



## ***POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD***

***Immediately Following Scrutiny Committee on  
THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2015***

***COMMITTEE REOOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE***

### **PART 1**

1. To agree the Chairperson for this Meeting
2. To receive any declarations of interest from Members.
3. To receive the Minutes of the previous Policy and Resources Cabinet Board held on the 3 September, 2015 (*Pages 5 - 12*)

### **To receive the Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

4. NPT Welsh Church Act Trust Fund (*Pages 13 - 34*)

### **To receive the Report of the Head of Financial Services**

5. Council Tax - Recovery of Costs 2015-16 (*Pages 35 - 38*)
6. Home Improvement Loan Scheme (*Pages 39 - 52*)
7. Treasury Management Monitoring 2015/16 (*Pages 53 - 58*)

### **To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services**

8. CCTV Service - Options (*Pages 59 - 88*)
9. Digital by Choice Strategy (*Pages 89 - 150*)

10. Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015  
(Pages 151 - 172)
11. To Receive Minutes of the Margam Joint Crematorium Committee and the Joint Resilience Committee (Pages 173 - 190)
12. To Receive the Forward Work Programme 2014/15.  
(Pages 191 - 192)
13. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No 2290 (as amended).
14. Access to Meetings - 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**

### **To receive the Private Report of the Head of Financial Services**

15. Housing Benefits Write Off (Exempt under Paragraph 14)  
(Pages 193 - 196)
16. Write Off of Council Tax (Exempt Under Paragraph 14)  
(Pages 197 - 208)

**S.Phillips**  
**Chief Executive**

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

**Monday, 12 October 2015**

### **Cabinet Board Members:**

**Councillors:** A.H.Thomas and A.N.Woolcock

**Notes:**

- (1) *If any Cabinet Board Member is unable to attend, any other Cabinet Member may substitute as a voting Member on the Committee. Members are asked to make these arrangements direct and then to advise the committee Section.*
- (2) *The views of the earlier Scrutiny Committee are to be taken into account in arriving at decisions (pre decision scrutiny process).*

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**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**  
**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**  
**3 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillors: A.H.Thomas (Chairman) and P.A. Rees

**Officers in Attendance:**

H.Jenkins, Mrs.K.Jones and Miss.G.Cirillo

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Agreed that Councillor A.H. Thomas be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD HELD ON THE 9TH JULY 2015**

Noted by the Committee.

3. **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA 2015-2016 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE (1ST APRIL 2015 - 30TH JUNE 2015)**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

4. **COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015**

**Decisions:**

1. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be authorised to take the actions necessary to secure compliance by the Local Authority with s26 and s36 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and associated statutory guidance issued by the Home Secretary in relation thereto;

2. That the above delegations be reported to Council in due course in order that authority to amend the Constitution may be obtained;
3. That Officers contact the WLGA to request that representations be made to Ministers concerning the fact that no new resources had been identified to support the new duties placed on local authorities in relation to the legislation subject of this report and other similar reports on today's agenda.

### **Reasons for Decisions:**

1. To provide the relevant Officers with the delegated authority to implement the actions necessary for the Authority to be able to comply with Sections 26, 36 and the Statutory Guidance, issued by the Home Secretary under Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
2. To draw to the attention of Ministers, the imposition of new duties without a corresponding allocation of new resources to fulfill the new duties.

### **Implementation of Decisions:**

The decision is will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

## 5. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014**

### **Decisions:**

1. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services, the Head of Public Protection and Housing, the Head of Legal Services, the Head of Streetcare and the Head of Planning be authorised to exercise the new powers available under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for the purposes of tackling anti-social behaviour and low level crime;
2. That the delegated authorities provided by the Cabinet Board be reported to Council in due course in order that authorisation to reflect the delegated authorities in the Council's Constitution can be obtained.

### **Reason for Decisions:**

To formally authorise Officers to exercise the powers available under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for the purposes of tackling

anti-social behaviour and low level crime across the Neath Port Talbot County Borough.

**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

6. **LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (WALES) ACT 2015**

**Decisions:**

1. That the the new duties and responsibilities placed upon the Council under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, be noted;
2. That the the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to take the actions necessary to ensure compliance by the Council with the provisions of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, subject to those actions being funded by Welsh Government;
3. That the above delegations be reported to Council in due course in order for changes to the Council's Constitution to be authorised.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To provide formal authority to the relevant Officer to take the actions necessary to secure compliance by the Council with the new duties and responsibilities placed on local authorities by the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

7. **REVISED STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2015-2019**

**Decisions:**

1. That the revised Strategic Equality Plan 2015-19, attached at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be endorsed;
2. That the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-19, be presented to Council for approval.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To discharge the Council's duty in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

**Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after consultation with the Scrutiny Committee and consideration and approval by Council.

8. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT 2015-2016**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

9. **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2014-2015**

**Decision:**

That the report be noted.

10. **INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2015-2016**

**Decisions:**

1. That the awarding of Insurance Policies as outlined in the circulated report be approved.
2. That the Head of Financial Services ensures that the Council's tendered Insurance arrangements are in place from 1st October 2015.



### **Reason for Decisions:**

To provide a decision in relation to the Council's Insurance arrangements, which need to be in place before the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

### **Implementation of Decisions:**

The decision is for immediate implementation. The decision is an urgent one for immediate implementation. The Chairman had agreed to this course of action and therefore there would be no call-in of this decision.

## 11. **DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS - REVIEW OF 2014-15 PERFORMANCE AND POLICY UPDATE FOR 2015-16**

### **Decisions:**

1. That the outcomes and financial support provided via Discretionary Housing Payments in 2014-15 as outlined in the detailed report be noted;
2. That the joint working arrangements between Housing Benefit, Housing Options and NPT Homes in relation to awarding DHP's be noted and supported;
3. That the updated Discretionary Housing Payments Policy and Procedure, (as set out in Appendix 3) to the circulated report be approved.

### **Reason for Decisions:**

In order to review performance information and update the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy and Procedures.

### **Implementation of Decisions:**

The decisions will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

## 12. **PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER AND REPORT**

### **Decision:**

That the report be noted.

13. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15.**

**Decision:**

That the Forward Work Programme 2015/16 be noted.

14. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** that pursuant to Regulation 4(3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15. **LOTTERY AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING INITIATIVE**

**Decisions:**

1. That Members note the intention of the Corporate Health Group to establish a Neath Port Talbot Staff Association with its day to day management undertaken by an Executive Committee with outline terms of reference, as set out at Appendix 1 to the private circulated report, with a detailed Constitution being developed;
2. That the Association establish a Private Society Lottery and Employee Wellbeing Fund that will benefit its members, with the Executive Committee making decisions in relation to those funds, in line with the terms of reference at Appendix 1 to the private circulated report, and in accordance with the detailed Constitution;
3. That the introduction of a part-time administrative post within the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to provide the administrative service to that the Executive Committee including the use of Council facilities, be approved, and that the salary of the administrative post be met in full by the lottery funds, and that the appointee be seconded from the existing workforce;
4. That the Internal Audit Service audit the lottery and employee wellbeing funds, with the cost of the audit work to being met from the funds;
5. That Finance and Corporate Services make staff lottery deductions from the payroll, and charge the Association an administration fee equivalent to 2% of deductions, and that the funds generated by the lottery prize fund and employee wellbeing fund be paid into a bank account to be controlled

by the NPT Staff Association through its Executive Committee, as detailed in the private circulated report;

6. That the Communications Section be authorised to assist in promoting the NPT Staff Association, associated lottery and employee wellbeing initiatives, the costs of which to be borne by the lottery fund.

**Reason for Decisions:**

To create an NPT Staff Association and to provide authority for services to be provided to the Executive Committee of the Association by the Council, on a chargeable basis.

**Implementation of Decisions**

The decisions are urgent for immediate implementation. The Chairman had agreed to this course of action and therefore there would be no call-in of these decisions.

16. **WRITE OFF OF COUNCIL TAX**

**Decision:**

That the write-offs of the amounts as detailed within the private circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

The accounts are irrecoverable.

**Implementation of Decision:**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

17. **HOUSING BENEFITS WRITE OFF**

**Decision:**

That the write offs of the amounts, as detailed within the private circulated report, be approved.

**Reason for Decision**

The accounts are irrecoverable.

## **Implementation of Decision**

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

**CHAIRMAN**

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES - H.JENKINS

#### Matter for Decision

Wards Affected - All Wards

#### NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACT TRUST FUND

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To seek member approval to open the Welsh Church Act Trust Fund for new applications.

#### 2. Background

This Council is the Trustee for the Neath Port Talbot Welsh Church Act Trust Fund. On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2012, following a review of the funds financial position, the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board suspended consideration of new applications. At that time outstanding grant commitments totalled over £65,000 with annual income in 2010/11 of £3,470.

#### 3. Financial Impact

Attached at Appendix 1 are the financial statements for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The following table summarises the estimated income for 2015/16.

	<b>Assets (Land) £</b>	<b>Assets (Cash) £</b>	<b>Total Assets £</b>
Value@31 March 2015	65,234	537,403	602,637
Est. Annual Income	500	5,375	5,875
Est. costs - Finance & Legal			2,600
- Independent Examiner			1,660
<b>Total Costs</b>			<b>4,260</b>

Whilst net annual income is some £1,600 the accumulated surplus totals some £70,000. This provides the opportunity to reopen the Welsh Church Act Trust Fund for new applications. However, given that the relatively low investment income now being available it is proposed that the maximum grant payable needs to be reduced.

The following schedule sets out the proposed amendments to existing award criteria.

### **Review of Award Criteria**

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<p>(d) Grants will not normally exceed £2,000 and in exceptional circumstances £10,000 per applicant and successful applicants will not normally be reconsidered for a further grant within 3 years of the date of approval of the last grant.</p>	<p>(d) Grants will not normally exceed £1,000 and in exceptional circumstances £4,000 per applicant and successful applicants will not normally be reconsidered for a further grant within 3 years of the date of approval of the last grant.</p>
<p>(j) Grant aid will not normally cover the full cost of a project/proposal and normally will be approved at 60% of actual costs incurred up to the maximum as outlined in condition (d) above.</p>	<p>(j) Grant aid will not normally cover the full cost of a project/proposal and normally will be approved at 25% of actual costs incurred up to the maximum as outlined in condition (d) above. The grant of £4,000 will only be approved where expenditure exceeds £50,000.</p>
<p>(p) In the case of students undertaking further Education courses, contributions towards the costs of individual instruments or pieces of equipment etc. will be made as follows - 50% of all costs over a threshold of £2,000 up to a maximum grant of £1,500.</p>	<p>(p) In the case of students undertaking further Education courses, contributions towards the costs of individual instruments or pieces of equipment etc. will be made as follows - 50% of all costs over a threshold of £2,000 up to a maximum grant of £1,000.</p>

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment**

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

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

As this is a charitable fund, Trustees will award grants in line with the grant conditions.

#### **5. Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements 2014/15**

As in previous years members should note that these draft statements have been forwarded to Wales Audit Office for independent examination and reporting in line with charitable regulations. It is expected that this work will be finalised later this year and there is a need for the statements to be lodged with the Charity Commission by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016. As the next meeting of this Committee is scheduled for early January and should this work not be completed at that time, there will be a requirement for an urgency action to be taken to satisfy Charity Commission requirements and a copy of the final documentation will be forwarded to members at the next appropriate meeting.

#### **6. Recommendation**

It is recommended that members approve:-

- a) the draft annual report and financial statements and note the potential requirement for an urgency action in order to forward finalised documents to the Charity Commission by the end of January 2016.
- b) that the Welsh Church Act Trust Fund is reopened for applications.
- c) that the new maximum grant values as set out below:
  - Grants will not normally exceed £1,000 and in exceptional circumstances £4,000 per applicant and successful applicants will not normally be reconsidered for a further grant within 3

years of the date of approval of the last grant.

- Grant aid will not normally cover the full cost of a project/proposal and normally will be approved at 25% of actual costs incurred up to the maximum as outlined in condition (d) above. The grant of £4,000 will only be approved where expenditure exceeds £50,000.
- In the case of students undertaking further Education courses, contributions towards the costs of individual instruments or pieces of equipment etc. will be made as follows - 50% of all costs over a threshold of £2,000 up to a maximum grant of £1,000.

**7. Reason for Proposed Decision**

To comply with charitable auditing requirements and the reopening of the fund for new applications within the financial resources available.

**8. Implementation of Decision**

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

**9. Consultation**

There is no requirement to consult on this item.

**10. List of Background Papers**

Welsh Church Act Trust Fund accounts and working papers

**11. Officer Contact**

Mr Hywel Jenkins – Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
Tel. No: 01639 763251  
email: [h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk](mailto:h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk)



**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**WELSH CHURCH ACT TRUST FUND**

**SCHEME 1999**

**DRAFT**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1076440**

**Neath Port Talbot Welsh Church Acts Fund**

**Annual Report For The Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Welsh Church Act Trust Fund) Scheme 1999, is a Registered Charity number 1076440.

**The registered address is:** Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
Finance & Corporate Services Directorate  
Civic Centre  
Port Talbot  
SA13 1PJ

The Welsh Church Acts Fund was established by a trust deed in 1914. It originally covered the old Glamorgan County Council area. The original fund was apportioned in 1974, following Local Government Reorganisation to 3 new Glamorgan Counties, South, Mid and West. Following further reorganisation in 1996, the Fund of the former West Glamorgan County Council was apportioned on a population basis between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea.

This report relates to the portion of the Fund now managed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

**Trustees:** Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, who have delegated responsibility to the Finance Panel, and its successors the Strategic Resources Board, Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and Policy and Resources Cabinet Board.

The following advisors have assisted the Trustees in the year:

**Honorary Treasurer:** Mr. H.J. Jenkins  
Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Port Talbot SA13 1PJ

**Independent Examiner:** Mr Richard Harries  
On behalf of the  
Auditor General for Wales  
24 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff, CF11 9LJ

**Bankers:** Santander Commercial Bank  
Bridle Road  
Bootle  
Merseyside L30 4GB

**Fund Manager:** Fieldings Investment Management Limited  
6 Kinghorn Street  
London EC1A 7HW

### **Restriction on Application of Income**

The object of the fund shall be to receive grant applications from charities and voluntary bodies which are based in, or active in, or provide significant benefits to some or all of the residents of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough area, and in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Grant Applications'.

A copy of these Guidelines are attached at *pages 5 and 6*.

### **Power of Investment**

The Trustees may out of the Fund acquire any land which is required for the purposes of the scheme, and invest income in any investment from time to time sanctioned by law for the investment of trust funds or in authorised security created by the local authority.

The Chief Executive shall act as the Clerk to the Trustees and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services shall act as Treasurer of the Fund.

### **Aims of the Fund**

The aim of the Trustees is to make grant payments for charitable purposes in accordance with Schedule 1 Paragraph 19 of the governing document.

A copy of this Schedule is attached at *pages 6-9*.

### **Review of Financial Activities 2014/15**

#### **Income**

Income for 2014/15 £6,601 (£5,925 in 2013/14) and comprised of short term investments and estate rentals.

There was a return on cash investments of £6,101 in 2014/15 (£5,248 in 2013/14).

Estate rental income totalled £500 in 2014/15 (£677 in 2013/14).

### Expenditure

Expenditure in the year was less than income by £2,301 (£4,994 deficit in 2013/14) with a corresponding increase in the income accumulation fund balance. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 this fund balance stood at £70,851.

The Charity did not make any grant payments during 2014/15 (£6,000 during 2013/14).

In order to protect the future sustainability of the fund new applications for grants have been suspended since 2011/12.

### Tangible Fixed Assets.

There was no movement in the tangible fixed assets or revaluation of fixed assets. The last revaluation was undertaken on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

### Fixed Asset Investments.

There are no fixed asset investments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

### Short Term Investments.

The total amount of short term cash investments with Neath Port Talbot CBC at the year-end was £537,403 an increase of £34,131 from the previous year.

Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Honorary Treasurer)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## Welsh Church Acts Fund

### Guidelines for Grant Applications

- a) Each application will be considered on its merits.
- b) Grants will only be awarded to charities and voluntary bodies which are based in, or active in, or provide significant benefits to some or all of the residents of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough area.
- c) Grants will only be awarded to individuals in exceptional circumstances.
- d) Grants will not normally exceed £2,000 and in exceptional circumstances £10,000 per applicant and successful applicants will not normally be reconsidered for a further grant within 3 years of the date of approval of the last grant.
- e) Grants will have a time limit for the take up of said grant of two years from the date of approval.
- f) Grants will not normally be awarded where the service could be dealt with out of the annual budget of the Council's service Committees activities or by other public bodies.
- g) Grants will not normally be awarded where they would commit the fund to regular annual payments nor will recurring annual expenses be supported.
- h) Grants will only be made out of the income of the fund, preserving the Fund's capital assets.
- i) Priority will be given to applications which are of significant benefit to the Neath Port Talbot County Borough area.
- j) Grant aid will not normally cover the full cost of a project/proposal and normally will be approved at 60% of actual costs incurred up to the maximum as outlined in condition (d) above.
- k) Organisations assessed as being able to meet the cost (e.g. by size or nature) are unlikely to receive any grant aid.
- l) Grants towards work of a structural nature will only be considered where:
  - there is evidence that a professional assessment has been made of the works;
  - the applicant organisation can demonstrate that there is no other impediment to work proceeding at an early date (e.g. planning permission).
- m) In the case of Churches and Chapels grants will only be approved for the repair of the fabric of buildings which are more than 50 years old and of the highest architectural and historic interest. Church halls, however, where available and used significantly by the public for non-religious purposes will not be subject to these criteria.
- n) No retrospective applications are considered.

- o) The Panel will take into account the Church membership and the normal size of the congregation
- p) In the case of students undertaking further Education courses, contributions towards the costs of individual instruments or pieces of equipment etc. will be made as follows - 50% of all costs over a threshold of £2,000 up to a maximum grant of £1,500.

### **SCHEDULE 1 Paragraph 19**

#### **The Charitable purposes for which the Fund may be applied**

#### **The Advancement of Education**

#### **Educational**

1. The provision of benefits which are not readily available from other sources for persons of any age in one or more of the following ways:-
  - (i) the award of scholarships, bursaries, loans or maintenance allowances to enable or to assist study at any school, university or other place of learning, approved by the Council, which may if the Council think fit include allowances to dependents.
  - (ii) the provision of financial assistance, outfits, clothing tools, instruments, other equipment, or books or loans to enable pupils or students on leaving school, university or any other educational establishment to prepare for, or to assist their entry into a profession, trade or calling.
  - (iii) the award of scholarships or maintenance allowances or loans to enable beneficiaries to travel abroad to pursue their education.
  - (iv) the provision, or assistance towards the provision of facilities of any kind not normally provided by a local education authority, or a grant maintained school, for recreation, social and physical training at a school, university or other educational establishment.
  - (v) the provision of financial assistance to enable pupils and students to study music or other arts.
  - (vi) the provision of financial assistance to enable beneficiaries to undertake apprenticeships.

**Libraries, Museums, Art Galleries etc.**

2. The advancement of knowledge and appreciation of the arts and literature of Wales and, in particular, in furtherance of those purposes but without prejudice to the generality thereof –
  - (i) the establishment, maintenance, replenishment or aiding of charitable institutions, libraries, museums, art galleries; or art, scientific or industrial exhibitions (including exhibitions relating to industrial archaeology); whether national or local, for the principal use and benefit of the Welsh people;
  - (ii) the assistance of charitable societies for study and research in subjects connected with Welsh history, topography, literature and life;
  - (iii) the provision of lectures, exhibitions and equipment;
  - (iv) the acquisition, preservation and publication of records and documents;
  - (v) the provision of suitable premises (by erection, purchase, lease or hiring for occasional use) for any of the purposes authorised by this paragraph.

**The Relief of Poverty  
Relief in Need**

3. The relief either generally or individually of persons who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by the making of grants of money or the provision of, or payment for, items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons.

**The Advancement of Religion  
Places of Worship and Burial Grounds**

4. The contribution towards the restoration and maintenance of any place of public worship or any burial ground.

**Other Purposes Beneficial to the Community  
Relief in Sickness**

5. The relief in cases of need of persons who are sick, convalescent, disabled, handicapped or infirm by the provision of, or payment for, items, services or facilities which are calculated to alleviate the suffering or assist the recovery of such persons, but which are not readily available to them from other sources.

## **Elderly Persons**

6. The provision, or assisting in the provision of accommodation for elderly persons who by reason of the infirmities and disabilities of age have need of such reception, care and attention. The provision of funds to organisations promoting the welfare of elderly persons.

## **Social and Recreational**

- 7.(1) The provision of, or assisting in the provision of, facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation being facilities which are available to the members of the public at large and which are provided in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving the conditions of life of the persons for whom they are intended and, in particular, in furtherance of those purposes but without prejudice to the generality thereof, the provision of, or assisting in the provision of, playing fields, other sporting facilities, parks, open spaces and centres or halls for meetings, lectures or classes.
- (2) Sub-paragraph (1) is intended, in particular, to be concerned with the provision of, or assisting in the provision of, facilities etc. to persons in need by reason of their youth, old age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances.

## **Aesthetic, Architectural, Historical and Scientific Matters**

8. The advancement of the education and public benefit of the Welsh people by promoting their interest in aesthetic, architectural, historical or scientific matters relating to Wales and in particular in furtherance of those matters but without prejudice to the generality thereof -
- (a) the acquisition and preservation of -
- (i) land of special interest in relation to science and nature history;
  - (ii) land, buildings or objects of beauty or of historic or architectural interest.
- (b) the acquisition, preservation and publication of records and documents of historic interest.



**Medical and Social Research, Treatment, Etc.**

9. The preservation and protection of the physical and mental health of society and, in particular, in furtherance of those purposes but without prejudice to the generality thereof -
- (a) the advancement of education in the theory and practice of medicine;
  - (b) the promotion of medical and social research and schemes for the prevention and treatment of disease and publishing the results of such research;
  - (c) the provision of nursery and convalescent homes and hostels.

**Probation Etc.**

10. Making grants in cases of need for the assistance of -
- (a) persons placed on probation, or children and young persons from community homes or any other institution of a substantially similar nature established under statutory authority;
  - (b) the families of any such persons, children or young persons; or
  - (c) discharged prisoners.

**People who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

11. Provision for the welfare of persons who are blind or visually impaired, including the provision of charitable homes and holiday homes.

**Emergencies or Disasters**

12. The contribution towards the alleviation of the effects of emergencies or disasters involving destruction of or danger to life, and property and directly assisting persons in need as a result of such emergencies and disasters.

**Other Charitable Organisations**

Contributions towards charitable organisations, the purposes of which are consistent with the provisions of this Schedule or the Welsh Church Acts 1914 to 1945

**Report of the independent examiner to the Trustee of Neath Port  
Talbot**

**Welsh Church Acts Fund**

To be inserted once independent examination completed

**Report of the independent examiner to the Trustee of Neath Port  
Talbot  
Welsh Church Acts Fund**

To be inserted once independent examination completed

## NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total Funds 31/03/2015 £	Total Funds 31/03/2014 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES:</b>						
<b>Investment income:</b>						
Long Term Investments	2	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Investments	3	-6,101	-	-	-6,101	-5,248
<b>Other incoming resources:</b>						
Sale of Land		-	-	-	-	-
Estate Rentals	4	-500	-	-	-500	-677
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>-6,601</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-6,601</b>	<b>-5,925</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED:</b>						
<b>Charitable Activities:</b>						
Grants	5	0	-	-	0	6,000
<b>Governance Costs:</b>						
Professional Fees	6	-	-	-	0	-
Accountancy, Legal & independent Examiners Fees		4,300	-	-	4,300	4,208
Other Expenses.		0	-	-	0	711
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>4,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>10,919</b>
<b>NET (INCOMING) / OUTGOING RESOURCES BEFORE</b>						
Transfers between funds		-2,301	-	-	-2,301	4,994
		-	-	-	-	-
		<b>-2,301</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2,301</b>	<b>4,994</b>
<b>OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES</b>						
Gain on sales of fixed assets	-	6,500	-	-	-6,500	-625
Unrealised (gains)/losses on investment assets		-	-	-	-	-
Unrealised gains on revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>-8,801.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-8801</b>	<b>4,369</b>
Total Funds brought Forward		-599,405	-	-	-599,405	-603,774
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>		<b>-608,206</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-608,206</b>	<b>-599,405</b>

# NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2015

	Note	31-Mar-15		31-Mar-14	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible Assets	7		65,234		95,234
Investments	8		-		-
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>			<b>65,234</b>		<b>95,234</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	9	7,572		6,306	
Short Term Investments	8	537,403		503,272	
Cash at bank		-		-	
<b>Total Current Assets</b>			<b>544,975</b>		<b>509,578</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	10		-2,003		-5,407
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>			<b>-2,003</b>		<b>-5,407</b>
<b>Total Net Current Assets</b>			<b>542,972</b>		<b>504,171</b>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>			<b>608,206</b>		<b>599,405</b>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after 1 year			-		-
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	11		<b>608,206</b>		<b>599,405</b>
<b>Represented By Funds of the Charity</b>					
Unrestricted Income Funds					
Fund Balance	12	537,355		530,855	
Income Accumulation Account		70,851		68,550	
<b>TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS</b>			<b>608,206</b>		<b>599,405</b>

# NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015

### 1. Accounting Policies

#### General

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) The Statement of Recommended Practice – “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” – and with due regard to general accounting policies and procedures (SORP 2005).
- b) The Charities Act 2011 and other legislative requirements.
- c) The historic cost basis of accounting except for investments and fixed assets which have been included at market value.
- d) Accounting Standards.

