what support is needed to ensure opportunities to diversify and grow within this sector is not missed. In particular, businesses have requested that the Group focuses on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the landscape in which the Renewable sector operates.</li> <li>• Supply chain and diversification opportunities.</li> <li>• UK Innovation funding and how best to access programmes.</li> <li>• Encouraging collaboration between businesses.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for businesses to exchange ideas and link with trade/ professional bodies and industry related organisations.</li> </ul> <p>Understanding the skills requirements needed to support the development of the Renewables sector.</p> <p>Understand the capabilities and capacity of the potential supply chain; the skills requirements of the workforce and industry issues and/or barriers needed to support the FLOW and on-shore renewables sectors.</p> <p>Improve the skills of people and businesses and supporting the net zero agenda.</p>	

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		The Skills Co-ordinator is now in post and is currently looking at the skills requirements for Neath Port Talbot working with partners to develop an enhanced undertaking of skills needs across Neath Port Talbot, both generic and with regards to renewables.	
6. Targeted programmes are developed to enable local people to benefit from the employment created through new business investment.	a. Take a collaborative approach to delivering the Supporting Business and Employability Shared Prosperity Fund projects to ensure that business and market intelligence is being used to develop employment and training programmes that meet the needs of local businesses.	<p>Working with Regional Skills and Learning Partnership (RSLP) to ensure that local businesses feed in the Annual/Quarterly Skills Report. In addition, a Skills Questionnaire is being developed to gather information from local businesses who are applying for grant funding via the Shared Prosperity Fund Business Anchor project. The aim will be to collate information on skills and training gaps, future employment trends and any recruitment issues. This intelligence will be used to inform the development of Economic Development and Skills related strategies and the delivery of employment, training and business support programmes to ensure local needs are met. This information will also be shared with the RSLP. An interim report has been completed.</p> <p>Skills plan will be available from RWE by end of '23. In addition, a joined up approach with Education to link businesses struggling to recruit with any displaced workers from other sectors is to be developed by the end of Quarter 3.</p> <p>“Draft Employability and Skills Strategy for Neath Port Talbot” collaboration with Neath Port Talbot and RLSP, should be completed end of Oct 23, this will be circulated to stakeholders, then to Corporate Directors Group and Cabinet. A collective workshop has taken place.</p> <p>A draft Outline Business Case to develop a Net Zeros Skills Centre of Excellence has been prepared and is progressing through the city deal governance structure before being submitted to both Governments for considerations. Understand the skills requirements of the workforce needed to support economic growth and the creation of well-paid employment opportunities. The Net Zero Skills Centre of Excellence will work in tandem with and enhance the opportunities provided by the Advanced Manufacturing Production Facility to deliver an industry led skills and training programme. The facility will complement rather than compete with existing academic organisations to deliver a pipeline of talented recruits to support the growing green economy.</p>	
7. Strengthen partnership arrangements at the local level to develop the economy ensuring business and communities have a strong voice in shaping future plans.	a. Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks.	<p>Working with Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) business partners such as Business Wales, Development Bank for Wales, Communities for Work+, Workways, universities, etc., a collaborative approach has been developed to support the delivery of the SPF Programme across all communities and a strong working relationship has been established to gather and share intelligence to help shape future strategies and plans.</p> <p>As part of the delivery of the SPF Business Anchor project, throughout quarter 1 and 2 the team have been developing and testing a new Customer Management System to manage the delivery of the project, including the £2.8m grant fund. The fund is now open and the team are currently working their way through over 300 requests for financial support from local businesses. As part of the testing process, 19 grants (15 from existing businesses and 4 from new start-ups) have been processed totalling a value of £314,593.</p> <p>A full launch of the SPF Grant Fund is expected in Quarter 3.</p> <p>Develop a better coordinated gateway to business support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide assistance to support new business start-ups.</li> <li>• Enable existing businesses to innovate, grow and develop and build long-term resilience within the local economy.</li> <li>• Develop and support a culture of innovation to maximise opportunities for diversification, growth, up-skilling and job creation.</li> <li>• Accelerate innovation and growth of local businesses connected with industrial decarbonisation.</li> </ul>	
8. Employability programmes are further strengthened ensuing that all those needing help to find work can access it,	a. Create a ‘single front door’ to our employability services so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need.	The Youth Service Keeping in Touch Team (KIT) are tasked with locating and engaging with young people whose status is unknown and are in Tier 1 of the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model and move them into an appropriate tier. The KIT Team also provide lead worker support to targeted groups of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model. During Quarter 1. Targeted groups included young people who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), young people from the traveller community and those young people who haven’t transitioned from Schools.	



