



CABINET

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2020**

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Overview of the Regional Response to COVID focussed on Care Homes *(Pages 3 - 14)*
4. Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020 *(Pages 15 - 44)*
5. Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019/2020 *(Pages 45 - 64)*
6. NPT Safe and Well – Humanitarian Assistance Provided by the Council in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic *(Pages 65 - 106)*
7. Recovery Strategy *(Pages 107 - 164)*
8. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2019-20 *(Pages 165 - 178)*
9. Treasury Management Monitoring Quarter 1, 2020-21 *(Pages 179 - 186)*
10. Section 38 Policy Adoption of New Highways *(Pages 187 - 214)*

11. Urgent Items

Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100b (4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 24 July 2020

Cabinet Members:

Councillors. R.G.Jones, C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, A.Wingrave and L.Jones

West Glamorgan Transformation Programme Covering Report



Overview of the Regional Response to COVID focussed on Care Homes

Date: 30 July 2020

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The report was collated by Jack Straw, Independent Chair of the Health and Social Care Group on behalf of the Extraordinary Regional Partnership Board.
- 1.2. The partnership can give a good level of assurance in terms of complying with extant guidance, and challenging it, when appropriate.
- 1.3. The Regional Partnership Board is asked to note and endorse the report

2. Background and Context

- 2.1. The report was requested to examine the extent of assurance that the West Glamorgan Partnership could provide to the Statutory Bodies in relation to its work with Care Homes in responding to the COVID-19 crisis
- 2.2. The partnership wanted assurance that the West Glamorgan Partnership complied with existing guidance as it become available and the speed at which we were able to respond the guidance as it was issued
- 2.3. Extensive and detailed documentation is available to evidence activity at all levels of the governance arrangements
- 2.4. The Partnership are preparing for scrutiny at both local and national levels
- 2.5. The partnership wishes to be clear as to the extent to which we can be assured that the region is prepared for any future surges

3. Summary Conclusion

- 3.1. The report give an overview of the partnership approach to care homes and more
- 3.2. The partnership can give a good level of assurance in terms of complying with extant guidance, and challenging it, when appropriate.

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OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID FOCUSED ON CARE HOMES

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the regional response to COVID, highlighting key issues and providing a balanced view in relation to both strengths and challenges.

The report is, by nature, a summary of key issues. Inevitably decisions have been made on a daily basis as the crisis has unfolded, as new information has become available, and as national guidance has changed. Extensive and detailed documentation is available to evidence activity at all levels of the governance arrangements, but is beyond the scope of this report, for example;

- Minutes and action notes at Gold and Silver level.
- The Care Home Matrix maintained to record all interactions with the sector.

At the outset of the crisis, a strong set of governance arrangements was established, with a particular focus on ensuring effective partnership working.

These arrangements directly addressed the challenge of partnership working by establishing the interface group as a point of escalation and issue resolution. This group reports and escalates issues to the Chair/Leaders informally, or sitting as the RPB, as necessary.

There has been a strong commitment, even in the face of adversity, to regional working and establishing a regional response on all key issues.

Working together in this way has been very effective, as will be demonstrated when reviewing the key issues later in this report. However, it is not without its challenges. Not all issues fit neatly into the fold of joint ownership and joint accountability. An obvious example is 'testing'. This is clearly a responsibility of the health service, and ultimately decisions and accountability sit there. Nevertheless, the partnership has strived to work together to both influence policy and deliver local solutions, for the benefit of the community. There are, of course, other examples.

In providing a frank assessment in relation to the key issues, great care has to be taken. When identifying what went well and not so well, an element of hindsight inevitably comes into play, and must be guarded against. The partnership has focused on complying with existing guidance at all points, whilst often challenging and questioning where appropriate. Decisions and actions should primarily be judged against the prevailing circumstances and guidance at the time they were made.

This report will now present an overview of the key issues arising in our joint efforts to support the Care Home Sector.

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General Support to Care Homes

Throughout the period of the crisis, there has been extensive work with care homes on an almost daily basis. An Externally Commissioned Care Homes Group was established as a sub-group of the multi-agency Community Silver group to manage the region's plans and interactions with care homes.

- Local commissioning teams have been in regular contact with all care homes, not just reacting to outbreaks, but ensuring early communication of any or all emerging issues.
- Local public health and EHOs have advised on infection control generally and have responded to specific outbreaks.
- The Matrix details a range of other support; when and how it has been provided, including;
 - Pastoral – bereavement and trauma
 - Financial
 - Providing staff to cover shortfalls
 - End of life care guidance
 - Guidance in relation to BAME

Irrespective of the extent of support, key issues need to be addressed in more detail. Firstly, the management of infection in care homes and, secondly, prevention of infection in care homes.

Managing Infection in Care Homes

First, the positives;

1. There has been a proactive approach to securing additional PPE rather than relying on a national supply chain that took a number of weeks to reach adequacy.
2. Set up regional procurement and store management infrastructure to ensure supply to care homes was sufficient and timely.
3. Moved to 'table 4' of guidance requiring full use of PPE (issued regional guidance to that effect) in advance of national advice that 'community transmission' was sustained, which was officially the trigger for doing so.
4. Established and published proactive regional guidance on 'lockdown' in care homes, ie moved to full barrier care of all residents if either residents or staff presented as symptomatic or tested positive. This regional guidance has become the mechanism through which all national guidance is brought together and communicated to care homes within the region.
5. Agreed proactive regional protocol and operational guidance that facilitated early local testing of symptomatic care staff, rather than relying upon the nationally agreed testing infrastructure that was not working.

Then, the challenges;

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1. National guidance led to a reliance on the presumption that if all of the above measures were implemented and that if any new admission to a care home was isolated for 14 days (as per the national guidance), then infection would be controlled.
2. The reliance on the presumption that the efficacy of testing was such that there was only value in testing symptomatic residents and staff between day 1 and day 5 of those symptoms.
3. There have been a small number of examples which appeared to indicate a possible breakdown of communication between Health Board, Public Health Wales, Local Authorities, and individual care homes. Concerns raised indicated that known information that an individual resident was infected was not passed to the responsible care home in a timely manner. However, any individual concerns of this nature were immediately referred for investigation via the usual complaints or safeguarding processes.

Preventing infection getting into care homes

First, the positives;

1. In advance of national guidance, a regional position was agreed that we would not 'knowingly transfer infection into a closed setting' (subsequently extended to cover all circumstances in which commissioned personal care is being provided).
2. All regional guidance and operational protocols refreshed and published to reflect the above organisational principle.
3. Set a threshold for the presumption of 'infection free' at 14 days post a positive test or symptoms in advance of national guidance to that effect. Eventually, that threshold has become the requirement of a negative test (as per national guidance).
4. A multi-agency infrastructure was established to oversee the practical implementation of an expanded testing regime, and to agree prioritisation in circumstances in which demand would likely outstrip capacity. Care home testing was agreed as the overriding priority.
5. A programme of testing for all care home staff and residents was initiated, and that programme was completed slightly ahead of schedule for older peoples' care homes.
6. Care staff have been prioritised for local testing, utilising the same local arrangements that the HB operate for their own staff in contradiction of the national arrangements, which were not effective.

Then, the challenges;

1. National guidance led to an over-reliance on the presumption that infection could be safely managed within a care home setting; meaning that infection is likely to have been transferred into some care homes as part of the national strategy (implemented nationally, regionally, and locally) to ensure capacity within the acute hospital setting in order to manager 'surge'.

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2. Hospitals are closed settings. Once there was COVID spread in the community, then any person admitted to hospital was potentially infected, which also inevitably results in a risk of spread of infection within hospitals. Keeping some of the most frail and vulnerable members of our society in acute hospital beds, when they did not need the level of care provided in acute hospitals, and would have been at risk of acquiring the infection, would not have been the right course of action.
3. It took longer than ideal to agree the 'don't knowingly transfer infection ...' principle.
4. Operational implementation of that principle was not as effective as it should have been, and therefore, some clinicians continued to operate on the basis that once an individual was MFFD, they could be transferred to a care home setting, even if still COVID positive.
5. In a small number of cases, there were examples of miscommunication between PHW, HB, LAs, and individual care homes; meaning that individuals were discharged on the presumption that they were not COVID positive when in fact, they should have been known to be so.
6. The national guidance on hospital discharge/care home admissions and step up/step down beds was not issued until the end of April. Whilst in theory, the principle of 'not knowingly transfer infection ...' predated this guidance, operational implementation may well have been more easily facilitated if the guidance had then been referenced. Full implementation of that guidance in relation to step up/step down beds is agreed in principle, with the details of implementation still being worked through.
7. The over-reliance on symptomology and then testing within the first 5 days of those symptoms (as per PHW advice) meant that asymptomatic staff and residents are likely to have been introducing infection into care home settings.
8. National guidance on mass testing of care home staff and residents took too long to develop. Politically and ADSS were petitioning for such testing to be rolled out. For ADSS, the knowledge that asymptomatic transmission was known to be a factor in high rates of care home deaths in other countries prior to the surge in this country, makes it particularly difficult to square the national and public health guidance. Once the guidance was issued, it was implemented quickly at a regional level, and capacity was prioritised to support testing of care home staff and residents.
9. Subsequent mass testing has identified that asymptomatic staff have continued to work and, therefore, have been a possible source of infection transmission for longer than necessary.

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General issues relating to testing

The partnership has throughout strived to comply with national guidance. The frequency with which new guidance has been issued has presented a major challenge. On several occasions, ministerial announcements have been made altering the guidance without prior consultation or warning. The practical implications and impacts on local resources have meant that there have been short periods between national announcements and local implementation. This has created frustration at both a managerial and political level.

It appears that guidance has not always been aligned with PHW advice nationally and public health advice locally. It has often been difficult to reconcile the 'laymen's' view of the usefulness of testing with professional advice on efficacy/reliability etc.

Local politicians and managers have lobbied extensively on testing issues, as the mismatch between public expectations of 'test, test, test' and the reality of guidance have come into sharp focus. On occasion, this lobbying has preceded further change in national guidance.

The issue of testing and the uncertainty created nationally has put strain on local partnership arrangements. However, despite this, local solutions have been found to deliver care home testing and key worker testing when national systems proved unworkable.

Ethics

There has been much debate nationally on a number of ethical issues that arise across the spectrum of response to the COVID crisis. These range from the access of the elderly to acute services based on need; the ethical issues arising from the hospital discharge process; issues arising at end of life; and much more.

It will be for UK and WG politicians to account for ethical choices they have made in setting policy and guidance at that level (if indeed, ethics was an overt consideration).

Whilst there remains work to be done locally, it is to the partnership's credit that ethical discussions have taken place regularly at the Interface Gold Board, and elsewhere. Local policies and practice have been influenced by these ethical discussions; for example, the adoption of a guiding principle, 'do not knowingly transfer harm/infection'.

Work is underway to formalise these ethical discussions, in order that assurances can be given or otherwise with regard to, for example;

- The extent to which we can evidence compliance with existing and revised ethical guidance.
- The extent to which the elderly's right to access services has been protected.
- The extent to which the guiding principle of transferring no harm/infection has been operationalised.
- The appropriateness of the various guidance on:

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- Return to work 7 days
 - Isolation 14 days
 - Care home 'closure' 28 days
- The ethical issues arising from our emerging discharge policy.

This crisis has sharply focused attention on the ethical framework that has underpinned Health and Social Care for years but is rarely directly debated. The likely impact of this is that ethical matters will need to be overtly considered in the post-COVID rebuild of services and beyond.

There clearly will be a need to differentiate between national decisions that constituted instructions and local decisions that have clear local accountability.

Creating capacity in the NHS

An urgent response at the very start of the COVID crisis was a move by UK and WG to create capacity in terms of NHS beds in anticipation of the NHS otherwise facing being overwhelmed.

This initiative had many and dramatic implications. Non-urgent clinical activity was put on hold; additional general medical (~ 1,200) and intensive care (112) capacity was created locally; and a major initiative to empty hospital beds was initiated. The dire forecasts on which this activity was based were emphasised by the rapid provision of additional mortuary capacity and emergency body storage. Large numbers of temporary staff were also recruited to work in the additional field hospital capacity, and to provide cover for workforce shortages which were anticipated as being as high as 20% throughout the pandemic.

The key documents from Welsh Government which set out these requirements are:

Document	Date
Letter from CEO of NHS Wales to prepare for COVID-19 including: Engage with social services partners to help ensure social care is ready and able to locally manage their residents that may be impacted and that they have infection prevention control measures in place, and their staff are aware of how to maintain these measures	5 th March 2020
Statement from the Minister for Health and Social Services on actions to protect our communities, including: Expedite discharge of vulnerable patients from acute and community hospitals	13 th March 2020
Letter from CEO of NHS Wales confirming the above	14 th March 2020
Welsh Government issued: COVID-19 preparedness and response: framework for the health and social care system in Wales, which included requirement to:	18 th March 2020

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discharge vulnerable patients from acute and community hospitals to suitable alternative placements in the community. - Plan now to manage the extra challenges relating to bed capacity shortages and high levels of long-stay patients, delayed transfers in care and poor social care infrastructure. 	
<p>Letter from CEO of NHS Wales advising on requirement to create additional capacity in the NHS (1,242 acute medical and 112 critical care beds in Swansea Bay)</p>	<p>3rd April 2020</p>
<p>Letter from CEO of NHS Wales advising on need to review additional capacity in light of demand</p>	<p>16th April 2020</p>

The local partnership was instructed to vigorously pursue a policy of emptying hospitals of those ‘medically fit for discharge’ (MFFD). The beds emptied by these initiatives were not sufficient to meet the bed capacity targets set by WG; hence the commissioning of field hospitals.

As the April peak passed and lockdown was continued, it would be easy to think that the actions were an unnecessary overreaction. However, as lockdown is eased, Test, Trace, Protect is implemented, and we move through the Autumn to Winter, there remains a number of scenarios where this capacity could yet be required. Time will tell.

These capacity-creating targets were driven hard by WG, and the local partnership was, unsurprisingly, equally focused on meeting the requirement.

At the point that the MFFD programme was at its peak, guidance was at a minimum, though the policy intent was crystal clear. The reality is that little was known about COVID and its impact at a national or local level.

There is no evidence that the capacity-creating exercise was driven by anything other than avoiding the NHS system being overwhelmed, or that the ethical issues arising were understood or considered.

Locally, Multi-Agency Community Silver was tasked with delivery of the targets and compliance with the guidance, and it was from this work that local ethics discussions were generated.

No assurance can be given that this discharge process avoided the transfer of infection, however, we do know that there was infection in the community which may have been transferred into hospitals. The then guidance presumed that infection could be managed in closed settings; no testing regime existed.

Creating capacity in Social Care

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Both LAs took steps to create additional capacity, both physical and manpower, in anticipation of not only demand, but the potential impact of COVID on the available social care workforce. However, the most important, and bold, step was taken collectively by the emergency RPB. Despite national pressure to not be so transparent, the RPB publicly launched revised social care 'eligibility' criteria. This work emphasised the need to prioritise and manage safe care. The strategy sought to avoid care home admissions and unnecessary personal care where a safe alternative family or community option was available. The RPB remains the only one in Wales to take this necessary strategic move in a transparent and open form.

Escalation

The strength of the local partnership, irrespective of tensions that inevitably arise, has allowed the region to have a strong voice on the national stage. The weekly meetings held between the Chair/Leaders/Chief Executives and lead officers from the LAs and Health Board have enabled this.

Key issues relating to testing, PPE, the shielding programme, and much more, have been regularly raised via political and managerial routes. These include;

- LA Leaders' meetings with WG
- LA Chief Executives' meetings
- WLGA
- ADSS
- HB re TTP liaison
- HB Chief Executives' meetings
- HB Chair meeting

It is evident that strong partnership working locally has facilitated advocacy on behalf of the local community interests, rather than the parochial needs of individual organisations.

Learning and Future Preparedness

It remains the case that future surges in COVID 19 are possible whereby infection rates increase, along with hospitalisations and, ultimately, deaths. The easing of lockdown and the potential for annual flu and COVID to occur at the same time are real risks.

The Health and Social Care system is undoubtedly better placed to cope with future surges as a result of recent experiences and developments. There is, of course, no room for complacency.

The areas that have benefitted from learning and development include;

1. Capacity

NHS capacity has been both released by stopping non-essential services and reducing the numbers of Delayed Transfers of Care/Medically fit for Discharge, and increased by

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the provision of field hospitals. The former will reduce as services are re-opened, but the latter is a significant addition in the medium term at least. The NHS has devised clear trigger points to respond to increased activity levels at 'surge' and 'supersurge' levels.

Social care has created additional capacity by adding beds. Additional flexibility has also been created by adopting (albeit time limited) new eligibility criteria focused on safety. Both organisations have demonstrated an ability to flex staff and increase numbers to deal with peak demand.

2. Infection Control

Working practices are now well established. The use of full PPE and isolation are now the norm in the event of an outbreak. The support systems provided by Public Health and EHOs are now well established and clear.

3. Prevention of spread of infection

A new discharge protocol has been agreed regionally, founded on the principle of 'not knowingly transferring infection'. The process of embedding this principle systems-wide is underway.

Testing protocols are now established, and capacity is in place locally to respond promptly to outbreaks. A regular programme of routine testing is also established.

The introduction of TTP will identify clusters and allow for intervention, including specialist advice and assistance, at the earliest possible time.

4. Ethics

The immediate ethical issues have been addressed, particularly by adopting the 'not knowingly transferring infection' protocol. This should stand us in good stead in most scenarios. If any surge were so large as to completely overwhelm the enhanced NHS capacity, the ethical implications would need to be overtly considered as indicated earlier.

Undoubtedly the local risks sit within a national policy framework, set at UK and WG levels. The timing of further lockdowns, local or national, and the continued effective use of TTP are key determinants, largely outside the control of local arrangements.

Conclusion

This report gives an overview of the partnership approach to care homes and more.

The partnership can give a good level of assurance in terms of complying with extant guidance, and challenging it, when appropriate.

There are, however, a number of areas, notably national NHS capacity-creation, where assurance cannot be given in relation to the transfer of infection or harm. This does,

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however, need to be viewed in the context of the then paucity of facts in relation to the nature of COVID, and the national imperative.

The partnership cannot be accountable for that.

The period March to June has seen rapid development in terms of the national and local response to managing COVID 19. The region is undoubtedly better prepared to deal with surges in activity going forward. However, the risks remain high and whilst the possibility of the NHS being overwhelmed has diminished, it is that scenario that is the most difficult to prepare for.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 July 2020

Report of Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

K.Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020 – Draft Addendum

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Cabinet the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020 – Draft Addendum for approval.

Executive Summary

2. On 21st May, Cabinet approved the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020 subject to early and urgent review of the improvement work outlined for action during 2020/2021 due to the impact of the pandemic.
3. To meet the above requirements, the Corporate Governance Group has prepared the attached draft Addendum which contains a revised table of improvement work for action during 2020/2021. This has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy).

Background

4. The Annual Governance Statement forms part of the Statement of Accounts and reports on the extent of the Council's compliance with its principles and practices of good governance, including how the Council has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year ending 31st March 2020. The Statement presented to Cabinet on 21st May also included improvement areas identified for action during 2020/2021.
5. The assessment of the Council's governance arrangements during 2019/2020 was undertaken prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. Since the outbreak there has been a significant impact on the council's operations as we responded at fast pace to the spread of the Coronavirus.
6. In light of the above, Cabinet (21st May 2020) approved the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 subject to early and urgent review of the improvement work outlined for action during 2020/2021.
7. To meet the request made by Cabinet to review the improvement work outlined for action during 2020/2021, the Corporate Governance Group has developed the draft Addendum contained in Appendix 1. The work undertaken to develop the draft Addendum also took into consideration the matters for consideration set out in the CIPFA Better Governance Forum briefing paper.
8. The draft Addendum sets out:
 - a. The changes to the Council's system of internal controls (between 16th and 31st March 2020) which were required to ensure the Council was able to mobilise its emergency response to the pandemic.

- b. A lessons learned review on the adequacy and effectiveness of the above changes.
 - c. A reassessment of the Council's governance arrangements as part of stabilisation which will, in due course, inform recovery planning to ensure they remain effective.
 - d. A revised improvement work table for 2020/2021. The original improvement work for 2020/2021, identified as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020, has been re-prioritised, with some improvement work deferred to enable the priorities for action identified following the above reassessment to be addressed in 2020-21.
9. The draft Addendum has been shared with Audit Wales for comment.
10. The draft Addendum, containing the revised improvement work identified for 2020/2021 will be attached to the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 and published in the Council's Statement of Accounts following approval by Audit Committee (September). The improvement work table for 2020/2021 contained in the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 approved by Cabinet on 21st May will be replaced.

Consultation

11. There is no requirement in the Constitution for consultation on this item.

Financial Appraisal

12. The improvement work undertaken during 2019/2020 was delivered against a continuing challenging financial backdrop.

Integrated Impact Assessment

13. There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impact

14. The Council continues to contract as financial resources continue to reduce. In recognition of the scale of change affecting the workforce, the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan supports the Council to adapt and help deliver the Council's objectives and priorities.

Legal Impact

15. The Council has a general duty under the local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions". In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions.
16. The Annual Governance Statement explains how the Council has met the requirements of Regulation 5(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 in relation to an annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control and the preparation and approval of an Annual Governance Statement.

Risk Management

17. During 2019/2020, the Council has continued to promote an open, consistent and proactive risk management attitude in order to better monitor risks over the short, medium and long term.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that :
- i. Members note the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance Group to develop the draft Addendum.
 - ii. Cabinet approves the draft Addendum attached at Appendix 1 containing the revised improvement work table for 2020/2021.
 - iii. Cabinet approves the replacement of the improvement work table for 2020/2021 contained in the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 approved by Cabinet on 21st May 2020 with the improvement actions set out in the Addendum herewith.

Reason for Proposed Decision

19. To ensure the Annual Governance Statement meets the requirements of Regulation 5(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 in relation to an annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control and the preparation and approval of an Annual Governance Statement.
20. To meet the request made by Cabinet on 21st May 2020 to review the improvement work outlined for action during 2020/2021.
21. To ensure consideration of the matters set out in the CIPFA Better Governance Forum briefing paper.

Appendices

22. Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020 – Draft Addendum

List of Background Papers

23. None

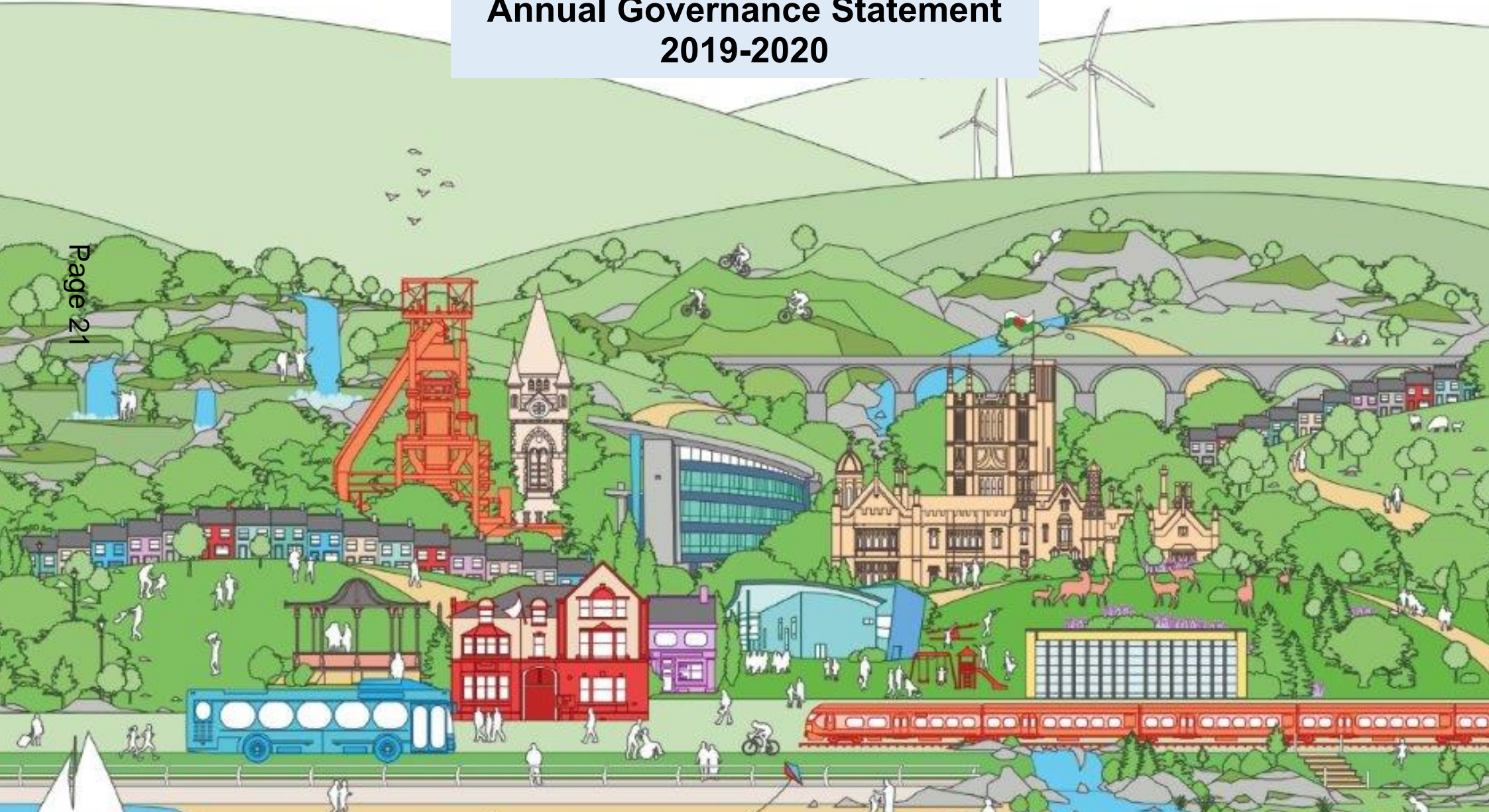
Officer Contact

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Addendum (COVID-19)

Neath Port Talbot Council Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020



Introduction

By mid-March 2020, before mobilising an emergency response to the developing Covid-19 national emergency, the Council had prepared the draft Annual Governance Statement (2019/2020). The draft Statement, which set out the Council's system of internal controls before the pandemic, was approved by the Council's Cabinet on 21st May 2020 subject to early and urgent review of the improvement work outlined for action during 2020/2021 due to the impact of the pandemic. In addition, on 12th May 2020, a briefing paper from the CIPFA Better Governance Forum was received which set out a number of matters to be considered when finalising the Annual Governance Statement (2019/2020) as a result of the pandemic.

This Addendum has been prepared to meet the above requirements and sets out:

Section 1 - The changes to the Council's system of internal controls (up until 31st March 2020) which were required to ensure the Council was able to take action in step with policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government

Section 2 - A lessons learned review on the adequacy and effectiveness of the above changes

Section 3 - A reassessment of the Council's governance arrangements as part of recovery planning to ensure they remain effective

Section 4 - The output from the work undertaken above has informed a revised improvement work table for 2020/2021. The original improvement work for 2020/2021, identified as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 has been re-prioritised.

Section 1 - Changes to the Council's system of internal control during the response phase (middle to end of March 2020)

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing Covid-19 national emergency situation. To ensure the Council was able to take action in step with policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government a number of changes to the Council's system of internal controls were initiated.

The changes are outlined below, categorised by the 7 principles of good governance which make up the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).

Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law

A clear governance structure for providing leadership, taking decisions and monitoring impact was established at the outset of the Covid-19 emergency situation. The structure is attached at Appendix 1 for information. All meetings of the Incident Management Team were supported by the Emergency Planning Unit who took notes of all meetings held. Decisions made by the Executive were documented in accordance with the Council's Urgency Action arrangements as set out in the Constitution, with manual administrative processes adapted to work in a digital environment. External meetings convened by the WLGA and Strategic Co-ordination group meetings were also minuted and fed back into the Incident Management processes.

Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Formal meetings of the Council were suspended when the UK and Welsh Government introduced emergency lockdown measures as the Council would not have been able to comply with the emergency measures in force

related to essential travel and social distancing. The Council's Urgency Action process was initiated to enable decisions required by the Executive to be made to in accordance with the Council's Constitution, relevant laws and regulations. Scrutiny chairs were consulted routinely about decisions requested from the Executive to ensure inclusive decision making. All decisions made under the above arrangements were published on the Council's Modern.gov system – making them available to all members of Council and to members of the public (except for private items).

- A number of mechanisms were deployed to ensure communication with all Members of Council. In addition to the urgency actions being published on Modern.gov, regular bulletins and e mails were sent to Members focusing on the key changes that had been taken or were being planned. The Leader has set up meetings on a fortnightly basis with the opposition group leaders to brief them on the situation and similarly, the Cabinet is meeting informally on a fortnightly basis to overview the developing situation.
- The Head of HR met with the Trade Union and Teaching Association representatives on a weekly basis from 31st March – 9th June, and from 9th June these meetings continue on a fortnightly basis, to ensure sharing of information, providing a forum for the raising of concern, and seeking TU input on key workforce matters. The Chief Executive has regularly attended these meetings.
- The Communications Service was enhanced and delivered on a 7 days / week to ensure public health messages were consistently promoted across all channels owned / commissioned by the Council. During the emergency response the Council commissioned radio broadcasts and sent a letter to all households, in addition to the channels that existed prior to the crisis. Accurate and timely information was provided about changes to service delivery, including the establishment of new services to support vulnerable people. Regrettably, it was not possible to maintain bi-lingual communication during the crisis period due to lack of linguistic capacity in the organisation.

- The Council also brought into operation its citizens' panel to help secure feedback from the resident population on the way in which the population was experiencing the restrictions on community life. The Citizens Panel has been designed to be demographically and geographically representative of adults living in the county borough.
- Because civic offices were closed as part of lockdown arrangements, staff from the One Stop Shops were redeployed to the Council's corporate contact centre and all staff enabled to work from home. The Contact Centre work was refocused to support the emergency response and daily data reports were provided to enable the pattern of interactions between the Council and its residents to be tracked.
- Reliance on digital services increased significantly during the emergency response phase. ICT work plans were re-prioritised to focus infrastructure and software developments on supporting the emergency response. This has entailed a rapid roll out of remote working technologies and also the creation of new software systems to enable the Council to interact with the resident and business communities.
- The Council's Digital Services team developed at pace an online form for customers who felt that they would have difficulty making their agreed Council Tax payments as a result of the pandemic. The form captured all information needed by Council Tax staff at source, enabled them to deal quickly and efficiently with customer requests and provide re-profiled payment schedules.
- The Council, via well-established links with local businesses located in our premises, provided 4 months' rent free to help alleviate some of the ongoing financial issues faced by businesses across our communities.

Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- The Council was required to implement changes to services and functions at pace as part of a UK-wide approach to protecting the public health. It is clear that the impact of the measures introduced have been felt differently across

geographies and between people who share protected characteristics. However, the anticipated peak of infection was suppressed and the local NHS was not overwhelmed.

- The key planning arrangements have been suspended during this period. Statutory duties related to the publication of key plans, such as the Council's Corporate Plan, Strategic Equality Plan, were relaxed by the UK and Welsh Government's to enable concentration on the management of the emergency response. The extended nature of the emergency means that key documents that were due to be presented for approval at the beginning of this financial year will now be largely redundant. We are now revisiting our forward plans and will be adjusting our priorities in light of the changed circumstances.

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

- The Chief Executive established and chaired an Incident Management Group to provide professional leadership which met daily, seven days a week. The Group was comprised of Corporate Directors, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer and Heads of Service, as appropriate. Key issues discussed and decided at the daily Incident Management Group were recorded and briefed to daily meetings between the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer. Information was also cascaded down to operational teams via the respective chief officers. Work tasked from the Group ensured the Council quickly assembled (and where required deployed) emergency responses and enabled changes to happen in service delivery / design during the following months. For example:
 - Decisions were taken to close down services to assist in reducing the spread of the disease as well as focussing regulatory services on ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance by local businesses and other organisations.
 - The response enabled plans to be deployed quickly enabling service changes to ensure critical services could operate safely over the following months. For example, innovating across safeguarding services to fulfil

statutory safeguarding responsibilities using digital platforms; supporting care providers to minimise the risks involved in providing personal care across community and residential settings; re-prioritising and adapting street-scene services to keep refuse and recycling services operational; and re-shaping services at crematoria and burial grounds in line with governmental advice. Staff using remote technology increased from an average of 50 per day to over 1,500 per day over the first four weeks of the outbreak as many were required to work from home using Microsoft Teams. New software services created through collaboration between business rates, economic development and digital services staff created on-line services to enable the rapid payment of government grants to over 2,000 businesses – the value of payments made to date exceeding £25 million. Similarly, collaboration between finance, education and digital services teams have enabled payment of funds to over 5,000 parents of pupils entitled to free school meals and the data sciences skills within digital services enabled lists of people advised to shield to be matched with other data to support the development of systems needed by the NPT Safe and Well Service. For those who are digitally excluded, over 1,350 devices have been issued to pupils who have no suitable device or Wi-Fi connection at home which will ensure no learner is excluded from learning because of technology limitations in their household.

- New service responses included the NPT Safe and Well Service, which was set up to support people who were told to shield themselves from the virus and other vulnerable people with daily living tasks. Childcare provision was provided through a network of school-based hubs to ensure the most vulnerable learners and the children of key workers were well supported.
- The Leader participated in the network of meetings established by the Welsh Local Government Association. This enabled the Council to escalate issues where needed but also had early notice of additional changes required.
- Informal meetings of the Cabinet were held as well as regular meetings between the Leader, Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer with opposition group leaders to provide regular briefings on changes taking place and to receive feedback.
- The Council's emergency response was undertaken in alignment with the work of the South Wales Local Resilience Forum which convened a series of Strategic Co-ordinating Group meetings – with a focus on facilitating co-ordination across the different arms of the public service.

- Joint arrangements were also agreed between Swansea and Neath Port Talbot councils and the Swansea Bay Local Health Board to oversee the local health and social care response.

Principle E – Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- The Head of Service Workforce Planning Group, chaired by the Director of Environment, with representative Heads of Service from each Directorate and a trade union representative have also met on weekly and then fortnightly basis to discuss and develop workforce planning in response to the emergency situation, including the redeployment of staff to the frontline, critical recruitment and the training necessary to support both measures.
- The Council’s Human Resources Service was refocussed to support the workforce as many were required to work from home using new remote technologies;
- Clear guidance was made available on the Council’s internet to ensure employees had an information point for updates in relation to the changing situation; this included Frequently Asked Questions;
- On-line and telephone based support was created to provide employees with advice and reassurance if their ability to work was affected by their own health conditions, caring responsibilities or because their work had significantly changed or had temporarily been suspended.
- Staff unable to undertake normal duties were invited to redeploy into roles required to support the emergency situation and significant training support was provided to enable them to safely undertake these roles, with advice from Health and Safety and agreed safe systems of work risk assessments in place.
- Personal Protective Equipment was sourced and provided to staff in accordance with the guidance advised by governments and as identified in local risk assessments.
- Adaptations to working environments for critical workers were made to comply with prevailing guidance.
- Regular dialogue has taken place between HR, the trade unions and the Chief Executive. This has included the joint development of a ‘return to workplaces’ risk assessment and guidance, as well as agreements on joint workforce messaging;

- Use has been made of video technology to maintain visibility of senior leaders at a time when all were required to work from home.
- On-line learning has been extended and promoted to the workforce with good take up.
- One to one support was provided to those elected members and officers who required it to ensure everyone who needed to use the remote technology was able to do so.

Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- All costs incurred in responding to the outbreak have been assigned to a project code enabling a clear audit trail to be available to identify and substantiate the costs of response, backed up by decisions taken under urgency provisions, where required.
- Health & Safety – Risk assessments undertaken which identify the range of protective measures put in place to protect staff and service users, such as: Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and workplace redesign to ensure social distancing. This has also extended to home working with the development of a Risk Assessment App.
- Risks to public health were managed through the Incident Management Team described earlier in this Addendum.
- Scrutiny through the political process was initially suspended at the outset of the emergency as lockdown measures were introduced without notice. Amendments to existing legislation to permit all meetings to be held remotely were not introduced for some time after the emergency response had been mobilised. In place of scrutiny, Members were provided with regular information about developments and provided with named contact officers in Democratic Services to follow up any queries from elected Members.



- A number of datasets required to support local and national performance management arrangements were temporarily suspended. Consequently, the Annual Report for 2019-20 will not provide a complete set of performance data for that financial year. A similar position will emerge in 2020-21.
- Routine monitoring reports, such as the Risk Register, Performance Indicators etc have been temporarily suspended to concentrate resources on managing the emergency. As the Council moves forward from emergency response towards recovery those systems of governance that have been disrupted will need to be reviewed and appropriate checks and balances restored.

Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver accountability

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- Planned internal and external audit programmes have been disrupted during the emergency response situation.
- The Corporate Governance Group met once between March and July 2020 - the focus of the meeting was to review the Annual Governance Statement prepared for 2019-20 and to prepare this Addendum.
- The main impact for the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan was in relation to work nearing completion not being completed and Internal Audit Reports not being compiled, finalised and issued in relation to work undertaken in 2019/20. The majority of the unfinished reports will have been completed and issued during the early part of 2020/21.

Section 2 - A lessons learned review on the adequacy and effectiveness of the above changes

<p style="text-align: center;">What Went Well</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What Didn't Go So Well</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
<p>Clear structure put in place to support the management of the emergency which provided for speedy communication internally and externally</p>	<p>7 day/week working over an extended period has been challenging. Welfare systems were introduced at an early stage in dealing with the emergency but the reality is that a core of staff and elected members have been working excessive hours</p> <p>Poor and delayed communication from Welsh Government on important issues, coupled with lack of certainty on how requirements were going to be funded created additional pressure and risk—arrangements worked best when local government co-produced the guidance and there was consultation over priorities.</p>
<p>Speedy adaptation of administrative processes to enable the Executive to function under Urgency Procedures during the initial response period when formal meetings could not be legally convened</p>	<p>Additional promotion of the urgency action arrangements could have helped some elected members and members of the public/stakeholders access the decision records earlier</p>
<p>Expansion of communications function and use of additional channels of communication to enable the public to understand the decisions being taken and</p>	<p>Communications through the medium of Welsh have not been possible in the emergency response phase due to capacity limitations within the communications</p>

<p>how to access services during the emergency period</p>	<p>team and the need to turn around communications at a very fast pace Radio will have bridged the communications gap for some digitally excluded people but most communications have relied on digital platforms</p>
<p>Rapid deployment of remote technologies to enable home working at scale and rapid development of new software systems to provide new services during the emergency response period</p>	<p>There were initial performance problems as large numbers of people began to use the remote technologies. That was remedied in quick time by the Digital Services Team. Longer term, more sustainable solutions will be introduced but will necessarily take longer to implement safely.</p>
<p>Ability to re-purpose and re-prioritise at pace to respond to the emergency</p>	<p>Generally, there have been few problems associated with the re-purposing and re-prioritisation of the Council’s work. Work to respond to those advised to shield was in tension with work to establish community champions in the early stages, but this was quickly resolved through dialogue between local elected members and officers. There has been a variable response from the Council’s partners – some partners have been able to respond quickly and effectively, however, some partners in the third sector were not able to mobilise a response.</p>
<p>Financial monitoring – systems were put in place immediately to code all expenditure linked to the emergency response. Additional work has been undertaken across services to identify lost income. All of this has been fed into the national meetings</p>	<p>Because of reliance on traditional channels, it was a significant effort to administer some of the new payments. This has highlighted the importance of making greater progress on implementing digital</p>

where the financial impact of the crisis has been debated	methods of working across a number of our services and functions
Partnership working enabled the response to be deployed quickly and effectively. For example the partnership working between the Council, Swansea Council and the Health Board to build the field hospital at Llandarcy	The response from other partners has been more mixed. It will be important to understand the reasons for this and to refresh the Council's partnership arrangements taking on board the lessons learned, including the way the Council targets resources.

Section 3 – Priorities for action following a reassessment of the Council’s governance arrangements as part of recovery planning to ensure they remain effective

Democratic arrangements – continuous review of arrangements in being undertaken to evolve democratic arrangements when meetings will be held remotely. Planning and preparation for a period when it may become possible to meet face to face but some of the methods of working developed during the crisis may permanently change the way in which the Council wants to administer its business. These arrangements will be developed with Members and supported through the Democratic Services Committee.

Audit – refocusing of the audit work programmes to focus on issues related directly to the crisis (eg verification of the recovery of expenditure incurred to manage the crisis etc); revisiting risk assessments to identify priorities for forward programme of work for Internal Audit (eg the extent to which services and functions have changed the way they operate and the types of controls in place to secure probity, stewardship etc).

Health, safety and welfare – ensuring risk assessments and associated control measures are robust across the Council to protect the workforce, those who need to use our services and functions and to uphold confidence in the Council’s response to the ongoing situation.

Equalities and other impacts- ensuring there is scrutiny of the extent to which the changes implemented and planned discharge the Council’s legal obligations. (Ensuring democratic oversight of the wider impact on the community arising from the crisis and how this may vary between geographies and between people who share protected characteristics).

Finance – understanding the one-off and recurring costs associated with the situation and the impact of this on the Council’s financial health.

ICT - ensuring there is an assessment of the impact of innovation on Information Risk and suitable measures in place to manage the risks.

Business Continuity – a review of business continuity planning to identify lessons learned for both the ongoing situation and for future incidents. (Assurance that emergency response can be mobilised quickly to any rise of infection across the county borough or to local clusters/outbreaks).

Statutory duties – careful consideration of Council responses to statutory duties suspended or relaxed during the emergency situation to ensure lessons learned from the emergency response inform choices made about the way such statutory duties are discharged into the future.

Partnership working – ensure the lessons learned from mobilising the emergency response, inform future choices made about partnership working.

Capacity and capability – review the Council’s workforce planning priorities to ensure they continue to be aligned with the organisation’s priorities given the challenges and opportunities associated with the ‘new normal’. This includes developing longer term methods of working based on what we have learnt during the pandemic and drawing on our experience of delivering services in different ways, embracing new technologies in order to do so. Our leaders will need to manage this change, helping employees adapt as we move forward, developing their skills sets and helping the Council to evolve in the post-pandemic era.

Section 4 - An updated governance improvement work table (2020/2021)

The output from the work undertaken above has informed a revised improvement work table for 2020/2021. The original improvement work for 2020/2021, identified as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 has been re-prioritised.

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A1	Areas of work identified following a reassessment of governance arrangements as part of recovery planning and the associated governance improvement priorities:	
Page 37	A1i – Democratic arrangements - continuous review of arrangements in being undertaken to evolve democratic arrangements when meetings will be held remotely.	Strategic Manager - Policy & Democratic Services
	A1ii – Audit - refocusing of the audit work programmes to focus on issues related directly to the crisis and revisiting risk assessments to identify priorities for forward programme of work for Internal Audit	Head of Financial Services
	A1iii – Health, safety and welfare - ensuring risk assessments and associated control measures are robust across the Council to protect the workforce, those who need to use our services and functions and to uphold confidence in the Council’s response to the ongoing situation.	Corporate Governance Group
	A1iv – Equalities and other impacts - ensuring there is scrutiny of the extent to which the changes implemented and planned discharge the Council’s legal obligations. (Ensuring democratic oversight of the wider impact on the community arising from the crisis and how this may vary between geographies and between people who share protected characteristics).	Strategic Manager – Policy & Democratic Services
	A1v - Finance – understanding the one-off and recurring costs associated with the situation and the impact of this on the Council’s financial health	Head of Financial Services
	A1vi - ICT - ensuring there is an assessment of the impact of innovation on Information Risk and suitable measures in place to manage the risks.	Strategic Manager - ICT

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
	A1vii – Business Continuity – a review of business continuity planning to identify lessons learned for both the ongoing situation and for future incidents. (Assurance that emergency response can be mobilised quickly to any rise of infection across the county borough or to local clusters/outbreaks).	Head of Human Resources
	A1viii - Statutory duties – careful consideration of Council responses to statutory duties suspended or relaxed during the emergency situation to ensure lessons learned from the emergency response inform choices made about the way such statutory duties are discharged into the future.	Corporate Governance Group
Page 38	A1xi - Partnership working – ensure the lessons learned from mobilising the emergency response, inform future choices made about partnership working	Corporate Governance Group
38	A1x - Capacity and capability – review the Council’s workforce planning priorities to ensure they continue to be aligned with the organisation’s priorities given the challenges and opportunities associated with the ‘new normal’.	Head of Human Resources
A1.1.2	Report annually to the Corporate Governance Group and Standards Committee to give an assurance that the Member Code of Conduct is fit for purpose	Head of Legal Services
A1.4.4	Update the constitution and bring a report to members in Autumn 2020 following royal assent of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.	Head of Legal Services
A1.4.6	Whistle Blowing Policy to be reviewed in 2020 and published on the council website.	Head of Human Resources
A1.4.7	Revise Corporate Complaints Policy in 2020 (to include: implementation of the Complaints Standards Authority for Wales (CSA) powers; recommendations from an internal audit review report which was received in November 2019; further staff guidance within the complaints process for disability related reasonable adjustments; further staff guidance in relation to covert recording and further staff guidance in relation to managing querulous/persistent complainants).	Strategic Manager Policy & Democratic Services
A2.2.2	Deliver six courses in relation to Recruitment and Selection and Safe Recruitment.	Head of Human Resources

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A2.3.3	To provide training on implementation of Contract Procedure Rules - training to be scheduled for Spring 2020 and bi annually thereafter.	Head of Legal Services
A2.4.1	Report annually to the Cabinet on the implementation and operation of the Ethical Employment in Supply Chain Policy - add to Cabinet forward work programme for 2020-2021.	Head of Legal Services
A2.4.2	To ensure that a copy of all partnership agreements are logged centrally with the Head of Legal Services – by the end of March 2021.	Head of Legal Services
A3.4.1	Reports annually to the Corporate Governance Group to give an assurance that the current system for dealing with data protection breaches is fit for purpose - add to agenda for 2020-2021.	Head of Legal Services

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A4.13.3	To undertake a review of FOI Publication Scheme in 2020-2021 with a report to Cabinet for approval.	Head of Legal Services
A4.13.1	Where relevant incorporate proposals for improvements from external regulators audit work into the Council's 2020-2021 corporate planning arrangements.	Strategic Manager Policy & Democratic Services

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A5.1.1	Incorporate the findings from the Audit Wales review of our performance, risk and business planning arrangements in 2020-2021 into CPMS.	Strategic Manager Policy & Democratic Services

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes		
Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer

See A5.1.1

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-21	Responsible Officer
None identified		

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A8.14.1	A review of Data Processing, Data Protection and Data Sharing work will be undertaken by the Information Governance team in 2020 and central records kept of data sharing.	Head of Legal Services
A1	A1xi To identify further training opportunities in order to provide additional clarity as to the role of Audit Committee Members and strengthen the Audit Committee function.	Head of Finance

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer
A9.5.1	To deliver governance awareness training across the Council in 2020-2021	Head of Legal Services / Strategic Manager Policy & Democratic Services

Signed:



Chief Executive: Steven Phillips

Date: 20th July 2020

Signed:



Leader of the Council: Councillor Rob Jones

Date: 20th July 2020

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Advised Response Structure for COVID-19

Developed by NPTCBC Emergency Planning Team | v8.0 | Date: 21 April 2020



UK

Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR)

WALES

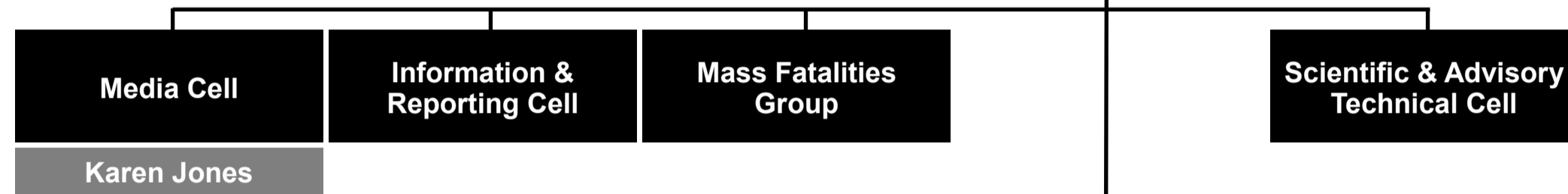
Wales Civil Contingencies Committee

Emergency Co-ordination Centre Wales (ECCW)

LRF

SCG SWLRF

Nicola Pearce **Supported by:** Emergency Planning



TCG SWLRF
Emergency Planning



NPT

NPTCBC IMT

Attended by: CHEX, Asst CHEX, Directors, Heads of Service, Emergency Planning
Supported by: Emergency Planning

CHAIR / LEAD OFFICER:

Logistics & Distribution Group	Warning, Informing & Digital Services Group	Social Services & Health Group	Community Resilience + Humanitarian / Voluntary Assistance Group	Workforce Planning Group	Facilities Cleaning, Deep Cleaning Group	Regulatory Services & Enforcement Group	Key Worker Provision & Vulnerable Learner Support Group	Mass Fatalities & Care of the Dead Group	Financial Resilience Group
Dave Griffiths	Karen Jones	Andrew Jarrett <i>(supported by Angela Thomas)</i>	Karen Jones	Nicola Pearce	Simon Brennan <i>TBC</i>	Ceri Morris <i>(supported by Craig Griffiths)</i>	Aled Evans	Craig Griffiths & Mike Roberts	Hywel Jenkins / Huw Jones

Attended by: CHEX, Asst CHEX, Directors, Heads of Service, Services, Managers, Relevant Officers (attendees of groups based on service / individual specialism)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Unit Human Resources Training & Development Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Services Communications Emergency Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Services Child Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Social services Community Safety Emergency Planning Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Asst. CHEX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities Access Managed Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Health Trading Standards Legal Licensing Community Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Finance Registrars Emergency Planning Crematorium Parks & Cemeteries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Services
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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 July 2020

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title:

Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020

Purpose of the Report:

1. To present the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2019-2020, produced in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015.

Executive Summary:

2. This annual report, produced in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, provides an overview of compliance with the standards with which we had a duty to comply during the year.
3. The report also details the number of complaints received during the year which relate to compliance with the service delivery,

operational and policy making standards and the Welsh language generally. A total of eight complaints were received during the year; seven via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council.

4. Specific information as required by the standards in relation to the Welsh language skills of employees and new and vacant posts is also included.
5. The outbreak of COVID -19 has had significant impact on our ability to produce an annual report by the statutory publication date of 30 June. This has been due to many of our workforce having been / continue to be redeployed to other service areas to support the Council's response.
6. The outbreak also meant that we have had to make considerable changes to the way we operated towards the end of March and because of limited internal linguistic skills this impacted on our ability to provide communications in Welsh and English during that period.

Background:

7. Following the Welsh Language Commissioner's final determination in relation to the Council's challenge to a number of standards a final [compliance notice](#) was received on 25 April 2018.
8. The annual report, attached at Appendix 1, provides an overview of compliance with the standards with which we had a duty to comply during 2019-2020.
9. Issues identified as a result of complaints received during the year have been addressed and procedures put in place to ensure we are better able to comply with the standards in future, e.g. the use of bilingual messages in service area social media

accounts, responding to correspondence in the appropriate language, etc.

10. The Welsh Language Officer Group has been instrumental in promoting and raising awareness of the Welsh language amongst staff and continues to support the implementation of the standards, assist in the identification of good practice and monitor compliance.
11. Our close partnership with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued over the period particularly with support and advice, assistance with compliance exercises and training sessions.

Financial Impacts:

12. Full compliance with the standards continues to be challenging due to the impact of austerity on the Council's human and financial resources.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

14. The Annual Report includes progress made in delivering services to support residents in valley communities.

Workforce Impacts:

15. Staff with Welsh language skills continue to be encouraged to use Welsh in their work.
16. In order to help increase the future language capability of staff the Council encourages the uptake of available Welsh courses.

While continuing to recognise the limits to increasing language capability currently due to restrictions on external recruitment we are taking every opportunity to recruit staff with Welsh language skills where possible.

Legal Impacts:

17. This report deals with the Council's duty to comply with the final Compliance Notice issued on 25 April 2018.

Risk Management Impacts:

18. Failure to comply with the standards could lead to a £5,000 fine per standard. There is also a risk of damage to the Council's reputation.

Consultation:

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

Recommendations:

20. It is recommended that:

Members monitor Neath Port Talbot Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019 – 2020, attached at Appendix 1, prior to its publication as soon as is practicable following Cabinet.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

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

Implementation of Decision:

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

Appendix:

23. Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020

List of Background Papers:

24. [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)
25. [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#)
26. [Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice](#)

Officer Contact:

27. Mrs Karen Jones, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer. Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Report 2019-2020

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

www.npt.gov.uk

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 Policy decisions7
Specific Legislative Requirements7
Complaints9
Have your Say11
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If you require this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Policy Team on 01639 763010 or email: policy@npt.gov.uk

Introduction

This annual report is produced to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015.

We are committed to the principle of the Welsh language standards and strive to comply with the standards as applied to the Council in what continues to be a difficult financial and resource limiting environment.

The outbreak of COVID -19 has had significant impact on our ability to produce an annual report by the statutory publication date of 30 June. This has been due to many of our workforce having been/ continue to be redeployed to other service areas to support the work in tackling the outbreak and supporting residents in these unprecedented times.

The outbreak also meant that we have had to make considerable changes to the way we operated towards the end of March and because of limited internal linguistic skills this impacted on our ability to provide communications in Welsh and English during that period.

Legislative requirements

The standards which have been applied to the Council under section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are contained in the [compliance notice](#) which can be found on our website.

As part of the requirements of the standards we must produce an annual report on how we have complied with the standards and provide information on specific areas; the number staff who are Welsh speakers and the language requirements of vacant posts.

Implementing the Standards

The Council has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the standards, with the Chief Executive having overall responsibility for ensuring arrangements are in place to secure compliance. In addition, we

recognise that each member of staff has a role to play in the successful implementation of the standards.

Our governance arrangements require the Annual Report to be monitored by Cabinet, with Cabinet Scrutiny Committee undertaking an important role in ensuring progress on performance is being sustained.

The Equality and Community Cohesion Group supports the Chief Executive and elected Members and has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the standards. This group is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Equality and has a membership drawn from each directorate as well as representatives from local equality organisations.

The Welsh Language Officer Group (WLOG) supports the administration and implementation of the standards and helps with the early resolution of any issues that may occur and supports staff in the delivery of services in accordance with the duties placed on the Council.

All information and support materials relating to the implementation of the Welsh language standards are available on the intranet and can be accessed by staff. Awareness of the requirements of the standards is raised via Corporate Management Group, directorate management teams, team meetings as well as through the Council's internal publicity mechanisms, e.g. the online newsletter, 'In the Loop'.