#### Basis of Accounting

The accounts have been prepared using the accruals basis. There was no change in this basis. Grants are recognised on a cash basis, i.e. when payments of grants to external organisations are made, rather than when they are approved.

Funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustee in furtherance of the general objectives.

### 2. Investment Income – Long Term Investments

There were no investments in Treasury Stocks during 2014/15.

### 3. Investment Income – Short Term Investments

The Welsh Church Acts Fund has short term cash deposits with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. These investments operate on an instant access basis, and interest is calculated based on average interest rate earned. The average interest rate for 2014/15 was 1.20% (1.03% in 2013/14).

Details of short term deposits are provided at **Note 8**.

#### 4. Other income

The Welsh Church Acts Fund receives rental income from various properties, land and wayleaves. Further details of the properties are attached at **page 18**.

#### 5. Grants

No Grant payments were made in 2014/15.

#### 6. Governance cost

No professional fees were paid in 2014/15 due to there being no investments in Stocks or bonds or asset sales.

Independent examiners fee for reporting on the accounts was £1,656.85 (2013/14 £1,656.85).

Payments of £2,070 (£2,040 in 2013/14) and £500 (both years) have been paid to Neath Port Talbot Council re Finance and Legal work respectively.

#### 7. Fixed Assets

There was a sale of agricultural land (Michaelston Super Ely with St Brides) in 2014-15. The capital receipt £36,500 (including deposit of £3,650 received in 2013/14) realised a net profit of £6,500.

#### 8. Investments

	Treasury Stock	Short-Term Deposits
	£	£
Market Value at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	-	503,272
Additions / Investments	-	34,131
Disposals / Withdrawals	-	-
Net Investment gains/ (losses)	-	-
<b>Market Value at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>537,403</b>

## 9. Debtors and Prepayments

	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
	£	£
Accrued Income		
Investment Income	6,101	5,133
Estate Rental	1,471	1,173
<b>Total Falling Due within one year</b>	<b>7,572</b>	<b>6,306</b>

## 10. Creditors

	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
	£	£
Independent Examination fees	(1,657)	(1,584)
Estate rental prepayments	(346)	(173)
Receipts in advance		(3,650)
<b>Total Falling Due within one year</b>	<b>(2,003)</b>	<b>(5,407)</b>

## 11. Analysis of net assets by fund – unrestricted and restricted income fund

	<b>2014/15</b>		
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	65,234	-	65,234
Current Assets	544,975	-	544,975
Current Liabilities	(2,003)	-	(2,003)
<b>Total</b>	<b>608,206</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>608,206</b>

## 12. Analysis of funds – Investment and unrestricted income funds

	<b>Balance 31/03/14</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Utilised/ Released</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Gains / Losses</b>	<b>Balance 31/03/15</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income	68,550	6,601	(4,300)	-	-	70,851
Fund Balance	530,855	-	-	-	6,500	537,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>599,405</b>	<b>6,601</b>	<b>(4,300)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>608,206</b>



### 13. Commitments and contingencies

The Fund has made commitments to external organisations for grants already approved and pending payment, which is not quantified within the accounts, because the conditions of the grant mean that not all approved grants are paid out.

Whilst the approved grants still unpaid as at 31/03/14 total £39,300, they were approved pre 2011. With the exception of two grants all have been contacted and advised cancelled. The two remaining approved grants unpaid as at 31/03/15 total £4,400 at maximum contribution. The income accumulation fund balance at 31 March 2015 stood at £70,851 and is able to meet this commitment.

The fund is not committed to any expenditure other than approved grants pending payment.

There were no contingent gains or losses that require inclusion in the accounts.

### 14. Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year, other than the £2,570 fee (2013/14 - £2,540) paid to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council disclosed at **note 6**.

#### NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND INVESTMENTS 2014/15

	Quantity (Capital)	Opening Balance / Market Value 01/04/2014 £	Closing Balance Market Value 31/03/2015 £	Total Interest 2013/15 £
NPT Loans Fund	-	503,272.14	537,403.41	6,100.66
<b>Totals</b>	-	503,272.14	537,403.41	6,100.66

**NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND  
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS, AGRICULTURAL LAND AND BUILDINGS  
AND FREEHOLD REVERSIONS**

Estat	Details	Address	Asset Value 31 Mar 2014	Sales	Asset Value 31 Mar 2015
<b>Vale of Neath:</b>					
	Residential Neath	80 Llantwit Road, Neath	17,000		17,000
	Agricultural Land	Llantwit Road Neath opp St Illtyds Church	3,250		3,250
		Llantwit Road Neath Opp St Illtyds Church			
	Agricultural Land	Glebe under canal	100		100
	Land Cadoxton Neath	5.4 Acres at Cwmbach Road	9,250		9,250
	Land Cadoxton Neath	3.74 Acres North of Cwmbach Road	3,750		3,750
	Land Cadoxton Neath	0.4 Acres South of Cwmbach Road	500		500
	Misc. Interest Cadoxton Neath	Garage Site, Cwmbach Road	1,500		1,500
	Misc. Interest Cadoxton Neath	Garage Site, Glebeland Street	1,500		1,500
	Land Cadoxton Neath	Land and stream adjoining 25 Church Road	1		1
	<b>Total Vale of Neath</b>		<b>36,851</b>		<b>36,851</b>
<b>Vale of Glamorgan - Agricultural:</b>					
	Michaelston Super Ely with St Brides	St-y-Nyll (0018)	30,000	(30,000)	0
	Peterson-Super-Ely	Gwern y Gae Uchaf Farm	11,500		11,500
	Peterson-Super-Ely	Backway Farm	16,000		16,000
	<b>Total Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural</b>		<b>57,500</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>27,500</b>
<b>Vale of Glamorgan – Wayleaves:</b>					
	St Brides Super Ely (electricity wayleaves)	0018 & 7200 wayleave	160		160
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	16		16
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	350		350
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	335		335
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	16		16
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	1		1
		0018 & 7200 wayleave	5		5
	<b>Total Vale of Glamorgan Wayleaves</b>		<b>883</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>883</b>
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>			<b>95,234</b>	<b>(30,000)</b>	<b>65,234</b>

## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

#### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES - D.REES

#### Matter for Decision

Wards Affected - All Wards

#### COUNCIL TAX - RECOVERY OF COSTS 2015-16

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To inform Members of changes to the recovery of fees and charges for 2015-16.

#### 2. Background

The Council Tax (Administration & Enforcement) Regulations allow the Council to levy an additional fee which is equal to the amount of costs reasonably incurred in making an application for a Liability Order through the Magistrate's. Reasonable costs are not defined in the regulations, but should reflect the cost to the Council of the processes undertaken in obtaining the Liability Order.

In January 2015 members approved costs for 2015-16 as follows –

- on the issue of a summons - £41.00
- on the granting of a liability order - £25.00

(Thus resulting in a total fee of £66.00 when both are granted)

Following a High Court hearing on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015 between Rev. Paul Nicholson and Tottenham Magistrates Court (summary in Appendix 1) where the level of costs charged by The London Borough of Haringey came under scrutiny, Swansea Magistrate's Court requested a detailed breakdown of costs charged by Neath Port Talbot Council in obtaining a liability order to substantiate the award of costs to the Council.

### 3. Financial Impact

In order to satisfy the Court that Neath Port Talbot Council is setting the level of costs reasonably incurred in obtaining a summons and liability order, a detailed analysis of expenditure incurred in carrying out the process was undertaken and the final figures forwarded to the Court are detailed below:-

	Costs associated with obtaining a summons	Costs associated with obtaining a liability order
Council Tax staff costs	£168,428.12	£56,142.71
Support Service costs	£63,161.78	£21,053.93
OSS costs	£2,643.75	£881.25
I.T costs	£3,307.50	£1,102.50
Postage	£7,162.38	£2,036.25
Printing	£688.60	£226.25
Total cost	£245,392.13	£81,442.89
Number of documents issued 2014/15	5,361	4,525
Total cost divided by number of documents issued	£45.77	£21.00 plus court fee £3.00 = £24.00

As the cost associated with obtaining a summons is in excess of the £41.00 previously approved by members this fee level has been increased to £42.00. On the other hand costs associated with liability orders were lower by £1.00 at £24.00. As a consequence the Court is now awarding the Council this lower fee level. The resulting total fee level when both a summons and liability order is granted totals £66.00, the same total as previously approved by members. However based upon last year's total volumes granted income will increase by some £836.

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment**

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

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

Council Tax is a universal tax that all tax payers are required to pay. The most financially disadvantaged tax payers within the community benefit from the Council Tax Reduction Support Scheme which can help pay up to 100% of the Council Tax for eligible tax payers. Following reminders and continuing non-payment legislation is in place enabling Councils to seek redress through the Magistrates’ Court. The costs of pursuing such action via summonses and liability orders can be recovered in line with the legislation. All tax payers are treated equally in terms of this recovery process.

#### **5. Legal Impacts**

This report satisfies the requirement as set out in Regulation 34(7) of the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 (SI 1992 No.613) that a court, when granting a liability order, shall make an order reflecting the aggregate of the outstanding council tax and "a sum of an amount equal to the costs reasonably incurred by the applicant in obtaining the order.

#### **6. Consultation**

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

#### **7. Recommendation**

It is recommended that members note that in order to comply with case law the Magistrates Courts are applying the updated fee levels for 2015-16 of a summons fee at £42.00 and a liability order fee of £24.00, in line with the costs identified.

**8. Reason for Proposed Decision**

To inform members of the updated fee levels being applied by the Magistrates' Courts in relation to summonses and liability orders.

**9. Implementation of Decision**

The decision needs to be endorsed following implementation by the Magistrates' Courts and is not subject to call in.

**10. List of Background Papers**

Council Tax (Administration & Enforcement) Regulations 1992

Council Tax Files & Case Law - Nicolson, R (on the application of) v Tottenham Magistrates & Anor [2015] EWHC 1252

**11. Officer Contact**

D.Rees - Head of Financial Services  
(Tel. 01639 763646)  
email: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Mrs Ann Hinder - Principal Council Tax Officer  
(Tel. 01639 763908)  
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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

15 OCTOBER 2015

#### Report of the Head of Financial Services – Dave Rees

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### Home Improvement Loan (HIL) Scheme

#### Purpose of Report

1. To approve the delivery of the Welsh Government Home Improvement Loan initiative for the purposes of issuing loans to applicants.

#### Executive Summary

2. The Welsh Government has launched an interest free loan scheme to help improve the supply and quality of private sector housing.
3. Funding totalling £892,244 has been allocated to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.
4. The loan fund will be available for a period of 15 years and must be repaid to WG by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030.
5. WG has given a commitment to share the risk of defaults with Local Authorities, the estimated default level is 5% the potential default risk to Neath Port Talbot is £37,306
6. This report provides the details eligibility criteria of the Home Improvement Loan scheme.

## Background

7. Cabinet approved the development of a project plan and final scheme particulars for the Home Improvement Loan initiative in February 2015.
8. The Home Improvement Loan Scheme is a Welsh Government (WG) initiative to offer interest free loans to help improve the quality and supply of private sector housing. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's allocation is £312,285 for 2014/15 with an additional repayable funding of £579,959 in 2015/16, giving a total funding of £892,244.
9. The Welsh Government has given a commitment to share the risk with Local Authorities in relation to applicants defaulting on their loan repayments, the WG anticipate a default level of 5% on each of the loan funds. They will fund half of any default costs up to a maximum of 2.5% of each loan fund. On the basis therefore of WG's estimate of a maximum default of 5%, the potential risk to Neath Port Talbot would be £22,306, plus a further £15,000 through the VVP scheme. These figures however, would be greater if the default level is higher than the WG estimate.
10. The loan fund is interest free and will be available to the Council for a maximum of 15 years. The loan fund must be repaid by the Council to WG by 31st March 2030. Money repaid to the Council before this date can be recycled to new applicants. The fund will be managed to ensure all loans are recovered from applicants in time to return it to WG by 2030.
11. In each of the years there is a 12 month rolling programme to spend, and if any of the money is not loaned within the 12 months, any funding that is not loaned is re-allocated amongst the regional area. The 12 month period starts at the point at which the money is drawn down by the Authority. The Authority is only liable for defaults on money that it issues and not for any monies that are re-distributed. Loans can be re-cycled into further loans as can repayment monies.
12. The WG funding offer stipulates that there must be consistency of approach in loan policy across regions. Neath Port Talbot is part of the Western Bay Region, where a consistent range of loan products will be available to applicants in both Neath Port Talbot



and Swansea. Bridgend County Borough Council is not participating in the delivery of the Home Improvement loan scheme as originally reported in February 2015.

13. A national steering group will be set up to monitor and review the scheme. This will be made up with representatives of each regional group, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Wales Housing Technical Panel, and Welsh Government.
14. As the scheme is delivered and developed performance measures will be put in place. Discussions will be held with finance, legal and audit sections to determine what measures, budget reports and other performance criteria are required. It has been agreed that the Council's Internal Audit Section will review and audit the loan scheme during 2016/17.

### **Home Improvement Loans**

15. Local Authorities have been given the flexibility as to the type of work that can be financed through the Home Improvement Loan Scheme.
16. Any loan approved must contribute to making the property warm, safe and / or secure. There is no requirement that the property must meet all of these criteria. The scheme will be used to offer loans for the following elements:
  - Loan for Regeneration/Renewal – Priority given to Renewal and Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) areas to support priority schemes.
  - Loan for Energy Efficiency Improvement – priority for owner occupiers for insulation works, renewable energy installations and / or boiler upgrades.
  - Loan to bring empty properties into residential use – via a Houses into Homes style loan targeted at owners of short term (less than 6 months) empty properties.
  - Loan to improve housing conditions & reduce hazards – To carry out major repairs / removal of hazards under the Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
  - Loan for homelessness prevention – priority given to landlords offering affordable market rents and / or nomination rights via Social Lettings Agency.

- Loan to top up a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) – Targeted at DFG applicants where mandatory grant, and any discretionary additional assistance, does not cover cost of works.
17. The Home Improvement Loan Scheme will be administered primarily within the Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service with additional support provided by legal services and finance, an indicative flow chart of a home improvement loan has been attached at Appendix 2.

### **Home Improvement Loan - Scheme details**

18. A detailed breakdown of the loan scheme criteria as detailed by Welsh Government is attached at Appendix 1.
19. Who can apply?

Any person with an owner's interest in the property subject to the loan, this includes owner occupiers, landlords of rented accommodation, and third sector organisations, but excludes Registered Social Landlords.

The owner will be determined through the title documents held at the land registry, consent from all owners recorded on the property title will be required for a loan to be considered. Any unregistered titles must be registered with the land registry prior to application for a loan.

Priority will be given to owner occupiers over landlords / developers. Where landlords do apply, priority will be given to those proposing to let properties at affordable market rate rent levels.

20. What is the maximum loan?

An eligible owner may apply for loan from £1,000 to maximum of £25,000 per unit of accommodation, and up to a maximum of £150,000 per applicant. Applications will be considered subject to the availability of funding and the loans will be interest free subject to payment default.

In circumstances where the total cost of the work exceeds the maximum loan permitted by the scheme, the applicant must provide documentary evidence of savings / investments or other financing arrangements that will be used to cover the cost of works above the loan value to ensure that adequate funds are in place to complete the proposed works, ensuring that, on completion, the property meets the required standard.

#### 21. Loan affordability

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 Article 3 (4) states that the Local Housing Authority shall have regard to the ability of the person concerned to make repayment or contribution.

Each loan applicant will be subject to a formal credit score rating check and an affordability assessment (based on income and expenditure) to ensure that the applicant(s) can meet the repayments on the loan. Applicants must evidence both income and expenditure to complete the affordability assessment.

#### 22. Loan fees and charges

An application fee up to 15% of the loan amount will be payable for each application. This can be paid upfront or added to the loan amount and spread equally over the agreed term of the loan. If added to the loan amount this will be subject to the maximum loan of £25,000 per unit of accommodation. The fee charged to cover all associated application fees (valuation, land registry check, credit scoring and loan administration).

The sum of the fee charged must not be greater than the cost of a loan available at market rates. A fee assessment will be included into the application process.

#### 23. Security for the loan

Any loan awarded will be secured on the property to which it relates, or on a different property which provides sufficient equity. A maximum loan to value ratio of 80% will apply which will take into consideration any loan already secured against the property.

The Council will take either a first or second charge on the property, which will remain in effect until such time as the loan is repaid in full. The Council will secure the loan with Land Registry for loans over £5,000; loans under this value will be secured by local land charge arrangements.

24. Repayment of the loan

The loans will be interest-free during the agreed loan term. For owner occupiers, a loan repayment period of up to 10 years, and for landlords, up to 5 years will be considered.

All loan terms offered will be subject to the outcome of the financial and affordability assessment which will be completed prior to loan approval.

In the case of a payment default, interest at 6% will become payable, and will be applied retrospectively from the date on which the loan was taken out.

25. Welsh Government Repayment

The Council has been awarded £892,244 for lending under the scheme by 31st March 2017. Any amount unspent at that time is subject to be returned to Welsh Government. As mentioned in para 2.4 this total amount is repayable to Welsh Government by 2030.

### **Financial Impact**

26. There are no new revenue funds allocated to local authorities to implement the Home Improvement Loan Scheme.

27. The scheme allows for the generation of revenue through administration fees of up to 15% of the loan value, it is anticipated the fee generation will cover the costs associated with the delivery of the Home Improvement Loan Scheme.

28. Training will be required for a minimal number of staff of the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) this will be conducted through a regional approach led by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to minimise costs incurred by the council.

29. On the basis of WG's estimate of a maximum default of 5%, there is a potential risk to Neath Port Talbot in the sum of £22,306, plus a further £15,000 through the VVP scheme. These figures however, would be greater if the default level is higher than the WG estimate.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

30. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - and
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”
31. Local data related to the existing Houses into Homes Loan Scheme does not identify any particular group with a protected characteristic as being disproportionately affected. Consequently, the impact of the Home Improvement Loan Scheme is considered to be neutral as far as the equality impact is concerned.

### **Workforce Impact**

32. The main workforce impact in the delivery of the Home Improvement Loan Scheme will be the training required on the extended eligibility and evaluation criteria.
33. It is not anticipated that there will be a significant workforce impact on the Council but the position will be kept under review.

### **Legal Impact**

34. The power to enable the Council to lend the money comes from the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

35. In order to be able to provide assistance under ‘The Order’, an Authority must have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance and give public notice of the policy. The policy will be included in the Council’s Housing Renewal Policy.

### **Risk Management**

36. There is a risk that local authorities could adopt different approaches in the delivery of the Home Improvement Loan Scheme. Authorities are required through the terms of the funding to work collaboratively to ensure that there is a consistent delivery approach.
37. There is a risk of non-completion of works or default on repayments from the loan recipient, at least two of the following risk mitigation measures will be adopted on each loan approval.
- Loan to value ratio of not more than 80% of an eligible properties current value (inclusive of existing mortgage / secured loan)
  - A registered first or second charge to be secured on an eligible property for loans over £5,000
  - Local land charge to be secured on an eligible property for loans under £5,000
  - Credit worthiness score to be completed on all applicants
  - Project risk score to be completed on all loan applications

### **Consultation**

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

### **Recommendation**

39. It is recommended that the Cabinet Board approves the delivery of the Home Improvement Loan Scheme.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

40. The proposed decision is recommended to enable the Authority to maximise the funding opportunity presented by the Loan scheme to improve the quality of private sector housing throughout the borough.

## **Implementation of Decision**

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

## **Appendices**

42. Appendix 1 - Home Improvement Loan (HIL) Criteria  
Appendix 2 – Home Improvement Loans – Flow Chart

## **List of Background Papers**

43. None

## **Officer Contact**

44. Mr Dave Rees, Head of Financial Services  
Tel: 01639 763634 or e-mail: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk
45. Mr Rob Davies, Principal Officer Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service  
Tel: 01639 763514 or e-mail: r.i.davies@npt.gov.uk

## Home Improvement Loan (HIL) Criteria

General requirements	There must be consistency, from the perspective of the loan recipient, in the respect of the eligibility criteria for a HIL and the terms on which the HILs are provided.
Maximum fee charged to a loan recipient	<p>A one off administration fee of up to 15 per cent of the HIL amount may be charged. For example, a £10,000 HIL could incur a maximum fee of £1,500.</p> <p>The sum of the fee charged must take into account the APR (annual percentage rate) of the HIL for the term of the loan. The APR of the HIL must not be greater than the market rate of APR for loans of the same amount and term.</p>
Minimum and maximum HIL value per unit of accommodation	£1,000 up to £25,000
Maximum HIL available per loan recipient	£150,000 at any one time. Once repaid the applicant can reapply.
Interest	HILs must be interest free.
Permitted improvement works	<p>Works which make a residential property safe warm and/or secure.</p> <p>This includes such works undertaken to Empty Properties on the condition that (i) the loan recipient occupies the property on completion of the works for the duration of the loan; and (ii) if the loan recipient dies, ceases to occupy the property or transfers/sells the property before expiry of the loan term the loan is repaid immediately. Works undertaken by a Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlord to an empty property is not eligible.</p> <p>“Empty Property” means a property which has not been lived in for at least six consecutive months.</p>



<p>HILs can be provided for the purpose of improving a residential property to/for:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued ownership</li> <li>• Sell</li> <li>• Rent</li> </ul>
<p>HIL conditions</p>	<p>The HIL terms and conditions must specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the purpose/works for which the HIL is provided.</li> <li>• if after completion of works funded by a HIL the relevant property contains a category 1 hazard (as defined by Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)) the property can not be rented out. (for PRS only)</li> <li>• that if the loan recipient sells the property during the term of the HIL the loan must be immediately repaid in full.</li> </ul>
<p>Maximum loan period</p>	<p>Up to 5 years;</p> <p>For owner occupiers: Up to 10 years or a lifetime charge may be taken over the property and the loan can be repaid on the earlier of the death of the loan recipient, when the loan recipient ceases to occupy the property or on the transfer/sale of the property.</p> <p>In the context of lifetime charges, the HIL will be deemed to have been repaid in full on the earlier of 31 March 2026 or the tenth anniversary of the HIL loan agreement and you are required to recycle an amount equivalent to the HIL provided in accordance with paragraph 2 of Part 3 of this Schedule.</p>

Payment terms	HILs can be drawdown by loan recipients in advance, in stages or on completion of the improvement works.
Repayment terms	Either staged repayments (monthly, quarterly or yearly) or full repayment at the end of the HIL term or on transfer/sale of the property if earlier unless specified otherwise herein.
Eligible loan recipients	Owners of sub standard residential properties e.g. landlords, owner occupiers who pass affordability checks.
Risk mitigation measures	Two or more of the following measures should be applied to each HIL: loan to value ratio, first/second property charges, local land charges, staged repayments, default fees, staged payments to the loan recipient.
Part funding and financial viability	HILs must only be provided to fund financially viable improvement works.  A HIL may be provided to fund part of the improvement works provided that evidence of sufficient/adequate funding for the remainder of the works is provided.
Other funding options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other funding options such as Arbed must be explained to loan applicants.</li> <li>• Other funding options can be used in conjunction with the HIL as long as there is no double funding of the works.</li> <li>• Loan applicants that can easily obtain commercial finance to fund the improvement works should be directed to appropriate sources of funding.</li> </ul>

## Home Improvement Loans – Flow Chart



Key:

Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service

Legal Services

Finance

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

15 OCTOBER 2015

#### MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

#### WARDS AFFECTED - ALL

#### TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2015/16

##### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out treasury management action and information since the previous report.

