



POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

***Immediately Following Scrutiny Committee on
THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2014***

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To agree the Chairman 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 16th October 2014 (*Pages 1 - 6*)

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

4. Miscellaneous Grant Applications (*Pages 7 - 12*)
5. Community Councils Minor Projects Scheme (*Pages 13 - 16*)
6. Consultation on Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme (*Pages 17 - 24*)

To receive the Report of the Head of Financial Services

7. Neath Port-Talbot Welsh Church Act Fund - Draft Financial Statements (*Pages 25 - 46*)
8. Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2014-2015 (*Pages 47 - 52*)

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

9. Quarterly Performance Management Data 2014-2015 Quarter 2 - Performance 1st April 2014-30th September 2014 (*Pages 53 - 92*)
10. Complaints, Compliments and Comments - Annual Report 2013-2014 (*Pages 93 - 98*)
11. Annual Governance Statement - Progress Report (*Pages 99 - 106*)
12. Corporate Improvement Plan - Six Month Progress Report 2014/2015 and Outcome Agreement Grant Payment Letter 2013/14 (*Pages 107 - 138*)
13. Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2013-2014 (*Pages 139 - 162*)
14. Welsh Language Standards And Other Matters - Update (*Pages 163 - 188*)

Joint Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services and the Head of Business Strategy and Public Protection

15. Welfare Reform - Advice Line Evaluation (*Pages 189 - 240*)

Joint Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services, the Head of Financial Services and the Head of Business Strategy and Public Protection

16. Welfare Reform - Benefit Changes (*Pages 241 - 254*)
17. To receive the Forward Work Programme Proposed Items for January and February 2015. (*Pages 255 - 256*)
18. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No 2290 (as amended).
19. 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 Head of Financial Services (Exempt under Paragraph(s) 14

20. Housing Benefit Write Offs (*Pages 257 - 260*)

21. Valley Loans Write Offs (*Pages 261 - 266*)

22. Business Rates Write Offs (*Pages 267 - 272*)

**To receive the Private Report of the Head of Human Resources
(Exempt under Paragraph(s) 14)**

23. Disclosure and Barring Service (*Pages 273 - 290*)

**S.Phillips
Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre
Port Talbot**

Monday, 24 November 2014

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

16th OCTOBER 2014

Cabinet Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

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

1. MISCELLANEOUS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Decision:

That the following miscellaneous grant application, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved:-

Bryn Residents Action Group – Lease of dis-used tennis court in Bryn for multi-use games and leisure facility. Grant to be awarded for a 5 year period, in line with the Lease period.

Reason for Decision:

In accordance with approved criteria.

Implementation of Decision:

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

2. **COMMUNITY COUNCILS' MINOR PROJECTS SCHEME**

Decision:

That the following Community Council Minor Project Grant Application, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved:-

Application from Resolven Community Council for a Skate Park to be built together with associated equipment. Supported at 60% up to a maximum of £12,000 in accordance with the schedule upon receipt of paid invoices together with a copy bank statement.

Reason for Decision:

In accordance with approved criteria.

Implementation of Decision:

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

3. **INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2014/2015**

Decision:

Members noted the following Urgency Action taken in respect of Insurance Arrangements 2014/15, in consultation with the requisite Members, as detailed in the circulated report:-

Urgency Action No: 0363 Date: 3rd September 2014

4. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2014/2015**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

5. **TIMETABLE - REVIEW OF POLICY CONCERNING GRANTS TO THE THIRD SECTOR**

Decision:

That the revised timetable for completing the review of policy and procedures that govern allocation of grant funding to the Third Sector, as detailed in the circulated the report, be approved.

Reason for Decision:

In order to implement the recommendations arising from the review of funding to Third Sector organisations agreed by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board in December 2013.

Implementation of Decision:

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

6. PONTARDAWE ONE STOP SHOP/ADVICE HUB

Decisions:

1. That the extension for 12 months of the Pontardawe One Stop Shop/Advice Hub be approved during which a further report be brought back to Members following the six months trial of remote access arrangements, and another report be also brought back to Members regarding the outcome of investigations surrounding the number of Council Tax enquiries not dealt with One Stop Shop.
2. That the following specific recommendations regarding the Advice Hub, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved:-
 - Those agencies that were most visited become the core agencies within the Hub working 2 days (Tuesday and Thursday) – Housing Benefits/Council Tax; NPT Homes and Citizens Advice Bureau.
 - A referral/appointment process is formalised for those agencies who had fewer visitors.
 - To undertake a review of the impact of the following services and bring an update report back to Committee in 6 months time:-
 - a. Credit Union
 - b. Welfare Rights Unit

Reason for Decisions:

In order to formalise the delivery of Council services at the Pontardawe One Stop Shop location, and to formalise the basis upon which agencies engage with the Hub, on an ongoing basis.

Implementation of Decision:

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

7. **WELFARE REFORM - LOW INCOME FAMILIES PROJECT - EMPLOYMENT**

Decision:

That the continuation of the arrangements for the continuation of the Low Income Families Project – Employment, as set out in the circulated report, be approved.

Members also noted that there had been a positive response to the pilot project from both Library and Job Centre Plus staff. Job Centre Plus had requested that the project be rolled out across all libraries, and Officers were in the process of having discussions with them regarding funding towards it.

Reason for Proposed Decision:

In order to formalise the partnership between the Library Service and Job Centre Plus.

Implementation of Decision:

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

8. **POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15.**

Decision:

That the Draft Policy and Resources Cabinet Board Forward Work Programme be noted.

9. **MINUTES OF THE JOINT RESILIENCE MEETINGS: 2ND MAY AND 1ST AUGUST 2014**

Decision:

That the Minutes of the Joint Resilience Meetings, of 2nd May and 1st August 2014, be noted.

10. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute No.11 below, the Chairman agreed that it could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290 (as amended).

Reason:

In order to immediately address an inconsistency in relation to the recording of a Minute due to a recent audit.

11. **AMENDMENTS TO THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD MEETING OF THE 13TH FEBRUARY 2014**

Decision:

That due to the discovery of an error in the way the decision concerning the item related to Property Bay Wales was recorded in the Minutes, the decision recorded for Minute No.8 at the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board Meeting held on 13th February 2014, as detailed in the circulated report, to be amended as follows:-:

Decisions:

1. That Property Bay Wales continue trading as detailed in the circulated report and to:-
 - Appoint new board of directors and confirmation of shareholders representative.
 - Be guided by the Council on what activities and area's PBW can trade in.
 - Develop Business and Marketing Plan.
 - Actively advertise.
 - Review and agree financial commitments.

2. That Members receive update reports on a regular basis.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that a correct record is maintained.

Implementation of Decision

This decision was for immediate implementation, therefore the Chairman confirmed that this item would not be subject to the three day call in period.

12. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Decision:

That pursuant to Regulation 4(3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290, the public be excluded for the following item 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.

13. **COUNCIL TAX WRITE OFFS**

Decision:

That the Council Tax Write Offs, as detailed in the private circulated report, be approved.

Reason for Decision:

The amounts are irrecoverable.

Implementation of Decision

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

CHAIRMAN

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

27 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Wards Affected - Pontardawe, Seven Sisters, Briton Ferry

MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS APPLICATIONS

Existing Policy Statement

- a) Each application will be considered on its merits.
- b) The Committee will only approve applications for financial assistance from voluntary or charitable organisations which are manifestly committed to voluntary endeavours of a local nature. This will not preclude the consideration of applications where the disposal of funds is outside the area but still provides significant benefits for the people from the Neath Port Talbot area.
- c) No applications will be considered from religious bodies except relating to church halls and other premises where there is significant community use of the property for non-religious activities.
- d) No applications will be considered from other public funded bodies such as community councils, hospital trusts, etc. or where the benefit may be in lieu of their contributions such as appeals for hospital equipment.
- e) Applications from individuals may be considered where both the person and the community derive a benefit.
- f) No grants will be made to any individual or organisation whose prime purpose is to distribute their funds to other charitable bodies.

Budget for 2014/15

The following grants are included and have been approved within this budget:-

	Budget 2014/15 £
Citizen Advice Bureau	82,680
Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service	45,494
Racial Equality Council	15,900
Maintenance of Mechanics Institute (in lieu of grant aid to Antiquarians & Archives)	14,037
West Glamorgan Association for the Blind	2,100
One-off grants	949
Total	<u>161,160</u>

New Grant Applications

Please see Appendix 1.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members:

- Decide on the applications set out in Appendix 1.

Reason for proposed decision

To decide on the funding application.

List of Background Papers

Letters of application.

Appendix

Appendix 1 –Miscellaneous Grant Applications.

Officer Contact

Mr H J Jenkins – Director of Finance & Corporate Services
(Tel. 01639 763251 - email: h.jenkins@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk)

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS APPLICATIONS

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the 3 day call-in period.

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

Economic Prosperity	Positive
Education and Lifelong Learning	Positive
Better Health and Well Being	Positive
Environment and Transport	Positive
Crime and Disorder	No impact

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	No impact
Sustainable Development	Neutral
Equalities	Positive
Social Inclusion	Positive

(c) **Consultation**

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

APPENDIX 1

MISCELLANEOUS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applicant	Purpose	Amount Request/ Cost of "Project"	Previous Support	Comments
Citizens Advice Bureau	Rental of a room/presence in the Pontadawe (Hub) to 30 November 2015	£40 per week based on occupation for 2 days per week	Initial 6 months rent free (during Hub Pilot period)	Provide grant to fully cover rent to 30 November 2015. Occupancy & Grant subject to review.
NPT Credit Union	Rental of accomodation in the former One Stop Shop in Pontadawe (Hub) from 29 September 2014 to 28 September 2017.	£130 per week based on service provision from Monday to Friday per week	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent in line with rent licence agreement. Occupancy & Grant subject to review.
Friends of Seven Sisters	Lease of Recreational Land at Seven Sisters for 25 years with 5 year reviews	£500 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period the subject to review.
Seven Sisters RFC & Seven Sisters AFC	Joint Lease of Playing Fields at Seven Sisters for 25 years with 5 year reviews	£500 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period the subject to review.

Applicant	Purpose	Amount Request/ Cost of "Project"	Previous Support	Comments
Trustees of Giants Grave & Briton Ferry Boys Club	Lease of Parc Newydd Playing Fields for 25 years with 5 year reviews	£650 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period the subject to review.
Bibles for Children Bath	To give free bibles to children in primary schools	No amount specified	£100 approved in 2012	Propose no grant is made due to council funds

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

27 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Wards Affected - Glynneath

COMMUNITY COUNCILS MINOR PROJECTS SCHEME – APPLICATION

Purpose of Report

We have received an application for grant aid under the above mentioned scheme from Glynneath Town Council. This application is for a Play Area to be built together with associated equipment with an estimated cost of £53,712 to be funded from external grants and Town Council reserves.

Background

A grants scheme has been introduced in order to assist Community Councils in undertaking minor capital projects which will alleviate to some degree the perceived unfairness about “double rating”.

Recommendation

The application from Glynneath Council complies with the conditions of grant and I therefore recommend that support at 50% up to a maximum of £10,000 in accordance with the schedule be made on receipt of paid invoices together with a copy bank statement.

Reason for Proposed Decision

The decision is in compliance with the approved policy.

List of Background Papers

Application Form.

Officer Contact

Mr. H. J. Jenkins – Director of Finance & Corporate Services
(Tel. 01639 763251 - email: h.jenkins@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk)

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINOR PROJECTS SCHEME

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the 3 day call-in period.

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

Economic Prosperity	Positive
Education and Lifelong Learning	Positive
Better Health and Well Being	Positive
Environment and Transport	Positive
Crime and Disorder	No impact

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	No impact
Sustainable Development	Neutral
Equalities	Positive
Social Inclusion	Positive

(c) **Consultation**

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

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

27 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Wards Affected - All

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Purpose of Report

This report sets out consultation arrangements for the Proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 which needs to be adopted by Council by 31st January 2015. It also makes proposals relating to discretionary areas within the proposed scheme.

Background Information

Council Tax Benefit was replaced in April 2013 by a Council Tax Reduction Scheme more commonly known as Council Tax Support.

As Members are aware the UK Government funding for the scheme was reduced by approximately 10% compared to their funding level for the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme. However, for 2013/14 the Welsh Government provided an additional £22m on top of its base funding of £222m for financial support up to 100% for eligible claimants and have retained this £244m in the base budget.

Welsh Government has made regulations for a national scheme for Council Tax support. However, the obligation remains upon the Council to adopt a scheme.

The cost of the Welsh Government scheme currently exceeds the £244m funding made available by the Welsh Government with the remaining funding having to be built into this Council's budget considerations.

CURRENT POSITION

The current Council Tax Reduction Scheme ends on 31st March 2015 and a new scheme must be adopted for 1st April 2015.

As Members have previously been informed, the Council provides Council Tax support to circa 19,000 households within the County Borough, of which approximately 14,000 receive full benefits and pay no Council Tax.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales is set by Regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012). On 26th November 2013 the Wales Government approved the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 as amended by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. These Regulations prescribe the main features of the Scheme to be adopted by all Councils in Wales. As in previous years it is expected that the Welsh Government will make some minor adjustments via regulations to uprate the financial figures and other technical adjustments required as a result of changes to underlying benefits for the 2015/16 final scheme. This report seeks approval to incorporate the final regulations within this Council's scheme for 2015/16.

Although the Local Government Finance Act gives Welsh Ministers discretion to allow Welsh local authorities to determine the contents of schemes themselves, the Welsh Government have announced that they have approved an extension to the existing national framework for the provision of Council Tax Support in Wales. This is to avoid what has been termed a "postcode lottery" whereby eligibility for a Council Tax reduction and the size of the Council Tax reduction for particular groups could be different in different council areas. This extension provides up to a "100% support scheme" for a further 2 years covering 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The approved national scheme, within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, provides limited discretion for the Council to apply additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme and which provide for additional administrative flexibility. As part of this consultation this council proposes to continue with the existing approved discretions for 2015/16. These are:

- (a) The ability to backdate the application of council tax reduction with regard to late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim;

Proposal for Consultation – that there is no increase in the backdate period for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard 3 months contained within the prescribed scheme.

- (b) The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons after they return to work where they have previously been receiving a council tax reduction that is to end as a result of their return to work;

Proposal for Consultation – that there is no change to the standard 4 week extended reduction period contained within the Prescribed Scheme remains unaltered.

- (c) Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and War Widower's Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the claimant;

The National Scheme provides for the first £10 per week of this income to be disregarded.

Proposal for Consultation – to continue to disregard the above above-mentioned pensions income in full.

The Council has previously undertaken consultation on the adoption of the scheme in 2012 and 2013 and must do so again for 2015/16 and this is now being arranged. It is likely that the Welsh Government will, as part of their consultation on Draft Regulations for 2015/16, consult on uprating and technical changes to the scheme. They are also likely to set out future year consultation arrangements. The Draft Regulations are likely to be laid in the second week of December.

Financial Implications

This Council's total budget for Council Tax Support in 2014/15 is £16.8m. The Welsh Government Provisional Settlement for 2015-16 provides funding available of £15.64m, similar to 2014-15. This results in £1.2m to be met from the council tax budget with any increase in the

2015-16 Council Tax for the County Borough, Community Council and the Police and Crime Commission for South Wales having to be fully met by this Council.

As the funding from the Welsh Government is fixed any increase/change in the amount of Council Tax Support will have to be met by the Authority. Every 1% increase in Council Tax will cost £168k.

Legal Implications

The Council is obliged to make a Council Tax Reduction Scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations. Although the legislation provides for a default scheme to apply in the absence of the Council making a scheme, the Council is nevertheless under a statutory duty to adopt its own scheme, even if it chooses not to apply any of the discretionary elements.

Risk Implications

The Council needs to manage the cost of Council Tax Support within its budget. The amount of Welsh Government support is provided on a fixed basis rather than the demand-led basis of support to council tax benefit. Any variation in Council Tax support costs will have to be met by this Council.

Equalities Implications and consultation exercise

This Council has previously carried out consultation in 2012 and 2013. The consultation assisted the Council in satisfying the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act. Consultation on the 2015/16 Scheme as set out in this report is now in hand with the outcomes collected and to be reported to Council in January 2015 for approval of the Council Tax Scheme for 2015/16.

The Welsh Government has previously compiled an equalities impact assessment following its consultation. A local equalities impact assessment has previously been carried out by the Council.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve that.

- 1 consultation takes place on the Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 prior to seeking Council approval to the final scheme in January 2015
- 2 consultation takes place specifically in relation to:
 - (a) That no increase in the backdate period for all claimants be applied from the standard 3 months contained in the Prescribed Scheme.
 - (b) That no increase in the extended reduction period for all claimants be applied from the standard 4 weeks currently contained within the Prescribed Scheme.
 - (c) Apply a 100% disregard for War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and War Widower's Pensions for all claimants.

Background Documents

Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 as amended by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

Welsh Government Equality Impact Assessment
NPTCBC Equality Impact Assessment

Wards Affected

All

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Mr Hywel Jenkins – Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Tel. No. 01639 763251
E-mail: h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk

Mr Kevin Davies – Principal Officer Benefits/Misc Income

Tel No. 01639 763920
E-mail: k.davies1@npt.gov.uk

Mrs Ann Hinder – Principal Officer Council Tax/Income
Tel No. 01639 763908
E-mail: a.hinder@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

Economic Prosperity	Positive
Education and Lifelong Learning	No Impact
Better Health and Well Being	Positive
Environment and Transport	No Impact
Crime and Disorder	No impact

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	No impact
Sustainable Development	Positive
Equalities	Positive
Social Inclusion	Positive

(c) **Consultation**

This report seeks approval to consult on the Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015-16.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

27TH NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND – DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013/14

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to inform Members of the 2013/14 Welsh Church Acts Fund financial performance.

2. Neath Port Talbot Welsh Church Acts Fund – Draft Financial Statements 2013/14

2.1 Neath Port Talbot CBC are trustees of the Neath Port Talbot Church Acts Funds and are as such responsible for its legal and financial administration, together with the preparation of the financial statements.

2.2 The Draft Neath Port Talbot Welsh Church Acts Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements 2013/14 are attached for review by the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board.

2.3 The statements show a deficit of £4,994 for 2013/14, fees payable to Neath Port Talbot CBC for legal and financial services amount to £2,520.

2.4 Members should note during 2013/14 a deposit of £3,650 was received for the sale of a proportion of the land at Michaelston Super Ely with St Brides. The sale was not finalised until May 2014 and hence the 2014/15 assets and accounts will be updated for this.

3. Future Policy

3.1 As at March 2014 outstanding grant commitments totalled £39,300 however, £37,300 of these grants relate to grants approved pre March 2010.

Consequently no new applications have been accepted until the backlog of grants is cleared. It is proposed to write to the current grant recipients to inform them that unless they advise that they will claim the grant by 31st March 2015 then they will have to reapply for the funds.

4. Appendix

Appendix 1 - Statement of Accounts 2013-14

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are requested to:

- Review the Accounts and recommend their submission to Wales Audit Office for Independent Examination.
- Continue to suspend the approval of new applications until further notice, whilst we write to the approved grant recipients.

6. Reason for Proposed Decision

- (a) To comply with the Charity Commission's requirements.
- (b) To ensure that the fund remains solvent.

List of Background Papers

WCAF 2013/14 Financial Statements

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Mr Hywel Jenkins – Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Tel No: 01639 763251
E-mail: h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk

Mrs Diane Mulligan – Group Accountant (Technical Services)
Tel No: 01639 763612
E-mail: d.mulligan@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND – DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013/14

(a) Implementation of Decision

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

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

Community Plan Impacts

Economic Prosperity	-	Neutral
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	Positive
Better Health & Well Being	-	Positive
Environment & Transport	-	Neutral
Crime & Disorder	-	Neutral

Other Impacts

Welsh Language	-	Neutral
Sustainable Development	-	Positive
Equalities	-	Positive
Social Inclusion	-	Positive

(c) Consultation

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

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 2014

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1076440

Neath Port Talbot Welsh Church Acts Fund

Annual Report For The Year Ended 31st March 2014

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 2013/14

Income

Income for 2013/14 £5,925 (6,995 in 2013/14) and comprised of short term investments and estate rentals.

There was a return on cash investments of £5,248 in 2013/14 (6,312 in 2012/13).

Estate rental income totalled £677 in 2013/14 (£683 in 2012/13).

Expenditure

Expenditure in the year exceeded income by £4,994 (£16,099 deficit in 2012/13) with a corresponding reduction in the income accumulation fund balance. At 31st March 2014 this fund balance stood at £68,550.

The Charity made grant payments of £6,000 during 2013/14 a decrease of £11,008 on the previous year. A full analysis of grants paid is attached at page 19 of the Financial Statements.

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 a sale of land belonging to the Welsh Church Fund Act in 2013/14. The sale produced a capital receipt of £14,225 realising a net profit on the sale of £625.

No revaluation of fixed assets was undertaken during 2013-14 the last revaluation was undertaken on 31st March 2013.

Fixed Asset Investments.

There are no fixed asset investments as at 31st March 2014.

Short Term Investments.

The total amount of short term cash investments with Neath Port Talbot CBC at the year-end was £503,272, an increase of £14,070 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 on the following basis:-

50% of all costs over a threshold of £2000 up to a maximum grant of £1500.

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 ENDED
31ST MARCH 2014

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endow- ment Funds	Total Funds 31-03-14	Total Funds 31-03-13
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES:						
Investment income:						
Long Term Investments	2	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Investments	3	(5,248)	-	-	(5,248)	(6,312)
Other incoming resources:						
Sale of Land		-	-	-	-	-
Estate Rentals	4	(677)	-	-	(677)	(683)
Total Incoming Resources		(5,925)	-	-	(5,925)	(6,995)
RESOURCES EXPENDED:						
Charitable Activities:						
Grants	5	6,000	-	-	6,000	17,008
Governance Costs:						
Professional Fees	6	-	-	-	-	-
Accountancy, Legal & independent Examiners Fees		4,208	-	-	4,208	4,404
Other Expenses.		711	-	-	711	1,682
Total Resources Expended		10,919	-	-	10,919	23,094
NET INCOMING /(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS		4,994	-	-	4,994	16,099
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-
		4,994	-	-	4,994	16,099
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES						
Gain on sales of fixed assets		(625)	-	-	(625)	(10,106)
Unrealised gains/ (losses) on investment assets		-	-	-	-	-
Unrealised gains on revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	(34,147)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		4,369	-	-	4,369	(28,154)
Total Funds brought Forward		(603,774)	-	-	(603,774)	(575,620)
Total Funds Carried Forward		(599,405)	-	-	(599,405)	(603,774)

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2014

	Note	31 March 2014		31 March 2013	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	7		95,234		108,834
Investments	8		-		-
Total Fixed Assets			95,234		108,834
Current Assets					
Debtors	9	6,306		7,267	
Short Term Investments	8	503,272		489,202	
Cash at bank		-		-	
Total Current Assets			509,578		496,469
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within 1 year	10	(5,407)		(1,529)	
Total Current Liabilities			(5,407)		(1,529)
Total Net Current Assets			599,405		494,940
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			599,405		603,774
Creditors: Amounts falling due after 1 year			-		-
NET ASSETS	11		599,405		603,774
Represented By Funds of the Charity					
Unrestricted Income Funds					
Fund Balance	12	530,855		530,230	
Income Accumulation Account		68,550		73,544	
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS			599,405		603,774

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2014

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 2013/14.

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 2013/14 was 1.02% (1.29% in 2012/13).

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

Grant payments made in 2013/14 totalled £6,000. Details of these payments are provided at **page 19**

6. Governance cost

No professional fees were paid in 2013/14 due to there being no investments in Stocks or bonds or asset sales.

Independent examiners fee for reporting on the accounts was £1,668, £1584 relating to the accrual for 2013-14 fees with the remaining £84 charge relating to an underestimate for the 12-13 fee (2012/13 £1,583.62).

Payments of £2,040 (£2,020 in 2012/13) 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 residential land (Llantwit Road, Neath) in 2013-14. The capital receipt £14,225 realised a net profit of £625.

8. Investments

	Treasury Stock	Short-Term Deposits
	£	£
Market Value at 31 st March 2013	-	489,202
Additions / Investments	-	14,070
Disposals / Withdrawals	-	-
Net Investment gains/ (losses)	-	-
Market Value at 31st March 2014	-	503,272

9. Debtors and Prepayments

	2013/14	2012/13
	£	£
Accrued Income		
Investment Income	5,133	6,312
Estate Rental	1,173	955
Total Falling Due within one year	6,306	7,267

10. Creditors

	2013/14	2012/13
	£	£
Independent Examination fees	(1,584)	(1,500)
Estate rental prepayments	(173)	(29)
Receipts in advance	(3,650)	-
Total Falling Due within one year	(5,407)	(1,529)

It should be noted that the receipt in advance relates to a deposit received in relation to the sale of a proportion of land at Michaelston Super Ely. The sale was not completed until May 2014 (Post Balance Sheet) and will therefore be reflected fully in the 2014/15 accounts.

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

	2013/14		
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	95,234	-	95,234
Current Assets	509,578	-	509,578
Current Liabilities	(5,407)	-	(5,407)
Total	599,405	-	599,405

12. Analysis of funds – Investment and unrestricted income funds

	Balance 31/03/13	Receipts	Utilised/ Released	Transfers	Gains / Losses	Balance 31/03/14
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income	73,544	5,925	(10,919)	-	-	68,550
Fund Balance	530,230	-	-	-	625	530,855
Total	603,774	5,925	(10,919)	-	625	599,405

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.

Approved grants still unpaid at 31 March 2014, totalled £39,300, at maximum contribution. The income accumulation fund balance at 31 March 2014 stood at £68,550 and is able to meet this commitment.

Whilst the approved grants still unpaid as at 31/3/14 total £39,300, it is most unlikely that grants approved pre 2009/10 (now over 4 years old) will ever be paid. These total £37,300. A prudent estimate of outstanding commitments would therefore be closer to £2,000.

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 £2,520 fee (2012/13 - £2,520) paid to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council disclosed at **note 6**.

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND INVESTMENTS 2013/14

	Quantity (Capital)	Opening Balance / Market Value 01/04/2013	Closing Balance Market Value 31/03/2014	Total Interest 2013/14
	£	£	£	£
NPT Loans Fund	-	489,202.32	503,272.14	5,133.21
Totals	-	489,202.32	503,272.14	5,133.21

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

Estate	Details	Address	Fixed Asset Value 31-03-13	Sales	Fixed Asset value 31-03-14
Vale of Neath:					
	Residential Neath	78 Llantwit Road	13,600	(13,600)	0
	Residential Neath	80 Llantwit Road, Neath	17,000		17,000
	Agricultural Neath	1 Brynawel Road, Cimla	0		0
	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
	Total Vale of Neath		50,451	(13,600)	36,851
Vale of Glamorgan - Agricultural:					
	Michaelston Super Ely with St Brides	St-y-Nyll (0018)	30,000		30,000
	Peterson-Super-Ely	Gwern y Gae Uchaf Farm	11,500		11,500
	Peterson-Super-Ely	Backway Farm	16,000		16,000
	Total Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural		57,500	0	57,500
Vale of Glamorgan – Wayleaves:					
	St Brides Super Ely	0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	160		160
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	16		16
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	350		350
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	335		335
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	16		16
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	1		1
		0018 & 7200 electricity wayleave	5		5
	Total Vale of Glamorgan Wayleaves		883	0	883
	TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		108,834	(13,600)	95,234

Appendix A

NEATH PORT TALBOT WELSH CHURCH ACTS TRUST FUND

GRANTS PAID 2013/14

Year of Approval		Payments 2013/14
		£
2011-12	St Annes Church,	2,000
2007-08	Godre'G Rhos Chapel	4,000
TOTALS		6,000

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

27TH NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION B - MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2014/15

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 continue to be at an all time low of 0.5% (since 5th March 2009) and detailed below are the changes in the bank base rate since April 2008.

Effective Date	Bank Rate
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 9.15am on 12th November 2014:

	Equal Instalments of Principal		Annuity		Maturity	
	Previous 2 October 2014	Current 12 November 2014	Previous 2 October 2014	Current 12 November 2014	Previous 2 October 2014	Current 12 November 2014
	%	%	%	%	%	%

5-5.5 years	2.19	2.06	2.20	2.07	2.80	2.64
10-10.5 years	2.80	2.64	2.83	2.67	3.43	3.29
20-20.5 years	3.43	3.29	3.50	3.36	3.93	3.83
35-35.5 years	3.85	3.74	3.94	3.84	4.02	3.93
49.5-50 years	4.01	3.91	4.03	3.94	4.00	3.91

3. General Fund Treasury Management Budget

- 3.1 The following table sets out the treasury management budget for 2014/15 and consists of a gross budget for debt charges i.e. repayment of debt principal and interest, and interest returns on investment income.

2013/14 Actual £'000		2014/15 Original Budget £'000
15,017	Principal and Interest charges	16,890
2,176	Contribution to Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve to fund SSIP and other Capital Programme over the next 3 years.	
17,193	Subtotal Expenditure	16,890
	Investment Income	
(778)	- Total	(654)
189	- less allocated to other funds	200
(589)	Subtotal Income	(454)
16,604	Net General Fund	16,436

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

4. Investment Income

- 4.1 In line with the Council's Investment Strategy, the 2014/15 Original Budget for investment income is £654k; treasury management investment income generated on investments made to date is £564k
- 4.2 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, RBS and Nationwide BS.
- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 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:

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

Icelandic Bank Update

- 4.5 Members should note the following position in relation to the recovery of monies from investments in Icelandic related banks.
- 4.6 There have been no further dividends received since the last report. The tables below show the amounts outstanding.

Table 1 – Original Investments

Bank	Original Investment	Amount of Principal Repaid	Current Outstanding Investment
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Heritable	9,000	8,597	403
KSF	3,000	2,516	484
Total	14,000	13,113	887

Table 2 – Investments Held in Escrow Accounts – Icelandic Kroner

Bank	Investment (Sterling Equivalent) £'000	Amount Repaid £'000	Outstanding Investment £'000
New Glitnir	387	0	387

- 4.7 Some of the investments matured by the old Glitnir Bank have resulted in cash being held in the form of Icelandic Kroner. In line with Icelandic law, the Kroner is not tradable and can only be spent within Iceland. The Local Government Association is pursuing ways of transferring these investments to realise repayments into Sterling. These new investments with the new bank are held in an Escrow

Account in the name of the local authority and generating interest in excess of 4%.

- 4.8 Members should note that the creditors of the old Glitnir Bank have challenged the original basis of settling the preferential creditors debts. Discussions are ongoing within the Icelandic Legal process in relation to this which may impact on some of the £387k referred to in the table above.

List of Background Papers

Treasury Management Files
PWLB Notice Number 440/14

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact:

Mr David Rees – Head of Financial Services

Tel. No. 01639 763634

E-mail: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Mr Huw Jones – Chief Accountant - Capital, Treasury, FIS and Projects

Tel. No: 01639 763575

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Mr Chris Rees – Senior Accountant

Tel. No: 01639 763590

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Policy and Resources Cabinet Board

27 November 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MRS K JONES

SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Quarterly Performance Management Data 2014-2015 – Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2014– 30th September 2014)

Purpose of Report:

To report quarter 2 performance management data for the period 1st April 2014 to 30th September 2014 for Chief Executive's and Finance & Corporate Services Directorates and, the performance management data for the same period for services that are within the remit of the other four main Scrutiny Committees (CYPE, SCHH, E&H and ECR). This will enable the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board and Scrutiny Members to discharge their functions in relation to performance management.

Background

The role of scrutiny committees was amended at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2010 to reflect the changes introduced by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009:

1. Scrutinise the service improvement set out in the Corporate Plan which fall within the committee's purview;
2. Scrutinise the performance of all services within its purview and the extent to which services are continuously improving;
3. Ensure performance measures are in place for each service and that the measures reflect what matters to local citizens;
4. Commission and participate in systems reviews through appropriate mechanisms and report onwards to the Executive

5. Monitor implementation by the Executive of responses to the conclusions and recommendations of the Council's external regulators; and
6. Promote innovation by challenging the status quo and encourage different ways of thinking and options for service delivery.

Appendices

Quarterly Performance Management Data 2014-2015 – Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2014– 30th September 2014) – APPENDIX 1 (PRB-271114-REP-CE-KJ)

List of Background Papers:

The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan - 2014/2017 “Rising to the Challenge”;

Policy & Resources Committee report date 30th July 2010 – Securing continuous improvement and scrutiny work programme.

Officer Contact:

Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services. Telephone: 01639 763284. E-Mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

Nita Sparkes, Corporate Strategy & Performance Manager. Telephone: 01639 766172. E-Mail: n.sparkes@npt.gov.uk

Shaun Davies, Performance Management Officer. Telephone: 01639 763172. E-Mail: a.s.davies@npt.gov.uk



Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

**Quarterly Performance Management Data 2014-2015 – Quarter 2
Performance (1st April 2014– 30th September 2014)**

Report Contents:

Section 1: Key points and summary of performance.

Section 2: Summary of Quarterly Performance data by Committee/Service Area.

Section 3: Quarterly Performance Management Data and performance key

Section 1: Key points and summary of performance.

Key Points

In relation to the performance results available at the end of the 2nd quarter 2014-2015:-

Overall, in this period we improved or achieved maximum performance in 63% (76) of our 120 comparable indicators, this compares to 73% for the same period last year. Whilst more indicators have comparable data for this period compared to the previous year, there are more indicators that have declined by 5% or more.

Adults Services, Public Protection and Waste services had more measures improving in the period compared to last year. More of the Education, Economic Development, Private Sector Renewal and some Chief Executives and Finance and Corporate Services indicators saw a drop in performance by 5% or more. The increase in comparable measures were in the main made up from children's services and planning measures, who both saw an increase in the number of indicators improving in the period, but also some of these measures falling in performance by 5% or more. Section 2 of this report provides a summary data breakdown of the table below by service area and by scrutiny committee.

	Comparable Indicators in this period	Improved or Maximum* Performance	Maintained Performance	Marginally declined - within 5%	Performance declined by 5% or more
Quarter 2 2014-2015	120	63% (76)	3% (3)	13% (16%)	21% (25)
Quarter 2 2013-2014	103	71% (73)	3% (3)	12.5% (13)	13.5% (14)

* - Achieving either 100% or 0% (where lower performance figure is better) performance, where there is no scope for improvement for the relevant performance indicator.

In relation to areas highlighted within the Corporate Improvement Plan as corporate improvement priorities:-

- Sickness across the Council has fallen slightly during this period from an average of 4.20 FTE days for the first six months of 2013-14 to 4.18 days this year, which is a reduction of 0.5%. The Council is not on track to meet the target to reduce sickness by 5% for the year.

Over the past few years we have concentrated on a strategy to reduce short term absences. This has led to a steady decrease in the number of working days lost due to sickness – going down from 11.3 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee in 2009/10 to 9.19 days in 2013/14.

The current focus is on the management of long term sickness absence. We know that there are sometimes delays in getting to access the right support and services to help people return to work when they are ready to do so.

A task force has been set up to identify opportunities to improve the management of long term sickness going forward. In addition, as requested by the Policy and Resources scrutiny committee sickness absence will now be a regular item on scrutiny committees' agendas.

In the New Year, the Corporate Health Group will initiate a wellbeing campaign. This will include making information about local services more available to employees e.g. support for carers; money management support; coping with stress. The Corporate Health Group is also hoping to access Wales Union Learning Funding to provide short courses for employees on a range of topics that will benefit health and wellbeing.

- Schools in NPT have secured an improvement in pupil attendance in both sectors, in particular in the primary sector with a 1.6% rise. Key Stage 4 results have maintained in line with 2012/13 performance with NPT continuing to compare favourably across Wales. Key Stage 2 results are steadily improving with Key Stage 3 maintaining their performance compared to 2012/13. There has been a rise in fixed and permanent exclusion in both the Primary and Secondary sectors which NPT are actively working on to decrease.
- During 2012-2013, Children & Young People Services agreed monthly improvement targets for eight priority measures with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW). These targets have been further increased in 2014-2015 and are reflected in the table below. During quarters 1 & 2 of 2014-2015, the service has achieved the revised target for each of the eight measures.

Children & Young People Services		
8 Priority Measures for 2013-2014	Target for 2014-2015	Quarter 2 performance 2014-2015
The percentage of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place.	91%	100%
The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.	91%	92.7%
The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months.	28%	13.9%
The percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year.	91%	95.2%
The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days	71%	91.2%
The percentage of required core assessments completed within 35 working days.	71%	82.4%
The percentage of child protection visits undertaken within 6 weeks.	91%	100%
The percentage of qualified and unqualified workers that receive supervision within 28 calendar days.	86%	86.3%

- 10 of the 11 adult services performance indicators have improved or achieved maximum performance during the period which includes fewer delayed transfers of care, more people being supported in the community and 100% of carers of adult service users were offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right during the year
- All six waste performance indicators have improved in this period. The Council is progressing with the implementation of its waste strategy that seeks to ensure that the Council meets its statutory recycling target. Performance to date (Quarter 2 performance of 60.78%) indicates that the Council is on course to achieve the Welsh Government statutory recycling target of 58% by March 2016.
- Two of the three Economic Development indicators have seen a drop in outputs compared to the quarter 2 period last year. It is anticipated that the service will meet its year end forecast output for these measures. More detail is found under indicators 133 & 134.
- Customer waiting times (face to face contact at Neath and Port Talbot One Stop Shops) continues to improve with fewer customer walk offs. Customer Services' other two key performance measures, average time to answer telephone calls and percentage of telephone calls abandoned after 5 seconds has seen a drop in performance. A comprehensive analysis of contact centre performance is scheduled on the agenda for this meeting as a separate agenda item.
- The average number of days for the completion of a Disabled Facilities Grant has increased significantly during this reporting period from 230 days to 270 days due to a greater number of more complex grants being completed. The Service has also introduced a new Rapid Adaptations Grant where small/minor works are directed to Care & Repair; which has had an effect on average times for this performance indicator. More detail is provided under indicator 106.

Other areas that are drawn to committee's attention include:

- 5 out of 6 youth justice indicators improved or achieved maximum performance when compared to the same period last year and one maintained performance. However, with relatively low numbers during the second quarter period, small differences can have a significant effect on performance
- Homelessness performance, which is still good in comparable terms, has broadly been maintained (3 indicators improving or achieving maximum

performance and 3 declining in performance). This is against a backdrop of increased presentations, increased statutory homeless cases and increased complexity of decision making. Effective early intervention and prevention work is having a positive effect on performance.

