



POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

***Immediately Following Scrutiny Committee on
THURSDAY, 28 MAY 2015***

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 9th April 2015 (*Pages 1 - 6*)

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

4. Miscellaneous Grants Applications (*Pages 7 - 16*)
5. Community Councils Minor Projects Scheme Application (*Pages 17 - 20*)

To receive the Joint Report of Head of Financial Services, Head of Legal Services and Head of ICT

6. Business Plans for Financial Services, Legal Services and ICT and Corporate Procurement Services (*Pages 21 - 80*)

To receive the Reports of the Head of Financial Services

7. Treasury Management Monitoring 2015/16 (*Pages 81 - 86*)
8. Business Rates - Section 44A Discretionary Relief (*Pages 87 - 96*)

9. Business Rates Relief Scheme - Wales Retail Relief Scheme 2015-2016
(Pages 97 - 102)
10. Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy (Pages 103 - 116)
11. Charging Proposals for Court Deputy Service (Pages 117 - 130)

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

12. Revised Strategic Equality Plan (Pages 131 - 176)
13. Community Boundary Review (Pages 177 - 232)
14. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Statutory Instrument 2001 No 2290 (as amended).
15. 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 Reports of the Head of Financial Services (Exempt under Paragraph(s) 12, 13 and 14

16. Housing Benefit Write Off (Pages 233 - 236)
17. Council Tax Write Off (Pages 237 - 246)

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 21st May 2015

Cabinet Board Members:

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

Notes:

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

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EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET BOARD – 9TH APRIL 2015

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

Cabinet Board Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

Mrs.K.Jones, D.Rees, S.John and Mrs.J.Woodman-Ralph

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

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

2. **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor.A.H.Thomas Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Review of Policy Concerning Grants as he is a Board Member of Dove Workshop and Dansa.

3. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD HELD ON THE 19TH FEBRUARY 2015**

Decision:

Noted by Committee

4. **MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS APPLICATIONS**

Members also considered the urgent addendum to the report that was circulated prior to the meeting.

Decision:

- (a) That grant applications for 2015/16 be approved for the following groups in the sums as detailed in the circulated report:

Citizen Advice Bureau

Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service

Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council

Maintenance of Mechanics Institute (in lieu of grant Aid to Antiquarians & Archives)

West Glamorgan Association for the Blind

Port Talbot Horticultural Society

- (b) That a grant be provided to the following community groups to cover the rent for the initial 5 year period in line with the rent review period as contained in the circulated report and the addendum report, circulated prior to the meeting:

Cwmgors RFC Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen

Cwmgors RFC and Cwmgors Amateur Boxing Club

Pontardawe AFC

Margam Village Football Club

- (c) That the following Miscellaneous Grant Applications be refused:

Derby Toc H Children's Camp, Derby

Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to progress grant applications.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision will be implemented after the 3 day call in period.

5. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2014-2015**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

6. **REVIEW OF POLICY CONCERNING GRANTS**

Members noted that the Equality Impact Assessment was currently being developed and would be informed by the outcomes of the public consultation exercise and brought back to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on the 23rd July 2015.

Decision:

That the Director of Finance and Corporate Services be authorised to initiate formal public consultation on the draft Scheme contained in Appendix 4 of the circulated report for a period of 12 weeks commencing on 14th April 2015 and ending on 7th July 2015.

Reason for Decision:

- (1) To enable the recommendations 2,3,4,5 and 6 of the Review of Grant Funding to Third Sector Organisations to be implemented as approved by Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on the 13th December 2013.
- (2) To enable interested parties to comment upon the proposals prior to the Cabinet Board making final decisions on the approach to be taken to Grant Funding to the Third Sector Organisations from 2016/2017 onwards.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Consultation:

Informal consultation has been undertaken with representatives of the 3rd sector from the outset of the review and there will now follow a 12 week formal public consultation period with this item.

7. **APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF THE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Members thanked the Head of I.C.T and Procurement for the excellent work that he and his team had undertaken to progress this work and the progress that had been made as part of the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan.

Decision:

That the adoption and publication of the Procurement Strategy, be approved.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the Council's Procurement Strategy is updated.

Implementation of Decision:

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

8. **CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2016**

Members noted the savings that had been made within the areas of responsibility of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services and were appreciative of the hard work in achieving this however the effects of increased levels of work on staff would need to be monitored.

Members were pleased that the previous Scrutiny Committee had requested to see on a regular basis the;

- a) score cards for each of the services;
- b) a report on the outcomes of the CCTV option appraisal
- c) the arrangements for the management of long term sickness absence cases across the Council;
- d) the Welsh Language Standards and plan for compliance.

Decision:

That the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Business Plan for the financial year 2015/16, as detailed within the circulated report, be endorsed.

Reason for Decision:

To authorise the Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Business Plan for 2015/16.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Consultation:

The item has been subject to external consultation as part of the wider budget proposals for the financial year 2015/16 and the outcome of that consultation has informed the report.

9. **COMMUNITY BOUNDARY REVIEW**

Decision:

That the report containing details of consultation undertaken be noted.

10. **URGENCY ACTION 0027- DELIVERY OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS TO SUPPORT UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Decision:

That the following urgency action taken by the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services, in consultation with the requisite Members, be noted:-

Officer Urgency Action No. 0027

Delivery of Partnership Agreement with the Department of Work and Pensions to support Universal Credit.

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

Noted by Committee.

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**

Members sought confirmation that all measures had been taken to recover the debts. Officers confirmed that despite the efforts made the debt was irrecoverable.

Decision:

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

Reason for Decision:

The accounts are irrecoverable.

Implementation of Decision:

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

CHAIRMAN

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

28TH MAY 2015

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION WARDS AFFECTED - ALL

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 2015/16

The following grants are included and have been approved within this budget of £164,383:-

	Budget 2015/16 £
Citizen Advice Bureau	82,680
Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service	45,494
Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council	15,900
Maintenance of Mechanics Institute (in lieu of grant aid to Antiquarians & Archives)	14,280
West Glamorgan Association for the Blind	2,100
Port Talbot Horticultural Society	712
One-off grants budget	3,217
Total Budget	<u>164,383</u>

New Applications

Please see attached Appendix 1.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- Decide on the applications set out in Appendix 1.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To decide on the grant applications

List of Background Papers

Grant Applications

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	Positive

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.

MISCELLANEOUS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applicant	Purpose	Amount Request/ Cost of "Project"	Previous Support	Comments
Abercregan United	Changing Rooms and Field at Red Field Cymmer	£1,050 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period.
Cwmafan Welfare Association	Lease of Land at Ebbw Vale Row Cwmafan	£300 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period.
Taibach Rugby Football Club	Lease of playing fields at Taibach Memorial Park	£1,250 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Gwynfi United FC	Gwynfi Welfare Ground and Changing room facilities	£1,200 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Cwmafan Boys and Girls Club, Cwmafan Football Club and Cwmafan Rugby Club	Pavilion and Changing Rooms at Parc Siencin Powell, Cwmavon, Port Talbot	£1,350 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period

Applicant	Purpose	Amount Request/ Cost of “Project”	Previous Support	Comments
Cimla Cricket Club and Football Club (one half of what will be the “Cimla Community Sports Association and Tonmawr AFC)	Lease of pavilion and playing field at Cefn Saeson, Cimla, Neath	£1,350 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Croeserw Athletic Football Club	Lease rent of Tudor Park Pavilion and Field	£1,050 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Afan Lido AFC	Vivian Memorial Park Playing Fields and Pavillion, Sandfields, Port Talbot	£1,350 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Pontardawe Community Sports and Recreation Association	Pontardawe Recreation Ground	£1,850 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Giants Grave Boys Club and Briton Ferry AFC	Wharf Playing fields Briton Ferry	£650 p.a.	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period

Applicant	Purpose	Amount Request/ Cost of “Project”	Previous Support	Comments
Community Ventures	Taibach Community Education Centre	£13,000	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period
Community Ventures	Baglan Community Centre	£6,500	None	Provide grant to fully cover rent for initial 5 year period in line with rent review period

Neath Port Talbot Credit Union Application

An application has been received from Neath Port Talbot Credit Union (NPTCU) for a grant or loan for £75,000 in order to increase the level of funds held in reserves. The current amount in the reserves total circa £100,000.

NPTCU is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA). The PRA/FCA have introduced capital adequacy requirements for all credit unions of at least 3%, which NPTCU is currently compliant with. However there is now an additional requirement that introduces higher rates of capital adequacy for larger credit unions. These requirements are:

5,000 members or £5m in assets	5% in reserves
10,000 members or £10m in assets	8% in reserves

The NPTCU is one of the most successful credit unions in Wales offering many more services than most other credit unions.

- Schools savings scheme – with over forty schools taking part to encourage young people to have a healthy relationship with money
- Mobile office – which enables provision to be made to the more remote and rural areas within the County Borough

- Payroll deduction savings schemes- encouraging people to save regularly and giving them access to the credit unions lowest loan rates
- Two branch offices in Neath and Port Talbot plus over twenty community collection points providing access to people across the County Borough

Potential Solutions

As NPTCU's has increased its membership to over 5000 adult members (with a further 2,500 junior members which are excluded from the calculation), there is a requirement to increase the reserves with a cash injection of £75,000 or reduce membership and services provided. The solutions considered are:

1. To seek a cash injection of £75,000.
2. Reduce costs through the closure of the schools scheme, community scheme and mobile office.
3. Close all inactive adult accounts and operate a waiting list for membership. However this will not enable NPTCU to meet the Welsh Government target for all credit unions to achieve 6% population penetration by 2020.
4. To seek a subordinate loan through a partnership agreement with the Council. NPTCU have confirmed that they will pay an interest rate of 1% per annum annually in arrears. Please see overview below.

Subordinate Loans – An Overview

To be included in the calculation of capital, subordinated loans must meet the following conditions:

- a) The maturity of the loan must be more than 5 years from the date on which the loan is made
- b) The subordinated loan ranks behind all other creditors including members shares
- c) Any amounts owed to the credit union by the lender cannot be offset by a subordinated loan
- d) The only events of default are non-payment of any interest or principal
- e) The remedies available in the event of default are limited to petitioning for winding up or proving any claim in a liquidation
- f) The subordinated loan must not become due and payable before its stated final maturity except in the event of default
- g) The terms of the loan must be set out in a written agreement that contains terms that provide for the conditions above
- h) It must be unsecured and fully paid

This is the portion of CRED 5 (the PRA/FCA regulation) concerning subordinated loans. It would appear to allow the following options:

1. Repay the loan on the maturity date from then existing resources
2. Place the funds in total on deposit in a higher interest rate account and leave them there until maturity
3. Make regular monthly payments into a higher interest account sufficient to repay the capital on maturity
4. Make irregular repayments, via the terms laid out below which would have to be from existing resources (this option is not fully covered by this CRED)
5. Negotiate a rolling contract where at any time the maturity date is at least 5 years and 1 day i.e. a non-repayable loan

Proposal

It is proposed that Members approve a subordinate loan of £75,000 at 1% interest per annum for a term of ten years to Neath Port Talbot Credit Union.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

28TH MAY 2015

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

Wards Affected – BLAENHONDDAN

COMMUNITY COUNCILS MINOR PROJECTS SCHEME – APPLICATION

Purpose of Report

We have received an application for grant aid under the above mentioned scheme from Blaenhonddan Community Council. This application is for the repair of playgrounds in Caewern, Cadoxton, Cilfrew and Ynysygerwn with an estimated cost of £46k plus VAT. A fifth playground Leiros Parc needs greater attention and replacement of equipment/provision of safety surfacing with an estimated cost of £27k. A local contractor will be painting equipment at a cost of just under £2k. The total estimated cost of the project is £75k. A further application may be received in future years for the refurbishment of two of the playgrounds when external funding may become available.

The Community Council has identified £15k from within its budget, external funding of £15k and if this application is successful for £6k then the residual sum of £39k will be funded from their 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 Blaenhonddan Community Council complies with the conditions of grant and I therefore recommend that support at 30% up to a maximum of £6,000 in accordance with the Minor Projects Grants Scheme 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 and to enable community improvements.

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.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES, HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES – DAVID MICHAEL, AND HEAD OF ICT – STEPHEN JOHN

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

FINANCIAL SERVICES, LEGAL SERVICES AND ICT & CORPORATE PROCUREMENT BUSINESS PLANS

1. Purpose of Report

To seek endorsement from the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board to the three Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for 2015/16.

2. Background

2.1. The Council introduced a revised Performance Management Framework in 2014/15. One of the requirements within that framework is the production of business plans by heads of service. The timetable for finalising business plans covering the financial year 2015/16 is 31st May 2015.

2.2. The Finance Section plan appended at Appendix 1 covers the functions of:

- Accountancy – Revenue and Capital
- Internal Audit
- Payroll
- Payments
- Cashiering
- Financial Ledger

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Benefits
- Financial Assessments
- Income & Debt Collection
- Court Deputy Service
- Treasury Management
- Insurance

2.3. The Legal Services plan appended at Appendix 2 covers the functions of:

- Legal Property and Corporate Services
- Legal Litigation
- Legal Services Childcare
- Business Support Services including Land Charges
- Licensing
- The Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

2.4. The ICT plan appended at Appendix 3 covers the functions of:

- Information and Infrastructure Security
- School and Curriculum Support
- Corporate and Mobile Telephony
- Application Development
- Desktop Provision and Support
- Fixed and Wireless Networking
- Database Management and Support
- Server and Storage Infrastructure
- Corporate Procurement and Centralised Purchasing

2.5. **Forward Financial Plan Impacts**

The Business Plans have been constructed on the basis of reduced budget allocations to be made available to the Directorate for 2015/16 as agreed by Council in February 2015.

3. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Board endorses the Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for the financial year 2015/16 attached at Appendix 1 to 3 to this report.

4. Reason for Proposed Decision

To authorise the Finance and Corporate Services Business Plans for 2015/16.

5. Background Papers

- Business Plans 2014/15
- Council – February 4th 2015 – report of the Corporate Directors’ Group “Budget 2015/16”

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Services Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 2 – Legal Services Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 3 – ICT & Corporate Procurement Business Plan 2015/16

Appendix 4 - ICT and Corporate Procurement Service Report Card
2014/2015 and 2015/2016

7. Officer Reporting:

Mr David Rees, Head of Financial Services,
Tel: 01639 763634 or e-mail: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Mr David Michael, Head of Legal Services
Tel: 01639 763368 or e-mail d.michael@npt.gov.uk

Mr Stephen John, Head of ICT & Corporate Procurement
Tel: 01639 686218 or email s.john@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

FINANCIAL SERVICES, LEGAL SERVICES

AND ICT BUSINESS PLANS

(a) Implementation of Decision

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

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

Economic Prosperity	-	Neutral
Education and Lifelong Learning		Neutral
Better Health and Wellbeing	-	Neutral
Environment and Transport	-	Neutral
Crime and Disorder	-	Neutral

Other Impacts

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

There have been both positive and negative impacts arising from the reduced number of employees working within each of the service areas following ER/VR during 2014/15 which has been taken into account in preparing the business plans for each section. The overall impact above is assessed as neutral given the new capacity within the service areas.

(c) Consultation

This item has been subject to external consultation as part of the wider budget proposals for the financial year 2015/16 and the outcome of that consultation has informed this report.

Financial Services Division

Business Plan 2015/16

Head of Service: David Rees

Area of Responsibility: Financial Services

Sponsor (Cabinet Member): Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

This is the 2015/16 business plan for the Financial Services Division of the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate. It sets out a summary of achievements in 2014/15, performance against the 2014/15 action plan plus details of the priorities and actions for the division for 2015/16.

Key Achievements Summary for 2014/15

The 2015/16 budget settlement for Welsh local authorities meant a real terms budget reduction of £18m or 6.6%. Such a reduction meant that significant budget reductions were required in the Authority's budget for that year. The division worked closely with service directorates during 2014/15 in order to develop an updated forward financial plan (FFP) and a balanced budget to take us into the new financial year.

A revised budget monitoring process was also developed during the year allowing senior officers and members to have more accurate and more frequent information on which to monitor actual spend against budget. This process will be further enhanced in 2015/16.

The 2013/14 Annual Statement of Accounts was produced in line with the legislative timetable, and showed further improvement in terms of quality over recent years.

Management and funding for the capital programme enabled the delivery of a number of significant achievements through 2014/15.

The collection rate achieved on council tax was 97.5 an increase on the rate achieved in the previous year.

Work has continued in supporting the requirements of the welfare benefit changes and in meeting the needs of those citizens currently in receipt of welfare benefits.

The Internal Audit plan was once again delivered to the satisfaction of the Wales Audit Office.

Budget savings for 2015/16 of £521k were achieved primarily through staff reductions via the Voluntary Redundancy (VR) process. Whilst work has been carried out on systems and processes to absorb these staff reductions they will inevitably result in increased pressure on the staff remaining and ultimately an adverse effect on performance.

Principle 1 – What are the most important things for the service to achieve in 15/16?

Given the nature of the services provided through the division the key priority areas will tend to remain the same each year:

1. To accurately monitor directorate budgets, highlighting any pressures at an early stage, and by working closely with directorates, to ensure suitable actions are put in place to mitigate the risks of not delivering overall spend within budget guidelines. This will involve further development of the new budget monitoring process implemented during 2014/15.
2. To work with directorates to produce a balanced budget for 2016/17 and updated Forward Financial Plan (FFP) in line with the timetable required by the Chief Executive.
3. To produce a Statement of Accounts that accurately reflects the Council's transactions for the financial year 2014/15, within the statutory timescales and to meet statutory requirements.
4. To maximise the collection of council tax and other income due to the Council.
5. To ensure that all who are entitled to benefits, receive the right amount and in a timely manner.
6. To help those entitled to Universal Credit to make claims effectively and manage their budget accordingly.

7. To deliver an agreed and detailed programme of work on finance based projects that will assist in the requirement to provide further reductions in expenditure over the next three to four years.
8. To ensure that assurance can be given to the Audit Committee regarding the adequacy of internal controls existing within the systems and processes operated by the Authority and to further develop the role of the Audit Committee.
9. To improve the effectiveness of the debtors IT system and to develop the debt recovery processes in order to reduce the value of outstanding debts.
10. To manage the significant reduction in the staffing level of the Financial Assessments team in order to maintain a high level of service provision.
11. To manage the reduction of staffing hours available to the Cashiering Service in order to maintain a high level of service provision.

Principle 2 – Why have we prioritised these achievements?

Broadly speaking, because these form the core ‘business’ functions of the division that are essential to the efficient running of the Authority. More specifically:

1. To satisfy statutory requirements particularly around budget setting and the production of the statement of accounts.
2. To help ensure that the Authority maintains its expenditure and income levels within budget and doesn’t require the use of reserves.
3. To maximise the amount of income available to the Council to help fund the services it provides.
4. To ensure that citizens who are in receipt of benefits receive the best possible service and are not disadvantaged financially.
5. To continue to provide high quality financial advice and support to all directorates.
6. To minimise the risk of fraud and/or errors occurring within the systems operated by the Authority that could damage its financial and/or reputational standing.
7. To continue to provide the best possible level of service whilst managing significant levels of staff reductions.

Principle 3 – How are we going to secure these achievements?

Primarily the services to secure these achievements will be provided in-house. Some elements of service or advice however will be commissioned externally. Examples of these are in debt recovery arrangements and treasury management strategy advice.

Principle 4 – How will any risks be managed?

The following are the identified risks to achieving the priorities set above along with the measures being taken to mitigate those risks:

1. The risk that service and financial pressures through the year will not allow elements of the FFP to be achieved and/or will put pressure on other budget heads. This will be mitigated through the new budget monitoring process the aim of which is to highlight pressures at the earliest possible stage and require managers to find solutions to those pressures and therefore retain net spending within the budget guidelines.
2. That a balanced budget is not produced in time that is sufficiently robust to meet the requirements of external audit scrutiny. This is mitigated by a rigid and robust process involving at a minimum, Directors, Heads of Service and Members. The process is timetabled with clear deadlines and required outcomes.
3. That the Statement of Accounts will not be produced in line with the statutory deadlines, and will have an unacceptable number of audit qualifications. This is partly mitigated by detailed staff training which has taken place in the requirements of the process and in lessons learnt from previous years. Furthermore, a detailed closure programme has been produced which outlines all the requirements of the process along with appropriate timescales and deadlines. Finally, detailed monitoring of the process is in place which includes regular meetings with the Wales Audit Office (WAO).
4. That the Council Tax collection rate will fall below the average of the previous five years, particularly given the fact that the required budget reductions have meant a reduction in staffing levels. This will be mitigated by regular monitoring of the council tax collection rate and immediate remedial action being taken by the experienced Council Tax staff. In addition, the new Council Tax Recovery Policy which is now fully operational should assist significantly with the recovery process.

5. That there is a drop in performance in terms of the time taken to process benefits and in terms of the number of write offs required due to authority error. This risk is mitigated by the regular training that all benefits' staff receive particularly with regard to changes in the rules and regulations surrounding benefits.
6. That citizens in receipt of benefits do not receive their full entitlement. This will be mitigated in part by the training referred to in 5 above but also by working collaboratively with the third sector to ensure that citizens are fully aware of what they are entitled to.
7. That there is a failure to deliver agreed projects on time and with the required outcomes. This is mitigated by the regular monitoring of a work programme for the project team. This work programme has, for each project, detailed timescales, target dates and expected outcomes, which are allocated against individual members of staff. The work programme is monitored on a six weekly basis.
8. That the WAO cannot give assurance regarding the quality of audit work. This is mitigated via a number of methods. Firstly, an annual audit plan is produced by the section which is approved by Audit Committee and agreed by the WAO. Secondly, all audit work is reviewed by a senior auditor/audit manager, and further quality control checks will be carried out by the Head of Financial Services. All Internal Audit work is reported to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis, and finally the work of Internal Audit is subject to an annual review by WAO.
9. That the level of service provided will be affected in areas where significant staff reductions have taken place. This will be mitigated by reviewing and where appropriate re-designing the service provided and on-going monitoring of the effects of the reductions in staff.
10. Further mitigation of the above risks will be achieved by the following generic actions:
 - Provide appropriate and timely training for all staff, both work based and external, to ensure that staff maintain the required skills and keep up to date with changes in regulations and legislation.
 - Provide the opportunity to achieve relevant professional qualifications to encourage staff progression and retain a high level of professional expertise within the division.

- To maintain low levels of sickness absence in the division through strict adherence to the absence management policy and regular sickness monitoring.
- To carry out personal development reviews for all staff members within the division and to ensure that issues that arise from the reviews are acted upon.
- To retain staff morale at as high a level as possible through good communication, and through the other factors detailed in this section.

Principle 5 – What is our current performance in these priority areas?

1. The outturn position is currently being prepared for 2014/15, but it is expected to show that the net expenditure for the year for the Authority as a whole will be retained within budget.
2. A balanced budget for 2015/16 and an updated FFP were produced to the required standard by the end of January 2015.
3. The Statement of Accounts for 2013/14 was produced within the legislative timescale and to a standard acceptable to the WAO.
4. The Council Tax collection rate for 2014/15 was 97.5% which was an improvement on the previous year. Whilst the Welsh average figure is not currently available, the figure for the Authority for the previous year was better than the Welsh average.
5. In 2014/15 out of a total of 13,300 Housing Benefit awards made there were a total of 31 authority errors. As a result of these errors the amount overpaid (and hence not recoverable) was only 0.09% of the total money paid out.
6. There are currently 15 finance based projects in progress.
7. In 2014/15, the Internal Audit plan was delivered with a total of 71 formal reports issued. The annual WAO assurance statement is not yet available for 14/15 but was received for 2013/14.
8. In 2013/14, 41,204 invoices were raised with a value of £39.3m. Income related to all outstanding debts of £40.1m was received.