##### 2. Rates of Interest

- 2.1 Bank base rates remain at of 0.5% (since 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009) and detailed below are the changes in the bank base rate since April 2008.

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Bank Rate</b>
10 April 2008	5.00%
08 October 2008	4.50%
06 November 2008	3.50%
04 December 2008	2.00%
08 January 2009	1.50%
05 February 2009	1.00%
05 March 2009 to date	0.50%

- 2.2 The following table provides examples of external borrowing costs as provided by the Public Works Loans Board as at 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015:

Years	Equal Instalments of Principal		Annuity		Maturity	
	Previous 18 August 2015	Current	Previous 18 August 2015	Current	Previous 18 August 2015	Current
	%	%	%	%	%	%
5-5.5	1.89	<b>1.80</b>	1.90	<b>1.81</b>	2.39	<b>2.26</b>
10-10.5	2.39	<b>2.26</b>	2.41	<b>2.28</b>	2.95	<b>2.85</b>
20-20.5	2.95	<b>2.85</b>	3.00	<b>2.91</b>	3.45	<b>3.47</b>
35-35.5	3.38	<b>3.37</b>	3.45	<b>3.47</b>	3.44	<b>3.50</b>
49.5-50	3.51	<b>3.56</b>	3.49	<b>3.55</b>	3.36	<b>3.44</b>

### 3. General Fund Treasury Management Budget

- 3.1 The following table sets out the treasury management budget for 2015/16 and consists of a gross budget for debt charges i.e. repayment of debt principal and interest, and interest returns on investment income.

2014/15 Outturn Position £'000		2015/16 Original Budget £'000
16,964	Principal and Interest charges	17,230
246	Contribution to Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve to fund SSIP and other Capital Programme over the next 3 years.	
<b>17,210</b>	<b>Subtotal Expenditure</b>	
	<b>Investment Income</b>	
(806)	- Total	(614)
227	- less allocated to other funds	210
<b>(579)</b>	<b>Subtotal Income</b>	<b>(404)</b>
<b>16,631</b>	<b>Net General Fund</b>	<b>16,826</b>

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

#### 4. Borrowing

- 4.1 There has been no further long term borrowing arranged since the previous report.

#### 5. Investment Income

- 5.1 In line with the Council's Investment Strategy, the 2015/16 Original Budget for investment income is £614,000; treasury management investment income generated on investments made to date is £457,000.

Members should note that the majority of investments are classified as 'specified' i.e. up to 12 months and are currently with the major banks including Barclays, Lloyds Group, Bank Santander, Clydesdale and Nationwide Building Society.

- 5.2 The Council policy will allow investments up to a maximum of £25m for periods of more than 1 year and up to 5 years, and this will be considered when decisions on investing surplus funds are made.
- 5.3 No additional long term investments have been carried out since the last report. The Council currently has £10m invested for periods in excess of 12 months:

<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Value £'000</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Maturity</b>	<b>Rate %</b>
Eastbourne Borough Council	4,000	4.5 Years	June 18	2.2%
Peterborough City Council	6,000	5 Years	Dec 18	2.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,000</b>			

#### Icelandic Bank Update

- 5.4 Members should note the following position in relation to the recovery of monies from investments in Icelandic related banks.

- 5.5 Since the last report a further dividend of £364,159 has been paid out by the administrators of the former Heritable Bank. The table below show the amounts outstanding.

**Table 1 – Original Investments**

<b>Bank</b>	<b>Original Investment</b>	<b>Amount of Principal Repaid</b>	<b>Current Outstanding Investment</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Heritable	9,000	8,961	39
KSF	3,000	2,546	454
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>11,507</b>	<b>493</b>

- 5.6 Members will be aware that £386,898 of the original amount invested with the former Glitnir Bank had been repaid in Icelandic Kroner and held in an Escrow Account. Due to currency controls imposed by the Icelandic Government the Council was unable to access these funds and there became a very real possibility that the Icelandic Government could impose a 'haircut' tax on any deposits of up to 40%.

As members are aware, the Local Government Association have been pursuing opportunities to return such monies into sterling and into council funds. This recently resulted in the Council recently being provided with an opportunity to repatriate such monies which resulted in the council receiving a payment of £298,197. The remaining balance of £88,701 will be funded by a contribution from the Treasury Management equalisation reserve. These proceeds now form part of the council's cash investments which are invested in UK Banks/Building Society and local authorities.

6. **List of Background Papers**  
Treasury Management Files  
PWLB Notice Number 386/15
7. **Appendix**  
None



8. **Officer Contact**

For further information on this report item, please contact:

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

#### **SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION**

**WARDS AFFECTED** - Aberavon, Briton Ferry East, Briton Ferry West, Bryn and Cwmavon, Glyncorrgwg, Neath East, Neath North, Neath South, Port Talbot, Sandfields East, Sandfields West, Seven Sisters

#### **CCTV SERVICE – OPTIONS**

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

The report to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015 set out the current position of the CCTV service and the options available to sustain the service whilst adhering to the savings targets outlined in the Authority's Forward Financial Plan for 2016/17 and 2017/18. The purpose of this report is to set out for Members:

- A summary of the consultation responses received over the period of the consultation process which closed on 15/06/2015;
- A summary of an Independent Consultant's Report carried out by MSC Global Security in July 2015; and
- The options for the service in the short and medium term.

##### **Executive Summary**

A detailed analysis of the number and location of cameras within the county borough and the control room infrastructure was undertaken and can be summarised as follows:

- The number of Public Space Cameras, excluding those in Multi Storey Car Parks is Ninety Eight. Analysis of the camera use and to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 concluded that the number should be reduced to fifty two – a reduction in cameras is necessary, regardless of the financial savings targets, to meet legal duties. The reduced number of cameras would be principally located in the Neath and Port Talbot town centre areas together with the promenade area on the Aberavon seafront. The savings in line rental costs would be in the region of £30K per annum. There will be one-off decommissioning costs. This technical appraisal accords with views of consultees.
- It was concluded that the control room equipment is approaching the need for replacement. It is estimated that the existing infrastructure should be replaced in about four years' time and funding to achieve this will need to be planned into regeneration budgets.
- Although the staff resource was reduced in 2014/15, the current level of staffing is not efficient as resourcing is not based on demand but more to sustain an out-of-hours telephone service. As a result there are large periods of down time in the Control Room which needs to be addressed.
- From the external review undertaken by the consultant, the responses to the public consultation and following visits to the City and County of Swansea and the City of Bristol local authorities, a short list of options has been developed for Members' consideration;

#### Short Term (1-3 years)

- NPT Withdraws its CCTV Provision entirely;
- NPT moves to a passive CCTV service only.
- NPT moves to a demand-led CCTV Services
- Alternative arrangements to deal with out-of-hours telephone calls to be made in respect of each of these options.

#### Medium Term (3 years plus)

- NPT combines its CCTV service with the City and County of Swansea to operate a joint service, with the option of expanding the scope of the existing CCTV services (subject to business case) to include other complimentary services such as alarm monitoring.

## **Background**

On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015, Members of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board authorised a period of public consultation on a long list of options that had been developed regarding the future of the Council's CCTV service.

The options presented in the report included:

- Do nothing
- Provide a passive service
- Reduce the number of cameras
- Close the service
- Income generation
- Diversify the service
- Outsource
- Collaborate

The decision taken by the Cabinet Board was to authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to develop the options further in order to put CCTV onto a sustainable footing and to consult relevant stakeholders in so doing.

This report summarises the consultation responses received and proposes a "short list" of options, within which officers identify a preferred option, that it is proposed be subject to a further period of public consultation with a view to making final decisions concerning the future of the service in December 2015.

## **Consultation Summary**

One hundred and nine responses were provided to the public consultation exercise on the options contained within the Cabinet Board report considered by Members on February 19<sup>th</sup> 2015.

- 88% of people who responded felt that all of the available options open to Members were identified in the report;
- 83% of respondents identified themselves as being a resident in the county borough;
- 90% of respondents were not prepared to contribute financially to the service, although the Police and Crime Commissioner identified that he was to conduct a CCTV review across the wider South Wales area;

- 72% of respondents felt that CCTV coverage was more important in some areas than others. Expanding on the responses, people identified town centres, industrial areas, the beach and hotspots as areas where CCTV would be most important; and
- Some respondents commented on the age of the existing infrastructure, arguing that it needed to be brought up to date.

In addition to the on-line consultation exercise, officers have also approached town and community councils to ascertain if they would be prepared to make a financial contribution to the running of the service. None of the councils have indicated that they would be prepared to make a financial contribution.

The analysis of data clearly identifies the Criminal Justice System benefitting significantly from the CCTV service, reducing the police, prosecution and court costs through the availability of CCTV evidence. South Wales Police have stated that they are not in a position to make a financial contribution to the cost of the CCTV service, however, they have strongly argued to retain a CCTV service in the county borough albeit they accept this might need to be on a reduced scale.

## **Technical Assessment**

MSC Global Security were invited to review the existing service, following a competitive procurement process.

Their appraisal indicated that the Council needs to reduce the number of cameras significantly to ensure that the service is compliant with relevant legislation and well governed. Additionally, the current policy needs to be updated to reflect the requirements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice which became operational in August 2013.

MSC Global Security noted that the existing infrastructure is reaching the end of its life. It will therefore be crucial that the need for CCTV in the medium to long term is examined carefully and funding secured for requirements beyond 2019/20. Given that the necessity for public space CCTV is focused in the Neath and Port Talbot town centres, plus the seafront, it would seem appropriate that the funding of replacement infrastructure is built into the regeneration plans for those areas.

In making recommendations as to the operation of the service, MSC Global Security concluded that the existing service is not operationally efficient as there is insufficient demand during the week to justify the existing level of resource. The Council could identify other work that could be located with the CCTV operators to optimise the use of available capacity. Alternatively, the Council could make alternative arrangements for handling the out-of-hours telephone service during the week and move to a demand-led service which would principally operate on weekends and over bank holidays.

MSC Global Security identified additional income generation opportunities to those included in the report of February 19<sup>th</sup> 2015: use of s106 monies; licensing levy; increase in third party fees:

- a. Consultation has taken place with the Planning Service and due to the demands on s106 monies, this is not seen as a feasible strategy to support the sustainability of CCTV.
- b. Consultation has also taken place with the Licensing Manager and there are considered to be a number of problems with the introduction of a licensing levy the most significant being: the evidence of crime and disorder generated by licensed premises in the county borough having a significant impact on resources is weak. Problems tend to be concentrated on a relatively small number of premises. Consequently, the likelihood of legal challenge by premises who do not generate crime and disorder as a result of their activities who would fall within the ambit of the levy is likely to be high. CCTV requirements have however, been strengthened in the Licensing Policy recently approved by Council for public consultation.
- c. An increase in third party fees is feasible, although the small amount of income generated from fees is fairly insignificant in the wider context of the service.

MSC Global Security offer comments on options to collaborate with other authorities and on the options available to diversify the service to include alarm monitoring services. Following receipt of their report, officers met with their counterparts in the City and County of Swansea to discuss the emerging findings. That Council has also been reducing the cost of its CCTV service and has already significantly reduced the number of cameras operating in the county and was beginning to consider the potential for diversifying the service operations. It was clear from those discussions, that the reduced scale of the two operations would strongly suggest that a combined service would offer better value for money going forward.

Officers from Neath Port Talbot and Swansea councils also visited the control room at Bristol City Council who were identified as a good practice site that had already significantly diversified its CCTV operation. During the visit we observed the service providing Lifeline support, intruder and fire alarm monitoring and response as well as CCTV services. The service is also to extend its scope further by monitoring smart meters, other community alarms such as pollution monitors as well as the temperature in particular buildings such as ICT server rooms. To deliver a service at this scope, however, requires investment to bring the infrastructure up to a suitable standard, including resilience in the event of service failure. On the face of it, this option merits further consideration as both councils will be incurring alarm costs in terms of their respective property portfolios and there would appear to be scope to provide services on a wider footing too. A full business case would however need to be prepared to ensure that costs associated with the infrastructure of a wider service is made out. That analysis is beyond the scope of this report.

Officers have also contributed to the South Wales-wide review of CCTV services commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Regrettably, the report has not been produced within the timescales that were agreed with the Commissioner with the draft report received on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Officers will approach the Commissioner to seek his agreement to share the conclusions of the work at Committee.

## **Option Appraisal**

Having undertaken the public consultation and had more detailed discussion with key stakeholders it is clear that, whilst CCTV is not a service the council must provide, there is support for a continuation of the CCTV service. Having received the independent assessment of the service it is clear that the current arrangements over-provide public space CCTV in the county borough and that the number of cameras needs to be significantly reduced. It is also clear that the operational service is not efficient and therefore does not offer good value for money.

Consequently, the following short list of options is put forward for Members to consider:

### **i. NPT withdraws its CCTV provision.**

This option is presented as the Council does not have to provide a CCTV service. However, there is strong support for continuing the service amongst the general public and also amongst key stakeholders.



Withdrawing the service would introduce a significant cost in the short term as the current BT contract commits the Council to buying a service until 2019 and there are significant financial penalties for early withdrawal. It has not been possible to renegotiate this contract. Added to the camera decommissioning costs and any financial compensation applying to affected staff, the costs would be significant in the short term although ultimately, if the service was fully decommissioned it would be possible to deliver recurring savings of circa £200,000.

Decommissioning costs in 2016/17 would include:

- Termination of transmission Contracts to 2019 - £210,000.00
- Staff redundancy/redeployment costs
- Camera decommissioning costs – circa £100,000

Consequently, on financial grounds it is not recommended that this option is progressed.

In addition, other factors would be needed to be taken into account:

- Cost of outsourcing of Out of Hours Calls
- Impact on crime and disorder
- Impact on public confidence
- Impact on inward investor confidence

## **ii Passive CCTV service**

This option would mean that a reduced number of cameras would continue to operate across the county borough, but there would be no staff resource available to carry out proactive monitoring or to react to events.

The benefit of this option is that the county borough would continue to have some benefit from its fixed term contract with BT until it lapses in 2019.

The existing maintenance and transmission fees would continue to be paid, an out of hours service would need to be out-sourced or re-arranged at cost. A staff presence would still be required to comply with any requests from third parties for footage reviews. It would be feasible to provide the police with a direct link to the CCTV footage to obviate the need for council officers to facilitate access to the footage.

This option would deliver savings of £107k in 2016/17, rising to circa £150k in the following two financial years and reaching a maximum saving of £190k in year four. (note: buying in the out-of-hours telephone service is not included in these figures but is not considered to be significant).

The other factors listed above would still be relevant but with less impact:

- Impact on crime and disorder
- Impact on public confidence
- Impact on inward investor confidence

### **iii NPT moves to a demand-led CCTV service**

This option would see the number of cameras reduce to what is necessary with staff monitoring taking place only when demand so warrants – in essence weekends and bank holidays. The service could operate using four staff to cover the peaks in demand of the CCTV service. Adopting a demand-led CCTV service would realise savings of £9k in 2016/17, rising to circa £55k in the following two financial years and £93k from year 4. (Note: these figures do not include buying back an out of hours telephone service and staff termination costs)

The impact on crime and disorder, public confidence and inward investor confidence would be far more limited as the service would be fully functional at times when there is greatest demand. In the short term, this is considered by officers to represent the best value for money option, balancing the support for a continuing CCTV service with the need to achieve value for money and contributing to the Council's savings targets.

### **Financial Appraisal**

The financial appraisal of the three options described in this report is set out at Appendix 1. The financial appraisal identifies the option of reducing the number of cameras and moving to a demand-led model as being the best value option for the short term. The projected savings will achieve the £160k target identified in the Forward Financial Plan for the CCTV service, however the profile of the savings to be achieved will need to be adjusted to reflect the outcome of the financial appraisal.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment was included with the February 19<sup>th</sup> Report to the Cabinet Board. The on-line consultation questionnaire asked respondents to comment on the equality impact assessment that had been undertaken. 90% of respondents did not consider there were additional equality impacts to consider beyond those contained within the impact assessment. Where respondents felt there were additional impact to consider, these included: comments on the age of the infrastructure and queries as to whether the level of investment needed to upgrade the system would enable a service to be sustained over the longer term; a further assessment of the cost-benefits of the system to reflect savings in the Criminal Justice System was suggested as another factor that could be considered; the human rights of victims and innocent persons was another suggestion put forward for inclusion in the Impact Assessment.

None of the suggestions put forward suggests the duty on the Council to assess the impact on people with protected characteristics had not been discharged. The demographic profile of respondents was captured in the survey and the Impact Assessment has been updated to reflect the profile of respondents. Otherwise, there has been no material change to the Equality Impact Assessment presented on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The amended Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 2.

## **Crime and Disorder Impact**

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

CCTV makes a contribution to the prevention and detection of crime and disorder in the county borough. The preferred option recommended in this report is based on establishing the number of cameras that should be maintained based on an assessment of necessity and to comply with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013. There is risk that the prevention and detection of crime and disorder in areas where cameras are proposed to be removed and during periods where staff will not be proactively monitoring cameras will be negatively affected. However, the data suggests that the risk is low. Monitoring of the position will be undertaken and reported to Members at regular intervals so that the position can be kept under review.

## 6. Conclusion

The operational need for CCTV across the county borough has been assessed and it has been concluded that the county borough needs a smaller number of public space CCTV than is currently in place. To comply with legal duties and to ensure good governance, the Council needs to reduce the number of cameras in operation.

An assessment of the operational efficiency of the service has been made. There is significant downtime amongst operators at some points during the working week, consequently, the service is not efficient at the present time. Opportunities to bring income into the service in the short term have been explored but are very limited. To increase the efficiency of the operational service the council could move the monitoring to a demand-led model which is the preferred option, or explore the potential to locate suitable work into the CCTV service to optimise the benefits from the investment current made.

Longer term, combining the CCTV operation with the City and County of Swansea would enable both councils to identify a more sustainable model for the service. The scope of a combined service could either be confined to CCTV or the scope could be extended to include other community monitoring activities, such as alarm monitoring. A full business case would need to be developed to test this option further. Investment in replacement infrastructure also needs to be considered in the medium term and this needs to be planned as part of wider physical regeneration programmes.

### Recommended

1. That Members authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to consult with key stakeholders and the wider public on the preferred option to reduce the number of cameras across the county borough and to move the monitoring service to a demand-led model which would ordinarily mean monitoring taking place on weekends and bank holidays only. The consultation to run for a period of six weeks with a further report to be presented to Members describing the outcome of the consultation in December 2015.
2. That Members authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to develop a full business case with the City and County of Swansea that tests the cost-benefits of establishing a joint CCTV service on a:
  - i) CCTV only scope;
  - ii) CCTV plus other monitoring scope.

3. That Members authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to identify alternative options for delivery of the out-of-hours call handling services in the event that the preferred option is supported.

### **REASON FOR PROPOSED DECISION:**

To develop further the proposals set out in the Council Budget 2015-16 – 2017-18 to make further savings in the cost of CCTV to the Council and provide the Best Value for Money Option.

### **Officer Contact:**

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services. Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 - Financial Appraisal
- Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 3 – Map of cameras proposed to be decommissioned

### **Background Papers**

1. Policy and Resources Cabinet Board 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – CCTV Service – Options
2. MSC Global Security – A Strategic Review of the Public CCTV System in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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<b>CCTV - OPTIONS</b>								<b>Appendix 1</b>
			<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	
		<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>Option 1 Withdrawal CCTV Service</b>								
	<u>Expenditure</u>							
	Staff Costs	147,672	-	-	-	-	-	
	BT Line Rental	63,250	63,250	63,250	63,250	-	-	
	Virgin Line Rental	9,310	-	-	-	-	-	
	CDS Maintenance	24,800	-	-	-	-	-	
	Other Running Costs	25,730						
	Additional Costs for decommissioning all 98 cameras		98,000					
	<u>Income</u>							
	Recharge SWTRA	(7,000)	-	-	-	-	-	
	Fees & Charges	(1,900)	-	-	-	-	-	
	<b>Total Net Cost</b>	<b>261,862</b>	<b>161,250</b>	<b>63,250</b>	<b>63,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
	<b>Option 1 Total Saving</b>		<b>(100,612)</b>	<b>(198,612)</b>	<b>(198,612)</b>	<b>(261,862)</b>	<b>(261,862)</b>	
<b>Option 2 Passive CCTV Service</b>								
	<u>Expenditure</u>							
	Staff Costs	147,672	-	-	-	-	-	
	BT Line Rental	63,250	63,250	63,250	63,250	29,405	29,405	
	Virgin Line Rental	9,310	6,827	6,827	6,827	6,827	6,827	
	CDS Maintenance	24,800	24,800	24,800	20,850	20,850	20,850	
	Other Running Costs	25,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	
	Additional Costs for decommissioning 46 cameras (i.e.reduce from 98 to 52)		46,000					
	<u>Income</u>							
	Recharge SWTRA	(7,000)	-	-	-	-	-	
	Fees & Charges	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	
	<b>Total Net Cost</b>	<b>261,862</b>	<b>154,707</b>	<b>108,707</b>	<b>104,757</b>	<b>70,912</b>	<b>70,912</b>	
	<b>Option 2 Total Saving</b>		<b>(107,155)</b>	<b>(153,155)</b>	<b>(157,105)</b>	<b>(190,950)</b>	<b>(190,950)</b>	
<b>Option 3 Demand-Led CCTV Service</b>								
	<u>Expenditure</u>							
	Staff Costs	147,672	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	
	BT Line Rental	63,250	63,250	63,250	63,250	29,405	29,405	
	Virgin Line Rental	9,310	6,827	6,827	6,827	6,827	6,827	
	CDS Maintenance	24,800	24,800	24,800	20,850	20,850	20,850	
	Other Running Costs	25,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	15,730	
	Additional Costs for decommissioning 46 cameras (i.e.reduce from 98 to 52)		46,000					
	<u>Income</u>							
	Recharge SWTRA	(7,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)	
	Fees & Charges	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,900)	(1,950)	(1,950)	
	<b>Total Net Cost</b>	<b>261,862</b>	<b>252,707</b>	<b>206,707</b>	<b>202,757</b>	<b>168,862</b>	<b>168,862</b>	
	<b>Option 3 Total Saving</b>		<b>(9,155)</b>	<b>(55,155)</b>	<b>(59,105)</b>	<b>(93,000)</b>	<b>(93,000)</b>	

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## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form

This form should be completed for each Equality Impact Assessment on a new or existing function, a reduction or closure of service, any policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project which has been screened and found relevant to Equality and Diversity.

**Please refer to the 'Equality Impact Assessment Guidance' while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Corporate Strategy Team or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Champion.**

<b>Where do you work?</b>
Service Area: CCTV
Directorate: CHEX

**(a) This EIA is being completed for a...**

Service/ Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy/ Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>	Project <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------------

**(b) Please name and describe below...**

A full review of the CCTV service to explore the options available to continue with the service in line with the Authorities FFP which is to reduce the budget by £80,000 for the years 2016/17 and 2017/18. The essence of the review is that the way the service is staffed, the age and number of cameras and the lack of contributions from partners and business have resulted in an expensive service that no longer matches current operating practices and legislation. The aim and purpose of the service is to promote public confidence by developing a secure environment for those visiting or using the area covered by the CCTV scheme.