Compliance

Our translation processes are well established although some delays have been experienced due to the increasing levels of demand placed on our shared Welsh translation service. During the year we have identified alternative arrangements and working practices to help alleviate this and so ensure we are able to meet our legal requirements.

In October 2019, we held a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner at Ysgol Ystalyfera Bro Dur, our new Welsh medium secondary school. The focus of the meeting was to ensure that we had a mutual understanding of the priorities we are working to and the

opportunities and challenges that we as a Council face. Ysgol Ystalyfera Bro Dur has exemplified our commitment to the Welsh language and the principles of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Issues identified as a result of complaints received during the year have been addressed and procedures put in place to ensure we are better able to comply with the standards in future, e.g. the use of bilingual messages in service area social media accounts, responding to correspondence in the appropriate language, etc.

In order to determine how well, or otherwise, we are complying with the service delivery standards the WLOG undertook a compliance monitoring exercise during March/April 2019.

Compliance was generally positive amongst service areas. However, there were some inconsistencies within and across some services and the use of Welsh in service specific social media accounts, dealing with particular aspects of telephone calls and producing documents were identified as areas of particular concern.

WLOG departmental representatives worked with the relevant sections to address the inconsistencies and gaps in knowledge in relation to the Welsh language requirements.

An action plan to address the issues of the use of Welsh in social media, developed in response to a complaint received via the Welsh Language Commissioner, is being progressed by all services with social media accounts.

In order to further assess compliance a mystery shopper exercise was undertaken during February/March 2020. Although not fully evaluated, the exercise has highlighted inconsistencies remain across various service areas. During 2020-2021 the WLOG will consider how best to achieve consistency both within and across service areas.

Examples of areas compliance

- The number of people requesting to correspond with the Council in Welsh has increased to 29 (as at 31 March 2020).
- The Welsh Language Officer Group continues to provide support and advice to services as well as providing regular updates on progress, issues and good practice to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.
- We published the first [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. Progress Report](#). The rate of progress has been mixed; some specific targets have been missed or partially met with the aim to bring the plan back in line with its original timescales during October 2019 -September 2020.
- During the year regular Welsh language features and guidance to support compliance have been included in our online newsletter, 'In the Loop'. This is available to all staff through our intranet and more recently made available through our employee portal allowing staff access on their home devices.
- The Welsh Language Officer Group's work programme which aims to support staff in the implementation of the standards, assist in the identification of good practice and monitor compliance has been agreed.
- The new Integrated Impact Assessment process, which includes consideration of the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, continues to be applied.

- Our close partnership with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot continued over the period particularly with support and advice, assistance with compliance exercises and training sessions.

Training developed by Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot was delivered to Accountable Managers to help raise awareness of the Welsh language and people's rights as well as to provide an overview of the Welsh language standards with which the Council must comply.

- We began work, with the support of the Welsh Language Commissioner, to consider the initial recommendations of the Place-Names Standardisation Panel in relation to local place names. This work was suspended as a result of the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic but will be resumed as soon as is practicable to do so.

- The WLOG ran a small awareness campaign for Welsh Language Rights Day on 6th December 2019 (introduced by the Welsh Language Commissioner). The aim of the day was to celebrate Welsh language services and promote the right to use the Welsh language. The focus of the campaign was the rights of staff within the workplace with posters, articles in In the Loop as well as further information available for staff.

Policy decisions

The Integrated Impact Assessment process includes for consideration the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The following is an extract of what has been included in the revised impact assessment to demonstrate compliance:

‘Guidance to accompany the Integrated Impact Assessment process has been produced which provides detailed information on the considerations to be given in relation to Welsh and is made available to all staff via the intranet. Training on the assessment process has been provided to all relevant staff (including senior management) as well as to elected Members.’

All decision reports to Cabinet/ Cabinet boards include a summary of the conclusion of the integrated impact assessment undertaken and is accompanied, as an appendix, by the assessment itself.

Specific Legislative Requirements

Vacant Posts - Welsh language skill requirements

Desirable	146 (including 8 school posts)
Essential	36 (including 25 school posts)
Not necessary	390 (including 121 school posts)
To be learnt on appointment	1
TOTAL	573

Language Skills of Staff

Directorate/Service	Ability						Total staff
	Fairly Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fairly Fluent Welsh Speaker	Fluent Speaker & Writer	Fluent Welsh Speaker	Welsh Learner	Total	
Chief Officers		1	1		1	3	6
Asst Chief Executive & Digital Services	5	4	3	1	20	33	164
Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning							
Participation	14	7	25	7	62	115	658
Transformation	6	2	14	9	36	67	261
Finance and Corporate Services							
Financial Services	3	4	2		10	19	165
Human Resources	2	1	4		5	12	72
Legal Services	5	1	3	1	12	22	80
Environment							
Engineering & Transport	4	3	5	2	12	26	137
Planning & Public Protection	1	2	4	1	20	28	95
Property And Regeneration	2	5	3	2	12	24	141
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	1	4	7	4	14	30	197
Streetcare Services	9	10	14	7	29	69	500
Social Services Health and Housing							
Adult Services	18	13	12	10	55	108	564
Business Services	2	3	2	2	9	18	108
Children & Young People Services	11	9	23	3	43	89	365
Western Bay					7	7	22
Grand Total	176	122	450	94	845	1687	3535

Language skills are self-evaluated and records updated via the employee portal so are not measured against recognised levels. A council wide skills level tool is being considered for introduction during 2020-2021.

Complaints

A total of eight complaints were received during 2019-2020; seven via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council

CSG 538 – Polling Station Review. The Welsh language version of a letter informing of a change to a polling station included English language text. The Commissioner determined that as Returning Officers are not subject to language duties no investigation was possible.

CSG 576 – Twitter/Signage - English language message @CyngorCnPT ‘Twitter’ account and sign by Port Talbot station. Both instances were dealt with via the Council’s own internal investigation. Therefore the Commissioner considered that as the complaint relating to the Twitter account had been resolved it would be a disproportionate use of his resources to undertake a statutory investigation. Also, as the signage complaint had been satisfactorily resolved by the Council there was no need to complete a statutory investigation.

CSG 577 - Home to School Transport Policy – consultation on the proposed policy. The Commissioner decided not to undertake an investigation as it was not a proportionate use of his resources as it would not address the concerns of the complainant.

CSG 594 - Home to School Transport Policy – the use of Welsh during a public consultation. While recognising that the Council had made arrangements to ensure that the Welsh language was not treated less favorably than the English language and that a Welsh language service was available, the Commissioner considered opportunities were missed in promoting a Welsh Language service and determined that there was a failure to comply with the relevant standards. Further action was required of the Council in the form of

the development of a checklist for use when planning and attending events.

Finalisation of the checklist has been delayed due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the Council's subsequent response. However, this work will be prioritised for completion by the autumn.

CSG 609 - Home to School Transport Policy – consultation on the proposed policy. The Commissioner decided not to carry out an investigation as the Council provided a copy of correspondence it shared with stakeholders advising of the decision to review the proposed policy changes in light of feedback received. As the policy decision making was still in progress, the Commissioner considered it pre-emptive to consider investigating an alleged failure to comply with standards relating to that decision.

CSG 650 – Telephone call to the general telephone number. The complaint referred to the use of English on a Welsh language telephone call and similar issues when connected to a service area. The investigation has been suspended by the Commissioner in light of the ongoing situation with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

CSG 682 – Street signs, car parking permits, marketing material. The complaint referred to the lack of Welsh on a street sign and car parking permits as well as the claim that the Welsh language had been treated less favourably than the English language on marketing materials. On 25 March 2020 the Commissioner determined that although the complaint was valid there was no identified failure to comply.

The following complaint was received direct by the Council concerning the Registrars Service:

- A Welsh language email was replied to in English – a misunderstanding by staff over the details of a Welsh language database which has been addressed through staff training.
- A concern over a lack of Welsh language service provision – with the only Welsh speaker no longer employed in the service.

Arrangements had been made to ensure the service was able to continue to offer a Welsh language marriage service.

Welsh Language Commissioner complaint received during 2018-2019:

CSG 459 - Banner/Website/Social Media. The investigation was suspended due the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic but will resume as soon as is practicable.

Have your Say

Enquiries or feedback on this report are welcomed via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk

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

Social media:



Follow us and add your comments to the Council's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NeathPortTalbotCBC>



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Follow us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nptcouncil/>

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

Measures

Translations	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total cost of translations (where able to be identified)	£55,584	£52,598	£49,573
Number of requests for translation received by the translation unit	788	1086	716
<p>In order for us to meet our legal responsibilities it has been necessary for services to source translations from other providers. The cost of this is not readily available and in most cases will be absorbed into publication costs or the general budget for the service.</p>			

Telephone Calls	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of staff with fluent/fairly fluent language skills identified in the employee directory	94	148	126
Average time to answer telephone calls – English	18 seconds	22 seconds	52 seconds
Average time to answer telephone calls - Welsh	23 seconds	20 seconds	45 seconds
<p>In April 2019 one of the two Welsh speakers left the service which affected our ability to answer Welsh calls. However the average time improved during the year with the recruitment of two Welsh speakers.</p>			

Social Media	31.03.18	31.03.19	31.03.20
Twitter			
Followers - English corporate account	11,937	12,957	14,381
Followers - Welsh corporate account	160	227	306
Facebook			
English corporate account	6,337	8,321	10,878
Welsh corporate account	27	37	71

NPT News e-newsletter	31.03.18	31.03.19	31.03.20
No of subscribers to Welsh e-newsletter	-	7	11
No of subscribers to English e-newsletter	-	403	1221
No of subscribers to bilingual e-newsletter	-	14	24

Website	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total number of hits on website	2,845,526	2,981,002	3,576,298
Hits on Welsh webpages	24,192	29,758	34,045

Language Skills	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker & writer	174	186	176
Fairly fluent Welsh speaker	126	128	122
Fluent Welsh speaker & writer	429	466	450
Fluent Welsh speaker	94	95	94
Welsh learner	748	828	845

Vacant Posts	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Welsh language skills were desirable	174	189 (64)	146 (8)
Welsh language skills were essential	36	29 (25)	36 (25)
Welsh language skills were not necessary	641	487 (207)	390 (121)
Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post	3	0	1

NOTE: Figures in brackets are the number of school vacancies

Complaints	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner	3	4*	7**
Number of complaints where Welsh Language Commissioner determined no investigation necessary (New for 2019-2020)	0	2	5

* investigation ongoing in respect of one complaint

** investigation ongoing in respect of two complaints



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 July 2020

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All

NPT Safe and Well – Humanitarian Assistance Provided by the Council in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Purpose of the Report:

1. To summarise the arrangements established by the Council to provide humanitarian assistance to the residents of Neath Port Talbot within the frameworks created by the United Kingdom and Welsh governments.
2. To draw out the main lessons learned from the work as a basis for developing the contingency plans that will need to be in place into the autumn should rates of infection rise.
3. To consider how the work undertaken through the NPT Safe and Well Service can inform the wider debate being developed within the Member Panel on the future role of the Council in community development moving forward.

Background:

As part of the national response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the UK and Welsh governments advised certain groups of people whose health is deemed to be at high risk if they were to contract the Coronavirus to shield themselves for an extended period of time. Additionally, the governments identified a further group of people at risk who were told to strictly observe social distancing measures and to limit their contact with other people.

These measures were a key element of the initial governmental response to reducing the spread of the Coronavirus - in particular to minimise the number of people who would require treatment within intensive care settings.

Whilst many people who had to shield themselves or self-isolate to limit their social contact had the support of family and friends, the governments recognised that there were/are some people who will not be able to call on such support. Consequently, local authorities were advised that they should make arrangements for people to:

- Receive support with food shopping,
- Get hold of necessary prescription medicines,
- Receive help with other daily living tasks; and also to
- Enable people to have social contact by telephone, on-line or other suitable means.

NPT Safe and Well was established to respond to the governments' request that councils mobilise humanitarian assistance to this most vulnerable group of people. The council was required to mobilise the response within a matter of days and it is noted that the governmental request was made after residents had started to form Covid-19 support groups at the neighbourhood level.

Description of the Service:

- Eligibility

Lists of people who had been identified by the NHS and told to shield themselves were received 30th March, slightly delayed from the date we were initially advised we would receive the details. There were 4,056 people identified in need of shielding at the time but this has subsequently grown to over 5,500 people as GPs and consultants add additional people to the lists on a daily basis.

Local Members and officers also identified other groups of people who needed humanitarian support and these include:

- People who needed to self-isolate and had no support;
- Young carers;
- Parents of children entitled to free school meals unable to receive BACS payments; and
- Carers of people shielding and self-isolating.

Approximately 1,300 people have received support from the Service between the end of March 2020 and the end of June 2020.

- Access to NPT Safe and Well

A letter was sent to every household across Neath Port Talbot explaining the NPT Safe and Well Service, encouraging people to contact the Council's main switchboard number 01639 686868 if they were in need of support.

This was important because the NHS letters to people who were advised to shield were significantly delayed.

The Council letter explained the service was available for the “shielding” group and also other vulnerable people, such as those advised to self-isolate, where they also had no family or friends to provide support with basic daily living tasks.

The service has been continuously promoted by radio, social media, the Council website, through communications with elected members, in communities through the network of Community Leads who replaced the Local Area Co-ordinators, through the NPT CVS and other partner agencies. Social media influencers with a link to NPT have also helped to communicate the work of the Service out to residents.

Customer Services staff, working through the Corporate Contact Centre were provided with a script and training to enable them to undertake a brief assessment when contacted by people seeking to access the NPT Safe and Well Service. Details are recorded on a database designed by the Council’s Digital Services Team and this feeds through to the different elements of the service that have been mobilised.

A referral process into NPT Safe and Well was also created for Social Services to enable support to be provided to vulnerable people open to that service. This has helped to alleviate some of the increased pressures that Social Services has and is expected to experience.

We have worked with our main social housing providers – Tai Tarian, Pobl Group and Coastal from the outset and were able to identify all of their tenants who were being advised to shield. We have shared this information and worked together to support those facing the greatest restrictions on their daily living.

The Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Department also identified lists of young carers and parents of children entitled to a

free school meal who also needed support from NPT Safe and Well.

- Food

Where a resident was identified as needing help with food, there has been a choice of three services:

- **Receipt of a food box organised by Welsh Government** – This is the first option considered where someone is able to make food, able to pick a box up from the doorstep and has no specific dietary requirement. Food boxes are delivered weekly. Initially, they were delivered to the doorstep of the resident by the wholesaler but, due to various operational problems, the food boxes have since been delivered to the Council's food hub for ongoing delivery to the community. The cost of this food is met directly by Welsh Government through the contractual arrangements they have established with wholesalers. There is no cost to the recipient;
- **Receipt of a food parcel organised by the Council** – a food depot was created at Tregelles Court so that be-spoked food parcels could be created for residents who either: cannot make a meal for themselves and require ready meals; have specific dietary requirements that cannot be met by the Welsh Government service; are vulnerable but not on the 'shielding list' or require assistance to carry food into their home. This food is being paid for by the Council and recovered from the Welsh Government. There is no cost to the recipient. Deliveries are organised on a weekly basis and transported via the Council's fleet management service.
- **Hot food delivery services** – where people cannot make a meal for themselves they have been signposted to local organisations who are able to provide a paid-for meal delivery

service – eg Age Cymru have partnered with Care and Repair to provide a “meals on wheels” style service.

- **Young carers** have been included in the food delivery service to alleviate pressures on them given that the people they are caring for are amongst those to be shielded or who need to self-isolate.
- Food deliveries are also available for parents of children entitled to **free school meals** and who are unable to receive the cash payments into a bank account.

The establishment of the food hub at Tregelles Court has been a fantastic example of corporate working. Staff from a range of different disciplines and from a number of different departments collaborated together to source food, ensure its safe storage, handling and distribution, made deliveries, kept good records, prepared healthy menus that catered for specific dietary requirements and also ensured emergency food provision where circumstances have warranted it. The arrangements established in NPT were identified by Welsh Government as an example of good practice.

d) Prescription Medicines

Residents were helped to organise a delivery service from their community pharmacy or, by agreement between the resident and the community pharmacy, we have been able to organise a volunteer to collect medicines and leave them on the doorstep. There is no charge to the resident for this service.

There have been significant problems in some parts of the county borough accessing community pharmacy services. We have worked with the Head of Primary Care in Swansea Bay Local Health Board to address these problems and have seen a gradual improvement in services, although there remain problems in some areas and these are still receiving attention.

e) Support with daily living
Residents have been helped with a wide range of daily living tasks, such as posting letters, walking dogs, topping up energy meters etc. We set up a system to deal with any costs associated with these services using Council credit cards (to avoid the need for staff or volunteers to handle cash or people's bank cards) but then re-charged to residents through the Council's sundry debtors system. This arrangements is meant to be exceptional.

f) Keeping in Touch
We have been connecting some residents to existing groups or one of the volunteers we have recruited so that someone is in regular touch whilst they were self-isolating or shielding.

The Council has also tried to contact everyone on the shielding list who has not yet rang the NPT Safe and Well helpline to make sure there are no people falling through the net. However, we do not have a telephone number for everyone so this exercise has essentially been a large survey of the population of shielded people. We can be confident from the large number of calls we have made that people who did not contact us, have been receiving help and support from others, although it is striking from the conversations that have taken place how welcome that welfare check was.

g) Volunteering
The NPT Safe and Well Service had to be mobilised within days of the governments making a request for councils to provide the humanitarian assistance described above.

Initially, roles within the service were carried out by Council staff who volunteered to be redeployed into the service. Staff have undertaken a range of roles:

- Picking and Packing food in the food depot;
- Delivering food into the community;
- Designing menus and ordering food;
- Recruiting and inducting volunteers;
- Liaising with local councillors, town and community councils and existing community groups;
- Setting up processes, systems and accounting arrangements;
- Auditing arrangements;
- Processing payments and keeping track of costs incurred;
- Readying the depot for use as a food depot;
- Liaising with partners
- Collecting medicines/shopping for residents
- Trouble shooting
- Processing data
- Promoting the service
- Creating and delivering training

Circa 100 employees also undertook volunteering duties in their own time. Circa 450 other residents also registered an interest to volunteer with the Service.

To support and manage the volunteers we set up a volunteer management function within the Council and have been assisted in developing our approach to the management of volunteers by NPT CVS. We developed a volunteer policy and induction programme and all volunteers used by the Council have had an induction programme and have completed DBS checks. We have also made checks on driving licences etc for those volunteers who indicated they could undertake driving duties. We made our volunteer training video available on the Council's social media and website channels on the request of some elected Members in the hope it would help some of the local Covid-19 groups in their own work.

The NPT Safe and Well volunteers have helped augment the arrangements that were developed at the neighbourhood level, particularly in areas where the volunteer network was not as well developed as in other areas. Through the Community Leads who were identified to replace the Local Area Co-ordinators we have worked hard through local Members to co-ordinate the NPT Safe and Well Scheme with the local community networks and appreciate that in the early days there was some confusion between arrangements which perhaps were inevitable in the early stages of the crisis response.

We have had a very positive experience from recruiting and supporting volunteers through NPT Safe and Well. We had already developed a pilot project, supported by NPT CVS, to encourage more staff to volunteer in our local communities – prior to the Covid-19 situation. This experience has shown that there are significant numbers of staff who are prepared to undertake volunteer activities and who have had a very positive experience over recent months.

We have also recognised that we use volunteers in a range of ways across the Council's many services and functions and there is scope to considerably strengthen the role of

volunteering within the Council's mainstream work moving forward. This would bring the Council into line with other large organisations, such as South Wales Police, Mid and West Wales Fire Service, Tai Tarian who all run corporate volunteering programmes.

In the short term, we will need to recruit a volunteer co-ordinator to relieve the person who has stepped into the role on a temporary basis and who will need to return to his normal duties in the near future.

h) Partnership Working

At a very early stage in setting up the NPT Safe and Well Service the NPT CVS was approached as were all the town and community councils and a number of other voluntary organisations to work with the council in establishing the humanitarian assistance. The response was mixed.

Tai Tarian, Coastal and Pobl Group housing associations were able to mobilise an immediate response, receiving details of those to be shielded who were their tenants and they have been making additional checks on those tenants during the emergency situation. Likewise, Age Connect, Age Concern and Care and Repair were already mobilised and co-ordinating voluntary efforts across neighbourhoods and providing a hot meal delivery services respectively.

For the most part, town and community councils were unable to mobilise capacity to work alongside the Council. There are notable exceptions, such as Glynneath Community Council, Crynant Community Council.

For other voluntary agencies, some were mobilised to meet needs within their immediate geographic area - for example Canolfan Maerdy - but for others, they found themselves with

capacity problems as some of their staff/volunteers were in the groups to shield/self-isolate.

i) Community and Covid-19 Groups

There were many groups formed or forming as the outbreak and the government restrictions were implemented. Because of pressures in Social Services, a decision was taken to free up staff to prepare to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups receiving care and support from Social Services. This included redeployment of the Local Area Co-ordinators who were playing an active role in setting up street champion networks across the county borough.

To fill the vacuum created by the redeployment of the Local Area Co-ordinators, eighteen Community Leads were identified from across the council. The Community Leads were identified to provide co-ordination of the NPT Safe and Well volunteers at the neighbourhood level and to ensure that the NPT Safe and Well Service worked to complement and add value to the existing community groups, through the local elected member, where this was appropriate.

Moving Forward - Transition

During June 2020, all cases open to NPT Safe and Well have been reviewed. A large number of people are now able to access services from within the community themselves, helped by changes in their personal circumstances or because the community itself has made changes – for example there are more local shops taking telephone orders and providing delivery services.

The number of open cases has since reduced significantly following the review exercise. The reasons given by people for continuing to need support with food and medication, the main themes being that people are still abiding by the shielding advice; people are anxious

about going outside; people cannot get delivery slots; some people were struggling before the crisis and their situations have since deteriorated. We also continue to support young carers and families who have children entitled to free school meals and cannot access the on-line payment arrangements for various reasons.

Therefore, we have made some good progress in helping people to regain their independence but there is clearly more to do. The Council cannot be involved in providing free food for residents into the future, nor is it the role of the Council to compensate for gaps in community pharmacy services.

By the end of July, it is our intention to transition the remaining people from the food service to more sustainable local alternatives. This will include, by way of example, working with local businesses so that more of them can take orders and payments on-line/by telephone and more of them can offer a delivery service. We will do this through the Community Leads and working with local members to ensure we find suitable and safe alternatives for everyone current receiving a service. This will pave the way for the pausing of the shielding scheme on August 16th 2020.

Officers are also continuing to work with the primary care team in the Local Health Board to ensure there is sufficient capacity for community pharmacies to offer a medicines delivery service to those who need it. Given that we have some 5,500 residents whose underlying health makes them especially vulnerable, community health services will need to permanently adapt to respond to this risk so that people have more choice and independence and that where possible community capacity is improved to meet the needs of the people who live in all of our neighbourhoods.

In terms of the wider needs we have been meeting through NPT Safe and Well, the review of open cases, the calls we have made to those who are shielding and other information we have captured through our Community Impact Assessment exercise provide clear evidence

that there are some people – prior to the Covid-19 crisis – who were struggling to meet their daily living needs and who were isolated from their neighbourhoods. There are clear opportunities to find ways of connecting this group of people with their communities and services going forward.

This is considered an important potential legacy of the NPT Safe and Well Service that needs to feed into the Council's wider work on community development moving forward.

A further consideration within our forward planning is the Council's ongoing role in community development. There has been a tremendous community response to the crisis situation and it is already clear that there is considerable learning to draw out from across the board. It will be important that we draw on these lessons to plot the recovery path, informed by what the community considers to be important and with local Members central to this exercise.

Financial Impacts:

The main cash impact for the Council from the establishment of NPT Safe and Well is the operation of the food service with the main cost element being the purchase of the food items. These costs (£189,000) have been fully reclaimed from Welsh Government to date.

The non-cashable costs relate mainly to the time of officers seconded into the service from other roles. The redeployment is seen as a good use of staff and vehicles as otherwise those staff and vehicles would have been stood down over the period but the Council would still have borne much of the expenditure. The benefits from redeploying staff have been numerous – morale has increased; people have learned new skills and it has also fostered a culture of working collaboratively across the Council, connecting much more closely to the needs of our communities.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

The main impact of this initiative is positive, seeking to mitigate the negative impacts of the shielding and self-isolation advice on those people whose health presents the greatest risk of admission to hospital, intensive care and ultimately of death if they were to contract Coronavirus.

The groups of people who are the main beneficiaries are those identified in Government guidance as in need of shielding or self-isolation. The main groups include:

- People over 70
- People with severely compromised immune systems; have
- People with compromised respiratory function;
- Carers of people with significant health conditions;
- Young Carers

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The NPT Safe and Well Service operates across the entire county borough and has been set up in a way where the service complements existing community and neighbourhood volunteering effort.

Workforce Impacts:

Staff have enthusiastically committed to the creation and delivery of the NPT Safe and Well Service. The Service was mobilised at very short notice and staff have volunteered in significant numbers to undertake the various different roles that have been needed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

Staff have also worked over weekends and into evenings where needed to ensure needs have been met.

As we move forward it is crucial that we take an opportunity to clarify the Council's role in ongoing community development and that capacity is identified as part of legacy arrangements to enable this important work to move forward on a strong footing.

Legal Impacts:

The legal powers for creating and operating this service are derived from the emergency legislation enacted by the UK and Welsh government and the associated guidance and regulations.

Risk Management Impacts:

The Service has, overall, sought to reduce the risk that people who have to shield or self-isolate are unable to access food, medicines, and other basic daily living activities as well as becoming socially isolated. Without mitigating this risk vulnerable people would experience significant detriment to their physical and emotional wellbeing.

As we move forward, there are a number of risks that need to be addressed to ensure that, as far as it possible, communities can provide safe and sustainable local support to these vulnerable groups for an extended period of time, supported by statutory and other agencies where appropriate. Risks identified to date include:

- Local shops unable to take orders and payments by phone/on-line and unable to offer a local delivery service;
- Local shops unable to offer sufficient on-line/telephone ordering and payment facilities (the large supermarkets have increased the number of slots to enable people to use this service but it is still insufficient on occasion);
- Community pharmacies unable to offer a medicines delivery service for all those that need it;

- Sustaining and strengthening the community response in each neighbourhood to ensure that vulnerable people are not left isolated and unable to support themselves.

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have “due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area”

As part of the Council’s NPT Safe and Well Service, all Community Leads and volunteers have been provided with safeguarding training to ensure they can spot and report crime and disorder matters.

As part of the recovery plan, the degree to which people are digitally excluded and/or at risk of scams on-line or over the telephone has been explored. It is clear that there are a core of people who do not have access to the Internet but have no interest in accessing the Internet either. Our forward plans must therefore cater for those who are on-line and those who aren’t.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts:

Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a general duty where a person exercising relevant functions must have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which —

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or
- (b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.

Community Leads and volunteers have been provided with brief training to make them alert to the potential of domestic abuse and to have the confidence to report concerns. There is a need to ensure that carers, in particular, are supported well to alleviate the heightened level of stress they will be experiencing.

Consultation:

Due to the need to mobilise an immediate response to the emerging crisis there was very limited opportunity to consult. As explained in the body of the report, an attempt was made to partner with community councils and third sector organisations initially. Where it was possible to work with partner agencies, we have worked hard to align the development of NPT Safe and Well with those agencies and also with the pre-existing community groups.