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including those who are hardest to reach.		<p>During Qtr 1 the KIT Team managed to locate 38 out of 47 young people and move them into a more appropriate Tier. At the end of Qtr2 the KIT Team managed to locate 74 out of 100 young people and move them into a more appropriate Tier.</p> <p>During Qtr1 the KIT team had supported 32 young people aged 16-18. At the end of Qtr2 the KIT team had supported 34 young people aged 16-18.</p> <p>The Youth Services Legacy Youth Workers provide support to young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET to make a successful transition from school to a post 16 destination.</p> <p>During Qtr 1 the Legacy Team supported 143 young people (Year 11 leaver project). At the end of Qtr 2 the Legacy Team supported 231 young people (Year 11 leaver project). This work will continue over the summer holidays and youth workers will maintain supporting these young people until the 31<sup>st</sup> October.</p> <p>Continuing to work with stakeholders, organisations and agencies we have updated our one system triage process to incorporate a holistic provision within Neath Port Talbot ensuring that customers are receiving the appropriate support for their need. This has recently gone out to a wider partnership stakeholders 4<sup>th</sup> October. We are incorporating a Training framework as part of Neath Port Talbot Employability to cover a wide range of training opportunities especially those focusing on emerging new green skills.</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot Employability is linking with the Shared Prosperity Fund Anchor projects and the Homes as Power Stations [HAPS] project to identify areas of growth within the emerging green economy. These links will identify areas of training required. A Training Framework is being developed, which will include invitations to apply for the identified training – Renewable Energy Solutions / Retrofit / Energy / Electrical and Construction (to include Traditional and Heritage Building). There has been an increase in individuals prepared and contributing to the emerging green economy.</p> <p>Employer Liaison Officers and the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator, working with local businesses will support employers to identify areas of transferable skills. The newly appointed Skills Co-ordinator is carrying out an analysis of the current training provision to identify gaps.</p> <p>Hub has been opened in the centre of Port Talbot offering a “single front door approach” to employment support, the Hub is open daily (Monday-Friday with partner agencies utilising the venue for appointments. This Hub ensures that people looking for employment support can walk in and be supported immediately and in addition can be referred to the correct provision for support. The Hub is averaging 50 drop-ins each month for people looking for employment support.</p> <p>Referrals received requesting support total 1296 between April and September.</p>	Green
9. Established a strong gateway to business support to help diversify the local economy and increase its resilience to future economic shocks by helping existing businesses to grow, establishing new enterprises and attracting new investment to the area.	a. Strengthen engagement with local businesses.	<p>As part of the delivery for the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Business Anchor project, a series of community events have been delivered across valley and town centre locations to promote business support services and provide hands-on advice to new and existing businesses across Neath Port Talbot. To date, 5 events aimed at providing advice and guidance to new business start-ups and, 6 Let’s Talk Business’ events for new and existing businesses have been held.</p> <p>The SPF Business Anchor project is delivering a programme of support to key employers within the manufacturing, engineering, med-tech, Information Computer Technology (ICT) and renewables sectors and new and existing businesses within the Foundational Economy, delivering a £2.8m grant pot and specialist support via diagnostic reviews.</p> <p>Meet the Buyer events have also been delivered with key developers such as Associated British Ports (ABP); RWE; Wildfox; Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE) to encourage local sourcing, supply chain development and employment and training opportunities.</p>	Green
	b. Work with the Economic Forum to review the Local Economic Recovery Plan and develop a joint flexible	As the focus has shifted to the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Anchor projects, and other strategic projects such as Freeports, Celtic Sea, etc., the Local Economic Development Recovery Plan needs to be reviewed to incorporate these new areas of work.	Green