**(c) It was initially screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity on: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

**(d) It was found to be relevant to...**

Age ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity ..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**(e) Lead Officer**

**Name:** Jayne Banfield

**Job title:** Customer Services Manager

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

**(f) Approved by Head of Service**

**Name:** Karen Jones

**Job title:** Head of Corporate  
Strategy and Democratic  
Services

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

## Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):

Briefly describe the aims of the function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan, proposal or project:

**What are the aims? To review the cctv service and identify areas where savings can be made or income generated to achieve the savings targets in the Authorities Forward Financial Plan for 2016/17 2017/18**

The essence of the review is that the way the service is staffed, the age and number of cameras and the lack of contributions from partners and business have resulted in an expensive service that no longer matches current operating practices and legislation.

The aim and purpose of the service is to promote public confidence by developing a secure environment for those visiting or using the area covered by the CCTV scheme.

The CCTV service is aimed at ensuring the safety of all residents regardless of the protected characteristics.

### Who has responsibility?

Karen Jones – Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.

### Who are the stakeholders?

The General Public, South Wales Police, Police and Crime Commissioner, City and County of Swansea, British Transport Police, Retail and Licenced Trade, Internal Council Departments , potential developers, Town and Community Councils in the relevant areas, SWTRA together with the staff in Council who run the service.

## Section 2 - Information about Service Users (See guidance):

Please tick what information you know about your service users and provide details / evidence of how this information is collected.

Age .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### What information do you know about your service users and how is this information collected?

Records are maintained within the CCTV control room which identifies/itemises the incidents that have occurred and captured on CCTV. Records are also maintained to record phone calls and visits to the control room, the data capture indicates peak demand periods and where intervention may be needed.

The general public are the subject of the CCTV system as cameras are recording 24 hours a day when an incident is captured the footage is retained until such time the Police or other agency require data for evidential purposes.

### Any Actions Required?

As part of the public consultation, respondents were asked to identify their personal characteristics and to comment on the initial Equality Impact Assessment.

Respondents ages ranged from 17 to 85. The highest number of responses were from those aged 30-59.

Responses were submitted mostly from residents and covered a range of locations across the county borough

90% of respondents thought there were no other equality impacts to draw out beyond those in the report. Where people did identify additional impacts, these were not in respect of people with protected characteristics. The comments made have been incorporated into relevant sections of the covering report.

12.15% of respondents described themselves as disabled.

89% of respondents described themselves as White British. 9 respondents described themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group.

There was an equal response from men and women.

50 respondents described their faith as Christian, Hindu or Muslim

5 respondents described themselves as gay or bisexual. All others described themselves as heterosexual

### Section 3 - Impact on Protected Characteristics (See guidance):

Please consider the possible impact on the different protected characteristics. This could be based on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs further investigation
Age	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Race	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	████→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>

**Thinking about your answers above, please explain in detail why this is the case? including details of any consultation (and/or other information), which has been undertaken to support your view?**

**The initial options have been refined in light of the research and consultation undertaken. Three short-listed options are presented in the report to cover the short term, with the option of combining services across the Neath port Talbot and Swansea councils being the recommended option for the medium to long term.**

- Option 1 – withdraw the service entirely. This is considered to have the biggest negative impact on the community. There are also significant costs associated with decommissioning the service and consequently this is not the preferred option.
- Option 2 – Reduce the number of cameras and provide a passive service. This would mitigate the impact of withdrawing the service in its entirety. There is likely to be a negative impact on crime and disorder, especially in town centres and the seafront together.
- Option 3 – Reduce the number of cameras and move to a demand-led monitoring staffing arrangement– this is the preferred option and would mitigate to a significant extent the impact on crime and disorder.
- Medium Term – Combine the service with the City and County of Swansea. This would appear to offer the best value for money option for the longer term but will need to be subject to a full business case which is beyond the remit of this review.

The impact on protected groups is anticipated to be indirect as the main impact on the provision or variation of the CCTV service is on Crime and Disorder and fair justice outcomes. It is known from research evidence that some groups with protected characteristics are over / under represented in victim and offender profiles.

**What consultation and engagement has been undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support your view?**

Stakeholders include staff, trade unions, council officers, elected Members, Town and Community Council Members, retailers, traders, licensees, police, courts, CPS, general public, CCTV service providers, officers at the City and County of Swansea.

A public consultation on the long list of options has been conducted and 109 responses were received. Additionally, face to face consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken.

**Any actions required (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge)**

None

## Section 4 - Other Impacts:

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues.

You could base this on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

<p><b>Foster good relations between different groups</b> Positive or Negative depends on options selected</p>	<p><b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b> N/A</p>
<p><b>Elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b> Positive or Negative depends on options selected</p>	<p><b>Reduction of social exclusion and poverty</b> N/A</p>

**Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.**

The current service reduces the fear of crime and gives reassurance to all sectors.

**What work have you already done to improve any of the above?**

Consultation with the community to assess community views on the options. Preferred option is the option with least impact/best value for money in the short term

**Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion?**

No

**How will the initiative treat the Welsh language in the same way as the English language?**

n/a

**Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).**

Demographic details of consultees was obtained.

## Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:

Please explain the arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:

**Monitoring arrangements:**

Regular review of crime and disorder data

Updating of CCTV policy with annual review

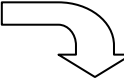
**Actions:**

Present post-implementation report to Scrutiny Committee at six month stage

## Section 6 – Outcomes:

Having completed sections 1-5, please indicate which of the outcomes listed below applies to your initiative (refer to guidance for further information on this section).

- Outcome 1: Continue the initiative...
- Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative...
- Outcome 3: Justify the initiative...
- Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative...

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

A preferred option to reduce the scale of the existing service has been identified with a medium term option to collaborate with the City and County of Swansea identified as needing to be tested with a full supporting business case

## Section 7 - Publication arrangements:

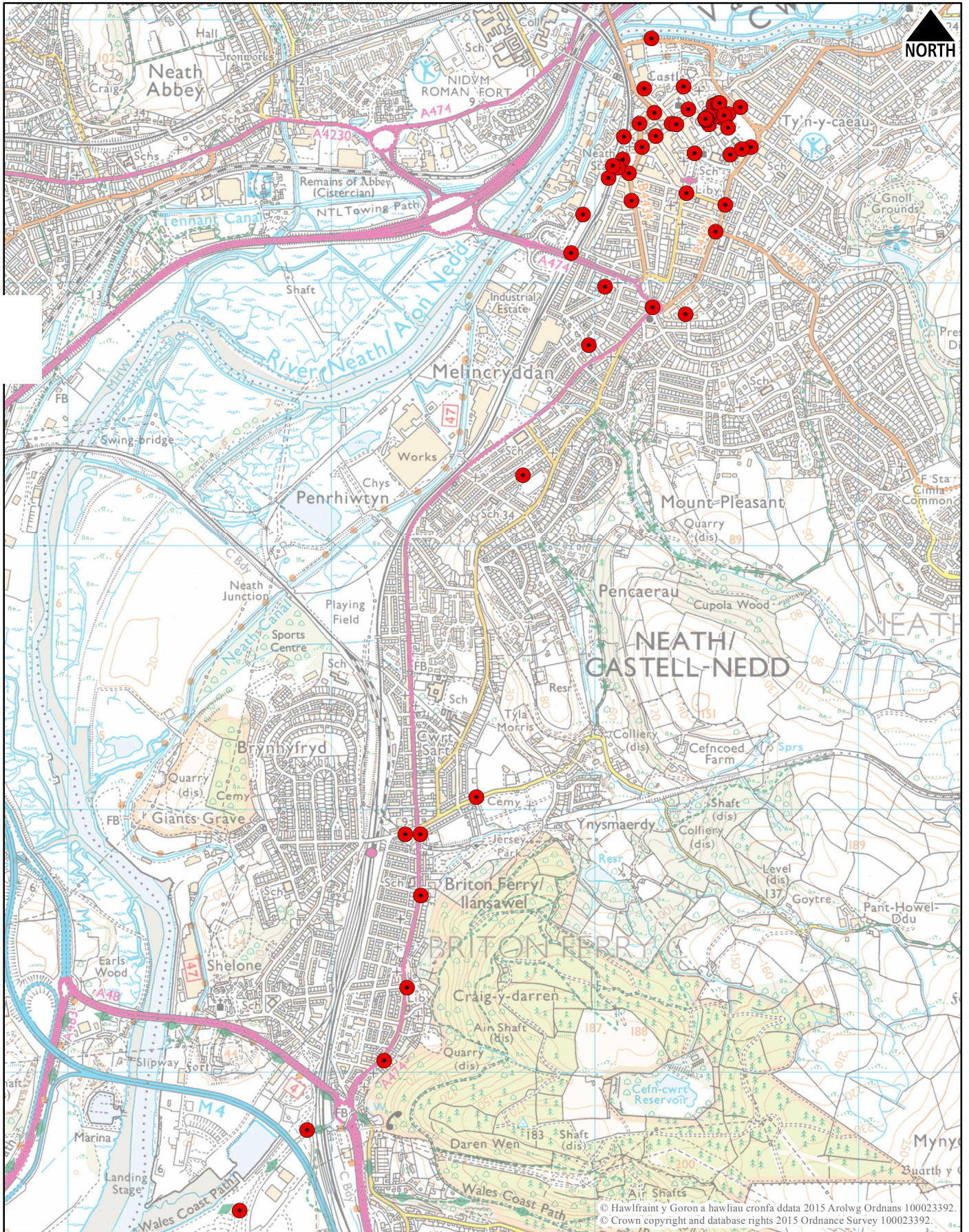
On completion, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team for advice on the legal requirement to publish the findings of EIAs.

## Action Plan:

<b>Objective - What are we going to do and why?</b>	<b>Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?</b>	<b>When will it be done by?</b>	<b>Outcome - How will we know we have achieved our objective?</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Formal Consultation Process	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	July 2015	Following Policy and Resources Cabinet / Scrutiny Committee on 19 <sup>th</sup> February.	Achieved and reported in this report
Further research on impact for groups with protected characteristics will be undertaken during the consultation period.	CCTV Project Manager	July 2015	Following Policy and Resources Cabinet / Scrutiny Committee on 19 <sup>th</sup> February.	Not obtained but characteristics of consultees has been secured
Further period of public consultation to test preferred options	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	December 2015	Further report to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board	
Discuss option of the police having a direct feed of CCTV footage to mitigate further impact of reduced monitoring service in the week	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	March 2016	Post-implementation report	
Develop full business case for medium term collaboration option with the City and County of Swansea	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services <sup>1</sup>	March 2017	Report to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board	

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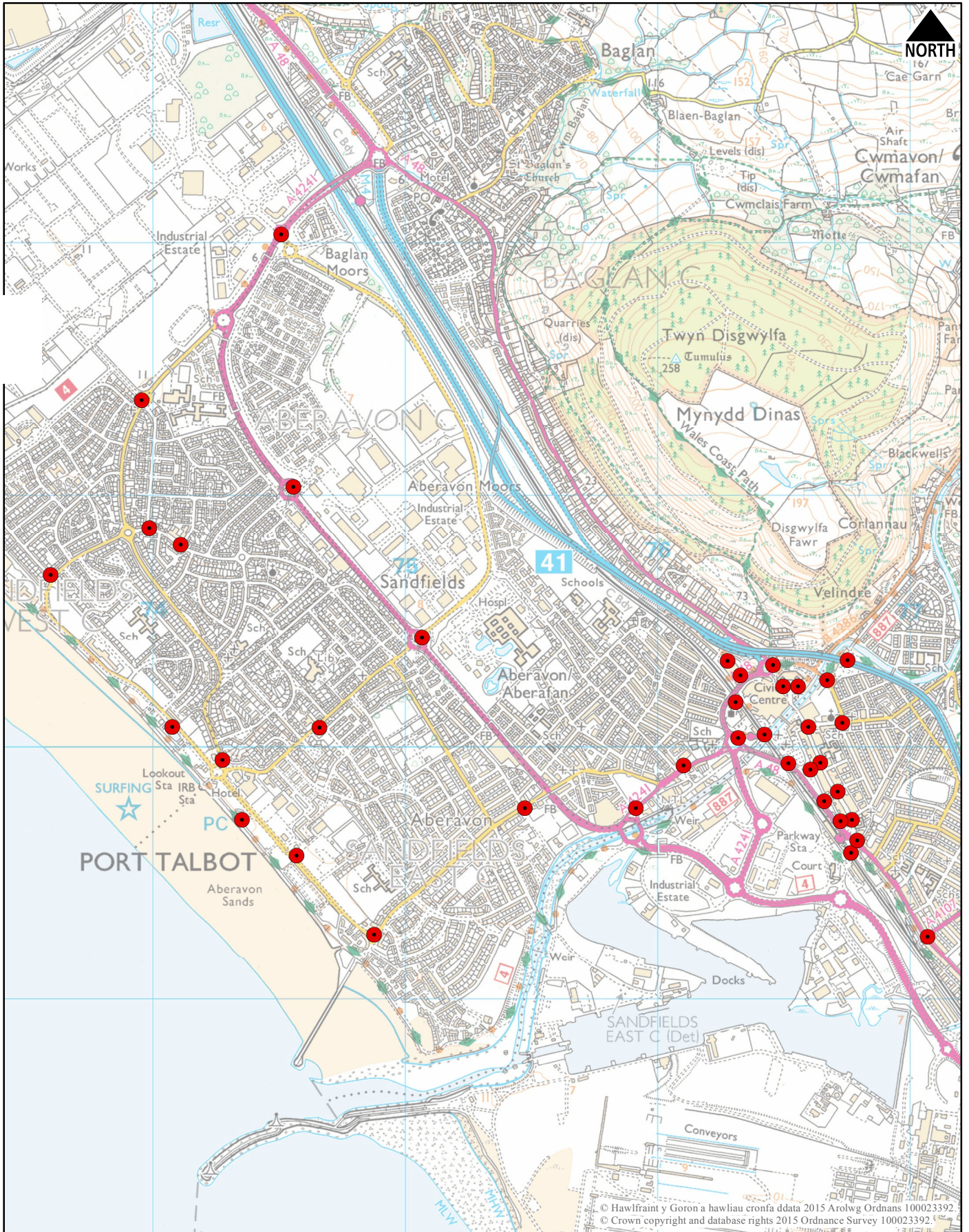


Appendix 3  
Existing CCTV Cameras  
Neath



**Network Management**  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Gareth Nutt  
Director of Environment  
The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park,  
Neath, SA112GG

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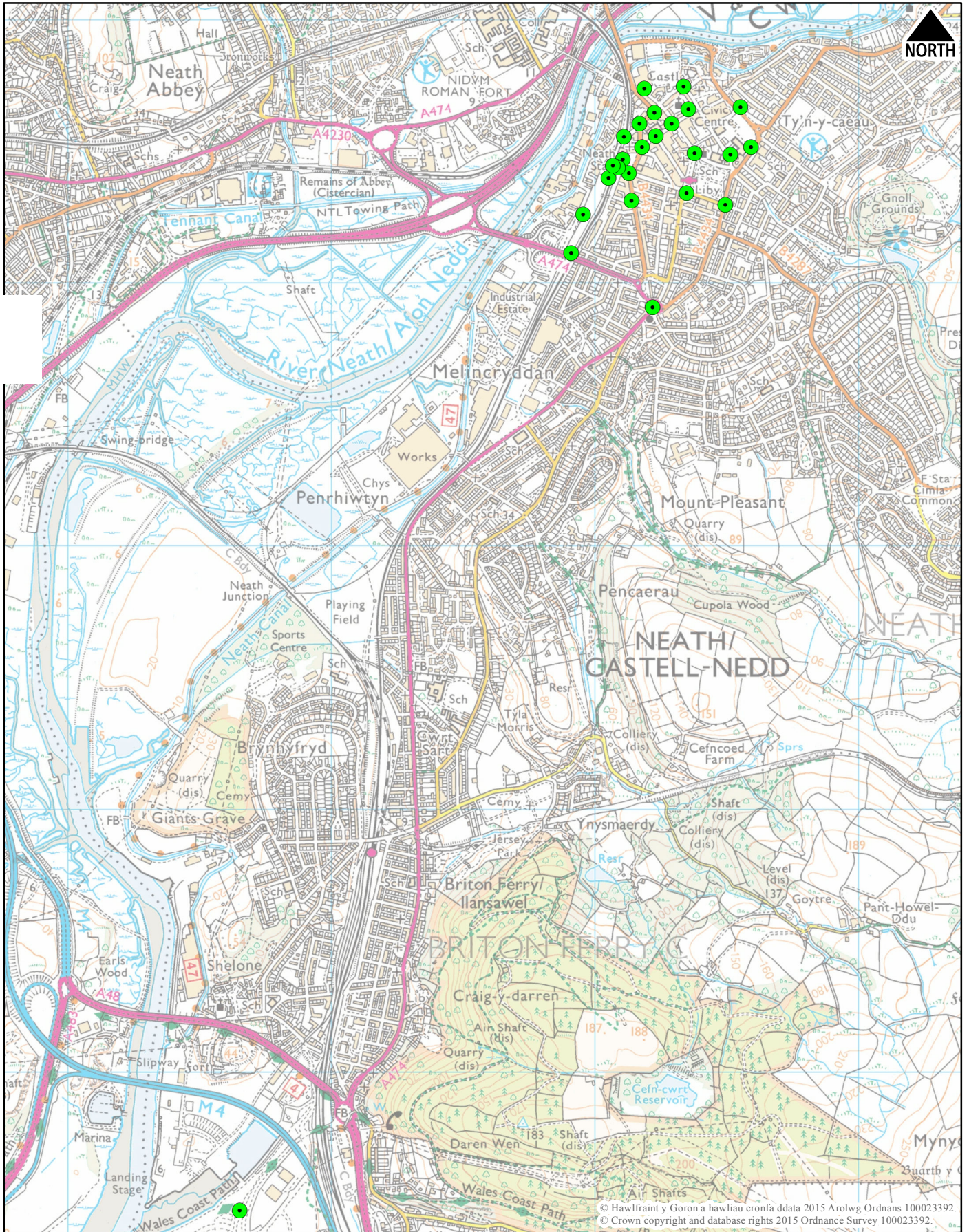


Appendix 3  
Existing CCTV Cameras  
Port Talbot



**Network Management**  
 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
 Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
 Gareth Nutt  
 Director of Environment  
 The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park,  
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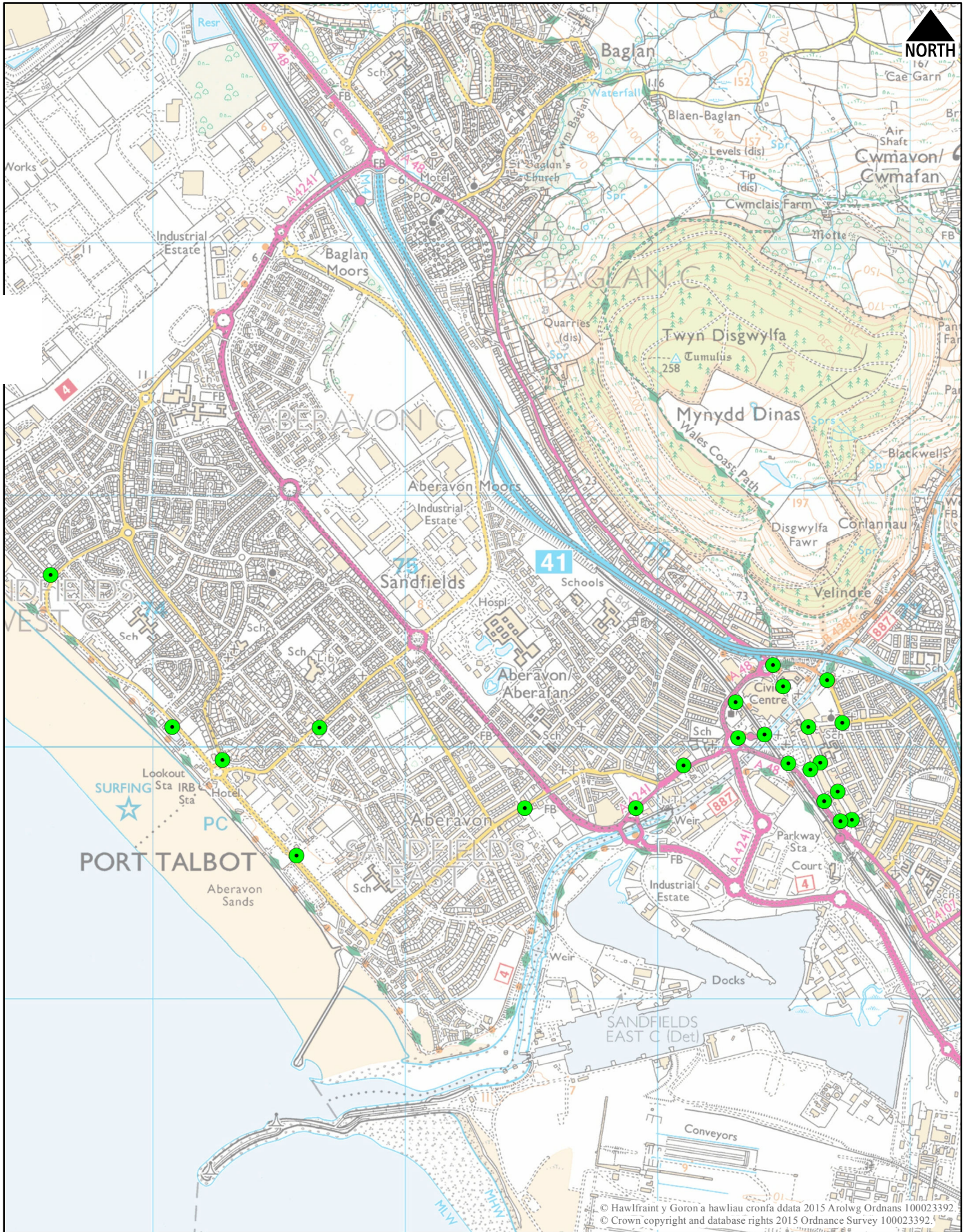


Appendix 3  
 Remaining CCTV Cameras  
 Neath



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Appendix 3  
 Remaining CCTV Cameras  
 Port Talbot



**Network Management**  
 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
 Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
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 Neath, SA112GG

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - K.JONES

#### SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

#### WARDS AFFECTED - All

#### Digital by Choice Strategy – Outcome of Public Consultation Exercise

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

To consider the outcome of the public consultation exercise undertaken to establish support, or otherwise, for the Council's draft Channel Shift Strategy "Digital by Choice".

Following consideration of the public consultation responses, to approve the "Digital by Choice" strategy and submit the Strategy to Council for adoption.

#### Executive Summary

- The Council's draft Channel Shift Strategy "Digital by Choice" was developed to update the existing Access to Services Strategy;
- The Strategy aims to ensure that citizens access the channel most appropriate to their needs, but at its core, it aims to significantly extend the range of services available on-line and to increase citizen uptake of the on-line options;
- A greater on-line presence reflects shifts in society in general, widening access to services and helping the Council to reduce the cost of services;
- However, the Strategy also recognises that for some transactions, face to face and more traditional channels remain important;

- Additionally, the Strategy recognises that there are digital inclusion challenges that need to be responded to in order that everyone in the borough has access to the opportunities that access to the internet and associated technologies brings;
- The public consultation exercise generated 48 responses. There were also a range of activities to solicit feedback from staff and partners. Overall, respondents were supportive of the proposals.

## **Background**

On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015, the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board authorised the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to undertake a public consultation exercise on a draft Channel Shift Strategy “Digital by Choice”.

Consultation commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and concluded on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

The draft Strategy was placed on the Council’s on-line consultation portal “Objective”. A press release was issued to draw attention to the consultation exercise.

In addition to the on-line consultation portal, the draft Strategy was sent to each of the Council’s equality networks with a request for responses. Groups were encouraged to comment on the aspect of the Strategy which focuses on the Council’s equality duties in particular.

A Member Seminar was held during the consultation period to give Members an opportunity to understand the rationale behind the proposals.

The Strategy has also been subject to consultation with trade union representatives and the Council’s wider workforce.

48 responses were received via the on-line portal. A range of views have also been gathered from the other methods of consultation undertaken.

## Consultation Summary

Broadly, consultees were supportive of the aims, objectives and proposed programme of activities set out in the draft Strategy.

Public respondents were drawn from residents of the county borough, staff, elected Members, business owners, volunteers, a carer, service users and partners. Internally, views were sought from elected Members, senior officers, trade union representatives, staff members.