- 7 of ten Public Protection performance indicators have improved in the period. More food establishments are 'broadly' compliant with food hygiene standards and all high risk trading standards inspections, animal health business inspections and health and safety inspections will be completed by year end. Fewer high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection for food hygiene were inspected in the period, however inspections of high risk food premises remain a key priority for the service and a new system of verification visits which is commencing in quarter 3 will bring the inspection plan back on target
- 5 of the 8 comparable planning performance indicators in the period have improved. Explanations for the drop in performance of the 3 performance indicators are found under indicators 126 - 128. Overall, efforts will continue to ensure that Officers and applicants 'front-load' negotiations as part of our continuing commitment to delivering 'Quality Development Quickly', and thus reducing delays later in the process.
- The figures for the Library Service cannot be compared like for like to the previous year's performance, as NPTCBC transferred overall responsibility for five of the libraries to various community groups on 1st April 2014 and a further four on 1st May 2014. Furthermore opening hours for these four were considerably less (below 50%) in April. However, if we compare the libraries that NPT have full responsibility over, there is a fall of 5.93% in materials issues but a rise of 1.37% in library visits for this period.
- Street scene, Asset Management and Highways (condition of roads) indicators are reported annually.

Section 2 - Summary of Quarterly Performance by Committee/Service Area - (quarter 2, 2013-2014 position in brackets)

Service Area	Scrutiny Committee	Improved or Maximum Performance	Maintained Performance	Marginally declined - within 5%	Performance declined by 5% or more	No Comparable data	Number of Performance Indicators
1. Chief Executive and Finance & Corporate Services	P&R	6 (8)	0 (0)	1 (1)	5 (2)	1 (2)	13
P&R Total		6 (8)	0 (0)	1 (1)	5 (2)	1 (2)	13
2. Education	CYPE	8 (14)	1 (2)	4 (2)	5 (0)	4 (4)	22
3. Social Care – Youth Justice	CYPE	5 (4)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	6
4. Social Care – Children’s Services	CYPE	20 (16)	0 (0)	7 (0)	3 (0)	15 (29)	45
CYPE Total		33 (34)	2 (2)	11 (2)	8 (2)	19 (33)	73
5. Social Care – Adults Services	SCHH	10 (7)	0 (0)	0 (3)	1 (1)	0 (0)	11
6. Housing – Homelessness and Housing Advice	SCHH	3 (3)	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	6
7. Housing – Private Sector Renewal	SCHH	2 (3)	0 (0)	0 (1)	3 (1)	2 (3)	7
8. Planning & Regulatory Services – Public Protection	SCHH	7 (5)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (0)	10
SCHH Total		22 (18)	1 (1)	1 (4)	7 (8)	3 (3)	34
9. Planning & Regulatory Services – Planning	ECR	5 (0)	0 (0)	0 (4)	3 (0)	1 (5)	9

Service Area	Scrutiny Committee	Improved or Maximum Performance	Maintained Performance	Marginally declined - within 5%	Performance declined by 5% or more	No Comparable data	Number of Performance Indicators
10. Planning & Regulatory Services – Building Control	ECR	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2
11. Economic Development	ECR	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)	0 (0)	3
12. Asset Management	ECR	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (7)	7
13. Leisure & Libraries	ECR	0 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	5 (3)	6
ECR TOTAL		7 (6)	0 (0)	2 (6)	5 (0)	13 (15)	27
14. Environment & Transport – Waste Management	E&H	6 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	6
15. Environment & Transport – Transport and Highways	E&H	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	4 (4)	6
16. Environment & Transport – Countryside Management	E&H	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	1
17. Environment & Transport – Street Scene	E&H	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3)	3
E&H Total		8 (7)	0(0)	1 (0)	0 (2)	7 (7)	16
Total Number of Performance Indicators		76 (73)	3 (3)	16 (13)	25 (14)	43 (60)	163
Overall performance Percentage (of comparable measures)		63% (73%)	3% (3%)	13% (12.5%)	21% (13.5%)		

NB - Quarter 2, 2013-2014 position in brackets.

Section 3: Quarterly Performance Management Data and Performance key

2014-2015 – Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2014 – 30th September 2014)

Note: The following references are included in the table. Explanations for these are as follows:







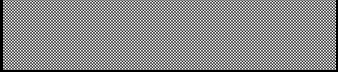
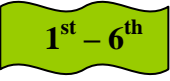

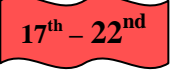
(NSI) National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) - are used to measure the performance of local authorities at a national level and focus on key strategic priorities. Local authorities are under a legal duty to collect & report on these measures.

(PAM) Public Accountability Measures - consist of a small set of “outcome focussed” indicators, selected initially from within the existing Performance Measurement Framework. They will reflect those aspects of local authority work which local authorities agree are considered to be important in terms of public accountability. For example, recycling, educational attainment, sustainable development, etc. This information is required and reported nationally, validated, and published annually.

(SID) Service Improvement Data - can be used by local authority services and their regulators as they plan, deliver and improve services. The make-up of this data set will be defined by local authorities according to need and value, collated centrally and shared within the local government community to support service improvement. The Data Unit will maintain centrally defined data definitions and associated guidance.

All Wales The data shown in this column is the figure calculated using the base data supplied by all authorities for 2013/2014 i.e. an overall performance indicator value for Wales.

(L) Local Performance Indicator set by the Council.

	Performance Key
	Maximum Performance
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been maintained
	Performance is within 5% of previous years performance
	Performance has declined by 5% or more on previous years performance - Where performance has declined by 5% or more for the period in comparison to the previous year, an explanation is provided directly below the relevant performance indicator.
	No comparable data (data not suitable for comparison / no data available for comparison)
	No All Wales data available for comparison.
	2013/14 NPT performance in upper quartile (top six of 22 local authorities) in comparison with All Wales national published measures (NSI & PAM's). 18 of 43 comparable measures in upper quartile.
	2013/14 NPT performance in mid quartiles (7 th – 16 th) in comparison with All Wales national published measures (NSI & PAM's). 15 of 43 comparable measures in mid quartiles.
	2013/14 NPT performance in lower quartile (17 th – 22 nd) in comparison with All Wales national published measures (NSI & PAM's). 10 of 43 comparable measures in lower quartile.

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
1. Chief Executive's and Finance & Corporate Services								
1	Benefits M001 (Local)	Percentage of new claims correctly assessed.	100%	100%		100%	100%	😊
2	Benefits M002 (Local)	Average days taken for new claims and changes of circumstances from application to assessment.	N/a New	9.6		11.5	9.4	↑
3	CS001 (Local)	Customer Services - Average customer waiting times (face to face contact)	13 minutes	8 minutes		8.2 minutes	6.4 minutes	↑
Page 64	CS004 (Local)	Customer Services - Percentage of customers leaving before being seen (walk offs)	1%	0.13%		0.15% 69 of 46,058	0.08% 32 of 41,161	↑
	CFH/007 (SID)	The percentage of council tax due for the financial year which was received by the authority.	97.1%	97.3%	Data not yet available	57.2%	57.4%	↑
6	#CHR/002 (PAM)	The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence.	9.65	9.19	Data not yet available	4.20	4.18	↑
7	CFH/006 (SID)	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid within 30 days.	92.4%	91.6%	Data not yet available	92.4%	90.1%	▼
8	7.7(L) (Local)	Percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days.	99.4%	97.9%		99.1%	89.3%	↓
	The searches that have been over 10 days are due to the complex nature of searches against areas of Land; an increase in volume of searches and also delays in getting responses to the enquiries from other internal departments.							

The sickness PI, CHR002 is a Public Accountability Measure (PAM) with effect from 1st April 2014.

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
1. Chief Executive's and Finance & Corporate Services								
9	CHR/001 (SID)	The percentage of employees (including teachers and school based staff) who leave the employment of the local authority, whether on a voluntary or involuntary basis.	7.88%	9.63%	Data not yet available	4.32%	5.38%	↓
	The most significant increase in figures is linked to the downsizing of the organisation where employees have left under the Voluntary Redundancy scheme and demonstrates the actions the Council has been taking to reduce budgets.							
10	CS002 (Local)	Customer Services - Average time to answer telephone calls	28 seconds	30 seconds		34 seconds	45 seconds	↓
	A comprehensive analysis of contact centre performance is scheduled on the agenda for this meeting as a separate agenda item.							
11	CS003 (Local)	Customer Services - Percentage of telephone calls abandoned after 5 seconds	10.5%	12.87%		13.4%	19.1%	↓
	A comprehensive analysis of contact centre performance is scheduled on the agenda for this meeting as a separate agenda item.							
12	CFH/008 (SID)	The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the local authority.	97.3%	98.1%	Data not yet available	63.6%	58.4%	↓
	The collectable debt (the amount of non domestic rates we need to collect) increased in June 2014 as one company in our borough had an increase in their rateable value which led to a £2.2m increase in rates payable from the 1st April 2014. As we were not in a position to collect this increase from April (only advised of increase in June), our collection rate will be lower during this period until this debt is paid in full by the end of January 2015. In addition, a large company in the borough missed a payment of £260k which has had an adverse effect on the collection rate. The company has been advised of the overdue rates and the consequences of late payments.							
13	L(P) 13 (L) (Local)	Annual Savings (£)	£1,462,117	£797,516		Reported Annually	—	

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
2. Education								
14	EDU/015b (NSI) Joint 1st	The percentage of final statements of special education need issued within 26 weeks excluding exceptions.	100%	100%	96.6%	100%	100%*	😊
15	EDU/003 (NSI/PAM) 20th	The percentage of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment.	80.6%	82.0%	84.6%	82.0%	84.1%#	↑
Page 66	EDU/011 (NSI/PAM) 6th	The average wider point score for pupils aged 15 as at the preceding 31 August, in schools maintained by the local authority.	486	537	505	537	539 # (P)	↑
17	EDU/016a (PAM) 22nd	Percentage of pupil attendance in Primary Schools.	93.1%	93.0%	93.7%	93.0%	94.6%# (P)	↑
18	EDU/016b (PAM) 12th	The percentage of pupil attendance in Secondary Schools.	92.3%	92.6%	92.6%	92.6%	93.5%#	↑
19	EDU/017 (NSI/PAM) 7th	The percentage of pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31 August in schools maintained by the local authority who achieved the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics.	54.1%	56%	52.5%	56.0%	55.8%# (P)	↑

* Nine months data – 1st January to 30th September.


Annual data for 2013-2014 Academic year

(P) – Provisional data

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
2. Education								
20	L(SEN) 1a (Local)	Number of children with new statements of special educational needs.	112	103		80*	55*	↑
21	L(Yth)2+ (Local)	The percentage of 11 - 19 year olds in contact with the youth service.	27.48%	33.07%		13.2%	15.0%	↑
22	EDU/004 (PAM) 19 th	The percentage of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment.	68.8%	73.1%	77.2%	73.1%	73.1#	↔
Page 67	EDU/006ii (NSI) 14 th	The percentage of pupils assessed, in schools maintained by the local authority, receiving a Teacher Assessment in Welsh (first language) at the end of: Key Stage 3.	10.3%	10.3%	17.0%	10.3%	10.1#	v
24	L(FP) 1+ (Local)	Number of full day childcare places provided.	1,707	1,800		1,762	1,734	v
25	L(SEN) 1b (Local)	Total number of children with statements of special educational needs.	774	788		759*	768*	v
26	EDU/010b (SID)	The percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the academic year, in Secondary Schools.	0.111% 1,658 days	0.107% 1,568 days	0.095%	0.107% 1,568 days	0.112%# 1,598 days	v



* Nine months data – 1st January to 30th September.

Annual data for 2013-2014 Academic year

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
2. Education – Continued								
27	EDU/006i (SID)	The percentage of pupils assessed, in schools maintained by the local authority, receiving a Teacher Assessment in Welsh (first language) at the end of: Key Stage 2	16.5%	16.4%	20.0%	16.4%	15.4%#	↓
The decrease is due to the annual variation in take up of Welsh language education. It is expected that the percentage of pupils receiving a Teacher Assessment in Welsh first language will remain fairly consistent over the next 2 to 3 years.								
28	EDU/008a (SID)	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year per 1,000 pupils from Primary Schools.	0.1	0.1	Data not yet available	0.1	0.2#	↓
			1 pupil	1 pupil		1 pupil	2 pupils	
Page 68	EDU/008b (SID)	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year per 1,000 pupils from Secondary Schools.	1.26	1.0		1.0	1.3#	↓
			10 pupils	8 pupils		8 pupils	10 pupils	
Comment for EDU010 a & b : Inclusion Review in place with behaviour / exclusions identified as a priority area. Exclusions shared with Challenge Advisors as they occur. Chronology that led to the exclusions is being audited in a sample of schools.								
30	EDU/010a (SID)	The percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the academic year, in Primary Schools.	0.012%	0.011%	0.013%	0.011%	0.015%#	↓
			191 days	174 days		174 days	258 days	
Inclusion Review in place with behaviour / exclusions identified as a priority area. Exclusions shared with Challenge Advisors as they occur. Chronology that led to the exclusions is being audited in a sample of schools.								
31	EDU/015a (NSI) 	The percentage of final statements of special education need issued within 26 weeks including exceptions	27.7%	32.0%	69.6%	28.8%	21.82 %*	↓
The increase in time taken to issue statements can be attributed to the increasing complexity of the individual cases coming through the Statutory Assessment process.								

Annual data for 2013-2014 Academic year

* 9 months data January to September

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
2. Education – Continued								
32	EDU/002i (NSI/PAM) 	The percentage of all pupils (including those in local authority care), in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at the preceding August, who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without and approved external qualification.	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	Data available Quarter 3		—
33	EDU/002ii (NSI) 	The percentage of pupils in local authority care, in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at the preceding August, who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without and approved external qualification.	0%	0%	2.0%	Data available Quarter 3		—
34	EDU/009b (SID)	The average number of school days that permanently excluded pupils did not receive an offer of part time appropriate education provision during the academic year.	16.1	38.5	11.9	Data available Quarter 3		—
35	EDU/009a (SID)	The average number of school days that permanently excluded pupils did not receive an offer of full time appropriate education provision during the academic year.	50.4	82.2	24.9	Data available Quarter 3		—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
3. Social Care - Youth Justice								
36	SCY/003b (SID)	The percentage of those children and young people with an identified need for treatment or other intervention, who receive that within ten working days of the assessment.	100%	100%	96.6%	100%	100%	😊
37	SCY/001a (SID)	The percentage change in the average number of hours of suitable Education, Training or Employment (ETE) children and young people receive while within the youth justice system by Children and young people of statutory school age.	0%	25.8%	1.2%	39.3%	55%	↑
38	SCY/001b (SID)	The percentage change in the average number of hours of suitable Education, Training or Employment (ETE) children and young people receive while within the youth justice system by: Young people above statutory school age.	-9.7%	38.2%	16.1%	-27.4%	69%	↑
39	SCY/002a (SID)	The percentage change in the proportion of children and young people in the youth justice system with suitable accommodation at the end of their court order compared with before the start of their court order.	4.1%	-3.7%	-1.7%	-14.3%	5.0%	↑
40	SCY/003a (SID)	The percentage of children and young people in the youth justice system identified via screening as requiring a substance misuse assessment that commence the assessment within five working days of referral.	92.7%	98.5%	90.4%	96%	100%	↑
41	SCY/002b (SID)	The percentage change in the proportion of children and young people in the youth justice system with suitable accommodation upon their release from custody compared with before the start of their custodial sentence.	-20%	0%	5.3%	0%	0%	↔



No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services								
42	*SCC/001a (SID from 2014-15) Joint 1st	Priority Measure: The percentage of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place.	58.4%	100%	90.9%	100%	100%	😊
43	SCC/013ai (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who have an allocated social worker - Children on the child protection register.	99.8%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%	😊
44	SCC/013bi (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who are allocated to someone other than a social worker where the child is receiving a service in accordance with his/her assessment or plan - Children on the child protection register.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	😊
45	*SCC/030a (SID from 2014-15) Joint 1st	The percentage of young carers known to Social Services who were assessed.	100%	100%	85.9%	100%	100%	😊
46	SCC/001b (SID)	For those children looked after whose second review (due at 4 months) was due in the year, the percentage with a plan for permanence at the due date.	69.5%	89.8%	93.4%	93.3%	100%	😊
47	Local	Priority Measure: The percentage of child protection visits undertaken within 6 weeks. .	N/a New	99.6%		99.6%	100%	😊
48	SCC/006 (SID)	The percentage of referrals during the year on which a decision was made within 1 working day.	93.1%	97.2%	96.3%	96.1%	98.2%	↑

- No longer a Public Accountability Measure (with effect from 2014-15)


No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
49	SCC/007b (SID)	The percentage of referrals during the year that were allocated to someone other than a social worker for initial assessment.	6.3%	4.4%	7.9%	3.3%	2.7%	↑
50	SCC/010 (SID)	Priority Measure: The percentage of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months.	35.9%	22.1%	22.2%	26.4%	13.9%	↑
51	SCC/011b (NSI) 16 th	The percentage of initial assessments that were completed during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen alone by the Social Worker.	43.1%	38.7%	42.9%	40.8%	41.3%	↑
52	SCC/013aiii (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who have an allocated social worker – Children in need.	66.3%	68.0%	76.4%	70.2%	72.3%	↑
53	SCC/013biii (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who are allocated to someone other than a social worker where the child is receiving a service in accordance with his/her assessment or plan – Children in need.	29.4%	31.8%	19.6%	28%	26.4%	↑
54	SCC/021 (SID)	Priority Measure: The percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year.	69.2%	95.0%	95.9%	92.6%	95.2%	↑
55	SCC/025 (PAM) 14 th	Priority Measure: The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.	68.3%	86.9%	85.3%	79.5%	92.7%	↑
56	SCC/030b (SID)	The percentage of young carers known to Social Services who were provided with a service.	84.2%	64.7%	80.1%	53.8%	66.7%	↑

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
57	SCC/041a (NSI) 21st	The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have pathway plans as required.	20.0%	69.8%	89.2%	41.2%	78.9%	↑
58	SCC/042a (SID)	Priority Measure: The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days.	38.1%	80.6%	71.9%	71.9%	91.2%	↑
59	SCC/042b (SID)	The average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days to complete.	30	18	19	19.3	14.9	↑
60	SCC/043a (SID)	Priority Measure: The percentage of required core assessments completed within 35 working days.	48.7%	70.2%	81.2%	72.8%	82.4%	↑
61	SCC/43b (SID)	The average time taken to complete those required core assessments that took longer than 35 days.	68	56	58	47.5	44.7	↑
62	Local	Priority Measure: The percentage of qualified and unqualified workers that receive supervision within 28 calendar days.	N/a New	92.5%		88.5%	86.3%	▼
63	SCC/007a (SID)	The percentage of referrals during the year that were allocated to a social worker for initial assessment.	48.5%	94.1%	75.5%	95.1%	94.4%	▼
64	SCC/013aiii (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who have an allocated social worker - Children looked after.	95.2%	99.1%	95.2%	99.2%	98.8%	▼




No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
65	SCC/014 (SID)	The percentage of initial child protection conferences due in the year which were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion.	67.8%	93.5%	89.9%	97.7%	93.8%	v
66	SCC/015 (SID)	The percentage of initial core group meetings due in the year which were held within 10 working days of the initial child protection conference.	82.3%	91.4%	90.0%	91.3%	89.3%	v
67	SCC/034 (SID)	The percentage of child protection reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year.	87.2%	97.5%	98.1%	98.7%	98.3%	v
68	SCC/041b (SID)	The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have been allocated a personal advisor.	96.0%	100%	92.7%	100%	97.7%	v
	SCC/011a (PAM) 20 th	The percentage of initial assessments that were completed during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen by the Social Worker.	79.2%	68.3%	78.9%	80.0%	66.6%	↓
69	<p>In 2012-2013 the service was not following appropriate child care procedures. In 2013-2014, the service introduced training on procedures for all social workers which included the need to do a “desk top” initial assessment prior to a child protection investigation; these circumstances would not expect a child to be seen/seen alone as part of the initial assessment. As this is a recent change in practice it would have not been in place when last year’s performance was reported.</p> <p>In terms of performance, if the “desk top” assessments were excluded from the calculation of this Performance Indicator, then our performance would show an overall improvement when compared to the same period last year. A true quarter on quarter comparison will not be possible until the 4th quarter 2014-15 period.</p>							
70	SCC/013bii (SID)	The percentage of open cases of children who are allocated to someone other than a social worker where the child is receiving a service in accordance with his/her assessment or plan - Children looked after.	0.6%	0.9%	4.5%	0.8%	1.2%	↓
	The six children in question are having respite in residential accommodation only therefore they do not require a social worker.							

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
71	SCC/024 (SID)	The percentage of children looked after during the year with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school in the year ending 31 March.	63.6%	85.7%	62.7%	87.0%	74.1%	↓
Arrangements for improving care planning led to IT changes that impacted on the way that Personal Education Plans were being recorded. This has been resolved and the system amended.								
72	SCC/002 (NSI) 	The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more change of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March.	15.8%	15.7%	13.8%	Reported Annually		—
73	SCC/004 (NSI/PAM) 	The percentage of children looked after on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year.	8.7%	6.4%	8.3%	Reported Annually		—
74	SCC/007c (SID)	The percentage of referrals during the year that did not proceed to allocation for initial assessment.	45.2%	1.5%	16.7%	1.6%	1.9%	—
75	SCC/022a (SID)	The percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in primary schools.	90.1%	93.1%	95.1%	Reported Annually		—
76	SCC/022b (SID)	The percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in secondary schools.	83.8%	89.7%	91.6%	Reported Annually		—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
77	SCC/033d (NSI) 12 th	The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at the age of 19.	72.2%	95.7%	93.4%	Reported Annually		—
78	SCC/033e (NSI) Joint 1 st	The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be in suitable, non-emergency accommodation at the age of 19.	92.3%	100%	85.9%	Reported Annually		—
79	SCC/033f (NSI) 8 th	The percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19.	46.2%	63.6%	54.8%	Reported Annually		—
80	SCC/035 (SID)	The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment.	52.9%	42.1%	51.6%	Reported Annually		—
81	SCC/036 (SID)	The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment.	33.3%	55.6%	37.2%	Reported Annually		—
82	SCC/037 (NSI) 4 th	The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children, in any local authority maintained learning setting.	162	335	262	Reported Annually		—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
4. Social Care – Children’s Services – Continued								
83	SCC/40 (SID)	The percentage of placements started during the year where the child is registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of the placement.	N/a	93.0%	88.3%	No data reported	95.9%	—
84	SCC/044a (SID)	The percentage of children looked after who were permanently excluded from school during the previous academic year	0%	0%	0.1%	Reported Annually		—
85	SCC/044b (SID)	The average number of days spent out of school on fixed term exclusions for children looked after who were excluded during the previous academic year.	3.8	4.0	6.8	Reported Annually		—
86	SCC/045 (PAM) 	The percentage of reviews of looked after children, children on the child protection register and children in need carried out in line with the statutory timetable.	No data reported	82.2%	89.6%	No data reported	89.3%	—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
5. Social Care - Adults Services								
87	SCA/018a (PAM) Joint 1 st	The percentage of carers of adult service users who were offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right during the year.	100%	100%	85.8%	100%	100%	😊
88	SCA/019 (NSI/PAM) Joint 1 st	The percentage of adult protection referrals completed where the risk has been managed.	100%	100%	94.45%	100%	100%	😊
Page 78	SCA/001 (NSI) 11 th	The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over.	5.97	3.49	4.70	2.35	1.93	↑
	SCA/002a (NSI) 5 th	The rate of older people (aged 65 or over): Supported in the community per 1,000 population aged 65 or over at 31 March.	99.98	107.8	74.48	100.68	102.41	↑
	SCA/003a (SID)	The percentage of clients who are supported in the community during the year, in the age groups: Aged 18-64.	91.17%	92.45%	93.84%	91.67%	93.52%	↑
	SCA/003b (SID)	The percentage of clients who are supported in the community during the year, in the age groups: Aged 65+	79.4%	81.98%	83.71%	81.42%	82.92%	↑

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
5. Social Care – Adult Services – Continued								
93	SCA/007 (NSI) 	The percentage of clients with a care plan at 31st March whose care plans should have been reviewed that were reviewed during the year.	76.1%	81.7%	81.1%	74.3%	78.43%	↑
94	SCA/018c (SID)	The percentage of carers of adult service users who were assessed during the year who were provided with a service.	44.6%	66.7%	63.8%	43.2%	96.7%	↑
95 Page 79	SCA/020 (PAM) 	The percentage of adult clients who are supported in the community during the year.	82.6%	85%	86.33%	85.86%	86.22%	↑
	SCA/002b (NSI) 	The rate of older people (aged 65 or over): Whom the authority supports in care homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over at 31 March.	23.36	23.86	19.84	23.42	23.34	↑
	SCA/018b (SID)	The percentage of carers of adult service users who had an assessment in their own right during the year.	23.9%	20.0%	39.4%	18.2%	15.7%	↓
97	Of the 191 carers who were offered an assessment or review during the 1st April 2014 to 30th Sep 2014 30 had an actual assessment or review. This compares with 203 carers who were offered an assessment or review during the same period last year where 37 had an actual assessment or review. It is worth noting that only a small number of carers actually accept the offer of an assessment. Work is also underway to make Carers Assessment training mandatory. This will strengthen the recording of outcomes resulting from the carer's assessment by including a new outcomes focused table as part of the carers assessment form.							

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
6. Housing – Homelessness and Housing Advice								
98	HHA/016 (SID)	The average number of days all homeless families with children spent in bed and breakfast accommodation.	0	0	22.91	0	0	😊
99	HHA/002 (SID)	The average number of working days between homeless presentation and discharge of duty for households found to be statutory homeless.	71	62	135	68.4	65.4	↑
100	HHA/017b SID	The average number of days that all homeless households spent in other forms of temporary accommodation.	111.97	106.49	159.19	105.6	99.35	↑
101	HHA/013 (NSI/PAM)	The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months.	97.1%	95.2%	66.4%	96.1%	92.8%	v
	* See Below							
102	HHA/008 (SID)	The percentage of homeless presentations decided within 33 working days.	96.6%	96.4%	87.5%	98.5%	93.17%	↓
	Of the 381 homeless presentations, 355 were decided within 33 days, compared to 322 out of 327 for the same period in 2013/14. It should be noted the number of statutory homeless cases has increased and the complexity of the decisions making, e.g. statutory homeless enquires obtaining 3rd party evidence, can be time-consuming. This measure still reflects the ongoing effective monitoring of statutory decisions and the effective early intervention and prevention work undertaken by the Housing Options Service. This has reduced the number of households being provided with temporary accommodation and the need for the Authority to accept a full statutory decision to the household.							
103	HHA/017a (SID)	The average number of days that all homeless households spent in bed and breakfast accommodation	16.02	16.61	35.57	9.9	18.97	↓
	34 homeless households spent time in B&B accommodation equating to a total of 645 days. This measure reflects the increase of statutory homeless households as reflected in HHA/002 and HHA/008 and the ongoing difficulty to provide interim accommodation for households who are not suitable for shared accommodation, and the ongoing difficulty to move households on from temporary accommodation.							

* - A Wales Audit Office report (published in 2013 identified a wide variation in how local authorities interpret guidance for indicator HHA/013 relating to homelessness prevention, resulting in a wide variation of performance reported. Due to these variations, the Welsh Government Statistical Release will advise in the publication of this data that the indicator should not be compared across local authority boundaries, however comparisons can be made over time within individual local authorities.

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
7. Housing - Private Sector Renewal								
104	PSR/004 (NSI) 3 rd	The percentage of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority.	5.28%	37.38%	9.23%	22.7%	30.3%	↑
105	PSR/007a (SID)	Of the Houses in Multiple Occupation known to the local authority, the percentage that: Have a full license.	1.7%	1.4%	Data not yet available	1.33%	1.4%	↑
	PSR/002 (NSI/PAM) 6 th	The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant.	244	204	239	230	270	↓
Page 61	<p>The average number of days for the completion of a DFG has increased significantly during this reporting period due to a greater number of more complex grants being completed, this has equated to 25 extensions in this reporting period compared to 20 in the same period in 2013/14. During this period there were a greater number of complex grants for children resulting in a higher number of extensions. Two children at the same property in particular had a DFG, each taking 1622 days to complete due to the complexity of their needs and the works involved. Excluding these two cases the average number of days taken to complete DFG's in this reporting period was 256 days.</p> <p>The average number of days for the completion of a DFG can be split into two areas. The average number of days from referral to OT authorised is 129 days, and the average number of days from OT authorisation to completion is 141 days.</p> <p>The Service has also introduced a new Rapid Adaptations Grant where small/minor works are directed to Care & Repair; this grant does not follow the mandatory DFG application process and therefore is excluded from this data set. The continued service improvements within the Housing Renewal & Adaptation Service have resulted in the service being responsive to referrals for a DFG once received by the section. The total number of DFG's completed during this reporting period has increased to 169, compared to 160 in the same reporting period in 2013/14.</p>							
	PSR/009a (SID)	The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for: Children and young people	386	310	Data not yet available	203	538	↓
107	<p>The average time for completing a DFG for children has increased during this reporting period with the overall time taken being substantially higher than the average time for adults due to each referral having more extensive and complex works completed. Two children at the same property in particular had a DFG, each taking 1622 days to complete due to the complexity of their needs and the works involved. During this reporting period there was an increase in the number of extensions being completed, 6 compared to the previous period whereby only 2 were completed. Excluding the 2 exceptional cases where the DFG's took 1622 days to complete the average number of days to complete DFG's in this reporting period for children is 371 days.</p>							

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
7. Housing - Private Sector Renewal coninued								
108	PSR/009b (SID)	The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for: Adults	233	197	Data not yet available	231	243	↓
	The average time taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant to adults has increased by 11 days during this reporting period due to a greater number of more complex grants being completed, this has equated to 19 extensions being completed in this reporting period compared to 18 in the same period in 2013/14.							
109	PSR/007b (SID)	Of the Houses in Multiple Occupation known to the local authority, the percentage that: Have been issued with a conditional license.	0%	0%	Data not yet available	0%	0%	—
110	PSR/007c (SID)	Of the Houses in Multiple Occupation known to the local authority, the percentage that: Are subject to enforcement activity.	0%	0.2%		0.2%	0%	—
8. Planning and Regulatory Services - Public Protection								
111	PPN/001iii (SID)	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Animal Health.	100%	100%	96%	33%	66%	↑
112	PPN/001iv (SID)	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Health and Safety	100%	100%	No data available	43%	57%	↑
113	PPN/007i (SID)	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for Trading Standards.	70.4%	78.7%	87.7%	49%	74%	↑
114	PPN/007ii (SID)	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for Animal Health.	90%	77.3%	92.6%	75%	80%	↑
115	PPN/008i (SID)	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year: Trading Standards	60%	56%	60%	31%	32%	↑

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
8. Planning and Regulatory Services - Public Protection								
116	PPN/008ii (SID)	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year: Food Hygiene	56%	79%	92%	51%	65%	↑
117	PPN/009 (PAM) 8 th	The percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly' compliant with food hygiene standards	83.02%	92.2%	90.3%	88.95%	93.6%	↑
118	PPN/001i (SID)	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Trading Standards.	100%	100%	99%	50%	50%	↔
Page 83	PPN/001ii (SID)	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for Food Hygiene.	99%	82%	97%	44%	32%	↓
	Out of a possible 376 high risk food businesses that were to be inspected during the year, 121 were carried out in this period, compared to 150 out of 343 for the same period in 2013/14. Food inspections of High Risk food premises remain a key priority for the service. A new system of verification visits is to commence in quarter 3, which has taken resource to develop but will bring the inspection plan back on target; additionally during quarter 2 the service has been engaged in an external audit by the Foods Standards Agency, which also took up resource but was a positive experience overall.							
120	PPN/008iii (SID)	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year: Animal Health.	44%	100%	61%	50%	*See note	—

Note: * There were no new businesses detected for Animal health in this period.

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
9. Planning and Regulatory Services – Planning								
121	PLA/002 (SID)	The percentage of applications for development determined during the year that were approved.	96.6%	95.5%	Data not yet available	95.8%	97.22%	↑
122	PLA/004d (SID)	The percentage of all other planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.	83.5%	73.9%		72.7%	83.5%	↑
123	PLA/M001 (Local)	Average time taken from receipt of application to validation of application -days	N/a New	30.1 days		30.2 days	28.1 days	↑
Page 845	PLA/M002 (Local)	Average time taken from receipt of application to date decision is issued - days	N/a New	87.6 days		81.7 days	77.6 days	↑
	PLAM/004 (Local)	The percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.	N/a New	23.1%		18.18%	26.67%	↑
126	PLA/004b (SID)	The percentage of minor planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.	75.5%	71.3%	Data not yet available	72.5%	68%	↓
	The percentage of minor planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks dropped from 72.5% to 68%, which remains a consequence of the complexity of the type of application determined and pressures on staff resources, but is balanced by the significant increase in performance for ‘all other’ planning application - PLA/004 d) – which increased from 72.7% to 83.5%.							



No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
9. Planning and Regulatory Services – Planning Con't								
127	PLA/004c (SID)	The percentage of householder planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.	98.0%	94%	Data not yet available	93.5%	88.8%	↓
	The percentage of householder planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks - remains high at close to 89% but falls short of the high standards set in recent years. The relatively poor quarter 1 performance has affected these cumulative figures, although the performance during quarter 2 (July-September), taken by itself, has improved from quarter 1 (up from 86.2% to 90.2%), demonstrating improvement in challenging times.							
128	PLA/M003 (Local)	Percentage of applications where the quality of the development has been improved (following negotiation by the case officer either at pre-application stage or during the course of the application).	N/a New	36%		35.4%	29.8%	↓
	The percentage of applications where the quality of the development has been improved - has dropped in comparison with the same quarter last year. Nevertheless, this figure is largely dependent on the nature of applications that are received during any quarter and, as a consequence, is subject to minor fluctuations throughout the year. This quarter resulted in 30% of applications requiring the intervention of Officers to improve proposals to make them more acceptable. This reduction in the overall number of applications requiring improvement can be attributed to the fact that the Department received a greater number of applications which were acceptable upon submission, and as such did not require negotiation							
129	PLA/006(b) (NSI) 5 th	The number of additional affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all additional housing units provided during the year.	27%	69%	37%	Reported Annually		—
10. Planning and Regulatory Services – Building Control								
130	BCT/004 (SID)	Percentage of Building Control 'full plan' applications checked within 15 working days during the year.	96.1%	98.1%	93.6%	98.3%	100%	😊
131	BCT/007 (SID)	The percentage of 'full plan' applications approved first time.	97%	99%	97%	99.1%	96.6%	∨



No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
11. Economic Development								
132	L(ED) 3 (Local)	Number of business enquiries resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies through Business Services.	651	682		382	388	↑
133	L(ED) 1 (Local)	Number of jobs created as a result of financial support by the Local Authority.	137	255		120.5	56.5	↓
	Performance output for this indicator has been affected by the fact that no loans have been offered to date. Changes in European Regulations meant that the loan fund had to be registered with the Financial Conduct Authority by 31st March 2014 (which has been met). We have now received confirmation that loan scheme can resume and this should impact on the figures reported by the end of the year. In addition, there are a number of approved applications that are still being processed and we anticipate that these outputs will reflect in the figure reported next quarter.							
Page 86	L(ED) 2 (Local)	Number of new business start-up enquiries assisted through Business Services	349	429		222	184	↓
	Business advisors now attend Job Centre Plus and this has resulted in referrals to the monthly Enterprise Club being significantly reduced. However, as enquiries from other sources are developed, it is anticipated that the target set for this indicator for 2014/15 will be achieved							

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
12. Corporate Health – Asset Management								
135	CAM/001ai (SID)	The percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition categories: A – Good	7.1%	7.2%	Data not yet available	Reported Annually		—
136	CAM/001aii (SID)	The percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition categories: B – Satisfactory	35.0%	41.2%				—
137	CAM/001aiii (SID)	The percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition categories: C – Poor	46.2%	42.2%				—
138	CAM/001aiv (SID)	The percentage of the gross internal area of the local authority's buildings in condition categories: D – Bad	11.7%	9.45%				—
139	CAM/001bi (SID)	The percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level: 1 – Urgent work	19.4%	15.2%				—
140	CAM/001bii (SID)	The percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level: 2 – Essential work	59.9%	60.6%				—
141	CAM/001biii (SID)	The percentage of the total value of required maintenance for the local authority's buildings assigned to works of priority level: 3 – Desirable work	20.7%	24.2%				—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
13. Leisure and Libraries								
142	LCS/002(b) (NSI) 22 nd	The number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres during the year, per 1,000 population where the visitor will be participating in physical activity.	5,839	5,696	8,954	2,839	2,719	v
143	LCL/001(b) (NSI) 4 th	The number of people using Public Libraries during the year, per 1,000 population.	6,831	6,839	5,851	3,457	2,897	—
144	LCL/004 (SID)	The number of library materials issued, during the year, per 1,000 population.	4,146	4,190	4,424	2,131	1,718	—
<p>The figures for the Library Service cannot be compared like for like to the previous year's performance, as NPTCBC ceded overall responsibility for five of the libraries to various community groups on 1st April 2014 and a further four on 1st May 2014. Furthermore opening hours for these four were considerably less (below 50%) in April.</p> <p>However, if we compare the libraries that NPT have full responsibility over, there is a fall of 5.93% in materials issues but a rise of 1.37% in library visits for this period.</p>								
145	LCL/002b (SID)	The percentage of available computer hours, in use.	46%	48%	39%	Reported Annually		—
146	LCL/003 (SID)	The percentage of library material requests supplied within 7 calendar days.	78%	83%	69%			—
147	LCL/002a (SID)	The number of publicly accessible computers per 10,000 population.	8	8	9			—

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
14. Environment & Transport – Waste Management								
148	WMT/009b (NSI/PAM) 14 th	The percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities and prepared for reuse and/or recycled, including source segregated bio wastes that are composted or treated biologically in another way.	48.33%	54.04%	54.33%	55.08%	60.78%	↑
149	WMT/004b (NSI/PAM) 3 rd	The percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities sent to landfill.	20.3%	14.04%	37.72%	16.2%	11.3%	↑
150 Page 89	WMT/010i (SID)	The percentage of local authority municipal waste: Prepared for re-use.	0.15%	0.18%	2.06%	0.17%	0.29%	↑
	WMT/010ii (SID)	The percentage of local authority municipal waste: Recycled.	34.92%	38.09%	33.80%	37.69%	37.81%	↑
152	WMT/010iii (SID)	The percentage of local authority municipal waste: Collected as source segregated bio-wastes and composted or treated biologically in another way.	13.27%	15.76%	18.49%	17.22%	22.68%	↑
153	WMT/012 (SID)	The percentage of local authority collected municipal waste used to recover heat and power.	27.54%	29.33%	9.11%	25.1%	25.9%	↑

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
15. Environment & Transport – Transport and Highways								
154	THS/009 (SID)	The average number of calendar days taken to repair street lamp failures during the year.	1.94	1.83	4.75	1.54	1.52	↑
155	THS/007 (NSI) 	The percentage of adults aged 60 or over who hold a concessionary bus pass.	91.8%	88.9%	84.3%	92.2%	89.6%	v
156	THS/011a (SID)	The percentage of: Principal (A) roads in overall poor condition.	7.9%	6.8%	4.5%	Reported Annually	—	
157	THS/011b (SID)	The percentage of: Non-principal/classified (B) roads in overall poor condition.	6.7%	5.2%	6.1%		—	
158	THS/011c (SID)	The percentage of: Non-principal /classified C roads in overall poor condition.	9.6%	8.2%	18.9		—	
159	THS/012 (PAM) 	The percentage of Principal (A) roads, Non-principal (B) roads and Non-principal C roads that are in overall poor condition.	8.0%	6.7%	13.2%		—	

No	PI Reference	PI Description	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	All Wales 2013/14	Quarter 2 2013/14	Quarter 2 2014/15	Direction of Improvement
16. Environment & Transport - Countryside Management								
160	CMT/001 (SID)	The percentage of total length of 'Rights of Way' which are easy to use by members of the public.	68%	67%	69%	65.4%	73.7% * see note	↑
17. Environment & Transport - Street Scene								
161	STS/005b (PAM) 	The percentage of highways and relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness.	83%	98.5%	96.8%	Reported Annually	—	
162	STS/005a (SID)	The cleanliness Indicator	70	67.6	73.2		—	
163	STS/006 (NSI) 	The percentage of reported fly tipping incidents cleared within 5 working days.	95.25%	81.10%	95.03%		—	

* Note: Based on a network sample size of 5%.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

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

(27TH NOVEMBER 2014)

SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS - ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with details of the annual report regarding complaints compliments and comments.