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	framework for delivering and monitoring actions' going forward.	<p>Governance structures are currently being worked up. In addition, working in collaboration with Education, to develop a new Economic Development and Skills Strategy to shape the delivery of future services.</p> <p>The Economic Strategy and associated delivery plan will enable a coordinated development of our existing and emerging business community and will enable the council and partners to access additional sources of funding</p>	
<p>10. Invested and attracted investment into our principal towns, district centres and wider communities; respond to the demand for more flexible work spaces; produced a holistic Regeneration Strategy for the borough.</p>	<p>a. Work with the Urbanists will continue. In addition to Town Centres, remit extended to include secondary and tertiary centres e.g. Ystalyfera, Gwaun- Cae-Gurwen, Taibach. A submission has been made for Shared Prosperity Fund to develop and expand the work which has recently been funded by the Welsh Government via its 'Transforming Towns' initiative.</p>	<p>Consultants, The Urbanists, are nearing completion over their commission for Place Plans for the three main towns (which consists of documents identifying issues to be addressed and/or opportunities to be explored) and the next steps are to go out to Member and wider consultation to help shape the proposals later in 2023. Work is continuing on the secondary and tertiary centres, which will follow the suit of that of the three main towns. We will dovetail together the Place Plans and capture them under one overarching Regeneration Strategy. This will then allow us to have numerous Regeneration projects identified, and will provide a pipeline of future Regeneration programmes, as and when appropriate funding becomes available from both the Welsh and UK Governments. This preparedness will enable us to respond far more quickly and flexibly to funding opportunities, and allow us a greater amount of time in which to deliver the projects.</p>	
	<p>b. This work will then form an important part of the forthcoming wider Regeneration Strategy, with emphasis on the Valleys.</p>	<p>Our aim is to dove-tail together the place plans and capture them under one overarching Regeneration Strategy. This will then allow us to have a pipeline of Regeneration projects identified and will provide the basis of future Regeneration programmes which we can draw down, as and when appropriate funding becomes available from both the Welsh and UK Governments. Welsh Government funding in particular has recently been focused on the main 3 town centres. With the Place Plans completed, we will have the opportunity to be more inclusive of valleys areas, and this will be further supported by the UK Governments Shared Prosperity Fund. This preparedness will enable us to respond far more quickly and flexibly to funding opportunities and allow us a greater amount of time in which to deliver the projects across the wider borough.</p>	
<p>11. Increased capacity within the Regeneration &amp; Economic Development team to better position the council to develop and bid for funding to support the development of the local economy.</p>	<p>a. Strengthen the council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers.</p>	<p>Recruitment has been completed for 7 new posts and the enhancement of 4 existing posts to take on additional responsibilities. Funded via the Shared Prosperity Fund Programme (SPF), the posts are involved in managing the delivery of the project including the overall grant process; monitoring and reporting; submitting claims; ensuring activities meet programme eligibility, procurement, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other regulatory issues as well as developing and delivering social value, community benefits and circular economy concepts and initiatives and providing advice and guidance to new and existing businesses operating within the Foundational Economy.</p> <p>In addition, the posts will also be involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioning of a feasibility study to provide a strategic position in terms of leveraging future funding and developing local supply chains to support new investment, technologies, markets, etc.</li> <li>• Working in collaboration with universities and local colleges to deliver specialist business support packages to key employers and spin outs to maximise opportunities from new developments/technologies (Floating Of-Shore Wind (FLOW); low carbon; net zero, hydrogen production), Government initiatives (Freeports), regeneration (re-development of Port Talbot Docks and new investments (Global Centre of Rail Excellence).</li> <li>• Delivering communications, marketing and promotional activity relating to for the SPF Business Anchor Project.</li> </ul>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>b. Recruit additional staff to the Regeneration team, to enable the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme.</p>	<p>2 members of staff have been recruited to administer the Valleys and Villages anchor project and 2 members of staff have been recruited to administer the Heritage, Culture and Tourism anchor Project. Applications are already in the process of Scrutiny and approval and will shortly be issued to successful parties.</p>	
	<p>c. Establish the mechanisms to implement the actions set out in the Local Economic Development Plan and use market intelligence gained from the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme to strengthen future funding bids</p>	<p>The Shared Prosperity Fund Business Anchor project will support the delivery of the key priorities of the Economic Development Plan when it is fully launched in October 2023. A new Content Management System (CMS) has been procured to ensure business intelligence is captured in a format that can be used to support the development of future bids.</p> <p>Additional funding is being secured to expand the regeneration team and enable an enhanced response to the economic challenges currently experienced within the Neath Port Talbot area and to enable the delivery of strategic regeneration projects within the council area.</p> <p>Improved partnership working with major developers/investors will deliver a positive and sustainable growth of our local economy, and in turn an increase in well paid jobs and reduction in poverty levels.</p>	
<p>Page 179</p> <p>12. Improved access to sites and premises – especially in valley areas.</p>	<p>a. Via the Shared Prosperity Fund programme, we will deliver 14 new business units in the Amman, Afan and Dulais Valleys. We will also continue to explore opportunities to utilise surplus buildings.</p>	<p>Preliminary site investigative work is underway along with initial layout designs. Survey work is being undertaken with a view to submitting Planning Applications for the 3 sites at Glyncorrwg, Cwmgors and Nant y Cafn in February or March 2024. The Council has been approached by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust who propose to develop out the remaining 4 acres at Nant y Cafn site with a further 60,000 sq.ft. of business space over two phases. Whilst this proposal cannot take advantage of this round of Shared Prosperity Fund, the Regeneration team are in dialogue with the Coalfield Regeneration Trust with a view to establishing a future relationship which will allow further development to take place over the next few years. We will provide new, quality business space to our Valleys communities, creating job opportunities and potential growth for indigenous businesses, as well as encouraging inward investment and new start-ups.</p>	
<p>13. Assessed the impact of the changes made to the council's operating model and bring forward proposals to repurpose assets that are surplus to requirements; this could include shared workspace hubs, hybrid office and research and development workspaces, starter units etc.</p>	<p>a. Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support.</p>	<p>As part of the delivery for the Shared Prosperity Fund Business Anchor project, a series of community events have been delivered across valley and town centre locations to promote business support services and provide hands-on advice to new and existing businesses across Neath Port Talbot. Branded "Let's Talk Business" two events have been held at Croeserw Enterprise Centre and Crynant Business Centre during the first quarter. Further events; workshops and drop in sessions are planned to increase the level of support available to local businesses.</p> <p>Fit for purpose business floor space is available to accommodate new and expanding businesses.</p>	
	<p>b. Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses.</p>	<p>The Regeneration and Estates team are already considering options around several buildings that have been declared surplus, with a view to making available, high quality business and activity space, as has been previously demonstrated with such projects as the former Plaza Cinema, 8 Wind Street, the Crown building, and the former Port Talbot Magistrates Court.</p> <p>The teams are considering an alternative potential use for the Wern School in Ystayfera and have submitted an application for funding to the Welsh Government to refurbish, reconfigure and extend the former Youth Offending Team building in Port Talbot, to provide quality office space to complement the adjacent Harbourside Court. We are also working with consultants with a view to convert the former Neath library into an Arts/Creative hub.</p> <p>As the Council's forthcoming Accommodation Strategy is delivered, then potential further surplus accommodation can also be considered with a view to bringing additional quality business space to the market.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		We will continue to adapt and refurbish surplus properties, so that local businesses have a choice of high quality accommodation to choose from. The availability of this new space will encourage indigenous businesses to remain and grow within the local economic area, and also encourage inward investment and new business start-ups.	
Page 180 14. Maximised Social Value and Community Benefits opportunities across the council's procurement activities to achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits for local residents, businesses and communities.	a. Further develop council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible.	<p>Economic Development and Procurement working together to review processes and understand the barriers faced by local businesses when tendering/quoting for work with the Council.</p> <p>Economic Development and Passenger Transport working together to hold a How to Tender workshop for local taxi drivers with the aim of giving them greater access to winning schools contracts.</p> <p>Economic Development and Workways working together to develop their Training Framework with the aim of ensuring local training providers.</p> <p>Cwmpas report was completed on 7<sup>th</sup> September 23 – next steps discussions are already taking place.</p> <p>Meetings have taken place with Business Wales and a Face to Face joint event will take place early January 24.</p> <p>Reached the stage of meeting local businesses Face to Face to discuss their views and possible barriers to tendering.</p> <p>A questionnaire is being developed to gather intelligence from local businesses with the aim of developing and supporting the local supply chain to be awarded contracts with the Council.</p> <p>Report complete: options appraisal of procurement approaches to increasing the local economic and social benefit of council's spend; and the development of a local procurement and supply chain strategy informed by the options appraisal.</p>	
	b. Development of a procurement and social value policy in line with the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Bill (once legislation approved by Welsh Government).	<p>The Shared Prosperity Fund Business Support Anchor project includes provision to take forward this work. Plans to liaise with Procurement and Legal departments. Policy will be developed from these internal discussions. By working together to develop a Social Value policy and by sharing resources Procurement and Economic Development aim to maximise spend within the local supply chain, create a reduction in our environmental impact, increase staff awareness of what social value means and how it can support the local economy.</p>	
	c. Work with Cwmpas (Wales Co-op) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, developers of the 'Preston Model') to review procurement supply chain strategy. Maximise the local social and economic benefits of council spend, prioritise goals and objectives for social value and community wealth building in Neath Port Talbot.	<p>Procurement commissioned consultants to prepare a report to highlight ways in which the Council can enhance and develop local spend, while considering different procurement approaches such as the "Preston Model", Circular &amp; Foundational Economy concepts to develop a tailored Neath Port Talbot Procurement Strategy. Final report issued week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> September and to be reviewed with Procurement. Information on the Shared Prosperity Fund Business Anchor project and its activities to support local procurement, supply chain development and use of Social Value policies have been provided for consideration.</p> <p>Mirroring the 'Let's Talk Business' events it has been decided to start similar style events on October 19<sup>th</sup> which will take place in the community, offering advice and support to local businesses.</p> <p>Directly help local people and businesses to start, grow and innovate and create opportunities for the local supply chain to be awarded contracts within the organisation and externally through providing access to training and upskilling.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