About half of the public respondents reported that they already used a range of on-line services. Half of those responding would prefer to use on-line services. A further 10% would prefer to use on-line services if they were available and knew how to use those services. A third of respondents preferred to continue using existing channels.

85% of respondents said that they agreed with the overall aims of the Strategy. Comments provided encouraged the Council to find ways of engaging more people to use on-line services, helping people to overcome the barriers they face. There were some comments that the Council should embrace on-line services as a corporate endeavour rather than the approach being left to individual services. There were comments also that there still needed to be some choice for those people where on-line is not the most appropriate way to deal with their needs or where people are unable to use the technology.

77% agreed with all or most of the priorities set out in the Strategy. A further 15% agreed with some of them. Only 6% (3 people) didn't think the priorities were right. To support these ratings, people again commented on the need to tackle digital inclusion and to ensure there are provisions for people unable to access services through on-line channels.

87% felt the performance measures proposed would enable the progress of the Strategy to be assessed. There were a small number of comments on this aspect of the Strategy emphasising the importance of this being applied corporately.

60% of respondents felt the equality impact assessment was accurate. 20% felt it could be improved but did not suggest how it might be improved. The Council has recently consulted on its draft Strategy Equality Plan and there are activities built into that Plan that will ensure

that the equality impact of adopting a Channel Shift Policy will be done in a manner which properly discharges the Council's equality duties.

In terms of other comments, respondents encouraged the Council to become a leading council in this area and to ensure that services are designed to be accessible from mobile phones. Five respondents indicated that they would wish to be involved in user testing of new services.

One respondent commented that the draft Strategy would benefit from an Executive Summary and that will be taken on board as part of the implementation work.

As far as internal respondents are concerned, there were no objections to the Strategy. There is agreement on the areas that are prioritised for action in the first tranche of work.

At the recent partnership event on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, partners were invited to comment on the proposed priorities within the "Digital by Choice" Strategy and there was again broad support for the direction of travel. In discussion, partners echoed many of the comments in the public survey concerning the need to address digital inclusion and to ensure there is access for those who cannot or will not use digital channels.

Accordingly, as a result of considering the responses during the consultation period, it is proposed that no changes are made to the draft Strategy considered on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015. An Executive Summary will be written as part of the implementation work and the points made on digital inclusion will be taken on board as part of the work to develop a digital inclusion strategy that will sit alongside the Channel Shift Strategy.

## **Financial Appraisal**

The Channel Shift Strategy will be targeted at areas of service delivery where cashable savings can be realised from extending on-line service channels.

Savings targets are and will be included in the Budget Strategy as cashable savings opportunities linked to the Strategy are identified.

There is a need to protect investment in ICT infrastructure and capability to ensure the Strategy can be delivered. There will be some on-off expenditures necessary to facilities and skills development to facilitate the delivery of the Strategy which will need to be contained within existing cash limits.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and was included with the report on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

There are no changes to the equality impact assessment proposed as a result of the consultation exercise.

It is important to note that there are specific aspects of the Strategy which address equalities and more particularly the need to address digital inclusion. There is a clear link between this Strategy and the Council's draft Strategic Equality Plan designed to ensure that the Council discharges its equalities duties in the appropriate way.

## **6. Conclusion**

There is broad support for the draft Channel Shift Strategy "Digital by Choice". No objections to the Strategy have been raised during the consultation period.

Consequently, it is recommended that the draft Strategy is now approved without amendment and submitted to Council for adoption.

## **Recommended**

1. That Members consider the outcome of the consultation undertaken on the draft Channel Shift Strategy " Digital by Choice" and approve the Strategy without amendment.
2. That Members recommend the draft Channel Shift Strategy " Digital by Choice" to Council for adoption.
3. That Members authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to take the steps necessary to implement the Strategy.

## **REASON FOR PROPOSED DECISION:**

To replace the existing Access to Services Strategy which is now outdated, creating a corporate policy framework which recognises the shifts in social trends towards greater use of on-line services, whilst also recognising the work that is needed to tackle digital inclusion and reduce the cost of public services.

## **Appendices:**

- Equality Impact Assessment
- “Digital by Choice” Channel Shift draft strategy

## **Background Papers**

1. Policy and Resources Cabinet Board 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015 – Digital by Choice Channel Shift Strategy

## **Officer Contact:**

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.  
Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)

# **Digital by Choice**

## **Channel Strategy**

# Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

**2015/16-2017/18**

## Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot Council has worked hard over many years to deliver high quality services for its citizens at best value for money.

Our initial Access to Services Strategy delivered:

- Three One Stop Shops, one in each town. Between them they deal with 70,000 enquiries face to face per annum and regularly record customer satisfaction ratings of over 95%;
- A Corporate Contact Centre that deals with over 220,000 telephone calls per annum;
- A Corporate web presence containing over 3,000 pages of public information and providing access to a range of online services; together with a
- Corporate ethos of “citizen first”.

These achievements were developed further through the Council’s programme of LEAN/systems thinking reviews. Over thirty services participated in this corporate transformation programme. Service delivery was critically examined from the end user perspective and then redesigned to ensure that we focused service delivery on “what matters” to the end user whilst designing out waste and reducing service cost. The Council’s pioneering work in Wales was recognised with awards from both APSE and the WLGA “Excellence Wales”



initiative and formed the basis of an innovative community of practice founded by the Council which has subsequently been supported by Welsh Ministers.

But despite these achievements there is more to do. Citizens are rapidly taking up new digital options in the way they live their day to day lives. Digital services can:

- Provide simpler and better access to services for citizens
- Increase choice for citizens;
- Support the move to greater integration of services within the Council and between agencies;
- Support the drive for more self-service and personalisation in service delivery;
- Reduce the cost of services substantially; and
- Generate greater customer and organisation insight through better management information.

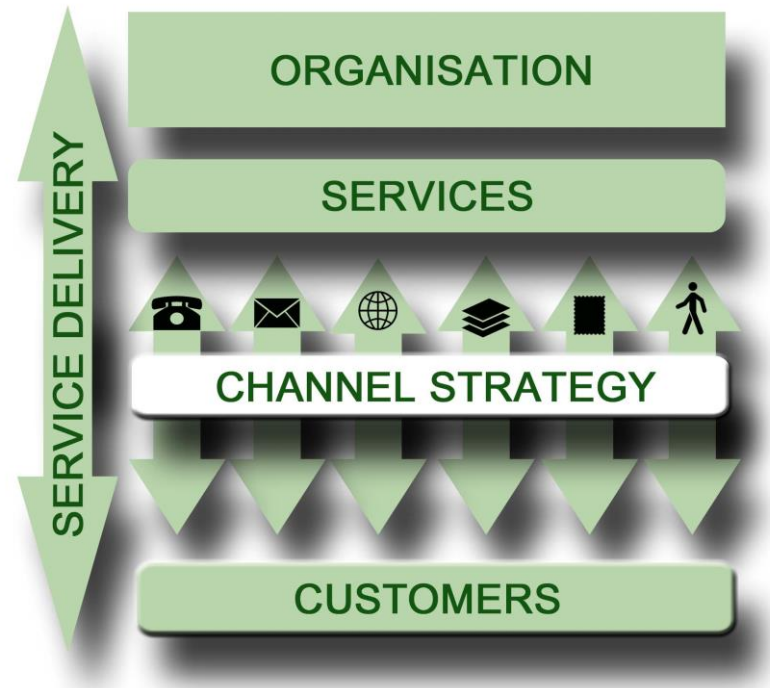
This Digital by Design Channel Shift Strategy has been developed to provide a corporate response to the emerging digital agenda. Implementation of the Channel Shift Strategy will ensure that the Council and its citizens accesses the benefits of digital technologies, whilst also ensuring that use of other, more traditional channels are appropriate, efficient and effective. This Strategy also underlines the importance of having a local and coherent response to digital inclusion to increase competitiveness within the local economy whilst also reducing inequality amongst our local population

We have made a good start: bringing six new transactional services online in the last eighteen months; improving access to resources available through our corporate website; and also experimenting with a new joined up face to face service at our Pontardawe One Stop Shop “Hub”. This Strategy explains how we will build on our early successes and position Digital by Choice as core to our thinking and work moving forward.

## Part 1 - Introduction

### **WHAT IS A CHANNEL STRATEGY?**

**Neath Port Talbot Council** has a responsibility to provide excellent services to the public and value for money to the taxpayer. The channels through which public services are delivered and by which the public has contact with the authority, (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means), are a critical part of public service provision, and there is an ongoing impetus for them to be managed effectively and efficiently for everyone.



A channel strategy is an organisation's plan for the channels it will use to deliver services to, and interact with, its customers. A channel strategy explains how an organisation will meet the contact demands of its customers using the resources it has available bearing in mind the needs of the customer.

A channel strategy is not simply a plan to move service provision to online channels.

### **WHY IS A CHANNEL STRATEGY IMPORTANT NOW?**

Customers receive a high standard of customer service from many public and private sector organisations. However, citizens sometimes have low expectations of services provided by local government, and it will be necessary to exceed rather than meet these expectations to achieve channel shift to cheaper and/or more effective channels. To achieve this, the public sector must continue to raise its own standards of service across all the channels it uses and offers.

In order to meet the needs of customers Neath Port Talbot Council must provide services that are:

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Robust
- Secure

It is also important to bear in mind the target audience's access to technology, the type and complexity of the contact, their personal preferences as well their skill sets when selecting channels

Rising internet use and customer expectations of accessing public services online present an ongoing opportunity for public service providers. Competent online services are easy and quick to use, available whenever customers need them and have a relatively low administrative burden. Managed well, online access to services is a very effective channel with considerable benefits for customers and taxpayers.

The public sector must however also meet the needs of people who do not (yet) have access to the Internet. 'Digital Inclusion' therefore is a core element of any government/public sector channel strategy. The Cabinet Office Digital Efficiency Report Research (6 November 2012) suggests that online transactions are 20 times cheaper than by phone, 30 times cheaper than by post and as much as 50 times cheaper than face to face. Digital forms a central part of the Welsh Government's plans to transform public services. The draft document entitled Digital First is about delivering public services that are focussed on the needs of the citizen. It promotes the need for digital services that are so straightforward and convenient – at any time and on any device - that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst those who can't are not excluded.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **The need for insight**

The process of developing and implementing a channel strategy needs to be guided by insight, and insight specifically relating to:

- The customer;
- The services an organisation is providing and each service area in question;
- The current delivery channels at the organisation's disposal as well as those that may be available to be/need to be used in future; and
- Other organisation-specific micro/macro factors that may have an impact on service provision and delivery including the value and waste in each system. For Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council these factors include systems thinking and budgetary constraints.

It is also important to understand the wider online services revolution, as expectations of online services are driven by customer experiences of using similar services of other organisations. Additionally, we need to understand the opportunities and challenges presented by access to superfast broadband across our local communities and the skills and confidence of local people to engage with a digital agenda.

### **Organisational challenge**

In considering a channel strategy, there is often a considerable challenge and change to existing organisational structures. A channel strategy needs to become an integral part of the structure of the organisation and the way the objectives of the organisation are realised. It cannot be super-imposed or retro-fitted onto existing practices and as such is likely to require or precipitate considerable organisational change.

We also need to recognise that people will use different channels not just for different types of interactions, but also to suit their own convenience. Particularly at local level, an integrated channel strategy is required that takes into account the varied ways in which local people may want to interact with the council.

The majority of our customers use the telephone to contact us (approximately 20,000 calls a month through the corporate contact centre alone) but only during the limited council office opening times ( primarily 8.30 -5 Monday – Friday) so if we highlight opportunities to deliver services through more efficient alternative channels it should have a big impact for both the Council and its customers. That said we need to be aware of the customer journey through the entire system, no matter what channel is used.

## **Focus on the Customer**

We are striving to be an organisation that focuses on customers with a strategy that delivers “what matters”, makes savings and supports culture change within our organisation and across our communities. We recognise that the Council website is increasingly a first port of call for customers, making it important that the redesign of the website makes this the default option, making the service more effective for customers and improving efficiency as customers do not have to use other channels to get the service they are seeking. As we bring more services online we use our LEAN/systems thinking methodology to support and encourage the change in culture that is needed and to ensure we realise the full potential of delivering a greater range of services across digital channels.

Part 2 – Basic Principles & Scope

## ***PURPOSE OF STRATEGY***

To outline the broad principles for the ways in which **Neath Port Talbot Council** will deliver its services through a range of contact channels that provide better value for money, are more accessible and are designed with the needs of the citizen at their core.

## ***SCOPE***

1. This strategy document sets out the basic principles by which **Neath Port Talbot Council** will deliver its services to the public through the contact channels currently available.

Contact channels in scope include:

- Face to face

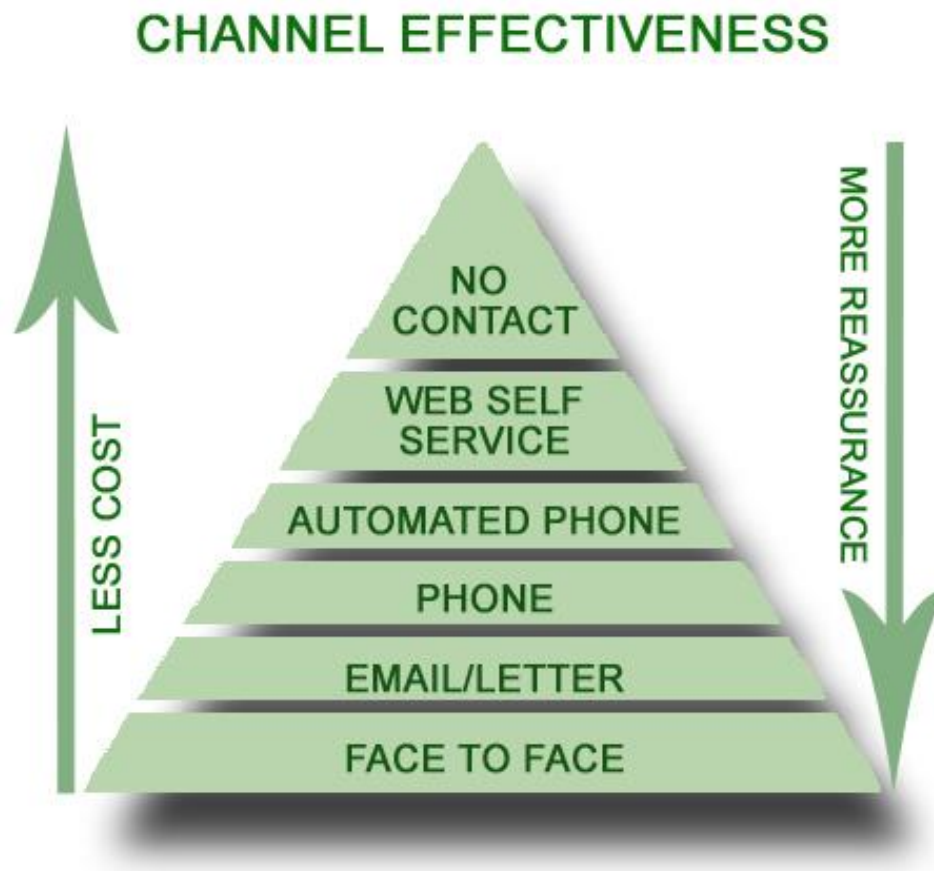
- Email
  - Internet, including web and social media
  - Telephone including Intelligent Voice Recognition and automated switchboard response
  - Mobile technology including SMS text messaging, apps and mobile web)
  - Post
2. This document focuses on three key types of contacts between the authority and the citizen
- **Transactions** (e.g. registering a death, reporting a problem or paying a bill)
  - **Interactions** (e.g. obtaining advice, public consultations, petitioning)
  - **Information Provision** (e.g. cycle maps, leaflets, web pages)
3. This strategy should be relevant to the nature of the services provided by the authority and ensure that its services are provided through a range of contact channels appropriate to the citizens' individual needs and preferences in a non-discriminatory way.

### ***CHANNELS HIERARCHY & DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

The choice of contact channels available to the public is growing all of the time as new technologies are developed and released. For example in the last 5 years we have seen the emergence and growth of channels such as digital social media (for example: Facebook TM and Twitter TM, mobile internet and more recently mobile phone applications (apps)).

Without a channel strategy many organisations typically adopt one of two approaches to using these channels by either 1) launching all of their products and services on all new channels without much thought to the relevance and cost of doing so or 2) focusing on switching their customer contact to the cheapest channel (often assumed to be the internet) without much thought as to the relevance of this channel to their entire customer base.

There is however a generally accepted model for the effectiveness of the major channels of contact available today as shown below



What this model shows is that as we move up the triangle the cost of delivery typically gets cheaper for the organisation. However for some types of contact a greater level of human contact is required, particularly for contacts that require some level of reassurance

For example:

Imagine you've received a letter asking you to pay a bill or the bailiffs will turn up at your house. You've just paid the bill and now want reassurance that your personal belongings are safe. You are unlikely to log on and have a look at the organisation's website's FAQ page for reassurance (even though this might be the most cost-effective solution for the organisation) but you may be more inclined to ring up the Contact Centre to request a letter confirming that matters are in hand. In this example, there may be a case for having online FAQs relating to debt recovery in terms of best practice, but there is probably little chance of shifting this individual contact online

It is therefore vital to fully understand each type of contact and the level of reassurance that the customer is likely to require before focusing the organisation's efforts on the design of any contact channel for that service.

But of course the conundrum doesn't end there. There may be little hope of shifting the channels that a certain group uses if that group simply doesn't access that channel. For example, internet penetration is currently very low amongst those not in work, the financially excluded, older people and people who do not read or speak English – all traditionally high users of Social Care services. Conversely, mobile telephone penetration is very high amongst teenagers, so SMS messaging might be a good channel to advise of last minute secondary school closures in bad weather. Customer insight goes a long way in the design of any channel strategy.

There are unfortunately even more factors to consider including “channel hopping”, (an individual's propensity to use different channels for the same transaction depending on what is convenient to them at the time) and the public's increasing confidence in new channels that develops over years and sometimes months, creating a continually changing landscape.

The key factors to an effective channel strategy therefore would be

1. **Detail** - the deliberate design of the channel strategy for **each type of service**, bearing in mind the level of human interaction required and the needs of the targeted customer base;



2. **Fluidity** – the constant reviewing of the effectiveness of the channel strategy for each type of contact bearing in mind changing technologies, channel hopping and changing customer habits;
3. **Simplicity** – the optimum channels for the organisation should be the easiest to use for the customer to drive a shift in customer behaviour;
4. **Inclusion** – no group should be denied access to a service because of disability, language or cost of the access channel (e.g. mobile phone costs, broadband access). Options should be made available other than the organisation's preferred method of contact;
5. **Cost effectiveness** – particularly in the current economic climate, finding ways in which to deliver services effectively but at lower cost is increasingly important.

## ***PROOF OF CONCEPT***

### **Digital Channels**

Demand data analysed by NPTCBC during specific bad weather events highlighted that over the last 2 years there has been a natural shift to online services e.g. school closures during snow. Previously there had been a reliance to ring the council switchboard to ascertain this information which often created queues and lost calls and at times not always helpful to the enquirer being restricted to the Council's opening and closing times. Now, messages about school closures when there are adverse weather conditions are accessed via social media, most particularly Facebook TM and Twitter TM, backed up by prominently displayed messages on the Council's main website and more traditional press releases.

*In mid 2013, the Improving Customer Experience programme was established as part of the council's strategic 'Rising to the Challenge' transformation programme. The remit of the programme is to build upon LEAN/systems thinking programme of service reviews, extending the initial work to embrace digital innovation. Six transactional services have been redesigned as online services – increasing customer choice and reducing cost. Even with limited marketing, take up of the online service option has reached over 50% of all transactions for refuse, recycling and van permit transactions with pest control and bulk waste collections reaching 25% of all customer transactions.*

Generally accepted SOCITM benchmark costs per customer interaction are:

- Face to Face £8.62
- Telephone £2.83
- Web £0.15

This early work has enabled the Council to test the robustness of the new technologies that underpin the development of digital channel options and to demonstrate the benefits of increasing the range and take up of digital service delivery options.

## **Integrated Working**

In response to the UK Government's Welfare Benefit Reform programme, the Local Service Board commissioned work to explore the support that might need to be in place to support benefit claimants from changes to processes that would require claims to be made on-line and for the frequency of payment of benefits to move from fortnightly to monthly.

Detailed mapping of services available in the Pontardawe area revealed significant support available to citizens in terms of benefits entitlement; money management; digital skills development and employment support. A pilot project, funded by the European Social Fund was initiated at the Council's One Stop Shop in Holly Street, Pontardawe. This brought all face to face services together under one roof. Citizens can now access wrap around support in one place and co-location of front line workers has removed duplication between agencies, whilst improving signposting between agencies and up-skilling front line workers. The project was formally evaluated and the concept will now be rolled out to other areas of the borough.

## ***Part 3 – Neath Port Talbot Council’s Channel Strategies***

### ***LOCAL CONTEXT***

Neath Port Talbot Council comprises an area of 44,217 hectares, with a mix of urban and rural settlements. Urban areas include the towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, while inland, there are the Afan, Neath, Dulais, Upper Swansea and Amman Valley communities many of which have their origins in coal mining. With a population of 139,880 (2012) it has the 8th highest population density in Wales and is the eleventh largest council. The population of the County Borough is projected to increase by 8,900 (6.5%) by mid-2023 (the eleventh highest expected population growth).

Neath Port Talbot has much to be proud of, with many successful projects and initiatives delivering good outcomes but we are facing a number of challenges. Seventeen areas within Neath Port Talbot are within the top 10% of the most deprived communities in Wales with 4 Communities First Cluster areas. Demands on local public services are significant and rising.

We have a good track record of responding to the needs of our communities, with a mature approach to working in partnership with a wide range of people and organisations. For example, the Council is working closely with the University of Swansea to facilitate the development of a new university campus within the county borough boundaries; there is an extensive programme of housing development and community regeneration delivered through registered social landlord partners which is improving the quality of housing supply as well as offering a range of opportunities to improve the quality of life of tenants; local community and voluntary sector organisations have worked with the Council to take over the operation of many smaller community services, such as community centres and the maintenance of sports facilities; and close work with private sector investors in the area have realised significant community benefits for local people, including work experience, apprenticeships and supply chain opportunities.

In terms of Digital Inclusion, The National Survey for Wales 2013/14 indicates that over 77% of local people use the internet for personal use. There is a growing use in internet useage in most age groups, but, there are still significant numbers of people aged over 65 who do not use the internet. There are a number of initiatives in place to support more people to access technology, however, there is scope to improve their effectiveness by establishing a clear framework that identifies need and targets resources to impact on need.

### **OVERARCHING CHANNEL STRATEGY**

The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan 2015-2018 contains six improvement objectives. Objective six makes a commitment to:

*“Improve customer/citizen access to services and functions provided by the Council, or on behalf of the Council, and to improve the efficiency of those services.”*

A focus of related improvement work is to increase the number of services available on-line and to improve the quality and efficiency of those services. This Channel Strategy provides the framework within which the improvement work will be undertaken. The emphasis in this overarching strategy is to use the most appropriate channels to deliver services based on demand and customer choice, but, where appropriate the Council will seek to increase on-line transactions, interaction and information services and encourage take up of the on-line option. Using the strapline Digital by Choice we mean digital services that are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst helping those who can't overcome any barriers that cause them to be digitally excluded.

- Neath Port Talbot Council will make access to its services available through appropriate and cost effective contact channels designed with the needs and preferences of its individual customers and tax payers in mind.
- Neath Port Talbot Council will seek to encourage greater usage of the most effective contact methods by creating a series of well targeted channel shifts.

- Neath Port Talbot Council will not discriminate against any individual by limiting the choice of available contact methods.

### ***OWNERSHIP OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL'S CHANNEL STRATEGY***

Neath Port Talbot Council's Channel Strategy will be endorsed by the full Council. Its implementation will be the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services. The delivery of the strategy will involve all service areas to ensure that there is a consistency of service delivery standards across all of the contact channels and the associated services that the council offers.