Background

This report provides an overview of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Authority during the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Introduction

In July 2011 the Welsh Government issued a model Concerns and Complaints Policy for adoption by public service providers in Wales to create a standard, streamlined and seamless process for handling these aspects raised by members of the public. This two stage model was adopted as Council policy by the Authority in August 2011.

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the Council's response under the policy may refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales or other appropriate organisation for independent external consideration. The Ombudsman must normally be satisfied that the matter has been raised with the Authority and that it has had a reasonable opportunity to investigate and respond.

Two stage policy overview

Stage 1 - informal resolution - complaint is handled by the staff directly responsible for delivering the service and a response should be provided within 10 working days.

Stage Two- formal investigation- complaint is formally investigated by the designated complaints officer within the relevant Directorate and a response should be provided within 20 working days.

Independent external consideration – referral to another organisation for external consideration e.g. the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Council has a Corporate Complaints Group the members of which are responsible for implementing the policy and co-ordinating responses to complaints for the relevant directorate in which they work.

Complaints regarding Social Services have, since 2006, been subject to a separate 3 stage statutory procedure (local resolution, formal consideration and referral to an independent panel). This procedure is due to be superseded by a new 2 Stage process, with removal of the independent panel stage, in August 2014. Social Services must prepare a separate annual report to summarise their dealings.

Reporting Processes

The designated departmental Complaints Officer should provide bi- annual scrutiny committee reports on stage 1 and stage 2 complaints, and an overview of stage 2 complaints as per Council policy. The Committee and Democratic Services team schedules the scrutiny work programmes to incorporate the reporting of complaints, compliments and comments aligned with other quarterly monitoring information and sickness reports.

The Head of Legal Services reports annually to the Policy and Resources Committee on complaints referred to the Ombudsman following receipt of the Ombudsman's Annual Report to enable comparisons between this authority and other Welsh Councils.

In accordance with the set Welsh Language Commission deadlines, the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services reports annually on complaints regarding the Council's Welsh Language provision to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Complaints recording

Although there is no one integrated common complaints recording system, the Customer Relationship Management System used by Customer Services staff record significant numbers of Council enquiries at the first point of contact to provide data on volumes and recurring issues which are then highlighted to the relevant service area. The designated directorate complaints officers also collate and track information on information dealt with by them. The analysis of recurring themes, responses and remedial actions including learning and improved future outcomes lies with the responsible service manager.

Members of the Environment and Highways Scrutiny Committee can better scrutinise demands on service and identify potential areas for improvement following a task and finish review which ended in March 2014. Officers presented a way forward to Members which would involve different services reporting quarterly and one service at a time being “under the spotlight”.

This information allows Members to undertake detailed scrutiny of different service areas and the volume of contact with the Customer Services Team who act as the first point of contact for this service area. Members agreed that this will improve the information they receive to have a better understanding of the demand on services and customer satisfaction outcomes. This approach could be replicated for other service areas besides.

Summary/Overview 2013/2014 **Social Services Health and Housing**

Social Services Health and Housing separately reported information on 23 January 2014 to specifically cover complaints received, therefore, only a brief reference is provided below.

Complaints Resolved at Stage 1

The vast majority of the resolved complaints during this period were alleged communication difficulties and quality of social work support. Complaints resolved under The Children Act 1989 reduced compared to the previous year with children making 31 of these complaints.

Eighty complaints were considered and resolved under the Community Care Act and nine were resolved for Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Housing related services.

Complaints Resolved at Stage 2

Ten complaints were resolved at Stage 2 of the procedure in 2013 compared with 19 in the previous financial year. The dedicated Complaints Team found that mediation has been a useful tool in promoting a resolution to some complaints without recourse to a formal investigation.

Complaints Resolved at Stage 3

Three complaints were resolved at Stage 3 (Independent Panel) which is the same as the previous financial year. Apart from a requirement to apologise in a variety of circumstances the resulting action plans highlighted several recommendations in order to improve future service delivery;

Education and Lifelong Learning

There were 17 complaints, mainly involving children with special education needs, their statements and transport. All were resolved at Stage 1 of the process with the circumstances addressed on their own merit to deal with the particular challenges involved.

Some complaints related to Margam Park charges and animal welfare aspects. The service has responded to those complaints by erecting a notice that provides Rangers telephone numbers for animal welfare concerns and the seating area was re-arranged to be more user friendly. There were 3 comments concerning signage and parking at Margam Park resulting in the signage being updated to provide better directions.

There were 8 compliments concerning Margam Park regarding the excellent surroundings and the helpful and professional manner of the staff.

Environment

There have been 7 stage 1 complaints and 16 stage 2 complaints with 30 compliments.

Stage 1 Complaints

These mainly relate to refuse and recycling issues which were not dealt with on first contact with the Authority, although it is worth noting that all were addressed by the section concerned and did not escalate to a Stage 2.

For example a resident's recycling receptacles were missed during the planned collection schedule. A call was logged via the Contact Centre and passed to officers for action as a first time service request, however, the problem remained unresolved. After repeated calls from the customer the complaint escalated to a Stage 1 complaint and referred to the manager of the service for investigation and subsequent action.

Stage 2 Complaints

Stage 2 complaints are often more in depth in nature and diverse due to the myriad of services delivered by the Environment Directorate.

Many of the investigations required input from Legal Services due to their complexity and legislative nature, an example being that a complaint was received in relation to how an out of hour incident was logged and dealt with. The matter was investigated and found that some reporting procedures had not been correctly followed. In this instance, as proper procedures were already in place, staff were reminded of the importance of adhering to these and therefore no other action was required.

In an example where a complaint was not upheld, a member of the public had contested that the Authority was not complying with current legislation within the Disability Act in providing play facilities for disabled children in a new park. The complaint was investigated and legal advice sought however the complaint was not upheld.

Compliments

A Cadoxton resident complimented the workforce on all the work done to keep the culvert clean on Main Road, Cadoxton at the junction of Stanley Place/Bryn Catwg.

A resident of Victoria Road Port Talbot thanked the Directorate for the excellent work carried out regarding residents parking in Victoria Road.

A Sustrans volunteer thanked the workforce for keeping the cycle paths clear in the County thus making their use a pleasure.

Finance and Corporate Services

Nineteen complaints were received relating mainly to council tax disputes, Benefits arrears and one for office closure on New Year's Day. Ten complaints were dealt with at stage 1 and 9 at stage 2 of the policy. An example of a stage 2

complaint related to arrears which had been inadvertently passed to a collection bailiff - but as payment had already been made an apology was provided for this oversight.

Twenty six compliments or thank you letters were received about the professional and helpful staff, help and time given to support training models and patience and understanding displayed in dealing with customer enquiries.

Summary

The Welsh Government's guidance makes it clear that the number of stages in a complaints handling process should be kept to a minimum. The guiding principle underlying the policy is to "investigate once, investigate well". The majority of complaints were considered under stage 1 of the policy (informal resolution) and not escalated to a stage 2.

The Corporate Complaints group agreed improvements to commonly capture and record complaints information, which may indicate an increase in activity, therefore, this data will be monitored and analysed to identify any changes or recurring themes.

Moving forward, it is intended that Complaints and Compliments activity will be integrated in to the Council's wider performance management arrangements to better support Members to overview performance on a holistic basis.

Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

None

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MRS K JONES

27 November 2014

SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Governance Group 6 month progress report

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with a half yearly update on progress made on the Governance improvement action plan, which reflects the governance issues identified in the last Annual Governance Statement for 2013/14 (attached at **Appendix 1**).

Background

The Annual Governance Statement describes the Council's governance arrangements and the controls we employ to manage the risks of failure to achieve strategic objectives. The Annual Governance Statement forms part of the Annual Statement of Accounts and provides a public statement of the extent to which the Council complies with the Code of Governance.

Following the improvement study undertaken in 2012/13 on 'Local Authority Reviews of Governance', the Wales Audit Office recommended that more frequent reports to elected Members should be made during the financial year. This report discharges the action taken in relation to that recommendation.

Summary of Progress

Overall, the improvement action plan is on track to deliver its outcomes, one area: Risk Management has a RAG status of red. Due to exceptional work demands in relation to budget proposals, work in this area has not progressed as quickly as anticipated. However, additional support has been identified to assist the Head of Financial Services in completing this work, which will now commence in the early part of 2015.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Governance Group Improvement Action Plan

List of Background Papers

Annual Governance Statement (contained within the 2013/14 Statement of Accounts)

Officer Contact

Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services/ Chair of Corporate Governance Group, Tel: 01639 763284, E.mail:

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Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
1. Complete scheduled governance reviews of Local Service Board arrangements for community safety/health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety - review terms of reference and membership 	K Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Dec 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Wellbeing – review terms of reference and membership 	C Furlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference completed 	Green
2. Conduct post-implementation review of revised performance management arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate review of business plans 	C Furlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oct 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Post implementation review of business plans competed 	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to Corporate Management Group /Policy & Resources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback due to on 4.11.14 - postponed to December 2014 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan workshops for report cards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops underway All report vards to be in place by March 2015 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate review of report cards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan//Feb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yet to commence 	

Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
3. Implement recommendations arising from the review of democratic arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement project plan with full officer and member engagement 	K Jones	Phase 1 May 15	<p>Good progress made with 1st phase of Modern Government (almost complete):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised arrangements for scrutiny established and being further reviewed Revised arrangements for Member development in place and being further reviewed Review of external bodies underway – 2/3 complete Forward work programme for Cabinet Boards and Scrutiny Committees in place Fuller report to Modernisation Group on 10.12.14 	Green

Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
4. Strengthen financial monitoring arrangements to ensure emerging service pressures are identified and acted upon at the earliest opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence budget planning for 15/16, 16/17, 17/18 in May 14 Arrange full stakeholder involvement Arrange full consultation on overall budget approach Arrange specific consultation on individual components of the Forward Financial Plan 	D Rees / K Jones	Ongoing	Comprehensive communication and engagement timetable in place and underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st partnership event completed 8.09.14 2nd consultation event planned 19.11.14 – not progressed All consultation and engagement live (e.g. have your say, social media etc.) using a range of channels Communication team officers allocated to each directorate to support consultation and engagement activities 	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget monitoring 	D Rees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report setting out changes to arrangements was approved by the Cabinet on 30.07.14 	

Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
5. Take forward necessary work to update and then embed the Corporate Risk Management Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update policy Review risk register Scope internal audit review recommendations for action Increase effectiveness of scrutiny role for Audit Committee 	H Jones/D Rees	End of Sept 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work has been delayed, due to exceptional workload demands in relation to budget proposals. Discussions are pending, to provide the required level of resource in order to carry this work forward in the New Year. 	Red
6. Formalise and implement the Corporate Communication and Engagement Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate budget and improvement planning cycles with communication and engagement plan Obtain feedback from stakeholders using the range of mechanisms available 	C Furlow	Oct 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also See point 4 A report evaluating participation in the revised arrangements will be produced early 2015 to inform arrangements for 2015/16 	Green

Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
7. Formally agree and implement the Local Charter with Town and Community Councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the work and formally agree it Devise and implement action plan 	R George	Early 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial consultation and discussions with all Community and Town Councils in the NPT area and Members of the Community Council Liaison Forum have taken place. Further consultation to consider final amendments is currently underway and should conclude in February 2015. 	Green
8. Complete the review of regional collaborative arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete assurance work Identify actions from assurance work 	C Furlow	Sept 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review has been completed. The main outcome was to strengthen and ensure regular information going to Scrutiny Committees. Forward Work Programmes to include suitable topics from 2015 onwards 	Green

Governance Improvement Action Plan – 6 month progress 2014/2015

Improvement Area	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	Progress	RAG
9. Implement the action plan drawn up to respond to the Information Commissioner's Audit of data protection arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement agreed actions Monitor above actions regularly 	P Watkins/ I John	Oct 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work underway to implement action plan. Governance Group to monitor above regularly 	Green
10. Undertake project work to improve the grants management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in Finance project team's action plan, as a priority area 	D Rees	March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some work has been carried out in Finance on reviewing the grants management Accounting Instruction. It is expected that the work on this system will be completed by the end of the 14/15 financial year. 	Green

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MRS K JONES

27 November 2014

SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT 2014/15 AND OUTCOME AGREEMENT GRANT PAYMENT LETTER 2013/14

Purpose of Report

To present a six monthly monitoring report on the progress being made in delivering the Council's improvement priorities (objectives) during 2014/15 as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan "Rising to the Challenge", which was approved by Council on the 6th June 2014 (**Appendix 1**). Also to update Members that the Council will receive the full Outcome Agreement grant payment of £1.469 million for 2013/14 (letter attached at **Appendix 2**).

Background

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to publish annual improvement priorities (objectives). Our six improvement objectives are:

1. Improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after by improving the performance of the Council's Children and Young People Services Department – **'Safer, Brighter Futures'**
2. Raise educational standards and attainment for all young people – **'Brighter Schools Brighter Prospects'**
3. Maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently with or without support within the home of their choice within their community – **'Maximising Choice and Independence'**
4. Support and invest in our town centres and communities to promote economic growth, regeneration and sustainability to maximise job opportunities and improve access to employment – **'Prosperity for All'**
5. Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted – **'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'**

6. Improved 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 and functions – **‘Better, Simpler, Cheaper’**

Summary of Progress

Overall, the Council continues to make good progress towards achieving its improvement objectives, with the majority of work on track to reach the intended milestones and performance during 2013/14. However, some risks to delivery have been identified against three of the improvement objectives in Education, Adult Social Care and Waste Services.

Outcome Agreement

A letter from the Minister for Local Government and Government Business to The Leader dated 18th November 2014 has concluded that the Council will receive the full Outcome Agreement grant payment of £1.469 million for 2013/14 performance. A separate update of progress against Milestones within the Outcome Agreement has not been reported as this agreement aligns with the Corporate Improvement Plan priorities.

List of Background Papers

Corporate Improvement Plan “Rising to the Challenge” 2014/17.

A guide to Outcome Agreements between the Welsh Government and Local Authorities in Wales for three years 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Corporate Improvement Plan 2014/17, 6 Month Progress Report

Appendix 2 – Outcome Agreement confirmation letter

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014-2017 – HALF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT (1.04.14 TO 30.09.14)



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 1

Improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after by improving the performance of the Council's Children and Young People Services Department

RAG Status	Comments
Green	Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.

What we said we would do:

1. Improve the quality and effectiveness of social work practice; continue to improve performance of our eight priority measures and also want the number of children looked after in the County Borough to show a 2.5% year on year decrease over the next two years

How are we doing? - 123 case file audits have been undertaken and findings show increased compliance with procedures and enhanced quality. Areas for continued improvement have been discussed in Business Improvement Meetings with support/training provision agreed. All eight priority measures are exceeding their target and the number of looked after children (*excluding Respite*) was 459, compared to 468 as at 31st March 2014. This represents a 1.9% decrease and remains on target.

2. Ensure the capacity and capability of the workforce would meet the demands on the service by minimising social worker vacancies and use of agency workers, ensure all employees in the service have an agreed Personal Development Plan and by March 2015, show that 72% of staff feel valued at work from our staff survey (it was 58.8% in 2012)

How are we doing? - Currently there are 3 fte social work vacancies across all frontline teams (our target by March 2015 is less than 10). There are fewer agency workers, 9 compared to 18 as at 31st March 2014). The findings of the most recent staff survey

(Sept 2014) will not be available until late 2014. Individual learning plans have been developed for 95% of qualified staff and 79% of unqualified staff. A training needs analysis has been undertaken and the results are used to inform the training plan for 2014/15.

3. Ensure that improving CYPS remains a priority for the Council and its partners and that there is continued strong and supportive political and professional leadership for the improvement programme

How are we doing? - The Strategic Improvement Plan was revised in July 2014 to reflect both the outcomes of the report received from CSSIW in January 2014, as well as the wider aims, objectives and aspirations of the service. In addition, we now have a Development Plan, a working document used to ensure relevant actions are undertaken in a timely and proper fashion.

4. Further enhance performance management and elected member scrutiny arrangements, by developing a new model which will put better checks and balances in place, so that service delivery is not compromised

How are we doing? - Performance Management information continues to be readily available, along with a comprehensive audit programme and a new scrutiny model was implemented which includes forward work programmes and the committee having sight of the cabinet work programmes to better plan their work. There is more structured and thorough questioning, making the process far more effective.

5. Formally adopt the new Corporate Parenting Policy and ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel hold a celebration and information day to recognise the achievements of looked after children; and support care leavers by commissioning contracts with Housing providers to provide suitable long term accommodation for young people who leave the care system

How are we doing? - Through the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, current contracts with supported housing providers are being reviewed to provide a better range of support packages to meet the needs of young people. We also held a looked after children information and fun day in July. The event was an excellent opportunity to listen to what is important to looked after children and their carers and how they can help shape the corporate parenting strategy. It also gave Members the opportunity to

promote their role as corporate parents so that looked after children know what they can expect from them and to recognise the work of foster carers.

In partnership, we said we will accomplish the work streams that are set out principally in the TAF, through the Think Family Partnership. This will mean: access to different services are clearer to service users and providers; early intervention and prevention will mean a reduction in demand for costly intervention services across the partnership and a reduction in the number of children looked after

How are we doing? - There is now a full team structure in place for Think around the Family and awareness training sessions for partner organisations are ongoing, with over 300 attendees to date. The criteria is clearly communicated to partners so they can make decisions as to whether families are appropriate for a referral to the Think around the Family team. Over 150 families have been referred to Think around the Family team, including approx. 50 'stepped down' from Children's Services. Partners are involved in supporting families in moving forward with their Family Support Plan and have accepted the role of Lead Family Contact as part of this and audits continue to monitor the extent and effectiveness of joint working with partners

IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 2

Raise educational standards and attainment of all young people

RAG Status	Comments
Amber	The RAG status at present is set at amber with priority action areas being progressed. Work is continuing on the production of detailed business cases for all projects under 21st Century Schools Band A Funding. Schools have secured an improvement in pupil attendance in both sectors, in particular in the primary sector with a 1.6% rise. Key Stage 4 results have maintained in line with 2012/13 performance and we continue to compare favourably across Wales. Key Stage 2 results are steadily improving with Key Stage 3 maintaining their performance compared to 2012/13. However, there has been a rise in fixed and permanent exclusion in both the primary and secondary sectors, which we are actively working to decrease. Performance of pupils entitled to free school meals in Literacy & Numeracy has been identified as a risk area (seven of the measures did not achieve forecast performance for the 2013/14 academic year).

What we said we would do:

- 1. Continue with the delivery of the Strategic School Improvement Programme and following consultations (in some cases with Welsh Government determination), this will include federating (merging) some schools; relocating some schools; increasing the capacity in some schools; continuing with our arrangements to build some new schools; and to close some others**

How are we doing?

- We have started the consultation process on the proposal to amalgamate Central Infant and Central Junior schools by 1st September 2015 and this will continue until 30th November 2014. The amalgamation of Cwmafan Infant and Cwmafan

Junior schools will take effect from 1st January 2015, following Cabinet approval. The amalgamation of Velindre Community School, Ysgol Hendre Special School and Bryncoch PRU, including an attached secondary assessment centre will take effect from 1st January 2015, following Cabinet approval.

- Plans to replace Cwrt Sart, Glanafan, Sandfields and Traethmeylin Schools with Ysgol Newydd (Bae Baglan) are progressing well, and planning approval secured. On-site work is scheduled to commence in November 2014. We have also started preparations for the outline business case for Ysgol Newydd Briton Ferry, to replace Brynhyfryd, Ynysmaerdy and Llansawel Primary Schools.
- We are still in discussions with the Diocese and School Governing Body for a new 3-16 school on the same site of St Joseph's RC Comprehensive.

2. Continue to work with developers to ensure appropriate educational provisions are available in the new Coed Darcy village commencing with a 3-11 primary school

How are we doing? – Plans for a new have been developed. Planning approval is yet to be secured and relevant statutory consultation is yet to commence.

3. Continue to implement our strategy for the provision of Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot and we will measure our success against outcomes as detailed in our delivery plan

How are we doing? -. The percentage of year 2 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh has increased from 17.6% to 18.1% (2013/14 academic year). The Local Authority's ambitions and priorities for Welsh medium and Welsh language education are encapsulated in the seven outcomes of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014/17, This WESP details how we will secure further development within the period April 2014 – March 2017.

4. Consult on a new Welsh medium school in the north of the County Borough and a new Welsh medium school in the south of the County Borough

How are we doing? - A formal consultation process will commence in the 2014 autumn term, on a new 3-18 Welsh medium school in the north and the south of the County Borough. A full business case for the north of the County Borough will be submitted to Welsh Government in November 2014.

5. Ensure that a school led improvement model is promoted and supported through: school to school collaboration; cluster development; and improvement partnerships and increase the number mainstream Schools which are good/outstanding (as per the criteria determined with regional partners) from 58% to 68% in 2014-2015

How are we doing? - We currently have 67.4 % of our schools that are Good/Outstanding (as per the criteria determined with regional partners), which is an increase on last years baseline figure of 58% as at December 2013. The forecast for the year is to achieve 68%.

6. Support schools and enable schools to support each other in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes across all key stages (years 2, 6, 9 & 11)

(Note: Foundation Stage = 6/7 year old pupils, Key Stage 2 = Year 6 pupils (final year of primary school), Key Stage 3 = Year 9 pupils (secondary school), Key Stage 4 = Year 11 pupils (final year of compulsory education in secondary school).

How are we doing? - 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. Two measures met their forecast performance for the year and two measures did not achieve forecast performance for the year.

7. Ensure that the 14-19 Learning Pathways programme supports all young people to achieve their full learning potential and by providing a range of relevant courses (including vocational courses) we aim to improve attainment levels for year 11 pupils and continue to work with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at post 16 and have less than 3% being NEET in 2014-2015

How are we doing? - We have increased the average wider point score for pupils aged 16 from 534 to 539 (provisional). However this performance is below our forecast for the 2013/14 academic year of 575. We have increased the average ‘capped’

points score for pupils aged 16 from 349 to 351 (provisional). However this performance is below our forecast for the 2013/14 academic year of 359. The figure for the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or training (NEET) for 2014 will not be available until April 2015.

8. Improve the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) in Literacy & Numeracy. This will include improving the quality of teaching; improving engagement with parents/carers and identify and facilitate opportunities for pooling resources, for example through Communities First & Flying Start projects

How are we doing? - Four of the eight measures improved, one maintained performance and three measures saw a drop in performance. One of the measures exceeded its forecast performance but seven of the measures did not achieve forecast performance for the 2013/14 academic year. This has been identified as a risk area.

9. Improve pupil attendance by continuing to provide advice and support to all schools and to those schools with lower attendance levels, scrutinise attendance and share best practice within schools

How are we doing? - 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 0.91% to 93.51%. Core visits during the autumn will include attendance issues and all schools will be required to submit attendance targets with an action plan and evaluation.

10. Continue to improve safeguarding practices and procedures to ensure that all schools judged by Estyn meet statutory requirements

How are we doing? - Some of the key achievements include: Estyn reports for 2013/14 show that all schools meet the requirements; peer reviews undertaken in schools; safe recruitment audit undertaken in a sample of schools; supply staff agencies providing staff to our schools are being scrutinised and schools informed which agencies meet our standards.

11. Improve and enhance behaviour management by aiming to have fewer permanent exclusions across all our schools and to reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions. This work will include improving capacity within schools to manage behaviour, so that intervention is employed at the early stages of challenging behaviour and specific support for targeted schools on behaviour management

How are we doing? - We have not made good progress in achieving our aim to have less permanent exclusions across all our schools and to reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions. For the 2013/14 academic year, the actual permanent exclusions were 12 an increase of three on last year. We also saw an increase in the number of days lost in primary sector to 281 days (174 the previous year) and an increase in the number of days lost in secondary sector to 1,626 days (1,568 the previous year). As a priority we are working to improve performance in this area.

12. Continue to consult with pupils, parents, staff, governors on all aspects of education provision through dedicated consultation events and annual roadshow meetings across the County Borough

How are we doing? – To date senior officers from the service have met with Chairs of Governors termly and attended meetings with secondary and primary school Head Teachers. We have held roadshows in all but one of our Comprehensive schools with a view to completing all the roadshows by the end of this term. All feeder primary schools were invited to the roadshows.

In partnership, we said we will continue to deliver school improvement through our partnership in ERW (Education through Regional Learning). A South West and Mid Wales consortium made up of six partner authorities which are Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthen, Powys, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion who will: share best practice amongst schools in the ERW region; monitor school performance; support school leadership; co-ordinate high quality governor training, and ensure that the delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework is effective across all schools

How are we doing? - We have put in place the ERW Leading Learner Group, which will oversee the National Professional Qualification for Headship, Head Teacher and middle leader professional development programmes and the training of higher level Teaching Assistants. We also put in place a Regional Governor Support Officer group, all regions now share training programme on the ERW website.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 3

Maximising the number of adults who are able to live independently with or without support within the home of their choice within their community

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RAG Status	Comments
Amber	The programme is assessed as being a low to moderate risk although it is working at full capacity given existing resources. However, there are capacity issues which threaten the successful achievement of the financial benefits identified within the Forward Financial Plan. The two areas where capacity is impacting on the ability to deliver are: 1. social work capacity to complete the number of assessments and reviews within the agreed timescales in order to meet Forward Financial Plan savings targets, currently expected to slip and 2. Dedicated project management support for the Transition to Adulthood Project. In terms of the resources and capacity available within community care, we are maximising the capacity that can be put into all these work streams whilst trying to ensure we continue to improve operational performance and performance indicators.

What we said we would do:

- 1. Deliver on proposals for a new range of services for people with disabilities, which will cater for individuals with assessed needs in relation to physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health. This will focus on three discrete elements – a community independence service, an employment service and a care and support service**

How are we doing? - From October we will have fully implemented a new service, including putting a workforce in place to support the new service and developed referral criteria and operational policies. We have successfully exited from the

COASTAL project and all project outcomes have been achieved and sustainable future for employment and tracking projects are continuing. We have also established care and support service at Trem y Mor and extended service at 'Old' Rhodes House.

2. Modernise social work practice to ensure we meet or exceed practice standards in terms of timeliness of response and quality, and implement the safeguarding action plan to further improve safeguarding practices

How are we doing? - We have completed the engagement activity on the new social work model and the management of change proposals for the workforce is due start at the end of October. We are in the process of developing a system for the reporting of Care Response Measures and there is also a new supervision policy in place. We have developed our Quality and Performance system in partnership with the Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University and by the end of the year we will measure customer satisfaction levels. Providers attended a workshop, where there was an opportunity to discuss Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and to update them on current changes in legislation. An extensive training programme has taken place with a focus on the implications. We have also put in place quality assurance processes, which form part of our system of continuous improvement.

3. Continue to prevent homelessness by maintaining the high percentage of all potentially homeless households which were prevented from becoming homeless for at least six months

How are we doing? - There is a slight decrease in the percentage of potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented, from 96.1% to 92.8% but this is still excellent performance and against a backdrop of increasing presentations to the service.

4. Improve residents' ability to remain independent in their own homes by providing support and continuing to offer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for adaptations to houses to meet the needs of disabled residents and we aim to reduce the average time to complete a DFG to 225 days

How are we doing? - Currently the number of DFG's delivered this financial year is 169 and are taking an average of 270 days to deliver. This includes 2 extremely complex grants for children and a higher number than average of extensions. Also due to the introduction of a new Rapid Adaptation Grant for this year which is set to take approximately 70 smaller jobs out of the DFG

system, the forecasted figures have been revised to an average delivery time of 285 days and the number of grants completed is now forecast to be 245.

In partnership, we said we would:

1. Work with the ABMU Health Board, Neath Port Talbot Carers Service, Carer representatives, Third Sector organisations and others to develop a commissioning strategy focusing on services which support carers in Neath Port Talbot. The strategy will help us plan how we use the money available in a way which achieves the best outcomes for unpaid carers

How are we doing? - The Carers Strategy group has agreed a process for developing the strategy, an estimated time table and the development of a communication plan.

2. Implement an approach called ‘Pathways to Independence’ across community care to ensure adults of working age with care and support needs are assessed and supported in a way which maximises their independence and more people are living independently with minimal or no support in their own communities

How are we doing? - The number of individuals who are reliant on residential care in the Learning Disability population had reduced from 73 to 49. In terms of percentage of spend on residential care, this has reduced from 48% to 26%. The current reduction in residential care costs in Learning Disability has reduced by £1.3million which is 10% of overall spend. Further targets have been identified for Mental Health and Physical Disabilities of which some success has been achieved. An outcome matrix has been developed to measure outcomes for individuals.

3. Work with neighbouring authorities and the ABMU Health Board as part of the Western Bay Programme to ensure services are integrated. Work will focus on community services for frail older people, those with learning disabilities and adult mental health services

How are we doing? - We are implementing a community services business case and robust performance measures are in place to assess the impact of the investment via the Intermediate Care Fund. The Western Bay Mental Health Project commissioned a

review of mental health services in May 2014. A 'Joint Commitments for Mental Health Services' paper was presented and approved by Western Bay partner Boards/Cabinets, which demonstrates a shared vision for improving services. There are also outcome measures in place for community services. There were 24 delayed transfers of care for social care reasons between 1st April 2014 and 30th Sep 2014 compared to 29 for the same period last year.

4. Develop and implement a Multi Agency Transition Policy and protocol to ensure all young people receive high quality advice, information and support to enable them to plan for their future as they move into adulthood

How are we doing? - A Transition Protocol has been agreed and signed off between Adult and Children's Services which ensures a more seamless transition process. This includes an agreement to have a single plan for every young person coming through transition and a data collection process.

5. Open the first (of the four) new 60 bed residential care home delivered by Grŵp Gwalia in the summer of 2014, situated in Moor Road, Port Talbot

How are we doing? - Llys y Seren is open and delivering residential Enablement as well as long term residential care.

6. Increase the availability of good quality, well managed, affordable private sector accommodation via the Social Lettings Agency to address the future changes in homelessness legislation and work to have 100 tenancies in management by the end of 2014-2015

How are we doing? - The number of tenancies in management fluctuates significantly during any year and the figure is currently 65, having bottomed out at 59 earlier during the first half of the year. Social Lettings Agency staff are confident that the number can be brought back up to 86 by the year end and every effort will be made to exceed this. The forecast for the year was set at 100 tenancies in management.

IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 4

Support and invest in our town centres and communities to promote economic growth, regeneration and sustainability, maximise job opportunities and improve access to employment

RAG Status	Comments
Green	Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.

Regeneration - what we said we would:

- 1. Continue work on Harbourside by developing pedestrian links to improve accessibility to employment opportunities**

How are we doing? – We are in the process of formalising land ownership issues prior to submitting a planning application for the development of pedestrian links and a planning application has been submitted for the new NPT College campus and a proposed Business Park.

- 2. Begin work on the Baglan Link Bridge which will make Baglan Energy Park more accessible and enable local bus companies to provide a bus service to the site**

How are we doing? - Construction work has started on site and is due for completion March 2015.

- 3. Begin 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**

How are we doing? - The first phase to include a new 600 space multi-storey car park, and 23,000 sq ft of new retail space is under construction and due for completion in August 2015.

4. Complete improvements in public areas in Port Talbot, Neath and Croeserw to enhance the environment for the community

How are we doing? - Initial works completed in Port Talbot and Croeserw, with additional work being undertaken in Lower Station Road, Port Talbot (due to be completed in June 2015). Also additional public realm works are being undertaken in Neath as part of the first Phase as mentioned in point 3 above.

5. Begin construction work, on the new Leisure Centre on Aberavon seafront

How are we doing? - Construction work is well advanced and the centre is due to open in December 2015.

6. Continue to drive forward regeneration projects in the Valleys to make enhancements to tourism, employment and public areas

How are we doing? - Regeneration projects in Pontardawe and Glynneath have been completed and a planning application has been submitted for the second phase at Sarn Helen.

7. Develop a comprehensive commuter cycle network to enable residents and visitors to access towns, employment centres and visitor attractions effectively and safely

How are we doing? - In partnership with the City and Council of Swansea we have introduced an integrated commuter route scheme covering the whole of Swansea Bay. This scheme has led to improved cycle signage in the County Borough, raising awareness to car/lorry drivers of cyclists and a full marketing programme is being implemented to raise awareness of the routes. This scheme so far has led to a 25% increase in cyclists on routes that have been measured.

8. Pursue the establishment of quality tourist accommodation and facilities at sites including Rheola

How are we doing? - The Rheola planning application is anticipated to be determined in November 2014.

9. Continue to renovate properties in the Council's two Renewal Areas- Neath East and Sandfields East & Aberavon. We aim to improve 75 properties

How are we doing? – Energy Company Obligation funding has been secured to support the renewal area energy upgrade works and currently 45 houses have been completed to date. A further 30 properties will be completed by year end.

Employment & Prosperity - what we said we would:

10. Continue to work with Welsh Government to test and explore opportunities to reduce the number of individuals in South West Wales who are economically inactive or unemployed by working in a joined up, client centred way

How are we doing? - As at 30th June 2014, the latest data indicates that more people (73.6%) of working age (16 to 64) were economically active, compared to 71.6%, as at 31st September 2013. As at 30th September 2014, 2.7% of working age people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, again an improvement compared to 3.5% as at February 2014.

11. Help economically inactive people and those who are long-term unemployed to improve their chances of getting a job through the Workways project and to explore self-employment through the Council's Innov8 programme

How are we doing? - 5,007 (cumulative figures) people were engaged in the project, above the target of 4,450 for this period (1.04.14 to 30.09.14) and 2,505 (cumulative figures) people were in sustainable employment, above the target of 1,871 for this period. This project has been extended to 31st December 2014.

12. Provide an effective and supportive service through our Business Development Team to local businesses to help them prosper creating more jobs and business start ups

How are we doing? - There were 388 business enquiries resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies. This output is on track to deliver the year end forecast of 430. We assisted 184 new business start-up enquiries and this output has already achieved the year end forecast. We have assisted 16 new start ups through the Innov8

programme and this output is on track to deliver the year end forecast of 28. 56.5 jobs have been created as a result of financial support by the Council and it is anticipated that year end forecast of 176 will be achieved.

13. Identify contracts for local companies and job and training opportunities for local people within major developments in the County Borough

How are we doing? -

- **Trem y Mor Respite Centre, Aberavon (value £4m)** - outputs achieved: four local companies secured contracts to provide materials/supplies; 47 people secured work on site, including 15 new job opportunities; two pathway apprenticeships completed; two apprenticeship training weeks completed.; 197 training weeks completed and all outputs agreed at the tender stage were achieved.
- **Neath Town Centre Redevelopment (Value £9.1m)** - outputs achieved to date: 22 local companies introduced to main contractor; five local companies secured contracts to provide materials/supplies; two local sub contractors secured M&E and Cladding contracts; 90 people secured work on site; there was one apprentice and one trainee work placement. The project is on track to achieve all outputs identified at the tender stage.

14. Provide opportunities for accessing training and employment, and support for businesses, in the community at the Croeserw Enterprise Centre

How are we doing? - We have established 30 training courses established, with over 150 participants gaining formal accreditation.

In partnership, we said we would:

1. Continue to monitor progress made by NPT Homes to ensure they meet the Council's promise to bring all former council housing up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to regenerate communities

How are we doing? – NPT Homes are on track to deliver this milestone and good progress continues to be made with the programme having completed the following works since transfer: 4,286 kitchens; 3,901 bathrooms; 3,698 heating system

installations; 2,670 rewires; 880 roof replacements; 1,544 window and door installations. The fifth NPT Homes half yearly progress report is due to go to Social Care Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 27th November 2014.

2. Continue to offer the “Housing to Homes” interest free loans to encourage landlords, developers and home owners to renovate empty houses that have fallen into disrepair and aim to support ten homes to be available for use

How are we doing? - 12 units have been brought back into the housing market this financial year, with approximately 10 further applications at various stages including application and on site.