15. Developed the Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station	a. Continue to develop plans to provide an Integrated Transport Hub at Neath Railway Station linking local bus services to the main railway station, reducing overall journey times, and improving connections between the places where people live and the places where people work, learn and enjoy their leisure time.	Welsh Government funding to continue the design in 2023/24 has been awarded. Design on the Transport Hub went to Scrutiny Committee on 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2023, there were delays to the design programme while the scheme went through the scrutiny process. Funding has been secured to progress to detailed design stage and to commence land assembly. A communication strategy is being developed to ensure that businesses affected by the development are briefed and involved in the development of the scheme. Delays to the programme. Potential for amendments to the design. Public transport and active travel routes will be improved to ensure that they support the vitality and viability of the town centre, in addition to reducing the reliance upon private vehicles.	
16. Developed transport plans in partnership with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to support access to work, reduce emissions and serve the needs of Neath Port Talbot residents.	a. Contribute to the development of the Regional Transport Plan ensuring that the needs and priorities of Neath Port Talbot are addressed.	<p>The Regional Transport Plan (RTP) Guidance issued by Welsh Government set out the key requirements in order to develop the South West Wales RTP, these are listed below. Each requirement has a number of actions and work packages that need to be undertaken, as part of the detailed Implementation Plan. Key features are outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the RTP Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Development of the Case for Change</li> <li>• Development of the Initial Draft of the Regional Transport Plan, Integrated Well-Being Assessment (IWBA) and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP) Development of the Final Draft of the Regional Transport Plan, Integrated Well-Being Assessment (IWBA) and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP)</li> <li>• Development of the Final Regional Transport Plan, Integrated Well-Being Assessment (IWBA) and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP)</li> <li>• Public and Stakeholder Consultation Monitoring and Evaluation Plan</li> <li>• Equalities Impact Assessment</li> <li>• Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.</li> </ul> <p>As set out in the table at section 1c above, the next piece of work to be undertaken is the RTP Case for Change; with the current deadline for submission to Welsh Government set for 29th February 2024.</p> <p>The Corporate Joint committee are currently awaiting Welsh Government feedback on the submitted implementation plan which on their approval a grant of £125K will be awarded to take the programme forward to the next stage of the process.</p> <p>Whilst positive discussions have taken place with Welsh Government regarding the availability of funding to prepare the RTP, those discussions have not yet concluded nor has any funding been received.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 182</p>	<p>b. The Welsh Government have announced £1.3m funding to support Community Transport car schemes to expand electric vehicle (EV) community cars in the Region. Neath Port Talbot schemes have been successful in securing some of this funding and will be looking at introducing EV cars in the Afan, Neath, Dulais and Amman Valleys.</p>	<p>Electric vehicles have been introduced and in service. Charging points installed in Afan, Neath, Dulais and Amman Valleys.</p> <p>The number of people transported in the two electric Multi-Purpose Vehicles in order to access opportunities, activities and facilitate medical appointments: 216 passengers(Health 138, Education 39, Shopping 16, Work 12, Social 11)</p> <p>The number of self-drive and volunteer driven journeys: 180 volunteer Driven</p> <p>The number of people transported in the two electric fully accessible minibuses: 2576 Passengers (Health 82, Education 373, Shopping 773, Social 1316, Work 32)</p>	
	<p>c. Publish the regional Low Emission Vehicle Strategy to support the transition of vehicles to electric power.</p>	<p>Taking the Neath Port Talbot Council Zero Emission Vehicle and Infrastructure Strategy (ZEVIS) for Board approval in November 2023. We are currently engaging with regional stakeholders across South West Wales Region moving towards formulating a synchronised Regional Strategy and Improvement Programme. The local strategy will inform the development of the regional strategy to coordinate activities across the region.</p>	
	<p>d. In partnership with Transport for Wales develop a proposed bus network and explore the feasibility of introducing a pilot Flecsi bus service to complement the proposed network. This initiative will be subject to funding becoming available</p>	<p>The Local Authority has worked with Transport for Wales (TfW) and the bus operators to introduce an affordable Network within Bus Transition funding budget. There will be service reduction despite lobbying from officers and politicians.</p>	
	<p>e. In partnership with Transport for Wales and Welsh Government secure funding for procurement of Hydrogen fuelled vehicles and identify land for hydrogen storage and refuelling infrastructure, vehicle parking and maintenance</p>	<p>Project team have met twice. Tender documentation and vehicle specification discussed. Awaiting confirmation of funding.</p> <p>Transport for Wales (TfW) identifying land options.</p> <p>The project positively aligns with the overarching policy framework including the goals of the Paris Agreement as it supports the decarbonisation of the transport sector, delivers on the commitment for public service buses to be net zero by 2035; supports aspirations for Wales to be a leading country in hydrogen mobility deployment across Europe and for the hydrogen sector to be developed across the UK as a whole; advocates for improving public transport and also to support the development of a fully integrated bus network that encourages people away from their cars.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
17. Jobs Growth Wales Plus and apprenticeship programmes expanded across the county borough; with the council offering a larger number of quality placement opportunities	a. Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment and training offer to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities.	Discussions still ongoing within our Corporate Training and Learning Team, Human Resources and Employability. We are continuing to update and modify processes. Working with Human Resources to get people into work for Neath Port Talbot and looking to update portal for Neath Port Talbot Website, work is still on going.  Systems are continuing at a steady pace but still needs some work to develop	
	b. Review our Human Resources recruitment and apprenticeship support, as well as our employability offer, so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need.	Shared Prosperity Fund Apprenticeship Bid - Met as Panel 4 <sup>th</sup> October, imminent with decision, as part of the People and Skills to enhance our Business Critical posts and react to our internal aging workforce. Work on going.  Skills and Training are targeting Teaching Assistants as a sector where it is hard to recruit. We have piloted this short sharp intervention which commenced in September 23, and will review its impact.  3 Jobs Plus Wales learners went into Primary Schools in September, we are reacting to Teaching Assistant vacancies in our schools. Trialling this method at this moment, if the learners are suitable they will progress onto an Apprentice pathway as a Teaching Assistant. The work is aimed at resolving the issue of hiring / training teaching assistants within our primary schools.	
18. More young people have access to opportunities to achieve a recognised qualification following completion of their statutory education	a. Deliver Jobs Growth Wales Plus to young people in Neath Port Talbot working with colleges to obtain Level 1 and 2	Skills and Training awarded Jobs Growth Wales+ (JGW+) contract working with Pembrokeshire College, this replaced the old Traineeship contract from Welsh Government. We are already seeing high numbers of referrals from Careers Wales and Self Referrals into JGW+. During April to September 91 referrals Jobs Growth Wales+ and 29 Referrals for Apprenticeships were received.	
	b. We will work to ensure Apprenticeship pathways are robust via partnership working and therefore give young people more opportunities.	Skills and Training currently work with Skills Academy Wales to deliver an Apprenticeship programme but pathway is limited to Hairdressing and Barbering and Childcare. It is our intention to develop new and innovative pathways expanding our offer for apprenticeships within Neath Port Talbot.  An Apprenticeship Co-ordinator has been appointed and Apprenticeship Pathway document has been completed, this gives an in-depth version of what apprenticeship pathways we have in Neath Port Talbot. A greater understanding of the pathway for apprenticeships to be developed.  A summer engagement programme with Skills & Training had over 100 young people engaged over the period.	
	c. Work with young people to help them gain vocational qualifications, for example Duke of Edinburgh, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme , First Aid Level 2	Skills and Training continue to provide an Alternative provision in Hairdressing and Barbering. In addition we provided Construction Skills Certificate Scheme Training and Groundwork to some of our schools within Neath Port Talbot. The service is looking to develop as part of Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills an expanded offer for our young people to react to the priority sector working with the RLSP and the emerging need within Neath Port Talbot. This will be promoted to all secondary schools within Neath Port Talbot through Neath and Afan Secondary Heads.	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
19. The council's learning and development offer is strengthened ensuring that all employees are supported to access lifelong learning opportunities and confidence to advance their careers within the council.	a. Maximise opportunities for partnership working both internally and externally, to access additional funding. Consider Shared Prosperity Fund funding for additional resource.	Shared Prosperity Fund bid – 'Developing People for the Future' has been submitted. This is a partnership application between Corporate Training & Development and The Employability Team. We plan to recruit 10 apprentices and 2 degree apprenticeships in departments where evidence gathered identifies skill shortages and business critical posts as part of our succession planning process. We will also recruit a Business Support Officer to assist in the administration and support of the project. This post holder will also work in partnership with the Apprenticeship Coordinator, within Skills & Training. Successful funding will allow us to deliver People and Skills interventions for people seeking employment and training through an apprenticeship pathway within Neath Port Talbot Council.	
20. Ensure we have a stronger workforce with sufficient apprenticeship opportunities for our young people and adults.	a. Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work.	We appointed an Apprenticeship Coordinator, during August 23, as part of Shared Prosperity Funding. His role will be to map out existing pathway opportunities for business to access apprenticeships for their employees and routes in which they can expand their current workforce. A greater understanding of apprenticeship framework to be developed. An increased number of successful apprenticeships delivered to enable improved access to long term well paid and high skilled jobs in the local economy.	
	b. Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision.	Work has already been undertaken to initiate a skills audit/mapping exercise as part of the Shared Prosperity Funding People and Skills to enhance understanding of skills needs in Neath Port Talbot. We have also secured funding to appoint a Skills Coordinator for Neath Port Talbot, this in turn will drive the skills agenda for Neath Port Talbot. Skills co-ordinator will start in October 2023.	
21. Partnership working is strengthened to upskill those already in work or who wish to return to work will improve; more local people will hold qualifications at Level 4+ and are supported into local quality jobs.	a. Neath Port Talbot Employability in work support will develop initiatives through partnership working to encourage those who want to upskill or those wishing to gain qualifications at a higher level.	The current offer of Neath Port Talbot Employability does not support those individuals who are in work wishing to upskill or retrain to gain better employment, whether it be for additional hours or an increase of salary. The team have submitted a Shared Prosperity Fund Expression of Interest to the Sustainable Communities Growth Fund to include this as part of the holistic provision of Neath Port Talbot Employability. The Sustainable Communities Growth Fund panel is due to meet in early October 2023. If the bid is successful the project will enhance the employability programmes to offer in work support or to upskill those already in employment.	



Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total – April to September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
1.	Number of 16-24 year olds being supported into education, employment, training and volunteering by Neath Port Talbot Employability.	155	108	162	Increase
2.	Number of internal Apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes.	78	110	Qtr 1 – 130 Qtr 2 - 155	Increase
3.	Number of completed training weeks for internal apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience (Community Benefits )	2844	1867	Reported annually	Increase
Page 185	Number of people assisted by Neath Port Talbot Employability achieving level 2 or higher qualification.	New performance Measure	New performance Measure	Qtr 1 – 17 Qtr 2 - 20	n/a – New Measure
	Number of people who are economically inactive supported into employment.	New performance Measure	New performance Measure	Qtr 1&2 -16	Increase
6.	Number of individuals from jobless households supported back into work with support from Neath Port Talbot Employability	New performance Measure	New performance Measure	Q1 &2 -42 was achieved Work Found – 27 Volunteering – 2 Qualifications/Work related Certificates - 13	n/a – New Measure
7.	Number of business enquires assisted resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies through Business Services.	711	515	For Qtr. 1 & 2 2023/24 – 481 For Qtr. 1 & 2 2022/23 - 294	Increase
8.	Business grants given as % of available funding.	New performance Measure	New performance Measure	Qtr 1 & 2 - Not issued any grants as yet. We have made conditional offers to companies but not paid out any because we have only had the grant offer letter and grant agreement approved by Legal week commencing 23.10.23. We should be in a position to start issuing letters week commencing 30.10.23, some companies will then be ready to draw down their funding. We will not see any activity on this PI until the end of quarter 3 and then it should increase substantially in quarter 4.	n/a – New Measure
9.	% of reduction in floor area of occupied council buildings.	22,010m2	New performance Measure	5.9% Decrease	Decrease

Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total – April to September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
10.	High quality business space made available/or under development.	New performance Measure	Total of 16,055 sq. ft. of letting space of which 4,254 sq. ft. is occupied. = 26.5%.	Reported Annually	Increase
11.	Number of commercial premises assisted with renovations or improvement.	New performance Measure	196	Q1&2- 112 (This figure includes both general advice and grants )	n/a – New Measure

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### Report of the Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

- N Daniel

#### Matter for Monitoring

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### Half Year Progress Report - Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023-2024

1st April 2023 – 30th September 2023.

#### Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with a half year update on the progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023-2024 (attached at Appendix 1). The action plan reflects the governance issues (improvement areas) identified in the council's Annual Governance Statement for 2022-2023.

#### Executive Summary

2. On the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Cabinet approved the council's Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023. Appendix 1 contains areas identified for improvement and an update on progress to date.

#### Background

3. The Annual Governance Statement forms part of the Statement of Accounts and reports on the extent of the council's compliance with its principles and practices of good governance, including how the council has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements.

## **Progress to Date**

4. The Corporate Governance Group continues to oversee the improvement work identified in the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan to ensure the council's processes and procedures enable the council to carry out its functions effectively.
5. During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, progress has been made on the improvement work areas contained within the action plan. More detail on the progress is contained in Appendix 1.

## **Financial Appraisal**

6. The progress described has been delivered within service budgets.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

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

## **Valleys Communities Impact:**

8. There is no impact on the valley communities as a result of this report.

## **Workforce Impact**

9. There is no impact on the workforce as a result of this report.

## **Legal Impact**

10. The council has a duty to reflect the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to ensure that our governance structures enable different parts of the organisation to work together on setting well-being objectives and taking all reasonable steps to meet the well-being objectives.

## **Risk Management**

11. The council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions,

including arrangements for the management of risk. Failure to monitor progress on the action plan may lead to non-compliance by Audit Wales and statutory recommendations the council would be obliged to address.

### **Consultation**

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

### **Recommendations**

13. It is recommended that Cabinet note the half year progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023-2024 for the period 1st April to 30th September 2023 - attached at Appendix 1.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

14. This is a matter for monitoring therefore no decision is required.

### **Appendices**

15. Appendix 1 – Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan 2023-2024.

### **List of Background Papers**

16. Annual Governance Statement 2022–2023

### **Officer Contact**

Noelwyn Daniel, Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

E-mail: [n.daniel@npt.gov.uk](mailto:n.daniel@npt.gov.uk)

Caryn Furlow-Harris, Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support.