Principle 6 – Action Plan:

2014/15

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Achievements
1.	Enhance and strengthen the role of Audit Committee in the areas of risk management and Treasury Management	Work with WAO and Audit Committee Chair to agree what steps are required	D. Rees	March 2015	Agreement has been reached on the role of Audit Committee in terms of risk management and Treasury Management. Audit Committee also has a greater scrutiny role now in special investigation reports.
2.	Improve risk management arrangements in the Authority	Review current arrangements, the current policy and the risk management register	D Rees	March 2015	The new arrangements are due to be available for the governance group in May 2015.
3.	Ensure completion of the monthly pay project	Lead project team to get everyone on to monthly pay	D Rees	March 2015	The project was fully completed ahead of time in February 2015.
4.	Implement a new budget monitoring process	Work closely with group accountants	S. Gorman	From May 2014	The new process was in place from May 2014 and further development is due during 2015/16.
5.	Support the budget setting process for 2015/16 and the FFP	Provide detailed financial support primarily to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services	S. Gorman	February 2015	A balanced budget was set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.

6.	Provide support to two new directorate group accountants	The two new accountants will require greater levels of support during their first year in the posts	S. Gorman	March 2015	The two new directorate accountants have very successfully adapted to their new role and will not require greater levels of support going forward.
7.	Co-ordinate the work required for the Statement of Accounts process	To produce a Statement of Accounts within the prescribed timescales	J. North	June 2014	The Statement of Accounts was produced in accordance with the required timescales.
8.	Prepare updated closure programme for the 2014/15 accounts	To ensure that we build in any lessons learned from the current year's process	J. North	September/October 2014	Wales Audit Office formally recognised the further improvements made in the Statement of Accounts process and document.
9.	Identify insurance management information and its use to influence service delivery	Provide relevant data for monitoring of service requirements regarding insurance	J. North	October 2014	Some improvements have been made regarding the provision of monitoring data and further work in this area is on-going.
10.	Prepare a detailed work programme for the project team for 2014/15	Agree a work programme with the Head of Financial Services to include timescales and work outlines	H. Jones	June 2014	A detailed work plan is in place that is monitored on a regular basis.

11.	Review and where appropriate revise the treasury management strategy for the Authority	This should be based on the current financial climate and latest information from the Authority's Treasury Management advisers	H. Jones	September 2014	The strategy was updated in line with the required timescale.
12.	Continue to provide FIS team support to the e-procurement project	Manage the workload of the team so that support can be provided when necessary and appropriate	H. Jones	March 2015	The team has continued to support the e-procurement project.
13.	Implement the new council tax recovery policy	As recently approved by Members	A. Hinder	March 2015	The new recovery process has proved successful and has been reported to members.
14.	Monitor and report on council tax collection rates	For monitoring by members	A. Hinder	December 2014	Council Tax collection reports will be reported to members on a regular basis in 2015/16.
15.	Support the budget process in terms of council tax details and requirements	Council tax base information in particular	A. Hinder	January 2015	All information/support was provided and a balanced budget was set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.

16.	Provide support on the welfare reform requirements	Support to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Members	K. Davies	March 2015	Welfare reform requirements to date are being met in full; regular updates provided to the Leadership and members via seminars etc.
17.	Monitor performance on housing benefit write offs	Produce performance information for monitoring by members	K. Davies	December 2014	A formal report was produced for members during 2014/15.
18.	Maintain the level of in-house benefit training for benefit staff	To ensure that staff are kept up to date with changes to regulations, allowances etc.	K. Davies	March 2015	Training is on-going.
19.	Prepare a detailed audit plan for 2015/16	To ensure that audit coverage of the Authority's systems is adequate	A.M. O'Donnell	March 2015	The audit plan was approved by Audit Committee in March 2015.
20.	Prepare quarterly reports for Audit Committee	To ensure Member scrutiny of audit work	A.M. O'Donnell	From June 2014	Quarterly Audit Manager reports which covered all reports published by Internal Audit were scrutinised by Audit Committee Members.
21	Ensure that the Internal Audit Service meets the new auditing standards	This is required in order to receive an adequate assurance from the WAO	A.M. O'Donnell	March 2015	Assurance was received from WAO following their annual review.

22.	Manage resources within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	The Finance Division's budget was delivered within agreed cash limits and showed a small underspend.
23.	Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	Staff sickness levels were successfully monitored and acted upon through the year.
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	PDR's completed for all section heads in the division.
25	Each financial year measure employee satisfaction levels	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	There has been a delay in implementing this within the Authority.
26.	Each financial year measure customer satisfaction levels	Mandatory corporate measure	Head of Service and all section heads	March 2015	There has been a delay in implementing this within the Authority.

Action Plan 2015/16

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Outcomes
1.	Deliver budget saving proposals for the division for the period 2016/17 – 2017/18.	In response to expected budget pressures facing the Authority for that period.	D. Rees	September 2015	A series of proposals that enable the budget of the division to be reduced in line with the target set.
2.	Introduce and monitor the new risk management proposals.	To respond to the comments of the corporate assessment.	D Rees	October 2015	The establishment of a new risk register and a more robust authority wide risk management process.
3.	Represent the Authority on a Welsh Treasurer's group looking at income generation.	To link in with the Authority's internal project on income generation.	D Rees	On-going	Proposals to increase the income generated by the Authority as a contribution to the budget.
4.	Further develop the new budget monitoring process.	Work closely with group accountants.	S. Gorman	Throughout 2015/16	Further enhanced budget monitoring process for the Authority.
5.	Support the budget setting process for 2016/17 and the FFP	Provide detailed financial support primarily to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services	S. Gorman	February 2016	A balanced budget set in line with the Chief Executive's timescales.
6.	Undertake a review of the internal charging process.	To simplify the current process.	S. Gorman	March 2016	A clearer and less resource intensive process for internal charging.

7.	Co-ordinate the work required for the 2014/15 Statement of Accounts process.	To produce a Statement of Accounts within the prescribed timescales.	J. North	June 2014	A Statement of Accounts produced in accordance with the required timescales.
8.	Monitor and review the impact of the reduced budget for cashiering services.	Reduced staffing levels and reduced opening hours.	J. North	Throughout 2015/16	A reduced service that still meets the needs of the public.
9.	Further develop the change in emphasis in terms of the work of the Debtors' team to that of debt recovery.	Moving away from debt raising to debt recovery.	J. North	Throughout 2015/16	Reduced levels of debt outstanding at year end.
10.	Complete the priority projects of grants management and income generation.	Income generation is a key project in terms of the 2016/17 budget process.	H. Jones	End September 2015	Options for members / senior officers to decide upon regarding increasing income and a more efficient grants management process.
11.	Continue to review, monitor and where appropriate revise the Treasury Management strategy for the Authority.	A critical area in terms of the Authority's finances.	H. Jones	Throughout 2015/16	The strategy is revised as appropriate to reflect current information.
12.	Setting the capital programme.	A review group is being established.	H. Jones	February 2016	A capital programme that maximises use of the funding available.
13.	Monitor and report on council tax collection rates.	For monitoring by members.	A. Hinder	Throughout 2015/16	Improved information for members.

14.	Fully implement the new council tax recovery policy.	Approved during 2014/15.	A. Hinder	Throughout 2015/16	Improved council tax recovery processes.
15.	Implement the new Business Improvement District (BIDS) initiative.	For businesses in designated BID areas	A. Hinder	March 2016	Fully implemented BID scheme.
16.	Continue to provide support on the welfare reform requirements and universal credit.	Support to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and members.	K. Davies	Throughout 2015/16	Welfare reform and universal credit requirements are met in full.
17.	Monitor performance on housing benefit write offs and overpayment recovery.	Produce performance information for monitoring by members.	K. Davies	Throughout 2015/16	Improved information for members.
18.	Evaluate the changes to systems and processes within the Financial Assessments Team.	Following the reduction in staff numbers through VR.	K. Davies	30 th September 2015	Service provision is satisfactory despite the reduction in staffing resources.
19.	Deliver the work contained in the audit plan for 2015/16.	The plan was approved in the Audit Committee meeting in March 2015.	A.M. O'Donnell	31 st March 2016	Assurances given to members regarding the internal controls in place throughout the Authority.
20.	Assist with the implementation of the enhanced role of the Audit Committee	In particular with regard to risk management scrutiny, treasury management information and scrutiny of special investigations.	A.M. O'Donnell	Throughout 2015/16	Audit Committee plays a greater role in the scrutiny arrangements of the Authority.

21.	Ensure that the work of the Internal Audit Service continues to meet the auditing standards.	An independent review will be required within the next three years.	A.M. O'Donnell	Throughout 2015/16	Assurance received from WAO following their annual review.
22.	Manage resources within 2015/16 budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	Budget delivered within agreed guidelines.
23.	Maintain staff sickness at as low a level as possible.	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	Staff sickness levels no higher than those experienced in 2014/15.
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandatory corporate measure.	Head of Service and all section heads.	March 2016	PDR's completed for all staff in the division.

Legal Services Division

Business Plan 2015/16

Head of Service: David Michael

Area of Responsibility: Legal Services

Sponsor (Cabinet Member): Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

This is the Business Plan for the Legal Services in 2015/16. It sets out a summary of achievements in 2014/15, describes the context within which the department will need to operate in 2015/16 and provides details of the priorities and activities that will be the focus of the department's work in that year.

Key Achievements and Performance Summary 2014/15

1. Delivered the scheduled Forward Financial Plan ("FFP") savings in year and the additional "procurement" headed savings. We have now incorporated the business support staff in one unit whilst losing posts.
2. The Head of Legal Services led a group which has negotiated a contract to substantially reduce newspaper advertising costs for public notices. This represents a saving for other sections and directorates rather than Legal Services.
3. The Business Support Unit has produced a web based guide for reducing postal costs for the local authority as a whole.
4. The Section has continued to provide advice to other directorates in relation to decision making on Forward Financial Plan issues and other changes in the service provision of the local authority. The Section has successfully defended on judicial review actions against the local authority.
5. The Section has provided advice and assistance through the year on Data Protection. We have together with ICT in putting measures in place to comply with the Information Commissioner's Audit.
6. Work has continued on arrangements with Bridgend, Swansea and the Local Health Board on the Social Services/Health collaboration known as Western Bay and collaboration agreements executed.
7. In terms of the Shared Legal Services Project, the joint commercial unit has continued to provide services during the year but has been scaled down due to reduction in grant. Work has commenced with the Welsh Procurement Unit to replicate the South West Wales procurement exercise for Legal Services on an all Wales basis.
8. Support for waste disposal and recycling has been provided by a mix of the section's own staff and Messrs. Geldards with our staff being substituted for private practice where possible. Services have been provided to the South West Wales Regional Waste Joint Committee.

9. It is to the Council's benefit that almost all of the equality claims have been dealt with from the FFP point of view. Our own staff have worked with other Authorities on a Wales wide basis in trying to tie up that part of the remainder of the claims which have merit and can be settled
10. The Margam Discovery Centre went through adjudication in year. Enforcement proceedings were taken for the adjudication award (together with the costs of enforcement). The total amount of £60,129.75 was to be paid in five monthly instalments all of which have been received.
11. Child Care Legal Services have continued to provide support for Social Services over the year and the Social Services Child Care Team have now been taken out of special measures. An in-house advocate has been engaged on behalf of Social Services. Exhaustive training has been provided to staff.
12. Along with other partners in the Shared Legal Services collaboration, the Section has implemented a secure electronic portal for the exchange of information, files, court papers etc. in relation to Child Care matters. This will enhance data security and reduce printing costs.
13. The Licensing Officer has led on the calculation of fees on a regional basis. Court judgements have limited the costs which can be recovered by way of fees and Licensing at NPT have formulated a tool for calculation of fees which is available to all Welsh local authorities.

What are the most important things for the department to achieve in the next year (15/16)?

Directorate Aims and Objectives

The Directorate aims and objectives adopted some years ago were:-

“To maintain and continually strive to improve our courteous and efficient professional services to the public and all our clients.”

Section's Aims

The aims which appear below were agreed for Legal Services some years ago with Members. These do not include Licensing and the Register Service.

- LO1. To enable Neath Port Talbot to achieve high standards of legality and probity in the conduct of its business.

- LO2 To develop a stronger corporate role for Legal Services in
- Identifying and advising on forthcoming legal developments;
 - Adapting the service to meet anticipated needs;
 - Taking a more proactive role in the development of corporate policy, and
 - Supporting Corporate initiatives and policies such as Welsh Language, Equalities, Sustainability and Social Inclusion
- LO3 To ensure that priority is given to the provision of Legal Services which will assist in the achievement of Corporate Aims and Values together with those contained in the Community Plan.
- LO4 To support clients fully by the provision of prompt accessible services operating to agreed timescales and to keep them apprised of progress at all times.
- LO5 By providing the right legal framework to assist Neath Port Talbot in being a modern, outward looking local authority with good communications with the Members, the public and other partners in the provision of services.
- LO6 To provide a service which is financially transparent and gives service users an accurate account of the cost of the provision of Legal Services.
- LO7 To embrace the principles of “E-Government” and to maximise the use of Information Technology in the provision of Legal Services.
- LO8 To provide and maintain a quality legal service by staff development, training and the application of the Quality System.”
- LO9 To provide the services at a moderate financial charge commensurate with the level of service provided facilitating the agreed prioritisation of matters and to fully account to internal clients for work done measured by a time recording system.
- LO10 To ensure that other parties are treated in an appropriate and courteous manner and to facilitate the prompt completion of transactions measured by a record of complaints, internal client satisfaction surveys and to avoid service of notices to complete on the Council.
- LO11 To provide the best and timely advice to Members and to client departments.

- LO12 To have a well-trained and motivated staff, with ready access to latest developments in their area of work.
- LO13 To raise awareness of developments within the law with client departments affected.
- LO14 To focus on and to progress the aims of the Community Plan by the provision of proactive advice and in the taking of legal action to support same.
- LO15 To make greater use of IT in the provision of the service to support the Council's modernisation strategy for the provision of services.
- LO16 Deleted. This Aim related to ISO 9001 from which we have now withdrawn as a cost cutting measure.
- LO17 To make best use of the restricted accommodation in the interest of the staff and to seek to group the teams appropriately.

The aims and objectives of the Property and Corporate Team are:-

- PCT1 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in its dealings with its land and with other land owners measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- PCT2 To ensure that the Council complies with all rules of Local Government and Public Law relevant to the property function measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the County Borough where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- PCT3 The provision of well-informed advice to the Council on rights and liabilities relating to its present and prospective land holdings and those of others measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the Council or adverse rulings of the Land Registry.

- PCT4 To effectively pursue the policy objectives of the Council especially those relating to development, job creation and provision of housing by the provision of an effective legal property service measured by the achievement of agreed targets in service provision.
- PCT5 To ensure that Council's interests are properly protected in any transaction.
- PCT6 To maximise Council's income measured by the achievement of agreed targets for income generation.
- PCT7 To record properly all transactions and ensure that deeds and other papers are safeguarded measured by the maintenance of proper deed records.
- PCT8 To ensure propriety in contract tendering.
- PCT9 To protect the Council's interests in the drawing up of Contracts.

The Aims and Objectives of The Litigation Team are:-

- LT1 To provide an effective dispute resolution service, to include effective and competent advocacy, only using Counsel as and when necessary.
- LT2 To ensure the Council complies with the law in exercising the planning, licensing, highways and housing functions.
- LT3 To assist the Council in attaining the aims and objectives of the Community Plan in the drafting and service of appropriate notices and the taking of action through the courts
- LT4 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in connection with its planning, housing, highways and licensing functions as measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.

- LT5 To ensure that the Directorate of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning and all Schools are provided with appropriate levels of advice and legal support in the carrying out of educational functions.
- LT6 To provide the Data Protection Officer Service as required and advice on Freedom of Information.

The Aims and Objectives of the Childcare Team are:-

- LCT1 To provide accurate, well informed and relevant legal advice to the Council through all phases of its involvement with children in need and/or at risk of harm.
- LCT2 To conduct child protection and other child related litigation on behalf of the Council, including providing the vast majority of advocacy in the family Court.
- LCT3 To support the Council's Children's Services directorate in its function as an adoption agency and panel, whether alone or acting jointly, and its permanency planning function.
- LCT4 To support the development and improvement of social work competence and capability, through the provision of/contribution to training and development.
- LCT5 To support the Children's Services Directorate in its statutory complaints process

It is necessary and desirable to review and update these aims over the next year and develop aims and objectives for the Licensing and Registrar Teams. Margam Crematorium will be subject to separate arrangements.

Key Objectives in 2015/16

These have been agreed with the Chief Executive, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services:

General

1. To deliver the savings allocated within the Council's Forward Financial Plan to the department and contain overall expenditure within the cash limit set for the department;
2. To maintain high levels of attendance in the Section;
3. To ensure departmental performance management arrangements are effective and in line with the Council's revised corporate framework;
4. To further develop staff communications, engagement and development arrangements across the department;
5. To maintain high standards of health and safety at work, ensuring all risk assessments are up to date and operational; and
6. To maintain an effective business continuity and emergency incident response across the functions and services within the portfolio and in particular to review business continuity arrangements at Margam Crematorium.
7. To ensure Directorate service changes and improvements in FFP are delivered.
8. To support and ensure proper governance arrangements are in place re collaboration work.

All of which will be delivered through the activities listed in Appendix A.

Why have these priorities been set?

The current financial cut backs and the Forward Financial Plan which documents the Council's method of dealing with those cut backs, remain the central operational facts to be dealt with over the next few years.

This is so for two reasons:-

First, services must be delivered using fewer and fewer resources but Legal Services does not control the level of activity that it is asked to address. The Section must do what it can to make service delivery more efficient whilst managing expectations in the continuing financial environment. Some teams such as that dealing with Licensing are not so affected by these changes.

Second, the Forward Financial Plan is likely to increase rather than lessen the requirement for provision of Legal Services. Some simple examples will explain the point. As the Council examines its expenditure and reduces or reallocates funding it becomes vulnerable to actions in judicial review. Also, where services are no longer provided directly in-house, legal relationships with other bodies (together with the need for documentation and advice) increase remarkably. For example, with some local library services being provided by Community Councils or volunteer groups, documentation is needed for each of them. Likewise, many leases were granted at the end of the last financial year so that sports clubs will manage their own facilities in future. Another factor which has increased the call upon Legal Services is the extension in inter-Authority and cross boundary working. The Section has provided support for joint working in the fields of – Waste, Education, Social Services, Housing, Health and Wellbeing.

The Section co-operates with the ICT and Procurement Sections in dealing with data protection issues. The Council co-operated in a voluntary audit conducted by the Office of the Information Commissioner. This gave rise to a report taken to the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board. The report identified a number of areas for improvement which have been included in the Improvement Plan.

Risks that have been identified and how risk will be managed

1. **Service quality and availability may be compromised** due to the reduction in financial resources - mitigated by prioritisation of available resources and appropriate staff training and supervision. Also, communication and agreement of revised service expectations with key stakeholders. Unavoidable staff absence has caused difficulty in certain areas. It is only as a result of staff willingness to act beyond job description that we have avoided using agency legal staff. On certain days typing services have not been available.
2. The **cost of services and functions** may not be delivered within the cash limit and **savings** may not be achieved for workload reasons – mitigated by concrete plans in place at the commencement of the financial year. Further savings will need to be identified in a review of the FFP.

3. **Demands on the service** will rise due to unforeseen external changes. Efforts will be made to mitigate this by developing greater efficiency and early identification of new developments. Staff have had to review extensive documentation at very short notice.
4. **Demands on the service** increase as a consequence of changes elsewhere within the council – mitigated by early and ongoing dialogue with colleagues to identify and agree where support needs to be prioritised.
5. **Service quality and availability** is compromised due to strain on staff – continue to build on staff communication and engagement activities and ensure all staff are receiving suitable support.
6. Risk that **statutory requirements** are not met – mitigated by clearly prioritising the statutory work.
7. Often instructions are received at the last moment. Reports to Cabinet and other Committees are often only available for review shortly before Committee deadlines and it is therefore difficult to give anything other than basic advice.
8. Combination of factors will lead to a depletion of staff in the Register Office during the year which will have an effect on service delivery.

How will we deliver the priorities we have identified?