3. Work with our housing partners to deliver affordable housing, through the Social Housing Grant (including Smaller Properties programme and revenue funded schemes), Vibrant & Viable Places programme and the Welsh Housing Partnership; whilst continuing to explore other and innovative funding solutions

How are we doing? - We are still on target for the delivery of 77 properties however one site is subject to matters outside our control and has an ‘amber’ status. The current housing market and financial climate is impacting negatively on the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106.

4. Develop projects and programmes to maximise the impact of the next round of European Funding

How are we doing? – The European and External Funding team are supporting the development of the following projects: NEETs, Neath and Port Talbot integrated strategies; Workways; Social Enterprise support; Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy; and Regional Technical Assistance proposal. *Note: the 2014 – 2020 ESF funds are not yet approved. WFO proposed launch date is 20th November 2014.*

5. Prioritise the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment Grants to those in greatest need to prevent hardship

How are we doing? – To date we have made 568 awards totalling £252,000.

6. Continue to fund benefits advice services, including maintaining the Council's Welfare Rights Unit, so that people are accessing the benefits to which they are entitled

How are we doing? - The welfare rights unit assisted and supported 108 people to successfully appeal benefit decisions that have cut or removed the benefits that they are entitled to. A comprehensive report will be going to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board meeting on 27th November 2014.

7. Complete the three pilot projects that we have set up with the assistance of European funding, to improve access to advice and support services for people with low incomes and recommend next steps to the Local Service Board

How are we doing? - The three pilot projects have been completed and evaluated and all have achieved their planned outcomes.

- **Project one**, the Multi Agency Hub at Pontardawe - the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (16th October) received the evaluation report for this pilot and approved the recommendation to extend the project for a further 12 months and for a number of follow up actions to be undertaken.
- **Project two**, the dedicated advice line set up in the Council's Corporate Contact Centre - a report will be presented to Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (27th November) on the evaluation with a list of recommendations, including extended the pilot to the end of March.
- **Project three**, one stop help for people actively seeking work through joint working between the library service and the Jobcentre - the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (16th October) received the evaluation of the pilot and approved the recommendation to endorse the continuation of the partnership arrangements and to report back to Members on the outcome of discussions between Job Centre Plus and the Library Service re: availability of financial resources to support the work.

8. Deliver on the Strategic Aims of the Regional Economic Development Strategy to enhance the long-term prospects of our City Region economy, its businesses and communities and monitor the delivery via a newly developed performance management framework

How are we doing? - Work is continuing to develop a Performance Management Framework to monitor the delivery of the strategic aims of the strategy.

9. Work towards linking strategic employment sites by establishing priority bus corridors between key towns within the City Region

How are we doing? - Construction of the Baglan Energy Park Link Bridge continues as part of the Port Talbot to Swansea bus corridor (completion March 2015), through Harbourside and Fabian Way Strategic Sites. Work continues to develop on other schemes in liaison with the Regional Transport Forum.

10. Work with community transport operators to enhance and integrate their services to support local communities and ensure the schemes meet the transport targets as set out in the Service Level Agreements with the Council

How are we doing? - All targets as set out in Service Level Agreements have been met. There have been regular meetings with both Community Transport schemes and Shopmobility, to encourage closer working and combined bids, to improve future funding prospects. To date, an Regional Development Plan bid has been submitted and a project proposal put forward to Pen-y-Cymoedd Community Fund.

11. Redevelop Port Talbot Parkway Station, to improve access, parking and facilities for customers

How are we doing? - On target for completion in Spring 2015.

12. Implement the Vibrant and Viable Places Regeneration Framework to combine support for people and places, and encourage partnership working by the public, private and third sector

How are we doing? - First scheme at Green Park on site, 34 homes to be delivered by November 2015.

13. Develop key sites and premises across the County Borough to encourage economic growth Sites include: Harbourside, Coed Darcy Urban Village and Swansea University's new Bay Campus

How are we doing? - All sites under various stages of advanced construction.

14. Enable the establishment of caravan site facilities at Margam Park in partnership with the Camping and Caravanning Club to enhance visitor numbers to the County Borough

How are we doing? – A planning application has been submitted.

15. Make the most of community investment by working in partnership with developers/organisations who are delivering substantial investment programmes, to encourage and monitor training and job opportunities for local people, and local supply chain activity

How are we doing?

- **Residential Care Homes (Grwp Gwalia) - Value £3.7m, Moor Road** - contract completed. 18 companies introduced to main contractors; seven contracts awarded to local companies; 300 persons secured employment on site; four apprentices completed training weeks on site; eight trainee/temporary job opportunities/work placements. There were no set targets for this contract.
- **Caewern Home** – work on site to commence in October 2014...To date, 13 companies have been introduced to main contractors and four contracts awarded to local companies.
- **Welsh Housing Quality Standards (NPT Homes)** - 31 people have secured jobs with sub-contractors; eight apprentices secured placements with sub contractors and 25 people have been provided with temporary job opportunities.
- **New Leisure Centre (Aberavon)** – to date 80 companies have been introduced to main contractors; three contracts awarded to local companies and 11 people have secured jobs on-site.
- **Swansea University** - 450 companies have been introduced to main contractors; 40 local companies secured contracts; 33 job opportunities created; more than 50 individuals completed 1000 trainee weeks and the canteen facilities are being run by NPT COASTAL projects – providing jobs and training to those looking to get back into employment.
- Further projects due to commence shortly: **Vibrant & Viable Places Funded Projects** - Green Park Industrial Estate (Coastal Housing), Renewal Areas (Aberavon) and **Briton Ferry Health Centre (Deryn Properties Ltd)**.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 5
Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted

RAG Status	Comments
Amber	Work is progressing to implement the Waste Strategy that was presented to Cabinet on 24 th April 2013. The overall RAG status is given as amber as further funding needs to be identified to fully implement the agreed strategy.

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What we said we would do:

- 1. Progress with the implementation of the Council's Waste Strategy to increase recycling and composting to achieve statutory recycling targets. We aim to increase our rates to 55% and work towards achieving the 2015-2016 statutory target of 58% (which is currently 52%)**

How are we doing? - The first six months performance of 60.78%, indicates that we are on target to exceed the 55% forecast for 2014/15 and on track to achieve the statutory recycling target of 58% in 2015/16.

- 2. Implement the Council's communications and engagement plan to improve public participation by undertaking surveys to identify areas of low participation and prioritise efforts to increase participation in these areas**

How are we doing? - A recycling participation survey will be completed by December 2014. Following this survey, areas will be prioritised through our Communications and Engagement Plan to increase participation. We will also review the delivery of our Communications and Engagement Plan by the end of March 2015.

3. Introduce a phased roll out ‘Kerbside Sort’ recycling waste collection service in 2014-2015, to all accessible areas of the County Borough

How are we doing? - The council currently operates six new waste collection vehicles for kerbside sort of recyclable waste. Progress with the new service has meant that circa 20,000 households now receive the new service. The evaluation of this new service is ongoing.

4. Continue the introduction of smaller wheelie bins, prioritising the areas that have low recycling participation

How are we doing? - The Council has removed around 1,000 excess bins from some households that had more than one bin. Progress with the rollout of smaller bins is around 70% complete and has contributed to our on going improvement in recycling performance.

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5. Introduce specific enforcement of commercial waste, to ensure all businesses comply with legislation by writing to all businesses. We will ensure they have valid trade waste agreements, take action against businesses that do not and undertake ad hoc inspections to ensure that businesses are presenting appropriate waste in line with their agreements (trade waste agreements with the Council only)

How are we doing? - All businesses that are not customers of the council will be contacted by March 2015 to determine their arrangements for waste collection. This will assist in ensuring that legitimate arrangements for business waste collections are in place for all businesses in the County Borough. Random ad-hoc inspections of business waste have taken place and will be ongoing to ensure waste presented matches the relevant waste agreement. By the end of March 2015 we will measure if there has been an increase in the percentage of traders (non council customers) with a waste agreement.

6. Increase the level of waste recycled by council staff in the three main centres namely Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre and The Quays by increasing the recycling provision available, offering food waste recycling provision and rationalisation of ‘general’ waste bins

How are we doing? - In Neath Civic Centre and the Quays we have introduced a 40 litre box for glass at each break-out area's recycling station. We have also added a food waste caddy in each break-out kitchen area. A 1100 litre container for cardboard and two, 240 litre containers for glass have been added to the outside waste collection area at Neath Civic, as well as a 240 litre bin for glass, to the outside waste collection area at the Quays. Following a trial to recycle food waste in Port Talbot Civic Centre, it was not feasible to accommodate food caddies in all offices and this was also hindered by the ongoing accommodation changes within the building. We are considering alternative options to increase recycling amongst staff as the original options similar to those in Neath Civic Centre and the Quays may no longer be feasible. Overall, approximately 2,480 litres of extra capacity for recyclable waste equipment has been provided. We will measure the quantity of waste recycled in each building to establish a baseline and use this data to monitor the success of our staff recycling more.

In partnership, we will continue to participate in procurement of the regional treatment of food waste through Anaerobic Digestion (conversion of food waste into energy and fertilizer) which will contribute to the Council achieving statutory recycling targets

How are we doing?

- Our regional waste procurement process began in 2009 but ended in 2013/14 with the regions preferred bidder withdrawing from the procurement process. Delivery of the regional anaerobic digestion facility has therefore slipped and we are currently considering a way forward.

IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 6

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 and functions

RAG Status	Comments
Green	<p>Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.</p> <p>The review of performance management has progressed and has moved into implementation stage. The action plan to implement the 3rd Sector Review was agreed by P&R Board on 08/05/14 and work is now progressing on the development of a new grant making policy..</p>

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What we said we would do:

- 1. Continue with a programme of efficiency reviews, using our Systems Thinking approach, and prioritising services where we receive most complaints**

How are we doing? - By working together, we have reduced the number of calls we receive for NPT Homes considerably and continue to educate its tenants of the correct procedures. As part of the Improving Customer Experience programme, new technology has been introduced into Streetcare Services, allowing the streamlining of front line processes, significantly reducing paperwork for all staff concerned and resulting in a faster delivery and collection service for the public. Our Welfare Rights team have identified a number of new working processes and are currently investigating a new IT system to replace its paper processes.

- 2. Modernise and improve on-line transactions available to the public and increase the number of on-line transactions undertaken**

How are we doing? -

- To date bulky household collections, the ordering of refuse and recycling equipment, pest control appointments and van permits are available online. We have received over 80 compliments from members of the public using the new online services since its inception 1 year ago. Prior to the Improving Customer Experience programme, there were no true online services. The public would only have the option of completing an email which would be sent to the Customer Contact Centre for processing. From the first online service going live, (Bulks in Oct 2013) to date, there have been 10,854 online transactions. The next phase of the programme, on-line map based reporting (will enable the public to report streetcare issues on-line) is currently in the user testing phase, this includes fixed assets such as litter bins, grit bins and dog bins. It is envisaged that this first phase will go live by December 2014.
 - Web improvement work is currently taking place, to ensure our website is fit for purpose and easy to use for the public. Currently, we have 3000 live web pages but 83% of the views are only on 250 pages and 17% view the remaining 2,762 pages. Development is taking place to smarten the top 250 pages, remove obsolete pages and ensure that the Welsh translation of pages is up to date.
- 3. Improve our telephone response times in our corporate Contact Centre (main switchboard) and reduce the number of abandoned calls**

How are we doing? – Customer waiting times in our face to face sites continue to improve, with fewer customers leaving before being seen (walk offs). However we have seen a drop in performance in our average time to answer telephone calls and in the percentage of call abandoned after five seconds. A comprehensive analysis of contact centre performance is scheduled to go to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Cabinet Board on 27th November 2014.

- 4. Continue the work we started last year to transform our internal management and administrative processes. Once complete we expect to reduce the cost of administration associated with these processes and have much improved management information available to inform our future improvement plans. In the next 12 months we expect to have made progress as follows:**

How are we doing? –

- **By March 2015 all services will be using the new procure to pay system** - Currently we have 109 departments live on the new system. We aim to have a further 23 departments live by the end of the current financial year (64%) and will continue to work with others during 2015/16. We also estimate that by end of March 2015, approximately 40% of invoices will operate via the new system. Members should note that some invoices relating to capital projects, grants etc. will also be paid and are in addition to what is purchased via the new system.
 - Purchasing cards have been deployed to 170 users across all departments. This has improved the process time and ability for buyers being able to get their goods when they need them; in many areas replacing petty cash.
 - Currently our 'on contract' spend (where there is a contract in place for buying goods/supplies corporately) for 2013/14 measured at 52%. As more departments go live on the new system, this will increase as more non contract spend turns into contract spend.
 - **Staff currently receiving pay on a fortnightly basis will be moved to monthly pay** - Approximately 80% of staff have been transferred from fortnightly to monthly pay.
 - **The Council's staffing data will have been audited and we will have new systems in place that make it easier to keep records up to date and report on that information for management purposes. A new, improved absence management module will be developed. This will help managers continue to maximise the attendance of staff at work and reduce sickness absence levels by at least 5% on 2013-2014 levels** - Information about the organisation and staff held in the Vision IT system is being systematically validated and where necessary corrected. Measures are being put in place to ensure this information is maintained accurately and in a timely way. This exercise will significantly improve the quality of workforce information available to managers. Sickness across the Council has fallen slightly during this period from an average of 4.20 FTE days for the first six months of 2013/14 to 4.18 days this year, which is a reduction of 0.5%. The Council is not on target to reduce sickness by 5% for the year; however, a taskforce to examine potential to improve long term absence management commenced in summer 2014.
- 5. Implement a revised corporate performance management framework which will support continuous improvement and employee development across the Council's services and functions**

How are we doing? - At Head of service level, 100% of business plans have been produced. Training and support is being provided to officers across the Council in preparing their report cards, with the aim to have 100% of report cards in place by

March 2015. Personal objectives were set for all senior officers for 2014/15. Employment Development Reviews were due for completion by the end of August 2014 for all other staff.

In partnership, we said we would implement the recommendations from the review of funding provided by the Council to Third Sector organisations, which will include the development of a new grant making policy to encourage organisations to work towards achieving financial sustainability and the building of capacity across the sector locally

How are we doing? - As the original timetable for the review of the policy was no longer feasible (it was originally proposed for the review to be completed by the end of March 2014 to inform grant allocations in 2015/16), a revised timetable was approved by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on the 16th October. The draft policy and procedures will be ready by end of March 2015 for formal consultation with stakeholders and the final policy will be available by end of July 2015 to inform grant allocations in 2016/17. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee will be consulted throughout the process.

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/LA/3610/14

Cllr Ali Thomas
Leader, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
The Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

18 November 2014

Dear Ali,

In September 2013, the Minister for Local Government and Government Business wrote to you to confirm the assessment process for the Successor Outcome Agreements covering your performance against agreed outcomes from 2013-14 to 2015-16. This matter now falls within my portfolio.

Your eligibility for Outcome Agreement Grant is assessed in two parts. Part 1 is assessed against the Outcome Agreement you developed and agreed with the Welsh Government. This focuses on five outcomes aligned to our Programme for Government. This accounts for 70% of the grant award. I have reviewed Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's performance in 2013-14 and conclude you have qualified for the full 70%.


Part 2 accounts for the remaining 30% and is based on an assessment of the corporate health of the authority. In making such an assessment, my officials form a judgement against the criteria set out in the Guidance as to whether an authority might be required to use part or all of the 30% component to fund a support package.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is not currently subject to support under Part 2 of the Outcome Agreement Guidance and, under the terms of the Guidance therefore qualifies for the 30% component of the Grant. This allocation is conditional. If Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's is subject to intervention, or is required to accept a support package under the terms of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, you would be required to fund any such programme from your Outcome Agreement Grant. The funding would be deducted from the Outcome Agreement Grant for the year or years in which the intervention or support takes place.

As Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council has qualified for the full Grant under Parts 1 and 2 of the Outcome Agreement Guidance, my officials will shortly make a payment of £1,469,000 to your Council.

I am paying this Outcome Agreement Grant using my powers in section 28 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executive, Steve Phillips.

Yours sincerely, *Best wishes,*


Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gwelnidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

27th NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Purpose of Report

This report presents the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2013-2014.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires the Council to provide an annual report by 31st March each year. In this instance it means reporting on 2013-2014 by 31st March 2015. The annual report includes the progress made towards fulfilling its equality objectives and how the Council has met the public sector general duty; to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Annual Report

In order to represent a clearer picture of our work and the links between the equality objectives and the priorities in the Corporate Improvement Plan the publication of this equalities annual report has been brought forward from the usual timetable of March each year to the autumn. This change will pave the way to rationalising and streamlining a number of 'annual reports' into one coherent report for the Council.

Time and circumstances have overtaken those actions we originally identified to help meet the equality objectives. However, as the objectives were linked to the priorities in our Corporate Improvement Plan 2013-2016 we were still able to

make progress across a number of our equality objectives through alternative actions.

Next steps

In light of budgetary and staffing constraints on the Council currently, and in the coming years, it is timely to undertake a review of the equality objectives. The new objectives will be identified through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including those groups we already work with, our partners, elected Members, trade unions and staff.

In setting the objectives we will be mindful not to waste our resources but to concentrate on a few priorities that will have the greatest impact, to align the equality objectives and the priorities in the Corporate Improvement Plan as well as be mindful of our work in the wider context, for example the Single Integrated Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2013-2014

List of Background Papers

The Strategic Equality Plan
The Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan

Officer Contact

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

Mrs Karen Jackson, Corporate Strategy and Performance Management
Coordinator
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STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

2013 – 2014

Introduction

Progress Made Against Our Equality Objectives:

- Objective 1** – Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- Objective 2** – Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- 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
- Objective 4** – Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- Objective 5** – Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements
- Objective 6** – Improve access to Environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Objective 7** – Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics
- Objective 8** – Expand data collection to all protected characteristics with effect from 1st April 2012

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

Next Steps

Appendix

Introduction

During 2013-2014 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.

We have been successful in making progress against some of the equality objectives identified in our Strategic Equality Plan but are also conscious that areas remain where the rate of progress has been limited. This limited progress has been due to a number of factors including the increasing budgetary constraints, a reduced workforce and the consequent need to re-prioritise resources.

However, this does not mean we have abandoned our commitments and principles to the equalities agenda but recognise the need to re-focus our efforts to achieve more with less over the coming years. In order that our equality objectives reflect the current climate we, in association with the various equalities groups will undertake a review of our equality objectives during 2014-2015.

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?

- Members of Disability Network Action Group have not only undergone training to be more aware of hate crime but have also undertaken train the trainer sessions in order for them to deliver hate crime training.
- Raising awareness of and combatting disability hate crime was identified as a priority for our community cohesion work in Neath Port Talbot. Council officers and the managers and staff of the various community first clusters have undergone awareness training.
- A number of racial hate incidents were highlighted to officers and police at a meeting with Black and Minority Ethnic taxi drivers. These incidents were investigated and have now been resolved.

- Increased engagement with the reinvigorated Black and Minority Ethnic Forum has resulted in promoting greater confidence within the communities to raise and address issues.
- As part of our work on community cohesion, training sessions to raise awareness of hate crime were arranged for officers. 83 officers attended these courses, with 74 respondents (97.6%) stating that their understanding of hate crime had increased.
- 2 Train the Trainer sessions were delivered to the Youth Service and an awareness raising session was delivered to the Youth Council.

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 Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop opened in Neath on White Ribbon Day, 25th November 2013, to provide information, advice and guidance to all residents of the County Borough. However, in light of recent funding difficulties there is a need to examine the sustainability of this service.
- A number of engagement events took place around White Ribbon Day on 25th November 2013 and the launch of the One Stop Shop.
- Elected members and officers received a briefing from the Domestic Abuse Coordinator and partners, at which two victims of domestic abuse spoke of their experiences of the services they received.
- A number of multi-agency and single agency domestic abuse training programmes took place during the year, increasing the number of frontline professionals with an understanding of domestic abuse and its impact.
- 356 frontline professionals completed domestic abuse training with 100% of attendees reported increased knowledge after training.
- 4781 young people completed domestic abuse prevention programmes with 80% reporting increased knowledge after the programmes.
- 36 adults completed domestic abuse awareness training programmes and all agreed that their knowledge had increased.

- We continued to work in partnership to deliver school and youth programmes to increase children and young people's awareness of domestic abuse and improve their understanding of its consequences.
- We launched our domestic abuse policy on White Ribbon Day.

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 started to re-develop our website. Of the 3000 pages on our site, monitoring showed that 80% of visits were to just 250 pages. Work to remove out dated pages has begun and 400 pages were removed during the period.
- We are also working with services to ensure that their webpages are fully translated.
- We are working on redesigning and modernising our homepages, and ultimately all our webpages, to make it easier to use and improve access to our services. Between 25 and 30 pages have been completely redesigned including, for example, Councillors and committees, Strategies plans and policies, Have your say. See Appendix.
- Various equality groups have worked with us to finely tune some of our online services including bulky household collections, refuse and recycling equipment requests, van permits, pest control and Neighbourhood Services requests (pot holes, street lighting, bin emptying).
- The Disability Network Action Group has worked with the recycling service in the production of accessible information on the new recycling service.
- We have begun to explore the possibility of including British Sign Language information videos on our website for key services.

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?

- Disability Network Action Group has worked with the recycling service on producing accessible calendars and information on the new scheme being piloted in various locations in the county borough.
- We have developed ‘How to...’ guides on a variety of topics, including producing accessible information, which are available to all staff.

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?

- With the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum, we are beginning to explore what support is available to older members of the community to access services as well as overcome social isolation.
- Due to work pressures, social services equalities group has not met for some time but is to be re-established. The group will oversee the work of gathering and utilising data for more effective identification of gaps in service provision.
- The various projects aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic older people and carers in the county borough, which are delivered by Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council and Neath Port Talbot Carers, are helping to address service accessibility issues within these groups as well as assist with aspects of social isolation.
- We held regular consultation events across all service groups; further events are to be held to target specific needs of service users in relation to equality issues.
- We consulted on our Corporate Parenting Strategy during an information day for young people and the data collected at the event helped inform the strategy.
- Our ‘How to...’ guides have been developed to help services manage a range of communications task and include guides on producing accessible information and organising meetings and events.
- Work has begun on auditing the public information for Learning Disability Services. The results will contribute to the Learning Disability Strategy, which is currently being developed.

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

What did we do?

- 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.
- 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
- 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?

- Elected members and key officers have received training on Equality Impact Assessments, delivered by the Welsh Local Government Association. More specific training in relation to elected members' role in scrutinising equality impact assessments has been arranged for the autumn 2014. We are the first council in Wales where Cabinet Members have participated in this training.
- In association with the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator we arranged number of training sessions on topics including human trafficking, disability hate crime, domestic abuse, safeguarding: Roma awareness and transgender.

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 £150k to improve access to buildings across the county borough.
- We carried out a feasibility study on creating a disabled toilet on the second floor of Port Talbot Civic Centre.
- We made alterations to the reception desk, front elevation and a room at the Cross Community Centre, Pontardawe, as well as installing automatic doors to the lobby.
- Coedffranc Infants, Gnoll Primary and Rhydyfro Primary schools benefited from work to improve access to the buildings and facilities
- Alterations to the public toilets in Crynant were made to create disabled unisex toilets.

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 secured funding for the redevelopment of Port Talbot Parkway Station. Work has already started and through the invaluable input from local disability groups, the new station is on track to be fully accessible.
- Work on Neath Railway Station has ensured that accessing the station particularly for disabled passengers, has been greatly improved.
- We secured funding from the Welsh Government's Vibrant and Viable Places programme which will fund projects in Port Talbot including town centre housing; Parkway Integrated Transport Hub; Plaza Arts and Cultural Centre; and new links connecting the town with the surrounding area. Engagement on these projects with the various equalities groups will ensure that equality issues will be considered appropriately.
- Working with Celtic Leisure programmes offered in the area have included the National Exercise Referral Scheme and disability dance and sport specific projects such as junior Netball and tennis.

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

What did we do?

- Primary school attendance for 2012-2013 academic year was 93.0%, marginally lower than the previous year (93.1%) and in Secondary schools at 92.6%, marginally higher than the previous year (92.3%).
- All schools have signed up to a partnership agreement to raise levels of pupil attendance.
- For the academic year 2013-2014, we have seen a steady increase in attendance in both sectors, as at the end of May 2014, primary schools were 94.58% and secondary schools at 93.41%.
- In the primary sector, we reduced the number of days lost through fixed term exclusions from 191 days to 174 in the 2012-2013 academic year.
- In the secondary sector, we reduced the number of days lost through fixed term exclusions from 1,658 days to 1,568 in the 2012-2013 academic year. We have achieved these reductions by constantly working with schools and using a range of strategies including managed moves to other schools.

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

What did we do?

- We saw a steady improvement in performance across schools in the county borough for year 11 pupils. The wider external points scored (including 'capped' points) by 16 years old has increased on the previous year. Improvement in teaching and learning practices is leading to an improvement in results.
- There have been termly meetings and training days for primary and secondary school literacy co-ordinators and Heads of English departments, to share good practice and useful information.
- Reading strategies and developing resources for GCSE English, training on guided and shared reading, reading behaviours, reading interventions and phonics have been delivered to well over half of the primary schools (including three secondary schools). Training on toolkits for writing, have been delivered to 18 primary schools.

- 20 of our primary schools have received a two day training course on Numicon (an approach to develop children into confident problem-solvers and raise achievement across all ability levels). Feedback to date tells us that we are seeing a positive impact on pupils' numerical understanding and the continued use should improve results overall.
- We held a number of training days to help schools diagnose national test data, highlight areas for improvement and to develop reasoning and mental maths strategies.
- We carried out numeracy audits across all schools and reviewed the recommendations and actions in order to help schools meet the national numeracy framework.
- All primary schools now use and share data from INCERTS (a tool to track pupil assessment). Through analysis of this data correlations are drawn between attainment, targets and vulnerability and appropriate actions identified to address any issues.
- A diagnostic tool to analyse the national maths tests has been devised by our Education Development and Inclusion Service which is now being used nationally.

Objective 8 – Expand data collection to all protected characteristics with effect from 1st 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.

To realise our commitment to developing data in relation to the protected characteristics, and pay and employment data, we have established a development project under the Better Simpler Cheaper Programmes Board.

We have dedicated resources have 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

In December 2013 the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum was re-established and a number of issues and concerns were identified during its inaugural event. Together we have been successful in addressing a variety of issues and concerns, most notably working with Black and Minority Ethnic taxi drivers to tackle problems and racial abuse they were experiencing.

Through our work together the Forum has grown in confidence, even over a short space of time, and is beginning to realise our hope of encouraging people to take a more active role in their communities and Neath Port Talbot as a whole; a Forum member is one our 'faces of recycling' in our advertising campaign.

We have continued to work with the Disability Network Action Group to identify and address issues and barriers for disabled people in accessing services. The Group helped us test our on line applications prior to them going live and has assisted our waste services section in the development of literature for the new recycling service.

We have worked with the Older Persons' Council over many years and their contribution to service planning and delivery has been greatly valued. Regular meetings with Cabinet have provided the opportunity 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 unpaid carers, the impact of Welfare reform and transport, in particular bus services.

Members of the Older Persons' Council have been recognised in the Neath Port Adult Learner Awards for their achievements in improving their own IT skills and their contribution towards encouraging older people to take up learning in later life.

Neath Port Talbot Youth Council meets periodically with the Cabinet to share information gathered by young people and to express their opinions. These meetings have already produced outcomes that benefit both young people and services alike.

A Disability Youth Forum, a sub group of the Youth Council, was set up to consider ideas and issues that face disabled young people.

We are 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 2013-2014](#).

Time and circumstances have overtaken the actions that we originally identified to help meet the objectives. 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.

However, as the objectives were linked to the priorities in our [Corporate Improvement Plan 2013-2016](#) by undertaking the actions identified to meet these priorities we have been able to make progress across a number of our equality objectives.

With the financial and staffing pressures facing us we recognise that actions to meet current objectives have been limited. The objectives that were appropriate at the outset of the Plan now need reviewing against a background of reduced capacity, greater expectations and a changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot.

Identifying and collecting relevant information

We have endeavoured to engage with members of the public, partners, local communities and interest groups to gather information to help shape not only our equality objectives but also our various strategies, policies and plans and to influence the delivery of our services.

Identification and collection of information is a key element of the equality impact assessment process and we are continually working to improve the data we hold in relation to service users and staff. While some services routinely collect and analyse information this is not so consistent across all services. Gaps in knowledge identified during the assessment process are being addressed within individual action plans and will be monitored as part of the assessment process.

Services have been increasingly aware during the last year of the need to engage more with the various communities in the county borough and a range of engagement activities have taken place. However there is still some way to go to routinely involve communities and the public generally, as part of service development.

How we met the general duty

- We completed the first phase of the Pathway to Independence project. The project has been helping individuals to have more control over their lives by giving them access to a greater range of housing options so that they can have their say about where they live and who they live with. This has meant that a number of people have been able to move from residential care to their own accommodation with ongoing support.
- Through our 'Improving Residential Care' partnership with Grŵp Gwalia, Llys y Seren on Moor Road Port Talbot was completed and opened in June 2014. The home has a dementia-friendly design incorporating best practice principles. Llys y Seren was the first residential care home to be completed as part of this partnership.
- Further residential care homes are in the pipeline with preferred sites at Caewern, Neath and Eastern Avenue, Croeserw.
- We processed 287 disabled facilities grants, lower than what we forecasted (310) but have continued to improve on the average time taken to deliver the grant in an average time of 204 days.
- The COASTAL project supported 792 participants with disabilities to achieve one or more positive outcomes which includes gaining a qualification, entering employment or further learning. The project found employment for 13 of the 22 Remploy workers enrolled since December 2013.
- In partnership with the Enfys Foundation, the project has set up and run a canteen for the contractors on the new Swansea University Campus construction site.
- We appointed a recycling officer in March (2014) to undertake community engagement on the promotion of the recycling scheme. Following an engagement meeting a member of the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum agreed to be one of our 'faces of recycling' in a poster campaign.
- The new state of the art school, Awel y Môr, opened its doors in September 2013.
- The reinvigorated Black and Minority Ethnic Forum has begun to establish itself as a significant voice for the various communities and is working to help address issues identified at Forum meetings including the social isolation of older members of the community.

- With the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum, we helped support Black and Minority Ethnic taxi drivers resolve a number of concerns relating to their work.
- We worked with the police to resolve two incidents of racial abuse which were reported during a Black and Minority Ethnic Forum meeting.
- Pupils from Cwrt Sart, Dŵr y Felin and Llangatwg comprehensive schools all took part in activities to mark Black History Month, culminating in the event, 'I Have a Dream', being held in Pontardawe Arts Centre.

Equality Impact Assessments, Training and Procurement

Equality Impact Assessments

We raised the profile of equality impact assessments during 2013-2014 particularly in relation to the budget setting process. We updated the toolkit to ensure that community cohesion was included as a consideration and we ensured that training on undertaking assessments was available for officers and Members.

In light of the advice following the outcome of a number of judicial reviews nationwide we have made the process clearer for officers and members in the reporting, scrutinising and recording of the assessments.

The importance of assessing the impact of the various budget proposals has resulted in the identification of actions to mitigate the impact of the proposals to be identified, fully considered and where appropriate implemented, as was the case in the review of the public library service.

We have been acutely aware of the overall negative impact our budgetary decisions have had on people with protected characteristics and have made every effort to ensure that our identified priority groups, children, young people and vulnerable people are protected from the full impact of the cuts.

Although there has been an improvement, we cannot be complacent and will continue to improve the process to ensure that we are fully aware of the impact our policies and services have on people living, working and visiting Neath Port Talbot

Training

We continue to consider training an important element of our work to meet our equality objectives. Equalities training has always featured in the training programme for both staff and elected members and this year we enhanced training on equality impact assessments.

In addition to the training provided for officers and elected members our training section have arranged and delivered training to the private sector who provide services on our behalf, as well as to private and voluntary partner care providers. Short sessions on equalities were delivered to school governors and head teachers by the education service.

As part of our work on community cohesion with the regional community cohesion coordinator we have arranged and participated in training sessions on a wide range of topics including human trafficking.

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 in depth training has been arranged for 2014.

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](#) for the period 2013-2014 has been reported separately.

Next Steps

During 2014-2015, we will start to review our equality objectives taking into account people's needs and requirements, our and our partner's resources as well as any external pressures placed upon local government. With the budgetary situation facing us over the next few years we must be mindful not to waste our resources but to concentrate on a few priorities that will have the greatest impact. We will take every opportunity to engage fully with people to determine if the current objectives remain relevant and explore the need to identify alternative or additional objectives.

We will be reviewing the employment equality objectives in conjunction with all recognised trade unions during the financial year ending 31 March 2015.

Original Webpage

The screenshot shows the website for Neath Port Talbot Council. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Residents, Business, and Visitors. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail reads: "You are here: Home Page » Your Council » Local Democracy".

The main content area is titled "Local Democracy" and features a sidebar menu on the left with the following items:

- » The Council
- » Political Composition
- » Democratic Structure
- » Councillors
- » Cabinet-Cabinet Boards
- » Regulatory & Other Committees
- » Standards Committee
- » Schedule of Meetings
- » Public Notice of Meetings
- » Access to Meetings-Information
- » Committee Documents
- » Constitution of NPT CBC
- » Contact Details
- » Town-Community Councils
- » Forward Work Programme
- » Members Allowances
- » Electoral Services
- » Scrutiny

The main content area displays:

- Local Democracy »**
- The Council**
- Mayoralty - 2014/2015**

Two photographs are shown side-by-side:

- MAYOR**
- Cllr. H.N.James -
- DEPUTY MAYOR**
- Cllr. A.P.H.Davies -

Below the photos, the text states: "The County Borough Council of Neath Port Talbot comprises 64 elected members representing 42 divisions of Neath, Northern Lliw and Port Talbot. A Divisional Map is available on the website from which you can access the Directory of Local Councillors. Details of the Directorates of the Authority can be obtained through our 'Contact us' pages."

Further down, it says: "There are also 19 Community Councils in the County Borough area."

The final paragraph reads: "The population of the County Borough is 137, 052 with an electorate of 111,087. The next County Borough elections will take place in 2017."

A "Useful Links" box at the bottom right contains the text: "Useful Links: H.M. Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan".

Redesigned Webpage



Welcome to
Neath Port Talbot

A A A | Text Only | Accessibility | Cookies | Translate | Cymraeg

Contact Us

Home Residents Business Visitors

Google™ Custom Search

A to Z of Council Services: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

You are here: Home Page » Your Council » Councillors and Committees

Councillors and Committees



Find your Councillor

Local Councillors, Wards and Contact Details



Agendas, Reports and Minutes

Read committee agendas, reports and minutes



Community Councils

Information about your local Community Council



Committee Dates and Forward Work Programmes

Schedule of Committee Meeting dates and Forward Work Programmes



How your council works

Council, Committees and Management including The Mayor



Scrutiny

How Scrutiny Committees work to ensure transparency of Council business.



Decisions

Browse recent decisions taken by the council



Which Councillors sit on which Committees

Details of committee membership



AMs, MPs and MEPs,

Contact details for your local AMs, MPs and MEPs

More

[Access to Meetings Information](#)


[Member Allowances](#)

[Co-Opted Members Interests](#)

[Constitution of Neath Port Talbot](#)

[Members Interests](#)

Original Webpage



Welcome to
Neath Port Talbot

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Plans & Policies »
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» Western Valleys Strategy
» Asset Management Plan 2011-16
» Pay Policy Statement

Plans and Policies

This section gives you access to our Council Plans and Policies:

The Local Service Board's (LSB) Single Integrated Plan replaces the Community Plan 2010-2020, Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014, Community Safety Plan 2009-2012 and Children and Young Peoples' Plan 2011-2014. It sets out the joint vision, priorities and actions of key organisations in the county borough.

Our [Corporate Improvement Plan](#) is one of the Council's main strategic policy documents, which contains information on what the Council's top priorities are for improvement for the next three years.

Our [Annual Report](#) gives a 'backward look', accounting for our overall performance during the last financial year.

[What our regulators said](#) - Each year, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) is required to produce an Annual Improvement Report (AIR) for each local authority in Wales.

Our [Code of Corporate Governance](#) describes how we take decisions in order to achieve our aims and objectives.

The [Equalities](#) section contains details of the Council's equality schemes and policies.

Our [Older People's Strategy](#) aims to make the best opportunities to improve services and community, volunteer and civic participation.

The [Unitary Development Plan](#) was adopted in March 2008. It is now the development plan for the whole of the Neath Port Talbot area.

The [Western Valleys Strategy](#) aims to improve the lives of people living in our Valley communities.

The [Asset Management Plan 2011-16](#) sets out the Council's proposals for the effective use of its property assets to support the delivery of quality public services and major regeneration initiatives.

Page Details

Last Updated: 12.02.2014 at 13:42

Redesigned Webpage

The screenshot shows the top section of the Neath Port Talbot Council website. At the top left is the council's logo, which includes a castle and the text 'Neath Port Talbot County Borough' and 'Ymunedd Sirol Castell-neath Port Talbot'. To the right of the logo is the text 'Welcome to Neath Port Talbot'. In the top right corner, there are links for 'Text Only', 'Accessibility', 'Cookies', 'Translate', and 'Cymraeg'. Below these links is a 'Contact Us' button with icons for a person, a phone, and an envelope. A navigation menu below the header contains buttons for 'Home', 'Residents', 'Business', and 'Visitors'. To the right of the navigation menu is a 'Google Custom Search' bar. Below the search bar is a 'A to Z of Council Services' section with a list of letters from A to Z. The main content area is titled 'Strategies, Plans and Policies' and contains a grid of six links, each with an icon and a brief description: 'Performance and Improvement' (line graph icon), 'Equalities' (group of people icon), 'Partnership Working' (ABC blocks icon), 'Single Integrated Plan' (map icon), 'Welsh Language Scheme' (globe icon), and 'Armed Forces Covenant' (airplane icon). At the bottom left, there is a 'More' section with a list of links: 'Unitary Development Plan', 'Asset Management Plan', 'Western Valleys Strategy', and 'Pay Policy Statement'. Below this is a 'Page Details' section.