E-mail: [c.furlow@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.furlow@npt.gov.uk)

Louise McAndrew, Corporate Strategic, Planning and Governance Office

E-mail: [l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk](mailto:l.mcandrew@npt.gov.uk)

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## Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2023-2024

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2023-2024	Responsible Officer	Progress During 2023-2024
<b>Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law</b>			
1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. All members ensure they attend annual refreshers in respect of the Members Code of Conduct undertaken by the Monitoring Officer;</li> <li>II. All Group Leaders make Standards and Ethics a standing item on their political group meeting agendas;</li> <li>III. All members ensure they are completing their declarations of gifts and hospitality, including where such gifts and hospitality are declined;</li> <li>IV. Group Leaders consider bi-annual meetings with the Monitoring Officer to discuss standards and ethics and how they can work together to promote standards within their political groups;</li> <li>V. Steps be taken to promote the Member Officer Protocol to all</li> </ul>	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<p>On signing their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, Members are required to give an undertaking to abide by the Members' Code of Conduct. Training was subsequently provided on the Code of Conduct. By the end of June 2022, all 60 elected members had attended and received this training.</p> <p>Refresher training takes place on an annual basis to enhance member's compliance with the Members Code of Conduct and to ensure members are aware of the responsibility to act ethically and with integrity, with advice provided on a variety of matters throughout the year on interests and predetermination matters.</p> <p>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provided an additional duty on group leaders to ensure members within their political group also comply with the Members Code of Conduct and ongoing support will be provided on this function via the Standards Committee.</p> <p>The Standards Committee were pleased to note the approach that Group Leaders take in promoting standards and the personal commitment they have to encourage members within their groups to embed ethical processes in their day to day activities. Of interest particularly to the Standards Committee was how Group Leaders deal with</p>

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2023-2024	Responsible Officer	Progress During 2023-2024
	<p>elected members and officers of the Council, with training provided as appropriate;</p> <p>VI. A series of guidance documents to be circulated to all members in respect of key conduct matters such as declarations of interest, predetermination, conduct case studies and key information for members.</p>		<p>the “thick skin” ideology that the Public Service Ombudsman and other regulatory bodies adopt and the views that all Group Leaders have that often this is an inappropriate test and it is not something that any elected member should have to have if they face abuse from members of the public, particularly in a social media setting. The Standards Committee are required to conduct an assessment of how political group leaders have complied with their new duty to promote high standards of conduct and the Standards Committee are able to confirm that throughout 2022-2023, Group Leaders have discharged their duty, in the views of the Standards Committee, and that there were no ethical concerns arising. The Standards Committee published their Annual Report in April 2023 for the work of the previous finance year.</p> <p>A detailed member induction programme took place following local government elections in May 2022. This included specified training relating to the member code of conduct, social media issues, gifts and hospitality and officer/member protocols.</p> <p>A protocol is in place as part of the council’s Constitution and Employee Code of Conduct.</p> <p>A review of the protocol was undertaken at the early stages of the member induction programme, as part of the wider review of the council’s Constitution. Copies of which have been distributed to officers.</p>



Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2023-2024	Responsible Officer	Progress During 2023-2024
			<p>Training has also been provided to officer groups within the council on the nature of the relationship between officers and members and this training will continue in future years. The protocol is monitored by the Standards Committee who considered the protocol and its implementation at a meeting of the Standards Committee recommending a few minor changes for consideration which will now be included within the Constitution going forward and circulated to officers and members.</p> <p>A series of guidance documents have now been produced in respect of member's interests, predisposition and predetermination and work commenced on the development of a guide in respect of social media and the code of conduct which will be considered by the Standards Committee in 2023-2024.</p>
1.3.4	Continue with future training of officer groups in the significance of the member and officer relations protocol.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<p>A protocol is in place as part of the council's Constitution and Employee Code of Conduct. A review of the protocol was undertaken at the early stages of the member induction programme, as part of the wider review of the council's Constitution. Copies of which have been distributed to officers.</p> <p>Training has also been provided to officer groups within the council on the nature of the relationship between officers and members and this training will continue in future years. The protocol is monitored by the Standards Committee who considered the protocol and its implementation at a meeting of the Standards Committee recommending a few minor changes for consideration which have now included within</p>

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2023-2024	Responsible Officer	Progress During 2023-2024
			the Constitution going forward and circulated to officers and members.
2.1.1	Corporate Procurement to monitor and evaluate compliance looking at what approach sections adopt. Head of Legal & Democratic Services to report annually to the Corporate Governance Group.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	The Corporate Procurement Team have spent the last year developing toolkits that will enable better reporting of financial spending and to monitor control mechanisms in respect of procurement activities. Work has been ongoing to address to procurement compliance in respect of the use of the council's Select List as well as addressing individual tendering arrangements in service areas. As part of the development of its procurement strategy and ongoing monitoring of council expenditure this work will continue.
<b>Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b>			
4.4.3	Review the Citizens' Panel and further develop in line with the action plan in the Public Participation Strategy	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	<p>In August, officers met with Opinion Research Services (ORS) to discuss how best to move forward with the Citizens' Panel. ORS have re-opened the recruitment form with an amendment to make it easier to identify the age group of respondents. A recruitment drive was launched in October during Local Democracy Week.</p> <p>In addition an opportunity for respondents to indicate whether they wished to be included in the circulation list when the council recruits for future activities such as focus groups, NPT Citizens' Panel etc. was built into the 'Let's Keep Talking' (LKT) questionnaire. These 'recontacts' from LKT responses will be contacted as part of the current recruitment drive.</p>