Action Plans for each business unit within the service area

(note: action plans will be continuously reviewed and updated during the year)

Action Plan of Head of Legal Services

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
Mandatory Corporate Measures				
1	Manage resources within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Monthly monitoring of financial data, with prompt action to address pressures. Ensure accurate and full time recording to permit analysis of efficiency and value for money.	Whole Section management through financial year.	Hitting financial targets
2	Reduce sickness absence levels by at least 5% on 2014/15 levels	Ensure compliance with corporate policy, in particular the conduct of RTWIs and timely seeking of OH advice/services as appropriate	Whole Section management through financial year.	Compliance with target reduction
3	Ensure all staff EDRs are completed by 30.9.15 and implement identified learning and development requirements	Completion of staff EDRs with all staff	Head of Service and Accountable Managers	Completion of EDR

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
4.	Improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after.	<p>4.1.Updating and delivering training to social workers on issues of quality and format of evidence and assessment, new developments in child protection cases in the new Unified Family Court and revision of the Public Law outline, and court skills</p> <p>4.2. Senior or Principal Solicitor attending twice weekly legal surgeries with principal officers and social workers to improve decision making on individual cases; identifying cases where protective action is appropriate and reducing “drift.”.</p>	<p>Child Care March 2016</p> <p>Child Care June 2016</p>	<p>Training session notes</p> <p>Surgery notes</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		<p>4.3. Piloting an in house advocate to increase the availability of early advice upon cases, consistency of approach, and to deliver savings on the cost of using external counsel. Assessment in conjunction with Social Services</p> <p>4.4. Provision of accurate and timely data to the Head of Children and Young People Services to enable him to monitor and control his legal spend, and to enhance the ability to benchmark.</p> <p>4.5. Continuation of development of contracts and service level agreements for provision of early intervention and preventative services and execution of agreements both with external organisations and internal departments. Advice to be given on development of further tender exercises for remaining areas of Early Intervention and Preventative Services</p> <p>4.6. In light of success of development Early Intervention and Preventative Services, advice to be provided on further tendering opportunities in children's services including those for advocacy services</p>	<p>Assessment September 2015</p> <p>Child Care Continue to March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016</p>	<p>Have in-house advocate in place</p> <p>Provision of expenditure information</p> <p>Contract conditions and tender documentation produced and Contracts executed</p> <p>Contract conditions and tender documentation produced and Contracts executed</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		4.7. Ongoing advice to be provided on contractual arrangements for children's services	Property and Corporate Ongoing by end of March 2016	Advice provided
5.	Raise educational standards and attainment.	<p>5.1. Contract for new Baglan Bay School and other 21st Century School Programme</p> <p>5.2 General Legal Support for schools and Directorate of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning on contractual matters</p> <p>5.3 Advice on contract conditions for Transport Tender, which shall include the provision of transport services school children with the aim of development of a Dynamic Purchasing System for Transport Services</p> <p>5.4 Development of contracts with providers for placement of children with educational needs</p> <p>5.5. General Legal Support for schools and Directorate of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2015</p> <p>Litigation Ongoing by March 2016</p>	<p>Executed Agreement</p> <p>Executed Agreements in place</p> <p>Executed Agreements in place</p> <p>Monitoring of advice given</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
6.	<p>Maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently And</p> <p>The provision of housing related support for the Supporting People Programme</p>	<p>6.1. Section.33 and related agreements (between ABMU and NPT, Swansea and Bridgend Councils) for Western Bay.</p> <p>6.2. Agreements to cover the provision and receipt of services to and from Gwalia until the decant of the care homes: 1. Receipt of meals service from Gwalia to NPT 2. Provision of transport services to Gwalia 3. Provision of certain buildings and maintenance services to Gwalia</p> <p>6.3. Supporting People Contract Extensions April 2015</p> <p>6.4. Arranging contracts for execution of extension of services for Supporting People Grant Programme for 2015/2016.</p> <p>6.5. Wallich Project Inter Authority Agreement Swansea. An inter authority agreement to cover payment and the administration of the contract between Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend is to be entered into to cover the contract period of 2015-2016.</p>	<p>Property and Corporate/Litigation By end March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of May 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of May 2015</p>	<p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Agreements in place</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		<p>6.6 Agreement to be entered into with ABMU to cover training services that NPT will provide to ABMU between 2015/2016. Agreement presently with ABMU for approval.</p> <p>6.7 Consolidation of Transport Contracts</p> <p>6.8 Development of a Service Level Agreement with Cyfle i Dyfu for occupation of Vocational Skills Centre and training opportunities</p> <p>6.9 Initial advice on new procurement methods (i.e. dynamic purchasing systems) for Direct Payments and Domiciliary Care Arrangements</p>	<p>Property and Corporate By end of June 2014</p> <p>Property and Corporate Ongoing – completion of two stage Tender March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of July 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate March 2016</p>	<p>Agreement in place</p> <p>Provision of advice</p> <p>Agreements in place.</p> <p>Provision of advice.</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
7	<p>Support and promote economic growth regeneration etc.</p> <p>Renewal Area Contracts</p>	<p>7.1. Contracts entered into on an adhoc basis for Renewal Area construction work.</p> <p>7.2 Work in execution of Neath Town Centre Development documentation</p> <p>7.3 Advice on redevelopment of former Afan Lido Site</p> <p>7.4 Advice on operators agreement for Afan Valley Forest Centre</p> <p>7.5. Work on acquisition of property and payment of compensation for the PDR</p> <p>7.6. Advice and assistance on the Viable and Vibrant project at Port Talbot Town Centre including grant agreements and land acquisition.</p>	<p>Property and Corporate Ongoing</p> <p>Property and Corporate To end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate End of March 2016</p> <p>Property and Corporate End of March 2016</p>	<p>Agreements in place</p> <p>Execution of Agreements</p> <p>Tender process completed and agreements in place</p> <p>Tender process completed and agreement in place</p> <p>Acquisition as instructed</p> <p>Development Agreements and leases in place.</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		7.7. Coed Darcy southern access compensation and construction agreements.	Property and Corporate to end of March 2016	Agreements in place
		7.8. Leasing playing Fields and Community Centres throughout the County Borough.	Property and Corporate to end of March 2016	Leases in place
8.	Increase percentage of waste recycled	8.1. Provide legal advice and assistance for the tendering of waste services and the leasing of the MREC facility.	Property and Corporate To end of March 2016	Advice provided and Agreements in place
		8.2. Prosecutions for unauthorised waste disposal.	Litigation Ongoing to end of March 2016	Monitoring of prosecution numbers
		8.3 Provide legal services to South West Wales Regional Waste Committee and assist in review.	Property and Corporate To end of March 2016	Provision of Legal Services at meetings

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
9.	Improve customer access to services and improve efficiency	<p>9.1. Drafting of legal documents compromised in the Third Sector Review</p> <p>9.2. Drafting and implementation of Contract Procedure Rules</p> <p>9.3. Fully integrate the Typing/Secretarial Service into Legal Service, thereby ensuring that full use (cost effectiveness) is made of them by all Legal Services colleagues.</p> <p>9.4. Manage the administrative integration of Rights of Way/Commons searches within current Land Charges staff.</p> <p>9.5. Create a more meaningful and understandable budget for all areas of the Legal Services family</p>	<p>Property and Corporate By end of August 2015</p> <p>Property and Corporate By end of July 2015</p> <p>Business Support June/July 2014</p> <p>Litigation/Property Teams to March 2016</p> <p>Business Support Team Prior to the Revised Budget period circa October/November</p>	<p>Grant Agreements drafted and approved</p> <p>Revised Contract Procedure Rules in Place</p> <p>Monitoring of through put of work</p> <p>Assimilation of Commons work and limitation of ROW work referred externally</p> <p>Witnessed by Budget Journals in FIS</p>

<u>REF</u>	<u>AIM</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TEAM RESPONSIBLE & TIMINGS</u>	<u>FORMS OF EVIDENCE</u>
		9.6. Use of PDF Docs software for redaction and bundling	Legal Services Child Care July 2015	Use of software on live files
		9.7. Establish access to NPT Legal Systems from Court at Civil Justice Centre (a) By use of smartphone (b) By Court wifi	Legal Services Child Care (a) July 2015 (b) December 2015	Availability of access
10.	Licensing	10.1. Review of Licensing Act 2003 Policy in accordance with Statutory requirements	December 2015	To be published following approval from Council
		10.2. Review of Gambling Act 2005 Policy in accordance with Statutory requirements	December 2015	To be published following approval from Council
		10.3. Engage with the Western Bay Safeguarding team and Swansea & Bridgend Licensing Authorities to implement taxi driver training on Child Sexual Exploitation	March 2016	Implement taxi driver conditions in respect of CSE training
		10.4. Creating a transparent and robust Licensing fee structure to contribute towards the FFP -utilising the All Wales Licensing Expert Panel's fees toolkits.	March 2016	Budget Monitoring

ICT and Corporate Procurement Division

Business Plan 2015-16

Head of Service: Stephen John

Area of Responsibility: Information & Communications Technology and Corporate Procurement

Sponsor: Councillor Arwyn Woolcock

Introduction

The ICT and Corporate Procurement Division of the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate business plan follows the Corporate Performance Management Framework – Business Plan Guidance and will detail the division’s priorities and proposed action plan along with its response in relation to the Council’s six guiding principles.

Background

The Division is responsible for the provision and support of all ICT functions across the Council’s Departments including its Schools. The Division is also responsible for all Corporate Procurement activity within the Authority.

Despite continued budget and staff reductions, the Division is still perceived as one that performs well, operates strategically and is extremely flexible in adapting its work programme to meet the Council’s changing needs and priorities. Examples of this include the work generated by the Better, Simpler, Cheaper Programme which has resulted in a number of web and mobile applications being delivered which allow our citizens to access council services in a more flexible and convenient way and also the installation of the Regional Adoption Service into Port Talbot Civic Centre which required the development of a bespoke application and the delivery of flexible ICT infrastructure such that the staff involved were capable of working at a time, and from a location, that best served the service.

Principle 1 – What are the most important things for this service to achieve in the next year (15/16)

1. Software developments to support the continuing work and regional collaboration generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care programme. (*Improving Outcomes, Improving Lives*)
2. Software developments supporting the continuing work in Children's Services which are underpinning the improvements mandated by the CSSiW (Care and Social Services Inspection Wales) inspection. (*Safer, Brighter, Futures*).
3. Replace the current CMS (Content Management System) third party system with an open source solution. This solution will underpin all the Council's customer facing web sites providing a more flexible and functional system at a reduced cost. (*All*).
4. Continue to produce flexible applications that support the ICE (Improve Customer Experience) programme including the expansion of map based reporting facilities for the public via the internet. The requirements identified by the Digital by Design programme will be amalgamated into this work stream. (*Better, Simpler, Cheaper*).
5. iDOCS – a rewrite and rationalisation of the existing EDRMS (Electronic Document and Record Management System) solutions leading to an improved document storage and retrieval facility that will reduce on-going costs, rationalise the storage required and increase public availability (*All*).
6. To support the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information. This may be through an increased integration of the Vision system with other applications or by replacing the existing Vision system with a different facility. The programme will also be supported by improving the quality of services to users of the iProcurement and FIS (Financial Information System) Systems (*Better, Simpler, Cheaper*).

7. To replace Mentor, the Council's job costing system, maintaining service at a reduced cost. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
8. Modern Government System – support the introduction of a third party solution, delivering Members and staff access to secure committee document storage and administration. Mobile applications will be deployed to augment the exercise and pilot “paperless” meetings. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
9. Continued rationalisation of server estate, and the introduction of an enterprise back-up service, across a fully secure and facilitated two site deployment ensuring the necessary infrastructure to satisfy the Council's Business Continuity plans. *(All)*
10. ICT Service Provision for NPT schools – modernising the schools ICT service to underpin the changes in teaching and learning mandated by the schools themselves, the regional body ERW (Education through Regional Working) and the initiatives and demands introduced by the national curriculum. *(Brighter Schools, Brighter Prospects)*
11. Review of telephony including mobile devices. This review to include the need for staff and customer video conferencing, automated call answering, increased self-service and reduced costs. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
12. Ensure value for money and compliance through the application of the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations and EU Procurement Legislation. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
13. To collaborate, where appropriate, with other public sector organisations such as the National Procurement Service and The Welsh Purchasing Consortium to deliver increased value for money. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*
14. To modernise the Procurement function through the use of electronic tools and software including E-sourcing, E-tendering and the continued roll out of e-Procurement across the Council. *(Better, Simpler, Cheaper)*

- 15.** To encourage and support local suppliers to bid for and win Council contracts thus ensuring the Council's procurement activity has a positive effect on the local economy. (Prosperity for All)

Principle 2 – Why have we prioritized these achievements:

1. These areas have been prioritised after in-depth consultation with Chief Officers and their service managers with a aim of helping services meet their financial objectives and Council priorities.
2. The priorities will aid services in helping to maximise their potential whilst ensuring that staff and members work from a resilient and available IT infrastructure.
3. To ensure that the Authority has value for money in its expenditure and that local business collaboration is prioritised.
4. To ensure that the Council has a modernised and supported infrastructure that will remain valid for the next four to six years.

Principle 3 – How are we going to secure these achievements:

These achievements will be secured in-house by the ICT Division's experienced and qualified staff.

However, should a limit to available manpower be reached, for example due to the budget situation and dwindling resources, external resource may need to be procured if all the services' priorities are to be met.

For several years the service has been providing opportunities for Modern Apprenticeships and has recently increased the number on offer. Once fully trained these staff will be a further source of additional resources.

Partnership working has also been discussed with neighbouring authorities and with ever decreasing resources and budget this will continue. However, to date there has been limited interest shown by our neighbours and therefore this plan cannot rely on this process and the delivery of the priorities identified herein do not rely on this.

Principle 4 – How will any risks be managed:

Step 1 – Identification of Risks			Step 2 – Assessing the Risks			Step 3 - Mitigation	
Risk No	Risk Description	Cause of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	How Risk is to be Addressed	Linked Actions
R1	Loss of key staff from Division	ER VR scheme, job opportunities	5	5	10 (High)	Combination of better job satisfaction through System Reviews, Employee Development Review process and reduction of dependency on key individuals by sharing expert knowledge across other staff.	
R2	Workload exceeds available resources	Unrealistic expectations arising from insufficient forward planning or consultation by service users; Legislation;. Expanded use; growth and diversity of technology deployed leading to an increased support burden.	3	3	6 (Med)	Ensure that senior IT Managers are consulted for all projects that contain elements linked to ICT. Stronger ICT governance. Ensure tasks and targets published in the Business Plan are achievable by setting realistic target dates and managing resources effectively.	

R3	Loss of Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation	Submission failure	2	4	6 (Med)	Ensure that all areas of PSN Conditions of Connection are met	
R4	Loss of Exchange/Email Service.	Server and/or Application failure.	1	2	3 (Low)	Provision of resilience through implementation of high Availability redundant servers.	
R5	Significant Fabric/Infrastructure loss.	Accidental or Malicious damage.	1	2	3 (Low)	Enhanced environmental monitoring agents coupled with more robust Business Continuity processes	
R6	Unauthorised access to corporate facilities/ information.	Breach of perimeter security.	1	2	3 (Low)	Increased detection methods and better application security.	

Principle 5 – What is our current performance in these priority areas:

1. The Software Development Team has a very good relationship with the service managers within the Social Services Directorate.

Regular development meetings are held and the application itself, which covers several disciplines within the Directorate, has been developed to meet the exact needs of the service.

This relationship has been very beneficial in supporting the work undertaken in adult services and that addressing the CSSiW recommendations. (Priority items 1 & 2)

2. The Development Team is well-respected within the Authority and also with those staff who we engage with from other Councils.

Our in-house developed systems avoid the need for the purchase of third party solutions and are created to be service-specific. Increasingly these applications are in demand by other local councils and NPT staff developed DRAGON, the Joint Resilience Unit system which has been adopted regionally with a view to becoming the national offering.

We are currently in discussions with various Councils on a number of recent developments including our Registrars and Fleet Management Systems.(Priority items 3, 4, 5 & 6)

3. The ICT Division has supported Mentor for several years but as the result of key staff leaving the Authority, and the need to realise increased savings from our software budget, it has been decided to replace the system.

The staff involved will ensure that any replacement is fit for purpose, will deliver the necessary savings and plan for a seamless decommissioning of the application. (Priority item 7)

4. The initial implementation of the Modern Government System has now been in place for several months.

The next steps will see the introduction of a “sister” secure application for use by

authorised staff and Members which will enable access to private reports and papers in addition to those publically available.

A review of Member's ICT will take place in tandem with the aim of understanding changing needs and introducing the necessary facilities to meet these. This will include the devices and software which will allow Members, and staff, to access and work with documentation electronically, reducing the need for paper. (Priority item 8)

5. The ICT Division has a very experienced technical team with a proven track record of ensuring that IT infrastructure meets the organisational need, is secure and is provided with a high availability.

Recent staff losses will be offset with a combination of team mergers, a reallocation of specific duties and the merging of corporate and school specific infrastructure. All of which should combine to ensure that service levels remain at the current high standard. (Priority items 9, 10 & 11)

6. The Procurement Team has a successful track record in supporting services delivering cashable contract savings across a wide range of commodities (Social Care, Professional Services, ICT). Procurement Training for relevant Council staff has also been delivered to ensure key officers are fully aware of how the recent changes to EU Procurement law affects their operation (Priority Item 12).
7. The Council are active members of the Welsh Procurement Consortium, making use of a number of agreements across its contract portfolio and also acts as lead Authority on a variety of contracts. It also contributes to the National Procurement Service across its various customer groups and provides information as required to deliver standardised, effective all Wales arrangements (Priority Item 13).
8. Procurement Staff have led on the re-design of Purchase to Pay (P2P) processes across the Council, introducing new forms of centralised purchasing, where appropriate. This work has been supplemented by the introduction of Oracle iProcurement software and Corporate Credit Cards that underpin the new processes and models of operation. Detailed Procurement Spend information is now readily available through pre-configured reporting software (Priority Item 14).

9. Support for local businesses is in place through the joint work between the Procurement and Business Development Sections that includes various workshops, issuing general advice engagement events and hands on support for completing tenders. This has also broadened out with Community Benefit clauses now standard in major construction projects and extending into other contract areas such as Financial Services. Support is also in place for local businesses to enable them to trade electronically with the Council and others, supporting their economic growth (Priority Item 15).

Principle 6 – Action Plan

Number	Task/Action	Comments	Resp. Officers	Target Date	Outcomes
1.	Software developments supporting the work generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme	Respond to demands from SSH directorate to develop in house system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Fit for purpose system
2.	Work associated with supporting continued work in Children's Services	Respond to demands from SSH directorate to modify in house system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Fit for purpose systems and IT
3.	Replace current CMS with open source solution	Cost saving by developing an open source solution	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful conversion and implementation of new solution.
4.	Continue to produce flexible applications	Develop web pages and system	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful implementation of new systems
5.	Rewrite and rationalisation of EDRMS	Development of in house solution	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Successful conversion and implementation of new solution.

6.	To support the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information	Identify Vision data import/export requirements. Develop and implement system interfaces. Review current technical architecture and service arrangements. Identify and implement improvements.	Phillip Hopkins	Ongoing development	Collect and analyse type and frequency of demands from users of corporate systems Collect and analyse customer views on corporate systems
7.	Work to replace Mentor System	Maintain service at a reduced cost	Ian John	Ongoing	Successful and seamless removal of system
8.	Modern Government System	Support third party installation and configuration	Ian John/Dave Giles	Ongoing	Successful implementation
9.	Rationalisation of server estate and upgrade of enterprise back up service	Replace ageing architecture and operating systems to provide a flexible, robust and responsive infrastructure; improve Disaster Recovery Capability	David Giles	Ongoing	Seamless replacement of architecture Ability to recover from system failure improved

10.	Modernisation of schools ICT service provision	Engage with schools to create an updated ICT Delivery model to reflect business needs. Emphasis on Office 365, HWB+ and Mobile access to Service	David Giles	Ongoing	Modernisation of schools ICT environment
11.	Review of telephony including mobile devices	Rationalisation of telephony across the Authority	David Giles	Ongoing	
12.	Continued desktop and Office 2010 upgrades	Refresh desktop estate across the council to provide access to latest stable operating system and office environment	David Giles	Ongoing	
13.	Ensure VFM and compliance through Contract Procedure Rules, etc	Ensure CPR, Fin Regs and procurement legislation are adhered to	Rob Type	Ongoing	
14.	Continuing Data Reviews	Reviewing staff use of information and ensuring security of the data.	Ian John	Ongoing	Surety surrounding data security and maximized information usage
15.	ICO Audit	Deliver the improvements identified during the ICO Audit	Ian John	March 2016	Completed action plan
16.	PSN Accreditation	Ensure PSN accreditation	Ian John	Nov 2016	Continued accreditation
17.	Identify and introduce meaningful service performance measures	Identify valuable measurable performance metrics for each section of the Division	Ian John	Ongoing	

18.	Engagement with National Procurement Initiatives	Contribute to the development of national procurement strategies and initiatives.	Rob Type	Ongoing	Publication and adoption of national strategies
19.	EProcurement	Redesign and streamlining of purchasing and payment processes and continued roll out of eProcurement tools	Rob Type	Ongoing	
20.	Guidance re changes in the EU Directives	Utilise Value Wales and CCS policy notes and organise procurement training and other resources for staff	Rob Type	Ongoing	Publication of guidance
21	Further develop the use of community benefits in the procurement process	Better identify opportunities for use through early involvement in the procurement process. Educate departments and members on the advantages of community benefits	Rob Type	Ongoing	
22.	Ensure that resources are managed within budget (including savings identified within the FFP)	Mandated measure	Head of Service and senior managers	Ongoing	Budget delivered within agreed guidelines

23.	Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Mandated measure		Head of Service and senior managers	Ongoing	Sickness levels managed
24.	Ensure all staff PDR's are completed	Mandated measure	Head of Service and senior managers	March 2016	PDR's completed for all staff in the ICT Division	

ICT AND CORPORATE PROCUREMENT SERVICE REPORT CARD 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

Brief description of the service	Key priorities for 2014/2015
<p>The ICT Division is responsible for the provision and support of all ICT functions across the Council; including its schools.</p> <p>The service includes support of all servers, desktops and mobile devices and associated infrastructure, development of software including web applications, support for new council requirements, Information security and ICT training.</p> <p>The Procurement Unit is also part of the Division and is responsible for ensuring corporate spend is undertaken within the remit of the Procurement Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System development including those supporting service improvements within Children's and Adult Services, mobile and web facing applications and map based reporting underpin the Digital by Design strategy • Completion of the desktop reprovisioning exercise • Server and storage upgrades to improve performance and resilience of the core infrastructure • Replace the aging telephone architecture with a flexible, integrated voice and data solution • Explore and exploit local and regional collaborative opportunities

Story behind the performance

The Division, as with all others in the Council, has to adhere to a very strict budget which operates under the control of the over-arching FFP. Whilst this is achievable, it does in the main direct spend against local solutions; ones which are important to our Council.

Despite the budget and staff reductions, the Division is perceived as one that performs well, operates strategically and is extremely flexible in adapting its work programme to meet the Council's changing needs. There are good examples of this, not least the work undertaken during the last year in supporting the Council's Children's Service to address the findings from its inspection and also the work carried out in partnership with Welsh Government and the Authority's Schools in providing ubiquitous wireless coverage within and across their campus'; ensuring safe broadband Internet access for their pupils wherever they are in the school.

Measure	13/14 Performance	14/15 Q1 Apr - June	14/15 Q2 July - Sept	14/15 Q3 Oct - Dec	14/15 Q4 Jan - Mar	14/15 Cumul.
Financial:						
FFP (agreed) savings at risk or undeliverable	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% expenditure within budget	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target strategies identified to balance budget for 2015/16	Strategies identified will realise the required savings					
Customer:						
Average customer satisfaction score	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
No of complaints received (including those received for the Welsh Language Scheme)	No service complaints have been received					
No of compliments received	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Internal:						
Average No of Support calls received per day	104	102	123	119	121	116
% of calls completed within 1 day	66%	68%	74%	71%	73%	71.5%
Number of calls that fail to get through first time (missed calls)	3.91%	2.87%	3.55%	3.71%	2.77%	3.22%
System availability	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
Number of transactions through eProcurement tools	NEW	9,562	10,474	12,715	16,676	49,427

Measure	13/14 Performance	14/15 Q1 Apr - June	14/15 Q2 July - Sept	14/15 Q3 Oct - Dec	14/15 Q4 Jan - Mar	14/15 Cumul.
Employees:						
% staff satisfied or very satisfied with their job	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Average days lost due to sickness / FTE	0.45	0.23	0.43	0.74	1.45	0.71
No of staff ideas generated	Ideas generated by staff on daily basis.					
% of staff who have received a PDR/EDR in the last 12 months	NEW	NEW	NEW	10%	10%	10%
% identified learning and development needs met	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Employee turnover rate due to unplanned departures	NEW	NEW	NEW	0	0	0

Next key actions for 2015/2016			
ID	What	Who	By When
2015/01	Software developments to support the continuing work and regional collaboration generated by the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/02	Software developments to supporting the continuing work in Children's Services which are underpinning the improvements mandated by the CSSiW inspection.	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/03	Replace the existing CMS system with an open source solution	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/04	Continue to produce flexible applications that support the ICE programme/Digital by Design programme	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/05	The rewrite and rationalisation of the existing EDRMS solutions	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/06	Supporting the delivery of the PICS programme by improving staff and manager access to employee information. This may be through increased integration with the Vision System or the replacement of the system with a different solution	Phil Hopkins	Ongoing
2015/07	Replacement of the Mentor costing system	Ian John	Ongoing
2015/08	Modern Government System continued deployment including the implementation of the secure document "app"	Ian John/Dave Giles	2 nd Quarter

Continued rationalisation of server estate & the introduction of an enterprise backup service	David Giles	Ongoing
Modernisation of the schools ICT service which will underpin the changes in teaching and learning mandated by the schools	David Giles	Ongoing
Review of telephony including mobile devices which will include video conferencing, automated call answering, increased self-service and reduced costs	David Giles	Ongoing
Ensure value for money and compliance through the application of the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regs, e-Tendering and EU Procurement Legislation	Rob Type	Ongoing
Collaboration with other public sector organisations such as the National Procurement Service and Welsh Purchasing Consortium to deliver increased value for money	Rob Type	Ongoing
To modernise the Procurement function through the use of e-tools and software including e-sourcing, e-tendering and the continued roll out of e-Procurement across the Council	Rob Type	Ongoing
To encourage and support local suppliers to bid for and win Council contract thus ensuring the Council's procurement activity has a positive effect on the local economy	Rob Type	Ongoing
Continued PSN accreditation	Ian John	3 rd Quarter
Continued data reviews to ensure staff are accessing, using and securing information properly	Ian John	Ongoing
Delivering the improvements identified during the ICO Audit	Ian John	Ongoing
Ensuring that resources are managed within budget	Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Maintain sickness levels as low as possible	Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Ensure staff PDRs are completed	Senior Management Team	March 2016

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

28th MAY 2015

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

WARDS AFFECTED - ALL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2015/16

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Rates of Interest

- 2.1 Bank base rates remain at of 0.5% (since 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 18th May 2015 pm:

	Equal Instalments of Principal		Annuity		Maturity	
	Previous 25 March 2015	Current 18 May 2015	Previous 25 March 2015	Current 18 May 2015	Previous 25 March 2015	Current 18 May 2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%
5-5.5 years	1.63	1.63	1.63	1.63	2.06	2.06
10-10.5 years	2.06	2.06	2.08	2.08	2.59	2.59
20-20.5 years	2.59	2.59	2.63	2.63	3.14	3.14
35-35.5 years	3.04	3.04	3.13	3.13	3.26	3.26
49.5-50 years	3.25	3.25	3.27	3.27	3.22	3.22

3. General Fund Treasury Management Budget

3.1 The following table sets out the treasury management budget and end of year outturn position 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. It also shows the 2015/16 Budget.