Performance and Improvement
Details of our priorities / assessment of our performance

Equalities
Learn what equality means in Neath Port Talbot

Partnership Working
How the Local Service Board delivers better public services

Single Integrated Plan
The joint vision and actions of key organisations in Neath Port Talbot

Welsh Language Scheme
How we promote parity between the English and Welsh languages


Armed Forces Covenant
Find out how the Armed Forces Covenant can help you

More

- Unitary Development Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Western Valleys Strategy
- Pay Policy Statement


Page Details


Original Webpage



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Neath Port Talbot

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You are here: [Home Page](#) » [Your Council](#) » [Talk to Us](#)

Talk to Us »

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- » [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- » [Ask the Leader](#)
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- » [Complaints](#)

Talk to Us

This section offers you a number of ways to talk to us:

You can Ask the Leader, Councillor Alun Thomas;

The Contact Us section has details of how you can get in touch via phone or email as well as details of the postal addresses of the Council buildings and Civic Centres;

The Local Service Board aims to respond more effectively to citizens needs;

Let us know if you have any comments, compliments or complaints;

The consultation section offers you the opportunity to have your say on our current public consultations.

Page Details

Last Updated: 01.06.2009

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Redesigned Webpage

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The screenshot displays the homepage of the Neath Port Talbot Council website. The header features the council's logo on the left, a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Residents', 'Business', and 'Visitors' buttons, and a search bar. On the right, there are links for 'Text Only', 'Accessibility', 'Cookies', 'Translate', and 'Cymraeg', along with a 'Contact Us' button. Below the header is a 'Have your say' section with a grid of nine service links, each with an icon and a brief description. At the bottom, there is a 'Page Details' section with a 'Last Updated' timestamp, a utility bar with 'Rate This Page', 'Print', 'Text Only', and 'Back To Top' options, and a social media sharing bar. The footer contains 'Terms & Conditions', 'Privacy Statement', 'Help', 'FAQ', 'Text Only', and 'Print' links, and a copyright notice for 2014.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Welcome to *Neath Port Talbot*

Home Residents Business Visitors

Google™ Custom Search

A to Z of Council Services: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

You are here: Home Page » Your Council » Have your say

Have your say

- Budget 2015-2016**
Have your say on the Budget setting process
- Claims against the council**
Making an insurance claim against the Council
- Comment on a Planning application**
View, object and comment on planning applications.
- Consultation**
Comment and provide feedback on topics relevant to Neath Port Talbot
- Contact us**
How to get in touch with us
- Contact your councillor**
Find out who your Councillor is and how to contact them
- Find us on social media**
Contact us on Twitter, Facebook and other social networks,
- Make a compliment or complaint**
Make a comment, compliment or complaint about any of our services
- Register to vote**
Find out how to register to vote in elections

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

27th NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS AND OTHER MATTERS UPDATE

Purpose of Report

This report is to update Members on the position regarding the Welsh Language Standards and other Welsh language matters.

Background

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established the Welsh Language Commissioner as an independent body with the aim to promote and facilitate the Welsh Language.

The Measure also abolished the Welsh Language Board, transferring its functions, including that of monitoring of Welsh Language Schemes, to the Commissioner.

The introduction of Welsh Language Standards was also legislated for under the Measure, with the Commissioner having responsibility for monitoring compliance by identified public bodies.

The Welsh Language Standards

The introduction of Welsh Language Standards was scheduled for November 2014, following debate and a vote in the National Assembly Plenary Session in October/November 2014. However, following the submission of the Welsh Language Commissioner's report on the Standards Investigation, and subsequent advice, the Welsh Government will consult on draft regulations in November 2014. A vote to approve regulations for the Standards will take place during National Assembly Plenary - March 2015.

Response of the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2013-2014.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's response to the annual monitoring report has been received and further information to clarify particular statements has been requested. As in previous years the Response will form the basis of the annual meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner, the date of which has yet to be confirmed. The Response can be found at Appendix 1.

'A survey of the use of the Welsh language on Twitter'

During January 2014 the Welsh Language Commissioner carried out a survey on the use of social media network Twitter by public bodies. The survey was undertaken to establish a clear picture of the current situation and offer guidance and good practice examples.

The Commissioner concluded that 'Twitter is used to convey short messages and communications to the public. The evidence did not show 'live'; or 'instant' use of the accounts. There are no obvious reasons therefore for not translating such messages and providing them in Welsh and English at the same time.' The survey report can be found at Appendix 2.

This Survey report has been circulated to relevant officers and we await the amended advice document 'Technology, Websites and Software: Considering the Welsh Language' which will include a specific advice on Web2.0 and Social Media.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Response of the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Annual Monitoring Report 2013-2014.

Appendix 2 - A survey of the use made of the Welsh language on Twitter.

List of Background Papers

Welsh Language Standards Investigation - response documents.

Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report 2013-2014.

Officer Contact

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

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Mrs Karen Jackson, Corporate Strategy and Performance Management
Coordinator

Tel: 01639 763247 or e-mail: k.jackson@npt.gov.uk



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Welsh Language Scheme – Response of the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Annual Monitoring Report 2013-2014



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2	Standard Statement	1
	2.2 Annual Monitoring Reports	2
3	Comments on performance	2
4	Summary	6

1 Baseline Information

Baseline Information		Further comment
Approval date of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Welsh Language Scheme	27/07/2007	
Senior Officer responsible for implementing the Welsh Language Scheme	Corporate Strategies Co-ordinator	
Date Annual Monitoring Report due to be Received	30.06.14	The report was received on 04.08.14, following correspondence that explained that there would be some delay.

2 Standard Statement

- 2.1 The main aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner (the Commissioner) is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. This is done by highlighting the fact that the Welsh language has official status in Wales and by imposing standards on organisations. This, in turn, will lead to the establishment of rights for Welsh speakers.
- 2.1.1 Two principles underpin the work of the Commissioner:
- The Welsh language shall not be treated less favourably than English in Wales
 - Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they wish to do so.
- 2.1.2 Over time, new powers to impose and enforce standards on organisations will come into force through subordinate legislation. Until that time, the Commissioner will continue to monitor statutory language schemes by virtue of powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 2.1.3 The Welsh Language Commissioner may investigate failure to implement a language scheme, allegations of interference with an individual's freedom to use the Welsh language in Wales, and, in future, complaints regarding the failure of

organisations to comply with standards.

- 2.1.4 The Welsh Language Commissioner will be able to regulate organisations robustly and consistently by means of standards, and may decide to impose a civil penalty on an organisation if it does not comply with a relevant requirement.

2.2 Annual Monitoring Reports

- 2.2.1 Language Schemes contain a commitment to prepare and submit a monitoring report on an annual basis. To all intents and purposes, an Annual Monitoring Report is a self-assessment exercise. In responding to them, the Welsh Language Commissioner will expect organisations to provide evidence of compliance with their language schemes.
- 2.2.2 With regard to Language Schemes, the Commissioner's practice will be to highlight risks and influence performance with a view to avoiding failure.
- 2.2.3 All responses to annual monitoring reports are published with a view to ensuring transparency and easy access to performance information.

3 Comments on performance

Service Planning and Delivery

Comments on performance		Action required
	You report that new aspects have been included within the equality impact assessments' criteria since March 2014 that will further the consideration given to the Welsh language.	Please provide a copy of the new equality impact assessment.
Website	The Council is in the process of updating the content of its corporate website. Part of the work is ensuring the availability of Welsh content, targeting, in the first place, the most popular pages with visitors to the website. It is also explained that self-service features will be added to the website.	Please provide a copy of any new scheme driving this work, as well as targets for progress. Are all of these self-service features available bilingually?

Dealing with Other Organisations and Procurement

Comments on performance		Action required
Procurement	You note that the procurement service is working to ensure a consistent attitude towards procurement across the Council, and that this includes consideration of the Welsh language in	Can the Council provide an example of the Welsh language being included in a specific way in a contract awarded during the year?

	all cases.	
Care	<p>The Council continues to conduct a survey of residential care providers. The results still vary with obvious areas to target for improvement, but there is also progress to be seen with a few aspects of provision.</p> <p>Reference is also made to the draft action plan in place to implement the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words' scheme.</p>	Please provide a copy of the action plan, for our records.

Welsh Language Frontline Services and Linguistic Skills

	Comments on performance	Action required
WLI 2	<p><i>Number and percentage of posts in the main reception area, contact centre or one-stop-shop designated as being Welsh essential and the percentage of those filled by bilingual speakers.</i></p> <p>This indicator was reported. The same number of Welsh speakers work in the Council's contact centre as the One-Stop-Shops. It was explained that the Welsh language provision has improved in Pontardawe, since opening the one-stop-shop.</p>	
WLI 4 (a)	<p><i>Number and percentage of staff (Welsh speakers and learners) who have received training in the Welsh language to a specific level of competence. And, Number and percentage of staff who have received language awareness training.</i></p> <p>A partial report was given on this indicator. Two members of staff are currently receiving training.</p>	<p>We wish to discuss training and further Council plans at the feedback meeting. Please provide any relevant plans beforehand.</p>
Language Awareness	<p>17 members of staff attended the customer care and telephone skills course, which includes an element of language awareness and awareness of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.</p>	

Practice and Consolidation Programme	The Welsh language has been considered throughout the qualifying process by following the practice consolidation programme. The consolidation programme is available to follow through the medium of Welsh.	
WLI 5	<p><i>Number and percentage of staff within the organization who are able to speak Welsh by i) department; ii) grade; iii) workplace.</i></p> <p>This indicator was reported, and detailed tables of information were provided. Information was recorded when officers were appointed, but a data updating exercise is in the pipeline at present to improve the information held.</p>	Please provide more information about the forthcoming work to update data.
Youth Services and the Children and Young People's Partnership	Detailed information was provided on the activities of the Youth Service and the Children and Young People's Partnership.	

Standard of Welsh Language Services

Comments on performance		Action required
WLI 6	<p><i>Number of complaints received regarding implementation of the Scheme and the percentage of complaints dealt with in accordance with the organisation's corporate standards.</i></p> <p>Information was provided about the complaints received and dealt with during 2013-14. Each complaint was dealt with within corporate standards. Information on the exact nature of the complaints was provided as well as the Council's improvement actions, including the matter of penalty notices that has been now been resolved.</p>	

Analysing Performance and Publishing Information

Comments on performance	Action required
<p>The Council provided an analysis of last year's successes and a summary of the areas needing improvement. We would tend to agree with the Council's analysis of the areas needing attention. We knew that these matters had been included in the Council's amended Action Plan, but we would like to take advantage of the opportunity to get a further update at our feedback meeting.</p>	

Appendix 1

Comments on performance	Action required
<p>3a</p> <p>The Welsh Language Scheme Corporate Action Plan for 2013-2016 was reported.</p> <p>You explain that current limitations on recruitment mean that implementing this action plan has been delayed. However, a quiet recruitment period offers the chance to consider the advice and guidance given, so that the advice is in place for the next recruitment campaign.</p>	

4 Summary

Further information required	Please provide a copy of the new equality impact assessment.	Within 30 working days of receiving the response
Service Planning and Delivery Website	Please provide a copy of any new scheme driving this work, as well as targets for progress.	
Procurement	Are all of these self-service features available bilingually? Can the Council provide an example of the Welsh being included in a specific way in a contract awarded during the year?	
Care	Please provide a copy of the action plan, for our records.	
WLI 5	Please provide more information about the work in the pipeline to update data.	
Questions that must be answered	We wish to discuss training and further Council plans at the feedback meeting. Please provide any relevant plans beforehand.	
WLI 4 (a)		



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

A survey of the use made of the Welsh language on Twitter

Dylan Jones

September 2014

1. Summary

This report outlines the main findings and conclusions of the checking and inspection exercise of the use made of the Welsh Language on Twitter.

The arrangements of 30 bodies were examined, including 22 Local Authorities, three National Park Authorities, the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Community Housing Cymru and two Social Housing Providers, namely Cartrefi Conwy and Wales and West Housing.

The findings of the exercise show that 13% of organizations maintain bilingual accounts, 40% maintain separate Welsh and English accounts and 47% maintain accounts in English only with a few Welsh messages appearing from time to time.

2. Background

The objective of the exercise was to examine the existing practices in organizations regarding maintaining Twitter accounts to establish a clear picture of the current situation and offer guidance and examples of good practice.

The exercise took place in January 2014.

3. Methodology

The aim of this exercise was to examine how 30 organizations used Twitter accounts. This only considered the accounts of the organizations noted above.

It was a desk exercise and none of the above organizations were contacted directly. A personal Twitter account was opened to follow the corporate accounts of each of the organizations noted above and any other accounts belonging to these organizations that we came across. The organizations' websites were also used to obtain further information such as how many Twitter accounts they had and, specifically, the various departments within those organizations.

The aim was to record the following information about each organization:

- Language of the corporate account
- Number of accounts
- Number of Welsh accounts

- Number of English accounts
- Number of followers
- Number of Welsh followers
- Number of English followers
- Language used to respond to comments
- Use of the accounts
- Were the Welsh and English accounts similar?
- Were the bilingual accounts fully bilingual?

Due to the nature of Twitter, the number of times an organization used its accounts was not recorded, for example on a daily basis etc but information was collected regarding the number of times organizations maintaining separate Welsh and English accounts had tweeted since setting up their profiles.

4. Findings

4.1 Corporate Accounts

Each of the organizations in question had at least one account. Of those, 4 (13%) were bilingual, i.e. Welsh and English appearing on the same account. 12 (40%) were Welsh and English, i.e. individual Welsh and English accounts, and 14 (47%) were English only accounts. However it should be noted that some Welsh comments did occasionally appear on some accounts, but not in sufficient numbers to be considered a bilingual service.

Local Authorities

- 10 (45%) English only account
- 2 (10%) bilingual account
- 10 (45%) separate Welsh and English accounts

National Parks

- 1 separate Welsh and English account
- 1 bilingual account
- 1 English only account

The following gives an indication of the practices of six organizations and the number of accounts and followers it was possible to obtain information about. Those noted are followers of the corporate accounts only. More detailed results are included in Appendix 1. Please note

that the column "Language used to respond to comments" has been completed in all cases as "Language of enquiry" - but it should be noted that evidence of enquiries in Welsh was not present in every case.

4.2 Case Studies

The figures below were correct on January 2014. The following accounts were identified, but it is possible that the organization administers other accounts as well.

Monmouthshire County Council

- 15 English only accounts
- 8837 followers

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

- 6 English only accounts
- 4048 followers

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

- 24 English only accounts
- 5544 followers

Wrexham County Borough Council

- 13 accounts (3 Welsh and 10 English)
- 185 Welsh followers
- 7943 English followers

Swansea City Council

- 32 accounts (4 Welsh and 28 English)
- 114 Welsh followers
- 15100 English followers

Newport City Council

- 5 English only accounts
- 5000 followers

Welsh Government

- Separate Welsh and English Corporate Accounts
- 2442 Welsh followers
- 28200 English followers

4.3 Separate Welsh and English accounts

As noted above, 12 organizations maintain separate Welsh and English accounts. The percentage and number of times those organizations have tweeted on their Welsh and English accounts since setting them up is noted in Appendix 2. Without further research it cannot be guaranteed that all tweets on the Welsh accounts were in Welsh. Please see Other Surveys at 4.5 and compare Wrexham Council numbers for example. These figures were correct on 31 January 2014.

There could be a number of reasons why a great deal more tweeting took place in English than in Welsh.

- Welsh and English account commencement dates do not correspond;
 - A greater number of the public tweet with the organization in English, therefore the organization responds in the language of the enquiry;
 - The organization retweeting a message originally tweeted by another organization and which was not available in Welsh, e.g. Arriva Trains, Met Office warning;
- and
- A failure on the part of the organization to tweet in Welsh on occasions.

Included at Appendix 3 is a sample of a day's tweeting by the organizations which provide separate Welsh and English accounts, including the number of Welsh Tweets, the number of English Tweets and the number of corresponding Tweets in both languages. It should be noted that the dates were chosen at random and the only consideration was that the organization had tweeted more than 5 times, excluding Snowdonia National Park, as only two tweets were identified on one day. It should also be noted that the number of retweets or responses to enquiries from the public that took place have been taken into account in the %, e.g. Conwy Council:

Conwy Council	31 January 2014	11 Welsh tweets	22 English tweets	100%
---------------	-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	------

There are 11 more tweets in English than in Welsh. The 11 tweets in question are English retweets from other organizations or responses to English only enquiries from members of the public. The 11 tweets in Welsh correspond to the 11 tweets in English which should be translated, giving 100% compliance.

4.4 Use of accounts

The use of Twitter accounts could be described as an additional notice-board to that which is already available, such as websites and Facebook accounts. Examples of use are general news, events, changes to bin collections, retweeted news and events from other organizations, enquiries from members of the public and bad weather warnings or roadwork warnings.

The use of enquiries from the public was not as great as had been assumed, therefore there was no concrete evidence of instantaneous use which could cause problems with translation. There were examples of conversations with the public and the custom was to respond to enquiries in the original language of the comment.

4.5 Other surveys

Kevin Scannell, Professor of Mathematics and Physics at the University of St Louis, Missouri, has undertaken a mapping exercise in respect of tweeters in all Celtic languages and beyond. He has developed a website indigenoustweets.com which includes a table of the top 500 users who tweet in Welsh. 8 of the organizations which are part of the Commissioner's Survey appear in the top 500. The information included in the table in Appendix 4 was extracted on 5 February 2014.

5. Conclusions and Good Practice

Generally, Twitter is used to convey brief, concise messages and communications to the public. The posts were pre-planned rather than instantaneous and urgent. Therefore, there are no apparent reasons for not translating such messages and providing them in Welsh and in English simultaneously on corporate accounts.

A matter which needs further discussion is how messages should be placed on the accounts. The custom is to put the Welsh version first on a bilingual account, but because Twitter shows more recent messages on the top of the screen, the English will be read first as the reader will usually scroll down from the top.

Twitter is an increasingly important method of communicating with the public, therefore it is vitally important that corporate messages are communicated in Welsh and in English to the same timescales.

Twitter is no different to any other form of conveying corporate messages. Looking at the survey findings, we are not convinced that the 'speedy' nature of the media impairs the ability of organizations to plan messages beforehand. The survey shows that a substantial proportion of the organizations in question are already able to do this, therefore the remainder should follow the same pattern.

Cardiff Council maintains separate Welsh and English accounts, and is one example of good practice in maintaining this method. It is evident from following both accounts that forward planning does take place which is proving to be an effective method of maintaining separate Welsh and English streams which mirror each other in content. The advantage is that the Welsh account is separate and easy to follow. The disadvantage is that it is not possible to check whether every message in English is also on the Welsh account without having to follow the English version as well.

On the other hand Gwynedd Council maintains a fully bilingual account apart from when a monolingual message is received, in which case the Council responds in the language of that enquiry. Two things are worth noting with this type of account: Firstly, and as stated above, the English message appears at the top when the Welsh version is placed first. Secondly, as the logo and the font are the same in Welsh and English, it is not easy to see the Welsh version first. As the illustration below shows, there is no difference between how the two languages appear. Therefore it should be considered whether it is necessary to differentiate between Welsh and English in accounts of this type.



Gwynedd Council@CyngorGwynedd 2 hrs

Want to learn about Gwynedd's history and culture? Why not visit one of the county's museums or galleries <http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/museums>



Gwynedd Council@CyngorGwynedd 2 hrs

Eisiau dysgu mwy am hanes a diwylliant Gwynedd? Beth am alw heibio un o amgueddfeydd neu orielau'r sir <http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/amgueddfeydd>

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Attachment 1 — January perceptions 2014

Organization	Language of the corporate account	Number of accounts	Number of Welsh language accounts	Number of English language accounts	Followers	Welsh language followers	English language followers	Language response to comments
Gwynedd Council	Bilingual				6408			Language of the enquiry
Ceredigion Council	English and Welsh				2767	665	2102	Language of the enquiry
Denbighshire Council	English and Welsh				4281	171	4110	Language of the enquiry
Monmouthshire Council	English	15	0	15	8837			Language of the enquiry
Carmarthenshire Council	Bilingual				2224			Language of the enquiry
Pembrokeshire Council	English				6226			Language of the enquiry
Powys Council	English and Welsh				5171	353	4818	Language of the enquiry
Flintshire Council	English and Welsh				5423	166	5257	Language of the enquiry
Anglesey Council	English and Welsh				3289	1006	2283	Language of the enquiry

A survey of the use made of the Welsh Language on Twitter - Attachments

Organization	Language of the corporate account	Number of accounts	Number of Welsh language accounts	Number of English language accounts	Followers	Welsh language followers	English language followers	Language response to comments
Vale of Glamorgan Council	English				7714			Language of the enquiry
Blaenau Gwent CBC	English	6	0	6	4048			Language of the enquiry
Neath Port Talbot CBC	English	24	0	24	5544			Language of the enquiry
Conwy CBC	English and Welsh				3632	303	3329	Language of the enquiry
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	English				2508			Language of the enquiry
Bridgend CBC	English				3424			Language of the enquiry
RCT CBC	English and Welsh				4440	61	4379	Language of the enquiry
Torfaen CBC	English				5831			Language of the enquiry
Wrexham CBC	English and Welsh	13	3	10	8128	185	7943	Language of the enquiry
Caerphilly CBC	English				5530			Language of the enquiry

Organization	Language of the corporate account	Number of accounts	Number of Welsh language accounts	Number of English language accounts	Followers	Welsh language followers	English language followers	Language response to comments
Cardiff Council	English and Welsh				24643	1143	23500	Language of the enquiry
Swansea City Council	English and Welsh	34	4	28	15214	114	15100	Language of the enquiry
Newport City Council	English	5	0	5	5000			Language of the enquiry
Snowdonia National Park	English and Welsh	2	1	1	6920	718	6202	Language of the enquiry
Brecon Beacons National Park	English	1	0	1	2506			Language of the enquiry
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	Bilingual	1			5346			Language of the enquiry
Welsh Government	English and Welsh				30642	2442	28200	Language of the enquiry
Cartrefi Conwy	English	1		1	200			Language of the enquiry

Organization	Language of the corporate account	Number of accounts	Number of Welsh language accounts	Number of English language accounts	Followers	Welsh language followers	English language followers	Language response to comments
Community Housing Cymru	English	1		1	3137			Language of the enquiry
Wales and West Housing	English	1		1	2447			Language of the enquiry
Natural resources Wales	Bilingual	1			4286			Language of the enquiry

Attachment 2 — Numbers and percentage of tweets from separate Welsh language and English language accounts

Organization	Number of Welsh language tweets	Number of English language tweets
Ceredigion Council	1077 (44%)	1337 (56%)
Denbighshire Council	2025 (46%)	2366 (54%)
Powys Council	1339 (37%)	2295 (63%)
Flintshire Council	1746 (26%)	3590 (74%)
Anglesey Council	2065 (46%)	2462 (54%)
Conwy Council	1310 (47%)	1502 (53%)
RCT CBC	383 (13%)	2642 (87%)
Wrexham CBC	4609 (36%)	8248 (64%)
Cardiff Council	7759 (31%)	17400 (69%)
Swansea City Council	126 (2%)	5879 (98%)
Snowdonia National Park	471 (40%)	606 (60%)
Welsh Government	3445 (38%)	5576 (62%)

Attachment 3 — A day of tweeting from separate Welsh language and English language accounts

Organization	Date	Welsh tweets	English tweets	Corresponding %
Ceredigion Council	01/02/2014	7	7	100%
Powys Council	10/01/2014	3	10	100%
Flintshire Council	05/02/2014	1 but this was in English	7	0%
Anglesey Council	04/02/2014	9	8	100%
Conwy Council	31/01/2014	11	22	100%
RCT CBC	05/02/2014	0	5	0%
Wrexham CBC	28/01/2014	3	13	75%
Cardiff Council	06/02/2014	3	10	100%
Swansea City Council	21/01/2014	0	9	0%
Snowdonia National Park	03/02/2014	2	2	100%
Welsh Government	04/02/2014	4	13	33%

Attachment 4 — Organizations which appear on the top 500 indigenoustweets.com website (Figures 5 February 2014)

Organization	Welsh tweets	Total tweets	% Welsh	Position	Which type of account
Cardiff Council	7424	7784	95.8	21	English and Welsh
Gwynedd Council	4178	8798	47.5	76	Bilingual
Welsh Government	3215	3445	93.3	117	Bilingual
Carmarthenshire Council	3179	7181	44.3	121	Bilingual
Anglesey Council	1863	2082	89.5	263	English and Welsh
Wrexham CBC	1494	4609	32.4	344	English and Welsh
Powys Council	1296	1339	96.9	421	English and Welsh
Conwy Council	1245	1320	94.3	448	English and Welsh

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POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND THE HEAD OF BUSINESS STRATEGY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

27TH NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

WELFARE REFORM – LOW INCOME FAMILIES PROJECT – ADVICE LINE

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To report the outcomes of the evaluation of one of the three pilot projects that have been undertaken as part of the Local Service Board's - Low Income Families Project.

BACKGROUND:

The Council, on behalf of the Local Service Board, has drawn down European Social Fund Grant in the sum of £590, 948 which has been used to fund new ways of working in collaboration. A condition of the Grant is the completion of an evaluation of the impact of the use of the Grant money which has to be completed by 31st December 2014.

The monies drawn down have funded the following three Projects:

1. Low Income Families Project (three pilot projects)
2. Promoting the Independence & Wellbeing of Vulnerable Adults – Intermediate Care (AFIC)
3. Vulnerable Families

On the 16th October the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board received reports on the outcomes of two of the three pilot projects initiated under the Low Income Families Project (The Hub at Pontardawe; and the collaboration between the Library Service and Job Centre Plus). The purpose of today's report is to provide Members with the outcomes of the evaluation of the third pilot project initiated under the Low Income Families Project – a dedicated advice line and triage service for benefits advice (executive summary and full evaluation report is attached at Appendix 1).

Context:

The Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) is part of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate. Their role is to provide both first tier and second tier services in relation to benefits maximisation. They offer training on all aspects of the benefits system both to staff of the Council and the third sector working in partnership with them. They also respond to requests for tailor made training from external organisations for which a reasonable charge is made.

They provide advice, information, casework and advocacy in a number of ways, the telephone advice line being the most recent innovation. Outreach surgeries are delivered in most parts of the County Borough.

A lot of the work involves Tribunal Representation. In the first half of 2014/15 (1st April -30th September) they represented 168 people at appeals with a success rate of 75 - 80%.

If people are not able to attend one of their surgeries or deal with their problems over the telephone, they can usually arrange a home visit for them, although they may have to wait a little longer but they will always try to accommodate any deadlines which relate to their case.

In 2013-14, the WRU raised or preserved over £6.7 million in benefit income for people living in Neath Port Talbot.

Demand for the Welfare Rights Unit (WRU):

The Welfare Rights Unit receives a large number of calls and when customers did get through they were often not able to speak to an advisor straight away and were having to wait anything up to 2 weeks for a call back.

As well as the high demand for advice from the Welfare Rights Unit, the Unit was also dealing with a large number of appeals. 629 demands in June 2013 were recorded by the Welfare Rights Team.

The Welfare Rights Unit did previously run an advice line operating 4 mornings per week (2 hours each time) but the demand for it could not be met. A large number of messages were being taken as the staff taking the calls were not able to put calls through to the Welfare Rights Officers due to their volume of work. This led to long delays in people being called back as the officers had such a large caseload.

Due to the high volume of work within the Welfare Rights Unit, customers were unable to get through to the Welfare Rights Unit on the phone and were finding that the voice mail was full so they could not leave a message. There were reports from the Council's Contact Centre that only 1 in 3 calls were able to be put through to the Welfare Rights Unit.

The Pilot Project

On 2nd December, a new dedicated advice line operated by two Welfare Rights Benefit Advisors in the Council's Contact Centre was launched for a pilot period of 6 months. The pilot would enable citizens requiring initial benefits advice to improve their financial situation at a much earlier point and reduce the impact of longer term hardship. It was also hoped that the pilot would free up capacity within the Welfare Rights Unit to deal with the complex cases that require more intensive intervention.

The two advisors are employed on a full time basis and operate the advice line from 8.30 – 4.30, Monday to Friday. Calls come to the advisors via a number of routes. Calls that come into the Council's Contact Centre asking about any form of benefits or welfare assistance are transferred directly to the advisors. Calls that are received by the Welfare Rights Unit which are new clients, are also transferred to the advisors.

The key findings of the evaluation of this pilot were:

- There has been a positive impact, both on the Welfare Rights Unit and Contact Centre as well as on outcomes for clients
- The advice line are dealing with an average of 407 calls per month
- The main reason for customers contacting the advice line is for a benefits check
- 177 clients were dealt with one stop

- 210 clients required involvement from the Welfare Rights Unit after receiving help from the advice line advisors (attending a surgery, a home visit, to see the Macmillan Specialist or another type of referral). This represents 23% of all actions taken for clients who received advice from the advisors
- 338 clients were passed onto a benefits agency (a range of departments within the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs). They received initial advice via the advice line advisors but then then needed to contact the Department of Work and Pensions in order to be able to resolve their query. This represents 37% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- 157 clients were referred onto other supporting organisations, groups or charities. This represents 17% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- For 81% of those interviewed, the council was the first agency they thought to contact when looking for advice or support
- 87% of those interviewed said they would be likely to use the advice line or similar services for future queries
- 88% of those interviewed said they felt more confident in dealing with their situation further to receiving advice
- 20% of those interviewed were successful in claiming extra benefits. 22% of those asked were still awaiting the result of their claims
- The number of messages being taken for the Welfare Rights Unit has fallen by 51%, since the start of the advice line, freeing up their capacity to deal with more complex cases
- Calls into the Welfare Rights Unit have fallen by 15.5% since the advice line was launched
- Welfare Rights Officers/ staff have been very positive about the advice line and feel that clients are getting a much better service as they can access help straight away
- Staff morale in the Welfare Rights Unit has improved
- The Contact Centre are putting 30% fewer calls through to the Welfare Rights Unit than prior to the advice line running

RECOMMENDATION:

To endorse the following actions:

1. To extend the pilot to end of March.
2. Officers to undertake a further analysis of the totality of advice calls coming into the Council and to look at how we may provide a more efficient way of dealing with these calls enabling better access to advice for citizens.
3. Officers to explore sources of funding available to sustain any changes made to service delivery arrangements.

REASON FOR PROPOSED DECISION:

To enable officers to explore options for sustaining improvement work beyond 31st March 2015 whilst maintaining current standards of service delivery.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Evaluation Report – Advice Line

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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

WELFARE REFORM – LOW INCOME FAMILIES PROJECT (ADVICE LINE)

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

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

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

Economic Prosperity	Positive
Education and Lifelong Learning	Positive
Better Health and Well Being	Positive
Environment and Transport	Positive
Crime and Disorder	Positive

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	Neutral
Sustainable Development	Positive
Equalities	Positive
Social Inclusion	Positive

(c) **Consultation**

This item is not subject to external consultation.

**Building Capacity and Capability to accelerate
service transformation from the citizens'
perspectives**

EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Low Income Families Project

Advice Line

October 2014



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pilot Project No.2 – Dedicated advice line and triage service for benefits advice

Aim

To provide an advice line and triage service for benefits advice.

Context

The Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) is part of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate. Their role is to provide both first tier and second tier services in relation to benefits maximisation. They offer training on all aspects of the benefits system both to staff of the Council and the third sector working in partnership with them. They also respond to requests for tailor made training from external organisations for which a reasonable charge is made.

They provide advice, information, casework and advocacy in a number of ways, the telephone advice line being the most recent innovation. Outreach surgeries are delivered in most parts of the County Borough.

A lot of their work involves Tribunal Representation. In the first half of 2014/15 (1st April -30th September) they represented 168 people at appeals with a success rate of 75 - 80%.

If people are not able to attend one of their surgeries or deal with their problems over the telephone, they can usually arrange a home visit for them, although they may have to wait a little longer but they will always try to accommodate any deadlines which relate to their case.

In 2013-14, the WRU raised or preserved over £6.7 million in benefit income for people living in Neath Port Talbot.

Demand for the Welfare Rights Unit (WRU)

The WRU receives a large number of calls and when customers did get through, they were often not able to speak to an advisor straight away and were having to wait anything up to 2 weeks for a call back.

As well as the high demand for advice from the WRU, the Unit was also dealing with a large number of appeals. 629 demands in June 2013 were recorded by the Welfare Rights Team.

The WRU did previously run an advice line operating 4 mornings per week (2 hours each time) but the demand for it could not be met. A large number of

messages were being taken as the staff taking the calls were not able to put calls through to the Welfare Rights Officers due to their volume of work. This led to long delays in people being called back as the Officers had such a large caseload.

Evidence from the Council's Contact Centre showing the demand to be put through to the Welfare Rights Unit

Due to the high volume of work within the WRU, customers were unable to get through to the WRU on the phone and were finding that the voice mail was full so they could not leave a message. There were reports from the Council's Contact Centre that only 1 in 3 calls were able to be put through to the WRU.

The Pilot Project

On 2nd December, a new dedicated advice line operated by two Welfare Rights Benefit Advisors in the Council's Contact Centre was launched for a pilot period of 6 months. The pilot would enable citizens requiring initial benefits advice to improve their financial situation at a much earlier point and reduce the impact of longer term hardship. It was also hoped that the pilot would free up capacity within the WRU to deal with the complex cases that require more intensive intervention.

The two advisors are employed on a full time basis and operate the advice line from 8.30 – 4.30, Monday to Friday. Calls come to the advisors via a number of routes. Calls that come into the Council's Contact Centre asking about any form of benefits or welfare assistance are transferred directly to the advisors. Calls that are received by the WRU which are new clients, are also transferred to the advisors.

Findings

2443 calls were received for the advice line during the 6 month pilot period (2nd December – 30th May 2014). Across the 6 months of the pilot project, an average of 407 calls were received each month.

826 new cases were dealt with by the advisors during the pilot period. On average they dealt with 138 new cases each month. Clients contacted the advice line about a wide range of issues. Benefit checks far outnumbered any other reason for calling the advice line, constituting over 35% of the enquiries made (298 enquiries).

The total number of calls received by the Welfare Rights unit fell by 15.5% during the period of the advice line running when compared with April- Sept 2013 (4307 calls prior, 3639 calls during the advice line running).

Of the 3639 calls received by the WRU, 2273 (62%) were processed with straight away, either by being transferred straight to a WRO, resolved by admin staff, transferred straight to the advice line or booked into surgery. This

was an increase from 2158 calls (50% of calls) prior to the advice line commencing.

Of the 1085 calls who asked to or needed to speak with a WRO (message, taken for a specific WRO, referral to a WRO, transferred to WRO or transferred to WRO answer machine) 407 (38%) were transferred straight to the relevant person compared to 25% in the pre advice line period. 678 of those who had contacted the WRU had to wait for a call back (a fall of almost 13% when compared to the pre advice line data).

The number of messages being taken for WRU staff fell significantly during the 6 months of the advice line running. 508 messages were taken for WROs, which was a fall of 51% when compared to the pre advice line period.

The number of referrals for WROs also fell significantly during the period of the advice line running. This figure fell from 207 referrals (inc referrals for home visits) to 101 referrals (a fall of over 50%). Prior to the advice line running, if the admin staff were unable to deal with an enquiry, it would have had to be referred to a WRO. Many of those enquiries are now transferred to the advice line instead, reducing the workload on WRO staff and preventing them from having to deal with some of the new cases.

An average of 135 calls per month were being put through from the Council's Contact Centre to the WRU. This was a drop of 30% when compared to April-September 2013 and is therefore freeing up capacity within the WRU. The Contact Centre have reported that they no longer have difficulty in putting calls through to the WRU. However, the Contact Centre is not always able to put calls through to the advisors based there, as the advisors can be on one call for a long period of time due to the complex nature of some cases, or there are occasions where there may only be one advisor present.

177 clients were dealt with one stop and required no further action having spoken to the advice line advisors. Benefit checks were the cases most likely to be dealt with one stop although a range of other cases were also dealt with in one stop. A benefit check enables the advisor to look at a client's circumstances and determine if they are in receipt of any benefits which they are entitled to in order to maximise the benefits that they can receive.

210 clients required involvement from the WRU further to receiving help from the advice line advisors – this included to attend a surgery, a home visit, to see the Macmillan Specialist or another type of assistance. This represents 23% of all actions taken for clients who received advice from the advisors. They were then passed to the WRU for further work. Whilst these clients have not been dealt with in one stop, the fact that the advisors are part of the WRU and are therefore able to make appointments in surgeries or direct referrals to the WRU, makes the process easier for callers and is another way of dealing with clients, 'in house' (as the WRU is part of NPTCBC).

338 clients were directed to a benefits agency (a range of departments within the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and

Customs). They received initial advice via the advice line advisors but then needed to contact the DWP in order to be able to resolve their query. This may have involved requesting a form, making a telephone claim or the first stage of the claim process. This represents 37% of actions taken for clients who received advice.

157 clients were referred onto other supporting organisations, groups or charities which included; Food Bank, Housing benefits/ Council Tax, Citizens Advice Bureau, NEST, NPT Homes, ENFYS, Credit Union, Blue Badge, Debt Advisor, ATOS, Social Services, Landlord, Shelter, MIND and to a doctor. (Any other referrals were only made on one occasion). This represents 17% of actions taken further to receiving advice.

Client Feedback

47 clients who had contacted the advice line were telephoned at a later date to ask for their feedback on the service. Benefit checks outnumbered any other query being made with 31% of queries being for this reason. Clients interviewed were also asked if their case was resolved at the time of speaking to an advisor (ie. was it dealt with one stop). 54% of cases were resolved one stop.

Of the 47 clients contacted for feedback, 88% of those interviewed felt more confident in dealing with their situation after having received support. There were several reasons for this. The general themes for this were related to clients having been given more information so knowing where they stood and feeling like they had somewhere else to go for help which had alleviated some of their concerns.

In many cases it is not known whether clients had an increased income due to acting on the advice received as this is not recorded unless the client rings the advice line again for further assistance or to advise them of the outcome. It can also take many months for the outcome to be known if a client is waiting for the outcome of an appeal or application for benefits. However, a number of the 47 clients (10 clients) contacted for feedback were successful in claiming benefits as a result of the advice that they had received.

Clients interviewed were asked if they had contacted any other agencies based on the advice that they were given. In these cases, to enable their queries or needs to be addressed, clients had been signposted to an agency that would be able to help. 28% (14 people) of those interviewed had contacted another agency. 63% had not (no data for 9% of cases).