After the initial mobilisation of the service, officers have spoken with many councillors from across the county borough to ensure NPT Safe and Well was providing an appropriate response in the different wards. Continuous adjustments have been made to service operations as feedback has been received. There is a risk as we move forward that we will see a further disruption to services as seconded staff have to return to their normal duties. This report has been prepared to agree actions that will mitigate this risk.

Where feedback on issues being experienced by the community has been received, officers have taken those issues up with the appropriate agency/department. For example, Internal Audit and Finance were consulted about the best way to accommodate payment of urgent items; the Local Health Board was contacted to work through issues about long queues at pharmacies and problems with community pharmacy delivery services.

There is more opportunity in the next phase to involve and consult members and our local communities. We will agree this through the Member Panel.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet notes and endorses the way in which the Council provided humanitarian assistance during the response phase of the Covid-19 crisis, in line with UK and Welsh governments' guidance.
2. That the Cabinet notes and endorses the steps that are being taken to transition people still receiving a service to more suitable and sustainable arrangements in respect of food and medication collection by the end of July and in anticipation that the shielding scheme will be paused 16th August 2020.
3. That the Cabinet remits the lessons learned from the work to the Member Panel established by Council to inform recovery planning, seeking views as to the way these lessons learned can be used to inform stabilisation and recovery planning.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To formally note and endorse the transition planning being undertaken to exit residents requiring humanitarian assistance from the Council in line with the timetables announced by the Welsh Government – ie that the national food delivery service will be paused on 16th August 2020, community pharmacy deliveries services are to be reviewed at end September 2020.

To ensure there is formal reflection on the lessons learned from the emergency response mobilised and that the lessons learned are used to inform stabilisation, longer term recovery planning and the wider work of the council.

Implementation of Decision:

For immediate implementation.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Residents Shielding Feedback

Appendix 2 – Data by Ward and Area

Appendix 3 – Info-gram of How Safe and Well Works

Appendix 4 – Lessons' Learnt

List of Background Papers:

- Urgency Action – NPT Safe and Well, May 2020
- Welsh and UK Government – various guidance issued in respect of shielded people

Officer Contact:

Mrs K Jones, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer. Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

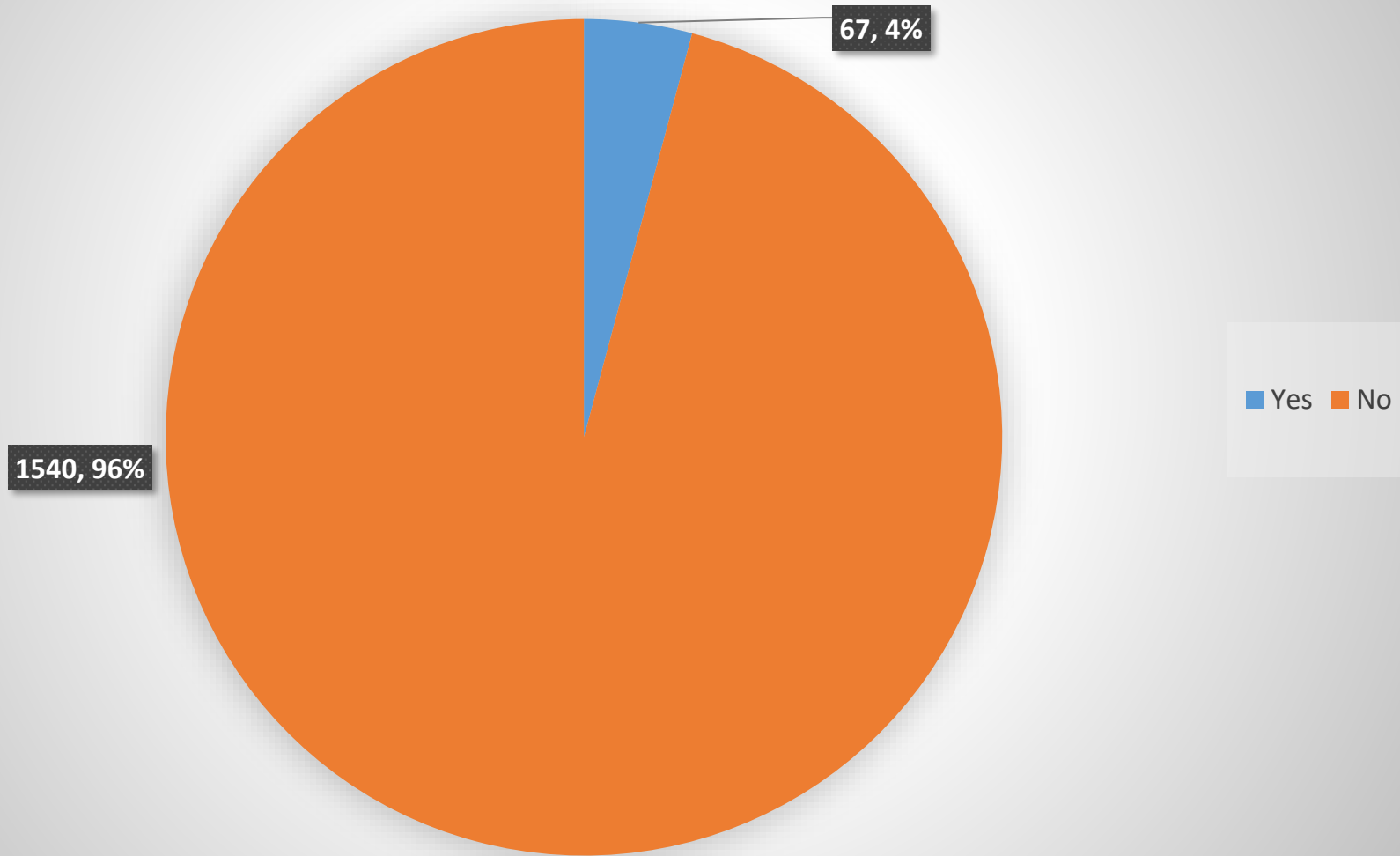
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NPT residents shielding feedback

Feedback from NPT residents shielding contacted by the Council up to 16th July 2020.

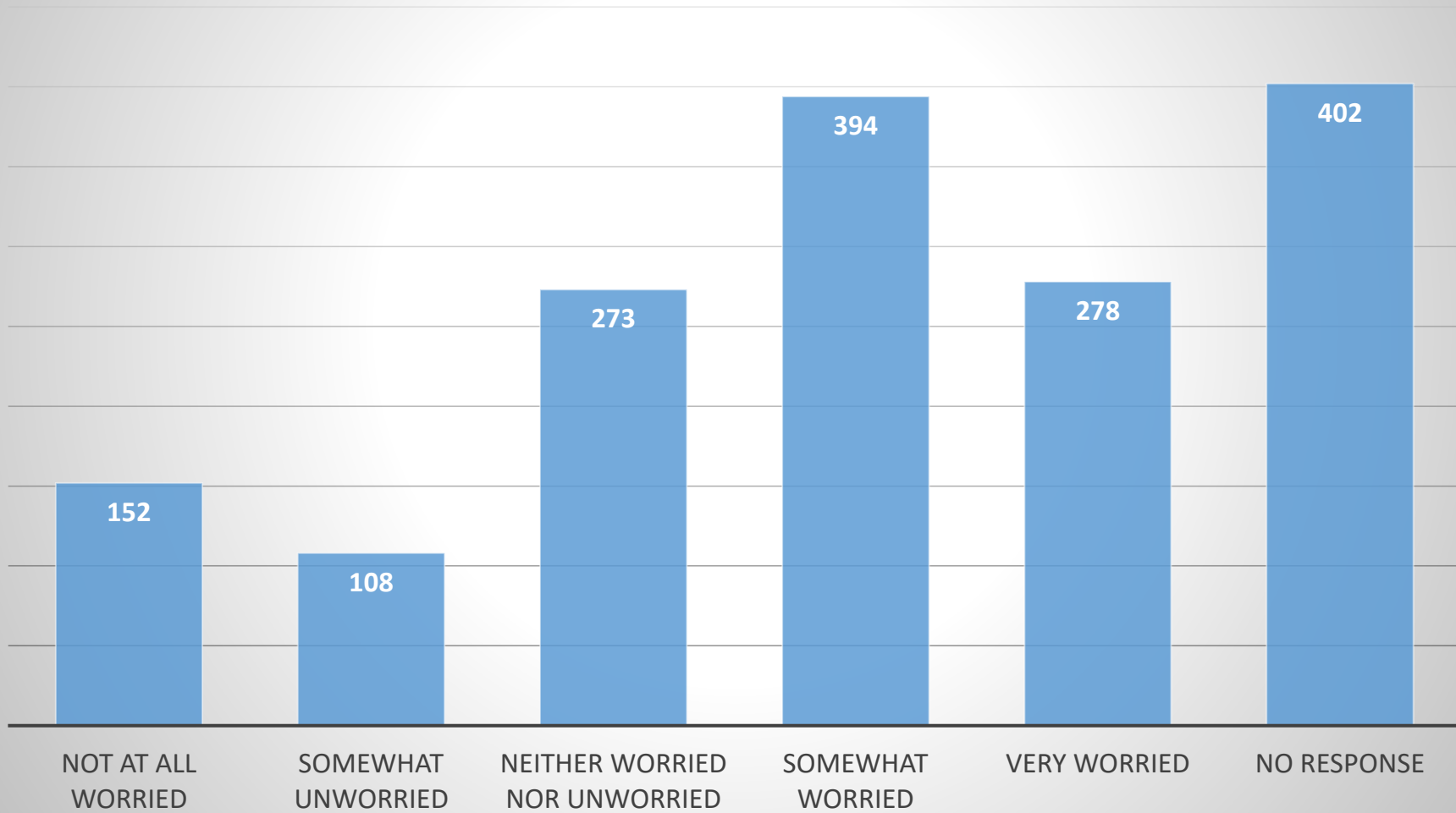
- Attempts to contact 2345. These residents have not previously contacted the council to request support relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 1607 residents contacted.
- 64 not contacted - Child / FSM /Already on S&W / Duplicate record / Deceased / Nursing or care home.
- Of the 1607 residents contacted, 44 did not want to participate in providing feedback.
- 50 residents contacted as part of the pilot scheme are not included in this data.
- Residents who are shielding and have previously contacted the council and requested support in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) are not included in this data.
- Residents feedback comments are available in more detail in a separate excel spreadsheet held by Customer Services.

Support Required- Number of residents shielding answered 'YES' or 'NO'



NPT residents shielding - feedback

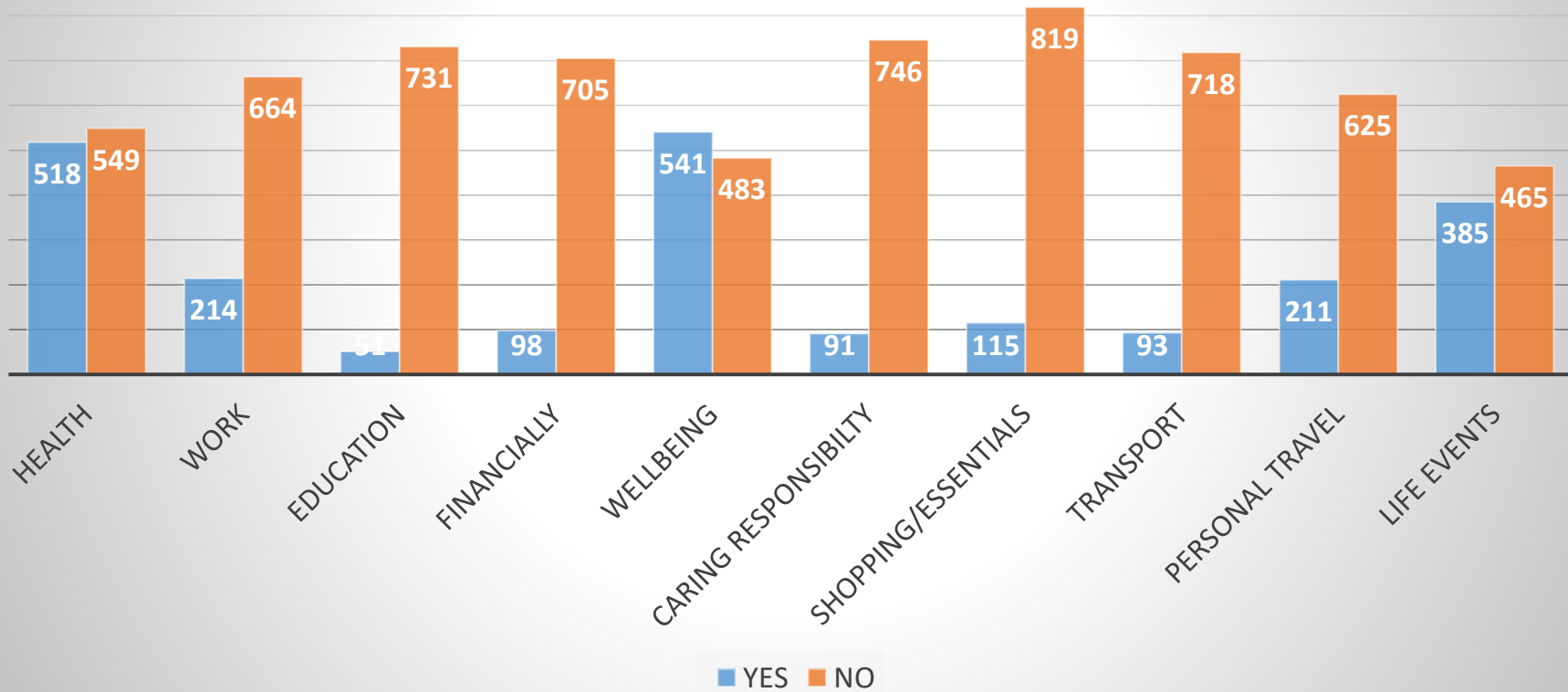
How worried are you about the effect that Coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on your life right now?



NPT residents shielding - feedback

In which ways is Coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting your life? All categories (YES or NO)

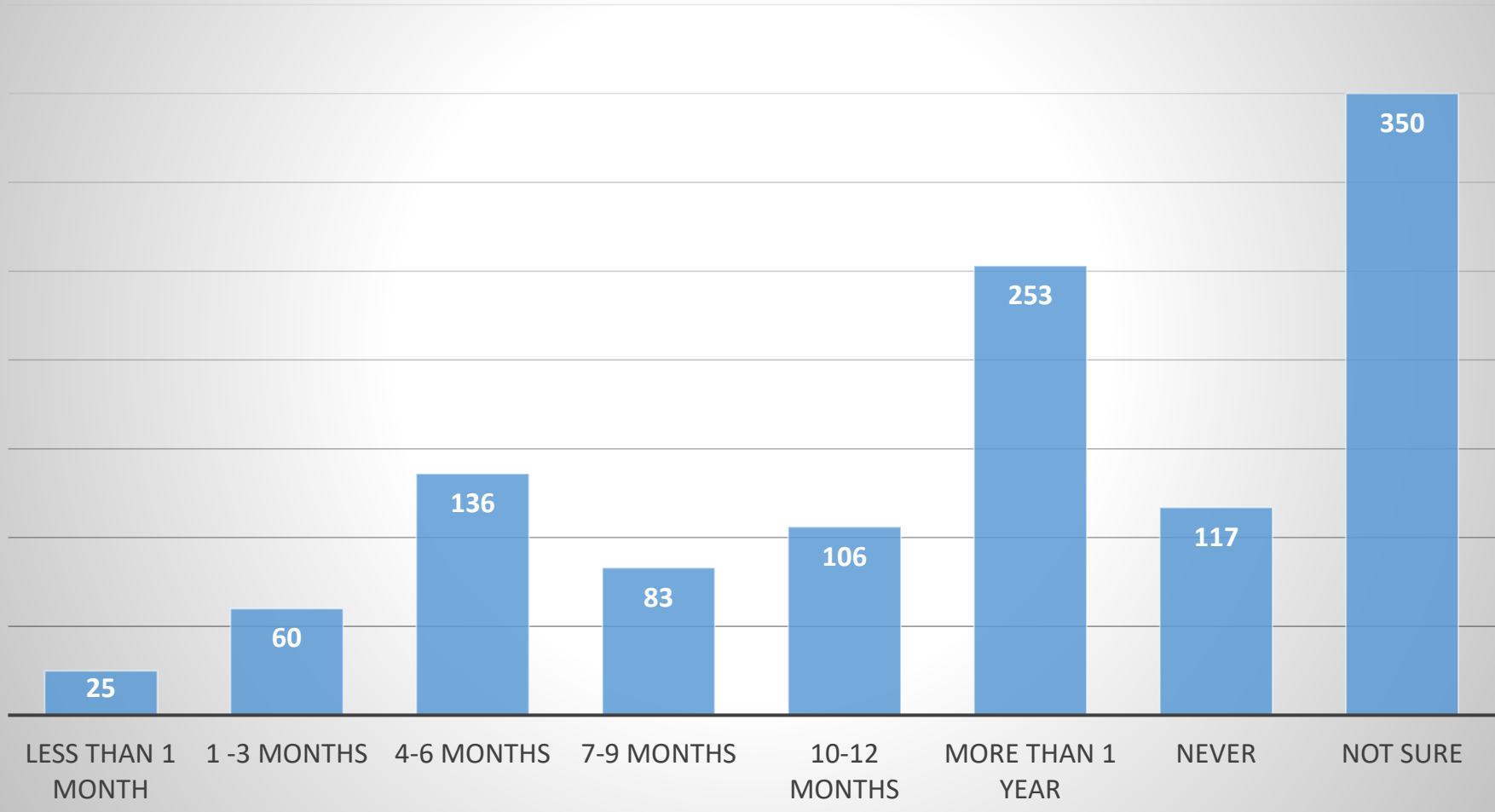
Page 88



In which ways is Coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting your life? Other please state: 615 responses – more detail available with Customer Services

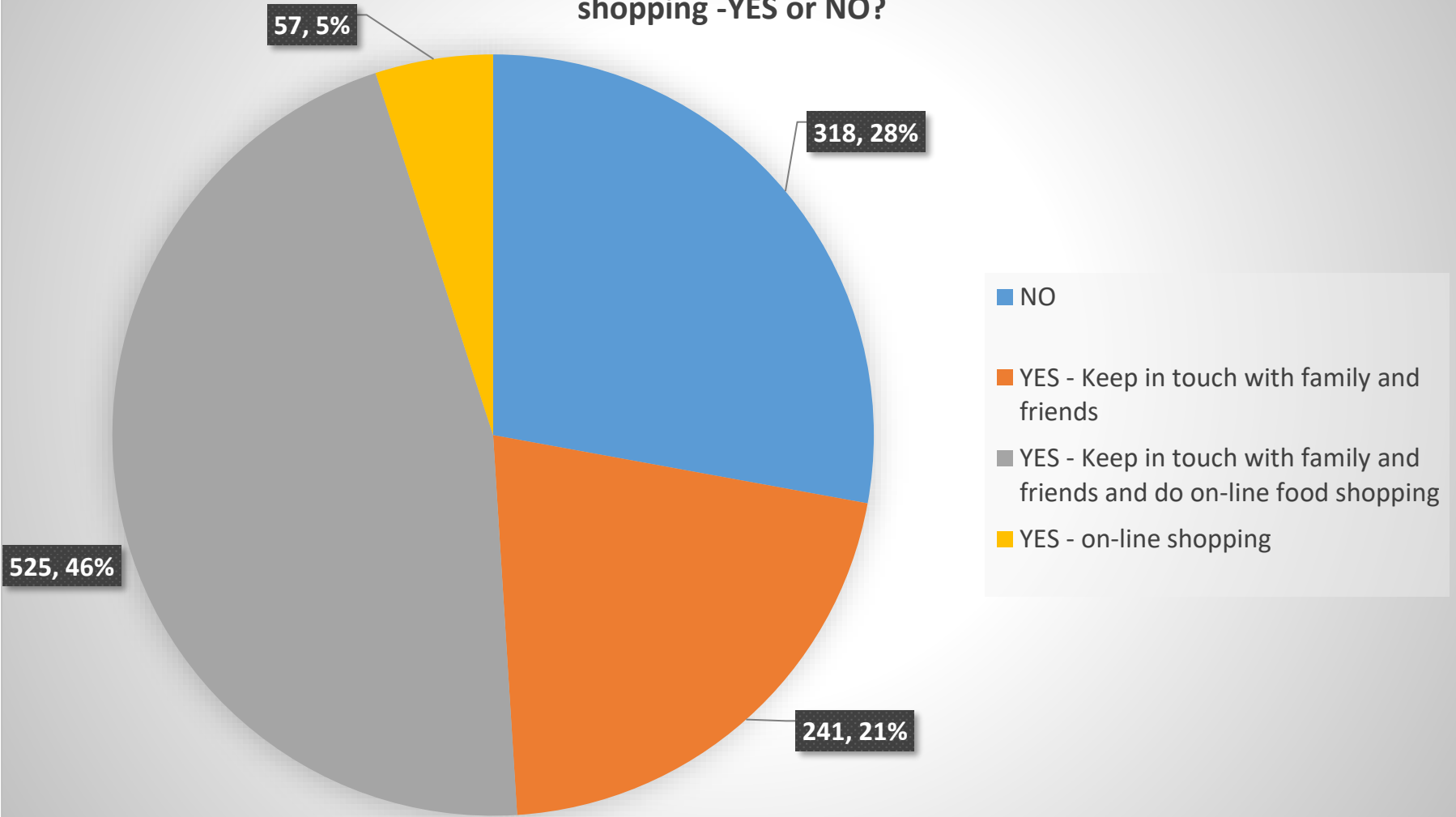
NPT residents shielding - feedback

How long do you think it will be before your life returns to normal?



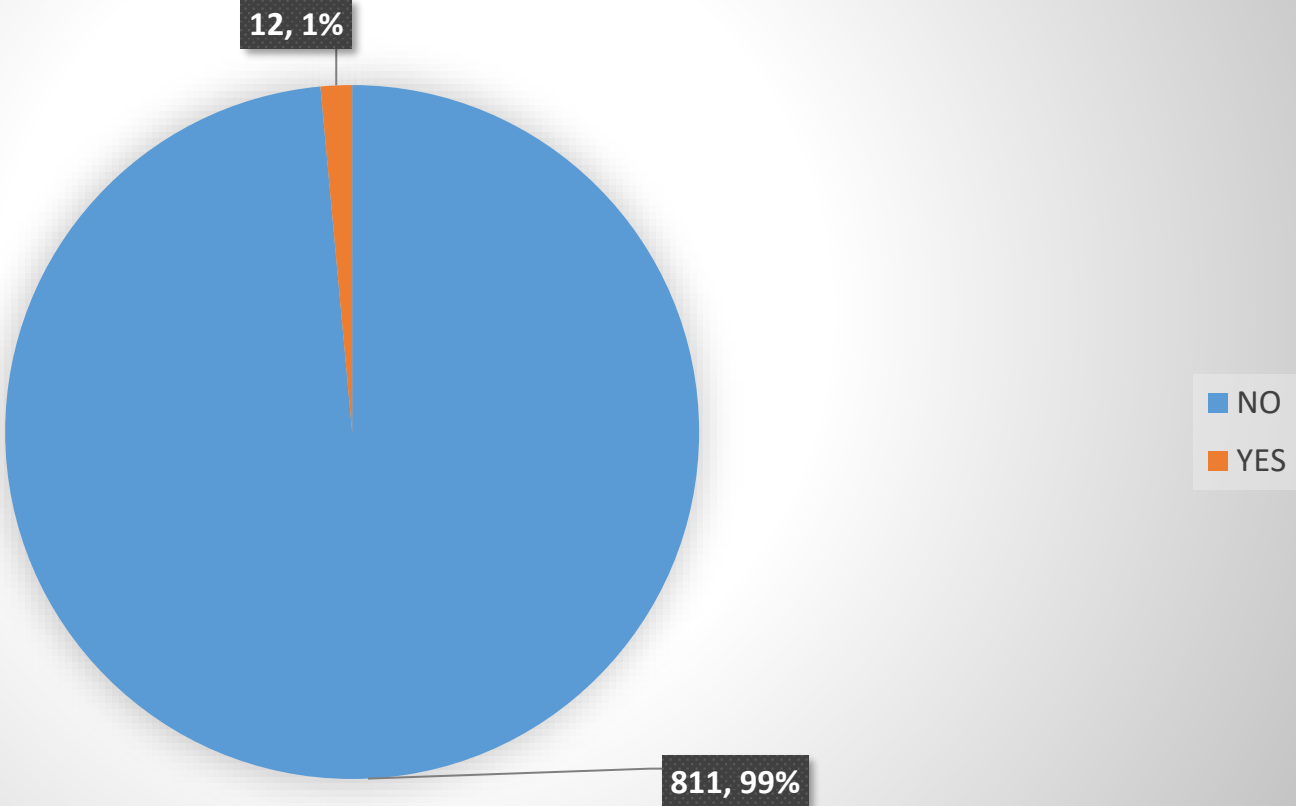
NPT residents shielding - feedback

Do you use the internet to keep in touch with family or friends and/or do on-line shopping -YES or NO?