2014/15 Revised Budget £'000	2014/15 Outturn Position £'000		2015/16 Original Budget £'000
17,085	16,964	Principal and Interest charges	17,230
	246	Contribution to Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve to fund SSIP and other Capital Programme over the next 3 years.	
17,085	17,210	Subtotal Expenditure	
		Investment Income	
(654)	(806)	- Total	(614)
200	227	- less allocated to other funds	210
(454)	(579)	Subtotal Income	(404)
16,631	16,631	Net General Fund	16,826

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

4. Borrowing

4.1 No long term borrowing has been arranged since the previous report.

5.1 Investment Income

It can be seen from the table above that interest on investments exceeded the 2014/15 budgeted amount by £152,000. This is due to the fact that the level of cash balances during the year exceeded expectations and the interest rate generated was slightly higher than budgeted for due to the pro-active management of cash balances.

In relation to 2015/16 the budgeted income target is £614,000, investment income generated on investments made to date is £393,000.

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

5.2 The Council policy will allow investments up to a maximum of £25m for periods of more than 1 year and up to 5 years, and this will be considered when decisions on investing surplus funds are made.

5.3 No additional long term investments have been carried out since the last report. The Council currently has £10m invested for periods in excess of 12 months:

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%
TOTAL	10,000			

Icelandic Bank Update

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

5.5 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	2,546	454
Total	12,000	11,143	857

Table 2 – Investments Held in Escrow Accounts – Icelandic Kroner

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

5.6 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%.

5.7 Members should note that due to an Icelandic Court ruling the Council has repaid the creditors of the old Glitnir Bank £23k. The result of this is that of the £2m original invested in Glitnir Bank the Council has received back, including the Escrowed amount above, a total £2.027m.

List of Background Papers

Treasury Management Files
PWLB Notice Number 188/15

Appendix

None

Wards Affected

All

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 and Corporate

Tel. No: 01639 763575

E-mail: h.jones@npt.gov.uk

Mr Chris Rees – Senior Accountant

Tel. No: 01639 763590

E-mail: c.rees@npt.gov.uk

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES –

DAVE REES

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

BUSINESS RATES –SECTION 44A DISCRETIONARY RELIEF

1. Purpose of The Report

- 1.1. Section 44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides Local Authorities with the discretion to allow rate relief where a property is partly occupied for a temporary period.
- 1.2. In order that any decisions to grant relief are fair and consistent, a policy has been drafted setting out the circumstances and details that will be taken into consideration when making a decision.
- 1.3. This report provides Members with this policy on Section 44A relief for authorisation. (Appendix 1)

2. Background

- 2.1 In rating law a partly used property is viewed as occupied, though section 44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables the Council to grant rate relief on a property that is partly unoccupied, so long as this situation exists for a short time only. This is in addition to various statutory reductions, discounts and disregards etc. that are already within existing legislation.
- 2.2 The amount of relief is not discretionary as the sum awarded is calculated on the apportioned rateable value supplied by the Valuation Office.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this policy does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. The purpose of this policy is to provide temporary assistance to taxpayers to help reduce their business rates liability in respect of properties that are partly occupied for a temporary period. As such there is a low reputational risk to the Authority as the awards will be to the advantage of the taxpayers who meet the qualifying circumstances. It will be of low visibility to the general public as it only applies to those paying business rates. The qualifying circumstances do not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members adopt the “Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy Section 44A” attached at Appendix 1.

5. Reason for Proposed Decision

To establish a policy to formalise applications received from business ratepayers for partial relief for NNDR.

6. List of Background Papers

Local Government Finance Act 1988

7. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy Section 44A.

8. Officer Contact

Mr David Rees – Head of Financial Services

Tel No: 01639 763646

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

Mrs Ann Hinder - Principal Council Tax Officer Benefits

Tel No: 01639 763908

E-mail: a.hinder@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

SECTION 44A DISRECTIONARY RELIEF

(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	No impact
Environment and Transport	No impact
Crime and Disorder	No impact

Other Impacts:

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

(c) **Consultation**

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

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy Section 44A

May 2015

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislative Powers
3. Statement of Objectives
4. Claiming Discretionary Relief
5. Decision Making
6. Period of Award
7. Authority to Award
8. Notification of Decision
9. Review of Decision
10. Data Access and Data Sharing

1. Introduction

The Council has discretionary powers to award relief from payment of Non-Domestic Rates in a range of circumstances. This Policy shall apply in giving consideration to applications for discretionary rate relief made in respect of properties that are partly occupied for a temporary period.

The discretionary relief policy will be administered by Neath Port Talbot CBC and will be made available to any tax payer specified in Section 4 of this policy. The purpose of this discretionary relief policy is to provide temporary assistance to tax payers to help reduce their business rates liability. The operation of the policy is at the discretion of the Council.

2. Legislative Powers

Section 44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides Local Authorities with the discretion to allow rate relief where a property is partly occupied for a temporary period.

The definition of a 'temporary period' is not prescribed with the law and therefore Neath Port Talbot CBC has the discretion to decide the period relief should be awarded.

Partially occupied rate relief (also referred to as Section 44A Relief) is not intended to be used where part of a property is temporarily not used. The intention is aimed at situations where there are practical difficulties in occupying or vacating part of the property.

3. Statement of Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to specify how the Council will operate this discretionary power and to set out the factors that will be considered when making a decision on whether to award Section 44A relief (or not).

Principally, the objective of this discretionary relief is to offer short term financial assistance to tax payers where part of the premises they occupy is temporarily unoccupied. Each application for discretionary relief will be treated strictly on its own merits and all tax payers will be treated fairly and equally.

4. Claiming Discretionary Relief

All applications must be made on the Authority's designated form by the occupier, owner or persons acting on their behalf, e.g. agents, solicitors or accountants.

The applicant must submit a plan which clearly identifies the areas of occupation and those areas that are temporarily unoccupied.

Applications will only be considered in respect of unoccupied parts of a property that can be clearly defined and are reasonably segregated from the occupied part of the property.

The effective start date of Section 44A relief will normally be the date of initial request, there will be no retrospective granting of relief where a request is made after the premises becomes fully operational or fully vacated.

5. Decision Making

The ratepayer must allow a Council Officer access to the property by appointment during normal working hours in order to verify the part occupation of the property. The inspector may also visit the premises from time to time, without prior notice to check that the certified unoccupied area is not in use.

Applications where favourable consideration would be likely would include (although not limited to) the following –

- Full occupation being phased over a period of time
- Full vacation occurring in stages over a period of time
- Where fire, flood or other natural disaster prevents full use of the premises
- Where remedial building work is being undertaken
- Where there are short term practical difficulties in occupying the whole property

In all of the above cases, the period of part occupation must be for a temporary period only.

Rate relief will not be awarded where the partial occupation is due to the normal day to day operation of the business; i.e. a warehouse which has recently had the despatch of a large order and has limited stock or where part occupation is seasonal.

Relief will not be awarded where it appears to the Council that the only reason that part of the property is empty is for the purposes of applying for rate relief.

Relief may not be awarded where part occupation is likely to continue year on year or where the empty area (or part of the area) has been subject to previous applications. Relief may also not be awarded if repeated awards of Section 44A have been granted historically.

Periodic refurbishments of a property are part of the normal economic life of a properties occupation and are unlikely to be considered for part occupied relief.

6. Period of Award

Section 44A relief will mirror the normal exemption allowance for the type of assessment, a maximum of 3 months for non-industrial and 6 months for industrial.

Awards of rate relief shall end at the earliest occurrence of one of the following:

- a) The date of full occupation
- b) The date of full vacation
- c) The date of completion of remedial works
- d) The end of the financial year (a further application will need to be made if the period of part occupation continues after the 1st April)
- e) The maximum period permitted for the relief
- f) The Council is unable to verify ongoing entitlement to the relief

7. Authority to Award Relief

The Principal Council Tax Officer or Senior Rating Officer will assess all Section 44A applications and the decision will then be referred to the Director of Finance & Corporate Services or Head of Financial Services for final authorisation.

8. Notification of Decision

The Council will notify an applicant in writing within 14 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision or within a reasonable period afterwards.

Where an application for discretionary relief is successful the applicant (and any other affected party) will receive notification of:

- The amount of the award

- The circumstances of the award, any steps that the applicant should take and any conditionality attached to the award
- The start and end date of the award
- Their duty to report any change of circumstances that may affect the award
- The recoverability of any award
- The procedure to follow should the applicant disagree with the decision.

9. Review of Decision

Under the Local Government Finance Act, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept an applicant's written request for a further review of its decision, if it is made within one month of the date of notification of the decision.

The request for review will be considered by a person other than the person who made the original decision. He/she will consider whether the applicant has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change to the original decision.

If the review concludes not to revise the original decision, this decision is final and may only be challenged by way of judicial review or by a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, (where there is an allegation of maladministration).

10. Data Access and Data Sharing

The Council is allowed to collect data to support, evidence and to determine discretionary payments. The scheme will operate to support principles for fair, reasonable and confidential data access and sharing at all times.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEME- WALES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME 2015-16

Introduction

1. This report recommends the authority adopt a new scheme, namely “Wales Retail Relief Scheme” which provides discretionary rates relief of up to £1,500 for businesses meeting the qualifying criteria.

Background

2. The retail sector is changing, particularly due to internet shopping, and many high streets are experiencing challenges as they look to adapt to changing consumer preferences in how people shop. The Welsh Government wishes to support town centres and high streets by providing particular support to retailers. The “Wales Retail Relief Scheme” was introduced in 2014-15 providing assistance of up to £1,000 to businesses that met the qualifying criteria. Welsh Government wishes to provide further support in 2015-16 providing relief of up to £1,500 for qualifying businesses.
3. **Wales Retail Relief scheme**
 - 3.1 The total amount of relief available for each property for each of the years under this policy is £1,500. The amount does not vary with rateable value and there is no taper.
 - 3.2 There is no relief available under this policy for properties with a rateable value of more than £50,000.
 - 3.3 The eligibility for the relief and the relief itself will be assessed and calculated on a daily basis.

- 3.4 The relief will be applied against the net business rates bill after all other reliefs have been taken into account.
- 3.5 Where the net rate liability for the day after all other reliefs but before retail rate relief is less than the retail rate relief, the maximum amount of retail rate relief will be no more than the value of the net rate liability.
- 3.6 Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties, subject to State Aid de-minimis limits.

4. **Awarding relief**

4.1 Properties that will benefit from the retail rate relief will be occupied hereditaments with a rateable value of £50,000 or less, that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments.

4.2 We consider shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments to mean:

(i) Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:

- Shops (such as: florist, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off-licence, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc.)
- Charity shops
- Opticians
- Post offices
- Furnishing shops/display rooms (such as carpet shops, double glazing, garage doors, etc.)
- Car/caravan show rooms
- Second hand car lots
- Markets
- Petrol stations
- Garden centres
- Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)

(ii) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Hair and beauty services (such as hair dressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops, etc.)
- Shoe repairs/ key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket offices e.g. for theatre
- Dry cleaners
- Launderettes
- PC/ TV/ domestic appliance repair
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- DVD/ video rentals
- Cinemas
- Tool hire
- Estate and letting agents
- Car hire

(iii) Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/ or drink to visiting members of the public:

- Restaurants
- Takeaways
- Sandwich shops
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Bars/Wine bars
- Cafes

4.3 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive as it would be impossible to list the many and varied retail uses that exist. There will also be mixed uses. However, it is intended to be a guide as to the types of uses that the Council considers to be retail for the purpose of this scheme.

4.4 On receipt of a completed application form, the Council will determine whether particular properties not listed are broadly similar in nature to those above and, if so, consider them eligible for the relief. Conversely, properties that are not broadly similar in nature to those listed above will not be eligible for relief.

4.5 As a guide, the list below sets out the types of uses that are not considered to be retail for the purpose of this policy:

(i) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Financial services (such as banks, building societies, cash points, bureau de change, payday lenders, betting shops, pawn brokers, etc.)
- Day nurseries
- Sports clubs / children's play centres
- Outdoor activity centres
- Gyms
- Kennels and catteries
- Employment agencies
- Tourism accommodation (such as B&B's, hotel accommodation and caravan parks)
- Post office sorting office
- Medical services (such as vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors, etc.)
- Professional services (such as solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisors)

(ii) Hereditaments that are not reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public. This is not defined within the Government guidance. However, for the purpose of this scheme, this would include properties which do not have a customer facing 'front of house'. The expectation is that, in the normal course of events, members of the public would ordinarily attend the property in person. Examples where relief would not be granted would include skip hire, scaffolding services, distribution premises etc where attendance in person does not normally occur.

5. Data on Wales Retail Relief Scheme 2014-15

Just over 400 businesses benefited from the Wales Retail Relief Scheme in 2014-15. The total amount of relief awarded was £322,808.18.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this policy does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. This is a Welsh Government scheme that applies to businesses that meet certain specified criteria, that allows those businesses a grant to offset against their business rates liability. Therefore there will be a low reputational risk to the Authority as providing the relief will be of benefit to those who meet the criteria. It is of low visibility to the general public as it is only available to those paying business rates. The criteria applied does not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.

7. Recommendations

That Neath Port Talbot Council adopts the new scheme as outlined for 2015-16 and provide the relevant rate relief where qualifying criteria are met.

8. Reason for Proposed Decision

To provide business rates relief in line with Welsh Government Scheme.

9. List of Background Papers

Local Government Finance Act 1988.
Welsh Government “Wales Retail Relief Scheme” guidance manual

10. Officer Contact

Mr D Rees – Head of Finance Services.
Telephone: 01639 763634
e-mail: d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Ann Hinder – Principal Council Tax Officer
Telephone: 01639 763908
e-mail: a.hinder@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEME- WALES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME 2015-16

(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	Positive
Crime and Disorder	Positive

Other Impacts:

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

(c) **Consultation**

There has been no requirement to consult under the Forward Work Programme.

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES –

DAVE REES

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF POLICY

1. Purpose Of The Report

- 1.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992, Section 13A allows a Council to reduce a person's Council Tax liability to nil (if it sees fit to do so).
- 1.2. In order that any decisions to reduce a person's council tax liability are fair and consistent, a policy has been drafted setting out the circumstances and detail that will be taken into consideration when making a decision.
- 1.3. This report provides Members with this policy on council tax discretionary relief for authorisation.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992, Section 13A (1) (c) (introduced in 2003) gave discretion to local authorities to reduce a person's council tax 'to such an extent as it sees fit', even to nil, whether on an individual basis or in relation to prescribed categories. This is in addition to various statutory reductions, discounts and disregards etc. that are already within existing legislation.

- 2.2. This discretion was only ever envisaged to be used in extreme cases, affecting a limited number of council taxpayers, for example a crisis or event that has made the property uninhabitable e.g. fire, flood etc., but recent changes to the way council tax support is provided to residents on low income i.e. the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, across the UK, has resulted in many more applications of this type being made, particularly to councils in England.
- 2.3. Following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in March 2013, Members will be aware that in Wales, the Welsh Government contributed a further £22m of funding on top of the £222m provided by the UK Government in order to maintain council tax reduction scheme entitlement at 100%; but in England, no such provision existed and many councils were forced to cut the maximum allowance resulting in many working age taxpayers having to contribute to their council tax liability.
- 2.4. Some council tax payers in England, who were unable to meet this liability, approached their council for help and many were refused any further financial support to meet the shortfall in entitlement. However, two individuals took their case to the Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE) on the basis that they were unable to pay the remaining council tax liability (25%) after CTRS had been awarded, but the Council (East Riding of Yorkshire) had refused to provide any further financial assistance.
- 2.5. At the VTE appeal hearing, the Tribunal made a ‘landmark’ decision that the Council should have provided support under Section 13A1. Furthermore, East Riding Council was heavily criticised by the Tribunal for not having a policy to deal with any discretionary council tax relief applications.

3. Proposed way forward

- 3.1. In view of this criticism, the professional body representing Council Tax & Rating specialists working in local authorities have strongly encouraged every council in the UK to have a Council Tax Discretionary Relief policy in place to cover all eventualities ranging from natural disasters affecting a large number of taxpayers to the possibility of providing support to an individual council tax payer who is unable to pay their council tax liability.

- 3.2. It is not envisaged that many applications will be made for discretionary council tax relief, as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme should support those on low incomes who have a liability, but there may be exceptional cases where an application is made.
- 3.3. A policy for dealing with such applications from residents in Neath Port Talbot CBC is attached at Appendix 1 for Members consideration.
- 3.4. Any applications will be considered under this discretionary policy by senior officers/principal officer within the Council Tax Section and authorisation to award (or not) agreed by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services or Head of Financial Services. This follows the same procedure as applications for Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this policy does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. This policy gives the Council discretion to reduce a person's council tax for a temporary period, as a result of financial hardship in exceptional circumstances. Due to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales being maintained at 100% it is not envisaged that many applications will be made to the Authority and as such the visibility to the general public will be low. There is a low reputational risk to the Authority due to the expected low number of applications and the fact that any awards made will be to the benefit of the applicants. Finally the criteria for awarding the discretion does not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members:

Adopt the "Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy" attached at Appendix 1.

6. Reason for proposed decision

To comply with the decision of the Valuation Tribunal.

7. List of Background Papers

Local Government Finance Act 1992

8. Appendix

Appendix 1- Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy Section 13A

9. Officer Contact

Mr David Rees – Head of Financial Services

Tel No: 01639 763646

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

Mrs Ann Hinder - Principal Council Tax Officer Benefits

Tel No: 01639 763908

E-mail: a.hinder@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF POLICY

(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	No impact
Better Health and Well Being	No impact
Environment and Transport	No impact
Crime and Disorder	No impact

Other Impacts:

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

(c) **Consultation**

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

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy Section 13A

May 2015

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Legislative Powers
- 3 Statement of Objectives
- 4 Claiming Discretionary Relief
- 5 Decision Making
- 6 Notification of Decision
- 7 Review of Decision
- 8 Data Access and Data Sharing

1 Introduction

This discretionary relief policy has been created by the Council to assist all persons liable for Council Tax who may be experiencing financial hardship or distress. This policy is also available to provide financial assistance where an applicant is in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction award, where it does not meet their full Council Tax liability.

The discretionary relief policy will be administered by Neath Port Talbot CBC and will be made available to any council tax payer specified in Section 4 of this policy. The purpose of this discretionary relief policy is to provide temporary assistance to Council Tax payers to help reduce their Council Tax liability. The operation of the policy is at the discretion of the Council.

2 Legislative Powers

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003), provides the Council with the discretion to reduce liability for council tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine and where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.

A summary of Section 13A(1)(c) is set out below :

- Where a person is liable to pay council tax in respect of any chargeable dwelling, the Council for the area in which the dwelling is situated may reduce the amount to such extent as it thinks appropriate.
- The power under subsection 1) includes the power to reduce an amount to nil.
- The power under subsection 1) may be exercised in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of case in which liability is to be reduced to an extent provided by the determination.

There are financial implications to awarding any discretionary reliefs other than those currently available under the statutory legislation and the financial burden of Section 13A discretionary relief is borne directly by the Council as a loss of council tax revenue.

3 Statement of Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to specify how the Council will operate this discretionary power and to set out the factors that will be considered when making a decision on whether to award council tax discretionary relief (or not).

Principally, the objective of council tax discretionary relief is to offer short term financial assistance to council tax payers who are experiencing exceptional circumstances. Each application for discretionary relief will be treated strictly on its own merits and all council tax payers will be treated fairly and equally.

The Council will seek through the operation of this policy to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Keep families together
- Support the vulnerable in their homes in the community
- Support those applicants who are unable to work due to a disability, who have been assessed as such by the Department for Work and Pensions
- Help customers through personal crises and difficult events
- Provide advice on long term possible solutions to meet their housing costs
- Improve financial capability by referral to an independent advisor e.g. Money Advice Service.

The list is not exhaustive and we will consider all factors or exceptional circumstances that may apply.

Council Tax discretionary relief through this policy is intended as a short term emergency measure and is not intended to cover the shortfall between Council Tax and entitlement to Council Tax Reduction Scheme support or any other reduction on a long term basis.

4 Claiming Discretionary Relief

The Council will only consider using its powers to reduce council tax liability for a council tax payer or class of payer in exceptional circumstances, because the full cost of awarding relief has to be borne by the Council.

Examples of circumstances where a council tax payer may experience exceptional financial hardship can include, but is not limited to the following:

- A reduction in income due to illness suffered by the liable person
- Loss of income incurred by the liable person to enable them to care for a dependant / family member
- Sudden increase in other expenses, for example, due to a family member's illness or incapacity (expenses incurred due to frequent visits to hospital for treatment)

General hardship can also be incurred from living on a very low income. It is difficult to determine when a person on a low income will qualify for additional support through this policy. However, the following are factors that the Council may take into account:

- Inability to make payments for basic utilities such as water, electricity and heating
- Court proceedings for outstanding debts
- Consistently exceeding overdraft limits without evidence of spending on anything other than necessities such as utilities, food and accommodation
- The threat of homelessness
- Inability to pay for food.

Who can apply?

Those persons liable to pay Council Tax to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council who can apply are:-

- Owner occupiers
- Tenants
- Liable residents
- Persons acting on behalf of a liable person i.e. an appointee, solicitor or someone with power of attorney

Who cannot apply?

Any person *not liable* to pay Council to Neath Port Talbot Council, but also specifically:-

- Landlords of properties where the tenant is liable
- Landlords, if liable
- Estate agents/managing agents on behalf of a landlord
- Friends/relatives of the liable person (unless acting as an appointee or under a power of attorney)
- Lodgers or other residents who are not liable to pay Council Tax
- Support agencies (unless acting as an appointee or under a power of attorney)
- Banks or other holders of a mortgage or other legal charge on a property
- Owners of empty properties

The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits, however some or all of the following criteria must be met for each case:

- There must be evidence of exceptional financial hardship or exceptional personal circumstances that justifies a reduction in council tax liability
- The applicant must satisfy the Council that all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the situation prior to application
- The applicant has applied for council tax support (the Welsh Government's national Council Tax Reduction Scheme exists to ensure that those on low incomes receive financial assistance with their council tax)

- All other appropriate council tax discounts/reliefs have already been awarded
- The applicant does not have access to other assets that could be used to pay council tax
- All other legitimate means of resolving the situation have been investigated and exhausted by the applicant.
- The situation and reason for the application must be outside of the applicant's control
- The amount outstanding must not be the result of deliberate non-payment or failure to make payments as required through neglect.