Clients were asked if they had previously contacted another agency about the same issue. Only 19% (9 clients) had done this. 81% contacted the council as their first port of call.

Important to the outcomes that clients experience is their understanding of the advice that they received and how helpful they found it. 92% of those interviewed understood either all or most of the advice that they were given

and 96% of those asked said that they found the advice that they were given either very helpful or somewhat helpful.

87% of those interviewed said that they would be likely to use services such as the advice line for other issues or concerns which demonstrates that they must have found their experience to be a positive one. The remaining 13% of clients did not respond to the question.

Agency Feedback

A workshop was held with the staff from the WRU to determine their views on the advice line and what impact it had had.

There was a consensus amongst staff that the advice line has had a positive impact on the WRU. This was for a range of reasons;

- (i) It has freed up their time to work on more complex case work
- (ii) It has relieved pressure on the administrative staff who used to be on the receiving end of aggravated clients who were unable to be transferred to a WRO or who had phoned previously and not been called back.
- (iii) Morale has improved in the office.

One of the key points raised was that clients now have access to immediate advice during working hours and an overall better customer service experience is offered. Accessing advice is easier as there are two full time members of staff on the advice line whereas the advice line that used to be staffed within the WRU was only for a few hours each day, 4 days per week whereas it now runs all day, 5 days per week. Now that there is much greater capacity to offer advice by phone, slots in surgeries are available for assisting clients with form filling and more complex cases. Whilst the advice line offers an alternative to clients to speaking to the WRU, WRU staff felt that there is still a need for surgeries and home visits for complicated cases.

Prior to the advice line starting, the first point of contact for clients was with the administrative staff in the WRU. They would then be transferred to a WRO if one was available. Now clients are being put through to the advice line, usually straight away. Clients are also able to ring back and speak to the same advisor again which ensures continuity for the client and they are able to build up a rapport with the advisor.

WRU staff felt that not only has the service offered to clients improved in terms of having access to benefits advice, but that the advice line also relieves pressure on other council departments who previously didn't know what to do with some of their calls. Other departments have had training on this now and know that if clients mention financial issues or welfare advice, where to direct them to which ultimately is a better service for clients who get directed to the right place more quickly. There are still some staff in other council departments who are unaware of the WRU and advice line and turnover of staff in some areas can further impact on this situation.

The two advisors who staff the advice line were interviewed to gauge their view on the line and how well it has worked. The advisors very much felt that they are helping clients and often exceed clients' expectations, as having done a full benefits check, clients often end up with more than they had expected. In some cases clients are reluctant to give out all of their information over the phone. However, other clients see the advisors as being much like the Citizens Advice Bureau as they can speak to other agencies on behalf of clients if needed, which takes the pressure off clients.

The number of calls being dealt with by the advice line demonstrates the demand that is there for it and this was backed up by the advisors who said that although it was quiet when the line was first launched, it picked up more than they expected and there is a lot of repeat business with customers ringing back for further help. They felt that they are working at full capacity, with the volume of calls being greater than they had anticipated.

The advisors are aware of the impact the advice line has had on the WRU and that it has taken the pressure off of them. Whilst the advisors were in no doubt that clients are benefiting financially from the service they offer, they also spoke of the emotional benefit to clients of giving people a point of contact to come to if they need help. When asked, the advisors did acknowledge that the support they offer could create a dependency for some clients as they do speak to some clients on frequent occasions.

Welfare rights staff also felt that the advice line may have a positive impact on customers as they will not lose out on money due to delays in receiving advice or meeting deadlines to apply for certain benefits. The advice line advisors pointed out some of the limitations to the service as clients will sometimes ring only a short time before the deadline to appeal a benefit decision. The advisors will always do their best to offer advice and support right up to the deadline.

Whilst customers may ring the advice line about one issue or concern, they are offered a full benefit check whilst they are on the phone therefore this may lead to them receiving new benefits that they wouldn't have otherwise have done and to reduce the impact of the welfare reform on them.

There are, however, some issues that have arisen which need to be addressed which would further improve the efficiency of the service being offered.

- Duplication of work as sometimes clients don't tell the advice line that they have already contacted the WRU about their issue. Referrals for the WRU may then be taken by the advice line for clients that already have cases open with a WRO.
- On occasion there has been a delay in referrals received by the advice line (which require more in depth assistance) being passed over to the WRU.

- Staff were asked about any concerns they had about the service. Comments were largely related to the future sustainability of the service and the impact it would have if it ended.
- Over the course of the 6 months pilot project, 30.7% of calls to the advice line's direct number were abandoned (ie. not answered when first rung). The reasons for this and what could be done to address it need to be considered.
- Providing staff cover for the advice line for holidays and sickness can put pressure on WRU staff who have to cover the advice line.

The advice line has been extended for a period of 4 months, from June – September 2014 using further ESF funding. Future funding is being sought.

Conclusion

- There has been a positive impact, both on the WRU and Contact Centre as well as on outcomes for clients
- The advice line are dealing with an average of 407 calls per month
- The main reason for customers contacting the advice line is for a benefits check
- 177 clients were dealt with one stop
- 210 clients required involvement from the WRU after receiving help from the advice line advisors (attending a surgery, a home visit, to see the Macmillan Specialist or another type of referral). This represents 23% of all actions taken for clients who received advice from the advisors
- 338 clients were passed onto a benefits agency (a range of departments within the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs). They received initial advice via the advice line advisors but then then needed to contact the DWP in order to be able to resolve their query. This represents 37% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- 157 clients were referred onto other supporting organisations, groups or charities. This represents 17% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- For 81% of those interviewed, the council was the first agency they thought to contact when looking for advice or support
- 87% of those interviewed said they would be likely to use the advice line or similar services for future queries
- 88% of those interviewed said they felt more confident in dealing with their situation further to receiving advice
- 20% of those interviewed were successful in claiming extra benefits. 22% of those asked were still awaiting the result of their claims
- The number of messages being taken for the WRU has fallen by 51%, since the start of the advice line, freeing up their capacity to deal with more complex cases
- Calls into the WRU have fallen by 15.5% since the advice line was launched

21.10.14

- Welfare Rights Officers/ staff have been very positive about the advice line and feel that clients are getting a much better service as they can access help straight away
- Staff morale in the WRU has improved
- The Contact Centre are putting 30% fewer calls through to the WRU than prior to the advice line running

MAIN REPORT

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Pilot Project No.2 – Dedicated advice line and triage service for benefits advice

Aim

To provide an advice line and triage service for benefits advice.

Context

The Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) is part of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate. Their role is to provide both first tier and second tier services in relation to benefits maximisation. They offer training on all aspects of the benefits system both to staff of the Council and the third sector working in partnership with them. They also respond to requests for tailor made training from external organisations for which a reasonable charge is made.

The WRU also provide policy advice to managers in the Council who are planning new services to enable them to gain maximum advantage from the benefit system for service users.

They provide advice, information, casework and advocacy in a number of ways, the telephone advice line being the most recent innovation. Outreach surgeries are delivered in most parts of the County Borough – many of which are in Communities First areas as the WRU receives funding for four workers to work in these areas from the Welsh Government.

The WRU work closely in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Care to deliver benefit advice to cancer patients and their families, not just in Neath Port Talbot but also in Singleton Hospital, Swansea and to people living in Bridgend.

A lot of their work involves Tribunal Representation. In the first half of 2014/15 (1st April -30th September) they represented 168 people at appeals with a success rate of 75 - 80%.

If people are not able to attend one of their surgeries or deal with their problems over the telephone, they can usually arrange a home visit for them, although they may have to wait a little longer but they will always try to accommodate any deadlines which relate to their case.

In 2013-14, the WRU raised or preserved over £6.7 million in benefit income for people living in Neath Port Talbot.

Demand for the Welfare Rights Unit (WRU)

The WRU receives a large number of calls and when customers did get through, they were often not able to speak to an advisor straight away and were having to wait anything up to 2 weeks for a call back. Calls for the WRU regularly featured in the top ten calls received by the Council's Contact Centre.

As well as the high demand for advice from the WRU, the Unit was also dealing with a large number of appeals. 629 demands in June 2013 were recorded by the Welfare Rights Team of which 25% were in relation to appeals and appeal queries and 18% needed support with filling in forms.

The WRU did previously run an advice line operating 4 mornings per week for 2 hours each time (subject to officer availability) but the demand for it could not be met. A large number of messages were being taken as the staff taking the calls were not able to put calls through to the Welfare Rights Officers due to their volume of work. This led to long delays in people being called back as the Officers had such a large caseload of work and if clients happened to be out when they called back, this could lead to a longer delay.

The number of calls coming into the WRU were recorded and analysed for a 6 month period from 1st April – 30th Sept 2013. 4307 calls were logged during this time. The Admin team who answer the calls were able to resolve 1582 calls (36% of total calls) over the phone at the time of the call.

Of the 4307 calls received by the WRU, only 2158 (50%) were dealt with straight away, either by being transferred straight to a Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) resolved by admin staff, transferred straight to the advice line or booked into a surgery. Of the 1035 calls who asked to or needed to speak with a WRO (message taken for a specific WRO, referral to a WRO, transferred to WRO or transferred to WRO answer machine) only 257 (25%) were transferred straight to the relevant person, therefore 778 had to wait for a call back.

A large number of messages were being taken or answer phone messages left, all of which generated an enormous amount of work for staff to have to deal with later. During the 6 month period looked at, 1037 messages were taken for WROs or for the original WRU advice line, all of which needed to be responded to (this does not include the number of calls transferred to a WRO answer phone as it is not known how many of these actually left messages).

The number of calls being passed through from the Council's Contact Centre to the WRU was recorded for the same period (Apr-Sept 2013) and an average of 192 calls per month were being put through, peaking at 254 calls in May 2013.

Evidence from the Council's Contact Centre showing the demand to be put through to the Welfare Rights Unit

Due to the high volume of work within the WRU, customers were unable to get through to the WRU on the phone and were finding that the voice mail was full so they could not leave a message. There were reports from the Council's Contact Centre that only 1 in 3 calls were able to be put through to the WRU. This was having a particular impact at Neath One Stop Shop as customers who were unable to get through on the telephone were then calling in, in person thus creating a duplicate contact. Then, when unable to get

through again by phone via reception they would leave their contact details with One Stop Shop staff for the WRU to ring them back as they had not been able to get through to a Welfare Rights Officer.

Inputs (Resources) and Activities – The Pilot Project

To address the issues outlined above and to mitigate the potential impact of future welfare reforms, the following partners; the Council's Welfare Rights Unit, Contact Centre and the Low Income Families Project collaborated to test out a new way of working.

On 2nd December, a new dedicated advice line operated by two Welfare Rights Benefit Advisors in the Council's Contact Centre was launched for a pilot period of 6 months. The pilot would enable citizens requiring initial benefits advice to improve their financial situation at a much earlier point and reduce the impact of longer term hardship. It was also hoped that the pilot would free up capacity within the WRU to deal with the complex cases that require more intensive intervention. The lessons learned will feed into the review of advice services across the county borough that the Local service Board will be taking forward during 2014/2015.

The two advisors are employed on a full time basis and operate the advice line from 8.30 – 4.30, Monday to Friday. Calls come to the advisors via a number of routes. Calls that come into the Council's Contact Centre asking about any form of benefits or welfare assistance are transferred directly to the advisors. Calls that are received by the WRU which are new clients, are also transferred to the advisors. The advice line has been set up and is running as was originally intended when the project was scoped.

Prior to commencing offering advice, the advisors undertook a 4 week training course. For the first 2 weeks that they were giving advice, they were under the supervision of a more experienced worker and throughout the project, a more experienced worker has operated the advice line alongside one of the regular advisors, initially for 2 days per week and more recently, one day a week so that they have been available in a mentoring capacity. The advisors have also been on a number of external training courses, some in-house, bought in by the WRU and some elsewhere. Ongoing training is very important in this type of work, especially with the current rate of change in relation to welfare reform.

As part of the evaluation, all clients contacting the advice line were asked if they would be happy to be contacted at a later date to find out about their experience of using the advice line. Of those clients who agreed to this, 47 were contacted by telephone and asked to answer a number of questions.

Outputs

2443 calls were received for the advice line from when it commenced on the 2nd December – 30th May 2014. For the first 3 months that the advice line was open, the number of calls received rose each month. In the first month that

the line opened (December 2013) the number of calls received was considerably lower than has since been the case. This is likely to be attributed to the fact that it was a new service and both the public and other staff needed to get to know about it. The line was also closed for a week during the Christmas period, therefore the number of calls received that month was not reflective of an, 'ordinary month.'

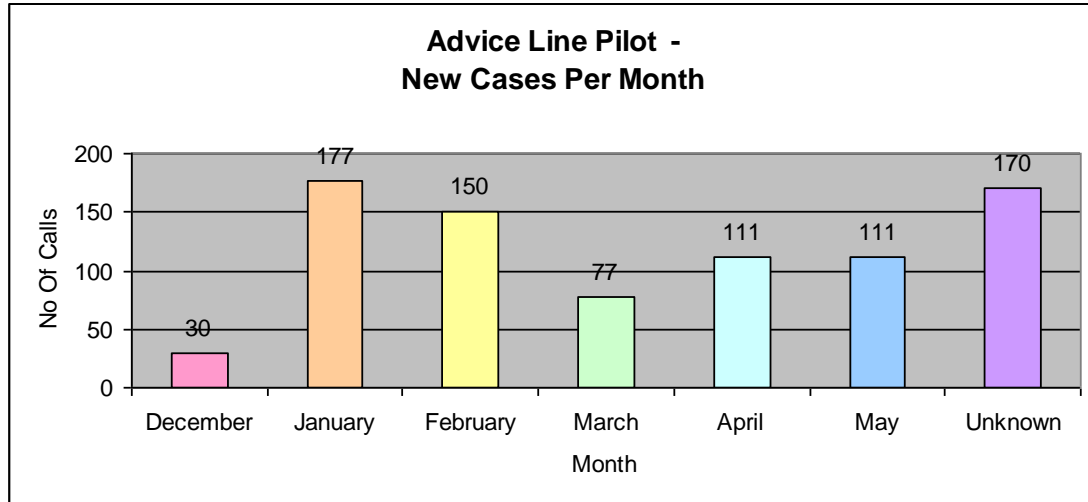
Across the 6 months of the pilot project, an average of 407 calls were received each month. Excluding the first month of the pilot for the reasons outlined above, an average of 459 calls per month were received (January – May) and this is likely to be a more accurate reflection of the level of demand for the service. The greatest number of calls to date was in May 2014, reaching almost 500 in that month. This is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Month	Number of calls received
December	147
January	376
February	476
March	470
April	476
May	498
Total	2443

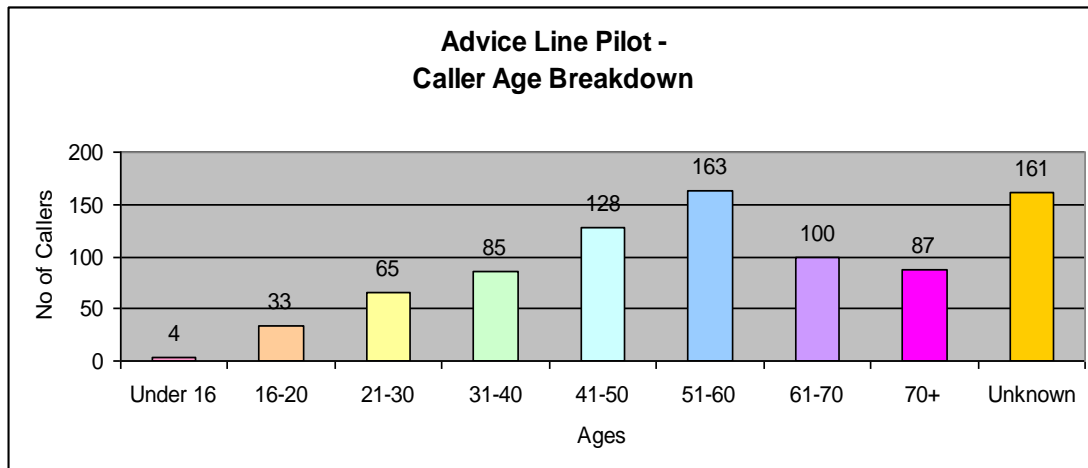
Figure 2 below shows the total number of new cases dealt with by the advisors each month as recorded from the case files which was 826. On average they dealt with 138 new cases each month. It is clear from these figures that new cases (in some cases the figures below will include the same client twice but who had rung back on a later occasion to make a different enquiry) constitute a fairly small percentage of the total volume of calls dealt with by the advice line advisors. This ranges between 47.1% in January to 16.4% in March. The rest of the calls the advisors received included; clients ringing back about the same issue, colleagues ringing about a number of other issues relating to the role and other organisations ringing back regarding enquiries that the advisors had made on behalf of clients.

Figure 2



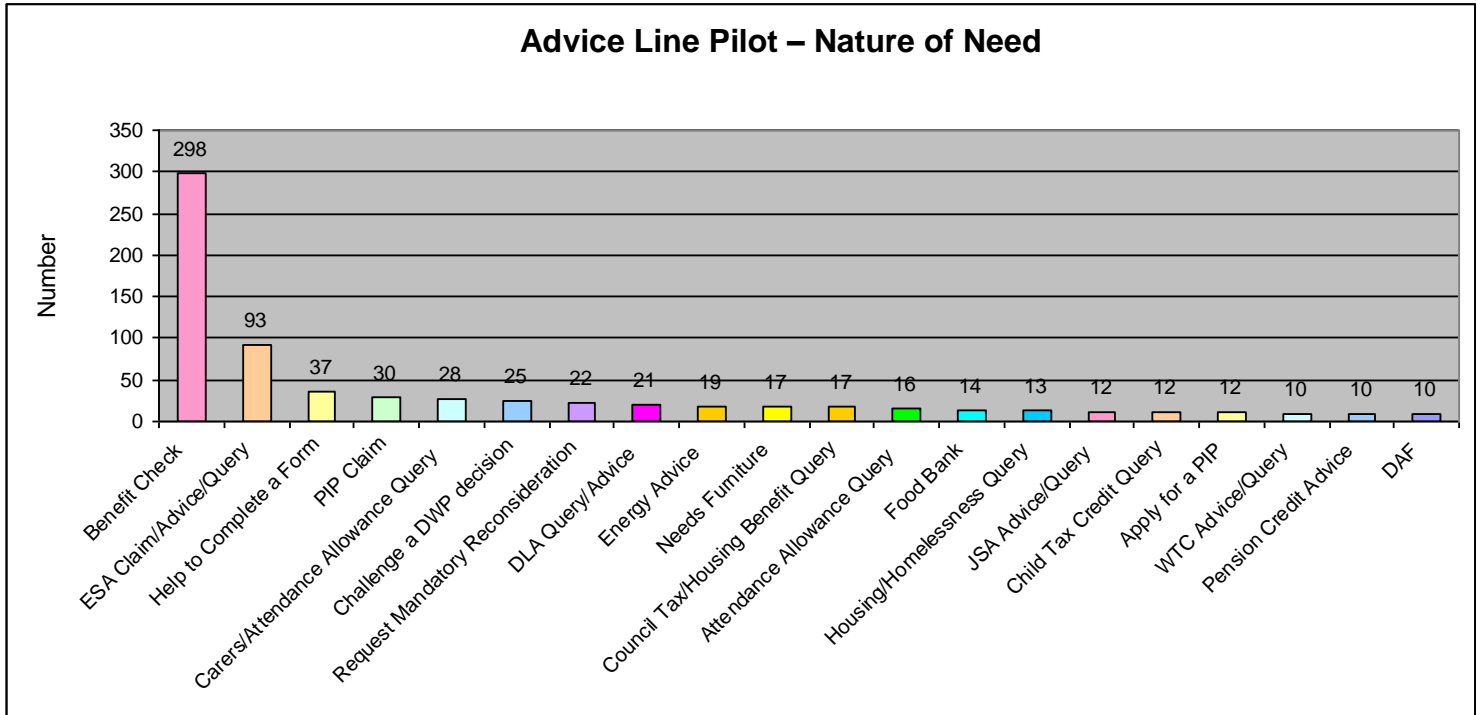
New cases are received from across the age spectrum as can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3



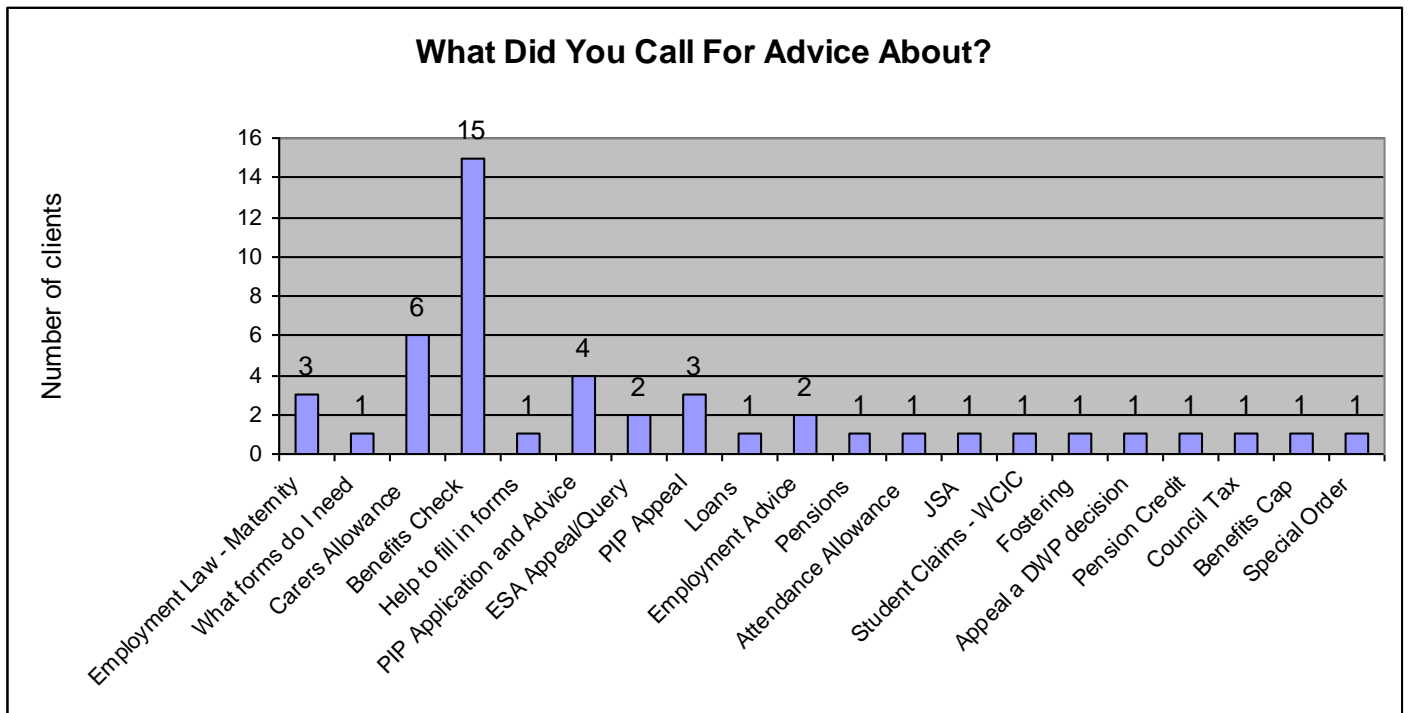
As can be seen in figure 4 below, clients contacted the advice line about a wide range of issues. The top 20 issues are shown. Benefit checks far outnumbered any other reason for calling the advice line, constituting over 35% of the enquiries made.

Figure 4



Almost 50 clients who had contacted the advice line were telephoned at a later date to ask for their feedback on the service that they had received. The reasons why they called for advice are shown in figure 5 below. Again, benefit checks outnumbered any other query being made with 31% of queries being for this reason.

Figure 5



- **Output 1 - Number of calls WRU receive**

The total number of calls received by the Welfare Rights unit fell by 15.5% during the period of the advice line running when compared with April- Sept 2013 (4307 calls prior, 3639 calls during the advice line running).

- **Output 2 - Reduced (ideally zero) reports of difficulty in putting calls through to the WRU**

The Contact Centre have reported that they no longer have difficulty in putting calls through to the WRU. However, the Contact Centre is not always able to put calls through to the advisors based there, as the advisors can be on one call for a long period of time due to the complex nature of some cases. Whilst there are two advisors based in the Contact Centre, there are occasions, due to lunch hours and other appointments etc, where there may only be one advisor present.

- **Output 3 - Number of customers referred to other agencies for assistance (may not be related to what their initial enquiry was about)**
- **Output 4 - Number of calls dealt with in one-stop**
- **Output 5 - Number of customers referred to the WRU**

These outputs are all shown in figures 6 and 7 below.

Figure 6 shows the pathways taken by clients after calling the advice line.

Figure 6

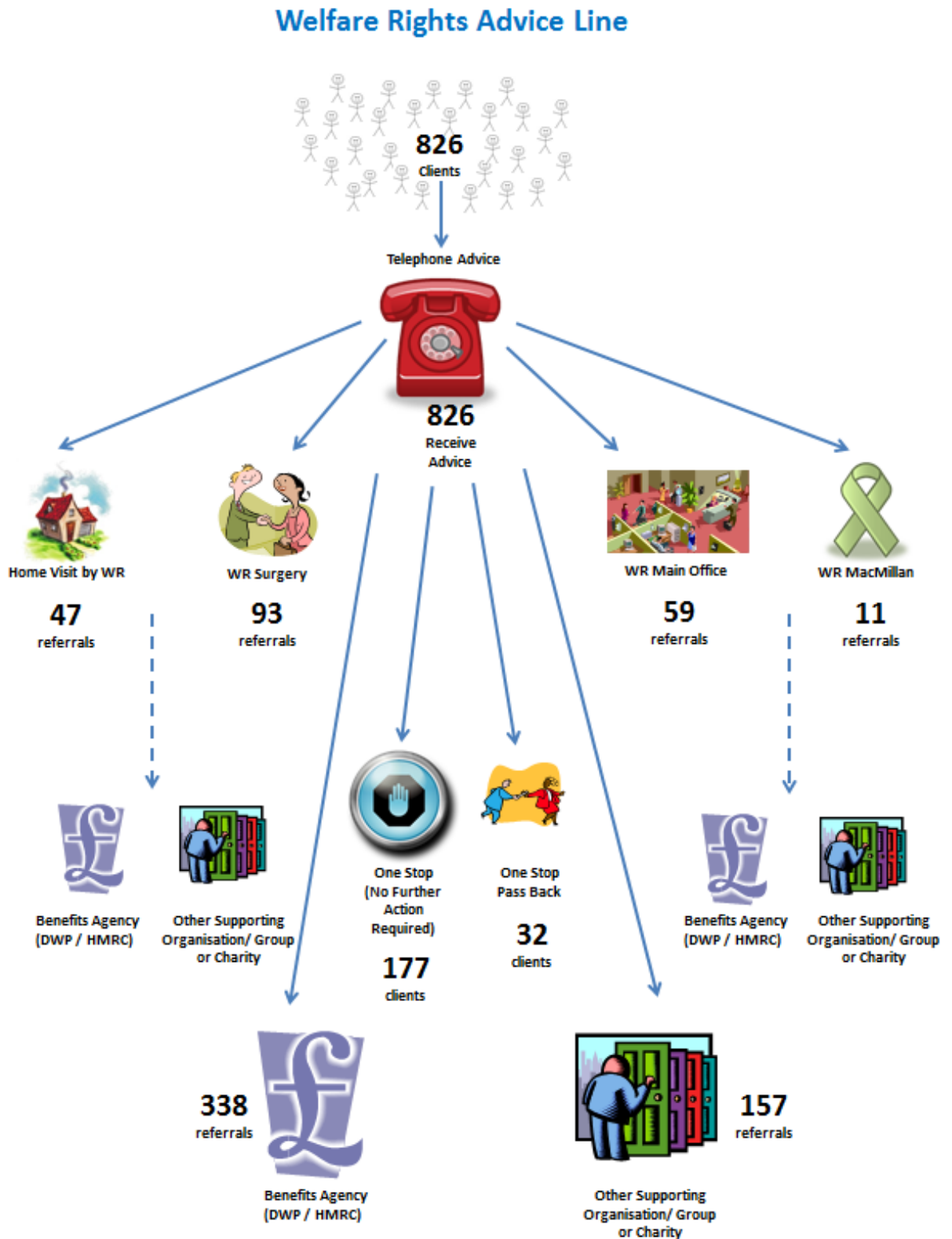
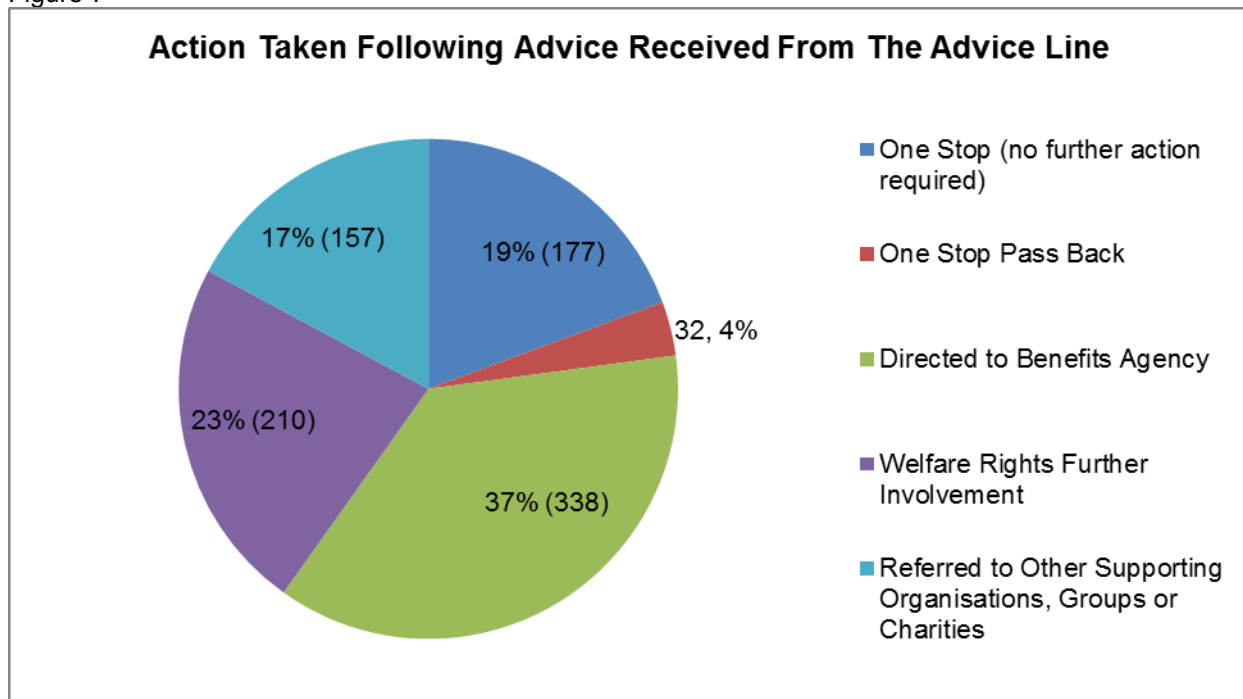


Figure 7



177 clients were dealt with one stop and required no further action having spoken to the advice line advisors.

210 clients required involvement from the WRU further to receiving help from the advice line advisors – this included to attend a surgery, a home visit, to see the Macmillan Specialist or another type of assistance. This represents 23% of all actions taken for clients who received advice from the advisors. They were passed to the WRU for further work. Whilst these clients have not been dealt with in one stop, the fact that the advisors are part of the WRU and are therefore able to make appointments in surgeries or direct referrals to the WRU, makes the process easier for callers and is another way of dealing with clients, 'in house' (as the WRU is part of NPTCBC).

338 clients were directed to a benefits agency (a range of departments within the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs). They received initial advice via the advice line advisors but then needed to contact the DWP in order to be able to resolve their query. This may have involved requesting a form, making a telephone claim or the first stage of the claim process. This represents 37% of actions taken for clients who received advice.

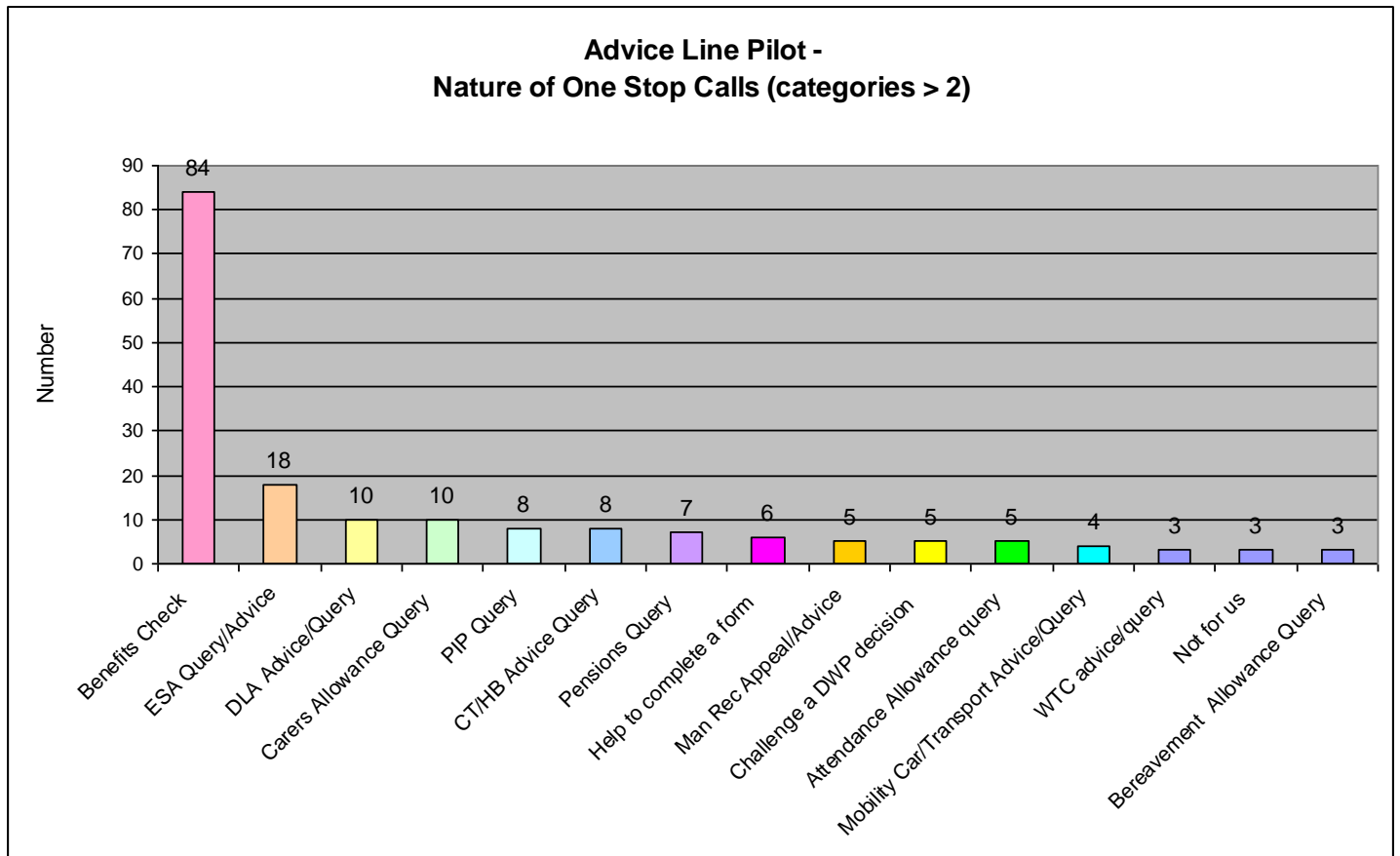
157 clients were referred onto other supporting organisations, groups or charities which included; Food Bank, Housing benefits/ Council Tax, Citizens Advice Bureau, NEST, NPT Homes, ENFYS, Credit Union, Blue Badge, Debt Advisor, ATOS, Social Services, Landlord, Shelter, MIND and to a doctor. (Any other referrals were only made on one occasion). This represents 17% of actions taken further to receiving advice.

The actions taken (914 in total) exceed the number of cases (826) as more than one action may have been taken for one client.

The nature of the calls that were dealt with one stop is shown in figure 8. It is clear from the data that benefit checks were the cases most likely to be dealt with one stop although a range of other cases were also dealt with in one stop. A benefit check enables the advisor to look at a client's circumstances and determine if they are in receipt of any benefits which they are entitled to in order to maximise the benefits that they can receive.

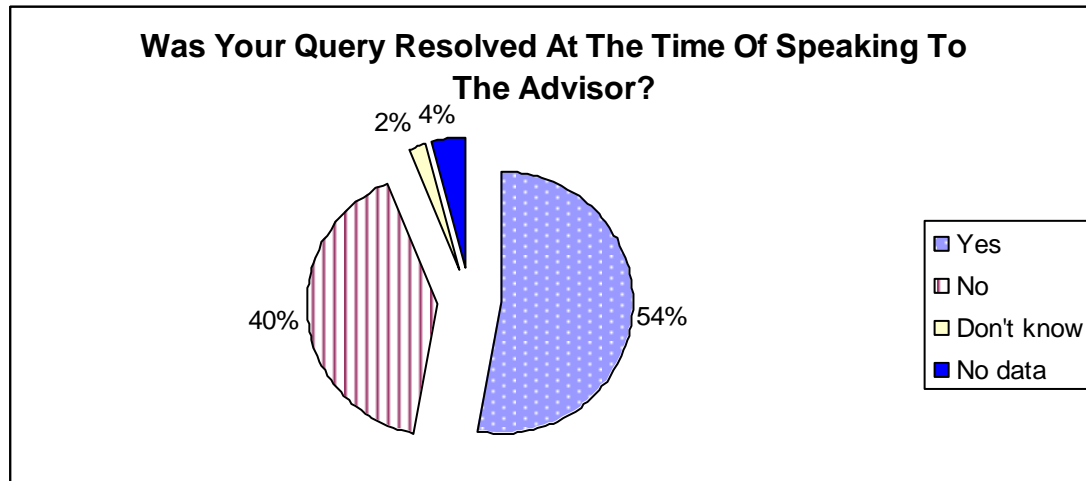
The total number of cases counted in the nature of one stop calls (below) is greater than the total number of cases dealt with in one stop (above) as in some cases one caller may have had more than one issue resolved in one stop.