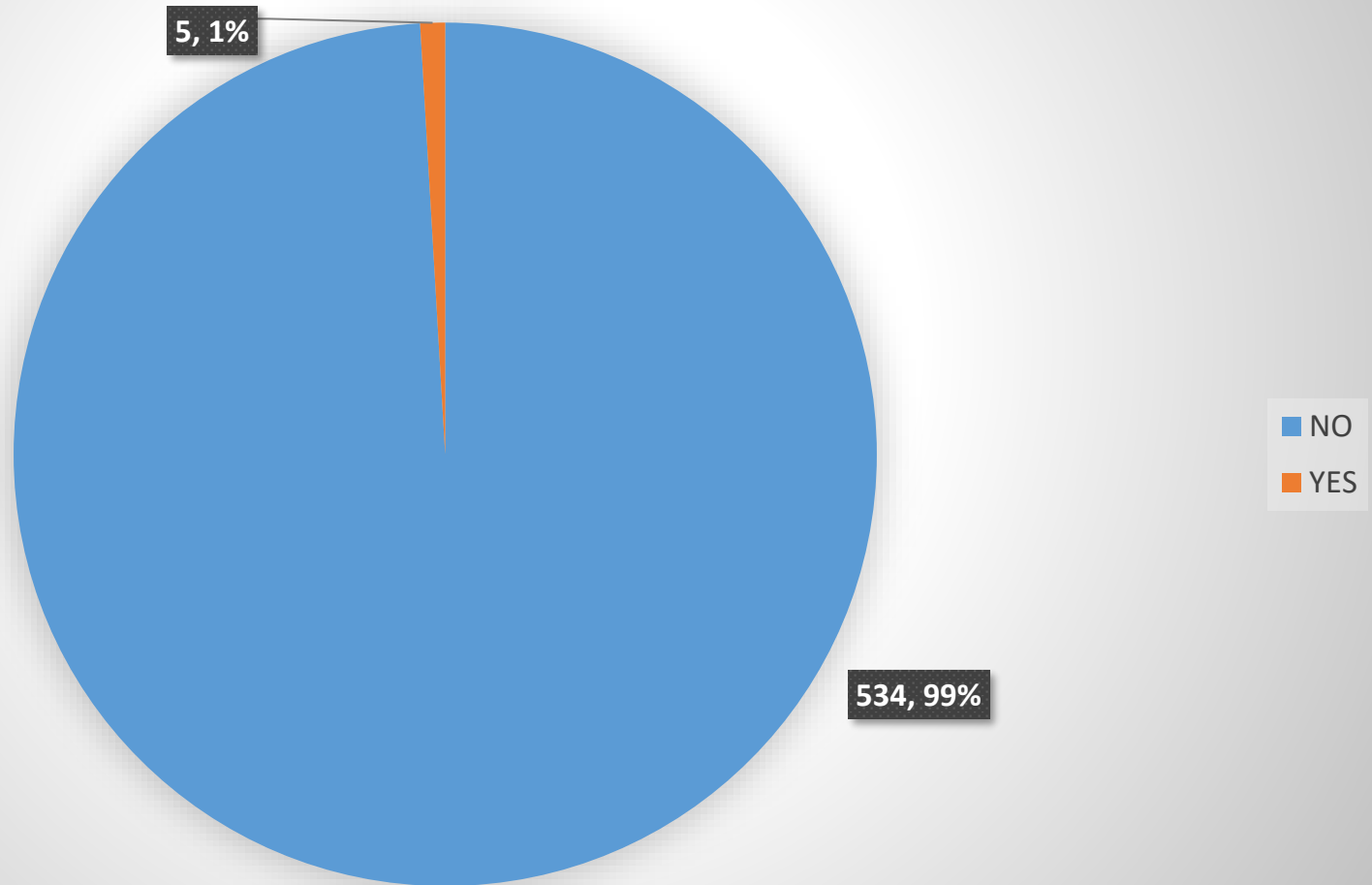
NPT residents shielding - feedback

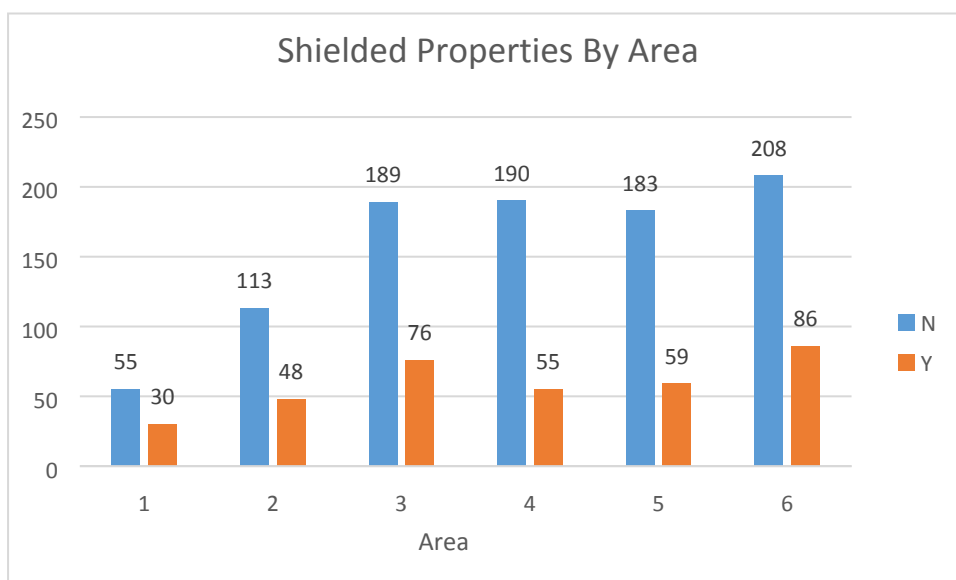
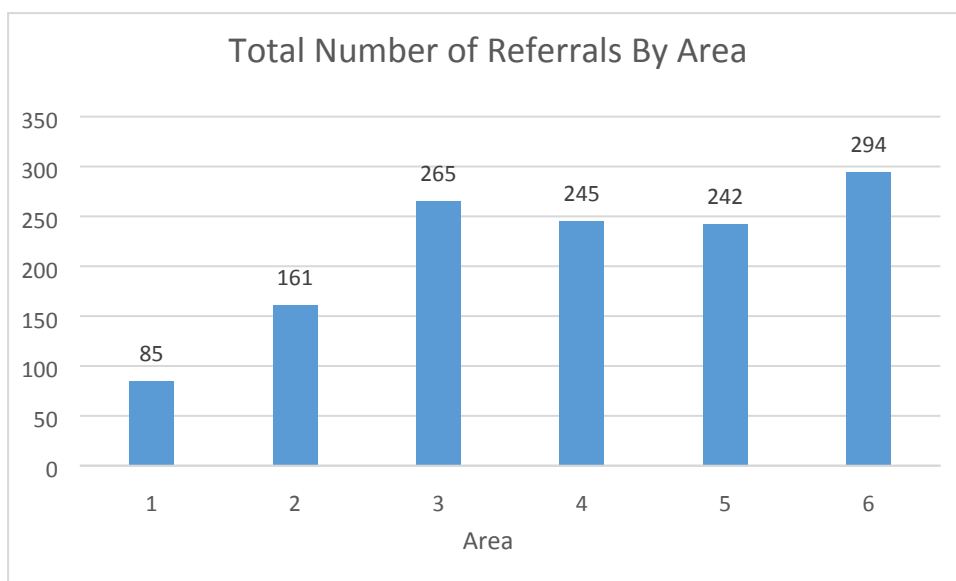
Do you use the internet to keep in touch with family/friends and/or do on-line shopping - If **YES**, is there any type of support you would find useful when accessing the internet?



NPT residents shielding - feedback

Do you use the internet to keep in touch with family/friends and/or do on-line shopping - if **NO**, if we were able to offer help and support to keep in touch with friends and family, or to be able to shop on-line, is that s





Area Breakdown

Area 1 – Blaengwrach, Crynant, Glynneath, Onllwyn, Seven Sisters, Resolven

Area 2 – Alltwen, Rhos, Cwmllynfell, Godregraig, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Lower Brynamman, Pontardawe, Trebanos, Ystalyfera

Area 3 – Briton Ferry East, Briton Ferry West, Cimla, Neath East, Neath North, Neath South, Tonna

Area 4 – Aberdulais, Bryncoch North, Bryncoch South, Cadoxton, Coedffranc Central, Coedffranc North, Coedffranc West, Dyffryn

Area 5 – Cymmer, Glyncorrwg, Gwynfi, Bryn & Cwmavon, Pelenna, Port Talbot, Taibach, Margam

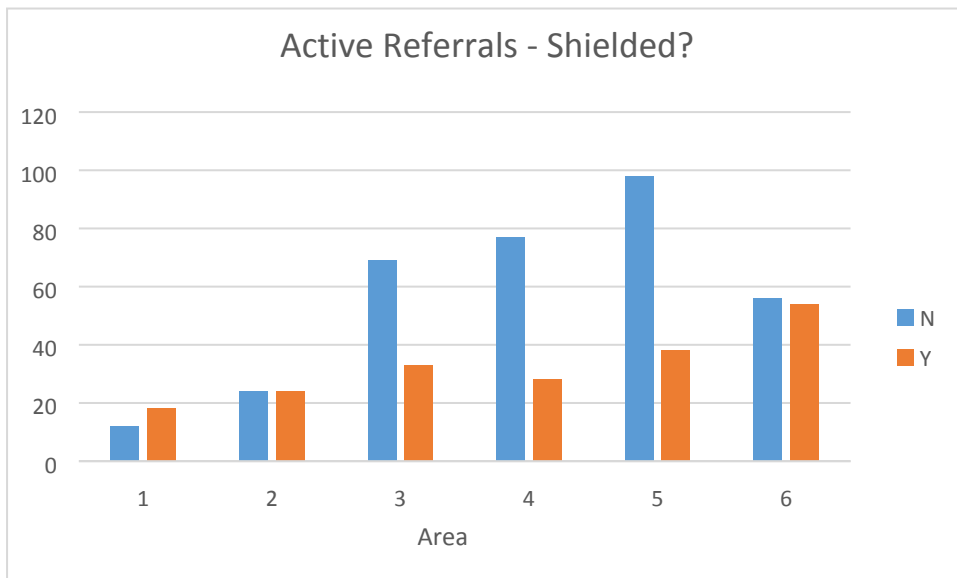
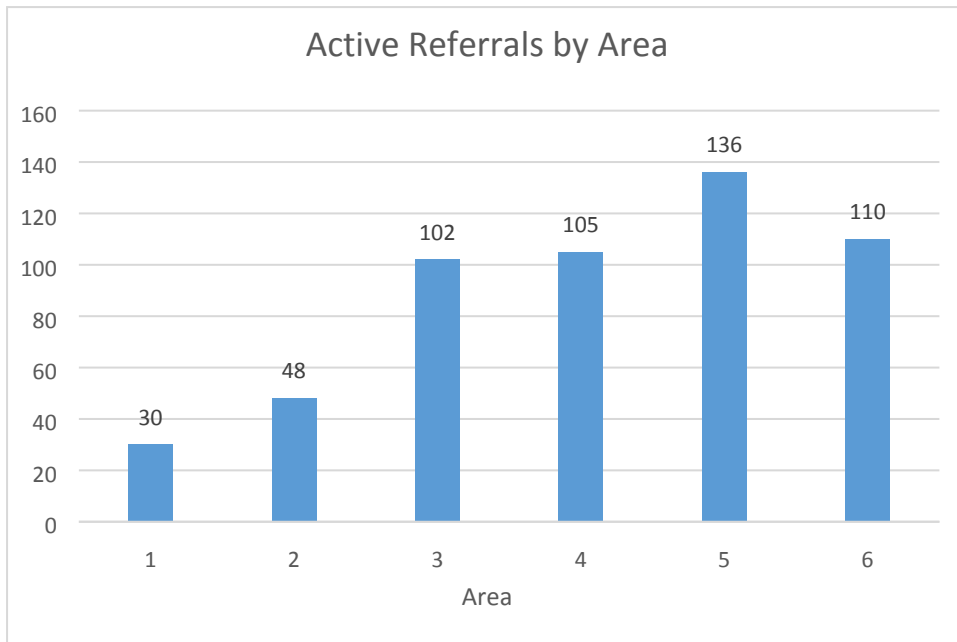
Area 6 – Baglan, Aberafan, Sandfields East, Sandfields West

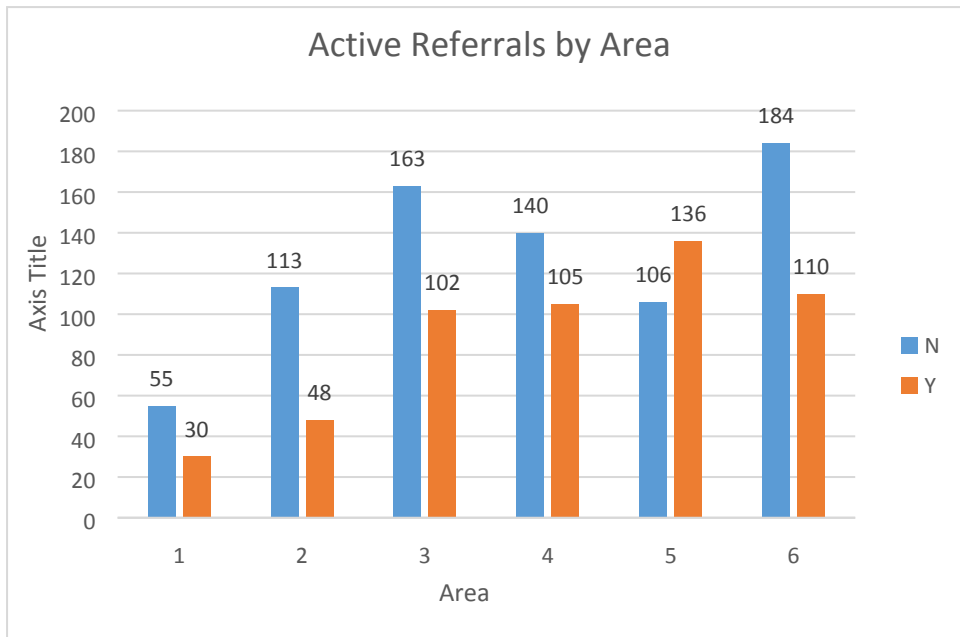
Total Number of Referrals by Ward and if Shielded

Ward	Shielded Property		Total
	No	Yes	
ABERAVON	36	15	51
ABERDULAIS	18	2	20
ALLTWEN	7	6	13
BAGLAN	54	20	74
BLAENGWACH	9	2	11
BRITON FERRY EAST	19	5	24
BRITON FERRY WEST	18	7	25
BRYN & CWMAVON	32	8	40
BRYNCOCH NORTH	11	2	13
BRYNCOCH SOUTH	66	13	79
CADOXTON	12	3	15
CIMLA	17	11	28
COEDFFRANC CENTRAL	23	7	30
COEDFFRANC NORTH	11	12	23
COEDFFRANC WEST	13	8	21
CRYNANT	12	2	14
CWMLLYNFELL	6	1	7
CYMMER	45	14	59
DYFFRYN	36	8	44
GLYNCORRWG	2		2
GLYNNEATH	12	11	23
GODREGRAIG	9	1	10
GWAUN-CAE-GURWEN	15	8	23
GWYNFI	5	3	8
LOWER BRYNAMMAN	6	1	7
MARGAM	14	6	20
NEATH EAST	44	21	65
NEATH NORTH	35	9	44
NEATH SOUTH	36	20	56
ONLLWYN	6	4	10
PELENNNA	6	1	7
PONTARDAWE	40	13	53
PORT TALBOT	39	20	59
RESOLVEN	7	10	17
RHOS	16	7	23
SANDFIELDS EAST	57	21	78
SANDFIELDS WEST	61	30	91
SEVEN SISTERS	9	1	10
TAIBACH	40	7	47
TONNA	20	3	23
TREBANOS	5	4	9
YSTALYFERA	9	7	16
Grand Total	938	354	1292

About 400 residents have received volunteer support from either S&W or community based services/local members.

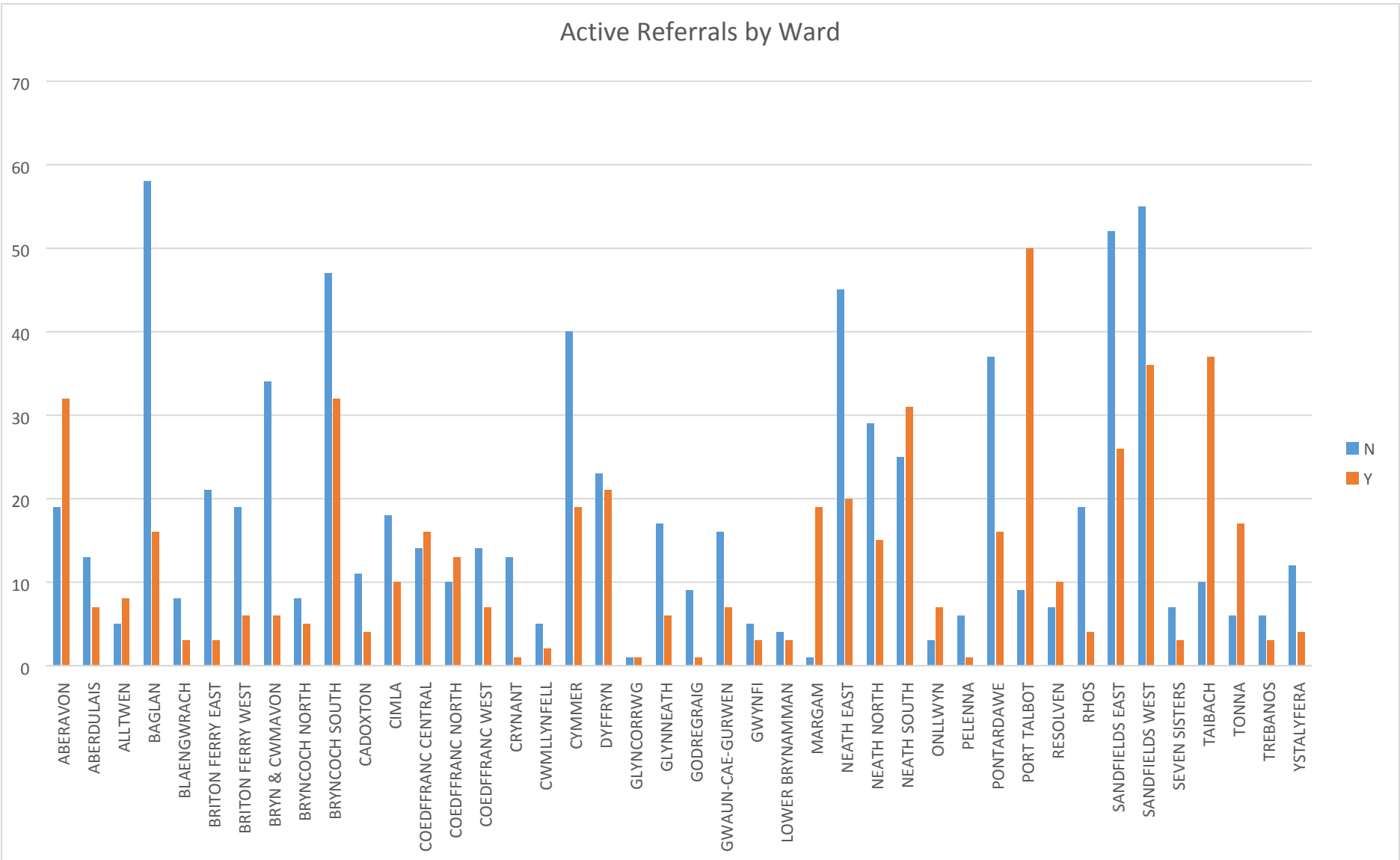
Since 30th April – notes added to 776 referrals about food orders, 288 still open





The above and below graphs show no. active (orange) and no. closed, i.e. not active (blue).

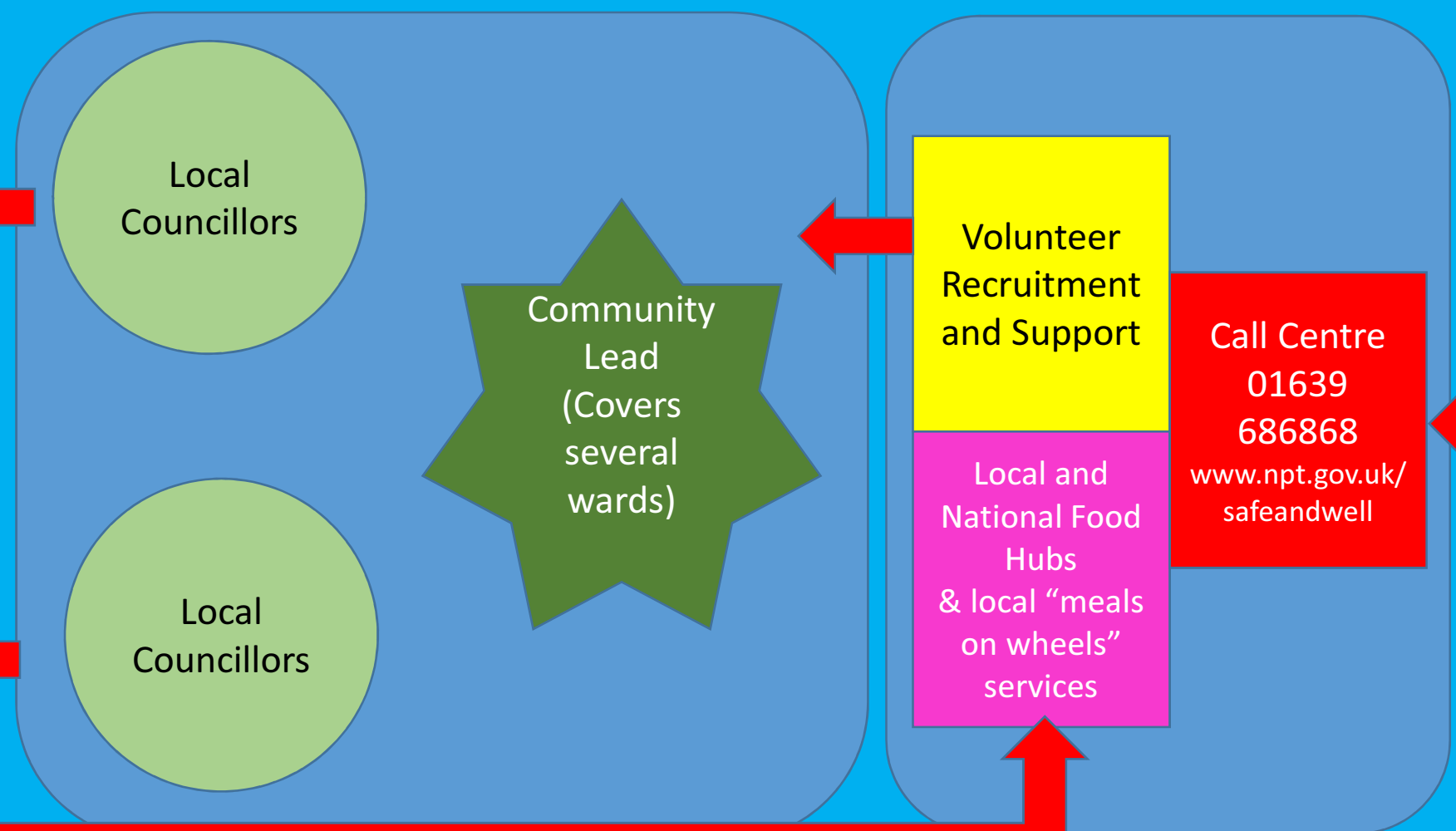
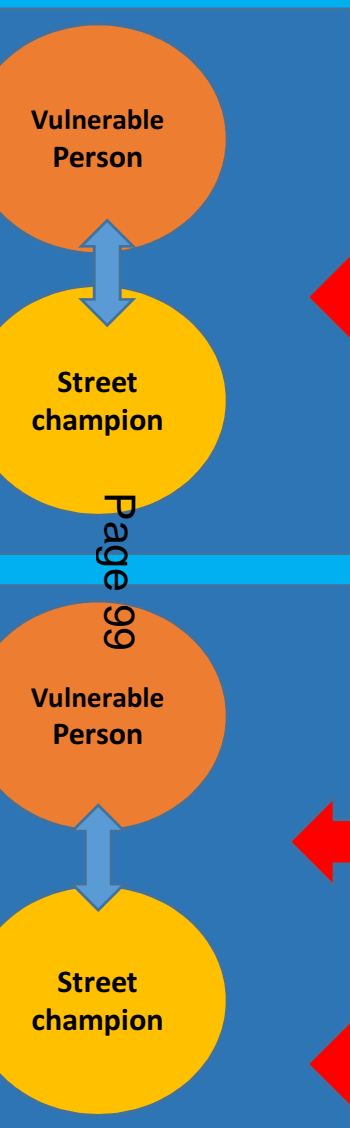
Active Referrals by Ward



wards divided into neighbourhoods

Support for wards and neighbourhoods organised into 6 areas

NPT Safe and Well – county borough co-ordination



Food delivered to the doorstep of residents

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Lessons Learned Log - NPT Safe and Well		Appendix 4
Version: July 2020		
Gone Well	Not Gone Well	Actions
Decision to set up humanitarian assistance as a cell within the Council's emergency response structure from the outset. This ensured alignment with the Council's wider emergency response, the Local Resilience Forum and national forums	Late receipt of information from Welsh Government or information received at very short notice. National guidance changing - sometimes a number of times over a short period of time. Lack of clarity about the end of shielding/food support and how humanitarian assistance might be stood down. Very late mobilisation of a national volunteering effort which was too late to deliver on the work we had to do locally	Ensure we continue to follow the Cabinet Office guidance on mobilising an emergency response. This worked well.
Decision to re-purpose council staff, resources and assets which were stood down from normal operations as part of the crisis response. This made the Council's contact centre, large numbers of staff, depots and vehicles available to resource the emergency at pace	Welsh Government announcements to bring services back into operation at short notice has put pressure on the resources and assets tied up in the emergency response. Unclear if there is understanding within WG that there is a transition required from the emergency response to re-opening of services and functions	Ensure we capture the philosophy of re-purposing council staff, resources and assets as part of our contingency planning. Look for opportunities to build staff confidence and skills in working across the council to respond to a wide range of issues - could include job swaps to aid succession planning. More formal arrangements in redeploying staff to S&W and releasing from their substantive role would have had benefits, particularly for the staff involved.
Adoption of collaborative working to bring together people with the right skills and experience to develop solutions to needs and requirements that were imposed on the Council at extremely short notice. This enabled a complex service that supported over 1300 people in a three month period to be created from scratch, safely	Some of the work was imperfect as we had to mobilise services and learn from doing. Generally, there were no major problems as we used people with experience and the right skills. With more time to plan we probably would have avoided some of the issues but we could equally have just created others.	Look for further opportunities to develop multi-disciplinary and corporate working. Build this into workforce planning, including recruitment, promotion and performance management systems to embed this as part of the council's corporate culture

<p>Communications strategy - a range of new and innovative approaches were used to inform residents and wider stakeholders about the service. During this project we have created video, animations, used radio, secured the support of social media influencers and used the gov.notify service on a significant scale. We have also extended the use of social media and gov.notify in our communications with staff. We have developed insights enabling us to gauge how the community were receiving our communications. As well as ensuring people knew about and were confident to access our service what we have learned will permanently improve the way we engage and communicate</p>	<p>We need to further develop communications for those who are digitally excluded and those who need to have more accessible communications. It is clear from the review that there are a sizeable number of people who are not going to be on-line and we should further develop methods of engagement that enable this group of people to be fully included in communications moving forward.</p>	<p>Ensure the lessons learned from this project are developing into the next phase of the council's corporate communications and community relations strategy</p>
<p>Flexibility and adaptability - staff willingly worked over seven days per week and late into the normal working day to deliver the objectives of the service. It was clear that staff were intrinsically motivated by the contribution they were encouraged to make. We can learn from this in the way we empower our staff, remove bureaucratic and command and control approaches and encourage people to take ownership of shared outcomes and find their own solutions to achieving those outcomes</p>	<p>As is often the case in emergency situations, people can be placed under significant stress as they strive to respond to the crisis. Generally, where people were becoming stressed this was recognised and additional support was put into place immediately to help. For the future, we need to make sure there is explicit consideration of the hours people are working and the way in which they are responding to pressure to ensure their wellbeing is being continuously supported</p>	<p>Consider providing training to staff about the way in which we instinctively respond to emergencies and identify ways in which we can ensure staff wellbeing when we are working under extreme stress and pressure</p>
<p>Governance - care was taken through the exercise to create good records and systems. We used Internal Audit to verify our systems so we could account for the money and resources we were using and from this we could also make sure staff were safe in the work we asked them to do. We created a steering group with different workstreams led by a person who took responsibility and accountability for their work. This enabled us to provide an integrated system of support for our residents and to solve problems and issues together</p>		