### ***REVIEW PERIOD OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL'S CHANNEL STRATEGY***

**Neath Port Talbot Council** will carry out a full review of this Strategy in before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The focus of improvement work will however, be reviewed annually as part of the Corporate Improvement Plan cycle.

**GOVERNANCE OF CONTACT CHANNELS AT NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL**

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Corporate Owner</b>
Telephone/Contact Centre	Customer Services Manager
Website	PO Communications and Digital Services
Email – Generic	Head of ICT
Letters – Generic	Head of Legal Services
SMS	PO Communications and Digital Services
Face to Face	Customer Services Manager
New Media	PO Communications and Digital Services
Mobile Telephone	Head of ICT

Lead responsibility for cross cutting issues are allocated as follows

<b>Cross Cutting Theme</b>	<b>Corporate Owner</b>
Digital Inclusion	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services
Equalities	PO Corporate Strategy
Avoidable Contact	PO Communications and Digital Services
Payments	Head of Financial Services
IT infrastructure	Head of ICT

Skills and training	Head of Human Resources/Corporate Training Manager
Marketing, communication and engagement	Corporate Communications Officer



## **THE AVOIDABLE CONTACT STRATEGY**

***We need to make sure that we get services right first time.***

### **Why should we minimise avoidable contact?**

Local authorities are fundamental points of contact for the citizen when seeking access to public services. They provide key services for their local communities that greatly affect the quality of life for individual citizens and the overall community.

Local authorities and their customers have limited resources and therefore need to be as efficient as possible. By identifying customer contact that is 'avoidable', the local authority and its partners are better placed to redesign the way services and information are presented to customers and business processes arranged to provide an effective service response. Getting this right should mean that customers do not have to make unnecessary contacts, such as chasing delays in service, providing additional information etc, which are both frustrating for the customer and inefficient for the provider.

#### **Case study:**

Following the transfer of the housing function to NPT Homes, the Council's contact centre was still dealing with around 1,000 calls per month from housing tenants. The Council worked with NPT Homes to identify why tenants were still contacting the Council, rather than NPT Homes directly. Through joint work, calls were reduced from over 1,000 per month to under 300 per month. This change means that tenants are getting a better response to their needs as they are contacting the right people first time, whilst the cost to the Council of handling calls received in error have been reduced.

We will capture good quality management information to enable us to understand the demands placed on our services by customers. We will use the management information to identify services where there are high levels of avoidable contact and we will redesign services on a systematic basis to reduce that avoidable contact. We will work with our partners and internal departments to design processes that reduce the need for customers to make contact with the public sector multiple times to complete one transaction. For example, notifying a change of address once, rather than contacting multiple

sections. Re-designed systems will also be simpler for staff to use, reducing the opportunity for errors to be made.

### ***The 3 Key Actions That We Will Take To Reduce Unnecessary Contact***

1. We will build on our successful systems thinking programme to promote the importance of having clear insight across all council services about the volume and nature of demand on services and implement our data capture system in services where there are high volumes of customer contact to measure avoidable contact.
2. We will prioritise Customer Services, Council Tax, Community Care and Street Care services within our corporate improvement programme, redesigning services to reduce avoidable contact, whilst also seeking to increase the volume of services that can be offered on a self-service, digital basis.
3. We will build on the work we have completed at the Pontardawe “Hub” where we have co-located a range of agencies into our Holly Street premises to make it easier for citizens on low income to access benefits advice; money management services; employment support and digital skills training. Our ambition is to replicate this model across the county borough.

### ***Performance Measures***

- No of services measuring demand using recognised methodology
- Ratio of avoidable contact to value demands in each service prioritised within the programme
- Capacity released by redesigning services – cashable, non-cashable and cost avoidance
- % customers satisfied/very satisfied with service response provided first time
- % customers accessing self-service option
- % staff satisfaction with service processes

## **CHANNEL SHIFT STRATEGY**

*To increase the range of channels offered to customers via digital platforms for interactions, transactions and information services. To encourage and support greater use of self-service and digital channels whilst continuing to offer existing channels where this works best for the customer.*

### **What is Channel Shift?**

Channel Shift is the process by which organisations seek to encourage customers to access or interact with services via channels that they would not normally choose.

Deliberate channel shift is the design and marketing of alternative channels because they are the most appropriate channels for the type of contact, customer or organisation in question. Channel shift forms one part of an overall channel strategy, and implemented well it can lower costs, build reputation, empower the citizen and improve the overall service proposition.

Shifting customers to particular channels involves behaviour change on the citizen's part, but once they are aware of the channels available, they will use the one that works best for them.

#### **Case study:**

In 2014/15 the Council made additional services available on-line and promoted the new channels to customers. By the end of March 2015, there was a good take up of the new on-line service option as follows:

- Refuse and recycling equipment requests – 53% of all transactions
- Bulky household waste collection requests – 24.5% of all transactions
- Pest control service requests – 26% of all transactions
- Obtaining a van permit for the civic amenity site – 58% of all transactions

### **The 3 key actions that we will take to create Channel Shift**

1. We will develop and implement a marketing strategy to bring about the behaviour change that is necessary for more people to choose self-service and on-line service options and train our front line staff and partners to promote the use of more effective and efficient channels, equipping customers with the skills and confidence to use on-line service options in greater numbers.
2. We will identify which transactional services delivered by our Customer Services, Streetcare, Council Tax, Community Care and Payments departments can be offered on a self-service/on-line basis and we will implement the system changes necessary to achieve this.
3. We will create a public information catalogue and move to a Digital by Default policy for all public information, ensuring the catalogue is available in formats suitable for downloading to a range of digital devices, whilst only printing hard copy versions where it is necessary to do so.

### ***Performance Measures***

- The number of new services available on-line during each financial year.
- The % of total customer transactions where there is an on-line service option where customers have opted for the on-line option
- % customers satisfied/very satisfied with their initial service response.
- % Customer Services staff trained to support customers move to digital options
- % public information leaflets and plans available in downloadable formats
- No. of “hits” to the public information catalogue
- Capacity release – cashable, non-cashable and cost avoidance

## **DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY**

*To ensure that citizens who do not have access to digital channels at home or work are helped to overcome those barriers.*

### **What is a Digital Inclusion Strategy?**

Not being able access digital channels matters as those most affected are likely to have the greatest need for public services. Being able to access services through digital channels can reduce the price people pay for services as traditional services can attract higher charges than on-line options; can open up opportunities to receive services in a different way, for example on-line services often have a home delivery option; or to have opportunities to access new service opportunities, for example using technology to communicate with people remotely, using Skype TM, Facetime TM or other such on-line media.

Addressing digital inclusion also matters for the delivery of efficient public services, because when people cannot access services online they invariably access them via alternative means which are generally more expensive. The Welsh Government has launched “Digital First (Wales)” ...” it is about delivering public services that are focused on the needs of the citizen. We want to make it much easier for people to find and use public services - at any time and on any device. This will remove barriers, create choice and make life simpler for people...”

The Welsh Government National Internet Survey for Wales shows a growing increase in internet usage across most age groups, but there are some groups where internet usage is considerably lower than most:

- 97% of people aged between 18-24 use the internet;
- 95% of people aged between 25-44 use the internet;
- 83% of people aged between 45-64 use the internet;
- 60% of people aged between 65-74 use the internet; and
- 25% of people aged between 75 and over use the internet.

The Welsh Government has made funding available to reduce the number of people digitally included and over the lifetime of this Strategy, the Council will work in partnership with other agencies to increase the number of people across communities confident to use the internet.

**Case study:**

As part of work to mitigate the impact of Welfare Benefit changes on local people, the Council, with partners, has accessed digital inclusion support from the Welsh Government's Communities 2.0 Programme. Training for Communities First front line staff has been accessed to enable those staff to assist people to acquire basic internet usage skills. Through the programme, it has also been possible to train volunteers to assist in increasing the number of people confident to access on-line services.

**The 3 key actions that we will take to reduce Digital Exclusion**

1. Identify and continue to promote public internet access at key locations including Civic Centres and Libraries, including mediated access.
2. Identify and where possible increase the support available to help people access on-line services confidently.
3. Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy to complement this Channel Strategy

***Performance Measures***

- The number of public access internet points across the borough.
- The number of public access internet points where there is support available to those who need help to access the internet
- The number of agencies offering digital inclusion training
- The % of people accessing digital inclusion training across the borough
- Measures of broadband access/take up or i-procurement take up (to be further developed)
- The Local Service Board and Council endorses a Digital Inclusion Strategy by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

## **EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO CHANNELS**

*To ensure service options are accessible to all, especially those people who have protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.*

### **What is Equality of Access?**

In the context of this document, equality of access relates to the ease or difficulty that a citizen may experience when trying to access services from the Council. For example, someone with hearing difficulties may find the telephone unusable and may prefer to communicate through email. Equally, a customer whose first language is Welsh may wish to access any contact channel through the medium of Welsh.

The Equality Act 2010 places a number of statutory duties on all councils. The Welsh Language Act 1993 and subsequent legislation and guidance also places a number of statutory duties on all councils and these will increase over time as new Welsh Language Standards are applied across public services.

#### **Case study:**

Members of the Disabled Network Action Group worked with the Streetcare Division to ensure that calendars distributed to Neath Port Talbot householders, which contains important information as to when different types of waste should be presented for collection could be accessed by people with visual impairments.

### **The 3 Key Actions that we will take to enable equality of access**

1. Involve end users of service, particularly those who have protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 in service redesign, especially end user testing of services before redesigned services are made generally available.
2. Ensure there is a Welsh language option for all channels, prioritising the development of the Welsh content of the corporate website.
3. Promote the availability of Language Line to those whose first language is not Welsh or English and the availability of alternative format information for people who may have a disability.

### **Performance Measures**

- Equality impact assessments of redesigned services
- % corporate website pages available in both Welsh and English
- No of people accessing Language Line
- No of people requesting alternative format information.
- No of complaints and compliments received in relation to equality of access to services and the resolution of any complaints received



## Part 4 – Strategies for Specific Channels

### **TELEPHONE STRATEGY**

***Improve customer response times at the Corporate Contact Centre whilst simultaneously encouraging a greater take up of on-line services and reducing avoidable contact.***

The Corporate Contact Centre handles over 220,000 calls each year from members of the public and is the Council's out-of-hours contact point. Calls range from the straightforward, e.g. "can you please put me through to..." to more complex transactions e.g. "I want to complain about..."

During 2014/15 the Corporate Contact Centre experienced considerable change to its operations. On the one hand good progress was made in migrating volumes of calls to new on-line service options, such as bulky waste bookings; refuse and recycling equipment bookings; and reducing avoidable contacts from NPT Homes' tenants. In total the focus on reducing avoidable contact and moving customers to on-line services accounted a reduction of 51% in telephone demand related to the new on-line services being dealt with by the Contact Centre. On the other hand, the scale of changes introduced across the Council and occasionally changes made by other agencies (such as the temporary closure of Junction 41 by Welsh Government) created new and significant demands which at times outstripped available staff capacity. The Contact Centre also continued to be affected by the promotion of incorrect contact details with the main number 686868 sometimes used incorrectly, rather than the correct service number. As a consequence, performance at the Corporate Contact Centre was mixed at times.

Looking to the future, whilst an efficient and effective corporate contact centre will continue to play a key role in providing access to services for citizens, more needs to be done to ensure that the main contact number is used appropriately; that more customers are encouraged to use on-line service options; that greater use is made of available technology to drive up response times to telephone calls; and that there is a greater degree of agility in the Contact's Centre's response to unexpected peaks and troughs in demand. Taken together, these measures will drive down avoidable contact, drive up customer response times and improve service efficiency.

**Case study:**

In depth analysis of calls into the Corporate Contact Centre showed a higher than usual volume of calls from customers about changes to refuse and recycling collection arrangements. In addition to receiving significantly more calls, calls were taking on average longer to deal with due to the complexity of the enquiry. The combination of higher call volumes and increased call durations led to an increase in the % of calls abandoned by the caller prior to response and a reduction in the % calls answered within 15 seconds.

Communication between the Contact Centre and Team Supervisors in the Streetcare Section enabled the refuse and recycling service to address the causes of the issues reported by customers and the Contact Centre was able to organise technology and staffing resources to respond more effectively to the temporary increase in demand. The outcome of this joint approach was an immediate reduction in customer enquiries due to improved service response, together with an immediate improvement in Contact Centre performance.

### The 3 Key Actions to Provide Easy Telephone Access

1. Introduce greater use of Interactive Voice Recognition technologies to deal with a higher volume of calls without the need for a customer services officer acting as intermediary.
2. Act on the telephone call data to increase the range of services available on-line and migrate more customers from telephone contact to digital service options. Priority areas to initially include Streetcare, Council Tax, Customer Services, Payments and Community Care services.
- 3.
4. Refresh the Council's call handling policy to ensure the right service numbers are published to ensure customers are accessing the right contact number first time and enabling avoidable contacts to be reduced.

### ***Performance Measures***

- Volume of calls received at the Corporate Contact Centre
- % of calls received at the Corporate Contact Centre abandoned
- % of calls received at the Corporate Contact Centre answered within 15 minutes
- Volume of calls migrated to on-line services following service redesign
- Volume of avoidable contact reduced following service redesign
- % customers satisfied or very satisfied with initial service response
- Capacity release at the Corporate Contact Centre – cashable, non-cashable and cost avoidance.
- Revised call handling policy in place

## **WEB STRATEGY**

***To develop the corporate website as the main access point for transactions, interactions and information services.***

The corporate website experiences over 200,000 hits per month. Around 70% of visits to the website are to find information about council services but we are also growing the number of transactional services, such as booking and paying for a bulky waste collection on-line.

There is a sustained trend too for people to access on-line services on mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets and notebooks, rather than the personal computer. The development of on-line services that are suitable for mobile devices must therefore be at the forefront of system redesign.

The redevelopment of the corporate website sits at the heart of this Channel Shift Strategy. We want the corporate website to be the first point of contact for transactions, interactions and information services. We want customers visiting the website to find it easy to access the services they need with the minimum amount of effort. We also want the website to increasingly become the main access channel for the workforce, enabling all staff whether office or community based to have equal access to information and support services.

### **Case study:**

For citizens of NPT to use the Civic Amenity Site a Van Permit must be obtained from the Council to prove that they are not traders, disposing of commercial waste. The process used to only be possible during normal working hours with access through the Corporate Contact Centre or at one of our One Stop Shops. This meant that if a resident with a van wanted access to the CA site during the weekend or evening, they would have to plan in advance and telephone the council.

The service was redesigned in 2014 to allow residents to apply for a day permit to visit the CA Site online. This new online service means that resident have access to a permit 24/7 – far more convenient to customers. This new service not only means a better, more accessible service for residents but also a reduction in contacts into the Contact centre.

### ***The 5 Key Actions to develop the corporate website***

1. Complete the review of website content, ensuring it is accessible, up to date, fully bilingual and optimised for mobile devices.
2. Increase the number of transactional services available on line, prioritising services in Community Care, Streetcare, Council Tax, Payments and Customer Services.
3. Develop a secure “my account” service for citizens so that website access can be personalised to the needs of individual customers who need to make repeated visits to the Council’s on-line services or who want to track the progress of their service requests.
4. Introduce a digital by default policy for public information, including the development of an on-line catalogue of public information leaflets.
5. Establish the business case for moving to a single site that services external customers and staff. Establish a more robust basis for developing and managing micro sites.

### ***Performance Measures***

- Number of website hits
- Number of new transactional services delivered on line in each financial year
- % of transactional services available on line where the customer has selected the online service option
- % website pages reviewed in last 12 months and confirmed as up to date
- % website pages fully bilingual and compliant with the Council’s Welsh Language Scheme
- % customers satisfied or very satisfied with the experience of using the on-line services
- Number of citizens who have registered for “my account”
- Digital by default policy approved and implemented
- Strategy for intranet and micro sites agreed.

## FACE TO FACE STRATEGY

***Reduce the number of transactions, interactions and information services delivered face to face by the One Stop Shops overall, but increase the % of services delivered on one visit by those customers who need to access services face to face.***

The original Access to Services Strategy approved by the Council introduced three One Stop Shops, based at Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre and Pontardawe. The aim of the One Stop Shops was to enable customers to have all of their transactions dealt with in a single, face to face visit, rather than having to navigate services from individual departments of the Council.

In the first instance, the range of services provided by the One Stop Shops was limited to a small number of high volume services, such as Council Tax enquiries, Housing Benefits, Housing Management. Over time, the range of services delivered by the three One Stop Shops has extended to include many other services, such as applications for a Blue Badge and Bus Passes.

As customers opt in increasing numbers to access self-service options, the role of the One Stop Shops will change. It is expected that the service will see an overall reduction in the number of people accessing simple transactions, however, where applicants need to be seen in person because of service or legal requirements; need to produce original documentation for inspection; or be unable or not wish to access online or telephone channels, then the One Stop Shops will continue to play an important role in the overall Channel Strategy.

One of the more recent developments has been the co-location of other agencies in the Council's building at Pontardawe to enable "wrap around" services to be provided to people on low incomes. Customers accessing the services at Pontardawe are able to access benefits advice; money management advice; employment support and digital skills support all in one visit. Evaluation of this new service has been positive and it is planned to extend this model to other parts of the county borough.

**Case study:**

The Council, together with its Local Service Board partners formed a group to examine the impact of welfare benefit changes on local people. The loss of benefit income per adult of working age in Neath Port Talbot is ranked amongst the top ten areas in the UK.

Partners quickly identified that many people affected by these changes would need access to: discretionary housing benefit payments; help to draw down all of the benefits that they were entitled to; help in managing family budgets; help to carry out their claims on-line as the Department for Work and Pension expect most claims and evidence of job seeking to be done on-line.

The Holly Street Offices at Pontardawe provided an excellent opportunity to trial the bringing together of local agencies who deliver the support identified above under one roof. Supported by European Social Funding, the Council's Housing Benefits and Council Tax Service; NPT Credit Union; NPT Homes; Citizens Advice Bureau and Welfare Rights, together with support from library staff who can provide support in accessing online services are providing one-stop services for people on low incomes from the area.

The new service has increased knowledge amongst agencies of wider services on offer and reduced duplication. Customers using the service give it a high rating too. Where specialist support is needed, the partners have worked together to ensure referrals can be made to the relevant agency, or an appointment to see the person at Holly Street can also be arranged.

***The 3 Key Actions to Develop our Face to Face Provisions***

- Use the management information collected on demand to identify avoidable contact and any services that are not being delivered "one stop". Redesign services to achieve optimum channel efficiency. Ensure all end to end services, where possible, also have an on-line/self-service option.
- Ensure all customer services staff are able to support customers to use self-service/on-line options as default.
- Extend the model of integrated service achieved at Pontardawe to other areas of the county borough, working with relevant agencies to achieve co-location where this best meets the needs of customers.

### ***Performance Measures***

- Volume of callers to the One Stop Shops
- % callers walking off before seen
- Average wait times at front desk
- % face to face transactions at One Stop Shops dealt within in “one stop”
- % Customers satisfied or very satisfied with One Stop Shop experience
- Complaint and compliments received and resolution of complaints



## ***POST/PAPER COMMUNICATION STRATEGY***

**To minimise the amount of post and paper communication and ensure its effective and efficient management**

Whilst electronic methods of communication have been gradually replacing traditional mail, the Council still receives and sends a considerable amount of information on paper and through the traditional mail service.

For example, the Elections Service must make provision for over 23,000 voters who have elected to cast a postal vote. This is a considerable exercise which must be carried out diligently and to high cost and quality standards.

If paper communication is the most appropriate channel to communicate through then it is important to ensure the most economical means of reproducing the paper documentation is selected. The Council decided as part of its wider budget considerations in 2014/15 to close its own Print and Graphics Unit. The Council now relies on external purchasing of print and design materials, or prints required documentation through local print devices. To ensure best value for money a Print Commissioning Manager has been established within the Communications and Digital Services Division.

Therefore, whilst the amount of paper communication circulated through traditional mail methods may be reducing over time, post/paper communication remains an important channel for the Council which needs to be managed efficiently and effectively.

### **Case study:**

The Corporate Mailroom Supervisor has developed a clear framework for officers of the Council to aid those needing to use post/paper communication in selecting the most effective and economic methods.

The framework has been promoted in various communications to staff and placed on the staff intranet as a “how to” guide,

### ***The 3 Key Actions to develop our paper based provisions***

1. Periodically audit incoming and outgoing mail to ensure the most economical methods are being used.
2. Gather data on the type and volume of paper demand incoming and outgoing to identify the potential for channel shift.
3. Analyse the volume, type and cost of print and design materials purchased and ensure clear guidance is in place to support decisions to print through local print devices.

### ***Performance Measures***

- Expenditure on externally posted mail, including costs of courier services
- % outgoing or incoming mail identified as suitable for channel shift
- % traditional mail responded to within 10 working days
- % printed materials identified as suitable for channel shift

## **EMAIL STRATEGY**

***Reduce the volume of e mails received from customers in respect of transactions, interactions and information services.***

***Establish ground rules for internal and business-to-business use of incoming and outgoing e mails to improve business efficiency and effectiveness.***

E mail has become of the main means of communication within and between the Council, its partners and wider community. Used in the right way, e mail communication can be reliable, efficient and effective. However, there is growing concern that some e mail practices, including the increasing use being made by commercial organisations of mailing lists to market goods and services directly to individual officers, can reduce efficiency and effectiveness by bombarding in-boxes with irrelevant/unwanted communication, resulting in wasted hours sifting through significant volumes of information. There is also some evidence that e mails are used in place of more appropriate channels, such as telephone or face to face communications with the result that communication is impaired.

E mail costs a great deal of money. Both in terms of the time spent composing, reading and responding to communication but also in terms of storing and retrieving the data. The scope to reduce unnecessary expenditure and to improve effectiveness needs to be explored as part of this Channel Strategy.

### **Case study:**

An analysis of the Council's website identified a number of "contact us" e mail accounts that had been set up to enable customers to notify the Council of comments, suggestions about service delivery or in some cases to receive service requests.

On closer examination it was found that most of the "contact us" mail boxes were not connected to any business process and were often not monitored by anyone in particular. Generic "contact us" e mail boxes have now been removed and replaced by more appropriate mechanisms that enable customer data to be captured and automatically processed so that enquiries receive an efficient and appropriate service response.

## **The 3 Key Actions to develop our email provision**

1. Identify the main causes of inefficiency in e mail usage and draw up policy guidance to encourage a shift away from poor e mail practice.
2. Establish good e mail recording keeping practice to minimise storage and retrieval costs
3. Research the options and business case for developing and alternative to e mail to internal communications

## ***Performance Measures***

- *Number of e mail demands identified as being suitable for channel shift*
  - *Volume of e mail transactions shifted to alternative channels*
  - *Volume of e mails stored by the Council*
- 
- Option appraisal and business case on alternatives to e mail completed

## **NEW MEDIA STRATEGY (INCLUDING EMERGING SOCIAL MEDIA)**

***Establish a clear purpose for the use of new social media to improve better access to information to improve the communication, reduce costs and widen access to services***

The growth in use of technology and the pace at which technology is adapting is well documented. For many, there has been a significant shift from traditional ways of communicating and accessing services including: mail to e-mail; newspapers to blogs; phonecalls to instant messaging; to name but a few.

If the Council is to connect effectively with its communities then we must embrace these innovations and make clear and wise choices as to where they feature within our service delivery arrangements.

Social media provides an excellent means of gaining insight into the way some people perceive the Council. It also provides a highly effective method of getting key information across to large groups of people very quickly – for example: school closures; road closures etc. Social media provides for a highly personalised response to customers due to the two-way flow of information. Although councils needs to be prepared for views that may not always be positive, used in the right way, social media can create stronger links with citizens, enhance the council's reputation and reduce service costs.

### **Case study:**

The Corporate Communications Team were early adopters of social media, using Twitter™, Yammer™ and Facebook™ to support the Council's service response on occasions where there is severe weather. Yammer enabled the on-call team to communicate effectively from home without making the hazardous trip to the office, ensuring that an early and responsive service was available throughout the day. Use of the corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts enabled clear messages to be sent to parents, pupils, businesses and the general public and to update the status of information throughout the day.