After considering the above it must be remembered that it is likely that a large number of claimants still fall into the defined categories. Any cases meeting the required criteria for an award must be considered to be more deserving, with greater exceptional circumstances, than the majority of applicants to warrant granting an award.

Requests for reductions in council tax liability will be required in writing from the council tax payer or a recognised third party appointed to act on their behalf. The application should relate to the current council tax year, unless the applicant has received a bill following a delayed council tax valuation for a previous year(s) or a late determination as to liability to the council tax (provided the late determination is not the fault of the applicant).

The Council reserves the right to request any additional evidence in support of the discretionary relief application, and will act consistently and reasonably in doing so. Where the applicant is unable to, or does not supply the required evidence, the Council will still consider the application and will take into account any other evidence available, including documentation held on the housing benefit/council tax reduction case file.

The Council will consider the household's overall financial capability when determining an award for discretionary relief.

5 Decision Making

Whilst the discretionary relief policy is by definition 'discretionary', the Council has a duty to make decisions in accordance with recognised principles about good decision-making, i.e. administrative law, and in particular, to act fairly, reasonably and consistently.

The Principal Council Tax Officer or Senior Council Tax Officer will assess all Section 13A applications and the decision will then be referred to the Director of Finance & Corporate Services or the Head of Financial Services for final authorisation.

In deciding whether to award discretionary relief, the Council will take into account the following:

- The shortfall between income and expenditure
- Any steps taken by the applicant to reduce their rental or council tax liability
- The household, financial and medical circumstances of the applicant, their partner and any other persons in the household
- Any savings or capital held by the applicant's household
- The applicant's level of debt
- Any special reasons which make it necessary or particularly desirable for the applicant(s) to occupy the dwelling in respect of which the liability arises
- The possible consequences of council tax arrears for the applicant or family members, especially if any of them are vulnerable by reason of age, sickness or disability
- Whether the applicant can change their spending pattern on non-essential items, whether they are prioritising payment of other debts
- The possible impact of not making a payment i.e. the pressure on priority homeless accommodation
- The actions being taken by the applicant to improve or change their domestic, financial or personal situation to reduce or limit the amount of support that they will require in the future i.e. helping those that are trying to help themselves
- Any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Council.

Any successful application will be granted for the remainder of the financial year in which the application is made, but will cease at the end of that financial year and a re-application will be required for consideration of any ongoing assistance.

Awards will generally be made from the date that the Council receive the application form, but the Council may backdate awards under this policy to the beginning of the financial year or 6 months, if it is considered reasonable.

6 Notification of Decision

The Council will notify an applicant in writing within 14 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision or within a reasonable period afterwards.

Where an application for discretionary relief is successful the applicant (and any other affected party) will receive notification of:

- The amount of the award
- The circumstances of the award, any steps that the applicant should take and any conditionality attached to the award

- The start and end date of the award
- Their duty to report any change of circumstances that may affect the award
- The recoverability of any award
- The procedure to follow should the applicant disagree with the decision.

7 Review of Decision

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept an applicant's written request for a further review of its decision, if it is made within one month of the date of notification of the decision.

The request for review will be considered by a person other than the person who made the original decision. He/she will consider whether the applicant has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change to the original decision

If the review concludes not to revise the original decision, this decision is final and may only be challenged by way of an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal for Wales, judicial review or by a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, (where there is an allegation of maladministration).

8 Data Access and Data Sharing

The Council is allowed to collect data to support, evidence and to determine discretionary payments. The scheme will operate to support principles for fair, reasonable and confidential data access and sharing at all times. This is to ensure that customers receive the correct payments at all times and that public funds and the wider interest of local council tax papers are protected.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES – DAVE REES

28TH MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

REPORT ON CHARGING PROPOSALS FOR COURT DEPUTY SERVICE

1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of the budget setting process, Members approved the proposal (Corp 565) to implement charges for specific aspects of the service provided by the Court Deputy Team.
- 1.2. The Court Deputy Service provides support to vulnerable citizens who lack capacity and for whom there is no-one else available who is willing or able to manage their financial affairs on their behalf.
- 1.3. Due to the requirement to make financial savings the proposals that Members approved were to make additional charges for some of the services previously provided free of charge. The income generated from these charges will enable the Authority to maintain the level and volume of service currently provided.
- 1.4. As part of the budget setting process an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was prepared on the proposal which is attached again for Members at Appendix 1. It was also decided that a consultation exercise would be carried out and the purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the responses to that consultation exercise.

2. Consultation Exercise

- 2.1. Because of the vulnerable nature of the service users it was felt that it would be inappropriate to consult directly with them or their families.

- 2.2. A list of appropriate organisations and individuals was therefore compiled (Appendix 3) and they were contacted by letter/e-mail and asked for their opinions on the proposals. The consultation letter which is attached as Appendix 2 to this report was also put on the Council's website using the online consultation tool. The period of consultation was 4 weeks ending on the 23rd March 2015.
- 2.3. The organisations/individuals contacted included:
- Town and Community Councils
 - Local AM's
 - Local MP's
 - Various groups attached to the Health Service
 - Various other groups/organisations that have links to this particular group of service users.
- 2.4. No responses were received online but a total of 8 responses were received by letters and e-mails. Of those received seven responded positively by either saying the charges were appropriate or using comments such as 'comfortable with', 'appropriate', 'reasonable' and 'agree'.
- 2.5. In the case of the one disagreement this was from an individual who expressed a view of being "uncomfortable" with it. The concern was in relation to individuals for example that may have their benefits reduced if hospitalised for any length of time. This concern is mitigated by the fact that no charge would be raised if the service user's financial assets fall below £3,000.

3. Conclusion

The outcome of the consultation therefore is that of those who responded the clear majority accepted that the proposal was reasonable.

4. Recommendation

That Members note the outcome of the consultation exercise and approve the implementation of the proposal as detailed in the consultation letter in full for all relevant service user accounts for the financial year 2015/16, and that charges be raised of:

- £250 for finalising the affairs of deceased clients
- £270 per annum property management fee

5. Reason for Proposed Decision

To agree service charges for 2015/16.

6. List of Background Papers

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Court Deputy Service

Appendix 2 – Consultation Letter - re Court Deputy Savings Proposals

Appendix 3 – Prospective list of Consultees

8. Officer Contact

Mr D Rees – Head of Finance Services.

Telephone: 01639 763634

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

Ann Hinder – Principal Council Tax Officer

Telephone: 01639 763908

e-mail: a.hinder@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

REPORT ON CHARGING PROPOSALS FOR COURT DEPUTY SERVICE

(a) **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

(b) **Sustainability Appraisal**

Community Plan Impacts:

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

Other Impacts:

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

(c) **Consultation**

Consultation has been carried out as set out in the report.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Form – Court Deputy Service

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

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

Where do you work?
Service Area: Financial Services Division
Directorate: Finance and Corporate Services

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

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

(b) Due to the requirement to make savings, the proposal is to introduce additional charges for some of the services previously provided free of charge. This will enable the Authority to maintain the level and volume of service currently provided. The proposed charges are:-

- £250 for finalising the affairs of deceased clients (approximately 15 cases per year),
- £270 per annum property management fee (approximately 100 cases).

In terms of the property management fee, the powers to levy this charge are contained in the Ministry of Justice Court of Protection rules (Category 3)

Both of the proposed charges are consistent with those levied in other Authorities.

The Court Deputy Section provides support to vulnerable citizens who lack capacity and for whom there is no-one else available who is willing or able to manage their financial affairs on their behalf.

The section has 8 staff (6.81 FTE) and has a net annual budget of £137,000. The section currently has a caseload of 201 cases consisting of 44 appointee, 22 short order, 107 court deputy cases and a further 28 in progress awaiting categorisation.

Appointee cases involve the team receiving any benefits on behalf of the service users from which they pay all bills. Court Deputy cases are far more involved, the team have to undertake a lot of initial work to set up the client, make an application to the court and are then governed by the 2005 Mental Capacity Act in respect of the duties they undertake on behalf of the service user. Short order cases are generally less complex and therefore require less time and resource to administer.

- (c)** No screening work was carried out as it was felt that a full Equality Impact Assessment would be appropriate.

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

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

(e) Lead Officer

Name: Sue Gorman

Job title: Chief Accountant – Financial Services

Date: 2nd October 2014

(f) Approved by Head of Service

Name: Dave Rees

Date: 2nd October 2014

Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):

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

What are the aims? To reduce the net cost of the service by generating increased income for the service whilst limiting the impact on service users and maintaining service provision at current levels. The raising of these charges also brings us in line with many other authorities. **(29.9.14)**

Who has responsibility? The initiative is the responsibility of the Head of Financial Services. It will be the responsibility of the Chief Accountant (Financial Services) to monitor and review the outcomes. **(29.9.14)**

Who are the stakeholders? Clients who use the Court Deputy Service. **(29.9.14)**

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

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

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

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

Information for each service user is collected at the point of referral and stored on a client database. Male /female split 53%/47%, age over 65 (70%), age below 65 (30%), all services users have some form of disability which renders them incapable of managing their financial affairs **(29.9.14)**

Any Actions Required?

None (29.9.14)

Carry out a consultation with interested groups/individuals (February 2015)

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

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

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

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

There is a negative impact based on disability as the nature of the service is that all clients have some disability which renders them incapable of managing their financial affairs. The impact is negative because they will be charged for services previously provided free of charge.

(29.9.14)

There is also a positive impact however, in that a charge will enable the Council to provide the same level of service as at present and the service users will benefit from proper attention to their financial interests. (5.5.15)

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

No consultation and engagement has taken place to date. (29.9.14)

A consultation exercise has been carried out with interested individuals and groups. The result of the consultation was that the majority of those who responded accepted that the proposal was reasonable. (5.5.15)

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

None (29.9.14)

Section 4 - Other Impacts:

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues.

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

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

(Please see guidance for definitions)

Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.

1. It is possible that this proposal will have a negative impact in terms of fostering good relations and in terms of advancing equality between different groups, as there are distinct groups of people who will be affected by the proposal.
2. It is possible that the policy could have a negative impact in terms of discrimination as it is imposing charges only on those who currently use the service.
3. It is possible that the policy could have a negative impact in terms of reduction of social exclusion and poverty as it is imposing charges only on those who currently use the service.

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

Not applicable **(29.9.14)**

Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion?

The proposal should have no impact on community cohesion. **(29.9.14)**

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

The ability to receive the service in Welsh will still be available in the same way as previously. **(29.9.14)**

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

- None required at this stage. **(29.9.14)**

-

-

Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:

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

Monitoring arrangements: Each case is monitored closely on an on-going basis and any impacts of this proposal will be taken back to the Head of Service for review.
(29.9.14)

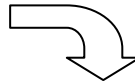
Actions: None **(29.9.14)**

Section 6 – Outcomes:

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

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

x



For outcome 3, detail the justification for proceeding here

Section 7 - Publication arrangements:

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

Action Plan:

Objective - What are we going to do and why?	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	Outcome - How will we know we have achieved our objective?	Progress
Carry out a consultation exercise.	Head of Financial Services	April 2015	Opinions on the proposals from interested parties.	

APPENDIX 2

February 2015
01639 763646
d.rees1@npt.gov.uk

Mr David Rees

HOFS/DR/RD

Dear Sir/Madam

re: Consultation Letter re Court Deputy Savings Proposals

As you may be aware, the Council is required to make significant savings on its budget for the financial year 2015/16 and beyond. As part of its budget savings strategy, the Council is proposing to raise additional charges within the Court Deputy Service to enable it to continue to provide this vital service at the current level.

The Court Deputy Service provides support to vulnerable citizens who lack capacity and for whom there is no-one else available who is willing or able to manage their financial affairs on their behalf.

If this service was not available, the citizens concerned would be vulnerable to financial abuse and may have to be placed in residential care instead of being allowed to live independently.

The proposed charges represent a contribution to the Council's costs, not the full costs. There are two charges both of which the Council is considering. Your views are sought on these proposals and they will form part of the decision making process.

.../cont'd

Proposal 1 – to raise a property management fee of £270 per annum for clients living at home. The Council has power to levy this charge under the Ministry of Justice Court of Protection Rules (Category 3), and the amount of the fee is dictated by those rules. A charge would not be levied against a client who has **financial assets** (eg cash, bank, building society) totalling less than £3,000.

Proposal 2 – to make a charge of £250 for finalising the affairs of a deceased client, including preparation of documents for handover to the executors. The size of the charge is in line with that charged by other local authorities who charge for this service. This charge would not be raised against a client's estate where there are insufficient financial assets.

In light of the current budget savings being required of the Council, these proposals are being considered in order to enable the service to continue to be provided at its current level.

The Council would appreciate any comments you may have with regard to these proposals to help in the decision making process. The deadline for receipt of your comments is Monday 23 March 2015.

Please use the form attached, or if you prefer, you can send comments by e-mail to d.rees1@npt.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

Head of Financial Services

Enc

Court Deputy Savings Proposals – Comments

Return to: Mr Dave Rees
Head of Financial Services
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre
PORT TALBOT
SA13 1PJ

Comments on the charging proposals:

Proposal 1: _____

Proposal 2: _____

Other Comment: _____

Please return by **MONDAY 23 MARCH 2015**

LIST OF CONSULTEES

ADSS Cymru Business Unit
Blaengwrach Community Council
Blaenhonddan Community Council
Briton Ferry Town Council
Cilybebyll Community Council
Clyne and Melincourt Community Council
Coedffranc Community Council
Crynant Community Council
Cwmllynfell Community Council
Dyffryn Clydach Community Council
Glynneath Town Council
Gwaun Cae Gurwen Community Council
Neath Town Council
Onllwyn Community Council
Pelenna Community Council
Pontardawe Town Council
Resolven Community Council
Seven Sisters Community Council
Tonna Community Council
Ystalyfera Community Council
CSSIW National Office
Disability Network Action Group(DNAG)(NPT)
David Rees, AM
Gwenda Thomas, AM
Dr Hywel Francis, MP
Rt Hon Peter Hain, MP for Neath
Local Health Board
Neath Port Talbot MIND Association
Older Persons Commissioner for Wales
Older Persons Council
Neath Port Talbot CVS

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

28th MAY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

REVISED STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

Purpose of Report

To seek Member approval to consult on a revised Strategic Equality Plan, including revised equality objectives, in accordance with legislative requirements.

Background

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 we, along with other public bodies, have a duty to develop Equality Objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan containing the objectives and other information as laid out in the Regulations. Our first Strategic Equality Plan containing the Equality Objectives was published on 1st April 2012.

We are required to review our equality objectives at least every four years and while there is no prescribed timescale to undertake a review of the Strategic Equality Plan it makes sense to review both simultaneously.

Review of Equality Objectives and the Strategic Equality Plan

A short review of the original equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plan was undertaken by directorate representative members of the Heads of Service Equality and Community Cohesion Group. Representatives from our local equality groups have also participated in a workshop to identify what remains important from their perspective, what is no longer relevant and what is missing from the current Plan.

The review identified that the objectives remained appropriate but in some areas there needed to be a realignment and refocus of actions in order to meet the objectives.

In revising the equality objectives we have placed specific emphasis on ensuring that the Strategic Equality Plan is relevant and achievable in the current financial climate whilst also ensuring the Plan enables the Council to continue to meet legal obligations.

The draft revised Strategic Equality Plan, which includes the equality objectives, is attached at Appendix 1.

Consultation

It is proposed to begin a period of public consultation following the granting of approval to consult. It is envisaged that a final draft will be presented to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board in September recommending approval by full Council in October.

Engagement with the various equality groups will continue during the consultation process to ensure that everyone has as much opportunity as possible to provide feedback on both the equality objectives and the Plan. It is envisaged that meetings with the equality groups will take place during this period and that responses will be considered along with those received from the wider consultation to further inform the equality objectives and Plan.

The public consultation documents will be available online through our consultation portal, Objective, as well as being available in libraries and also accessible in alternative formats.

Equality Impact Assessment

A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this Plan does require an Equality Impact Assessment. The impact assessment is currently being developed and will be informed further by the outcomes of the public consultation exercise. The final equality impact assessment will accompany the report to Policy & Resources Cabinet Board on 3rd September 2015.

Recommended

For Members to authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to initiate formal public consultation on the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 contained in Appendix 1 commencing on 5th June and ending on 21st August 2015.

Reasons for the Proposed Decision

- 1) To discharge the Council's duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to develop Equality Objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan containing the objectives and other information as laid out in the Regulations 2010.
- 2) To enable interested parties to comment upon the Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan prior to the Cabinet Board finalising the Plan and then recommending approval of final proposals by full Council.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Draft Strategic Equality Plan

Officer Contact

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

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

REVISED STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

(a) Implementation of Decision

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

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

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

Other Impacts

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

(c) Consultation

Informed consultation has been undertaken with representatives of interested groups from the outset of the review and there will now follow a period of formal public consultation.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019



If you require this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team on 01639 763010 or email corporate.strategy@npt.gov.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Description of the authority
3. Engagement and Employment
4. Equality Impact Assessments:
5. Training and communication
6. Equality Objectives
7. Action Plan

1. Introduction

This Plan and associated action plan have been developed within the current financial context and support the Council's corporate improvement objectives which have been recently published in the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan for the period 2015-2018.

The focus of year 1 of the action plan is to ensure actions are in place to meet the objectives we have set and measurable outcomes are delivered. During year 2, Heads of Service will monitor the impact of the delivery of those actions. Year 3 will focus on reviewing the outcomes of the monitoring exercise to identify any additional actions that require inclusion in the action plan.

(There is more work to be done on the framework for the evaluation of the impact of the delivery of the actions contained in this Plan).

Description of the Authority

Neath Port Talbot County Borough is located on the coast between Swansea and Bridgend and covers an area of over 44,217 hectares. As of 2011 census it has a population of 139,812 and 62,957 dwellings. It also shares boundaries with Carmarthenshire County Council, Powys County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The main urban areas are in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe. The valley areas comprise the Afan, Amman, Dulais, Neath, and Swansea Valleys with extensive upland areas between. The valleys intersect the urban areas and are defined by spectacular scenery and a network of close-knit communities

Neath Port Talbot has the 8th highest population density of the 22 local authorities across Wales. There are 14 areas in the county borough within the top 10% of the most deprived communities in Wales, most of which are designated Communities First areas.

It is expected that the population will grow by 7,000, an increase of about 5%, by 2021. Whilst the under-65 population is expected to remain stable, the increase anticipated in the over-65 population is significant.

According to the 2011 Census, black and minority ethnic groups account for 2.1% of the population compared to 4% in Wales.

Data from schools indicates that the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds (non-white British) is 4.6% compared to the Wales average of 8.2%.

There are two authorised gypsy traveller caravan sites in the county borough with an estimated population of 236.

At the 2011 Census, of those people indicating a religion, faith or belief, 57.7% described themselves as Christian, 33.8% indicated that they have no religion, 7.3% did not state a religion and those remaining were Buddhist (0.2%), Hindu (0.1%), Jewish (0%), Muslim (0.4%), Sikh (0.1%), other (0.4%).

There are an estimated 41,828 children and young people aged from 0 to 25 years living in Neath Port Talbot. More than 300 disabled children live in Neath Port Talbot and 731 children with educational statements attend our schools.

We have high levels of chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disorders and stroke in the county borough. 26.22% of the population is disabled (according to the Equality Act definition) compared to 19.1% across Wales. The numbers of adults registered as having a learning disability in Neath Port Talbot is 513, of which 314 live and are supported in the family home. Over 50% of carers are parents over 60 years of age with two thirds of this group being over the age of 70. Approximately 130 families in Neath Port Talbot use respite care.

Structure of the Council

Within Neath Port Talbot there are 42 electoral divisions returning 64 elected members and we operate a cabinet style of local government with a Leader who is supported by 9 cabinet members (the Executive). There are 5 Scrutiny Committees which scrutinise and monitor the performance and decisions of the Cabinet and make reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council, as a whole, on its policies, budget and service delivery.

At an elected member level an executive member has responsibility for equalities, Equality Champion, whilst a further executive member has been designated as the Older Persons' Champion.

The importance given to equalities is reinforced by the fact that these policies and plans are amongst the limited number that require approval by full Council.

A senior management group consisting of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors oversees the strategic management of the Council's business. Heads of Service have individual operational responsibility for services as well as providing strategic support to senior management.

3. Engagement and Employment

We continue to build on the engagement work we have undertaken over recent years in all aspects of our work; from the activities held in the development of our first set of equality objectives to the partnership event held during autumn 2014 as part of our budget setting process. These engagement activities have assisted us with the development of website self-service applications, the production of service specific public information as well as helping us to continue to improve our awareness of the issues, concerns and the needs of the diverse communities within the county borough.

Engagement has long been part of our approach particularly in relation to the equalities agenda. This revised Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives, as previously, were developed through the involvement of a number of equality groups as well as officers, elected members and partners.

In Neath Port Talbot we invested in developing networks with a number of local groups, i.e. the Disability Network Action Group, Black and Minority Ethnic Forum, Older Persons' Council, Youth Council and Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Forum, which help, support and engage with us on a range of matters. However, although recently reformed, the Black and Minority Ethnic Forum needs support to achieve its potential while significant organisational change is requiring a review of support for the Youth Council. We are committed to helping and supporting the development of these groups to ensure we are regularly obtaining a wide range of perspectives on the way in which we are discharging our equality duties.

Employment Data

Over recent years we have looked to develop a more integrated system for data collection in relation to staff. We had identified there was a gap in our ability to fully capture and report equalities statistics and to monitor the effectiveness of human resources policy in ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment. As a result we embarked on a process of reviewing and improving our human resources data collection systems, VISION. We established a VISION Development Project to oversee this process.

During the last year progress in updating our main personnel and payroll system was mixed and we are reviewing our plans as we move into 2015-2016 to ensure we make the progress needed in this area of work.

Whilst we have not made the progress we had hoped, we have been able to capture a limited amount of data and have reported this employment information annually in accordance with our statutory responsibilities.

4. Equality Impact Assessments

We have made significant progress over recent years in our work on assessing the impact of our policies on residents and visitors to Neath Port Talbot. The increasingly difficult financial climate has necessitated a more concentrated approach to the assessment process and as such we have ensured that training has been arranged for elected members and officers in order to be more effective in this area of our work. We are committed to continuing training for relevant officers and elected members and intend to take a more targeted approach as we move forward, recognising the scale of organisational change that has taken place as a consequence of successive voluntary redundancy programmes.

We will audit the equality impact assessments carried out so far to identify good practice as well any weaknesses in the process. This will help inform the more focused training we intend to arrange for officers, and where appropriate elected members. Additionally, the quality of the equality impact assessments we undertake will be kept under review and any issues identified will be addressed.

Arrangements for reporting the outcomes of the assessments to relevant Cabinet Boards have been employed whereby the Equality Impact Assessments should go to Members along with the report and that the conclusions and outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments should be considered in full in the report.

While monitoring of the ongoing impact is recognised as an important part of the assessment process practice is varied. However, with the strengthening of our scrutiny arrangements we are confident of greater improvement in this area.

Equality impact assessments are published as part of the usual reporting arrangements for each relevant Cabinet Board.

5. Training and communication

Training is an important element of our work, not only in helping us meet our equality objectives but also as a key feature in the personal development of employees and elected members. As a result our training programme has focused on areas that are new and those that remain challenging for the council as a whole.