<p>We made efforts to contact a wide range of potential partners at the outset of the crisis. We had fantastic support from housing associations and some of the local voluntary organisations - we need to explore how we develop these relationships further into the future. We had a more mixed response from other organisations, including some voluntary organisations that the council funds and also a mixed response from town and community councils. We will need to explore in more detail the reasons why response was mixed to inform our future relationships with those organisations</p>	<p>We need to have a more complete understanding of community capacity to inform our future community development work, in particular, to identify where we may have gaps in community capacity. We should also take the opportunity to review the objectives of the Council's Third Sector Funding Scheme and the Member Development Fund to ensure resources are being effectively targeted</p>	<p>As part of the council's wider work to develop our community development approach, undertake more analysis of the capacity in communities and across the third sector and use this information to review existing funding and partnership arrangements. Work with partners to understand the support offered through housing associations, voluntary organisations and communities, to help avoid duplication of effort and to identify gaps in support. Establish clear communication channels for sharing service information and updates</p>
<p>Digital services - we benefitted from our in-house digital expertise and were the first to receive the details of people who were shielding. We matched our lists against the lists of other vulnerable people known to council services and housing associations. This enabled us to quickly identify a wider network of support. Our software development team created a database to support our service operations and our communications and customer services teams created surveys to enable us to capture good, detailed metrics on how people were accessing and experiencing our service. This has enabled us to continuously adjust the service over the months</p>	<p>We established good information systems but it was clear that there were some discrepancies in some of the reports and statistics we were generating. This was largely due to the way people were querying the database. We also recognised relatively late in the process that we needed full case management functionality. If we had built review into the system from the beginning we would not have spent so much time cleansing the data and probably would have exited some people from the service earlier.</p>	<p>Consider further developing the case management system and use it to underpin future humanitarian assistance initiatives. Prioritise work set out in the Smart and Connected Strategy to bring together the Council's data assets</p>

<p>Liaison with elected members - we recognised the absolutely critical role of elected members at an early stage and worked with a number of members to communicate their street champions initiatives into their local wards. We linked community leads to a number of members to ensure there was a clear point of contact and responded to feedback received from members, particularly early on, about problems that were apparent. As time has elapsed we have been able to communicate and engage with members before making changes -something we were unable to do at the early stages because of the pace at which the arrangements had to be introduced</p>	<p>NPT Safe and Well was implemented at the same time as elected members were busy establishing their street champions networks with the support of local area co-ordinators. It was clear that there was a tension between the two initiatives in the early stages which was overcome through dialogue and by ensuring the work done by LACs was taken on by a team of community leads when LACs were reassigned to other duties. Throughout the project we have worked hard to communicate through elected members, respecting their unique role in their communities but this can still vary from time to time. Moving forward there is more that can be done to explain the role of the ward member to staff and to ensure there is a strong and mutually understood member-officer protocol that ensures harmonious and effective working between officers and members</p>	<p>Build into staff and member training improved understanding of the member-officer relationship. Use this exercise to strengthen the local ward member's role in leading community development for their ward</p>
<p>Food - the decision to create a local food hub enabled to bridge the gap between what the national food box system could do and the needs of our residents.</p>	<p>We took the decision to bring the national food boxes into the hub to reduce the amount of cost to the Council and WG. This placed an additional strain on the food hub operation which in retrospect hasn't been justified by the benefits</p>	
<p>Community pharmacies - being able to communicate problems with the Head of Primary Care has benefited residents and the health board as we have been able to provide support to meet gaps in the community pharmacy service in the short term and communicated those gaps to the Health Board for them to include in their work.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government commissioned the British Red Cross to support community pharmacies and there were also discussions about commissioning support locally. The commissioning processes simply took too long to mobilise the additional capacity and instead we had to rely on an extensive volunteer network to meet need</p>	<p>Feed back to WG and the LRF that a commissioning approach is not a good fit within an emergency situation. Other models need to be developed and deployed</p>

<p>Community Leads - have played a key role in co-ordinating the corporate aspects of the Service with what has been happening in neighbourhoods. They have adjusted their work to suit the needs of different wards - there is a lot of variation across the Board. Leads have fed back what has been working, not working which in turn has enabled us to continuously adapt. This shows that harnessing the experience of front line staff and those who use our services is crucial to the way in which we plan and develop services</p>	<p>The transition from LACs to community leads was difficult. There was no effective handover of information which created some challenges across the system at the beginning. We need to ensure the knowledge gathered by the community leads is effectively transferred into any successor arrangement</p>	<p>Use the learning from this work to inform the way the council approaches community development moving forward</p>
<p>Volunteering - we were taken aback by the huge numbers of people who volunteered to work with the service. We created a volunteering policy and induction programme and undertook DBS and other checks. We learned that a significant number of our own staff have appreciated having an opportunity to volunteer in their own time too</p>	<p>We had a surplus of volunteers from our recruitment and took some time to set up our processes and support arrangements. The council now has an opportunity to develop its own infrastructure and pipeline of volunteers to support its corporate work which could include the role of volunteers in supporting the council's business continuity and emergency response arrangements</p>	<p>Formalise the council's objectives in relation to volunteering effort as part of its own corporate arrangements and set in place a suitable infrastructure to further develop this work</p>
<p>Supporting vulnerable residents - through the communications strategy and community awareness of S&W, many vulnerable residents have been identified who were not accessing support through other services. For others, S&W was able to work alongside existing support networks where Covid had impacted on their needs.</p>	<p>The support offered to residents often did not have an expectation in terms of review or end which has allowed some dependencies to begin to develop. Building in reviews with residents at set intervals would avoid the need for a large review process to be carried out and encourage residents to explore other options.</p>	<p>Ensure clarity on the offer of support, how this works alongside other services and how residents transition into other support where none was previously in place.</p>
<p>Food hub - the hub allowed us to make an offer of support to residents requiring food through the provision of basic food boxes that could be quickly packed and delivered through a central distribution network.</p>	<p>Many residents were able to pay for food, and some would have preferred to but it was difficult to implement a mechanism to 'shop' for residents or charge for food. Also, it is not feasible to manage the hub to meet all dietary needs and to include non-food items, so residents may still have a need for supplementary shopping.</p>	<p>Consider other options for supporting residents in accessing food including shared learning from other community based initiatives</p>

<p>Connecting with communities - this initiative has enabled the Council to strengthen its connection with communities in many ways - through the role elected members took on in mobilising the community, through staff who live in the county borough volunteering their help and support, by focusing on those who were most vulnerable and finding innovative ways of supporting those people.</p>	<p>The nature of the emergency has meant that it is difficult to provide continuity as staff were pulled back into other areas of work. There is however a very strong view amongst all those who have worked as part of NPT Safe and Well that the crisis has brought about a renewed sense of community and this is a platform we should build upon to permanently connect into communities</p>	<p>Bring clarity to the Council's approach to community development, led by members and the community itself. Provide training to staff to ensure there is a shared understanding of how to work with communities. Consider options for co-ordinating efforts at the community level taking forward the learning from Area Co-ordination and the Community Leads and other insight gained from the crisis</p>
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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 July 2020

Report of Corporate Directors' Group

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Covid-19: Moving Forward Stabilisation – The Period Between Response and Recovery

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Cabinet the draft Recovery Strategy for approval.

Executive Summary

2. It will be considerable time – eighteen months or more – before the Council can start to plan to recover from the crisis. The intervening period will therefore be a period of stabilisation.
3. The draft Recovery Strategy sets out a general framework that will support a consistent and co-ordinated approach as we move towards recovery across the Council.
4. The draft Strategy has been presented to all Scrutiny Committees for comment before consideration at Cabinet.

Background

Looking Back

5. In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing COVID-19 national emergency situation.
6. Since then, there has been an immense effort to ensure the Council was able to take action, in step with policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government.
7. A number of key actions were undertaken during that period, including:
 - a. The establishment of a 7 day/week enhanced communications service;
 - b. The closing down of Council services to assist in reducing the spread of the disease as well as focusing regulatory services on ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance by local businesses and other organisations;
 - c. The changing of services so that critical service could operate safely over the period; and
 - d. The establishment of new service responses.
8. To enable these changes, support functions across the Council also adapted, for example:
 - a. The refocusing of the Council's Human Resources Service to support the workforce as many were required to work from home;
 - b. Risk assessments undertaken to identify the range of protective measures required to protect staff and service users; and
 - c. The work done in recent years to develop the Council's digital capability has been a key asset during the outbreak. The

number of staff using remote technology increased from an average of 50 per day to over 1500 per day over the first four weeks of the outbreak.

9. In addition to the many service and support service changes that were implemented to ensure the Council was able to mobilise its emergency response quickly, the leadership and democratic oversight of the Council's work also needed to adapt:
 - a. The Leader of the Council participated in the network of meetings established by the Welsh Local Government Association designed to co-ordinate the local government response across Wales;
 - b. Due to the lockdown measures imposed by the UK and Welsh governments suspending all Council meetings, decisions have been undertaken under the urgency and emergency provisions contained within the Council's Constitution;
 - c. To ensure visibility of decision making, administrative processes were adapted to work on a digital platform; and
 - d. Following the enactment of legislation to remove the requirement for Members to be seen and heard in formal meetings of the Council, the Council quickly moved to resume key meetings using Microsoft Teams.

10. The professional leadership and governance arrangements also needed to adapt to ensure the Council was able to mobilise its emergency response quickly:
 - a. The Chief Executive established and chaired an Incident Management Group (IMT) to provide professional leadership. The group met daily, seven days/week.
 - b. Issues from the (IMT) were briefed to daily meetings between the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive. Information was also cascaded down

to operational teams through the respective chief officers but also where needed into wider structures.

11. The local emergency response was also undertaken in alignment with the work of the South Wales Local Resilience Forum which convened a series of Strategic Co-ordinating Group meetings – with a focus on facilitating co-ordination across the different arms of the public service, e.g. police, local government and others.
12. On 15th May 2020, the Welsh Government published initial plans to lift restrictions in Wales – “Unlocking society and our economy: continuing the conversation”. The route map contained in the plans signalled a cautious shift towards lifting some of the restrictions.
13. As in the initial response, the Council will act in step with the Welsh Government. The draft Recovery Strategy sets out a general framework that will support a consistent and co-ordinated approach as we move towards recovery across the Council.

Looking Forward

14. As in the response phase, it is crucial we take a corporate approach to the way we achieve stabilisation.
15. The draft Strategy sets out three key areas of focus:
 - i. Test, Trace, Protect
 - ii. Resumption of Council services and functions
 - iii. Understanding and responding to the impact COVID-19 has had for citizens, businesses and other organisations across Neath Port Talbot
16. The work undertaken in each of the above key areas will be tested against the vision, principles and objectives set out in the draft Strategy.

17. As we move towards recovery, political leadership will be provided by the Cabinet, supported by a cross party Member Panel – Coronavirus Recovery Phase. Through the work of the Panel, mechanisms will be established to ensure all Members of Council have an opportunity to shape the Council's plans to resume services and functions.
18. Professional leadership will be provided by the chief officer group, led by the Chief Executive through a Recovery Planning Group. The Recovery Planning Group will ensure there continues to be a corporate approach to the way we approach stabilisation through to recovery, using the lessons learned from the immediate response phase.
19. Each service manager will prepare plans for the recovery of the services and functions for which they are accountable, using the Strategy as a framework.
20. There are a number of key risks and issues identified in the draft Strategy that will need to be managed as the Strategy is implemented.

Consultation

21. There is no requirement in the Constitution for consultation on this item.

Financial Appraisal

22. The medium to long term financial implications for the Council are largely unknown. In the short term, the Council's cash flow can be sustained as a consequence of advance payments of Revenue Support Grant. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is preparing estimates of the one-off and recurring financial impacts which will be reported to Members in due course.

Integrated Impact Assessment

23. It is acknowledged the crisis has created greater inequality and has differentially impacted across the communities we service. As we do the work to bring services back into operation it will be important that we make sure we consider the equalities impact of our proposals fully to reduce these inequalities wherever we can, safely.

Workforce Impact

24. The current Welsh Government guidance on working from home remains unchanged, i.e. that 'all reasonable steps should be taken by employers to help people work from home'. To ensure a consistent approach to managing homeworking, a "Homeworking Guidance – during COVID-19" has been developed. This guidance provides a framework for both managers and employees during the current context and where the government continues to advise that employees must work from home where they are able to do so.

Legal Impact

25. The legal powers for all service changes that were necessary and those that continue to remain in force are derived from the emergency legislation enacted by the UK and Welsh Governments and the associated guidance and regulations.

Risk Management

26. The risks associated with the implementation of the draft Strategy have been identified and will be managed as the Strategy is implemented.

Recommendations

27. It is recommended that Members approve the draft Covid-19: Moving Forward Stabilisation – The Period between Response and Recovery Strategy.

Reason for Proposed Decision

28. To enable the Council to undertake a consistent and co-ordinated approach as we move towards recovery.

Appendices

29. Appendix 1 – Draft Covid-19: Moving Forward Stabilisation – The Period between Response and Recovery Strategy.

List of Background Papers

30. None

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Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Covid-19: Moving Forward
**Stabilisation – the period between response and
recovery**

Version 2.1
June 12th 2020

Foreword

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the way we live and work.

Thanks to the collective efforts of everyone in society, the anticipated peak of infection has been suppressed, the NHS has been able to cope with the influx of patients needing treatment in hospital settings and many lives have been saved.

I am immensely proud of the way in which the Council's workforce and our communities have adapted to the severe restrictions that have been placed on us all. The efforts across the county borough to sustain critical services and to support those most at risk have been extraordinary.

We are now entering a period where we will need to make further adjustments whilst we await an effective vaccine.

It is crucial that we all embed the public health measures that reduce the chance of the virus spreading into our daily routines. This will involve: maintaining good personal hygiene; continuing to practice social distancing; redesigning our services and working environments; continuing to support those who need to shield themselves from the virus; and co-operating with advice to self-isolate and get tested if we develop symptoms associated with the disease.

This strategy sets out how the Council will begin this work – work that will be subject of continuous review as new evidence and policy responses emerge.

Cllr R G Jones

Leader of Council

Introduction and Context

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing Covid-19 national emergency situation.

Since then, there has been immense effort to ensure that the Council was able to take action, in step with policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government. At all times our approach has been to work with and in support of government policy. Key actions taken during the response phase of the emergency have included:

- A 7 day/week **enhanced communications** service to ensure that public health messages were aggressively promoted across all channels owned/commissioned by the Council; and accurate and timely information was provided about changes to service delivery, including the establishment of new services to support vulnerable people;
- **Closing down Council services** to assist in reducing the spread of the disease as well as focusing our regulatory services on ensuring compliance with new legislation and guidance by local businesses and other organisations;
- **Changing services** so that critical services could operate safely over the period. For example: supporting continuity of learning using remote technologies to connect learners with their teachers; innovating across safeguarding services to fulfil our statutory safeguarding responsibilities using digital platforms and also creative approaches to outreach work; supporting care providers to minimise the risks involved in providing personal care across community and residential settings; re-prioritising and adapting street-scene services to keep vital refuse and recycling services operational; and re-shaping services at crematoria and burial grounds in line with governmental advice;
- Establishing **new service responses**. The new NPT Safe and Well Service was set up to support people told to shield themselves from the virus and other vulnerable people with daily living tasks. Over 1,000 residents have used the service and over 500 people registered to volunteer; Childcare provision has been provided through a network of school-based hubs, ensuring the most vulnerable learners and the children of those working in essential roles have been well supported over the

period. New on-line services were set up to support the administration of financial assistance to businesses and community groups. The Council undertook the project management of the construction of the Llandarcy Field Hospital, completing the build within four weeks; Children entitled to free school meals have also been supported throughout the period, initially through the “grab bag” scheme and then more latterly by payments into the bank account of eligible parents; and

- The Council has encouraged and supported the fantastic **community action** we have seen across the county borough, helping councillors where needed to complete the setting up of “street champion” networks, adapting the NPT Safe and Well Service to response to community needs, helping to connect local businesses with other businesses and local communities, working with local third sector organisations and housing associations, respecting what each agency is able to offer communities at this extraordinary time.

This would not have been achieved but for the exceptional commitment from the Council’s workforce and the strong partnership between the Council and the trade unions.

Support functions have also adapted to enable these changes. Some examples of the work completed includes:

- Refocusing of the Council’s **Human Resources** Service to support the workforce as many were required to work from home using new remote technologies; providing employees with advice and reassurance if their ability to work was affected by their own health conditions, caring responsibilities or because their work had significantly changed or had temporarily been suspended. All of those unable to work were invited to consider redeployment. Several hundred of the Council’s workforce voluntarily agreed to temporary redeployment into other roles – this has included secondment to the communications team, refuse and recycling, customer services, NPT Safe and Well, Test Trace and Protect;
- **Health and safety** has been a top priority over the period. Risk assessments, identifying the range of protective measures put in place to protect staff and service users, such as: PPE; workplace redesign to

ensure social distancing; and use of other equipment such as in-cab screens has required an immense effort, especially in the early stages of the outbreak when global supply chains were under immense pressure and Government guidance was changing very rapidly as scientific evidence developed;

- Alongside health and safety physical control measures, there was an early focus on supporting the emotional wellbeing of employees. A wide range of new on-line **wellbeing resources** has been established and promoted to the workforce and more recently telephone helplines for all staff and pupils have also been put in place, connecting those needing help to the Occupational Health Service or the Education Wellbeing Service ;
- The nature of the Coronavirus has meant that people should avoid face to face contact wherever possible and avoid touching things that other people may have touched. The work done in recent years to develop the Council's digital capability has been a key asset during the outbreak. For example: Staff using remote **technology** increased from an average of 50 per day to over 1500 per day over the first four weeks of the outbreak as many were required to work from home using Microsoft Teams to connect with other work colleagues. New software services created through collaboration between business rates, economic development and digital services staff created on-line services to enable rapid payment of government grants to over 2,000 businesses - the value of payments made to date exceeding £25 million. Similarly, collaboration between finance, education and digital services teams have enabled payment of funds to over 5,000 parents of pupils entitled to free school meals and the data sciences skills within digital services enabled lists of people advised to shield to be matched with other data to support the development of systems needed by the NPT Safe and Well Service. More latterly, focus has also turned to those who are digitally excluded. Over 1,350 devices have been issued to pupils who have no suitable device or wifi connection at home which will ensure no learner is excluded from learning because of technology limitations in their household. There are many more examples of digital technologies providing a strong backbone to keep the Council functioning;
- As the pattern and nature of work has shifted over the period, learning and development activities have adapted too. **e-learning** has massively

expanded with many people unable to perform their normal duties taking the opportunity to update their skills include, for example, Welsh language and safeguarding training. Where there has been a need for face to face training adaptations have been made to ensure social distancing.

Delivering change on the scale and at the pace that has been required has been a corporate effort. People from different professional disciplines have collaborated to do what has been required. As well as ensuring the Council has been able to quickly mobilise its emergency response, there are many lessons to be drawn from the period that will be drawn out to inform the work that will need to be done in the period ahead as the Council re-shapes its services and functions further to adapt to operate safely with the continuing threat posed by the disease.

Leadership and Governance during the Response Phase

Political Leadership and Governance

Leadership and democratic oversight of the Council's work needed to adapt very quickly over the period.

Lockdown measures imposed by the UK and Welsh governments meant that all Council meetings were suspended. Decisions have therefore been taken under the urgency and emergency provisions contained within the Council's Constitution.

To ensure visibility of decision making, administrative processes were adapted to work on a digital platform, mirroring as closely as possible what would have happened prior to the outbreak. Scrutiny chairs have been routinely consulted about decisions requested from the Executive. All decisions made under the arrangements have been published to the Council's Modern.gov system – available to all members of Council but also to members of the public (except for private items).

The Leader of Council has participated in the network of meetings established by the Welsh Local Government Association designed to co-ordinate the local government response across Wales. These arrangements have meant that the Council has been able to escalate issues where needed but has also had early notice of additional changes that have been required. Informal meetings of the Cabinet have been held as have regular meetings between the Leader, Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and opposition group leaders – all of this designed to provide regular briefings on the changes taking place and to receive feedback.

While formal meetings have been suspended, a number of mechanisms have been deployed to keep in touch with all Members of Council. Regular bulletins and e mails have been sent to members by e mail focusing on some of the key changes that have been taken or were being planned to respond to the measures taken by governments.

Following the enactment of legislation to remove the requirement for Members to be seen and heard in formal meetings of the Council, the Council moved quickly to resume key meetings using Microsoft Teams. The meetings held to date have included a meeting of the Council (the first council in Wales to hold a full meeting of Council remotely) and meetings of the Cabinet, Planning Committee, Audit Committee and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. An initial debrief has been held to tease out immediate lessons learned and a fuller review is scheduled before the end of July to agree the pattern of meetings and associated support from autumn onwards. Issues to take forward in the next period will include enhancing scrutiny, resuming bi-lingual meetings of Council, ensuring public access to all meetings as well as refining practical arrangements such as the type of device used for meetings, meeting protocols, support at meetings and consideration of alternative software systems.

Council has also authorised the establishment of a cross-party Panel to support the Cabinet in moving forward from initial response to stabilising council services in the new operating environment. One of the key tasks given to the Panel by Council is to ensure each member of Council is encouraged to help shape the way forward.

Professional Leadership and Governance

In the initial response phase of the outbreak, the Chief Executive established and chaired an Incident Management Group to provide professional leadership during the response phase and this met daily, seven days/week using a standard agenda. The Incident Management Group was comprised of the corporate directors and assistant chief executive and heads of service, as appropriate.

Key issues discussed and decided at the daily Incident Management Group meetings were recorded by the emergency planning team. Issues from these meetings were then briefed to daily meetings between the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive. Information was also cascaded down to operational teams through the respective chief officers but also where needed into wider structures.

Work tasked from the Incident Management Group ensured that the Council quickly assembled (and where required deployed) emergency responses. Activity mobilised included, for example: project management of the Llandarcy Field Hospital, creation of the NPT Safe and Well Service to meet the needs of shielded and vulnerable people, plans to expand capacity to care for the deceased, creation of child care hubs in schools, support to adult social services, etc

The local emergency response was undertaken in alignment with the work of the South Wales Local Resilience Forum which convened a series of Strategic Co-ordinating Group meetings during the period – with a focus on facilitating co-ordination across the different arms of the public service, eg police, local government and others.

Because of the nature of the emergency, joint arrangements were also agreed between Swansea and Neath Port Talbot councils and the Swansea Bay Local Health Board to oversee the local health and social care response. The governance of the Regional Partnership Board was formally amended to ensure that more agile arrangements were put in place to work through and manage the pressures across the health and social care system and to make contingency plans for a significant surge in people needing treatment for Coronavirus.

The Incident Management Group ensured that these arrangements were focused on the priority issues and that the Council had a coherent and corporate approach throughout the emergency response period.

From the outset, all costs incurred in responding to the outbreak have been assigned to a project code enabling a clear audit trail to be available to identify and substantiate the costs of response, backed up by decisions taken under urgency provisions, where required.

Next Steps

On Friday, May 15th 2020, the Welsh Government published initial plans to lift restrictions in Wales, described as the next phase of response to the virus “¹Unlocking society and our economy: continuing the conversation.” The publication of the route map signals a cautious shift towards lifting some of the restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

As in the initial response phase, the Council will act in step with the Welsh Government to establish the arrangements that will be needed to continue to bear down on the spread of the disease whilst also easing the restrictions that have been applied during the lockdown period.

As in the response phase, we will invest in our public information and communications functions, keeping our residents informed of the way in which services and functions are brought back into operation, whilst remaining vigilant to the potential for further increases in the infection rate. We will also work with partners to support them in bringing wider services for our community back into operation also seeking to alleviate the negative social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts across communities whilst harnessing some of the positive impacts we have seen over the period.

This strategy sets out a general framework that will support a consistent and co-ordinated approach as we move towards recovery across the Council.

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-continuing-the-conversation.pdf>

Moving Forward

Although infection rates and related deaths have peaked and are on a steady downward trajectory, there will be no return to normality in the immediate future. Until a vaccine and effective treatments are available, we will need to adjust our daily lives to live with the constant threat posed by the disease.

It will therefore be a considerable time – eighteen months or more – before we can consider that we are recovering from the crisis. The intervening period will therefore be a period of stabilisation – a period where we work in step with the leadership provided by the Welsh and UK governments to carefully lift the restrictions imposed on the daily life of our staff and residents, always vigilant to the potential for infection rates to increase.

As in the response phase, it is crucial that we take a corporate approach to the way we achieve stabilisation. There are three key areas of focus for us:

1. **Test, Trace, Protect** – the Council has a significant role in implementing the Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect Strategy.

Our Environmental Health Service will oversee the delivery of the local contact tracing service which forms the tier 1 services within the 3 tier Test, Trace, Protect NHS national service model. Environmental Health will also contribute their resource and expertise to the 2nd tier, regional element of the national service.

This is a significant undertaking for the Council. Test, Trace, Protect plays a vital role in protecting the public health, tracing those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus, encouraging people to responsibly quarantine themselves which in turn will help prevent the spread of the virus and break the chain of transmission. The information gathered from this work will also help public health professional better understand how the disease is affecting our local community and consequently informing further public health measures that can help keep our communities safe.

The Council's involvement in Test, Trace, Protect is also significant in terms of the scale of the activity and resource involved. Current

estimates put the financial cost of the service at over £3 million for the initial phase of operation.

Test, Trace, Protect will also play a key role in building confidence in our workforce, our service users and the wider community as restrictions are lifted. Those who are symptomatic can now easily access tests while they self-isolate. All residents and the workforces in closed settings, such as care homes, will access testing whether symptomatic or not - one of a series of measures to enhance protection for those who are especially vulnerable.

- 2. Resumption of Council services and functions** – Whilst some services have been temporarily suspended during the response phase, most council services and functions have continued to operate albeit with changes made to access and operational arrangements to respond to the numerous measures put in place by the UK and Welsh governments.

As we move into the stabilisation phase, all services and functions are undertaking review exercises to tease out the lessons learned during the response phase which in turn will inform the way in which those services and functions may operate as restrictions are carefully eased by governments.

For those services which were temporarily suspended in line with government requirements and guidance, plans are being prepared to bring those services back into operation, adapted to comply with social distancing and high standards of hygiene. However, the timing of when services will resume will be informed by government decisions on the lifting of lockdown restrictions and also our local risk assessment arrangements.

As indicated in the earlier sections of this paper, there have been many innovations during the response period which need to shape the way we plan services and functions into the future. We **should not be assuming a return to the old normality** – we will be forced to live with adaptations

to services and functions until the threat presented by the Coronavirus has been satisfactorily addressed – but there are also clear indicators too that the crisis has enabled new, more responsive approaches to be developed by the Council to the way we respond to community need; that community action has been stimulated in a significant way across all communities; and that other local agencies too have needed to adapt their offer over the recent months. We need to use the stabilisation period to reflect on this and realise some of the opportunities that have been created by the crisis alongside the work we will need to do to address the risks and threats.

It is essential that we approach the exercise of resuming council services and functions from a corporate perspective, taking the unique opportunity now presented to test how well proposed service models are likely to respond to the changed and changing needs of our communities, the financial and human resources likely to be available, applying the important learning we have done during the response phase which has seen some remarkable examples of innovation and ingenuity- for example:

- The completion of the Llandarcy Field Hospital in less than a month;
- The development of a corporate, single organisational view of the most vulnerable children, young people and families that education, social services and community safety all support. This may create an opportunity to also develop a single, integrated response to meeting the needs of this cohort of our population;
- The expansion of digital approaches combining datasets from disparate databases with the rapid development of new digital services using tools such as webchat and chatbots – these changes have reinforced the importance of all elements of the Council’s existing Smart and Connected Strategy with an opportunity to deliver our ambition at far greater pace than initially envisaged;
- The deployment of multi-disciplinary teams to respond at pace to rapidly changing situations – these examples

demonstrate what becomes possible when people are not constrained by service and directorate silos, pooling expertise, knowledge and resources to deliver good outcome for our citizens.

The Roadmap attached at Appendix 1 provides a framework against which we will plot the way services will resume during the stabilisation phase. For some services and functions, the Roadmap is already clear, for others there is more work and thinking to do. The Roadmap will therefore need to be continuously updated as we work through the months ahead, this may include revisiting early plans as we put plans into practice and learn from our own experience and from wider afield.