### **The 3 Key Actions to develop social media use**

1. Evaluate the current use made of social media to identify who is currently using the channels and the effectiveness of current use.
2. Ensure that social media channels are integrated with other channels, ensuring an integrated, multi-channel approach to public information
3. Benchmark current practice against industry best practice to inform further development of the Council's social media activities

### ***Performance Measures***

- The number of corporate social media accounts
- The number of other service-based social media accounts
- The number of followers etc of corporate accounts
- The overall tone of social media conversations
- % of public information broadcasts by the Council that make use of social media channels
- % social media followers engaging with the Council

## **PAYMENT CHANNELS STRATEGY**

***Maximise the number of customers paying for council services via electronic channels***

Collecting income due to the Council efficiently and effectively is a key activity. The total income raised and the cost of collecting and administering the payments is a significant activity for us.

There are many different ways in which fees and charges are administered and there are multiple ways in which people can pay over the sums owed to the Council. Current methods include: cash, telephone payment, on-line payment, cheques, debit cards, credit cards, direct debits and standing orders, to name but a few.

Setting appropriate, fair and reasonable fees for services is even more crucial at a time of continuing austerity. Similarly, maximising the collection of income owed whilst minimising the cost of income collection is of growing importance. Examining our current practices is a priority action within this Channel Strategy.

**Case study:**

Customers paying in cash at the Holly Street offices at Pontardawe were surveyed to understand if there was appetite to pay for goods and services through other, cheaper channels. The assumption made prior to the review was that people were paying in cash as they had no means of paying by any other method.

Face to face interviews with customers calling at the cash desks revealed that a large percentage of people had on-line bank accounts and would be quite happy to pay by direct debit or standing order. Customer services officers worked with those customers to set up the new methods of payment and this enabled the Council to close the cash desk service at the location.

***The 3 Key Actions to develop our Payment Channels Provisions***

- Draw up a policy that ensures equitable, reasonable and economic fees and charges across the Council
- Use data on existing transactions to identify those transactions where there is greatest opportunity and impact in shifting customers to different payment channels
- Draw up a corporate policy to ensure there is a legal, proportionate and consistent approach to debt recovery across the council.

**Performance Measures**

- % income owed collected
- % payment transactions undertaken via digital channels
- % value of payments undertaken via digital channels
- Cost of income collected/transaction
- Ratio of cost of income collection processes to value of income collected
- % customers satisfied/very satisfied with payment arrangements



## **Part 4 – Glossary of Terms**

### **Customer**

A person using a public service.

The person could be using the service for personal reasons (e.g. to register the birth of a child), for business reasons (e.g. filing company information) either for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

### **Service**

A service is a provision of information or a transaction that an organisation delivers to its customer.

Examples of public sector transactional services are the state pension and vehicle registration.

### **Service delivery**

The processes by which a customer receives or accesses a service. Service delivery often involves multiple stages, for example a public sector service delivery process may involve:

- Enquiries and requests for information (e.g. “What benefits am I entitled to?”)
- Service fulfilment (e.g. registering for benefits and payment of benefits to customer)
- Follow-up and after care (e.g. reviewing a benefit entitlement after a change)

Public sector service delivery can involve a complex chain of actions across multiple organisations.

### **Channel**

A means of communication by which a service is delivered or accessed.

Examples of direct channels used by the public sector include post, telephone, mobile telephone, web, and face-to-face (services delivered in physical locations, such as Civic Centres).

## **Channel strategy**

An organisation's plan for the channels it will use to deliver services to its customers. A channel strategy explains how an organisation will meet the demands of its customers using the resources available.

### **Efficient**

Channels that are efficient deliver services without wasting time, money or effort for either the customer or service provider.

### **Effective**

Channels that are effective deliver services which meet the desired outcome, with minimal difficulty for the customer or service provider.

### **Insight**

An insight into a customer is a deep truth based on an understanding of customer behaviour, experiences and attitudes, and their needs from a service. Organisations with insight into their customers can deliver the services their customers need, through the right channels.

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) REPORT FORM**

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form**

This form should be completed for each Equality Impact Assessment on a new or existing function, a reduction or closure of service, any policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project which has been screened and found relevant to Equality and Diversity.

**Please refer to the ‘Equality Impact Assessment Guidance’ while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Corporate Strategy Team or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Champion.**

<b>Where do you work?</b>
Service Area: Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services
Directorate: Chief Executive’s Office

**(a) This EIA is being completed for a...**

	Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy
Plan	Proposal			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				✓ <input type="checkbox"/>

**(b) Please name and describe below...**

Draft Digital by Choice Channel Shift Strategy

**(c) It was initially screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity on ...**

12<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**(d) It was found to be relevant to...**

Age.....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	Race .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment.....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation .....	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>

Pregnancy and maternity..... v

Welsh language..... v

**(e) Lead Officer**

**(f) Approved by Head of Service**

**Name:** Mrs Karen Jones

**Name:** as lead officer

**Job title:** Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):**

Briefly describe the aims of the function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan, proposal or project:

**What are the aims?**

The draft Digital by Choice Strategy has been developed to update the Council’s Access to Services Strategy

It aims to establish a corporate approach to the way in which the Council will design access to services through a range of different channels, with an overall aim of increasing the number of services available on-line and encouraging a significant take up of the on-line service options, with a corresponding reduction in other, more expensive channels.

**Who has responsibility?**

The Strategy will need to be approved by the full Council as it is listed in the Council’s policy and budget framework.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services is the Lead Member and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services is the Lead Officer.

**Who are the stakeholders?**

There are many different stakeholders – the principal stakeholders are the staff affected by the service changes that will flow from the Strategy and the members of the public who access council transactional and information services.

**Section 2 - Information about Service Users (See guidance):**

Please tick what information you know about your service users and provide details / evidence of how this information is collected.

Age.....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>	Race .....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Disability .....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief.....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex .....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership .....	√ <input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What information do you know about your service users and how is this information collected?**

The draft strategy is a corporate strategy and will therefore bring a range of services within its scope. The level of detail available about service users will vary from service to service but it believed to include the level of detail shown above. Gaining the best customer insight is an integral feature of the approach that will be taken to service redesign – the method adopted will seek to establish who is currently using the service

and to involve representative service user grouping in the design and implementation of each change. By taking this approach we hope to identify groups with protected characteristics and to take into account any specific needs throughout the service redesign lifecycle.

We also recognise that as far as on-line services are concerned, there are significant numbers of people who are digitally excluded and that older people are more likely to be digitally excluded compared with other groups. We have used Welsh Government survey data to establish this. We intend to develop a digital inclusion strategy to complement this Channel Shift Strategy so that those currently excluded are helped to overcome any barriers. It is planned that the draft digital inclusion strategy will be ready for public consultation in early autumn 2015.

Pregnancy and maternity ..... ✓  Welsh language..... ✓

**Any Actions Required?**

Ensure the methodology develops the customer insight for each service area to ensure that service redesign meets the needs of those who would wish to access that channel.

Bring forward a draft digital inclusion strategy for consideration in early autumn to help remove barriers to using on-line service options for those who are currently digitally excluded.

**Section 3 - Impact on Protected Characteristics (See guidance):**

Please consider the possible impact on the different protected characteristics. This could be based on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs
<b>further</b>				
<b>investigation</b>				
Age	➔ ✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	➔ ✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	➔ ✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Marriage & civil partnership	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	→	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thinking about your answers above, please explain in detail why this is the case? including details of any consultation (and/or other information), which has been undertaken to support your view?**

It is believed the impact will be overall positive for each group with protected characteristic as the aim of the strategy is to increase customer choice by offering services across a wider range of channels. By including service users in the design and testing of new service options, it will should be possible to identify any potential barriers to access that groups with protected might experience and to specifically cater for those.

In terms of the Welsh Language, the service redesign will specifically seek to ensure there is equality with English language options and to address some of the non-compliance areas identified, for example, with the Council's website resources.

**What consultation and engagement has been undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support your view?**

We have held workshops in drawing up our Strategic Equality Plan where there is some overlap between actions in this draft Strategy and that Plan which involved members of the older persons' forum, youth council, BME forum, lesbian gay and transgender forum, disability network and wider equality organisations.

We adopted user testing for the redevelopment of our website and on-line service developments several years ago and have used the learning from those arrangements to inform this proposal.

**Any actions required (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge)**

We will consult on this draft equality impact assessment as part of the public consultation specifically with groups who have protected characteristics to check the accuracy of this impact assessment.



**Section 4 - Other Impacts:**

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues.

You could base this on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

<b>Foster good relations between Different groups</b>	<b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b>
<b>Elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	<b>Reduction of social exclusion and poverty</b>

**(Please see guidance for definitions)**

**Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.**

This draft strategy aims in the main to reduce social exclusion and poverty as on-line service options increase choice, life opportunities and can reduce cost. The development of a digital inclusion strategy to complement this Channel Shift Strategy is key to securing this objective.

In terms of advancing equality of opportunity between different groups, widening choice of channel should mean that we are better able to cater for the needs of different groups for whom face to face and telephone contact may present barriers.

**What work have you already done to improve any of the above?**

We have tested the concept of increasing our on-line presence and seen a significant take up of the new service options by the local population. This ranges from 25%-to just over 50% of total transactions

We have been user-testing our web developments over a number of years and have been able to make adjustments to our approach in light of feedback received.

**Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion?**

It is likely that there will be no discernable impact on community cohesion

**How will the initiative treat the Welsh language in the same way as the English language?**

The approach embraces the Council's existing Welsh Language Scheme and anticipates some of the new requirements that will flow from the Welsh Language Standards.

**Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).**

- 
- No additional actions to those identified early in this impact assessment

**Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:**

Please explain the arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:

**Monitoring arrangements:**

The outcome of public consultation will be reported to Members with the final draft strategy early autumn.

Performance indicators are included in the draft strategy and will form the basis of monitoring

**Actions:**

Ensure performance data is captured to enable progress against the strategy to be secured

**Section 6 – Outcomes:**

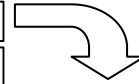
Having completed sections 1-5, please indicate which of the outcomes listed below applies to your initiative (refer to guidance for further information on this section).

Outcome 1: Continue the initiative...

Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative...

Outcome 3: Justify the initiative...

Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative...



For outcome 3, detail the justification for proceeding here

**Section 7 - Publication arrangements:**

On completion, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team for advice on the legal requirement to publish the findings of EIAs.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Objective - What are we going to do and why?</b>	<b>Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?</b>	<b>When will it be done by?</b>	<b>Outcome - How will we know we have achieved our objective?</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Conduct a public consultation exercise on the draft strategy to establish the level of support for the direction of travel and associated priority work areas	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	End August	A report detailing the results of the consultation exercise will be produced and this will accompany final proposals that will be submitted to Members in September 2015	
A digital inclusion strategy will be developed to complement this strategy	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	September 2015	A draft strategy will be submitted to Members in September with a view to seeking authority to consult on its content	Discussions with LSB partners have already commenced to ensure there is a partnership input to the development of the strategy
Establish data Systems to enable Members to gauge the progress made in implementing the Digital	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services	September 2015	Statistical data is available to Members as part of the monitoring	Some data has already been developed to support the early work of the

by Choice Strategy			arrangements put in place to gauge the progress and impact of the strategy	programme. This will now be expanded to enable progress across the entire scope of the strategy to be measured and reported upon.
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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Policy and Resources Cabinet Board

15<sup>th</sup> October 2015

### Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

K.Jones

#### Matter for Monitoring

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015

#### Purpose of Report

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2014-2015.

#### Executive Summary

2. This report for 2014-2015, attached at Appendix 1, is the last annual report on our first Strategic Equality Plan that was published in 2012 and provides an assessment of progress against our original equality objectives during the year.
3. We have continued to work to remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics and to take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where they were different from the needs of other people. While we have made progress against some of the equality objectives we acknowledge the amount of work that remains.
4. As a consequence of the ongoing challenging financial circumstances, a reduced workforce and consequent need to prioritise resources, we have carried out a review of our equality objectives earlier than was originally anticipated. This review has been the main focus of our work during the year.

#### Background

5. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires us to provide an annual report by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year. In this instance it means reporting on 2014-2015 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

6. The annual report includes the progress made towards fulfilling our equality objectives and how we have met the public sector general duty.
7. The focus for 2014-2015 has been the review of the equality objectives. We have been conscious of ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectations and changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot and these have prompted an early review of our objectives. We have, however, continued to work to meet the equality objectives while bearing in mind the revision of and the potential changes to the objectives.
8. During the year we have concentrated efforts on improving areas which have greatest impact on people lives including the accessibility of our website and improving the equality impact assessment process. We have not, however, neglected other objective areas.
9. As our equality objectives were linked to our Corporate Improvement Priorities and by undertaking the actions identified to meet these priorities we have been able to make progress across a number of our equality objectives.

### **Financial Appraisal**

10. The progress described in the annual report was delivered within reduced budgets.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

11. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”
12. As the focus of the annual report is to report progress made against our equality objectives as well as to include other specified information there is no requirement to undertake an equality impact assessment.



### **Workforce Impact**

13. The progress described in the annual report was achieved against a backdrop of a reduced workforce alongside ongoing financial challenges

### **Legal Impact**

14. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce and publish an annual report every year.

### **Crime and Disorder Impact**

15. The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”.
16. The Strategic Equality Plan contained specific proposals to prevent and address hate crime and domestic abuse and progress has been made to meet these proposals thereby assisting us in discharging the crime and disorder duty.

### **Risk Management**

17. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce and publish an annual report every year. Failure to produce an annual report could lead to a compliance notice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, an independent statutory agency which was established under the Equality Act 2006.

### **Consultation**

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

### **Recommendations**

19. It is recommended that:

Members monitor the contents of the Annual Report 2014-2015 attached at Appendix 1.

## **Appendix**

22. Appendix 1 – Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015

### **List of Background Papers**

23. [Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011.](#)  
[Strategic Equality Plan 2012](#)

### **Officer Contact**

24. Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.  
Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

# **STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015**

## **Introduction**

### **Progress Made Against Our Equality Objectives:**

**Objective 1**

**Objective 2**

**Objective 3**

**Objective 4**

**Objective 5**

**Objective 6**

**Objective 7**

**Objective 8**

**Gender Pay Objective**

### **Steps taken to meet the equality objectives**

**Identifying and collecting relevant information**

**How we met the general duty**

**Equality Impact Assessment, Training, Procurement**

**Specific employment information**

**Revision of the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives**

## Introduction

This report for 2014-15 is the last annual report on our first Strategic Equality Plan that was published in 2012 and provides an assessment of progress against our original equality objectives during the year.

We have continued to work to remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics and to take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where they were different from the needs of other people. While we have made progress against some of the equality objectives we acknowledge the amount of work that remains.

The ongoing challenging financial circumstances, a reduced workforce and consequent need to prioritise resources have led to an earlier review of our equality objectives than was originally anticipated. This review, taking into account people's needs and requirements, our and our partners' resources as well as any external pressures placed upon local government, has been the main focus of our work during the year.

As austerity measures continue we must be mindful not to waste our resources but to concentrate on a few key areas that will have the greatest impact. Through working with our local equality groups, elected members, staff and our partners we are confident that our equality objectives will meet this challenge

## Progress Made Against Our Equality Objectives

**Objective 1 (a)** – Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics – Hate Crime

### What did we do?

- Safer Neath Port Talbot led on a bus poster campaign in the area which promoted information on how and where to report hate crime.

- Our Community Safety Engagement Team carried out over 60 engagement events reaching over 10,000 residents during the year. These events were aimed at raising awareness of Hate Crime and how to report it.
- The Deputy Leader officially launched the Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council Voices Have Spoken (VHS) project in Port Talbot in November 2014
- Neath Port Talbot Communities First team financially supported the Swansea University 'Faith Awareness Week' in February 2015.
- In partnership with Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council a Disability Hate Crime Myth Busting leaflet was produced and launched by the Deputy Leader of Neath Port Talbot. The leaflet has been shared Wales wide.
- A Gypsy and Traveller Myth Busting leaflet was developed by the Western Bay Gypsy and Traveller Multi-Agency Forum. It is being used as a training resource in challenging stereotypical attitudes and prejudices against that community.

**Objective 1(b)** – Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics – Domestic Abuse.

#### **What did we do?**

- The Community Safety Team and various partners organised the annual Crucial Crew event in June. 1,600 year 6 pupils from all of NPT's primary schools attended, participating in a range of activities including a domestic abuse awareness session.
- We received a White Ribbon Town Award in October 2014, in recognition of our commitment to raising awareness, understanding and providing services in order to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and providing the community with increased support and understanding of this issue. Building on this success,

council staff worked with partners in other organisations to deliver a very successful White ribbon initiative in November 2014.

- The Hafan Cymru Spectrum Project received further funding from the Welsh Government to deliver healthy relationship lessons in primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in addition to the lessons they already deliver in the secondary sector.
- Calan Domestic Violence Service was awarded £2 million by the Big Lottery Fund to provide effective intervention measures for children and young people exposed to domestic violence and abuse.
- In addition, Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid Healthy Relationships project also funded by the Big Lottery is now operating within the county borough.
- The youth offending service recognised the need for early intervention with children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence, committed a violent offence or committed a domestic violence related offence. As a consequence the service now offers a range of interventions aimed at reducing the risk of these children and young people becoming perpetrators in the future.

**Objective 2(a)** – Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people – website.

#### **What did we do?**

- We have brought six new transactional services on-line in the last twelve months thereby improving the accessibility of our corporate website.
- We have continued to improve the content and appearance of our website. By analysing website hits we found that the majority of views were to only 250 of the 3000 pages. As a result we are working to smarten these pages, remove the obsolete pages and ensure that the Welsh translation of pages is up to date.

- On-line map based reporting, to enable the reporting of streetcare issues, e.g. problems with litter bins and dog waste bins, on-line underwent user testing and went live in January 2015
- We began to develop a Channel Shift Strategy which will ensure that both we and our citizens access the benefits of digital technologies, whilst also ensuring that use of other, more traditional channels are appropriate, efficient and effective. This Strategy will underline the importance of having a local and coherent response to digital inclusion to increase competitiveness within the local economy whilst also reducing inequality amongst our local population

**Objective 2(b)** – Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people – paper based public documentation.

#### **What did we do?**

- We continued to utilise our ‘How to ...’ guides which are available on a variety of topics, including accessible information. These guides are available to all staff.
- Working with the Older Persons’ Council and the Youth Council we developed a more accessible summary of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2015-2018
- As part of our work to improve our website we are working to ensure that the all documentation is up to date and accessible in the printed form too.



**Objective 3** – Improve access to services by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people - social services.

### **What did we do?**

- During the year we supported 810 more individuals (65yrs+) in their own communities to become more independent in their day-to-day lives than last year (total was 3070).
- We successfully exited from the COASTAL project and all project outcomes have been achieved and sustainable future for employment and training projects are continuing. As the project ended in December 2014, the outcomes relate to nine months. 30 people gained paid employment and 151 achieved accredited training and 80 gained work experience.
- We have also established care and support service at Trem y Mor and extended the service at 'Old' Rhodes House.
- We opened the first of our four new residential care homes for older and disabled people, Llys y Seren with our partner Grŵp Gwalia.
- A new Assisted Transport Policy has been developed to encourage greater independence for older people and people with disabilities ensuring access to social services transport is only available to those who have an assessed need for it.
- From October, we fully implemented our modernised disability service, which is helping people become more independent, assisting people into employment or delivering modern care and support where this is needed. The number of individuals with a learning disability who are reliant on residential care reduced.
- We have also made a number of improvements to modernise social work practice to ensure we are fully focused on helping people maximise their independence and quality of life.

**Objective 4 – Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics.**

**What did we do?**

- Our work with the equality impact assessment process has highlighted areas where services need to focus attention to address the gaps in knowledge about their service users. Actions to address the gaps in knowledge are included in the action plans for each equality impact assessment
- We are aware that monitoring information is an essential tool in the development and provision of services. However, while there are systems in place to collect information we have yet to fully realise the potential of analysis and application of the data collected.
- Unfortunately, the revised monitoring form used in the recruitment process still has not been introduced due to the delays experienced with the database development of the Human Resources Vision Database.

**Objective 5 – Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements.**

**What did we do?**

- We continued our commitment to improving staff and elected members awareness and understanding of hate crime, including that of disability hate crime, by holding a number of training sessions during the year.
- 26 Youth Service staff received Hate crime awareness ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions. These staff have in turn delivered awareness training to a further 57 staff and 125 young people.
- We held 2 disability hate crime awareness sessions in October and a further 2 in January with a total of 40 staff attending.

- In association with the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator we arranged number of training sessions on topics including human trafficking, transgender awareness and 'Working with Roma Families in a Safeguarding Context'.
- During autumn 2014 we held equality impact assessment training sessions for staff while training sessions for elected members focused on their role in scrutinising equality impacts.
- Elected members attended a workshop which aimed to identify barriers the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities face when accessing local services, as well as explore opportunities to improve the provision of services and make them more inclusive of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

**Objective 6 (a)** – Improve access to Environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people – civic offices and council owned buildings.

#### **What did we do?**

- We allocated £108k to improve access to buildings across the county borough.
- As a result of the feasibility study works began to create a disabled toilet on the second floor of Port Talbot Civic Centre. This is due for completion in August 2015
- We provided disabled crossings at Cwmclais Road, Cwmavon and Longford Road, Neath Abbey as well as continuing with our programme of installing dropped kerbs where appropriate in various locations across the county borough
- Works were carried out at Glanafan Comprehensive School to improve access for pupils and staff within the school environment
- We improved accessibility to public conveniences in Crynant with the installation of a unisex disabled toilet.

- At Pontardawe Library we improved access with the installation of an automatic door at the main entrance. We also improved facilities at the library by installing a new disabled toilet

**Objective 6 (b)** – Improve access to Environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; street furniture, etc.

### **What did we do?**

- We began construction work to deliver the first phase of the Neath Town Centre redevelopment to improve the town centre for the community and visitors to the town.
- The first phase to include a new 600 space multi-storey car park, and 23,000 square feet of new retail space, including a space for Shopmobility, is under construction and due for completion in September 2015.
- The redevelopment of Port Talbot Parkway Stations was due for completion in spring 2015 but has been delayed due to a number of unforeseen site issues and has resulted in the need to undertake further design work. However the stations remains on track to be fully accessible
- Engagement with various equalities groups continues in respect of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme which will fund projects in Port Talbot

**Objective 7 (a)** – Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics; pupil attendance.

### **What did we do?**

- In the 2013-14 academic year, we made improvements in pupil attendance. Primary school attendance increased by 1.6% to 94.6% and secondary school attendance increased by 0.9% to 93.5%.

- The ongoing core visits to schools which include looking at attendance issues and all schools requiring to submit attendance targets with an action plan and evaluation has positively impacted on attendance levels. In a comparison context (across Wales) our Primary School attendance is ranked at 16<sup>th</sup> and Secondary 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Schools in NPT have secured an improvement in pupil attendance in both sectors, in particular in the primary sector with a 1.6% rise.
- The attendance data for Primary aged pupils on FSM for 2013-14 was 93.01%, an increase of 1.9% from 2012, surpassing the target for July 2015 by 0.5%. The attendance of pupils not on FSM for 2013-14 was 95.12%
- The attendance data for secondary aged pupils on FSM for 2013-14 was 89.94% an increase of 1.6% since 2012. In order to meet the target for July 2015 of 90% a further increase of 0.06% is needed. The attendance of pupils not on FSM for 2013-14 was 94.48%
- There has been a rise in fixed and permanent exclusions in the Secondary sector and a rise in fixed exclusions in the Primary sector which NPT are actively working on to decrease.

**Objective 7 (b)** – Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics; educational attainment.

#### **What did we do?**

- Our Minority Ethnic Achievement Service supports pupils who have English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic groups who may be at risk of underachievement. Bilingual and multilingual staff have supported learners to take examinations in Polish and other first languages, with pupils achieving great successes

- Estyn assessed the number of effective and highly effective schools as 68.35% (changed from previously good/outstanding). Of this number, 51.89% of all schools were deemed effective and 16.46% of all schools highly effective.
- The number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) for 2014 was 3.8%, an improvement on the previous year of 4.4%.
- Three of the four key stage literacy measures improved and at least met their forecast performance for the year. One of the measures (at key stage 4) maintained performance but was below its forecast for the year.
- All four key stage numeracy measures have improved although two measures did not achieve the forecast performance for the year.