We continue to work to ensure that all staff and elected members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are suitably trained when to planning and delivering services. We acknowledge there are still gaps in our understanding of the diverse nature of our communities but training has been identified to address this.

As part of our work on community cohesion with the regional community cohesion coordinator a wide range of topics including disability hate crime, human trafficking, transgender and Gypsy Traveller & Roma awareness, have been arranged. Further training sessions have been identified for 2015-2016.

Our work on equality impact assessments has highlighted a continuing training requirement for all staff involved in the process. An audit of assessments already undertaken along with feedback from officers and members is scheduled to take place to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current process which will in turn inform a training programme.

6. Our Equality Objectives

In setting our equality objectives we have been mindful of the various external pressures we continue to experience, information received as a result of engagement activities, generally and specifically in relation to the objectives, as well as planned work within service areas over the coming years. As a result we have developed objectives that will not only allow us to focus our energies on those areas that matter most to people but also where we are certain that measurable outcomes will be delivered.

Additionally, we have identified similarities of purpose across our key plans and as such we are working toward providing a more rounded view of what we want to achieve both individually and in partnership. This plan is the first step towards a more cohesive identity for the work we will undertake to meet the needs, requirements and wherever possible the aspirations of our communities.

We are aware that through service improvements we enable people to achieve successful outcomes in their own lives. We remain particularly conscious of the need 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 these are different from the needs of other people.

The revision of our equality objectives was made possible through the involvement of various groups representing/of people who share protected characteristics. The involvement of these groups is not just a feature of this specific exercise but is part of our budget planning and engagement activities. Using all the information gathered during the various events and conversations that took place, along with specific workshops we were able to focus on what was still relevant, what was missing, what we could do and what we could aspire to do in order to meet our commitment to:

“Creating a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous”

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 1

Address **harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety** experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

Why is this important?

Hate crimes and incidents have a damaging and corrosive impact upon community cohesion, which can in turn increase community tensions and create a sense of intolerance. We along with our partners in the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership recognise that under reporting of hate crime, and in particular disability hate crime, is prevalent within our communities.

We know that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. We want to continue our commitments to addressing this issue within the county borough and meet the proposed requirements of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act i.e. prevention of abuse, protection of victims and the support for those affected by such issues.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to improve people's safety, both real and perceived.

We want to help raise the confidence of communities in reporting hate incidents. We want to increase awareness of hate crime/incidents and reporting procedures amongst staff and the public.

We want to contribute towards the creation of an environment where domestic abuse is not tolerated and we want to protect and support victims and their families.

Links to other Plans:

Single Integrated Plan

Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan – Western Bay

EQUALITY 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

Why is this important?

We want to improve access to our public information, creating an easy to access catalogue of on-line information. We also want to promote awareness of alternative format information that the Council is able to offer, such as Braille, Large Print..

We want to ensure that public information is available in both Welsh and English and we want to ensure, where appropriate, that access to information in other languages can be facilitated

What difference do we want to make?

We want to offer more choice and availability of the way people access information and at lower cost.

Link to other Plans:

Corporate Improvement Plan

Single Integrated Plan

EQUALITY 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.

Why is this important?

The number of people with care and support needs due to age-related frailty or disability is increasing. The focus on how we assess people's needs and then provide services to meet those needs has been more around what the person cannot do rather than on what they can do. This does not achieve best outcomes for people because they can become more dependent on services, rather than living their lives independently in the community. This model of assessment is also too expensive. In a nutshell, increasing choice and control is critical to better outcomes for people and will enable us to meet increasing demands in a cost effective way.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to continue to build on the success already achieved through the Transforming Adult Social Care programme, but it is not possible to continue to provide high levels of care and support to people which are not based on outcomes which maximise independence. We need to continue to reduce care home placements, and traditional forms of community support in order to live within the means available. We need to shift investment to early intervention and prevention (generally available through well-being services as primary prevention and targeted secondary prevention for people who already have care and support needs) from traditional service types.

Link to other plans:

Corporate Improvement Plan
Single Integrated Plan

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 4

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

Why is this important?

In order to provide fair and equitable services we need to be fully aware of the needs of people from protected groups. We must be mindful of our roles and responsibilities both as individuals and as a council. We know some protected groups face significant barriers on a daily basis which can impact on their participation in the community life and when accessing services.

The impact of our policies and services on people's lives can be significant and we need to be aware of equality considerations when planning and delivering services, developing policies, when procuring services, and how we interact with people from protected groups

What difference do we want to make?

We want to be able to provide services and develop policies that are based on a robust understanding of the impact on people who have protected characteristics.

Link to other plans:

Corporate Improvement Plan
Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan – Western Bay

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 5

Deliver **staff training** in line with the Equality Act requirements

Why is this important?

In order to provide fair and equitable services we need to be fully aware of the needs of people from protected groups. We must be mindful of our roles and responsibilities both as individuals and as a council. We know some protected groups face significant barriers on a daily basis which can impact on their participation in the community life and when accessing services.

The impact of our policies and services on people's lives can be significant and we need to be aware of equality considerations when planning and delivering services, developing policies, when procuring services, and how we interact with people from protected groups

What difference do we want to make?

We want staff to understand the Council's commitment to equalities. We want staff to be confident and competent to deliver services and design policies that recognise and provide for the needs of people with protected characteristics.

Link to other plans:

Corporate Improvement Plan
Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan – Western Bay
Single Integrated Plan

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 6

Improve **access to the environment** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

Why is this important?

To ensure that all members of our community can access our buildings and services, by removing physical and sensory barriers. This will include where possible, changes and adaptations to existing buildings and hard landscaping, and ensuring that all barriers are removed at the design stage on new projects.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to provide an environment where services can be accessed by all users with different needs and which satisfies the current British Standard design recommendations as a minimum.

Link to other plans:

Corporate Improvement Plan
Asset Management Plan
Strategic Schools Improvement Plan

Equality Objective 7

Reduce gaps in the **educational performance** experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

Why is this important?

In 2008, we approved an approach to school improvement, known as the Strategic School Improvement Programme based on the following principles:

1. standard of educational provision;
2. need for places and accessibility of schools;
3. standard and suitability of school accommodation; and
4. effective financial management.

We aim to raise standards in both school and pupil performance, and to secure continuous improvement in service delivery, so that all children and young people in Neath Port Talbot get the best start in life.

What difference do we want to make?

We aim to deliver an effective education service that enables all young people to maximise their learning potential. We want to continually improve the performance of schools and education of young people. We will empower all schools to become excellent and ensure high quality provision for all learners. These changes will improve the educational environment for pupils, staff and communities and will improve outcomes for children. We also want to continue to increase the levels of attendance in all our schools.

Links to other plans:

Strategic Schools Improvement Plan
Single Integrated Plan
Corporate Improvement Plan
Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan – Western Bay

Equality Objective 8

Ensure our **employment and recruitment processes** promote fairness and equality for all.

Why is this important?

It is important that our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all and are based on the principle that people with protected characteristics (set out in the Equality Act 2010) should not be discriminated against in employment or when seeking employment.

We must demonstrate that we take any form of discrimination seriously and that we take reasonable steps as an employer to prevent discrimination. The policies need to communicate the standards of behaviour expected of all employees and what our employees can expect from the Council as an employer.

Our recruitment processes must give job applicants (both internal and external) the confidence that they will be treated with dignity and respect.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to encourage a diverse workforce and have a reputation for welcoming applicants with a protected characteristic in our organisation.

Links to other plans:

Single Integrated Plan
Corporate Improvement Plan

7.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics		
Project 1: Increase awareness and reporting of Hate Crime.		
Responsible Officer: Karen Jones		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Design and deliver a programme of public engagement to raise awareness of hate crime and to increase the number of hate crimes reported to the police	Sian Morris	Ongoing
Review the outcomes of hate crime incident reporting and identify if steps can be taken to prevent such incidents or to provide more effective responses	Sian Morris	31.3.2016
Hate Crime to be a standing item on agenda for each meeting of the equality groups we engage with in order to raise awareness and encourage reporting	Rhian Headon	31.7.2015

Measures

No. of hate crime reports

No. of repeat victims

Objective 1: Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics		
Project 2: Strengthen partnership work to tackle domestic abuse and establish multi-agency mechanisms to support people at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime		
Responsible Officer: Karen Jones		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Continue to challenge the notion that domestic abuse is not acceptable via a range of targeted communication campaigns, training events and conferences.	Julia Lewis	Ongoing
Manage the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate Service (IDVA)	Julia Lewis	Ongoing
Support Local partners in their continued roll out of education packs and projects in schools	Julia Lewis	Ongoing
Manage the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop and develop a business plan for its longer term future	Julia Lewis	31.3.2016
Create a county borough-wide domestic abuse strategy, incorporating into that strategy the provisions within the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act	Julie Lewis	30.9.2015
Establish a local Channel Panel to discharge the Council's duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act.	Sian Morris	31.7.15

Participate in the Regional CONTEST board	Karen Jones	Ongoing
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Measures

- No. of incidents of domestic abuse notified to partner agencies
- No. of repeat victims notified to partner agencies
- No. of high risk victims assessed
- No. of people engaged with, trained and attended conferences
- No. of referrals to the Channel Panel and associated outcomes
- No. of service users accessing the One Stop Shop and related outcomes
- Strategy adopted by agencies

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		
Project 1: To improve the Council's website content		
Responsible Officer: Karen Jones		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Implement a Digital by Design policy	Karen Jones	31.7.15
Complete work to bring website content up to date	Jonathan Lewis	31.3.15
Ensure website is compliant with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme/Welsh Standards requirements	Jonathan Lewis	31.3.15
Embed user testing into website development activities	Steff Griffiths	Ongoing
Develop on-line catalogue of public information	Steff Griffiths	31.3.15
Ensure web developments are "mobile device friendly"	Steve John	Ongoing
Train customer services officers to support customers in accessing digital channels for transactional and information services	Jayne Banfield	31.7.15
Establish the corporate consultation portal 'Objective' as a requirement for all public consultation exercises	Anita James	31.7.15

Measures

No. of webpages updated

% of website pages fully bilingual

% of increase in first hit successes on website

% of customers rating the web content positively

SOCITM rating

% of public consultation exercises delivered through 'Objective'

No. of consultees using the corporate consultation portal

No. of customers assisted to use self-service options by Customer Services One Stop Shop staff

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		
Project 2: To increase the accessibility of information/documentation		
Responsible Officer: Karen Jones		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Promote the use of guidelines on accessible information	Anita James	Ongoing
Secure improved compliance with the Council' s Corporate Identity to ensure the appropriate format, font, etc., is used	Sylvia Griffiths	31.3.16
Ensure inclusive and culturally appropriate language is used in public information documentation	Anita James	31.3.16
Ensure Welsh language is considered and taken into account at the design and development stage of any public information/service area documentation	Anita James and Sylvia Griffiths	Ongoing

Measures

No. of requests for public information in alternative formats

No. of "hits" on alternative format guidance pages

No. of complaints upheld in relation to use of culturally inappropriate/insensitive language

No. of complaints upheld in relation to compliance with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme

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		
Project: Improve access to the provision of Social Services		
Responsible Officer: Angela Thomas		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Gather and utilise data more effectively to determine gaps in provision		
Analyse profile of children on children on child protection register and children looked after by protected characteristics	Performance Management Officer	September 2012
Analyse profile of existing foster carers by protected characteristics	Performance Management Officer	September 2012
Engage with specific groups to develop service geared to meet needs of those groups		
Consult Black and Minority Ethnic Forum	Head of Community Care and Housing/Children's Services	December 2015
Consult relevant stakeholder forum depending on outcome of analysis (e.g. older persons' forum, youth forum, etc.)	Head of Community Care and Housing/Children's Services	December 2015

Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Develop accessible information to encourage take up a range of services amongst BME community i.e. direct payments, support for people with mental health issues, recruitment of foster carers, etc.		
Undertake audit of available public information accessible to groups with protected characteristics	Communications Officer	September 2015
Review suitability of public information during consultation exercises outlined above	Head of Community Care and Housing/Children's services	December 2015
Develop public information plan based on outcome of consultation	Communications Officer	March 2016

Measures

To be confirmed

Objective 4: Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics		
Project 1: Develop robust monitoring systems within services		
Responsible Officer: Karen Jones		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Audit Equality Impact Assessments to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas for improvement • good practice • areas where further training is required 	Rhian Headon	31.7.15
Use the lessons learnt from Equality Impact Assessment process, the budget planning event and other relevant engagement events to identify gaps in knowledge/ understanding of the various protected characteristics.	Rhian Headon	31.7.15
Undertake development work with Black and Minority Ethnic Forum and Disability Network Action Group	Rhian Headon	Ongoing
Ensure monitoring data on staff is collected, inputted and updated via the VISION system at regular periods during staff employment with the Council e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joining the council • change of position within the council 		

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Measures

- % of Equality Impact Assessments audited
- No. of improvement actions identified from Equality Impact Assessment audit
- % of improvement actions completed
- No. of people participating in Black and Minority Ethnic Forum and Disability Network Action Group

Objective 5: Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements		
Project 1: Review staff training in line with the Equality Act Requirements		
Responsible Officer: Lynne Doyle		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Investigate option to design e-learning module to provide equalities awareness training to wider staff groups - All Wales Academy platform for e-learning to be developed and equalities module to be made available	Lynne Doyle	Sept 2015
Attend regional equalities learning & development Action Learning Sets	Lynne Doyle	On-going 2015
To deliver training sessions on a range of specific topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essential skills - Dyslexia awareness - Disability Hate Crime - Human trafficking - PREVENT anti-extremism awareness - Transgender awareness - Equality Impact Assessments - Sexual Exploitation - Roma Awareness - Disability awareness - Cultural Awareness 	Lynne Doyle	2015-16

Measures

No. of staff attending training on each specific topics

% of participants of training sessions that considered training had met the objectives set for the programme

Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people		
Project 1: Improve physical accessibility to and within Civic Offices and other Council owned buildings		
Responsible Officer: Mike Roberts		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Review signage within Civic Offices and other Council owned buildings in accordance with BS8300, JMU, RNIB	Property and Valuation Manager	November 2015
Renew as appropriate signage within Civic buildings	Property and Valuation Manager	November 2015
Review access to and from Civic offices and amend where appropriate	Property and Valuation Manager	November 2015
Establish a system for keeping access to Council owned buildings under review and amend where appropriate	Property and Valuation Manager	On-going 2015
Ensure access is suitable for the public to use toilets where appropriate in Civic offices	Property and Valuation Manager	July 2015
Sensory accessibility within Civic offices and other Council owned buildings to be reviewed	Property and Valuation Manager	On-going 2015
Improve entrance signage to Neath Civic Centre	Property and Valuation Manager	August 2015
Undertake feasibility study for locating a disabled toilet near the Committee rooms in Port Talbot Civic Centre	Property and Valuation Manager	June 2015

Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Liaise with the Sensory Support Manager and other partners regarding specific issues for people with visual and hearing impairments.	Property and Valuation Manager	On-going 2015
Provide access to all services offered by the Council and respect everyone's right to access these services.	Property and Valuation Manager	On-going 2015/16
Continue to undertake access audits of Council buildings and prioritise identified works to improve accessible environment.	Property and Valuation Manager	On-going 2015/16

Measures

No. of compliments received regarding accessibility
 % of complaints upheld in relation to accessibility

Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people		
Project 2a: Appropriate positioning of street furniture, signs, lighting columns, etc		
Responsible Officer: Mike Roberts		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Work with Disabled Network Action Group (DNAG), Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership and other relevant groups to consider appropriate repositioning of street lighting columns as part of the street lighting refurbishment scheme.	Alan Jenkins	September 2016
Work with DNAG, Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership and other relevant groups where appropriate to consider access improvements as part of any significant environmental maintenance work.	Andrew Lewis	ongoing
Ensure access is suitable for the public to use play provision throughout all parks.	Andrew Lewis	ongoing
Ensure access is suitable for the public for New School development at Western Avenue	Andrew Lewis	Jan 2016
Renewal of play equipment as appropriate to accommodate physical accessibility throughout all parks.	Andrew Lewis	ongoing
Ensure play equipment at New School development at Western Avenue is appropriate to accommodate physical accessibility	Andrew Lewis	Jan 2016
Ensure replacement benches within Parks accommodate physical accessibility	Andrew Lewis	ongoing
Continue to ensure that the correct bus shelters are installed to accommodate all users, and access is sufficient.	Andrew Lewis	ongoing
Continue to share best practice on equality Management with our staff and operational crews	Andrew Lewis	ongoing

Measures

No. of compliments received regarding accessibility and % of complaints upheld in relation to accessibility

Objective 6: Improve access to the Environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people		
Project 2b: Appropriate positioning of street furniture, signs, lighting columns, etc.		
Responsible Officer: Mike Roberts (Simon Brennan)		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
The positioning and style of street furniture to be considered in the following regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Station Road Enhancements • Green Park Riverside Enhancements • Harbour Walk • Port Talbot Integrated Transport Hub • Neath Town Centre Redevelopment – Phase 1 	Ian Williams	June 2015 June 2016 March 2016 December 2016 August 2015
With relevant groups determine the appropriate signage, etc. in the following regeneration projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Station Road Enhancements • Green Park Riverside Enhancements • Harbour Walk • Port Talbot Integrated Transport Hub • Neath Town Centre Redevelopment – Phase 1 	Ian Williams	June 2015 June 2016 March 2016 December 2016 August 2015
Ensure access is suitable for the public to use the facilities particularly in the following regeneration projects are to be reviewed:	Ian Williams	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Station Road Enhancements • Green Park Riverside Enhancements • Harbour Walk • Port Talbot Integrated Transport Hub • Neath Town Centre Redevelopment – Phase 1 		<p>June 2015 June 2016 March 2016 December 2016 August 2015</p>
<p>Liaise with architects and other partners regarding specific issues for people with mobility problems in the following regeneration projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Station Road Enhancements • Green Park Riverside Enhancements • Harbour Walk • Port Talbot Integrated Transport Hub • Neath Town Centre Redevelopment– Phase 1 	Ian Williams	<p>June 2015 June 2016 March 2016 December 2016 August 2015</p>

Measures

No. of compliments received regarding accessibility
% of complaints upheld in relation to accessibility

Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics		
Project 1: To raise levels of attendance of pupils with the Protected Characteristics at school, including traveller, looked after children and pupils in receipt of free school meals.		
Responsible Officer: Chris Millis		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved By
Raising levels of attendance of pupils with protected characteristics	Huw Roberts	
Data unit to provide monthly attendance information	Carl Glover	Ongoing,
Receive and interpret the attendance information in relation to identified groups from the data unit. Set an annual target set in line with Corporate Improvement Plan (Current target 93.2% July 2015)	Huw Roberts	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluated data to assist schools in developing a draft strategy of engagement as part of their Attendance Action Plan to be submitted annually (September) 	Huw Roberts	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with EWS, EOTSS, TAF, MEAS, Traveller Unit and LAC Co-ordinator developing engagement strategies with identified pupils 	Huw Roberts	Dec 2015
Education Welfare Service in collaboration with TAF, MEAS, LAC co-ordinator and Traveller Unit to work with schools and pupils to develop improved attendance patterns to narrow the gap between pupils with protected characteristics and others.	Huw Roberts/ Nicky Sneezum / Jan Hoggan/ TAF	July 2016
Roll out of strategies EWS work in conjunction with schools and families, in accordance with the attendance partnership agreement, to identify and work with pupils with protected characteristics and who have attendance issues.	Huw Roberts	Jan 2016 and ongoing

Measures

To be confirmed

Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics		
Project 2: To reduce the gaps in educational performance attainment between boys and girls at Key Stages (KS) 1, 2 & 3.		
Responsible Officer: Chris Millis		
Action	Lead Officer	Achieved by
To address areas of pedagogy to ensure curriculum is engaging and challenging for both boys and girls. – The second core visit for all schools in the spring and summer terms of 2015 will be based on improving teaching and learning. The primary focus will be lesson observations. The level of scrutiny, support and monitoring will depend on the categorisation colour of the school.	EDIS Challenge Advisors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for school staff to ensure good models of pedagogy are consistent within our schools for literacy All schools have access to a shared Hub training programme for literacy and numeracy. 	Teacher Development Officer for Literacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for school staff to ensure good models of pedagogy are consistent within our schools for numeracy School to school support is brokered by Challenge advisers via the Lift as you climb project. The literacy and numeracy TDOs are also supporting schools with their training programme and this is supplemented with the work of the Leaders of learning. 	Teacher Development Officer for Numeracy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for school staff to ensure good models of pedagogy are consistent within our schools for addressing SEN/ALN 	Teacher Development Officer for ALN	

Action	Lead Officer	Achieved by
<p>Identify good practice where schools are displaying consistently strong evidence in relation to attainment by boys. The Lift as you climb project identifies strengths and areas for development in every school. The schools are then paired up based on a Lead and Emerging status.</p>	<p>EDIS Challenge Advisors</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for Headteachers to undertake effective monitoring of groups of pupils to ensure appropriate progress is made - All Heads and Dpeuty Heads have received data training, Self evaluation training and School improvement plan training. 	<p>Mike Daley</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training with INCERTS tracking software for Heads Deputies and Assessment coordinators. All schools have received Incerts training at a county level and most have received bespoke training within their own school 	<p>Mike Daley / Ann Stoker</p>	
<p>Share good practice through Neath Port Talbot Gateway Summer Term 2012. This has been usurped by the development of Hwb and Gary Morgan has been employed to further develop this across the county. Gary has run numerous training sessions for all schools.</p>	<p>EDIS Challenge Advisors</p>	

Measures

To be confirmed

Objective 8:	Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.	
Responsible Officer:	Sheenagh Rees	
	Action	Lead Officer
	Employment Policies	Achieved by
	Review our employment policies every three years:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment at Work Policy • Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure • Grievance Policy and Procedure • Domestic Violence Policy • Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy • Flexible Working Policy 	Diane Hopkins August 2015 June 2015 June 2016 September 2016 November 2016 September 2017
	Recruitment Processes	Achieved by
	Undertake training for recruiting managers outlining their responsibilities under the Equality Act, making reasonable adjustments, at interview and when considering the best applicant for the post, ensuring a fair and transparent process	Diane Hopkins September 2014 (3 times a year)
	Workforce Monitoring Information	Achieved by
	Collection of information on protected characteristics (This is part of the VISION Development Project and approval needs to be given for this development to be prioritised by Efficiency Board).	Cath Lewis March 2016
	Annual Reporting	

Draft and publish annual report on employment information by protected characteristic. (see above)	Cath Lewis	September 2015
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Action	Lead Officer	Achieved by
Trade Union Consultation		
Undertake ongoing consultation on monitoring developments and future objectives. These are to be on the agenda annually for the LGS Forum.	Diane Hopkins	28th April 2015

Measures

No. of staff attending recruitment training

% of participants of training sessions that considered their knowledge had increased

No. of recruitment complaints

Other measures are reported in the Annual Equalities Employment Information Report.

Objective:	Gender Pay Objective	
Project:	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.	
Responsible Officer:	Sheenagh Rees	
	Action	Lead Officer
	Further develop pay/employment data	Achieved By
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address existing discrepancies 	Cath Lewis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and address any gaps in data 	Cath Lewis
		Ongoing – completion by March 2016
	Annual Reporting	
	- Draft and publish pay gap information in employment information annual report	Diane Hopkins
		Reported annually
	Starting Salaries	

Policy decision that all new starters commence on the minimum point of the grade. This is monitored via the Starting Salaries Monitoring Form.	Diane Hopkins	Ongoing
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Measures

Measure the gender pay gap by using the following method:-

- The single figure difference between the average hourly earnings of men and women calculated by reference to all female employees' average pay with all male employees' average pay.
- No. of new starters commencing above the minimum point of the grade.