Our Roadmap will also enable us to demonstrate our local response to the Welsh Government's policy framework set out in "2Unlocking society and our economy: continuing the conversation".

3. Understanding and responding to the impact Covid-19 has had for citizens, businesses and other organisation across Neath Port Talbot –

As countries across the globe reflect on the impact of Coronavirus it is clear that the pandemic is likely to have both immediate and longer term, significant impact.

Countries around the world are reporting significant political, economic and social impacts. There are also emerging impacts for the environment. We need to make a clear assessment of these impacts for our local area too. The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board, chaired by the Leader of Council is well-placed to undertake a community impact assessment using the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014 framework to establish the impact of the pandemic on the economic,

² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-continuing-the-conversation.pdf>

social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Neath Port Talbot residents. The community impact assessment will inform our work to respond locally to our communities needs whilst also providing an evidence base to influence policy choices at the regional and national tiers of governments.

A multi-agency group, led by the Council, is collecting data to produce an initial impact assessment by mid June 2020. As well as gathering data from key indicators, for example Universal Credit claimant counts, crime and disorder etc, the exercise is seeking to gather views from a wide cross section of people to understand the lived experience of people from different backgrounds and places across our communities since the outbreak started.

An initial community impact report will be considered by the NPT Public Services Board towards the end of June. It is anticipated that the report will enable the key areas of focus to be identified and the Board will then need to organise work and resources to move the work forward into its next stage. There will be an important community leadership role for elected members here too, both in terms of ensuring the impacts drawn out for each community are relevant and accurate as well as ensuring the Board itself is held to account for the way in which agencies plan to respond to the findings of the exercise.

Political leadership throughout this phase is critical. Governments the world over are striving to secure the confidence of citizens as they work through unprecedented challenges to move from response, through stabilisation to recovery. Elected members must be supported to provide strong community leadership through the next period and beyond as we move towards recovery. The cross-party Member Panel established by Council will be an important mechanism to achieve this.

The work we undertake in each of the three areas summarised above will be tested against the vision, principles and objectives set out in the next section.

Moving Forward – Vision, Aims and Objectives

Vision

Residents, businesses and organisations are able to shape and agree upon the measures each needs to take to protect public health, control the spread of the disease and maximise the life chances of everyone who lives and works in the county borough.

Aim:

To ensure that the residents, council staff and all other employment sectors within Neath Port Talbot are supported to move safely from lockdown conditions in accordance with Welsh Government guidance whilst continuing to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on our communities and most vulnerable populations.

To identify and implement the most effective and efficient ways of delivering and facilitating services in order to support local economic recovery and public service functions, prioritised according to resource and need.

Objectives:

1. To encourage residents, staff and organisations to continue to comply with the public health guidance;
2. To establish a resilient and effective contact tracing capability to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's strategy ³"Test, Trace and Protect";
3. To support vulnerable residents who are required to shield themselves;
4. To bring the Council's services and functions safely back into operation;
5. To work with Public Services Board partners to identify the wider impacts of the pandemic on the communities of Neath Port Talbot and the collective action needed to address those impacts; and
6. To ensure the Council can mobilise a speedy and effective emergency response should infection rates increase.

³ <https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-html>

Principles:

- We will act in step with the policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government, wherever possible;
- We will adopt a corporate and consistent approach to recovery activities;
- We will base decisions on the most recent scientific advice and evidence available, supporting Welsh Government to keep the reproduction rate “R” below 1;
- We will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our staff and those who need to use our services and functions;
- Where possible, services and functions will be delivered on-line or be re-designed to limit face to face contact;
- We will continuously engage with and involve our workforce, residents, businesses and other organisations in our recovery process;
- We will assess the impact of our recovery work on people who share protected characteristics, on our ability to deliver our statutory responsibilities and also on the Council’s financial health; and
- We will ensure strong democratic oversight and public accountability of our recovery work.

Leadership and Governance in the Stabilisation Phase

Political Leadership and Governance

Political leadership will be provided by the Cabinet, supported by a cross-party Member Panel – Coronavirus Recovery Phase. Through the work of the Panel, mechanisms will be established to ensure all Members of Council have an opportunity to shape the Council’s plans to resume services and functions as we move through stabilisation towards recovery. Regular reports will be provided to enable Members to monitor the progress made.

Senior members will continue to actively participate in regional and national networks to ensure we are learning from elsewhere, helping to shape national and regional policy and continuing to advocate for the interests of our citizens.

Formal meetings of the Council will be expanded but most, if not all business, will take place over remote technology. Public access to meetings will be enhanced and scrutiny committees will begin to play a more significant role in helping to shaping the Roadmap and associated work as well as scrutinising the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board, the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, exercising powers delegated to it by Council to scrutinise the work of the Board.

Professional Leadership

Professional Leadership will be provided by the chief officer group, led by the Chief Executive through a Recovery Planning Group. The Recovery Planning Group will ensure there continues to be a corporate and coherent approach to the way we approach stabilisation through to recovery, using the lessons learned from the immediate response phase.

Each service manager will prepare plans for the recovery of the services and functions for which they are accountable, using this strategy as a framework. The Chief Executive will also designate lead officers to develop other responses as may be required, to fulfil the objectives set out in this strategy.

The development and operation of Test, Trace, Protect and the planning and delivery of health and social care services will operate on the Swansea Bay Health Board footprint, enabling Neath Port Talbot Council to integrate and co-ordinate its local arrangements with Swansea Council and the Swansea Bay Local Health Board. Governance arrangements are in place to support this joint work with clear lines of communication back to the Council's Recovery Planning Group and associated democratic arrangements.

Officers will also continue to participate in the South Wales Local Resilience Forum and wider networks to help shape government policy and to share the learning that is emerging as all agencies adapt to the impact of this pandemic.

Risks and Issues

There are a number of key risks and issues that we will need to manage as we seek to implement this Strategy. These include:

- Risk that the reproductive rate (R) for the disease will increase – ie will exceed 1 and consequently lockdown measures will be reintroduced and emergency responses re-mobilised;
- Availability of suitable Personal Protective Clothing (PPE) – whilst supply chains are improving, in the short term pressures for some stocks continue to be experienced;
- Impact of Test, Trace, Protect – with more extensive testing of the population, it is likely that the number of staff self-isolating will increase, placing strain on business continuity;
- Impact of social distancing measures – the 2m requirements have a significant initial and recurring impact on the model and cost of services and functions;
- Organisational capacity – the Welsh Government is requiring the Council to establish new services such as the NPT Safe and Well Service and the Test, Trace, Protect Service as foundations of its health protection strategy. Resourcing of these new services has been met by redeploying staff from other roles. As the Welsh Government eases restrictions and encourages more public services to come back into operation, staffing resources will come under increasing strain as we balance new responsibilities with existing responsibilities;
- Community Impacts – the economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts will shape the volume, range and pattern of demand for Council services and functions. Impacts may be experienced differentially, between groups with protected characteristics and across different geographies which in turn may require a differential response by the Council and its partners as we design a pathway to recovery;

- Community Cohesion – as restrictions are eased and time elapses there is a risk that people’s propensity to comply with ongoing restrictions will be mixed, creating tension between those who are complying and those who are not. There are also reports from elsewhere of anti-Chinese sentiment that we need to be alert to locally;
- Financial and Resourcing Risks – the Welsh Government has already agreed a supplementary budget for 2020-21 which in part re-prioritises some elements of the budget voted by the Senedd prior to the outbreak. There is a risk that other programmes, including capital programmes will be affected by decisions taken by the UK and Welsh Government to undertake a wider re-prioritisation of public funding and also the policy choices made to fund the financial costs of the pandemic;
- Governance – the scale of the emergency response saw the temporary suspension of legislation, regulations, guidance and a range of statutory reporting requirements. There is a risk that these will be reintroduced without review, placing burdens on the Council at a time when capacity needs to be focused on the work we need to do during stabilisation and in recovery. There is also a need for the Council to ensure its own checks and balances are fit for purpose with systems of governance enabling and supporting the changes that will need to be delivered and not impeding them.

Financial Considerations

At the time of writing, the medium to long-term financial implications for the council are largely unknown. In the short term, the council’s cash flow can be sustained as a consequence of advance payments of Revenue Support Grant and the support announced in the Welsh Government Supplementary Budget on 28 May.

However, the financial implications of COVID-19 will undoubtedly be very significant and decisions in the short-term must be informed by this context.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services and his team are preparing estimates of the one-off and recurring financial impacts of this outbreak and the detail of his work will be reported to Members as soon as available.

Strategy Review

Because of the dynamic nature of the situation, this strategy will need to be kept under continuous review to ensure its continued relevance.

DRAFT

Covid-19 – Moving Forward

Stabilisation – the period between response and recovery

Road Map

Version 2.3

July 2020

The Council has framed its action plan on the basis of a traffic light system, mirroring the approach the Welsh Government has set out in its document “Unlocking our Society and Economy: continuing the conversation”.

DRAFT

OBJECTIVE: To encourage residents, staff and organisations to continue to comply with the public health guidance

LEAD: Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
Promote and amplify public health messages across all of the Council's owned and commissioned channels			
Communicate services available to support vulnerable residents and encourage take up			
Communicate support and assistance available to people and organisations impacted by restrictions			
Communicate business opportunities to local companies and organisations			
Monitor channels to gain insight into how the lockdown is affecting people, business and other organisations			
Extend digital channels available to the workforce and elected members, including access to e-learning and wellbeing support			
Communicate how critical services are operating during the lockdown period			
	Communicate changes to service availability as restrictions are eased. Monitor the impact of changes to service availability on behaviours		
	Survey residents, staff and other stakeholders to assess the impact of ongoing restrictions and to gauge the level of confidence to engage with services as they are recovered		
		Use learning and insight to generate further innovation in the delivery of the communications function	

OBJECTIVE: To establish a resilient and effective contact tracing capability to support the delivery of the Welsh Government’s strategy ⁴“Test, Trace, Protect”;

LEAD: Director of Environment and Regeneration

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
	Recruit, train and equip 6 contact tracing teams and associated business support	Expand contact tracing capability in line with governance policy and available resource	Right size contact tracing capability to “new normal” requirements
	Establish regional tier of contact tracing capability to deal with more complex situations		Right size regional tier capability to “new normal” requirements
			Agree the actions the Council can take to sustain the public health protection strategy over the medium term

⁴ <https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect.html>

OBJECTIVE: To support vulnerable residents who are required to shield themselves;

LEAD: Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
Promote take up of the NPT Safe and Well Service to people who are shielding and to those who need to self-isolate where they have no other form of support	Work with food retailers across the county borough to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for people who are shielding or self-isolating to source their own food	Transition people supported by NPT Safe and Well with a food delivery service to local food retailer alternatives	
	Work with the Health Board to ensure there is sufficient capacity within the community pharmacy network to deliver medication to those who require assistance	Transition people supported by NPT Safe and Well to a community pharmacy delivery service	
	Review all of the cases open to NPT Safe and Well to establish needs other than food and medication	Develop options for meeting wider support needs.	Implement agreed model for meeting wider support needs

	collection where there is a need for ongoing support		
Promote volunteering opportunities with NPT Safe and Well to ensure there are enough people available to support those who are shielding or who need to self-isolate and who have no other form of support	Induct, train and support volunteers	Develop options for sustaining volunteer arrangements in line with changes to the model of support	Implement changes to volunteer model
Encourage and celebrate wider community action mobilised to support communities during the lockdown phase	Continue to encourage and celebrate wider community action	Explore how community action can be sustained over the longer term	

OBJECTIVE: To bring the Council’s services and functions safely back into operation;

LEADS : Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer, all Directors

a) Education and Care for Children

Lockdown –closed except for key workers and vulnerable children. Outreach services in place	Red – no change, but able to manage increase in demand from children already eligible to attend schools and daycare	Amber – priority groups of pupils return to school in a phased approach. Increased numbers of children in daycare	Green – all children and students able to access education. All children able to access daycare.
Schools are closed except to accommodate vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers. Measures are in place to support remote learning and to provide outreach services to vulnerable children and special needs pupils	Increase in number of hubs for children of critical workers	Schools re-open for a three week period to enable learners to check in, catch up and prepare for September term Blended learning continues Child care for critical workers stopped. Vulnerable learners continue to attend school and receive support over the summer holiday period	All schools re-open on 1 st September with all children attending school regularly from 14 th September. Blended learning approaches developed to provide solid contingency arrangements in the event that there is further disruption to schools from the spread of the infection

Early years settings closed	Childcare providers to start re-operating and increasing numbers in accordance with WG guidance issued on 29 th June.	Family Information Service will continue to signpost families to operating childcare providers over the summer break.	
Youth services closed for face to face services, remote outreach services operating	Youth service continues to provide remote support and engagement with targeted groups.	Youth service will contribute to summer care arrangements for vulnerable learners and summer enhancement programme for year 5 and 6 pupils from schools with over 17% efsm profile.	
Adult learning services closed	Adult learning provision will be delivered remotely to focus mainly on qualification based courses.		
Safeguarding services and children's social services operating with social distancing and remote contact in place	Safeguarding services will continue to operate and communication issued to all relevant providers.		
'Grab Bags' then cash payments to parents of children entitled to free school meals	Families are receiving a weekly payment of £19.50 per child this covers an allowance for breakfast,	We are currently serving food in half of our school settings but are chargeable to all paying and FSM pupils	

	<p>lunch and milk. The payments commenced from April 6th and they will receive the payment through the summer holidays to the 31st August. During the duration of the hub schools all children and staff were entitled to free school lunches with many of them taking up this offer. A small number of food parcels have been distributed to those families who are entitled to FSM's from the Food Hub (who do not have a bank account to receive the above payment)</p>	<p>as they are receiving the payments. The other half of schools are asking all pupils to provide their own packed lunches due to their school plans.</p>	
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b) Getting Around

Lockdown – Leave the house for essential travel only	Red – local travel including for click and collect retail. Promote active travel and adapt public transport for physical distancing. Allow outdoor leisure and recreation	Amber – travel for leisure, access non-essential retail and services and more people travelling to work	Green – unrestricted travel subject to ongoing precautions
All council-owned parks closed	All council-owned parks open except for children’s play areas, toilets, cafes and other buildings. Social distancing signage in place	MTB, Mario’s cafe and Orangery re-open at Margam Park with social distancing and hygiene measures in place	All facilities re-open in parks with social distancing and hygiene measures in place
Some rights of way closed			All Public Rights of Way that were temporarily closed due to Covid-19 have now reopened (effective as of 9 th July).
Some transport re-purposed to support the delivery of NPT Safe and Well food delivery service	Social Services suspended complex needs freeing community transport service vehicles to be	As complex needs services start to return a new model for food distribution is being developed where volunteers	Transition people supported by NPT Safe and Well with a food delivery service to local food retailer alternatives.

	utilised for the delivery of food packages to those shielding in the community.	and social housings associations will be able to collect packages from the food hub for vulnerable/shielded residents.	
Adapt public transport for physical distancing.	Bus Services severely reduced with many routes suspended.	Commercial Bus Operators have segregated off seats on vehicles to maintain social distancing. The Council has had signage installed at main bus stations and all electronic signage displays social distancing guidelines. Temporary drop off points have been introduced to avoid conflict when passengers are alighting.	Commercial operators have been reintroducing routes with a view to services increasing through the summer.
Social distancing signage erected on the beach promenade supported by use of drone messaging	Signage updated re Lifeguard Service available.		
Parking fees temporarily suspended and parking enforcement temporarily suspended		Parking fees and enforcement reintroduced for car parks (except town	Parking fees and enforcement fully restored from 1 st September 2020

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	centres) from 1 st August 2020	On-Street enforcement resumed at the beginning of July 2020. Margam Park will be charging for parking from 1 st August 2020 (bringing it line with the Aberavon Seafront and Gnoll Park)
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c) Exercise, playing sport and games

Lockdown – exercise once a day outside on own or with household	Red – exercise more than once a day and incidental activity locally. Outdoor sports courts to open. Elite athletes resume some activity	Amber – team and individual sports, non-contact sports and games in small groups indoors and outdoors. Some outdoor events with limited capacity and events behind closed doors.	Green – all sports, leisure and cultural activity open, with physical distancing. All events resume with limited capacity.
All council leisure services closed	Remain closed until further guidance provided.		
All council organised events cancelled	All events cancelled in Margam Park. Private hire - Drive in Cinema arranged at end of August.		
The council community centre closed	Remain closed.		

d) Relaxing and Special Occasions

Lockdown – stay at home and only leave the house for essential purposes	Red – some opening of outdoor cultural and other sites. Relaxation and leisure outdoors where local	Amber – more cultural and leisure sites to re-open (eg museums and galleries). Weddings and other events with limited capacity and physical distancing	Green – all special occasions and cultural and leisure activities permitted with precautions in place
Theatres and other cultural services closed	Remain closed		
Libraries closed except for on-line library service	Pontardawe, Port Talbot and Neath libraries re-open with click and collect service. Home delivery service resumes	Extend click and collect service to all branch libraries operated by the council. Re-open Port Talbot, Pontardawe and Neath Libraries for face to face customers with social distancing and hygiene measures in place Reactivate the mobile library service with social distancing and hygiene measures in place Re-open ELRS	Re-open all branch libraries with social distancing and hygiene measures in place Community run libraries will be opening on a call and collect basis following advice and guidance from the local authority's library service and subject local decision. <u>- Monday 27th July</u>

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Cwmafan Library reopens for Call and Collect service
Glynneath Library reopens for Call and Collect service
Monday 3rd August
Mobile Library service resumes – Call and Collect only
Wednesday 12th August
Neath Library will offer limited access and Public Internet access
Pontardawe Library will offer limited access and Public internet
Port Talbot library will offer limited access and Public internet
Monday 17th August
Baglan Library reopens for Call and Collect service
Sandfields Library reopens for Call and Collect service
Skewen Library reopens for Call and Collect service

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e) Working or running a business

<p>Lockdown – work from home if possible. List of businesses required to close. 2m requirement in workplaces where not possible to work from home</p>	<p>Red – more outdoor work and click and collect retail. Businesses not required to close (eg construction) re-opening and safe working practices</p>	<p>Amber – non-essential retail to re-open with physical distancing. Trial some personal services under appointment (eg hairdressers) Accommodation businesses open without shared facilities</p>	<p>Green – restaurants, pubs and customer contact industries under physical distancing. All businesses and workplaces open under new protocols</p>
<p>Enforcement policy in place – engage, educate, encourage, enforce to support compliance by businesses and other organisations with Government policy</p>			
<p>All council workers working remotely from home where this is possible. Redeployment mechanism for staff unable to carry out their normal duties established</p>	<p>In accordance with WG regs, staff advised to work from home where possible. Essential non-office based services continue where possible subject to risk assessments</p>	<p>Staff continue to be advised to work from home, in accordance with guidance. Risk assessments undertaken in buildings and mitigating measures to achieve social distancing are put in place</p>	<p>Programme for phased return to offices being developed for customer facing services from 1st September alongside the revised home working policy</p>
<p>Financial assistance administered in accordance with national and local policy decisions</p>	<p>NDR Grants Schemes closed on 30th June 2020. Final residual payments being processed during July 2020.</p>		

	<p>Business Start Up Grant Scheme launched beginning of July 2020. Neath Port Talbot limited to 83 applicants. Applications being assessed by Economic Development Unit.</p>		
<p>Refocused employment support services focused on meeting business needs during the Covid-19 outbreak</p>			
		<p>Licensed Premises to be allowed to open outdoors in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance as of 13th July 2020 with social distance being maintained.</p>	

f) Going Shopping

<p>Lockdown – essential retail only face to face</p>	<p>Red – include click and collect for non-essential retail. Begin making adaptations to public realm (eg town centres)</p>	<p>Amber – can access most non-essential retail where adaptations are possible to maintain physical distancing. Town centres and high streets adapted to facilitate shopping and accessing services under physical distancing</p>	<p>Green – able to access all retail and leisure facilities whilst taking reasonable precautions</p>
<p>Enforcement policy in place – engage, educate, encourage, enforce to support compliance by businesses and other organisations with Government policy</p>			
<p>Enforcement policy in place – engage, educate, encourage, enforce to support compliance by businesses and other organisations with Government policy</p>	<p>Monitoring undertaken to assess the impact on town centres</p>	<p>‘Light touch’ adaptations in place in main town centres to enable queueing and ease pedestrian movement. Monitoring and consultation arrangements in place to enable modifications as required</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of adaptations and modification as required</p>
<p>Financial assistance administered in accordance with national and local policy decisions</p>	<p>NDR Grants Schemes closed on 30th June 2020. Final residual payments being processed during July 2020.</p>		

	<p>Business Start Up Grant Scheme launched beginning of July 2020. Neath Port Talbot limited to 83 applicants. Applications being assessed by Economic Development Unit.</p>		
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g) Using public services

Lockdown – access to emergency or essential services only	Red – increase the availability of public services gradually (eg waste and recycling, libraries). Increase scope of essential health and social care services	Amber – continue to increase the availability of public services. Increase access to non-essential health and social care services (eg elective surgery, dentistry)	Green – access to all normal public, health and social care services under physical distancing where possible or precautions in other settings
ENVIRONMENT			
Refuse and recycling operational with modifications to comply with social distancing and good hygiene practices. Side waste policy temporarily relaxed	Collection of unauthorised “side waste” will stop on Monday 3 rd August.		
Bulky waste services suspended	Bulky waste service re-opened with advance, on-line booking to manage demand. Hygiene rules, limits on collections and PPE in place.		
Civic Amenity sites suspended	Sites re-opened with advance, on-line booking to		

	<p>manage demand and social distancing. Reconfiguration of operations at sites to ensure social distancing. Vans, pick-ups and trailers can access the recycling centres at Briton Ferry and Cymmer on Monday 13th July using the on-line booking system.</p>		
Public toilets closed	Toilets closed in accordance with Welsh Government guidance	High use toilets to be re-opened in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, with reduced opening hours, enhanced cleaning regime and restrictions on numbers	Monitoring of usage and potential to open remaining toilets subject to available resources
Urgent engineering works only with social distancing, PPE and other modifications	Many contractors closed sites when the lockdown was implemented.	Only urgent engineering works being undertaken with social distancing and appropriate PPE. This is affecting the number of workers on sites with a knock on effect to contract completions and associated financial impacts.	The industry is beginning to resume construction activities however the supply chains in some sectors are affected.

Construction and regeneration projects suspended except for construction of Llandarcy Field Hospital	Some larger projects on site with restricted staff numbers and social distancing in place. Essential maintenance taking place	Most projects back on site with restrictions still in force.	All sites to reopen with social distancing and non-essential maintenance work being undertaken
SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING			
Day services and respite for adult social care users closed	Assess and review on an individual basis of need targeting families in crisis to arrange the most appropriate means of intervention/outreach, such as 1-2-1 case work with appropriate PPE; questionnaires sent to further establish need	Re-open day services on a phased basis, service users attending on a rota basis, based on assessed needs	Day services and respite services re-opened and full assessed service provided
Other Social services for adults operating with significant modifications – PPE, social distancing, remote contact. Suspension of normal eligibility rules.	Increase in assessments and reviews undertaken face-to-face by front-line social work teams, based on need and individual circumstances. Suspension of eligibility rules relaxed in	Re-establishment of domiciliary care ‘green’ packages of assessed need. Further relaxation of the suspension of eligibility	All assessments and reviews undertaken face-to-face. Full re-introduction of the normal eligibility rules.

	<p>accordance with WG guidelines https://gov.wales/adult-social-services-during-covid-19-pandemic.html</p>	<p>rules in accordance with WG guidelines</p>	
<p>Housing Options operating with social distancing and remote contact arrangements in place, supported by PPE and other measures. Expansion of accommodation for people street homeless.</p>	<p>Additional homeless accommodation to be identified and resourced as Phase 2 of the WG Homelessness Strategy.</p>	<p>Implement Phase 2 into Phase 3 of the WG Homelessness Strategy, establishing new accommodation.</p>	<p>Re-introduction of 'Face-to-face' interviews by operational Housing Options staff, where appropriate or required.</p>
<p>ASST CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICES</p>			
<p>IDVA and Substance Misuse outreach services operating with significant modifications – PPE, social distancing, remote contact. Other community safety services refocused to support NPT Safe and Well</p>	<p>On-line support for anti social behaviour incidents</p> <p>Crime prevention measures embedded into communications and marketing approaches</p>	<p>Business crime reduction partnership activities resumed as town centres are re-opened</p> <p>Partial return to police station to enable access to</p>	<p>Refocused priorities to reflect new risk threat and harm picture with modifications in place, greater use of remote technologies to support work with some face to face contact where required</p>

and Covid enforcement activities (4Es)	<p>Awareness raising and training in relation to VAWDASV continuing on-line</p> <p>Channel panel activities continue on-line linked to safeguarding outreach services where appropriate</p>	key databases to resume fuller services	
Customer Services – face to face services closed. Contact centre and on-line channels expanded to support new profile of demand.	Further expand telephone and on- services to support the emergency response	Remodelling of one stop shop services at civic centres to ensure social distancing and support further channel shift	New face to face service operational alongside much expanded digital and telephone channels
Finance and Corporate Services			
		Registration Office now open (as of 26 th June 2020) for birth registration, death registration, marriage/civil partnerships with limited numbers in attendance to maintain social distance. Registration of deaths under revised protocols.	

		Licensing Regulatory Inspections and Applications now being processed and facilitated remotely.	
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h) Practicing Faith

Lockdown – closure of places of worship, with exceptions for funerals and cremations	Red – opening of places of worship for private prayer under physical distancing	Amber – limit services and sizes of congregations linked to ability to maintain physical distancing	Green – all places open with full range of services, alongside physical distancing
Registrar Offices closed – weddings and registration of births suspended. Registration of deaths under revised protocols.		Registration Office now open (as of 26 th June 2020) for birth registration, death registration, marriage/civil partnerships with limited numbers in attendance to maintain social distance. Registration of deaths under revised protocols.	
Limitations on attendance at funerals and enhanced cleaning regimes		Limitations on attendance at funerals and enhanced cleaning regimes	
Temporary closure of graveyards and crematoria	Graveyards and crematoria open with social distancing measures in place		

OBJECTIVE: To work with Public Service Board partners to identify the wider impacts of the pandemic on the communities of Neath Port Talbot and the collective action needed to address those impacts; and

LEAD: Chief Executive

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
Work within the South Wales Local Resilience Forum			Exit from South Wales Resilience Forum
	Convene PSB to agree process to work towards recovery and commission initial community impact assessment	Further develop community impact assessment	Establish ongoing arrangements for community involvement, data, research and evaluation
		Agree initial areas for action	Establish full recovery plan within Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act Framework

OBJECTIVE: To ensure the Council can mobilise a speedy and effective emergency response should infection rates increase.

LEAD: Chief Executive

Lockdown	Red	Amber	Green
Identify organisational capability and capacity needed to respond to level of threat and risk identified in modelling	Workforce audit process to monitor capability and capacity with overview by Workforce Planning Group. Adjust organisational response and contingency plans as threat and risk changes – plan for local outbreak situations as well as wider lockdown scenarios.		
Mobilise resources needed to implement emergency measures needed	Workforce data capture (including skills audit) to support workforce planning processes and to enable rapid deployment of resourcing to reflect changes to the threat and risk identified by modelling. Agreed framework in place to facilitate this.		
Ensure democratic oversight of emergency response			
Ensure effective governance to assess and record financial and organisational impact of emergency measures			
Communicate and escalate issues where appropriate			

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES – MR HYWEL JENKINS

30 JULY 2020

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2019/20

Purpose of Report

1. This Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2019/20 (this report).
2. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code). Some information incorporated within this report has been provided by the Council's Treasury Advisors Link Asset Services.
3. Recent changes in the regulatory environment place a much greater onus on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

4. This report also confirms that Council has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to the annual strategy report, which was submitted to Cabinet in February 2019 before being reported and approved by full Council.