**Objective 8** – Expand data collection to all protected characteristics with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

**Gender Pay Objective** - to further develop pay/employment data to better understand the reasons for the gender pay gap and to identify any actions which may be feasible to close the pay gap.

Under its commitment to developing data in relation to the protected characteristics, and pay and employment data, we have established a development project under the Efficiencies Programmes Board. Dedicated resource has been allocated to this project, with the aim of improving the quality of the data held on the integrated HR/Payroll I.T. system, VISION, and to improve the quality of the data that can be extracted from the database. The project plan includes addressing the requirements for complete data collection for equality monitoring purposes.

### **Steps taken to meet the equality objectives**

The focus for 2014-2015 has been the review of the equality objectives. We have been conscious of ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectations and changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot

and these have prompted an early review of our objectives. However, we continued to work to meet the equality objectives while bearing in mind the revision of and the potential changes to the objectives.

During the year we have concentrated efforts on improving areas which have greatest impact on people lives including the accessibility of our website and improving the equality impact assessment process. We have not, however, neglected other objective areas.

As our equality objectives were linked to our Corporate Improvement Priorities and by undertaking the actions identified to meet these priorities we have been able to make progress across a number of our equality objectives. Progress against our improvement priorities can be found in the Corporate Improvement Plan Annual Report 2014-2015. **(INSERT LINK when available)**

In light of the increasingly difficult financial situation we have had to find alternative actions with the aim of protecting people with protected characteristics from the worst impacts of funding reductions, with children, young people and vulnerable people being identified as priority groups.

The Older Persons' Council continues to meet with Cabinet to highlight, discuss and consider solutions to issues which affect the independence and quality of life of people over the age of 50. Topics that have been considered include the closure of hospital facilities, the role of the voluntary sector within the current financial climate of cutbacks, the implications of some closures of leisure /learning facilities across the county borough

While the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum begun the year on an encouraging note it lost some of its momentum lessened as the year progressed. We have acknowledged that the Forum requires greater support in meeting its potential and this has been reflected in the revised equality objectives.

We continue to be mindful that our work to progress our equality objectives does not lose sight of our commitments under our Welsh Language Scheme. Progress on the Scheme is reported in a separate document, the [Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2014-2015](#). The introduction of the Welsh Language Standards in autumn 2015 will bring with them new challenges at a time of increasing financial and resource pressures

## Identifying and collecting relevant information

Engagement with members of the public, partners, local communities and interest groups to gather information to help shape equality objectives and other strategies, policies and plans as well as to influence the delivery of our services remains our priority.

We are aware that the identification and collection of information remains a key element particularly of the equality impact assessment process. We continually work to improve the collection and analysis of the data we hold in relation to service users and staff and are conscious of weaknesses in this area. This was recognised during the revision of the equality objectives and actions have been identified to resolve this.

By holding an equality briefing in September 2014 we provided officers and members with a better understanding of equalities issues; an opportunity to meet/engage with representatives of existing networks/groups; an opportunity to be better informed when considering equality impact assessments/consultation in relation to proposed service and budget changes.

## How we met the general duty

- Standing on the shoulders the theme for Black History Month 2014 was celebrated in Neath Port Talbot by local mainstream and special schools through music and reading.
- Cwmtawe Comprehensive School Choir attended the National event in Newport in September to celebrate Black History Month
- We completed works in relation to Disabled Facilities Grant in 252 days on average (target 285 days).
- During 2014-15 we completed more Disabled Facilities Grants, 323 this year (287 last year) due to the average cost of works being lower than predicted allowing the budget to go further and the introduction of the Rapid Adaptation Grants process which took smaller jobs out of the process
- Work has begun to provide a new fully accessible 3-11secondary school, Ysgol Bae Baglan.



- While the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum begun the year on an encouraging note its momentum lessened as the year progressed. We have acknowledged that the Forum required greater support in meeting its potential and this have been reflected in the revised equality objectives
- The Older Persons' Council has helped promote Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council's Minority Elder Advocacy Service and Voices Have Spoken project.
- We continue to support the Older Persons' Council to ensure it continues as a crucial engagement mechanism to provide independence and information for older people
- As a council we endorsed the Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe 2013, where it is within our area of responsibility and economically feasible to do so.
- Cwmtawe Comprehensive School Choir was part of the 100 voice choir that took part in the launch of Black History Month in Newport in September
- The Minority Ethnic Achievement Service was a finalist in the National Union of Teachers Blair Peach Award 2014 and was specially mentioned at the National Union of Teachers annual conference for their work with pupils for whom English is an Additional Language and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who may be at risk of underachievement.
- Duan Li, Chinese Language Assistant worked with the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service and a number of schools in Neath Port Talbot sharing Chinese language and culture and provided support with interpreting/ translating with Chinese families and schools.
- Three schools in Neath Port Talbot entered the Show Racism the Red Card competition with Sandfields Comprehensive School the overall winner of the competition with their display about Nelson Mandela.
- Black Asian Minority Ethnic Taxi Association was officially launched in June by the Mayor Cllr. Huw James. The launch was supported by the Council, Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council, the police, other taxi

associations and taxi drivers themselves. The Associations is a useful platform to voice the concerns of its members and liaise effectively with agencies to tackle negative attitudes and hate incidents.

- We held an equality briefing in September 2014 provided officers and elected members with an opportunity to hear from our local equality groups, to better understand their concerns and encourage greater dialogue and engagement.

## **Equality Impact Assessments, Training and Procurement**

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

We recognise the continuing importance of equality impact assessments and during 2014-2015 we have been keen to explore how best to improve the assessment process.

Following a brief evaluation we concluded that a more thorough audit was required and this has been included in our revised Strategic Equality Plan. We anticipate that following this audit a programme of training will be required to build on the improvements already made to date.

We have continued to focus our attention on ensuring officers and elected members receive training on undertaking impact assessments. In addition we have included consultation as major part of the training.

The financial challenges we continue to face have necessitated hard decisions for services and the overall negative impact that these decisions have had cannot be avoided. However, we have made every effort to mitigate these impacts wherever possible and that our identified priority groups, children, young people and vulnerable people are protected from the full impact of the cuts.

We are aware of the need to continue to improve the process. This was recognised during the review of the Equality objectives with the inclusion of an action to audit the assessments and take forward any recommendations for improvement.

## Training

Training continues to be an important element in meeting our equality commitments. Training has been provided to elected members, staff and partners during 2014-15.

Our training section have arranged and delivered training to private and voluntary partner care providers as well as to the private sector that provide services on our behalf. In addition our education service have provided a number of equality training sessions to school governors and head teachers.

A wide range of topics, including human trafficking and Roma awareness, have been arranged as part of our work on community cohesion with the regional community cohesion coordinator. These sessions have been well patronised by staff and members

A series of training sessions on understanding and undertaking equality impact assessments was delivered by the Welsh Local Government Association to both officers and elected members. This training was well attended and more targeted training will be arranged for 2015.

## Procurement

The procurement service is mindful of its legal obligations not only with regard to the spending of public money but also to equalities and works with service managers during the entire process to ensure that equality issues are considered at every stage. It works to ensure a consistent approach to procurement across a wide range of supplies, services and works. Tendering paperwork includes relevant guidance as well as requiring statements and evidence of compliance with the public sector general duty.

## Specific Employment Information

Employment Information (INSERT LINK when available) for the period 2014-2015 has been reported separately.

The data has been analysed by the protected characteristics of gender, race, disability and age and by specific criteria. While the data in relation to these characteristics is of good quality there are gaps in the information that

we are currently able to collect in relation to the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

The data is either for the 12 month period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015, or, where appropriate, a snapshot of the workforce on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

### **Revision of the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives**

Work to revise the Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives was begun during 2014-2015, through active engagement with equality groups, elected members and officers. From an early stage it was identified that the objectives were still relevant but that actions to meet each one required amendment to reflect progress made to date, the changing needs of people who share protected characteristics, the work that was already being undertaken as well as the financial climate.

The Strategic Equality Plan acknowledges that we are working through large scale changes in order to respond to the continuing climate of austerity. The emphasis placed on further improvements to equality impact assessments, public information and engagement is part of our response to the financial challenges that we face and is focused on working hard to understand the potential consequences of service cuts, reductions and changes, especially on groups who share a protected characteristic.

Based on the information gathered a revised Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives were drafted and was subject to a period of public consultation during summer 2015. Following consultation amendments were made to the Strategic Equality Plan and the inclusion of additional actions under some objectives, the Strategic Equality Plan was agreed by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, and is anticipated to be approved by Council on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

## MARGAM JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

(Acting with Plenary Powers)

**Members Present:**

**6th February 2015**

**Representing Neath  
Port Talbot County  
Borough Council**

**Councillors:** E.V.Latham (Chairman) R.G.Jones,  
E.V.Latham and A.Taylor

**Officers In Attendance**

D.Michael, H.Jenkins, Mrs. A.Dixon, M.Griffiths,  
C.Phillips and Mrs.J.Woodman-Ralph

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1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr.Mrs.P.James and Cllr.M.Reeves,  
Bridgend County Council.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL OFFICER**

**RESOLVED:** that Mr.G.Nutt be appointed Technical  
Officer of the Margam Joint Crematorium  
Committee following the recent retirement  
of Mr.J.S.Flower.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH  
SEPTEMBER 2014**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the above mentioned meeting be  
confirmed as correct record of proceedings.

**Matters Arising**

Work is progressing in regard to Seat Benches and a report will be prepared  
for the next meeting of this Committee.

The Water Treatment – Sewerage Works screening is progressing with  
Mr.N.Thomas attending shortly to look at the types of trees to be planted  
taking into account the adjacent drains.

#### 4. **ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT**

Members were provided with the Margam Crematorium Joint Committee revised budget for 2014/15 and the Estimate for 2015/16 as detailed in the circulated report.

Members welcomed the very positive report and thanked the Treasurer and Officers for all the hard work undertaken that resulted in a positive budget position which has resulted in the Committee being able to increase the payment of the loan to Neath Port Talbot and to make a provision into a reserve fund. Members noted that there was no proposed increase in the Cremation Fees but were supportive of the increases for ancillary service charges.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) that approval be granted for the Revised Budget for 2014/15 as detailed in the circulated report.
  - (b) that approval be granted for the Budget for 2015/16 as detailed in the circulated report.
  - (c) the fees for 2015/16 be approved as detailed in Appendix 2 of the circulated report.
  - (d) Members noted the position in relation to the Cremator Project and Reserve as detailed in the circulated report.

#### 5. **BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Members were given an overview of the changes to the banking arrangements for Margam Crematorium as detailed in the circulated report.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) that approval be granted for the changes to the banking arrangements for Margam Crematorium.
  - (b) that all future income be transacted through the Council's banker Santander and the bank account with Lloyds Bank closed.
  - (c) that the development of arrangements for taking payment by cards be progressed.

6. **FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES  
AUDIT**

Members were provided with the outcome of an audit undertaken at the Crematorium by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) as detailed in the circulated report.

Members were pleased to receive a very positive report and asked the Superintendent and Registrar to forward the Committees thanks to all the staff concerned. Crematorium housekeeping was identified as excellent with some recommendations being addressed. Further reports will be provided in future to the Committee to ensure all the recommendations are being actioned.

- RESOLVED:**
- (a) that the recommendations in the FBCA be accepted.
  - (b) that compliance be noted in recommendations 3,4,5 and 7.
  - (c) that further reports be submitted to Committee to ensure that the remainder of the recommendations are dealt with.

7. **FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES  
DOCUMENT AMENDMENTS**

Members received a report advising of changes to documents that had been actioned in line with the Cremation Code of Practice as detailed in the circulated report.

- RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

8. **CHRISTMAS MEMORY TREE**

Members received a report advising of the placing of a Christmas Tree in the Chapel of Remembrance during December 2014 as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that the Remembrance Christmas Tree had been very well received and 400 cards placed on the tree.

**RESOLVED:** that approval be granted for the Memory Tree to be provided in future years and for the remembrance cards to be retained for a period of 12 months ensuring that families are made aware of the timescale for retaining cards.

9. **DEATH CERTIFICATION**

Members received a report advising them of further delays by Central Government in introducing a new system of death certification as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

10. **CREMATIONS - CAMEO**

Members were provided with information on the number of cremations which had taken place since the re-opening of the Crematorium on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 up until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 which has been forwarded to CAMEO, the body responsible for managing the fees relating to unabated/abated cremations as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

11. **APPLICATIONS FOR CREMATIONS**

The circulated report contained statistical details for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014, whereby there had been 700 applications for cremations received and following the appropriate scrutiny and investigation, authority had been granted for cremations to proceed.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted

12. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12,13 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.



13. **RELIEF CREMATOR OPERATORS**

Members were provided with the options available to them in regard to the training for relief Cremator Operators as detailed in the private circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** that consideration of the training of additional cremator operators be deferred to a Special Meeting of the Margam Joint Crematorium Committee which will be convened when necessary.

14. **INSURANCE CLAIM - FIRE DAMAGE**

Members were provided with an update on the Insurance Claim as detailed in the private circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

**CHAIRMAN**

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# MARGAM JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

(Acting with Plenary Powers)

**Members Present:**

**24 April 2015**

**Representing Neath  
Port Talbot County  
Borough Council:**

**Councillors:** E.V. Latham (Chairman), J.S.Evans,  
P.Greenaway and R.G.Jones

**Representing Bridgend  
County Council:**

**Councillors:** Mrs. P.James

**Officers in Attendance:**

H. Jenkins, D. Michael, C.Phillips, S. Brennan and  
Miss G.Cirillo

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1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE JOINT  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 6TH FEBRUARY, 2015**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the above mentioned meeting  
be confirmed as a true and accurate record of  
proceedings.

2. **FUNERAL DIRECTOR CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Members discussed in detail proposals to change the layout of the car park to provide an area for Funeral Director cars to park, whilst waiting for families to return after the service. It was noted that the aim of the proposal was to ease congestion that could sometimes occur outside the entrance to the chapel, and avoid funeral cars waiting in sight of other families. In order for Members to have a more accurate idea of the proposals, the Committee visited the site of the proposed new layout and were provided with a copy of a draft plan of the proposed new car parking arrangements, which was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the proposals to change the layout of the Car  
Park, as detailed within the circulated report and  
plan, be approved.

3. **FILMING AT MARGAM CREMATORIUM - URGENCY ACTION**

Members noted that the following Urgency Decision had been determined by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in consultation with the requisite Members for immediate implementation.

Urgency Action No: 0364

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Re: The Filming of Funerals

The urgency action sought to approve a request made by a Film Company (GRJ Media), to film a funeral service (with the permission of the respective family) in the Crematorium Chapel on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015, as detailed in the circulated report.

After considering the issues raised surrounding this initial request, and following detailed discussions on this matter, Members and Officers agreed to review the Joint Committee's Policy regarding Filming of Funerals at the Crematorium.

- RESOLVED:
1. that the Urgency Action No.0364 as detailed within the circulated report, be noted;
  2. that a draft revised policy regarding the filming of funerals, be brought to the Joint Committee in due course;

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12,13 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **STAFF - APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING**

Members noted that a new member of staff had been appointed at the Crematorium and had already commenced the required FBCA Cremator Operator Training, as detailed in the private circulated report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

**CHAIRMAN**

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# MARGAM JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

(Acting with Plenary Powers))

**Members Present:**

**26th June, 2015**

**Representing Neath  
Port Talbot County  
Borough Council:**

**Councillors P.Greenaway, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham  
and A.Taylor**

**Representing Bridgend  
County Council**

**Councillors Mrs. P.James**

**Officers in Attendance:**

**D.Michael, H. Jenkins, S.Brennan, C. Phillips,  
Mrs. A. Thomas and Miss G. Cirillo.**

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr.E.V. Latham be appointed Chairman  
of the Margam Joint Crematorium Committee  
for the Civic Year 2015/16.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr. Mrs. P.James be appointed Vice-  
Chairman of the Margam Joint Crematorium  
Committee for the Civic Year 2015/2016

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON THE 24TH  
APRIL 2015**

**RESOLVED:**

that the Minutes of the previous meeting held  
on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015 be confirmed as a true  
and accurate record of proceedings.

4. **MATTER ARISING - CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS AT MARGAM CREMATORIUM**

Members were advised that an update report on the proposals to change the layout of the car park in order to ease congestion as discussed at the previous meeting, would be brought to the next meeting as the additional work required would incur more costs.

5. **APPLICATIONS FOR CREMATIONS**

Members received information regarding applications for cremations, for the period 1st October 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

6. **OUTTURN REPORT AND ANNUAL RETURN 2014/15**

Members received a report providing details of the Margam Joint Committee Outturn position for 2014/15 and the Annual Report 2015 which included the draft Annual Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

The Chairman thanked Officers for the comprehensive report and the work carried out to ensure efficiency of business in difficult times.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Outturn Report for 2014/15 as attached at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be approved.
- (b) that the Annual Return, prior to Audit Certificate for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee for consideration by external auditor.
- (c) that the Annual Governance Statement, as attached at Appendix 3 to the circulated report, be confirmed.

7. **FILMING OF FUNERALS AT MARGAM CREMATORIUM**

Members received a report of the Superintendent and Registrar seeking approval to amend the policy in relation to filming of funerals at Margam Crematorium.



Members were given a background to this item as over recent years numerous requests have been made by families to record or video stream funerals as outlined in the circulated report.

Following discussions it was agreed that an amended recommendation be made as detailed below.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent be granted delegated authority to give final approval of the filming of funerals at Margam Crematorium, subject to such conditions as they may include in that approval.
- (b) That the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent shall consider the grant of such approval on the basis of written applications made by a Funeral Director acting with the consent of the family and following consultation by the Funeral Director with the person conducting a service of ceremony.
- (c) That the consent only extends to one recording made on behalf of the family.
- (d) That an announcement be made before the commencement of the service or ceremony that the funeral is being recorded on behalf of the family.

8. **MEMORIAL BENCHES**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Superintendent and Registrar made a comprehensive presentation to Members regarding the review of the provision of Memorial Benches within the grounds of the Crematorium.

Following detailed discussions, it was felt that the information presented required further evaluation. It was therefore agreed that a workshop for Members be held for this item before the next scheduled meeting, in order to support future decision making regarding Memorial Benches.

**RESOLVED:**

That a Workshop be held for Members on the matter of Memorial Benches prior to the next scheduled meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

**CHAIRMAN**

# **JOINT RESILIENCE COMMITTEE**

(Committee Room 3, City and County of Swansea)

## **Members Present:**

1<sup>st</sup> May, 2015

**Neath Port Talbot  
County Borough  
Council:**

**Councillors J.R.Bryant and R.G.Jones**

**City and County of  
Swansea:**

**Councillors D. Cole (Chairman) and Mrs. M. Jones**

## **Officers in Attendance:**

**Neath Port Talbot  
County borough  
Council:**

**Mrs.S.Rees, S. Burgess and Miss G. Cirillo**

**City and County of  
Swansea:**

**M.Nicholls**

## **Apologies for Absence:**

**Councillors:**

**Mrs. S.Penry, Mrs. D.Jones and A. Woolcock**

### **1. MINUTES OF THE JOINT RESILIENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 7TH NOVEMBER 2014**

The Minutes of the Joint Resilience Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were received and noted as a true and accurate record.

### **2. JRU - SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

The Corporate Occupational Health, Safety and Joint Resilience Manager, Mr.S.Burgess updated the Committee on the proposed Service Specification which summarised the service to be provided by the Joint Resilience Unit (JRU), to both Local Authorities, as attached at Appendix 1 to the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** that the Service Specification be approved, subject to the lead Resilience Heads of Service for both Local Authorities, being authorised to agree any necessary changes which may be required from time to time, to ensure critical service delivery, and subject to amending the number of annual days from 352 to 365 at item 11.2 of the Service Specification.

3. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members received an update on the proposed Terms of Reference as detailed in the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed Terms of Reference be approved subject to an Annual review, and subject to the Joint Resilience Committee convening as required in an emergency.

4. **RESILIENCE POLICY**

Mr. S. Burgess, presented to Members the Resilience Policy as circulated. The Policy contained comprehensive information which included matters for discussion on Management Structure, Job Descriptions and specific responsibilities, Neath Port Talbot/Swansea Resilience Partnership, Joint NPT/CCoS Resilience Committee, the South Wales Local Resilience Forum and Co-ordinating Group.

**RESOLVED:** That the Resilience Policy be approved, as detailed in the circulated report and subject to the agreed amendments regarding the Job Descriptions of Resilience Co-ordinators.

5. **ANNUAL RESILIENCE REPORT 2014/2015**

Mr.S.Burgess gave Members an overview of the Manager's Annual Report as circulated which contained information on the Disaster Response and GIS Operational Network (DRAGON) the system which secures online emergency response applications to deliver improvements in dealing with civil emergencies in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas. On this matter, Mr. Burgess confirmed with those present that arrangements would be put in place for Members to access the Dragon System as soon as possible.

With regard to Rest Centre and Evacuation Exercising, it was confirmed that an exercise is due in the near future and Members would be informed of this accordingly. Members also noted the good work carried out around COMAH Exercises during 2014/2015 involving two local top-tier COMAH sites namely Tata Steel and Calor Gas, Aberdulais providing opportunities to rehearse emergency response procedures.

The Manager's Annual Report also contained information on the new European Seveso Directive, Land Planning and Flooding.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Joint Resilience Manager arrange for Members to access the DRAGON System as described above.
  2. That the Annual Report be noted.

#### 6. **JRU WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015**

Members received a report listing priorities for a variety of tasks and objectives to be met for the 2015/2016 period. The aim of the Work Programme is to ensure that the JRU and other key partners in both Local Authorities focus on and deliver agreed priorities. From discussions, Members suggested that the Business Continuity Plans be reviewed at future Joint Resilience Committee meetings where appropriate.

- RESOLVED:** That the JRU Work Programme 2015/2016 as circulated, be approved subject to periodic reports being submitted to Members of Committee.

#### 7. **SEVESO 111**

Members noted that significant changes would be made to COMAH Regulations following the implementation of the new European Seveso 111 Directive as outlined in the circulated report.

- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

8. **COMAH RECHARGES**

The Joint Resilience Manager explained to Members how recovery of costs can be recovered by the Local Authority regarding the preparation, planning and exercising of maintaining plans for industrial sites within its boundaries. Mr. S. Burgess outlined to Members the current model used for recharges, however work on this will be ongoing as staff would be researching other models to use if appropriate. An update report would be brought back to Committee on this item in the future.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**CHAIRMAN**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS 2015/2016**

<b>Meeting Date and Time</b>		<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)</b>	<b>Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> November 2015</b>	1.	Treasury Management Monitoring/Write Offs	Monitoring & Decision	Each Meeting	D. Rees
	2.	Miscellaneous Grants Applications	Decision	Each Meeting	H.Jenkins
	3.	Quarterly Performance monitoring	Monitoring	Quarterly	S. Davies
	4.	Well being of Future Generations Act Update report	Decision	Annual	K. Jones
	5.	Corporate Governance - 6 Month Progress Report	Monitoring		N. Sparkes
	6.	Information Governance Strategy	Decision	Topical	S.John
	7.	Welsh Church Act Funds – Final Account	Decision	Annual	D.Rees

**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS 2015/2016**

<b>SPECIAL MEETING 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2015</b>	1.	Third Sector Grant Funding – Award of Grants	Decision			HJ
	2.	Digital Inclusion Draft Strategy for Consultation – Final Proposals	Decision		Topical	K.Jones/S.Griffiths
	3.	CCTV Appraisal – Consultation Outcome – Final Proposals	Decision		Topical	J.Banfield

<b>Meeting Date and Time</b>		<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)</b>	<b>Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> January 2016</b>	1.	Treasury Management Monitoring/Write Offs	Information/Decisions	Each Meeting	H. Jenkins D. Rees
	2.	Miscellaneous Grants Applications	Decisions	Each Meeting	H. Jenkins
	3.	Civic Centre Cash Offices – Opening Hours feedback report from P &R 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Information	Topical	D. Rees
	4.	Community Safety Partnership - Update	Monitoring		S.Morris
	5.	Community Cohesion Update			K. Jones



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