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SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

COMMUNITY BOUNDARY REVIEW

Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the conclusion of a public consultation exercise in relation to the review of community arrangements within the County Borough area, seek approval of the final proposals and authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to submit final proposals to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Background

On 1 June 2013 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council initiated a community review to consider what changes, if any, are needed to existing community arrangements across the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot.

The first stage of the review, which concluded on 30 September, was to ask all residents and interested parties to consider the current arrangements and submit their view of support or proposals for change. These submissions were reviewed and draft proposals drawn up and made available for further public consultation.

Please note Maps of all boundary alterations will be available in the Members Rooms at Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres

Progress

Following the publication of the draft proposals and on advice from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, a further short four week consultation period was undertaken from 13 April, 2015.

This additional consultation included some minor alterations to resolve certain community ward boundary anomalies primarily due to urban development and concluded on Friday, 8 May, 2015.

Following the conclusion of the consultation process final proposals have now been drawn up and following approval will be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales for scrutiny. The Commission will then review the proposals and if minded submit recommendations to Welsh Government to implement the outlined minor electoral and boundary alterations.

Equality Impact Assessment

A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the Screening Assessment, it has been determined that this policy does not require a Full Equality Impact Assessment and is considered unlikely to have any significant equality impact.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Appendices

Community Review – Stage 3 Final Proposals
Terms of Reference

Community Review – Stage 3 Final Proposals
(Appendix A) – Summary of Proposals

Community Review – Stage 3 Final Proposals
(Appendix B) – Aberavon

Community Review – Stage 3 Final Proposals
(Appendix C) – Neath

Community Review – Stage 2 Draft Further Proposals
(Appendix D) – Consultation Responses

Recommendation

That Members note and approve final proposals arising from the Community Boundary Review and authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to submit the final proposals (as outlined in Appendices A-D) to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Please note Maps of all boundary alterations will be available in the Members Rooms at Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres and via the Council's Corporate Website in due course (www.npt.gov.uk/elections)

Reason for Proposed Decision

To comply with the statutory responsibilities as outlined in Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1972.

List of Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents>

Officer Contact

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

Mr Rhys George, Electoral and Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 01639 763719 e-mail: r.j.george@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

COMMUNITY BOUNDARY REVIEW

(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 and Lifelong Learning	- neutral
Better Health and Well Being	- neutral
Environment and Transport	- neutral
Crime and Disorder	- neutral

Other Impacts:

Welsh Language	- neutral
Sustainable Development	- neutral
Equalities	- neutral
Social Inclusion	- neutral

(c) **Consultation**

The proposals have been subject to consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

COMMUNITY REVIEW

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY BOUNDARY AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF NEATH PORT TALBOT

FINAL PROPOSALS – APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR001	<p>Creation of a new community of Baglan Moors (MAP 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new community. • The new community is to be contained within the existing community boundary of Aberavon. • See Appendix B for further information 	Aberavon
CR002	<p>Blaenhonddan Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of one Community Councillor from the Bryncoch North Ward • This proposal is linked to CR003 • See Appendix C for further information 	Blaenhonddan - Bryncoch North
CR003	<p>Blaenhonddan Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of one Community Councillor for the Bryncoch South Ward • This proposal is linked to CR002 • See Appendix C for further information 	Blaenhonddan – Bryncoch South
CR004	<p>Neath Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of one Town Councillor for the Cefn Saeson Ward • See Appendix C for further information 	Neath – Cefn Saeson
CR005	<p>Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of three Community Councillor’s for the Pontardawe Ward • This proposal is linked to CR006 & CR007 • See Appendix C for further information 	Pontardawe – Pontardawe

CR006	<p>Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of one Community Councillor for the Rhyd-Y-Fro Ward • This proposal is linked to CR005 & CR007 • See Appendix C for further information 	Pontardawe – Rhyd-Y-Fro
CR007	<p>Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of two Community Councillors for the Trebanos Ward • This proposal is linked CR005 & CR006 • See Appendix C for further information 	Pontardawe – Trebanos
CR008	<p>Ystalyfera Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of two Community Councillor for the Godrergraig Ward • This proposal is linked to CR009 • See Appendix C for further information 	Ystalyfera – Godrergraig
CR009	<p>Ystalyfera Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of two Community Councillor for the Ystalyfera Ward • This proposal is linked to CR008 • See Appendix C for further information 	Ystalyfera – Ystalyfera
CR010	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 1) - Margam</u></p> <p>At the north of the Margam Community at the boundary with Tai-bach Community, near to Dyffryn Comprehensive School, It is proposed to make a minor adjust the Tai-bach Community boundary to ensure a clear demarcation between the two community wards.</p>	Margam
CR011	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 2) – Margam Moors</u></p> <p>At the north of Margam Moors Community, there is a small area of land known as the Sandfields East (DET) ward which it is proposed should be amalgamated within the Margam Moors Community. There are no electors in the Sandfields East (DET) ward.</p>	Margam Moors

CR012	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 3) – Tai-bach</u> North of Tai-bach Community at the boundary with the Port Talbot Community, to the east of Goytre village, the L&A Outdoor Centre is bisected. It is proposed to move the boundary line north, as the main access road to the centre is in the Tai-bach Community.</p>	Tai-bach
CR013	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 4) – Port Talbot</u> North of the Port Talbot Community at the boundary with the Cwmavon Community, between B4286 and A4107, just west of ‘Caerhendy’ and north of ‘Craig Avon’ – a playing field (situated in Cwmavon) and the adjacent buildings is divided by the boundary line. It is proposed to adjust the boundary to go around the playing field and adjacent buildings.</p>	Port Talbot
CR014	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 5) – Baglan</u> North west of Baglan Community at the boundary with Briton Ferry Community, at the Britton Ferry roundabout at the north end of the A48 , an office/depot stands at the west side of the roundabout . The office/depot is in the Baglan Community, whilst the access road to the office/depot is in the Briton Ferry Community and is not easily identifiable. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Baglan
CR015	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 6) – Briton Ferry</u> North West of Shelone Wood community at the boundary with Brynhyfryd community, to the east of Neath Canal and Giant’s Wharf, and to the west of Highfield Road, the community boundary bisects the dwelling and associated garden of a property on Giant’s Grave Road. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Briton Ferry – Shelone Wood

CR016	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 7) – Blaenhonddan</u> At the East of Bryncoch South community at the boundary with Cadoxton Community, the Lidl food store, off Golwg y Gamlas road, is in Cadoxton ward, and half the car park and access road is in Bryncoch South Community. Furthermore the boundary bisects the gardens of two properties in Golwg y Gamlas. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Blaenhonddan - Cadoxton
CR017	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 8) – Neath</u> North east of Castle community at the boundary with the Llantwit community, the boundary line north of Prince of Wales Drive, to the east of Willet Close is not easily identifiable and bisects gardens at the rear of Willet Close. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Neath - Castle
CR018	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 9) – Onllwyn</u> At the west of Onllwyn Community at the boundary with Seven Sisters Community, just north of A4109, dwellings on Golwg y Bryn road at Ty Newydd are in the Onllwyn Community, but the access road is in Seven Sisters Community. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Onllwyn
CR019	<p><u>Community Ward Boundary Change (MAP 10) – Cilybebyll</u> South west of Gellinudd Community at the boundary with Rhos Community, to the south of Gellinudd village, two dwellings just west of the A474 are in Gellinudd Community whilst the access road is in Rhos Community. In addition, just east of the A474, opposite the Ty'n-y-graig properties, a petrol station/garage's adjacent car parking area is bisected. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.</p>	Cilybebyll - Gellinudd

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR001	Creation of a new community of Baglan Moors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new community. • The new community is to be contained within the existing community boundary of Aberavon. 	Aberavon Polling Districts AA5, AA6
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Abbottsmoor / Rhos Yr Abad		127
Brooklyn Gardens		99
Fenbrook Close		36
Neath Port Talbot Hospital		11
Village Gardens		114
Westlands		112
Cathedral Way / Ffordd Y Gadeirlan		49
Chalice Court / Cwrt Y Ffiol		27
Chapel Close / Clos Y Capel		18
Cloisters Walk / Rhodfa'r Glwysti		16
Pentre Afan		71
Windsor Village		87
Total of Properties		767
Statistics	Current (2015)	
Electorate	1,399	

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR002	Blaenhonddan Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of one Community Councillor from the Bryncoch North Ward This proposal is linked to CR003 	Blaenhonddan - Bryncoch North Polling Districts: ND1,ND2
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Alexander Crescent		10
Alexander Road		90
Birchwood Close		25
Briarwood Close		17
Brynglas		12
Caemaen		4
Channel View		20
Church Close		19
Cwm Cottages, Dyffryn Arms		2
Dyffryn Arms		4
Dyffryn Road		7
Dyffryn View		56
Elias Drive		29
Elias Road		8
Farmers Road		2
Firwood Close		19
Furzeland Drive		52
Gilfach Road		33
Glendale		20
Glendale Court, Glendale		2
Gorffwysfa Llys Gwynfryn		1
Green Hedges		31
Heol Hendre		1
Heol Pantglas		32
Heol-Ty-Gwyn		6
Lane from A474 to Lletty Siac Farm		3

Lane from Neath Road to Bryncoch Form	2
Lane from Neath Road to Gilfach Fach Farm	1
Linden Close	20
Llys Gwynfryn	12
Main Road	79
Maplewood Close	18
Margaret Street	12
Neath Road	2
New Road	2
New Wernddu Terrace	3
Oakfield Cottages	4
Oakland Drive	14
Old Furnace	1
Pentwyn, Dyffryn Road	2
Penywern Road	28
Primrose Bank	13
Redwood Close	16
Rosewood Close	18
Tre Nache Access Lane	3
Tyllwyd	8
Tyllwyd Cottage, Tyllwyd	2
Tynyrheol Road	37
Village Close	31
Wernddu Cottages, New Wernddu Terrace	3
Woodview Terrace	16
Total of Properties	852
Statistics	Current (2015)
Electorate	1,799

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR003	Blaenhonddan Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of one Community Councillor for the Bryncoch South Ward • This proposal is linked to CR002 	Blaenhonddan - Bryncoch South Polling Districts: NE1,NE2,NE3,NE4,NE5,NE6
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Bittern Court		9
Blaenwern		6
Brookfield		134
Brwynen Las		37
Bryn Heulog		12
Cadoxton Road		6
Cae Derw		15
Chestnut Close		7
Cloda Avenue / Rhodfa Cloda		36
Cromwell Avenue		10
Cromwell Road		11
Crud – Yr - Awel		27
Curlew Close		16
Daphne Close		9
Daphne Road		63
Derlwyn		21
Derwen Deg		36
Dol Werdd		44
Dwr-Y-Felin Road		15
Dyffryn Woods / Allt Y Dyffryn		25
Dynevor Avenue		32
Fair View / Golwg Deg		25
Ffrwd Vale		48
Gelli Aur		8
Gellidawel		22
Gellideg		9

Glynleiros Gardens	8
Golwg-Y-Gamlas	18
Golwg-Y-Mynydd	17
Hazel Tree Court / Cwrt Y Gollen	9
Heol Catwg	54
Heol Glynderwen	46
Heol Illtyd	102
Heol Llwyncelyn	12
Heol Llwynon	15
Heol-Y-Felin	86
Heol-Y-Nant	29
Heol-Y-Wern	18
Hérons Way	15
Highfield Close	5
Kestrel Close	24
Lane from Leiros Parc Drive to Tycoch Farm	2
Lakespur Close	12
Leiros Parc Drive	44
Llewellyn Avenue	31
Llwyn Helyg	38
Llygad-Yr-Haul	105
Llys Iris	26
Llys Nedd	8
Llys Wern	30
Llys Y Coed	7
Lombardy Villas	6
Lon Brynteg	36
Maes Y Rhedyn / Fernlea Park	84
Maes-Y-Meillion	21
Main Road	16
Mill Race / Cafn Y Felin	80
Mill Road	15

Millbank / Bancyfelin	39
Mountain Stream / Nant Y Mynydd, Wern Fraith	39
Neath Abbey Road	11
Osprey Close	18
Penywern Road	39
Princess Drive / Ffordd Y Tywysoges	12
Priory Court / Clos-Y-Priordy	91
Ravenswood Close	25
Rhiw Las	36
Rhyd-Y-Pennau	9
Roman Way	67
Rowan Tree Close / Clos Coed Cerdinen	88
Royston Court / Llys Royston	15
Sunnybank / Haulfryn, Wern Fraith	14
Swallowtree Close	9
Taillwyd Road	62
The Rickyard / Buarth Y Ddera	14
Tudor Gardens	49
Twyn Teg	51
Ty Twyn Teg	64
Tyla Moes	18
Tynyrheol Road	25
Waun Las	35
Wern Fraith	3
Woodmill / Allt Y Felin	32
Wrenwood / Coed Y Dryw	36
Total of Properties	2,603
Statistics	Current (2013)
Electorate	4,503

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
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CR004	Neath Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change • Addition of one Town Councillor for the Cefn Saeson Ward	Neath – Cefn Saeson Polling District: NG1
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Access to Preswylfa Farm	2	
Afan Valley Close	26	
Afan Valley Road	15	
Aspen Way	4	
Brodawel	28	
Brynau Wood	79	
Bryn Siriol	8	
Castle Drive	90	
Cefn Saeson Close	10	
Cefn Saeson Fach Access Road	1	
Cefn Saeson Fach Cottages	1	
Cefn Saeson Fawr Access Road	1	
Cobham Drive	9	
Glannant Rise	15	
Glannant Way	124	
Greenwood Drive	84	
Heol Brynna	24	
Heol Celyn	19	
Heol Derwen	58	
Heol Y Ffynon	15	
Hornbeam Close	12	
Larch Close	9	
Mackworth Drive	128	
Maple Close	18	
Min Y Coed	22	
Pentre Fedwen	20	
The Hollins	10	
The Hollins Care Centre	1	
The Meadows	85	

Trevallen Avenue	70
Willow Walk	15
Woodlands Drive	2
Woodview	81
Y Berllan	28
Total of Properties	1,114
Statistics	Current (2015)
Electorate	2,136

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR005	Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of three Community Councillors for the Pontardawe Ward This proposal is linked to CR006 & CR007 	Pontardawe – Pontardawe Polling Districts: NT1,NT2,NT3,NT4
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Bethesda Road		42
Birchfield Road		9
Brecon Road		14
Coedcae		25
Craig Llanguicke		4
Davies Road		12
Gellifowy Road		11
Gwrhyd Road		3
Heol Las		31
Leyshon Road		5
Llanguicke Road		6
New Road		85
Old Road		32
Cefnllan Villas		1
St Marys Road		14
Vicarage Drive – Off Brecon Road		3

Ynysmeudwy Road	84
Clos Nant Ddu	34
Alltacham Drive	25
Alltycham House	1
Arthur Terrace	3
Brecon Road	58
Woodland Court / Llys Tircoed	11
Bronywawr Road	38
Bryn Celyn	8
Bryn Derwen	28
Bryn Onnen	11
Brynawel	31
Church Street	28
Clos Yr Hen Ysgol	7
Compass Row James St	4
Court Lane	2
Dynevor Terrace	7
Ffordd Brynheulog	24
Hafan Brynheulog	37
Ffordd Silkin	4
George Street	31
Grove Road	38
Haulfryn	3
Heathfield Road	14
High Street	86
Hopkin Street	19
James Street	27
Jones Street	4
Maes Yr Ysgol	36
Mount Pleasant	4
Oakfield Road	17
Cherry Grove / Gelli Geirios	4

Quarr Road	29
School Lane	1
Smithfield Road	26
Thomas Street	31
Upper Heathfield Road	10
Woodland Road	6
Ael Y Fro	38
Alltywerin Road	83
Cefn Llan Road	36
Derwen Deg	12
East Crossways	10
Fairway Drive	4
Ffordd Cefn Llan	3
Gellidderw	44
Gellideg	79
Gelligron Road	54
Glynteg Villas	2
Gwyrddgoed Road	75
Lon Deg	16
Lon Y Coed	12
Parc Gilbertson	117
Waun Gron	46
West Crossways	33
Derw Road	15
Francis Street	35
Fuller Street	9
Glanrhyd Road	7
Herbert Street	47
Lyric Court	8
Pat Chown Court, Herbert Street	14
Holly Street	18
Llwynderw	14

Orchard Street	16
Primrose Row	9
Riverside Court	34
Swansea Road	55
Tawe Terrace	23
Ty'n-Y-Pant Road	1
Uplands	28
Wesley Terrace	6
Western Road	26
Ynysderw House	31
Ynysderw Road	32
Ty Mawr	10
Total of Properties	2,230
Statistics	Current (2015)
Electorate	3,508

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR006	<p>Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of one Community Councillor for the Rhyd-Y-Fro Ward • This proposal is linked to CR005 & CR007 	Pontardawe – Rhyd-Y-Fro Polling District: NT5
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Allt-Y-Waun		38
Baran Road		11
Church Road		1

Commercial Road	55
Cwmclyd Road	2
Cwrt-Y-Waun	25
Cysgod Y Fro	20
Garth Road	8
Gellygron Road	5
Godrerfro	25
Gwrhyd Road	8
Gwrhyd Cottages	2
Heol-Y-Gors	1
Lane from Baran Road to Hafod Wennol Farm	1
Lane from Baran Road to Henrhyd Farm	1
Lane from Grenig Road to Brynmawr Farm	1
Nant Y Gafaelau Farm Access Road	1
Off Baran Road	1
Penlan Road	4
Perthigwynion Access Road from A474 Pontardawe Road	5
Pontardawe Road	12
Road from Baran Road to Penwaun	2
Road from Baran Road to Tresgyrch Fawr Farm	1
Waun Penlan	58
Waunsterw	28
Total of Properties	316
Statistics	Current (2015)
Electorate	542

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR007	Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of two Community Councillors for the Trebanos 	Pontardawe – Trebanos Polling District: NY1

	Ward	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposal is linked CR005 & CR006 	
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Caeismaen		9
Clos Pentyle		20
Danygraig Road		15
Farm Road		9
Gellionen Road		5
Glynmeirch Road		33
Graig Road		42
Darren Cottages, Graig Road		2
Heol Y Ffin		8
Heol Y Llwynau		140
Lloyd Street		17
Morgan Street		24
New Road		43
Pheasant Road		29
Richardson Street		5
Swansea Road		208
The Drive		16
The Green		4
The Grove		2
William Street		8
Total of Properties		644
Statistics	Current (2015)	
Electorate	1,086	

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR008	Ystalyfera Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of two Community Councillors for the Godrergraig Ward 	Ystalyfera – Godrergraig Polling District: NL1,NL2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposal is linked to CR009 	
Affected Streets	Number of Properties	
Access Lane to Pentwyn Farm from Graig Road	1	
Cilmaengwyn Road	72	
Cwmdu Road	36	
Amman Court, Cwmdu Road	3	
Gnoll Road	37	
Graig Road	100	
Maengwyn	33	
Maesycloed Road	11	
Pen Cwmdu Road	22	
Pendarren	12	
Tanydarren	114	
Carreg Yr Afon	34	
Chemical Row	7	
Ffordd Danygraig	39	
Ffordd Y Glowyr	36	
Glanyrafon	5	
Golwg-Y-Mynydd	61	
Graig Newydd	91	
Crimea Court/Llys Crimea, Graig Y Darren	4	
Graig Y Darren	26	
Hodgson Road	62	
Llys Cambrian	28	
Llys Graig Arw	4	
Llys Harry	12	
Llys Rhaeadr	20	
Llys Ynysgeinon	8	
Llys Yr Afon	13	
Owens Lane	8	
Pantyyffynnon Terrace	9	
Total of Properties	908	

Statistics	Current (2015)
Electorate	1,438

PROPOSAL NUMBER	PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
CR009	Ystalyfera Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of two Community Councillors for the Ystalyfera Ward • This proposal is linked to CR008 	Ystalyfera – Ystalyfera Polling Districts: NZ1,NZ2,NZ3
Affected Streets		Number of Properties
Graigtwrch		11
Graigtwrch Villas		2
Lower Brynmorgan Bridge		1
Mynydd Bach		3
Near Tainewydd		2

Rhiwfawr Road	5
Cwmfelin Cottages, Rhiwfawr Road	1
Danygraig, Rhiwfawr Road	2
Twyn-Y-Berllan, Rhiwfawr Road	2
Tainewydd Isaf	4
Access Lane to Gilfach Yr Haidd Farm	1
Alltygrug Farm Road	8
Alltygrug Road	83
Bronyrallt Road	14
Bryngrug	8
Clare Road	41
Clyngwyn Road	14
Milborough Court, Commercial Street	5
Commercial Street	72
Arnold Court, Commercial Street	8
Glanyrysgol Road	5
Gough Road	67
Graigymerched Road	11
Lane from Bron Yr Allt to Gilfach Goch Farm	1
Lower Wern Road	1
Milborough Road	20
Pantygwanyd Row	2
Pen Y Graiggarw Farm Access Road	1
Penlan Fach Farm Access Road	1
Pentwyn Road	5
Penygrug Road	20
Penyrallt Road	20
Penywern Road	27
School Road	97
Tanywern Lane	11
Tirbach Road	12
Twynyrysgol Road	17

Wembley Road	2
Wern Road/Heol-Y-Wern	79
Wernwood Road	8
Y Gilfach	8
Y Gilwern	9
Canal Terrace	27
Church Road	17
Clees Lane	10
Cyfyng Road	51
Oak Villas, Cyfyng Road	4
Darren Road	9
Deeley Road	11
Ffordd Emlyn	28
Ffordd Glandwr	11
Glantwrch	66
Glanyrafon Road	58
Gurnos Road	34
Lane from A4067 to Ynysgeinon Farm	2
Lane from Glan Yr Afon to Abertwrch Farm	1
Lower Pantteg	1
Maes Y Darren	35
Min Yr Afon	28
Min-Y-Ffordd	24
New Street	15
Office Row	4
Old Wern Road	4
Wern Villas, Old Wern Road	3
Pantteg	25
Prospect Place	15
Rear of Commercial Street	1
St Davids Road	24
Swan Lane	24

Swanfield	18
Cadfan Villas, Swanfield	2
The Gardens	20
Varteg Road	108
Wade Avenue	50
Woodman Terrace	15
Ynysydarren Road	52
Sunnyville, Ynysydarren Road	2
Total of Properties	1,510
Statistics	Current (2013)
Electorate	2,237

Community Review

Review of the Community Boundary and Electoral Arrangements within the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot

FINAL PROPOSALS – APPENDIX B (ABERAVON)

ABERAVON COMMUNITIY

No submissions were received regarding the Aberavon Community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR001 – Creation of a new community of Baglan Moors**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that the area commonly referred to as 'Old Aberavon' is distinct from the newer housing developments on 'Baglan Moors'. It can be viewed that the two areas are physically separated by a dual carriage way, connected only by a small corridor of land. The two areas are clearly distinct communities in their own right with little in common in respect of their needs and aspirations. Baglan Moors is relatively affluent whilst Aberavon has high levels of deprivation. It is therefore recommended that a draft proposal be made to create a new community of Baglan Moors.