<b>Ref (action)</b>	<b>Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2023-2024</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Progress During 2023-2024</b>
4.6.1	Commence the review of the Partnership Agreement (Compact) between the council and the voluntary sector (to be completed by September 2024)	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	Discussion held at Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum – 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 to inform timeline and approach.
4.6.3	Commence the review of the Charter between the council and Town and Community Councils (to be completed by September 2024)	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	Discussion scheduled at Town / Community Councils Liaison Forum – 4 <sup>th</sup> December to set out timeline and approach.
<b>Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>			
5.1.1	Review business planning and performance management arrangements across the council	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	Review of the Corporate Performance Management Framework is underway in readiness for implementation from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024.
5.4.1	Ensure all strategic risk are embedded and further refine Directorate (operational) Risk Registers	Chief Finance Officer / Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	The Strategic Risk Register has been reviewed by Corporate Directors Group and presented to both Cabinet and Governance & Audit Committee. The Directorate Registers are being developed and have been presented to Corporate Directors Group (as set out in the council's Corporate Risk Management Policy).
5.5.1	Revisit the Let's Talk campaign during 2023-2024 to inform priorities for 2024-2025.	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	The Let's Keep Talking campaign was launched at the end of June 2023 and ran until 8 <sup>th</sup> October. The output will inform the council's updated Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2027.

**Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

6.1.1	Further refine the council's annual self-assessment process.	Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support	The self-assessment for 2022-2023 has been undertaken. Further work is required to ensure the self-assessment fits within the Corporate Performance Management Framework to add value and ensure its fit is aligned to Annual Report and Annual Governance Statement.
6.9.1	Further development of a medium term financial strategy.	Chief Finance Officer	Work has progress on development of a MTFP however further work is required to develop proposals to ensure the council has a sustainable financial footing.

<b>Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>			
8.14.1	A review of Data Processing, Data Protection and Data Sharing work to be undertaken by the Information Governance team.	Chief Digital Officer	<p>An audit of council information is underway to identify information assets, their characteristics, risks and any gaps in required documentation. This process prioritises areas likely to involve higher risk information or processes. As higher risk items are identified, they are addressed with lower risk items added to the Information Governance team's work plan. This will progressively improve the position of the council.</p> <p>It is expected that circa 500 Information Assets will be assessed and mitigated by the close of the Quarter 2 2024-2025. Upon completion of the Information Asset Audit, ongoing review of these information assets and council processing activities will be included in the business as usual activities of the team to provide adequate assurance of compliance in Data Processing, Data Protection and Data Sharing.</p>
<b>Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</b>			
9.5.1	Work to deliver governance awareness training across the council is ongoing and will continue during 2023-2024 to ensure appropriate training takes place with council officers.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Safe and Legal Decision Making Training' is available for relevant officers and is provided on an annual basis by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to council officers. Democratic Services Officers and Legal Services monitor reports to ensure legal compliance.

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

**Cabinet –**  
**Tuesday, 28 November 2023**

### **ACCESS TO MEETINGS/EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To consider whether the Public should be excluded from the following items of business.
<b>Item (s):</b>	<p>Item 14 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund Skills and Multiply Round 2</p> <p>Item 15 – Glamorgan Further Education Trust Fund</p> <p>Item 16 – The Harold and Joyce Charles Trust</p>
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Paragraphs listed below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 subject to the Public Interest Test (where appropriate) being applied.
<b>Relevant Paragraph(s):</b>	14

## **1. Purpose of Report**

To enable Members to consider whether the public should be excluded from the meeting in relation to the item(s) listed above.

Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, allows a Principal Council to pass a resolution excluding the public from a meeting during an item of business.

Such a resolution is dependent on whether it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **2. Exclusion of the Public/Public Interest Test**

In order to comply with the above mentioned legislation, Members will be requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendation(s) to the report on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Exclusion Paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Information which falls within paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended is exempt information if and so long as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.



The specific Exclusion Paragraphs and the Public Interest Tests to be applied are listed in Appendix A.

Where paragraph 16 of the Schedule 12A applies there is no public interest test. Members are able to consider whether they wish to waive their legal privilege in the information, however, given that this may place the Council in a position of risk, it is not something that should be done as a matter of routine.

**3. Financial Implications**

Not applicable

**4. Integrated Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

**5. Valleys Communities Impact**

Not applicable

**6. Workforce Impact**

Not applicable.

**7. Legal Implications**

The legislative provisions are set out in the report.

Members must consider with regard to each item of business the following matters.

- (a) Whether in relation to that item of business the information is capable of being exempt information, because it falls into one of the paragraphs set out in Schedule 12A of the Local

Government Act 1972 as amended and reproduced in Appendix A to this report.

and either

- (b) If the information does fall within one or more of paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information; or
- (c) if the information falls within the paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in considering whether to exclude the public members are not required to apply the public interest test by must consider whether they wish to waive their privilege in relation to that item for any reason.

## **8. Risk Management**

To allow Members to consider risk associated with exempt information.

## **9. Recommendation(s)**

As detailed at the start of the report.

## **10. Reason for Proposed Decision(s):**

To ensure that all items are considered in the appropriate manner.

## **11. Implementation of Decision(s):**

The decision(s) will be implemented immediately.

**12. List of Background Papers:**

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**13. Appendices:**

Appendix A – List of Exemptions

## Appendix A

<b>NO</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</b>
<b>12</b>	Information relating to a particular individual
<b>13</b>	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
<b>14</b>	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
<b>15</b>	Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority
<b>16</b>	Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
<b>17</b>	Information which reveals that the authority proposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person, or</li><li>• To make an order or direction under any enactment.</li></ul>
<b>18</b>	Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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