Figure 8



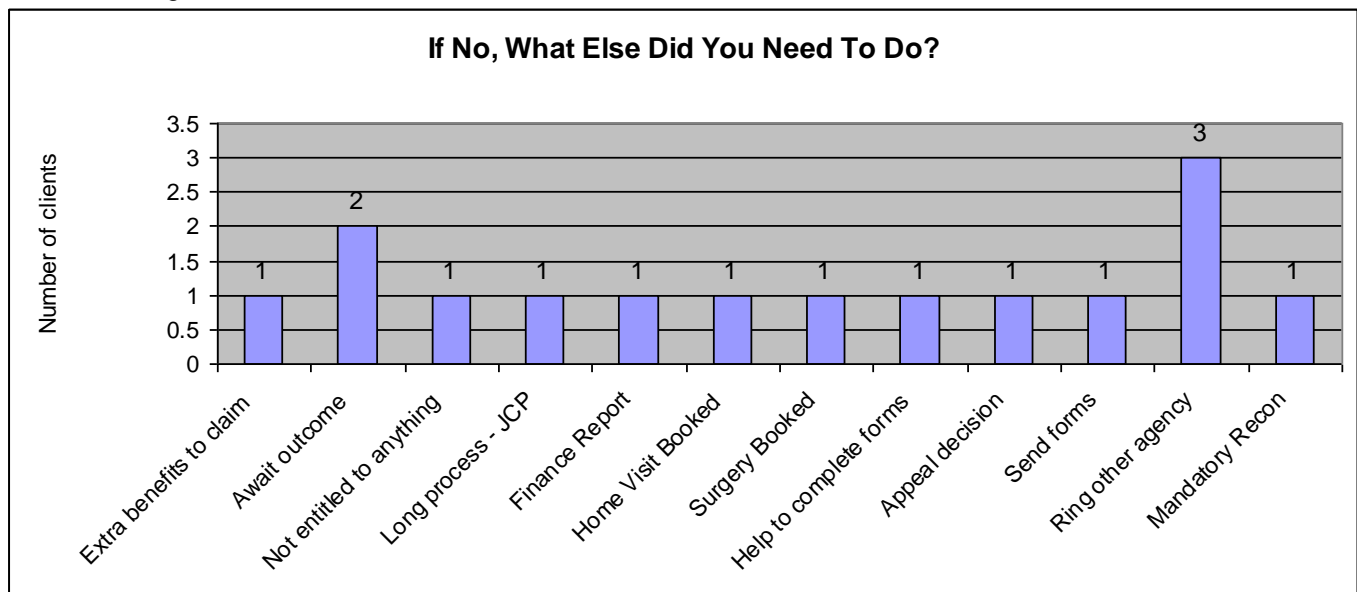
Clients interviewed further to receiving advice were also asked if their case was resolved at the time of speaking to an advisor (ie. was it dealt with one stop). As can be seen in figure 9 below, 54% of cases were resolved one stop.

Figure 9



Clients who had responded 'no' to the above question were then asked what other action they needed to take. If further action was required, they were advised on what action they could take. Responses that were provided are included in figure 10 below.

Figure 10



- Output 6 - Customers have an increased income due to acting on the advice received**

In many cases it is not known whether clients had an increased income due to acting on the advice received as this is not recorded unless the client rings the advice line again for further assistance or to advise them of the outcome. It can also take many months for the outcome to be known if a client is waiting for the outcome of an appeal or application for benefits. However, the case studies included in the outcomes section demonstrate several cases where clients have been successful in claiming benefits and therefore had an increased income due to acting on the advice they received and this is a story

that has been repeated many times. A number of the 47 clients contacted for feedback were successful in claiming benefits as a result of the advice that they received. Figure 11 shows the percentage of clients interviewed who were successful in claiming a new benefit further to receiving advice. Figure 12 shows what benefits those were and the amount the client would receive.

Figure 11

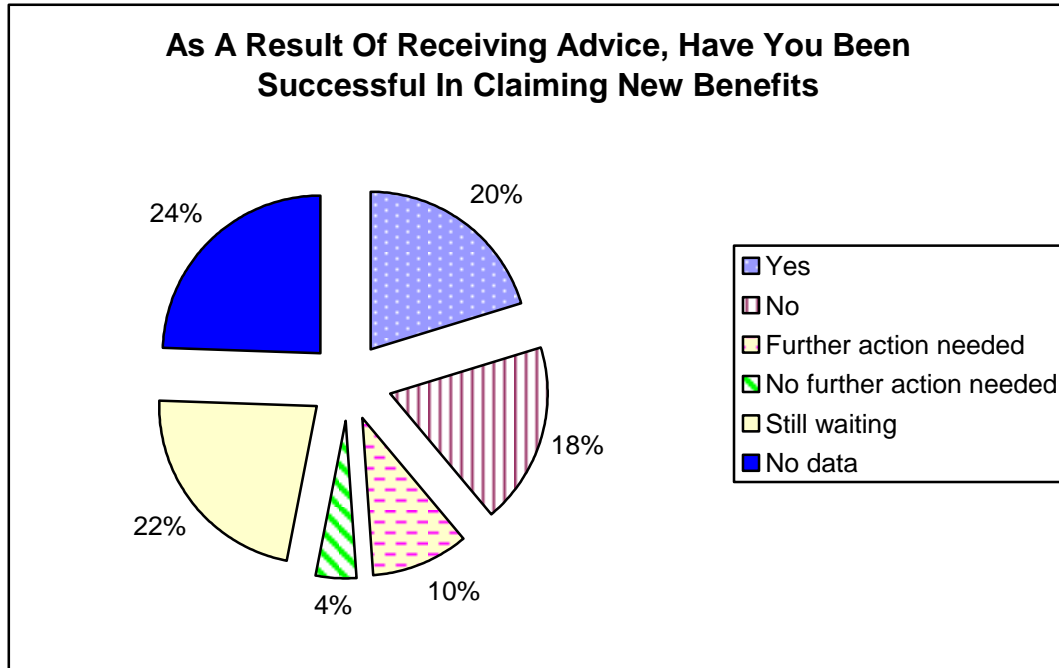
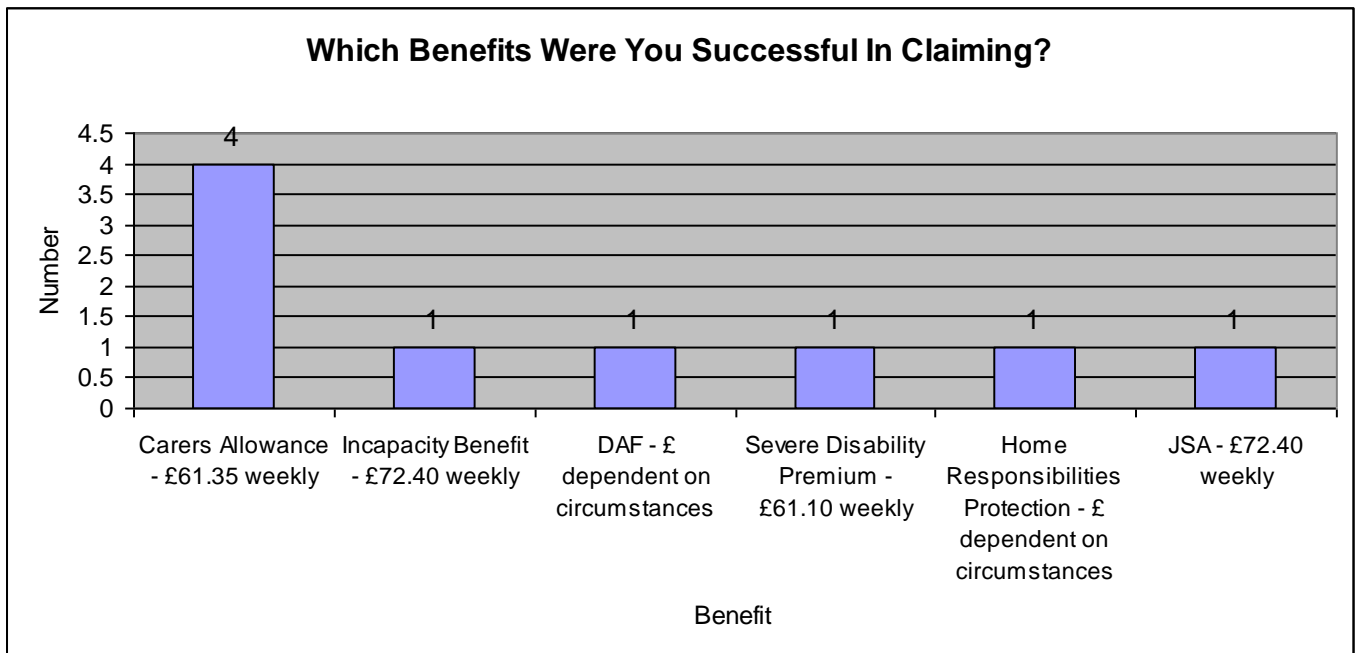


Figure 12



Outcomes

- **Outcome 1 - Reduced demand on the WRU thus freeing up some of their time to work on more complex cases and appeals**

A workshop was held with the staff from the WRU to determine their views on the advice line and what impact it had had, not only on their capacity and workload but also on clients, the council and the wider community.

There was a consensus amongst staff that the advice line has had a positive impact on the WRU. This was for a range of reasons;

- (iv) It has freed up their time to work on more complex case work as they don't have as many messages to call people back and don't have to put 2-3 hours aside during the week to be available for the advice line (that the WRU used to run internally).
- (v) It has relieved pressure on the administrative staff who used to be on the receiving end of aggravated clients who were unable to be transferred to a WRO or who had phoned previously and not been called back. It was commented on that the advice line had cut down repeat phone calls where the client was frustrated and angry and admin staff felt helpless to act.
- (vi) Several officers commented that morale had improved in the office. As one team member said, 'it puts me in a better mood not seeing 30 advice line queries when I come in, in the morning.'

The number of calls received by the WRU fell during the 6 months of the advice line running when compared to April – September 2013. 3639 calls were received (compared to 4307 calls prior) which was a fall of 15.5%.

Of the 3639 calls received by the WRU, 2273 (62%) were processed with straight away, either by being transferred straight to a WRO, resolved by admin staff, transferred straight to the advice line or booked into surgery. This was an increase from 2158 calls (50% of calls) prior to the advice line commencing.

Of the 1085 calls who asked to or needed to speak with a WRO (message, taken for a specific WRO, referral to a WRO, transferred to WRO or transferred to WRO answer machine) 407 (38%) were transferred straight to the relevant person compared to 257 (25%) in the pre advice line period. 678 of those who had contacted the WRU had to wait for a call back (a fall of almost 13% when compared to the pre advice line data).

The number of messages being taken for WRU staff fell significantly during the 6 months of the advice line running. 508 messages were taken for WROs, which was a fall of 51% when compared to the pre advice line period.

The number of referrals for WROs also fell significantly during the period of the advice line running. This figure fell from 207 referrals (inc referrals for home visits) to 101 referrals (a fall of over 50%). Prior to the advice line running, if the admin staff were unable to deal with an enquiry, it would have had to be referred to a WRO. Many of those enquiries are now transferred to

the advice line instead, reducing the workload on WRO staff and preventing them from having to deal with some of the new cases that they would previously have had to deal with.

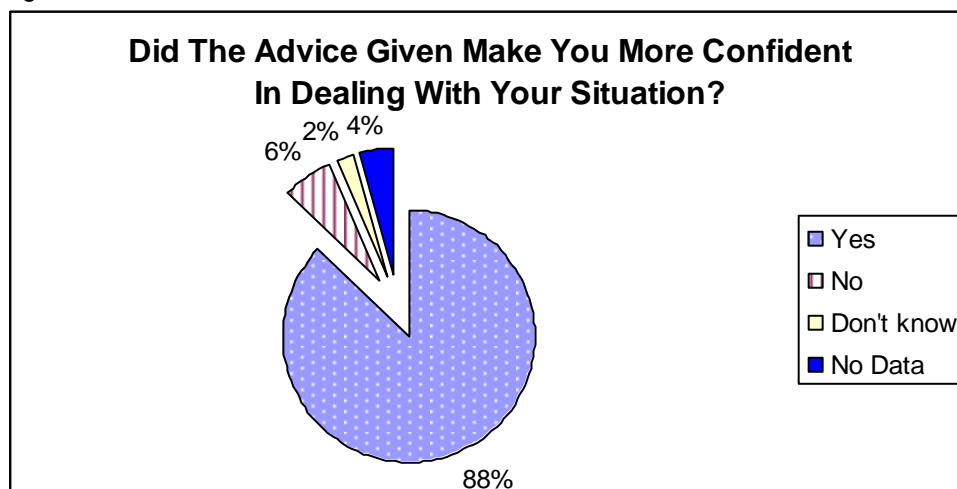
The number of calls being passed through from the Contact Centre to the WRU was recorded for the duration of the pilot project and an average of 135 calls per month were being put through from the Council's Contact Centre to the WRU, peaking at 157 calls in January 2014. This was a drop of 30% when compared to April-September 2013 and is therefore freeing up capacity within the WRU.

- **Outcome 2 - Customers feel more empowered to tackle benefits issues themselves**

Whilst the advice line aimed to reduce demand on the WRU and offer a new way of offering advice and support to clients, the intention was also to empower people so that they felt better equipped to tackle benefit issues themselves.

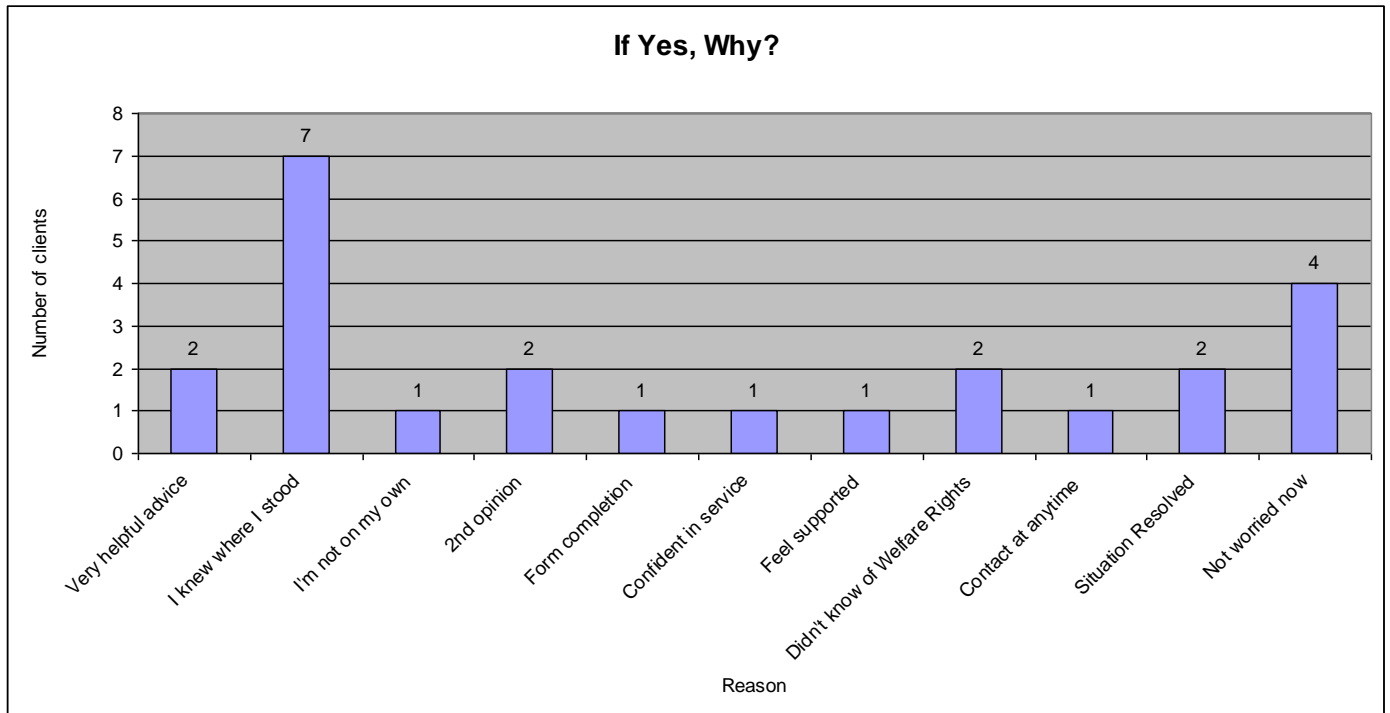
As can be seen from figure 13 below, of the 47 clients contacted for feedback, 88% of those interviewed felt more confident in dealing with their situation after having received support.

Figure 13



The reasons why clients felt more confident in dealing with their situation are shown in figure 14 below. The general themes for this were related to clients having been given more information so knowing where they stood and feeling like they had somewhere else to go for help which had alleviated some of their concerns. Only in two cases was it due to the situation having been resolved. This shows that clients value services like the advice line because it offers them a means of support with their situation, it is not necessarily associated with the final outcome.

Figure 14



- **Outcome 3 - Customers are less reliant on limited resources for support and more likely to address benefit issues for themselves.**

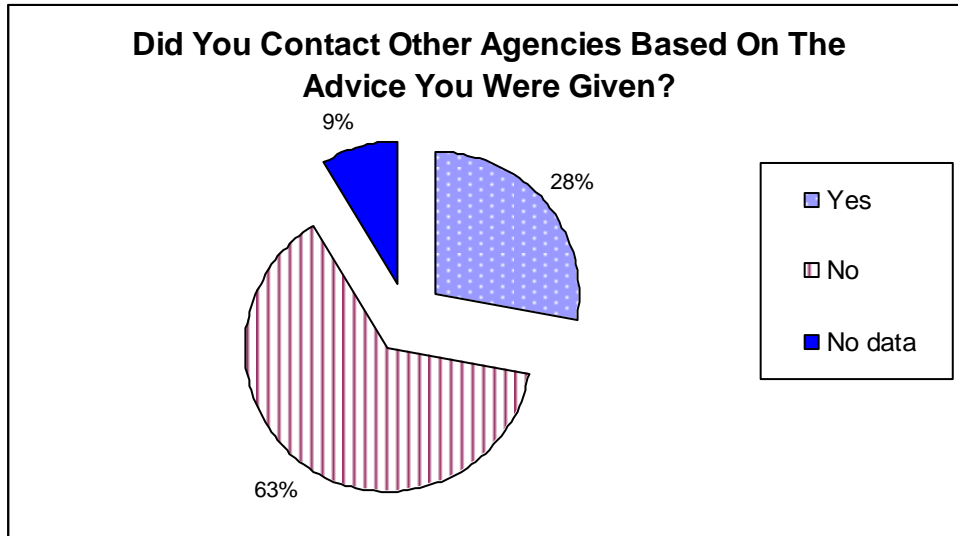
A specific question was not asked on whether clients had become less reliant on the resources and were more likely to address benefit issues for themselves. However, it is hoped that as many reported feeling more confident in dealing with their situation, this would lead to them feeling more able to tackle benefit issues themselves and consequently, be less reliant on the limited resources for support available.

- **Outcome 4 - Where necessary, customers are referred to a greater range of agencies, enabling all of their queries/ needs to be addressed**

The range of agencies that the advice line referred clients to was discussed in the outputs section. A large percentage of clients were directed to the DWP for further assistance having received advice from the advice line.

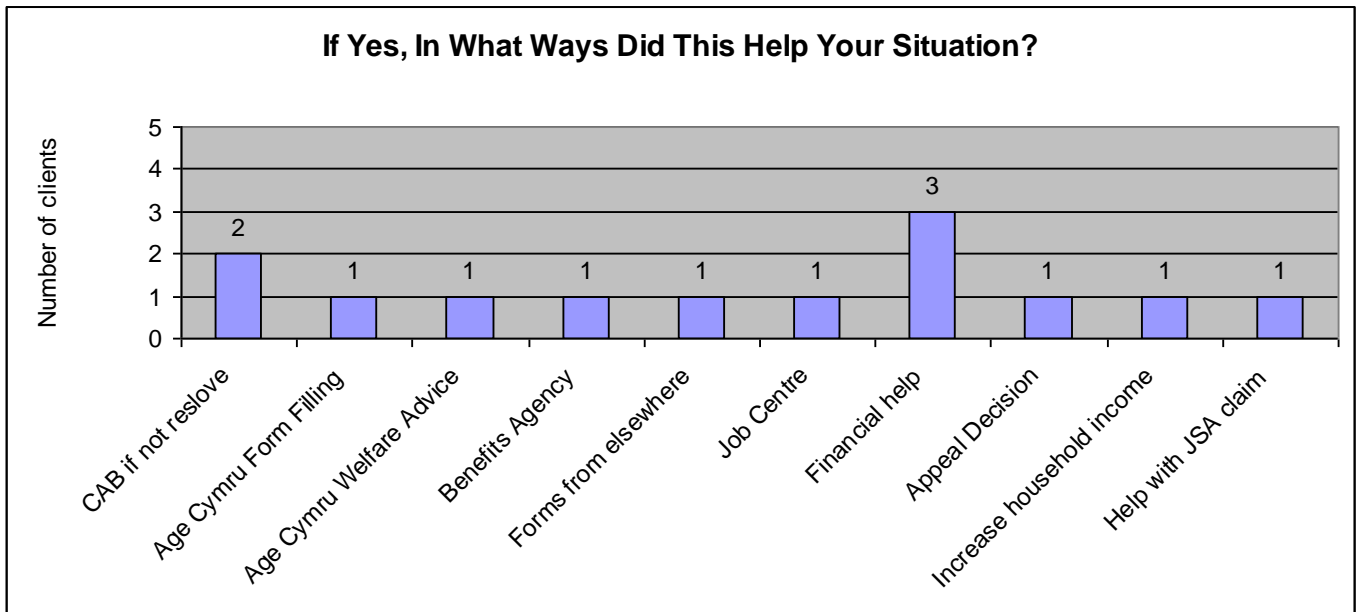
Clients interviewed were asked if they contacted any other agencies based on the advice that they were given. In these cases, to enable their queries or needs to be addressed, clients had been signposted to an agency that would be able to help. As shown in figure 15 below, 28% (14 people) of those interviewed had contacted another agency. 63% had not (no data for 9% of cases).

Figure 15



The ways in which this helped their situation are shown in figure 16.

Figure 16

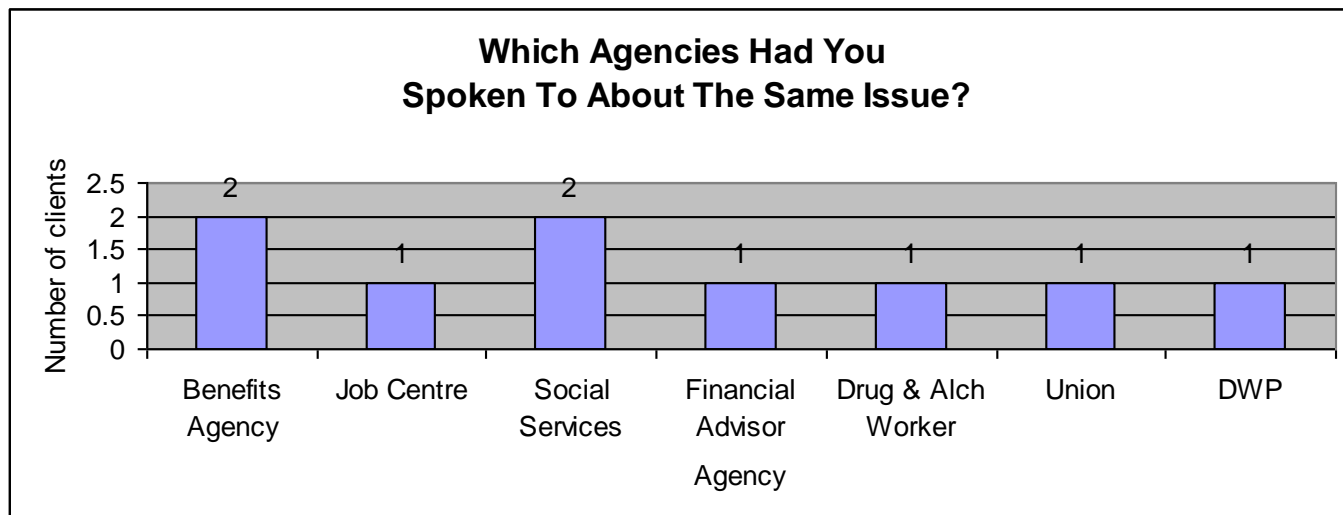


- Outcome 5 - Customers' queries and problems are addressed more holistically**

When clients ring about a specific benefit, they are offered a full benefit check. If there are further questions which the advisors are unable to help with, they will refer or redirect the client to the relevant agency to help them. The advisors reported that they are referring clients onto other agencies on a frequent basis. This is backed up by the range of agencies that the advisors refer clients to. This could be the advisor making a call on behalf of the client or just giving them the contact number of the relevant agency.

Clients were asked if they had previously contacted another agency about the same issue. Only 19% (9 clients) had done this. The agencies they had spoken to are shown in figure 17 below. 81% contacted the council as their first port of call.

Figure 17



Of the 38 clients who had not previously spoken to another agency about the same issue, 21 had their query resolved at the time of speaking to an advisor therefore their whole query had been resolved from start to finish in one phone call to one phone number (ie. in the case of almost 45% of the clients interviewed). This was a very positive outcome for clients who were able to resolve their issue quickly and easily.

- **Outcome 6 - Customers are able to improve their financial situation**

There are number of examples where customers have improved their financial situation as a direct result of the advice or assistance they received on the advice line or follow up home visits or attending a surgery having made initial contact by phone to the advice line. In some cases customers were not only successful in claiming the benefit they first rang the advice line to enquire about, but also went on to receive other benefits based on the advice they received.

Mr & Mrs P

Mr P had been found fit for work after an assessment for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) having received the benefit for over 5 years. He wanted help to appeal against the decision and to make a joint claim with his wife.

The couple had no income other than Mrs P's income from a job working 10 hours per week. The advisor helped the client to request a Mandatory Reconsideration (a written statement looking again at the unsuccessful decision and outlining the reasons for it). This was turned down. The only remaining choice he had was to go to an appeal. The Welfare Rights Unit represented Mr P at Appeal which they won and had their ESA Joint Claim Reinstated resulting in the couple receiving £95 per week.

Following this, the advisor helped Mr P to complete a claim for a Personal Independence Payment and he was awarded Enhanced Daily Living of £81.30 and Standard Mobility of £21.55 per week (paid every four weeks). As a result of this award, they were then able to claim Carers Allowance of £61.35 per week (paid every two weeks) for Mrs P. As a result of the whole intervention, Mr & Mrs P's benefit income went from zero to around £1000 per month. These benefits included ESA, Personal Independence Payment & Carers' Allowance.

Mrs L

Mrs L had been found fit for work after an ESA Assessment and was in the Work Related Activity Group. She had not worked for approximately 8 years and had no income. The advisor requested a Mandatory Reconsideration for her and as a consequence, she was placed into the Support Group. She was placed back onto ESA and will be paid it for longer because she has the Support Group Premium added. Her income went from nothing to £106.50 per week.

Mr S

Mr S had previously held a blue badge which had been revoked. The advisor explained to him that he needed to be on Disability Living allowance high mobility rate to automatically qualify for a Blue Badge. They will also give it at their discretion depending on what medication a client is taking and what medical evidence can be provided. The advisor explained that he could apply for Attendance Allowance which is similar to Disability Living Allowance but for the over 65s. She then arranged a home visit for him which took place a week later. After seeing him on a home visit they filled in the form stating he has care needs in the day and some in the night due to his physical condition. The advisor told him that it would take about 4 weeks to process. The aim was to get him on the low rate of Attendance Allowance. Mr S rang the advisor 4 -5 weeks later stating he had been awarded Attendance Allowance on the high rate of £81.30 a week and had also had it backdated – an amount of approx £500 . The advisor explained that he also needed a consultant letter so with that and having been awarded the Attendance Allowance, he got the blue badge back. The customer was very happy with the result.

Mr R

Mr R had severe mental health problems as he suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which he developed from serving in the army. He had been found Fit For Work after attending a medical. After contacting the advice line, he attended a surgery with the same advisor to discuss the issue in more detail. He attended with his mother who was very attentive and spoke for him the majority of the time. She explained his history and the mental health problems he had. The advisor wrote a Mandatory Reconsideration letter explaining that they disagreed with the decision to take him off ESA. The letter included areas where they felt he should have scored points in the work capability assessment. Medical evidence was also sent in with the Mandatory Reconsideration. The advisor told the client that it would take a few weeks to

process. Within 8 weeks they received a decision and not only had he been put back on ESA but he had been put into the support group also (the highest rate of ESA) so was receiving £112.05 per week and would not be expected to go to work-based interviews. He also received a backdated payment of £448.20. The client and his mother were thrilled with the outcome.

- **Outcome 7 - A greater level of resources is available to assist people who have complicated benefits issues to address or who have ongoing appeals**

The workshop that took place with WRU staff highlighted a number of ways in which a better service and more resources are available to assist people with complicated benefits issues or who have ongoing needs. One of the key points raised was that clients now have access to immediate advice during working hours and an overall better customer service experience is offered. Accessing advice is easier as there are two full time members of staff on the advice line whereas the advice line that used to be staffed within the WRU was only for a few hours each day, 4 days per week whereas it now runs all day, 5 days per week. The service is more flexible and accessible.

Several staff members agreed with the comment that surgeries used to be fully booked as a lot of clients were booked in for advice. Now that there is much greater capacity to offer advice by phone, slots in surgeries are available for assisting clients with form filling and more complex cases.

Prior to the advice line starting, the first point of contact for clients was with the administrative staff in the WRU. They would then be transferred to a WRO if one was available. Now clients are being put through to the advice line, usually straight away. Clients are also able to ring back and speak to the same advisor again which ensures continuity for the client and they are able to build up a rapport with the advisor.

Whilst the advice line offers an alternative to clients to speaking to the WRU, WRU staff felt that there is still a need for surgeries and home visits for complicated cases.

- **Outcome 8 - Better outcomes for customers**

The financial benefits that some clients experienced through having received advice or acting upon that advice have been discussed in both the outputs section and also in the case studies above. Also important to the outcomes that clients experience is their understanding of the advice that they received and how helpful they found it. If the understanding of advice received was poor or they did not find it helpful, it may be less likely that they would receive a positive outcome. 92% of those interviewed understood either all or most of the advice that they were given, as shown in figure 18 below.

Figure 18

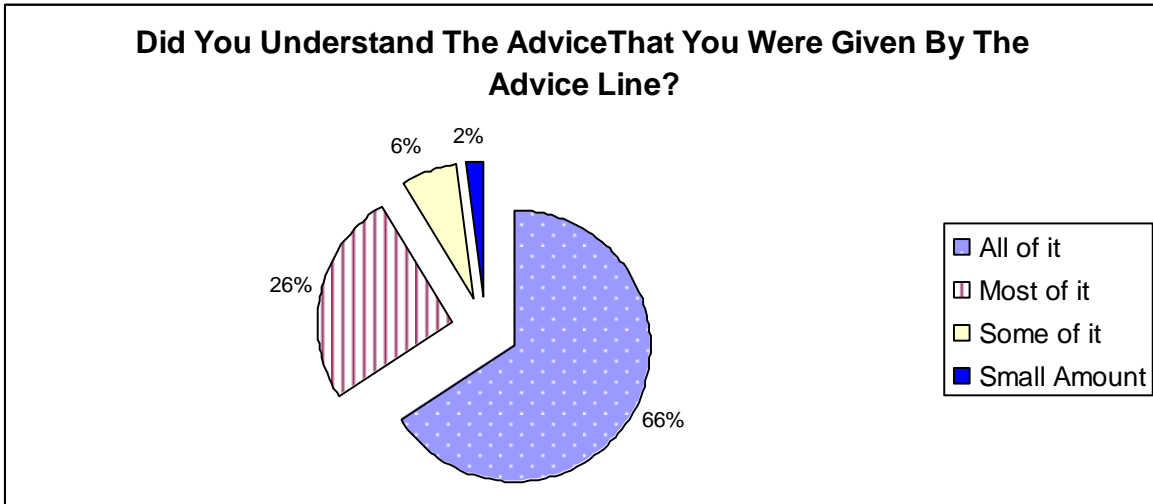
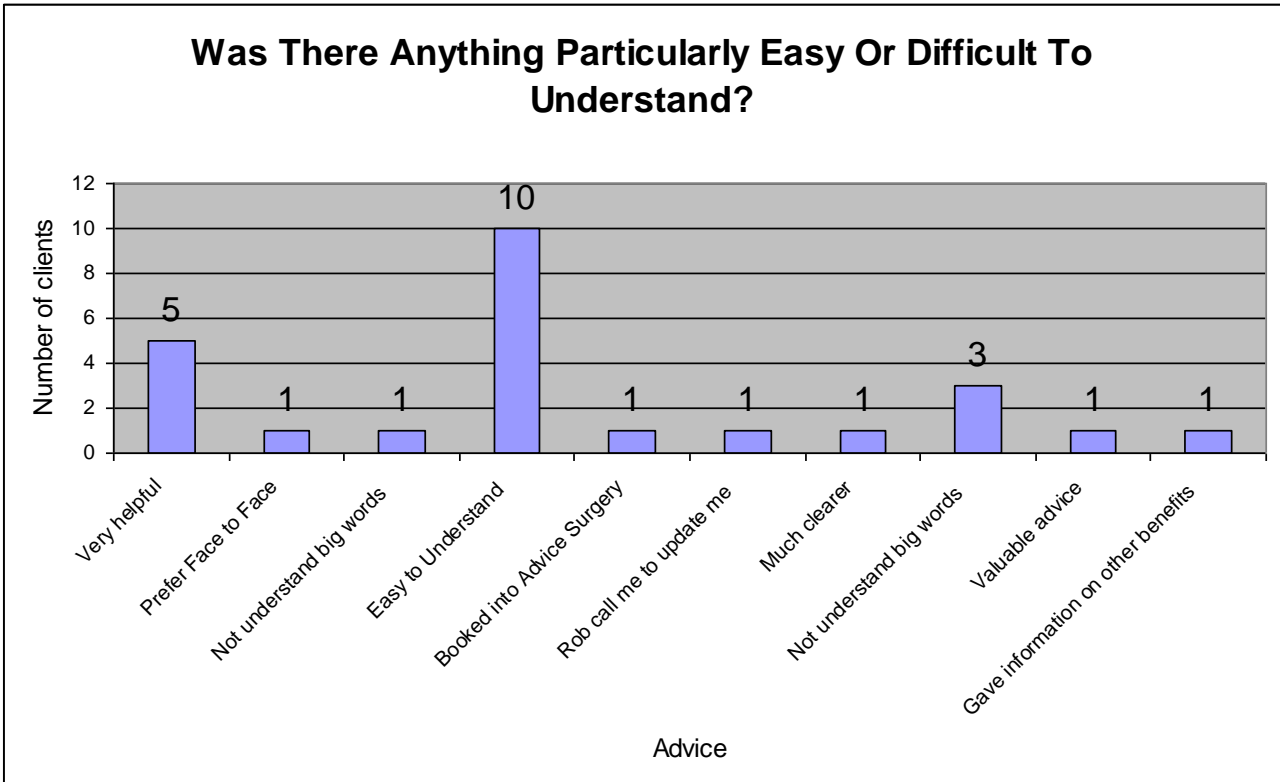


Figure 19



96% of those asked said that they found the advice that they were given either very helpful or somewhat helpful, as shown in figure 20 below. The reasons for this are shown in figure 21.