Proposal: Boundary Alteration - See Map 11

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

BAGLAN COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Baglan Community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR014 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Baglan**

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was observed that North West of Baglan Community at the boundary with Britton Ferry Community, at the Britton Ferry roundabout at the north end of the A48, an office/depot stands at the West side of the roundabout . The office/depot is in the Baglan Community, whilst the access road to the office/depot is in the Britton Ferry Community and is not easily identifiable. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 5

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

BAGLAN BAY COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Baglan Bay Community.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

BRITON FERRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL (Craig-Y-Darren, Cwrt Sart, Brynhyfryd & Shelone Wood Communities)

No submissions were received regarding the communities of Craig-Y-Darren, Cwrt Sart, Brynhyfryd and Shelone Wood. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR015 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Briton Ferry – Shelone Wood**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that North West of Shelone Wood community at the boundary with Brynhyfryd community, to the east of Neath Canal and Giant's Wharf, and to the west of Highfield Road, the community boundary bisects the dwelling and associated garden of a property on Giant's Grave Road. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 6

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

BRYN COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Bryn Community.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

CWMAVON COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Cwmavon Community.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

COEDFFRANC COMMUNITY COUNCIL

No submissions were received regarding the communities of Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc East Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West and Coedffranc West Central.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

GLYNCORRWG COMMUNITY (Cymmer, Glyncorrwg & Gwynfi Communities)

No submissions were received regarding the communities of Cymmer, Glyncorrwg & Gwynfi.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

MARGAM COMMUNITY

One submission was received regarding the Margam community. The Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR010 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Margam**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that at the north of the Margam Community at the boundary with Tai-bach Community, near to Dyffryn Comprehensive School, Brombil Paddocks is separated from Brombil Gardens in the Tai-bach Community. It was originally proposed to adjust the Tai-bach Community boundary to include six properties at the end of Brombil Paddocks (the dwellings are of a similar nature and design).

Following a further submission it has been highlighted that additional residential development has or is likely to take place within the vicinity of the above mentioned boundary. As such it is proposed to make a more subtle but clear alteration to the current boundary line between the Tai-bach and Margam community wards.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 1

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

MARGAM MOORS COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Margam Moors community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR011 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Margam Moors**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that at the north of Margam Moors Community, there is a small area of land known as the Sandfields East (DET) ward which it is proposed should be amalgamated within the Margam Moors Community. There are no electors in the Sandfields East (DET) ward.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 2

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

PORT TALBOT COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Port Talbot community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR013 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Port Talbot**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that North of the Port Talbot Community at the boundary with the Cwmavon Community, between B4286 and A4107, just west of 'Caerhendy' and north of 'Craig Avon' – a playing field (situated in Cwmavon) and the adjacent buildings is divided by the boundary line. It is proposed to adjust the boundary to go around the playing field and adjacent buildings.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 4

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

SANDFIELDS EAST COMMUNITY

No submissions were received that could be considered for this specific review exercise in relation to the Sandfields East Community.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

Submission Review: Creation of Sandfields Community Council

One submission was received requesting that a new Community Council be created which would combine both the Sandfields East and Sandfields West Communities. This submission could not be taken forward as this review is not the appropriate mechanism for taking the proposal forward. Furthermore, no additional submissions were received in relation to this suggestion.

SANDFIELDS WEST COMMUNITY

No submissions were received that could be considered for this specific review exercise in relation to the Sandfields West Community.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

Submission Review: Creation of Sandfields Community Council

One submission was received requesting that a new Community Council be created which would combine both the Sandfields East and Sandfields West Communities.

This submission could not be taken forward as this review is not the appropriate mechanism for taking the proposal forward. Furthermore, no additional submissions were received in relation to this suggestion.

TAI-BACH COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Port Talbot community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR012 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Tai-bach**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that north of Tai-bach Community at the boundary with the Port Talbot Community, to the east of Goytre village, the L&A Outdoor Centre is bisected. It is proposed to move the boundary line north, as the main access road to the centre is in the Tai-bach Community.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration - See Map 3

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

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Community Review

Review of the Community Boundary and Electoral Arrangements within the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot

FINAL PROPOSALS – APPENDIX C (NEATH)

BLAENGWRACH COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Community of Blaengwrach.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

BLAENHONDDAN COMMUNITY (ABERDULAIS, BRYNCOCH NORTH, BRYNCOCH SOUTH, CADOXTON & CILFREW WARDS)

One submission was received which requested no changes be made. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following changes:

- **CR002 – Blaenhonddan Community Council (Bryncoch North Ward) Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR003 - Blaenhonddan Community Council (Bryncoch South Ward) Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR016 - Community Ward Boundary Change – Blaenhonddan (Cadoxton Ward)**

Submission Review: CR002/CR003 – Blaenhonddan Community Council Electoral Arrangement Change

The current electoral arrangements for Blaenhonddan Community Council as a whole would see 18 Community Councillors representing an

electorate of 9,596 with a Member/Elector ratio of 533. The representation ratio for the Bryncoch North ward is currently five Community Councillors representing 1,799 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 360, while the representation for the Bryncoch South ward is six Community Councillors representing 4,503 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 751.

The Electoral Registration Officer has determined that the current elector arrangements in these two wards do not provide equal representation. By removing one community councillor from the Bryncoch North Ward would reduce the overall ward representation to four Community Councillors with a Member/Elector ratio of 450. It is then proposed that the Bryncoch South Ward be given an additional Community Councillor to take account of their increased population size.

This would bring the community ward representation up to seven Community Councillors with a Member/Elector ratio of 643.

Proposal: Addition of one Community Councillor for the Bryncoch South Ward

Proposal: Removal of one Community Councillor from the Bryncoch North Ward

Submission Review: CR016 – Community Ward Boundary Change – Blaenhonddan - Cadoxton

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was observed that at the East of Bryncoch South community at the boundary with Cadoxton Community, the Lidl food store, off Golwg y Gamlas road, is in Cadoxton ward, and half the car park and access road is in Bryncoch South Community.

Furthermore the boundary bisects the gardens of two properties in Golwg y Gamlas. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration – See Map 7

Rejected Submissions

One submission was received relating to Blaenhonddan Community Council in general. It proposed no changes to electoral boundaries to the Community of Blaenhonddan and the status quo arrangements to remain. It was felt by the Electoral Registration Officer that the current electoral arrangements do not offer equal representation across the four community wards that comprise Blaenhonddan Community Council, in addition it was felt necessary to make the minor adjustment to the relevant community boundary to ensure it remained clear and effective.

CILYBEBYLL COMMUNITY (ALLTWEN, GELLINUDD & RHOS WARDS)

One submission was received that proposed no change be made to the existing community arrangements. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following changes:

- **CR019 – Community Ward Boundary Change - Cilybebyll**

Submission review:

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that Southwest of Gellinudd Community at the boundary with Rhos Community, to the south of Gellinudd village, two dwellings just west of the A474 are in Gellinudd Community whilst the access road is in Rhos Community. In addition, just east of the A474, opposite the Ty'n-y-graig properties, a petrol station/garage's adjacent car parking area is bisected. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration – See Map 10

Rejected Submissions

One submission was received relating to Cilybebyll Community Council in general. It proposed no changes to electoral boundaries to the Community of Cilybebyll and the status quo arrangements to remain. However, It was felt necessary to make the minor adjustment to the relevant community boundary to ensure it remained clear and effective

CLYNE AND MELINCOURT COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Clyne and Melincourt Community. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Clyne and Melincourt.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

CRYNANT COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Crynant Community. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Crynant.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

CWMLLYNFELL COMMUNITY (CWMLLYNFELL & PENRHIWFAWR WARDS)

One submission was received that proposed no change be made to the existing community arrangements. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Cwmllynfell.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

DYFFRYN CLYDACH COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Dyffryn Clydach Community. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Dyffryn Clydach.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

GLYNNEATH COMMUNITY (CENTRAL, EAST, WEST & WEST CENTRAL WARDS)

One submission was received that proposed no change was made to the existing community arrangements. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Glynneath.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

GWAUN-CAE-GURWEN COMMUNITY (CWMGORS, GWAUN-CAE-GURWEN, LOWER BRYNAMMAN & TAI'R GWAITH WARDS)

One submission was received that proposed that no change was made to the existing community arrangements. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

NEATH COMMUNITY (CEFN SAESON, CRYNALLT, MELIN CRYDDAN, PENRHIWTYN, CASTLE, LLANTWIT, GNOLL & MOUNT PLEASANT WARDS)

Two submissions were received which requested no changes be made. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR004 - Neath Town Council - Cefn Saeson Ward Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR017 – Community Ward Boundary Change - Neath - Castle**

Submission Review: CR004 – Neath Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change

The current electoral arrangements for Neath Town Council as a whole would see 18 Community Councillors representing an electorate of 14,711 with a Member/Elector ratio of 817. Based on the 1976 guidance provided by the former Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales, Neath Town Council is currently under-represented by one member.

Therefore, the initial proposal is to increase the number of community councillors overall for Neath Town Council to 19. Following review, it has been identified that the Cefn Saeson Community ward currently has two Community Councillors representing an electorate of 2,136, while the Melin Cryddan Community ward currently has three Community Councillors representing an electorate of 2,205 electors.

As such it has been determined that Cefn Saeson Community Ward currently does not have fair and adequate representation when compared to other similar size community wards. Therefore, it is proposed to allocate an additional Community Councillor to the Cefn Saeson Community Ward to rebalance its Member/Elector representation.

Proposal: Addition of one Town Councillor for the Cefn Saeson Ward

Submission Review: CR017 – Community Ward Boundary Change - Neath - Castle

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that North East of Castle community at the boundary with the Llantwit community, the boundary line north of Prince of Wales Drive, to the east of Willet Close is not easily identifiable and bisects gardens at the rear of Willet Close. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration – Map 8

Rejected Submissions

Submission Review – Removal of County Borough Councillors from Town/Community Council's

One submission was received that proposed the removal of County Borough Councillors from Community/Town Councils due to the clear and frequent conflict of interests that occur. This proposal was rejected as it had no bearing on the review of Community areas currently being conducted.

Submission Review – Dissatisfaction with the running of the Community/Town Council

One submission was received that did not provide any specific proposals but outlined their dissatisfaction with some recent decisions and developments. This comment was rejected as it had no bearing on the review of community areas currently being conducted.

ONLLWYN COMMUNITY

Two submissions were received that proposed that no change was made to the existing community arrangements. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following changes:

- **CR018 – Community Ward Boundary Change - Onllwyn**

Submission Review

Upon review by the Electoral Registration Officer, it was identified that at the west of Onllwyn Community at the boundary with Seven Sisters Community, just north of A4109, dwellings on Golwg y Bryn road at Ty Newydd are in the Onllwyn Community, but the access road is in Seven Sisters Community. It is proposed to adjust the boundary accordingly.

Proposal: Minor Boundary Alteration – See Map 9

Rejected submissions

None rejected.

PELENNA COMMUNITIY

Two submissions were received proposing an alteration to the existing boundary of the Community of Peleenna. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Peleenna, however, subject to the outcome of the Welsh Government's White Paper on Local Government Reform, published in February 2015, a further review of the Community of Peleenna should be undertaken.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

Both submissions received suggested altering the boundary of the Community of Peleenna which would subsequently impact on the boundary arrangements for two neighbouring electoral divisions as well as two separate Parliamentary constituencies.

As such, while the minor proposals put forward held some merit, due to the implications this alteration would have in terms of boundary arrangements for the principal local authority as well as the Parliamentary constituency boundaries of Neath and Aberavon it is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward at this time. However, the matter will be kept under review.

PONTARDAWE COMMUNITY (PONTARDAWE, RHYD-Y-FRO & TREBANOS WARDS)

No submissions were received regarding the Pontardawe Community. However, the Electoral Registration Officer would like to propose the following change:

- **CR005 – Pontardawe Town Council (Pontardawe Ward) Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR006 – Pontardawe Town Council (Rhyd-Y-Fro Ward) Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR007 – Pontardawe Town Council (Trebanos Ward) Electoral Arrangement Change**

Proposal: Addition of three Community Councillor’s for the Pontardawe Ward. This proposal is linked to CR006 & CR007

Proposal: Removal of one Community Councillor for the Rhyd-Y-Fro Ward. This proposal is linked to CR005 & CR007

Proposal: Removal of two Community Councillors for the Trebanos Ward. This proposal is linked CR005 & CR006

Submission Review: CR005/CR006/CR007 – Pontardawe Town Council Electoral Arrangement Change

The current electoral arrangements for Pontardawe Town Council as a whole would see 16 Community Councillors representing an electorate of 5,275 with a Member/Elector ratio of 330. The representation for the Pontardawe community ward is currently seven Community Councillors representing 3,554 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 508, the representation for the Rhyd-Y-Fro community ward is currently three Community Councillors representing 589 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 196, and the representation for the Trebanos community ward is currently six Community Councillors representing 1,132 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 189.

The Electoral Registration Officer has determined that the current elector arrangements in these three wards do not provide equal representation. By removing one community councillor from the Rhyd-Y-Fro community ward and two community councillors from the Trebanos community ward and reducing their overall representation to two and four Community Councillors respectively with a Member/Elector ratio of 295 and 283, this would bring the level of representation for both areas in line with similar sized community wards.

It is then proposed that Pontardawe community ward have an additional three Community Councillors to take their representation to ten with a Member/Elector ratio of 355.

Rejected Submissions

None rejected.

RESOLVEN COMMUNITY (ABERGARWED, NORTH & SOUTH WARDS)

No submissions were received regarding the Resolven Community. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Resolven.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

SEVEN SISTERS COMMUNITY

One submission was received that proposed that no change was made to the existing community arrangements. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Seven Sisters.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected Submissions

None rejected

TONNA COMMUNITY

No submissions were received regarding the Tonna Community. The Electoral Registration Officer following review proposes that the status quo arrangements should remain in place for the Community of Tonna.

Proposal: No Change

Rejected submissions

None rejected

YSTALYFERA COMMUNITY (GODRE'RGRAIG & YSTALYFERA WARDS)

One submission was received which requested changes be made to the electoral arrangements of the Godre'rgraig and Ystalyfera community wards. It proposed that the representation of the Ystalyfera ward be reduced to nine Community Councillors and the representation of the Godrergraig ward be increased to six Community Councillors. Following a review of this submission, the following change proposals have been made:

- **CR008 – Ystalyfera Community Council (Godrer'graig Ward)
Electoral Arrangement Change**
- **CR009 – Ystalyfera Community Council (Ystalyfera Ward)
Electoral Arrangement Change**

Proposal: Addition of two Community Councillor for the Godrer'graig Ward. This proposal is linked to CR009

Proposal: Removal of two Community Councillor for the Ystalyfera Ward. This proposal is linked to CR008

**Submission Review: CR008/CR009 – Ystalyfera Community Council
Electoral Arrangement Change**

The current electoral arrangements for Ystalyfera Community Council as a whole would see 15 Community Councillors representing an electorate of 3,722 with a Member/Elector ratio of 248. The representation for the Godrergraig ward is currently four Community Councillors representing 1,461 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 365, while the representation for the Ystalyfera ward is 11 Community Councillors representing 2,261 electors with a Member/Elector ratio of 206.

The Electoral Registration Officer has determined that the current elector arrangements in these two community wards do not provide equal representation.

By removing two community councillors from the Ystalyfera Ward and reducing the overall representation to nine Community Councillors with a Member/Elector ratio of 251. It is then proposed that the Godrergraig Ward have two additional Community Councillors to take their representation to six Community Councillors with a Cllr/Elector ratio of 244.

Rejected Proposals

None rejected

Community Review

Review of the Community Boundary and Electoral Arrangements within the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS – FURTHER DRAFT PROPOSALS

From	Community
Councillor Peter Rees Neath Port Talbot CBC Councillor for Neath South	Neath
Submission Summary: I do not propose any changes to the existing community arrangements	

From	Community
Councillor Rob Jones Neath Port Talbot CBC Councillor for Margam	Margam
Submission Summary: I do not understand the relevance of including six properties under the CR010 changes i.e. Brombil Paddocks when you have to go past Brombil Barns (Seven Properties), Tudor Grove (currently two properties but plans for four further properties), Brombil Access Road (Two properties), Cwm Brombil (Two properties) and Brombil Cottages (Two properties). It would make more sense to include all of these properties or make a subtle adjustment to the current boundary to ensure that the demarcation line is clear and obvious between the two communities.	

From	Community
Neath Town Council	Neath Town Council Areas
<p>Submission Summary: Neath Town Council confirm that they are content with the current community boundary arrangements and support the proposed additional seat in the Crynallt Ward taking future membership of the Town Council from 18 to 19.</p>	

From	Community
Peter Lloyd Jones Clerk of Cwmllynfell Community Council	Cwmllynfell
<p>Submission Summary: Cwmllynfell Community Council has discussed the further draft proposals and is pleased to note that no changes are proposed for the community.</p>	

From	Community
Wendy Thomas Clerk of Coedffranc Community Council	Coedffranc
<p>Submission Summary: Just to confirm that the Members discussed the Community Review 2015 – Public consultation on further draft proposals 13th April – 8th May 2015. The Council had no comments to make at this time.</p>	



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

COMMUNITY REVIEW

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY BOUNDARY AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF NEATH PORT TALBOT

STAGE 3: FINAL PROPOSALS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Community Review

Review of the Community Boundary and Electoral Arrangements within the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot

Final Proposals

Introduction

On 1st June 2013 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council initiated a community review to consider what changes, if any, are needed to existing community arrangements across the whole of the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot.

The first stage of the review, which concluded in September 2013, was to ask all residents and interested parties to consider the current arrangements and submit their views of support or proposals for change. These submissions were reviewed and draft proposals drawn up and made available for public consultation from the 1st March 2014 to 31st May 2014.

Following the publication of the draft proposals and on advice from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, a further short four week consultation period will be undertaken from April 2015. This additional consultation will include some minor alterations to resolve certain community ward boundary anomalies primarily due to urban development.

Review of Preliminary Submissions

With regard to the Terms of Reference, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council has undertaken an unbiased analysis of all the Stage one submissions received and has made nine proposed alterations to existing community arrangements and ten proposed changes to existing community ward boundaries, as itemised in the attached appendices.

For the purpose of the analysis, a community has been viewed as having a characteristic of a sense of identity that is often accompanied by a sense of separation from people living outside the area.

This characteristic stems from a combination of social, economic, geographical, economic and cultural influences. Submissions have been

rejected where there isn't a clear identifiable community being proposed.

The review also looked at community name changes and alterations to existing boundaries. Name changes will only be proposed where it is believed that the change will improve recognition and the identity of the community.

Boundary changes have been proposed where either an identifiable community has expanded beyond the current boundary due to housing development or change of land use or where a change to a physical barrier (river, main road, railway line) between two communities will give greater definition and clarity 'on-the-ground' to the communities in question.

Further Draft Proposals

Further Draft proposals have been made on the basis of the review of preliminary submissions explained above. These proposals are technical submissions and advice and support from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission. It is expected that the public consultation on these additional proposals will inform the final proposals by clarifying the position of all the affected residents.

A summary of all the further draft proposals has been attached in Appendix A and B.

Final Proposals

A detailed breakdown of the submissions received and final proposals made has been split into the two main areas of the Council and attached in Appendix C (Aberavon) and Appendix D (Neath).

18 communities have no changes proposed for them. They are:

- Blaengwrach
 - Clyne & Melincourt
 - Coedffranc
 - Crynant
 - Cwmllynfell
 - Dyffryn Clydach
 - Glynneath
 - Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen
 - Pelenna
 - Resolven
 - Seven Sisters
 - Tonna
-
- Baglan Bay
 - Bryn
 - Cwmavon
 - Glyncorrwg
 - Sandfields East
 - Sandfields West

13 communities have one or more changes proposed for them. They are:

- Aberavon
- Baglan
- Blaenhonddan
- Briton Ferry
- Cilybebyll
- Margam
- Margam Moors
- Neath
- Onllwyn
- Pontardawe
- Port Talbot
- Tai-bach
- Ystalyfera

Submissions have been received that proposed the creation of a new community council. These submissions have not been taken forward as this review may not physically create a community council. Where appropriate the review has put forward draft proposals for alterations to boundaries of the community. These alterations are in anticipation that once the review has concluded, the electorate within the community may consider taking forward proposals for the establishment of a new Community Council.

Timetable for the Review

The review started on 1 June 2013 with the final recommendations being submitted for adoption in September 2014.

The public consultation on these further draft proposals will run from 13 April, 2015 to 8 May 2015. In order to be considered a submission, it must be received no later than midnight on 8 May 2015.

Action	Period	Date
Start of Review Further Proposals		13 April 2015
Preliminary Investigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite initial submissions 	Four Weeks	13 April 2015 – 8 May 2015
Consideration of submissions received	Two Weeks	11 May 2015 – 22 May 2015
Final Proposal Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish final proposals & send recommendations to Local Democracy and Boundary Commission 		June 2015

Making a Submission

All comments and submissions on the further draft proposals will be given due consideration in the review if the following criteria are met:

- Comments refer to the draft proposals. Other matters will not be considered as part of this review.
- Comments shall be received on the pro-forma submissions form or a form to like effect.
- Comments are received by midnight of the timetabled deadline.
- All comments are received with a name and address identifying the sender. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted, though personal details of members of the public will not be made public. Submissions from representative bodies and persons such as Councils, Councillors and AMs, MPs will be named within the report.
- Where an organisation or an individual is making a submission, it shall show how it is made “in the interests of effective and convenient local government”.

Supporting Information

Further information relating to the review, including electorate figures, uncontested election results and maps showing existing boundaries are available at the Council’s main office’s and on the Councils Electoral Service website.

Neath Port Talbot CBC

Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

Neath Port Talbot CBC

Civic Centre
Neath
SA11 3QZ

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Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the Draft Screening Form Guidance while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact Corporate Strategy or your directorate Heads of Service Equality Group Champion.

Section 1

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Electoral and Democratic Services

Directorate: Chief Executive's

Q1(a) What are you screening for relevance?

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

(b) Please name and describe below

To approve final proposals in relation to the review of community arrangements for submission to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Q2(a) What does Q1a relate to?

Direct front line service delivery	Indirect front line service delivery	Indirect back room service delivery
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

(b) Do your customers/clients access this service...?

Because they need to	Because they want to	Because it is automatically provided to everyone in NPT	On an internal basis i.e. Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (L)

Q3 What is the potential impact on the following protected characteristics?

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4(a) How visible is this service/function/policy/procedure/ project/strategy to the general public?

High visibility to general public	Medium visibility to general public	Low visibility to general public
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

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(b) What is the potential risk to the council's reputation? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)

High risk
to reputation

(H)

Medium risk
to reputation

(M)

Low risk
to reputation

(L)

Q5 How did you score?
Please tick the relevant box

MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY → EIA to be completed
Please go to Section 2

MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT → Do not complete EIA
Please go to Q6 followed by Section 2

Q6 If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if necessary).

Following the conclusion of the formal consultation exercises final proposals have now been drawn up and following approval by the relevant Cabinet Board will be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales for scrutiny. The Commission will then review the proposals and if minded submit recommendations to Welsh Government to implement the outlined minor electoral and boundary alterations.

As part of this process a screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the Screening Assessment it has been determined that these proposals do not require a Full Equality Impact Assessment.

Section 2

Screener- This to be completed by the person responsible for completing this screening
Name: Rhys James George
Location: Electoral and Democratic Services, Civic Centre, Port Talbot
Telephone Number: 01639 763719
Date: 19 May 2015
Approval by Head of Service
Name: Karen Jones
Position: Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services
Date: 19 May 2015

Please ensure this completed form is filed appropriately within your directorate because it may be required as evidence should a legal challenge be made regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

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