Figure 20

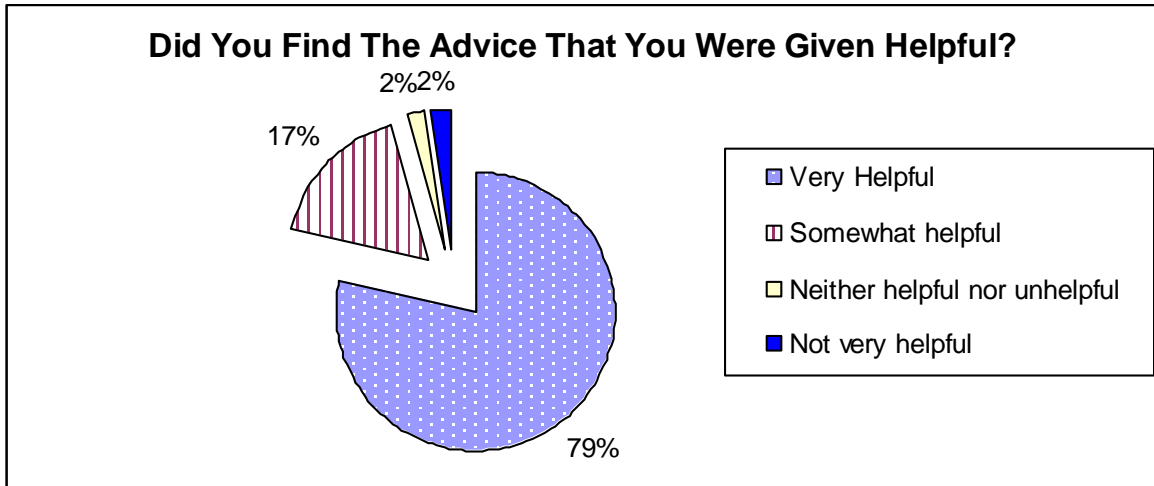
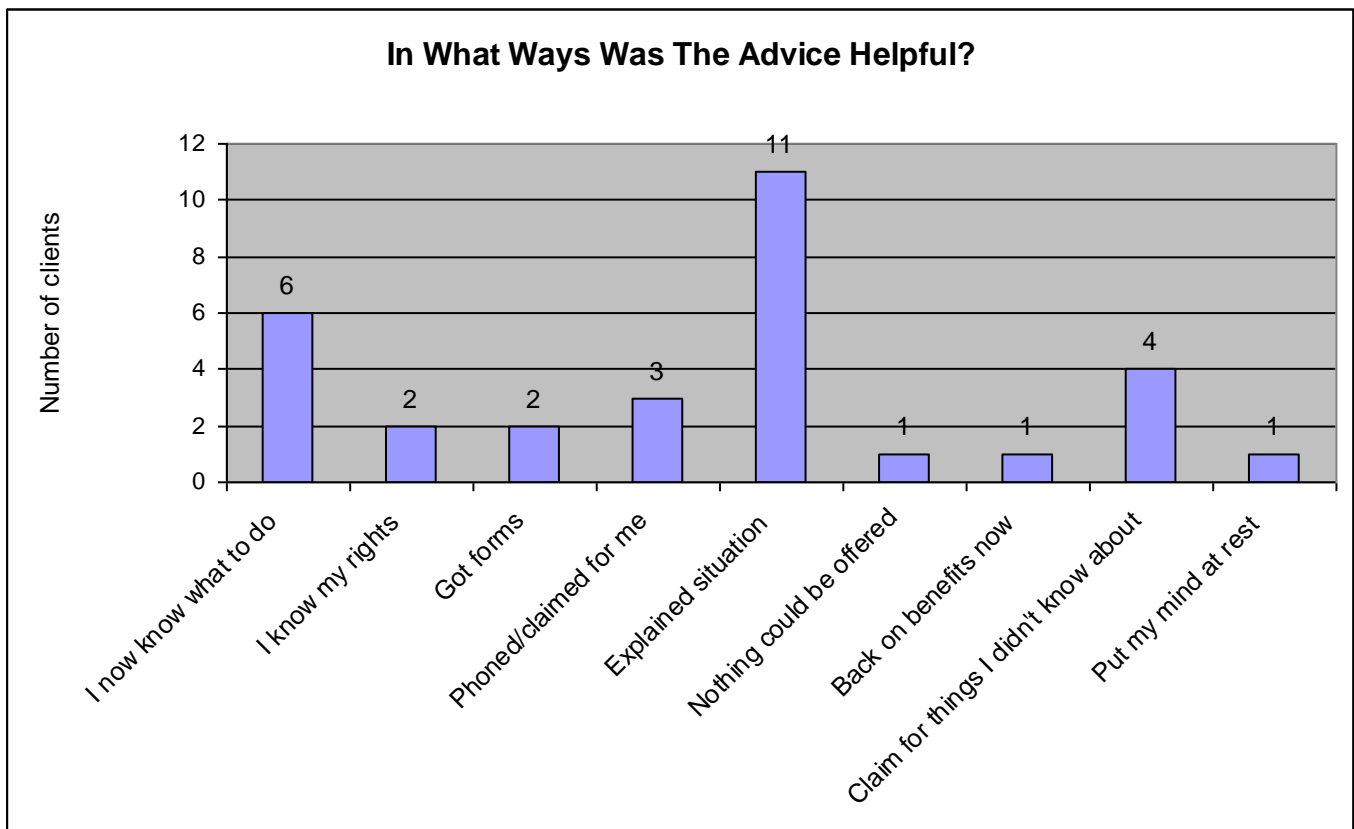


Figure 21



87% of those interviewed said that they would be likely to use services such as the advice line for other issues or concerns which demonstrates that they must have found their experience to be a positive one. The remaining 13% of clients did not respond to the question.

The workshop held with staff from the WRU to find out what impact they felt that the advice line had had, provided useful feedback. WRU staff felt that not

only has the service offered to clients improved in terms of having access to benefits advice, but that the advice line also relieves pressure on other council departments who previously didn't know what to do with some of their calls. Other departments have had training on this now and know that if clients mention financial issues or welfare advice, where to direct them to which ultimately is a better service for clients who get directed to the right place more quickly. However, there is still further work to be done to better promote the work of the WRU (suggestions were made as to advertising in the Council's internal communications or via workshops) and the advice line as there are still some staff in other council departments who are unaware of the WRU and advice line and turnover of staff in some areas can further impact on this situation. Greater promotion, however, could lead to the advice line seeing a large increase in the number of calls that they receive.

Whilst it wasn't one of the outcomes of the pilot project, the impact of the advice line on the wider community was also discussed. It was felt that the service helps to foster respect for the council within the community as the previous view held was that it would take a long time for the council to get back to you. Providing this type of advice also helps to increase a community's knowledge of these issues and gives people benefits' knowledge before they make a false step and makes them more 'savvy,' as one advisor put it.

The number of calls being dealt with by the advice line demonstrates the demand that is there for it and this was backed up by the advisors who said that although it was quiet when the line was first launched, it picked up more than they expected and there is a lot of repeat business with customers ringing back for further help. They felt that they are working at full capacity, with the volume of calls being greater than they had anticipated, 11-3 being the busiest period. As well as offering telephone advice, they each run a surgery half a day each week and do some home visits therefore they are able to see clients face to face if required.

The two advisors who staff the advice line were interviewed to gauge their view on the line and how well it has worked. The advisors very much felt that they are helping clients and often exceed clients' expectations, as having done a full benefits check, clients often end up with more than they had expected. This all contributes to meeting the outcome of customers receiving a better outcome than may previously have been the case. Of course there can be barriers to clients receiving a good outcome as in some cases clients are reluctant to give out all of their information over the phone. However, other clients see the advisors as being much like the Citizens Advice Bureau as they can speak to other agencies on behalf of clients if needed which takes the pressure off clients, again contributing to a better outcome for the customer.

On a personal level, the advisors felt that they received intensive training and have since been on further courses to extend their knowledge. The majority of calls now come direct to the advisors as once a client has rung, they will be given the direct number for the advice line. The WRU also put a large number

of calls through to the advisors. The advisors are aware of the impact the advice line has had on the WRU and that it has taken the pressure off of them. Whilst the advisors were in no doubt that clients are benefiting financially from the service they offer, they also spoke of the emotional benefit to clients of giving people a point of contact to come to if they need help or don't understand a letter they have been sent from an agency. As one of the advisors put it, 'we can take someone's worries away.' When asked, the advisors did acknowledge that the support they offer could create a dependency for some clients as they do speak to some clients on frequent occasions. The fact that they have received thank you cards is testament to the positive outcomes that clients are receiving from the service. However, some clients have expectations to be seen straight away which isn't possible.

The advisors did make some suggestions on further improving the service to clients through holding workshops or open days to offer advice.

- **Outcome 9 - Fewer people are missing deadlines for applying for benefits**
- **Outcome 10 - Impact of the welfare reforms is reduced**

Whilst customers may ring the advice line about one issue or concern, they are offered a full benefit check whilst they are on the phone therefore this may lead to them receiving new benefits that they wouldn't have otherwise have done and to reduce the impact of the welfare reform on them.

Welfare rights staff also felt that the advice line may have a positive impact on customers as they will not lose out on money due to delays in receiving advice or meeting deadlines to apply for certain benefits. The advice line advisors pointed out some of the limitations to the service as clients will sometimes ring only a short time before the deadline to appeal a benefit decision but still want help with this. The advisors will always do their best to offer advice and support right up to the deadline although ideally this work would be done face to face.

- **Outcome 11 - Welfare rights place advisors in the Contact Centre on an ongoing basis**

The advice line has been extended for a period of 4 months, from June – September 2014 using further ESF funding. Future funding is being sought.

- **Other Outcomes**

As has been demonstrated above, there are a large number of positive outcomes being derived from the pilot project. There are, however, some issues that have arisen which need to be addressed which would further improve the efficiency of the service being offered.

The issues raised were;

- Duplication of work as sometimes clients don't tell the advice line that they have already contacted the WRU about their issue. Referrals for the WRU may then be taken by the advice line for clients that already have cases open with a WRO. All calls to the advice line are treated as new enquiries unless told otherwise. Initially the advice line staff did not have access to the WRU's computer system which caused this problem to occur. They do now have access to the same IT system, however, on a read only basis therefore time is still taken up between calls in recording paperwork which may impact on the number of calls that the advisors can take.
- On occasion there has been a delay in referrals received by the advice line (which require more in depth assistance) being passed over to the WRU. This is because the advice line manually write their case notes on paper, meaning that they are not given to an Officer in the WRU until the advisor visits their office which can cause a delay. This has resulted on occasion in referrals not being received quickly enough to open a case for the client.
- Staff were asked about any concerns they had about the service. Comments were largely related to the future sustainability of the service and the impact it would have if it ended. A concern was also raised that the number of appeals that the WRU would be dealing with may rise in September (according to information they have received from the Tribunals Service) which will coincide with the advice line pilot period having ended and could cause capacity issues for the WRU.
- Over the course of the 6 months pilot project, 30.7% of calls to the advice line's direct number were abandoned (ie. not answered when first rung). The reasons for this and what could be done to address it need to be considered.
- Providing staff cover for the advice line for holidays and sickness can put pressure on WRU staff who have to cover the advice line. There was also a feeling that they would be back to square one if the advice line ended and they had to revert back to the old way of working, which no one would want.

Analysis of Logic Model

Context

The context which the pilot project was based on; the volume of calls that the WRU was receiving and difficulty that this was causing in calls being able to be put through to them from the Contact Centre, was undoubtedly causing concerns within the WRU and making it difficult for clients to access support.

Inputs (Resources) and Activities

From the workshop held with the WRU and discussions with the advice line advisors, the inputs into the pilot project are as was planned and envisaged. No queries have been raised that anything that was intended has not come to fruition. It can be assumed that demand for the service is being met as there have not been any reports of difficulties in getting through to the advisors

although lines can be busy at times. If the WRU staff are unable to put a call through to the advisors, they take a message and email it through and the advisors are able to respond within a short timescale.

Staff involved in the above activities have not indicated that the advice line should be run any differently although there are still some concerns to be addressed such as duplication of paperwork and delays that can occur in a referral being passed from the advisors to the WRU.

Outputs and Outcomes

The outputs and outcomes that have emanated from the advice line are clearly attributable to it as no other changes have taken place within the WRU or to the context that the pilot project was set in which would lead to this.

The advice line has undoubtedly had a positive impact, both on the WRU and Contact Centre as well as on outcomes for clients. There are, of course limitations within any pilot and at times clients contact the advice line a very short time before a deadline for appealing against a benefit decision. The advisors will still do their utmost to assist the client, even if this then needs to be by phone when face to face would have been preferable. Some clients may also be reluctant to give all of their information over the phone which may impact on the extent to which they can be assisted and therefore benefit from the pilot project.

Calls into the WRU have fallen by 15.5% since the advice line was launched and the Contact Centre are no longer reporting difficulties in putting calls through to them, and they are putting 30% fewer calls through to the WRU than prior to the advice line running. The advice line dealt with an average of 138 new cases each month, a large number of whom would have previously been likely to call the WRU instead. The WRU has also been able to direct a large number of calls that they received, to the advice line, a large number of which would previously have ended up having a message taken which would have been passed to a WRO to call back. The number of messages that the WROs were previously needing to respond to was creating a large workload and affecting morale. This situation has improved vastly since the advice line started and the number of messages being taken for the WRU has fallen by 51%. A workshop with WRU staff demonstrated that they are now feeling more positive and feel that clients are getting a much better service as they can access help straight away which wasn't previously the case.

There have not been any unintended outcomes from the advice line and other than the few concerns raised about some of the processes involved in the service, which have at times led to a duplication of paperwork, or delays in the WRU receiving referrals and concerns regarding providing staff cover for the advice line when there are shortages, the outcomes have been achieved and have been very positive. However, the reasons behind the number of abandoned calls need to be looked at in further detail. The advice line advisors now have access to the WRU's IT system and are able to input their cases into it, meaning that there is no longer duplication of work as the advisors can see if there is already a case open for a client, in which case

they will refer them to the appropriate WRO. They also no longer need to wait for internal mail or to visit the WRU to take new (more complex) referrals over. This has made the process quicker for customers and easier for staff. IT systems from other areas are also being looked at to see if a new or amended system could be put into place, to include elements that the team would find useful. As the advisors are still only able to access the WRU's IT system on a read only basis, this means that they need to complete paperwork between calls, taking up time that could be spent advising clients.

There have been no other suggestions for any ways in which the pilot project should be changed although the advisors queried whether there should be more publicity about the advice line. However, if this were to be done, the ability of the advice line to deal with any large increase in demand would need to be considered. The biggest concern amongst both staff within the WRU and the advice line advisors is the future sustainability of the pilot project as the benefits to both client and the WRU have been clearly established. If the line were to close or have to change substantially, the benefits being reaped would be lost, with clients no longer having quick access to advice and support and the WRU having to take on additional work. This would impact on their ability to deal with the more complex cases that the additional capacity created by the advice line has enabled them to do.

It is clear from the number of calls being received to the advice line and the number of new cases being dealt with, that there is a strong demand for the service. The advisors are receiving a good volume of calls and feel that they are working at full capacity. Benefit checks constitute the largest reason for people calling and even if clients have called for another reason, they are offered a full benefit check. If the advisors are unable to fully resolve a client's query, the client may be directed to another agency for further advice. 210 clients were passed to the WRU for more in depth assistance (23% of actions taken further to speaking to the advice line). 338 clients were directed to a benefits agency for further assistance (37% of actions taken). 157 clients were referred to a specialist agency for advice (17% of actions taken).

Given the way in which the benefits system is set up, with different agencies and departments dealing with different benefits, it is not surprising that a large proportion of queries do need to be directed to another agency or referred elsewhere.

Clients are happy with the service received and they are clearly benefiting from it, with a number of those contacted for feedback stating that they were now receiving benefits that they hadn't previously been, as a result of the advice or support that they received. 87% said they would be likely to use the advice line or similar services for future queries, indicating that they were happy with the help they received and found it to be beneficial. The case studies back up this assertion. Of those interviewed, 88% felt more confident in dealing with their situation further to receiving advice. It is hoped that this would translate into clients feeling more empowered to deal with similar situations in the future although the extent to which this may happen is questionable as many clients do call back and given the high level of

satisfaction there appears to be with the service received, there would no reason to assume that they wouldn't call back if they had a new query. Whilst the longer term outcome for many clients is not known and what impact, if any, there has been on their financial situation, it is known that some clients have definitely benefited financially from the advice that they have received. 20% of those interviewed were in receipt of a benefit or financial assistance that they had not been prior to receiving advice and the four case studies included give specific examples of clients who are now better off due to having received advice and support. In each of those cases their income increased from between approx £80 per week to £250 per week (for a couple) and if more examples were sought, this would undoubtedly be a story that would be replicated many times over.

Conclusion

- There has been a positive impact, both on the WRU and Contact Centre as well as on outcomes for clients
- The advice line are dealing with an average of 407 calls per month
- The main reason for customers contacting the advice line is for a benefits check
- 177 clients were dealt with one stop
- 210 clients required involvement from the WRU after receiving help from the advice line advisors (attending a surgery, a home visit, to see the Macmillan Specialist or another type of referral). This represents 23% of all actions taken for clients who received advice from the advisors
- 338 clients were passed onto a benefits agency (a range of departments within the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty Revenue and Customs). They received initial advice via the advice line advisors but then then needed to contact the DWP in order to be able to resolve their query. This represents 37% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- 157 clients were referred onto other supporting organisations, groups or charities. This represents 17% of actions taken further to receiving advice
- For 81% of those interviewed, the council was the first agency they thought to contact when looking for advice or support
- 87% of those interviewed said they would be likely to use the advice line or similar services for future queries
- 88% of those interviewed said they felt more confident in dealing with their situation further to receiving advice
- 20% of those interviewed were successful in claiming extra benefits. 22% of those asked were still awaiting the result of their claims
- The number of messages being taken for the WRU has fallen by 51%, since the start of the advice line, freeing up their capacity to deal with more complex cases
- Calls into the WRU have fallen by 15.5% since the advice line was launched

- Welfare Rights Officers/ staff have been very positive about the advice line and feel that clients are getting a much better service as they can access help straight away
- Staff morale in the WRU has improved
- The Contact Centre are putting 30% fewer calls through to the WRU than prior to the advice line running
- The four case studies included give specific examples of clients who are now better off due to having received advice and support. In each of those cases their income increased from between approx £80 per week to £250 per week (for a couple)

Appendix 1 – Logic Model

Provision of basic advice to empower people to improve their financial situation					
Context	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes (short and medium term)	Impact (long term)
<p>Anecdotal evidence from the Council's Contact Centre shown that only 1 in 3 calls to the Contact Centre were able to get through to Welfare Rights</p> <p>Changes to the benefits system have led to a high demand for advice services. Calls for the WRU regularly feature in the top ten calls received by the Contact Centre</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot is in the top ten UK local authorities of the loss of income per working age</p>	<p>2 Contact Centre advisors</p> <p>Project Steering Group</p> <p>Welfare rights manager</p> <p>Contact Centre management</p> <p>Low income families steering group</p> <p>ESF funding for project manager</p> <p>Project Manager to co-ordinate work</p>	<p>2 advisors working office hours in the Council's Contact Centre for a 6 month trial period.</p> <p>Advisors take all initial calls that come into the Contact Centre, asking for advice on benefits or asking to speak to the welfare rights unit (unless they already have an ongoing query with the unit).</p> <p>Advisors assist with any new enquiries that they can. If they are unable to assist, they arrange an appointment for the</p>	<p>Number of calls taken by the advisors.</p> <p>Number of customers referred to other agencies for assistance (may not be related to what their initial enquiry was about).</p> <p>Increased capacity of WRU staff to deal with complex cases and appeals.</p> <p>Reduced (ideally zero) reports of difficulty in putting calls through to the WRU.</p> <p>Number of calls</p>	<p>Reduced demand on the WRU thus freeing up some of their time to work on more complex cases and appeals.</p> <p>Customers feel more empowered to tackle benefits issues themselves</p> <p>Where necessary, customers are referred to a greater range of agencies, enabling all of their queries/ needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Customers' queries and problems are addressed more holistically.</p>	<p>Raised incomes through receiving appropriate and timely advice regarding benefits</p>

<p>adult due to the welfare reforms The WRU receives a large number of calls and when customers get through, they are often not able to speak to an advisor straight away and have to wait up to 2 weeks for a call back.</p> <p>Customers missing targets to apply for benefits due to not being able to access support quickly enough.</p> <p>Welsh Government research has indicated that telephone advice is an area of development for delivering advice services.</p>		<p>customer with the WRU.</p>	<p>dealt with in one-stop Number of customers referred to the WRU</p> <p>Number of calls WRU receive</p> <p>Customers have an increased income due to acting on the advice received</p>	<p>Welfare rights place advisors in the Contact Centre on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Customers are able to improve their financial situation.</p> <p>A greater level of resources is available to assist people who have complicated benefits issues to address to or who have ongoing appeals.</p> <p>Better outcomes for customers</p> <p>Fewer people are missing deadlines for applying for benefits.</p> <p>Impact of the welfare reforms is reduced</p>	
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<p>Welfare Reform is anticipated to continue the current trend of increased demand for specialist welfare benefit, debt and housing advice as well as for financial inclusion advice.</p>				<p>Customers are less reliant on limited resources for support and more likely to address benefit issues for themselves.</p>	
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Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
<p>Baseline data for number of calls received by WRU (Apr-Dec '13 = how many get through, leave a message etc, number who got to speak to an advisor straight away (36% of calls)</p> <p>National research on the impact of the</p>	<p>Review of partners involved to identify any gaps</p>		<p>As above</p>	<p>Less calls received by WRU</p> <p>WRU has greater capacity to deal with complex cases</p> <p>Number of customers dealt with one stop Customers report feeling more empowered to deal with benefit issues</p>	<p>From a range of case studies, calculate additional income received through benefits obtained as a result of advice received from Contact Centre advisors</p>

welfare reforms showing loss in income				themselves Interviews with customers pre and post intervention (and at a later date)	
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Appendix 2

Questions – Welfare Rights Advice Line Clients

1	What did you call for advice about?	
2	Had you spoken to any other agencies about the same issue before contacting us? If yes, which agencies?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Did you understand the advice you were given by the advice line? Was there anything particularly easy or difficult to understand?	All of it <input type="checkbox"/> Most of it <input type="checkbox"/> Some of it <input type="checkbox"/> A small amount of it <input type="checkbox"/> None of it <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Did you find the advice you were given helpful? In what ways was it helpful?	Very helpful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat helpful <input type="checkbox"/> Neither helpful nor unhelpful <input type="checkbox"/> Not very helpful <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all helpful <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Was your query resolved at the time of speaking to the advisor on the phone? If no, what else did you need to do?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Did you contact other agencies based on the advice you were given? If yes, in what ways did this help your situation? If no, why was this?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

7	<p>Did the service given to you by the advice line make you feel more confident in dealing with your situation?</p> <p>If yes, why?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>
8	<p>Would you be likely to use advice services like these for other issues or concerns?</p> <p>If yes, why?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>
9	<p>(If call related to benefits) As a result of the advice you received, have you been successful in claiming new benefits?</p> <p>Which ones?</p> <p>Has this improved your overall financial situation?</p>	

Questions – Welfare Rights Advice Line Advisors

1	Is the service what you expected it would be – the way it is running, opening times, types of enquiries, way you receive calls etc?
2	Is there anything that you think should be done differently?
3	Are resources being used in the best way?
4	Are you able to meet the demand for this service – can people get through, are people reporting any difficulties etc?
5	Do you think that the project is able to meet the needs of the service users – can you resolve their enquiries or direct them to someone who can? Which agencies are you referring people to? Have there been any problems involved with doing this?
6	Are you aware of any barriers to people accessing the service eg. getting through, opening times, phone service etc?
7	Is there anything that hasn't been done in the service that you thought would be? Has this had any impact on the service?
8	Do you think that service users have benefited from this service? In what way?
9	Have there been any outcomes or benefits from this project that you hadn't envisaged?
10	Is there anything that you think could be done to improve the outcomes for service users from this project?

Workshop Plan for: Welfare Rights

Date: Thursday 1st May 2014 **Time:** 9.30 – 11.45

Venue: Tregelles Court

Time	Activity	Lead
9.30 – 9.35	Welcome, Housekeeping and Introduction	Sian/ Hannah/ Jackie
9.35 – 9.40	Icebreaker	Sian
9.40 – 9.45	Setting the Scene	Sian
9.45 - 9.50	Exercise 1: Introduction to Celebrating Success	Sian
9.50 – 10.00	Working in groups of 3 – participants answer each question by completing 2 answers on post-its per question and place on the board.	
10.00 – 10.10	Feedback to the group – each group to feed back to the wider group about their answers.	
10.10 – 10.15	Exercise 2: Introduction to Working / Not Working	Hannah
10.15 – 10.30	Working individually – participants are given 3 post-its and are asked to write down one answer per post-it to answer the question on what's working or not working about the new way of working (pilot) from their perspective and to place them on the Board.	
10.30 – 10.40	Participants to gather around the board and group the answers into themes.	
10.40 – 10.45	Participants to be given 3 sticky dots each and asked to prioritise the most important answers by placing dots next to the themes.	
10.45 – 10.55	BREAK – Put up flipchart	
10.55 – 11.00	Exercise 3: Introduction to Four Plus One Questions Exercise	Sian
11.00 – 11.15	Working in groups of 3, have a discussion about the four questions and complete 2 post-its for each question:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have we tried? • What have we learned? • What are we pleased about? • What are we concerned about? 	
11.15 – 11.25	Each group then feedback on their answer to the other groups.	
11.25 – 11.30	Exercise 4: Introduction to the Road Ahead	Hannah
11.30 – 11.35	Each participant is given 2 dots which are different colours. Plot on the road where they felt they were when the pilot began by placing a dot on the road. Then place a dot where they feel they are now.	
11.35 – 11.40	Summing up & Next Steps	Sian/ Hannah
11.40 - 11.45	Any questions	

POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

HEAD OF BUSINESS STRATEGY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

27TH NOVEMBER 2014

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide Members with an update on:

1. The latest information available on the estimated impact of the implementation of welfare benefit changes across Wales and Neath Port Talbot.
2. The advice and support being provided at the local level to mitigate the impact.
3. Plans to further mitigate the impact of welfare benefit changes.

BACKGROUND:

1. The impact of the implementation of the welfare benefit changes across Wales and Neath Port Talbot

The latest report on the impact of Welfare Reform on the Valleys¹ estimates the welfare benefit changes will take more than £1bn a year out of the Welsh economy – equivalent to £550 a year per adult of working age. This is substantially more than the GB average (£470). The report goes on to estimate that within Wales, the seven main Valleys authorities will be the seven hardest hit local authority areas who can expect to lose around £430m – an average of £650 per adult of working age.

1 C Beatty and S Fothergill (2014) The Impact of welfare reform on the valleys, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University

To provide a context for the estimated financial loss by local authority and by adults of working age the table below shows the estimated overall impact of welfare reform across Wales and the extent to which the South Wales Valley authorities will be hit.

Table 1

	Estimated loss £m p.a.	Loss per working age adult £ p.a.
Merthyr Tydfil	27	720
Blaenau Gwent	31	700
Neath Port Talbot	62	690
Rhondda Cynon Taf	100	670
Caerphilly	73	640
Bridgend	53	600
Torfaen	34	590
Denbighshire	33	590
Carmarthenshire	65	580
Newport	52	560
Swansea	86	560
Conwy	36	550
Pembrokeshire	39	540
Anglesey	22	510
Wrexham	44	510
Vale of Glamorgan	73	470
Cardiff	112	470
Flintshire	44	450
Gwynedd	33	440
Powys	34	430
Ceredigion	21	430
Monmouthshire	22	390

Source: Sheffield Hallam estimates based on official data

The table below indicates the top 20 valley wards facing the greatest financial loss per adult of working age. This is a loss averaged across the whole population of these wards, including non-claimants.

Table 2

Authority	Ward	Overall financial loss per adult of working age £ per year
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Maerdy	1,050
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Pen-y-waun	1,040
Merthyr Tydfil	Gurnos	1,010
Neath Port Talbot	Gwynfi	940
Neath Port Talbot	Cymmer	930
Caerphilly	Twyn Carno	930
Neath Port Talbot	Neath East	930
Bridgend	Bettws	920
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Penrhiwceiber	920
Bridgend	Caerau	920
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Tylorstown	910
Neath Port Talbot	Sandfields West	900
Neath Port Talbot	Briton Ferry West	890
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gilfach Goch	870
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Treherbert	850
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Aberaman South	850
Torfaen	Trevethin	850
Caerphilly	Moriah	850
Neath Port Talbot	Glyncorrwg	840
Neath Port Talbot	Sandfields East	840

Source: Sheffield Hallam estimates based on official data

The table below indicates the estimated financial loss arising from welfare reform by ward across Neath Port Talbot.

Table 3

Ward	Loss per working age adult £ p.a.
Aberavon	810
Aberdulais	650
Alltwen	550
Baglan	520
Blaengwrach	720
Briton Ferry East	770
Briton Ferry West	890
Bryn and Cwmavon	690
Bryncoch North	410
Bryncoch South	560
Cadoxton	440
Cimla	490
Coedffranc Central	690
Coedffranc North	570
Coedffranc West	490
Crynant	550
Cwmllynfell	590
Cymmer	930
Dyffryn	640
Glyncorrgw	840
Glynneath	670
Godregraig	680
Gwaun-Cae Gurwen	760
Gwynfi	940
Lower Brynamman	690

Margam	530
Neath East	930
Neath North	810
Neath South	760
Onllwyn	750
Pelenna	640
Pontardawe	700
Port Talbot	660
Resolven	640
Rhos	480
Sandfields East	840
Sandfields West	900
Seven Sisters	690
Taibach	720
Tonna	480
Trebanos	580
Ystalyfera	800

Source: Sheffield Hallam estimates based on official data

2. The advice and support being provided at the local level to mitigate the impact

Housing Benefits / Council Tax:

- Housing Benefit records identify the number of households across NPT currently affected by the Benefit Cap as 29. The Authority continues to look at any help needed by these claimants. Discretionary Housing Payment funding is available if necessary.
- The number of housing benefits recipients currently affected by Bedroom Tax is 2,080. Many have received or continue to receive a Discretionary Housing Payment to help meet the shortfall.

- Of the Discretionary Housing Payment fund of £371k, 715 awards have been made with a total paid and / or committed to date totaling £301k.

225 applications for assistance have been declined. There are currently 73 applications awaiting a decision.

- In 2013/14 a further discretionary fund of £32k was used to help house those at risk of homelessness as a result of benefit changes. This was primarily used for re-housing costs such as bonds, rent in advance, removal expenses etc. No similar funding has been provided for 2014/15 by the Department of Work and Pensions.
- Universal Credit is being rolled out nationally in 2015. Neath Port Talbot is expecting its first claim early in 2015 although the number of claims initially will be small.

Welfare Rights:

- The Welfare Rights Unit is still experiencing fairly high demand for appeal representation. The demand has decreased from this time last year due to long delays in decision making on the part of the Department of Work and Pensions both in relation to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The Unit represented at 168 appeals in the first half of the year (April to September) with a success rate of between 75% and 80%.
- Personal Independence Payment continues to be rolled out to existing Disability Living Allowance recipients of working age.
- Since June 2013, there have been no new claims for Disability Living Allowance (DLA). From Oct 28th 2013, some existing claimants have had to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP). These are:
 - Young people reaching the age of 16
 - Anybody reporting a change of circumstances
 - Those who have a short term award ending in Mar 2014 or later
- Changes in the procedure for appeals - known as Mandatory Reconsideration has been in effect since 28th October 2013. Concerns relate to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) appeals. During the

first stage of the process, no Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) will be payable and will only be paid when the appeal is lodged. Currently people receive the assessment rate throughout the whole period that the appeal is pending. There is no indication how long someone could be without income. The Welfare Rights Unit has seen an increased trend of people signing on for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) who clearly are not fit for work, and end up being sanctioned and having their money cut.

Discretionary Assistance Fund:

As part of the UK's Government's programme of Welfare Reform, the discretionary element (Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans) of the UK Government's Social Fund was abolished. Some elements of the Social Fund such as Short Term Advances and Hardship payments have continued and are managed under the Department of Work and Pensions.

On April 1st 2013 the Welsh Government launched a national scheme called the Discretionary Assistance Fund. The fund is initially running until March 2015. Within the scheme there are two types of non-repayable grant support.

Emergency Assistance Payments- to provide assistance in an emergency or when there is an immediate threat to health or wellbeing. Anyone over the age of 16 can be considered eligible for these payments to help meet expenses due to an emergency or because of a disaster.

Individual Assistance Payments- to meet Individual Assistance Payments to meet an urgent identified need that enables or supports vulnerable citizens to establish themselves or remain living independently in the community. To be eligible applicants must be: entitled to and be in receipt of income related welfare benefits. Due to leave an institution or care home within 6 weeks, that they are likely to be entitled to receive income related welfare benefits on leaving.

In Neath Port Talbot between April 1st 2014 and the end of October 2014 the following grants were awarded from the above Fund:

- Number of applications: 1611
- Number of awards: 1113
- Success rate: 69%
- Total awarded: £295,866
- Total awarded as percentage of fund spend: 6%

Food Banks:

A food bank is a non-profit charitable organisation and tends to receive a large proportion of their food from individual donors. There has been a rapid growth of food banks since 2010 with a high percentage of food banks coordinated by The Trussell Trust.

In Neath Port Talbot there are five food banks established. The first food bank opened in Neath and the most recent one which is still under development is in Port Talbot. Three of the food banks are Trussell Trust co-ordinated; Neath Food Bank, Vale of Neath and Port Talbot (under development). The other two food banks, CATCH and PANTRY are independent. The Trussell Trust operates differently to independent ones as they will only issue up to 3 food vouchers in a life time. However PANTRY food bank can issue up to 3 vouchers in a 6 month period.

There are a number of organisations across the county borough who issue vouchers on behalf of the food banks. The Council issues vouchers for the Neath Food Bank via the One Stop Shop at Neath, the Welfare Rights Unit and at the Hub at Pontardawe via Citizens Advice Bureau. The One Stop Shop at Neath from April 2014 up until the end of October had issued 380 vouchers.

Name of food bank	Location and times	No of People seen
Neath Food Bank	Orchard Place, Baptist Church Orchard St. Neath Tuesday and Thursday 2-4pm	Since Sept 2011 they have issued 4,164 food packs (end of Oct 2014) The One Stop Shop in Neath issued 380 vouchers (April-October 14)
Vale of Neath	Peniel Pentecostal Church, New St, Glyn Neath	Awaiting figures
CATCH (Ystalyfera)	Gurnos Chapel, Ystalyfera Wednesday and Friday 11-2pm	Since June 2013 they have issued 429 food packs (end of Oct 14)
PANTRY (Pontardawe and surrounding areas)	Tabernacle Chapel, Thomas St, Pontardawe Tuesday and Saturday 10am-12pm	Since April 2014, 87 people have received a food pack. 29 people out of the 87 had 46 dependents
Port Talbot	Carmel Chapel Riverside, Glan Yr Afon	(still under development)

Working in Partnership:

The Low Income Families Project (LIF) brought partners together to work collectively to mitigate the impact of the changes to support families on low incomes. As different benefit changes have been introduced the group were able to identify those most affected and used existing systems and arrangements to ensure those most in need received the help and support they required.

The drawing down of European Social Fund (ESF) grant by the Council on behalf of the Local Service Board enabled the partners to pilot better ways of working to further mitigate the impact. The culmination of this work was presented to Policy & Resources Cabinet Board on the 16th October 2014 which outlined the evaluation of the following two pilot projects:

1. Ponty Hub
2. Library Services / Job Centre Plus Collaboration

The third pilot project – Advice Line - is the subject of a separate report to be presented at today's meeting. The evaluation of the three pilots has informed a number of recommendations to ensure sustainability and facilitate ongoing work to enable the Council and partners to further mitigate the impact of welfare reform.

3. Plans to further mitigate the impact of the welfare reform including the forthcoming roll out of Universal Credit across Neath Port Talbot.

The major welfare reforms that have been underway in Wales since 2010 are listed in Appendix 1. Some of these reforms are now fully in place, others are currently underway and a small number are still to come to full fruition. However, the welfare reform agenda is wider than those listed in Appendix 1 and perhaps the most ambitious of all is Universal Credit. This is scheduled to replace most of means-tested working age benefits. Unlike the other reforms, it is not expected to lead directly to a reduction in welfare spending and is better understood as a repackaging of existing benefits that for the first time introduces a consistent withdrawal rate, but the rules governing eligibility are essentially carried over from the

existing benefits it replaces including Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

There has been a major delay in the roll-out of Universal Credit nationally but earlier this year (April) Shotton became the first place in Wales where Universal Credit was introduced for some new job seekers. Current indications suggest that Neath Port Talbot could be included in the next phase of the roll out.

Universal Credit will be paid differently from current benefits. Individual claimants will be required to have an email address to access Universal Credit. It will be paid monthly, usually into a bank or building society account. If an individual lives with a partner and both claim Universal Credit, a single payment will be made to that household that covers both. Any help individuals get with the payment of rent will be included within the Universal Credit payment and the individual will pay the landlord themselves.

To ensure preparatory work is undertaken to react to the above roll out of Universal Credit and the risks the changes outlined above bring with them it is proposed to:

1. Re-focus and refresh the existing Steering Group of key partners to lead the work that will need to be undertaken to support people affected by the Universal Credit changes.
2. Establish with Job Centre Plus the potential number of claimants who will be affected by the roll out of Universal Credit to new single claimants for Job Seekers Allowance and the timetable.
3. Review and update the Advice Directory which was developed with partners during 2013 to establish the availability of support services e.g. benefits advice, money management, digital / basic skills, employment support across Neath Port Talbot.
4. Following the update of the Advice Directory, identify gaps in the provision of support services to inform a bid for funding from DWP.

5. Complete the development of a web portal that enables the details of advice and support services to be readily accessible to those involved in helping claimants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Cabinet Members note the actions taken to date to support local people affected by welfare benefit changes.
2. Cabinet Members endorse the actions planned to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit as set out above.

REASON FOR PROPOSED DECISION:

To ensure the Council is proactively preparing for the impact of Universal Credit with a view to mitigating the risk that families affected may have some difficulties engaging with the UK Government's new methods of paying benefit claimants.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Major welfare reforms underway in Wales since 2010

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- i The impact of welfare reform on the valleys (C Beatty and S Fothergill) Sheffield Hallam University (September 2014)
- ii Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (16th October 2014)

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Housing Benefit – Local Housing Allowance

Changes to the rules governing assistance with the cost of housing for low-income households in the private rented sector. The new rules apply to rent levels, 'excess' payments, property size, age limits for sole occupancy, and indexation for inflation.

Housing Benefit – Under-occupation

New rules governing the size of properties for which payments are made to working age claimants in the social rented sector (widely known as the 'bedroom tax')

Non-dependant deductions

Increases in the deductions from Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and other income-based benefits to reflect the contribution that non-dependant household members are expected to make towards the household's housing costs

Household benefit cap

New ceiling on total payments per household, applying to the sum of a wide range of benefits for working age claimants

Council Tax Benefit

Reductions in entitlement of working age claimants arising from 10 per cent reduction in total payments to local authorities

Disability Living Allowance

Replacement of DLA by Personal Independence Payments (PIP), including more stringent and frequent medical tests, as the basis for financial support to help offset the additional costs faced by individuals with disabilities

Incapacity benefits

Replacement of Incapacity Benefit and related benefits by Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), with more stringent medical tests, greater conditionality and time limiting
of non-means tested entitlement for all but the most severely ill or disabled

Child Benefit

Three-year freeze, and withdrawal of benefit from households including a higher earner

Tax Credits

Reductions in payment rates and eligibility for Child Tax Credit and Working Families Tax Credit, paid to lower and middle income households

1 per cent up-rating

Reduction in annual up-rating of value of most working-age benefits

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

WELFARE REFORM - BENEFIT CHANGES

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

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

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

Economic Prosperity	Positive
Education and Lifelong Learning	Positive
Better Health and Well Being	Positive
Environment and Transport	Positive
Crime and Disorder	Positive

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	Neutral
Sustainable Development	Positive
Equalities	Positive
Social Inclusion	Positive

(c) **Consultation**

This item is not subject to external consultation.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD DRAFT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2014/2015- PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

15th January 2015	1) Treasury Management/Miscellaneous Grants/Write Offs	D. Rees
	2) Access to Services – Updated Strategy	K.Jones
	3) Town & Community Council – Charter	K.Jones
	4) Polling District Review	K.Jones
	5) Pontardawe One Stop Shop –Report C/Tax Enquires not dealt with by OSS	K.Jones
	6) Business Plan – Progress Report 2014/15	K Jones
19th February 2015	1) Misc grants /Treasury Mgt/Write offs	D.Rees
	2) Quarterly Performance Monitoring	K.Jones
	3) Community Boundary Review	K.Jones
	4) Twinning	K.Jones
	5) CCTV – options appraisal	K.Jones

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