Executive Summary

5. During 2019/20, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, are as follows:

Prudential and Treasury Indicators	2018/19 Actual £000	2019/20 Mid-Year Estimate £000	2019/20 Actual £000
Capital Expenditure	43,395	43,976	39,131
Capital Financing Requirement	338,618	343,940	342,874
External debt(gross)	281,770	285,804	307,872
Less Investments	(55,100)	(61,000)	(56,500)
Net Borrowing	226,670	224,804	251,372

6. The full list of prudential and treasury indicators are to be found in Appendix 1. During the financial year the Council operated within its treasury limits and Prudential Indicators.
7. The financial year 2019/20 was once again a challenging environment as in previous years with low investment returns and continuing counterparty risk.

Introduction and Background

8. This report summarises:
- Capital activity during the year;
 - Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
 - Reporting of the required prudential and treasury indicators;

- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity

The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2019/20

9. The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.
- Actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

	2018/19 Actual £'000	2019/20 Mid- Year Estimate £'000	2019/20 Actual £'000
Total capital expenditure	43,395	43,976	39,131
Resourced by:			
• Capital receipts *	0	1,653	0
• Capital grants & contributions	20,196	25,285	24,684
• Capital Reserves and DRF	606	1,690	182
Unfinanced capital expenditure (to be funded from Borrowing)	22,593	15,348	14,265

* Capital receipts are currently being retained to fund potential future City Deal revenue expenditure.

The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

10. The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's debt position. The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and what resources have been used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2019/20 unfinanced capital expenditure (see Table 2) and prior years' net of unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.
11. Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB] or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.
12. Reducing the CFR – Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the borrowing need. This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External debt can also be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.
13. The total CFR can also be reduced by:
 - The application of additional capital financing resources (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
 - Charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).
14. The Council's CFR for the year is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator.

CFR	2018/19 Actual £'000	2019/20 Mid-Year Estimate £'000	2019/20 Actual £'000
Opening balance	325,241	338,618	338,618
Add unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	22,593	15,348	14,265
Less MRP	(9,216)	(9,951)	(10,009)
Closing balance	338,618	344,015	342,874

15. The borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for net borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.
16. Net borrowing and the CFR – in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term the Council’s external borrowing, net of investments, must only be used for a capital purpose. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. Net borrowing should not therefore, except in the short term, have exceeded the CFR for 2019/20 plus the expected changes to the CFR over 2020/21 and 2021/22. The table below highlights the Council’s net borrowing position against the CFR which shows that at 31 March 2020 we have self-funded the net position of £91.502m. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

	2018/19 Actual £'000	2019/20 Mid-Year Estimate £'000	2019/20 Actual £'000
Net borrowing position	226,670	224,804	251,372
CFR	338,618	344,015	342,874
Self-funded	111,948	119,211	91,502

17. The authorised limit – the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council does not have the power to borrow above this level.
18. The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year.

19. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

	Actual 2019/20 £000
Operational boundary	372,873
Authorised limit	392,873
Total Maximum Borrowing compared to Operational Boundary at any point during the year	307,872

The Council has maintained gross borrowing below the Authorised limit.

Treasury Position as at 31st March 2020

20. The Council's debt and investment position is managed by Finance Treasury Staff in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through Member reporting detailed in the executive summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices. At the beginning and the end of 2019/20 the Council's treasury position was as follows:

	31 March 2019 Principal	Rate / Return	31 March 2020 Principal	Rate / Return
Fixed rate funding:	£m	%	£m	%
-PWLB	217.771	3.96%	241.804	3.40%
-Market (LOBO)	62.500	3.93%	62.500	3.93%
Other:				
WG Crown Loan	1.500	0.00%	1.500	0.00%
Salix	N/A	N/A	0.500	0.00%
Temp Loans	1.552	0.78%	1.568	0.71%
Total debt	283.323		307.872	

Investments:				
- in house	55.100	0.80%	56.500	0.74%
Total investments	55.100		56.500	

PWLB = Public Works Loans Board which is a body the Government has established to lend money to Local Government.

Market LOBO's = Lender Option Borrower Option – this is borrowing from the market when the lender has offered a long term loan but with options to continue or foreclose on the loan at various specific intervals.

Other:

WG Crown Loan = interest free loan from Welsh Government used to fund the purchase of the former Crown Building in Briton Ferry

Salix = interest free loan from Welsh Government via Salix Finance Ltd to be used towards funding new Street Lighting

Temp Loans = these include several loans the council have for the Education Trust Funds, Welsh Church Act Funds, Mayor's Charity Funds that we hold.

The Strategy for 2019/20

21. The strategy for 2019/20 was approved by Council in February 2019 and included the following:

New Borrowing:

22. The cheapest borrowing will be internal borrowing by running down cash balances and foregoing interest earned at historically low rates. However this strategy can only be used as a short term measure therefore consideration will be given to entering into external borrowing.
23. The following types of loan arrangement will be considered (in no particular order):
- Temporary borrowing from the money markets or other local authorities.
 - Short dated borrowing from the market or PWLB.

- Long term fixed rate market or PWLB loans

Investments

24. The Council continued with its main investment priorities:

- (a) security of capital
- (b) liquidity of capital

with the aim of achieving the optimum return commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. With investments being dominated by low counterparty risk considerations, relatively low returns were expected when compared to borrowing rates.

25. For balances generated through normal cashflow the strategy looked to utilise the business reserve (call account) and short dated deposits.

Debt Rescheduling

26. The strategy allowed for the use of investment balances to repay debt prematurely providing it was economically worthwhile and it enhanced the maturity profile of the debt portfolio.

27. No debt rescheduling was anticipated (or took place) in 2019/20 particularly as the PWLB rate structures have made it more expensive in recent years to do so.

Borrowing Outturn for 2019/20

28. The following long term loans were entered into during 2019/20 due to the fact that PWLB loan interest rates were low. These loans are used to finance capital expenditure on projects such as the 21st Century Schools Programme, Street Lighting Replacement Programme and Regeneration.

Lender	Date	Amount £'000	Rate %	Period	Details
PWLB	02/09/19	10,000	1.70	49.5yrs	Maturity
PWLB	30/03/20	20,000	1.89	2.5yrs	Maturity

29. Treasury Borrowing – There were no short-term temporary loans taken out during 2019/20

Investment Outturn for 2019/20

30. Investment Policy – the Council’s investment policy is governed by Welsh Government guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by Council in February 2019. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies supplemented by additional market data (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc).
31. During the last two weeks of 2019/20, as part of our planning for dealing with COVID19 pandemic, we decided to increase the amount of money invested in our Santander call account. This was done to ensure the Authority had enough liquid cash to deal with any unknown issues that would arise from the pandemic. The strategy says we can invest up to £15m with our own bankers, but this can be temporarily exceeded where necessary. The most we had invested with them during this two week period was £32.9m. This strategy will also continue into 2020/21 for the same reason.
32. All other investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy.
33. Resources – the Council’s longer term cash balances comprise, primarily, revenue and capital resources, although these will be influenced by cash flow considerations. The Council’s core cash resources comprised the following:

Balance Sheet Resources	31 March 2019 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Balances and Earmarked Reserves	61,394	59,093
Provisions	5,093	4,836
Usable capital receipts	6,971	8,076
Total	73,458	72,005

34. Investments held by the Council – The Council received the following return on its investments:

Average Investment	External Interest Earned	Rate of Return	Benchmark Return
£'000	£'000	%	%
66,168	469	0.74	0.63

35. The benchmark for funds managed in house is the 3 month LIBID uncompounded. The rate reflects a more realistic neutral position for core investments with a medium term horizon and a rate which is more stable with fewer fluctuations caused by market liquidity.

Treasury Management Reserve

36. The below table shows the Treasury Management Equalisation reserve as at 31 March 2020, broken down between the different elements:

	£000s
General - Closing Balance	3,041
Earmarked:	
City Deal	4,098
Neath Town Centre	500
Total Earmarked	4,598
TOTAL Treasury Management Reserve	7,639

Performance Measurement

37. One of the key requirements in the Code is the formal introduction of performance measurement relating to investments, debt and capital financing activities. Whilst investment performance criteria have been well developed and universally accepted, debt performance indicators continue to be a more problematic area with the traditional average portfolio rate of interest acting as the main guide (see table in paragraph 20). The Council's original performance indicators for 2019/20 were set out in the Annual Treasury Strategy approved by Council in February 2019.

Financial Impact

38. All financial impacts are detailed within the body of the report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

39. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts

40. No implications

Workforce impacts

41. There are no workforce impacts resulting from this report.

Legal impacts

42. The report deals with the Council's legal requirements as set out in Local Government Act 2003.

Risk management

43. Compliance with the strategies outlined in this report should be sufficient in terms of managing risks in this area.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

45. It is recommended that Members note the 2019/20 treasury management function performance as set out in this report including the actual 2019/20 prudential and treasury indicators.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Prudential Indicators

List of Background Papers

Statement of Accounts 2019/20

Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact: -

Mr. Hywel Jenkins, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
E-mail: h.jenkins@npt.gov.uk

Mr. Huw Jones, Head of Finance
E-mail: h.jones@npt.gov.uk

Mr Ross Livingstone, Group Accountant - Capital and Corporate
E-mail: r.livingstone@npt.gov.uk

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Mid-Year Estimate	2019/20 Actual
Capital Expenditure	£'000 43,395	£'000 43,976	£'000 39,131
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 st March	338,618	344,015	342,874
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	% 6.90	% 7.27	% 7.04
Authorised Limit for External Debt: Borrowing and other long term liabilities	373,725	393,940	392,873
Operational Boundary for External Debt: Borrowing and other long term liabilities	353,725	373,940	372,873
External Debt (Gross)	281,770	285,804	307,872
Less Investments	(55,100)	(61,000)	(56,500)
Net Borrowing Position	226,670	224,804	251,372

Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing During 2019/20	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Original Estimate		2019/20 Actual
		Upper Limit	Lower Limit	
	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	2	15	0	3
12 months to 2 years	4	15	0	0
2 to 5 years	6	40	0	12
5 to 10 years	0	60	0	1
10 years and above	88	100	15	84

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE – HUW JONES

30 JULY 2020

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected - All

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2020/21

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out treasury management action and information for the first quarter of 2020/21.
2. This report will also be forwarded to the next Audit Committee in line with the Council's Treasury Management Practices Scrutiny arrangements.

Rates of Interest

3. The global outbreak of coronavirus has forced the UK Government to take drastic steps to stem the economic impact and this resulted in the Bank of England reducing the bank base rate.
4. During a special meeting of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee on 10th March 2020, the Bank of England cut the rate from 0.75% to 0.25%, effective from 11th March, with a further reduction to 0.10% following shortly after on 19th March. The bank warned that the pandemic will result in a "sharp and large" economic shock.

The following table details the changes in bank rate:

Effective Date	Bank Rate
8th January 2009	1.50%
5th February 2009	1.00%
5th March 2009	0.50%
4th August 2016	0.25%
2nd November 2017	0.50%
2 nd August 2018	0.75%
11 th March 2020	0.25%
19 th March 2020	0.10%

5. The following table provides examples of external borrowing costs as provided by the Public Works Loans Board as at 7th July 2020:

	Equal Instalments of Principal		Annuity		Maturity	
	Previous 14Jan20	Current 07Jul20	Previous 14Jan20	Current 07Jul20	Previous 14Jan20	Current 07Jul20
	%	%	%	%	%	%
5-5.5 years	2.28	1.94	2.28	1.94	2.32	1.98
10-10.5 years	2.32	1.98	2.32	1.98	2.58	2.24
20-20.5 years	2.58	2.24	2.60	2.24	3.05	2.66
35-35.5 years	2.99	2.60	3.02	2.62	3.00	2.61
49.5-50 years	3.09	2.69	2.98	2.69	2.93	2.49

General Fund Treasury Management Budget

6. The following table sets out details of the treasury management budget for 2020/21 along with outturn figures for 2019/20. The budget consists of a gross budget for debt charges i.e. repayment of debt principal and interest, and interest returns on investment income

2019/20 Outturn		2020/21 Original Budget
£'000		£'000
19,925	Principal and Interest charges	19,720
	Investment Income	
(497)	- Total	(400)
147	- less allocated to other funds	130
(350)	Subtotal Income	(270)
(301)	Contribution from General Reserves	(170)
	Contribution to General Reserves	
	Contribution to/(from) treasury management reserve	
19,274	Net General Fund	19,280

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

Borrowing

7. The following new loan has been entered into since the last quarterly monitoring report:

Date	Amount of Loan £'000	Type	Interest Rate %	Term of Loan (Yrs)
30/03/20	20,000	Maturity Loan	1.89	2.5

8. This loan was taken out to mitigate against any potential shortfall in cash, particularly in relation to paying out Small Business Grants on behalf of the Welsh Government and also concerns over the wider impact on cashflow from the Coronavirus outbreak.

Investments

9. The following are a list of investments that we have as at 30th June 2020:

<u>Counterparty</u>	<u>Value (£)</u>	<u>Investment type</u>	<u>Investment start</u>	<u>Investment maturity</u>	<u>Interest rate</u>
Surrey County Council	£10,000,000	Fixed	15/06/20	15/09/20	0.30%
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	£7,000,000	Fixed	10/06/20	10/09/20	0.20%
Santander	£80,100,000	Call Account	N/A	N/A	0.10%

10. Please note – the Council’s investment criteria (TMP2 - appendix 1) allows for a maximum investment for an F1 rated counterparty to be £15m. Santander are currently an F1 rated counterparty – however, the policy also allows for this to be temporarily exceeded in exceptional circumstances. Member should note that during the COVID pandemic, this balance has been exceeded.

Investment Income

11. In line with the Council’s Investment Strategy, the 2020/21 original budget target for investment income is £400k, income for the financial year to date totals £67k. Due to the very low interest rates at present with base rate at 0.1%, it is unlikely that the investment income target will be met. Any unachieved income will be met from the treasury management equalisation reserve at year end, subject to the Council’s overall financial position.
12. Members should note that the majority of investments are classified as ‘specified’ i.e. up to 12 months and are currently deposited with Local Authorities and Santander Bank.
13. 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. The Council has no such investments.

Financial Impact

14. All relevant financial information is provided in the body of the report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

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

Valleys Communities Impacts

16. No implications

Workforce Impacts

17. There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

Legal Impacts

18. There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

19. There are no new risk management issues arising from this report. Borrowing and investment decisions are made in line with the Council's Treasury Management Policy. The Council has appointed Link Asset Services to provide support and advice in relation to this policy.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

21. It is recommended that members note the contents of this monitoring report.

Appendices

22. None

List of Background Papers

23. PWLB Notice Number 259/20

Officer Contact

Mr Huw Jones – Head of Finance
E-mail - h.jones@npt.gov.uk

Mr Ross Livingstone – Group Accountant – Capital and Corporate
E-mail – r.livingstone@npt.gov.uk

Specified Investments

	Minimum 'High' Credit Criteria	Funds Managed	Max Amount	Max Duration
Term deposits				
Term deposits - Debt Management Office	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	1 year
Term deposits – local, police and fire authorities	N/A	In-house	£10m	1 year
Term deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£20m	1 year
Term deposits – UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1	In-house	£15m	6 months or 185 days
Callable deposits				
Callable deposits – Debt Management Agency deposit facility	N/A	In-house	Unlimited	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+, F1	In-house	£20m	
Callable deposits – Nationalised & Part Nationalised UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F2	In-house	£10m	
Callable deposits - UK banks/Building Societies	Fitch short-term rating F1+ or F1	In-house	£15m *	
Term deposits – non UK banks	Fitch short-term rating F1+	In-house	£5m	6 months or 185 days

* Where necessary this limit may be temporarily exceeded with the Authority's bankers only.

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 July 2020

Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport D. W. Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Policy for Section 38 Agreements (Highway Adoptions) Under the Highways Act 1980.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Members' approval for a Policy for section 38 highway adoption agreements for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the "Council").

2.0 Background

Statutory Responsibilities

2.1 The 'Council' as a Highway Authority has an important role to discharge in exercising its powers to adopt highways under the Highways Act 1980. Any highway proposed for adoption must be directly linked with the existing public highway network, and be of sufficient utility to the public and offer wider community benefits.

2.2 The Highway Authority has powers under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 to adopt new highways which would then become maintained at public expense. Once a development that includes an associated highway has been granted planning permission, the developer can if they chose to do so formally apply for adoption of highways under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. Any highway proposed for adoption by the Council will require that the freehold owner(s) of the land dedicate the road as a public highway when it is constructed under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980.

- 2.3 The intention of this policy is to allow the Highway Authority to undertake duties in relation to highway adoption, safe guarding the public, and improve upon service delivery.
- 2.4 An “adopted highway” is a highway which is maintained by the Council at public expense where the responsibility of maintaining a highway which may include: carriageways; footways; footpath links; street lighting; highway retaining structures; verges; and highway drainage such as gullies and gully leaders. Once adopted, all public liability will be with the Council as the Highway Authority.
- 2.5 The Highway Authority is able to adopt roads and footpaths that are essential to a development and allow the safe access or passage for all users of the highway, this includes vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. This is subject to the highway layouts and construction being undertaken in accordance with the Highway Authority current Design Guide for New Developments and the current Specifications for the Construction of Roads for Adoption.
- 2.6 Any or all new highways proposed for adoption have to be formally agreed and dedicated by the landowner(s) and/or developer whereby the highway adoption specifications and criteria meets the satisfaction of the Council as the Highway Authority before being considered for adoption, and maintained by the Council.
- 2.7 The Highway Authority do not have a mandatory duty to adopt a new highway. The adoption criteria and obligations requires any highway (Street or Road) to be of sufficient utility to the public, a constructed to adoptable standard (as approved by the Highway Authority) before becoming maintainable at public expense. At its discretion, the Highway Authority, can, if agreed between all parties, adopt a highway which may not be of sufficient utility to the public but which does still however meet the Highway Authority specification and design.
- 2.8 The most common method of adopting a new highway is for the developers and/or land owner(s) together with the Highway Authority, to enter into a section 38 agreement under the Highways Act 1980. Only the landowner(s) can dedicate the land as highway pursuant to a section 38 agreement. If the land is subject to a charge, lease or other interest then the chargee/lessee or other interested party needs to give their consent to the dedication of the

land. Once the agreement is entered into by all parties then the related highway works are carried out in accordance with the Highways Authority's (Current) highway specifications before the construction is subsequently inspected and approved by Council Highway Section officers. The newly constructed highways shall, on the issuing of a final completion certificate by the Council (following a 12 month maintenance period) become adopted by the Council, and maintained at the public expense. All highway verges to be adopted by the Council must be approved and inspected by the Highway Authority prior to adoption and be compliant with the BS4428: Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces) [as amended] and BS3882: Specification for topsoil [as amended].

Recent Developments

- 2.9 The Council have recently been involved in a court case regarding highway adoption principles by a housing developer within the County Borough. The Council argued that the highway was not of "sufficient utility to the public" to justify them [the roads] becoming maintainable at public expense.
- 2.10 The final Court hearing concluded in December 2019. This particular case is thought to be one of the first of its kind in Wales and many other Local Authorities eagerly awaited the outcome. The Court found in favour of the Council and costs of circa £45K were awarded to NPT which relate to the legal and technical officers time in defending the position.
- 2.11 Prior to the above Court case taking place, Officers of the Council attended a similar court case whereby the Council for the London Borough of Barnet commenced proceedings against a developer. At the conclusion of that case, the District Judge also found in favour of the Local Council but importantly made reference to their Council's robust policy which they had published and played a significant role in influencing the decision of the Court.
- 2.12 Subsequently, as an outcome of these court actions, it is considered prudent to provide a resilient policy to advise developers on the adoption criteria as set out in Appendix 1 for consideration by members for adoption and implementation.

2.13 This policy is intended to provide both clarity on the Highway Authority's adoption criteria and will assist in discouraging developers from serving section 37 notices on the Council and to further negate the need for the Council to defend its stance through the Courts in terms of the requirements for commuted sums that are needed for the long term maintenance of the highway assets in the County Borough.

4.0 Financial Impact

4.1 Should developers successfully apply notices under section 37 of the Highways act 1980, instead of the more traditional route of highway adoptions under section 38 agreements then there will be a significant cost to the Council in respect of financing long term maintenance for any adopted highway assets. This policy defines what is acceptable for adoption by the Highway Authority and aims to mitigate this risk.

4.2 Additionally the Highway Authority could be faced with adopting a development that does not meet the design and specification criteria and would then have to finance any costs attributed to make good any defects.

4.3 For un-adopted roads there are financial impacts upon the residents themselves who would be liable for the maintenance costs for repairs on what are deemed privately maintained roads.

4.4 The adoption of this policy is intended to mitigate against these financial implications and aims to reach agreement with developers on adequate commuted sums for the long term maintenance liabilities which will enable the adoption of the relevant highways.

5.0 Workforce Impact

5.1 None

6.0 Legal Impact

6.1 The legislative provisions under the Highways Act 1980 are as set out in this report.

7.0 Risk Management

- 7.1 This policy will minimise the legal risk of litigation, together with challenges to decisions made on highway adoptions and will help to formalise current practices within the adoption process of new highways within the locality.
- 7.2 The section 37 method simply requires a developer to serve a formal notice on the Council (as the Highway Authority) requesting that a “highway be adopted by the Highway Authority and maintainable at public expense”. Subsequently, section 37 does not have any provisions within that section that would allow the Council to call upon any commuted sums payments required and to be paid by the developer/landowner. This could allow the developer and/or landowner to circumvent payments for future maintenance on highway design and materials that are considered to be a deviation from the standard highway design, materials and specifications.

8.0 Consultation

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

9.0 Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Policy for Section 38 Highway Adoption Agreements as set out in Appendix 1 of this Report be adopted for implementation.

10.0 Reason for Proposed Decision(s)

- 10.1 To ensure that the Highway Authority has in place a clear policy and criteria in assessing and evaluating any formal requests to adopt any highways in the locality of Neath Port Talbot and to safeguard the Council from unwarranted financial strain.

11.0 Implementation of Decision

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

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Policy on section 38 highway adoption agreements.

13.0 List of Background Papers

13.1 None

14.0 Officer Contact

14.1 Mr Justin W. Griffiths

Senior Highway Development Engineer – Team Leader

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Appendix 1

Policy for Section 38 Agreements (Highway Adoptions) Under the Highways Act 1980.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the “Council”), wish to formalise a policy to set out the current practices of highway adoption within the County Borough. For the purposes of this policy, the Council is the relevant Highway Authority pursuant to the powers set out in the Highways Act 1980.
- 1.2 A formal highway adoption policy is required to manage and facilitate the highway adoption process within the Council. Without a clear and consistent policy, the Highway Authority may be subjected to further legal challenges should a highway not be considered for adoption whilst also defending the position of the Council on highway adoption related matters.
- 1.3 The Highway Authority has powers under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 to adopt new highways which would then become maintained at public expense. Once a development, that includes an associated highway, has been granted planning permission, the developer can if they chose to do so formally apply for adoption of highways under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. Any highway proposed for adoption by the Highway Authority will require that the freehold owner(s) of the land dedicate the road as a public highway when it is constructed under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 1.4 The intention of this policy is to allow the Highway Authority to undertake duties in relation to highway adoption, which in turn will safeguard the public and improve upon service delivery.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Highway Authority has an important role to discharge in exercising its powers to adopt highways under the Highways Act 1980. Any highway proposed for adoption must be directly linked with the existing public highway network, and be of sufficient utility to the public and offer wider community benefits.
- 2.2 An “adopted highway” is a highway which is maintained by the Council at public expense where the responsibility of maintaining a highway which may include: carriageways; footways; footpath links; street lighting; highway retaining structures; verges; and highway drainage such as gullies and gully leaders. Once adopted, all public liability will be with the Highway Authority.
- 2.3 All highway verges to be adopted by the Highway Authority must be approved and inspected by the highway authority prior to adoption and be compliant with the BS4428: Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces) (as may be amended from time to time) and BS3882: Specification for topsoil (as may be amended from time to time).
- 2.4 The most common method of adopting a new highway is for the developers and/or land owner(s) together with the Highway Authority, to enter into a section 38 agreement under the Highways Act 1980 [as amended]. Only the landowner(s) can dedicate the land as highway pursuant to a section 38 agreement. If the land is subject to a charge, lease or other interest then the chargee/lessee or other interested party needs to give their consent to the dedication of the land. Once the agreement is entered into by all parties then the related highway works are carried out in accordance with the Highway Authority’s (current) highway specifications before the construction is subsequently inspected and approved by Highway Officers. The newly constructed highway shall, on the issuing of a final completion certificate by the Highway Authority (following a 12 month maintenance period), become adopted by the Council, and maintained at the public expense.
- 2.5 Any or all new highways proposed for adoption have to be formally agreed and dedicated by the landowner(s) and/or developer whereby the highway adoption specifications and criteria meets the

satisfaction of the Highway Authority before being considered for adoption, and maintained by the Council.

- 2.6 The Highway Authority is able to adopt roads and footpaths that are essential to a development and allow the safe access or passage for all users of the highway, this includes vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. This is subject to the highway layouts and construction being undertaken in accordance with the Highway Authority current Design Guide for New Developments and the current Specifications for the Construction of Roads for Adoption.
- 2.7 The Highway Authority do not have a mandatory duty to adopt a new highway. The adoption criteria and obligations requires any highway (Street or Road) to be of sufficient utility to the public before becoming maintainable at public expense. At its discretion, the Highway Authority, can if agreed between all parties, adopt a highway which may not be of sufficient utility to the public but which does still however meet the Highway Authority specification and design.

3.0 Criteria for Adoption of New Highways

3.1 Unless otherwise agreed with the Highway Authority, the minimum criteria associated with a sufficient utility to the public and which offers wider community benefits would require the majority of the following items:-

1. All Highways are designed in accordance with the Highway Authority current design guide and specification for adoption highways.
2. The construction of all highways must be constructed to the satisfactory adoptable standards.
3. A highway is required to have a direct link with or is connected to an existing publically maintained highway. The Highway Authority will not adopt highways that are in isolation from an existing highway.
4. The new highways network must be of sufficient utility to the public and be of benefit to the surrounding community. Whereby the highways proposed for adoption would have a wider use than simply providing access to residential, commercial and/or industrial development(s)/properties.
5. All materials used on any highways being built, to an adoptable standard, must be designed and constructed in accordance with the Council's design guide and highway specifications.
6. The new highway(s) must remain open to the public to offer safe passage for pedestrians and vehicles to pass and re-pass, at all times, when formally adopted and maintained by the Highway Authority.
7. Suitable and/or sustainable surface water drainage for the highways must be approved and constructed in accordance with the current Highway Authority design and specification unless the drainage is approved, and proposed to be adopted by the SAB Authority.

8. Any Highway proposed for adoption will require the submission and approval of technical details, which includes all highway and drainage construction specifications, site layout and phased drawings and a program of work. The approval process requires a payment to be made to cover the Authorities cost for vetting the submission.
9. Surface water drainage to be adopted by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (or any other approved agent or SAB authority). The Highway Authority will consider adoption of surface water drain that purely serves for run-off from adoptable highways.
10. The Highway Authority will not consider any connection from roof and yard or shared areas that are to remain in private ownership, unless all other alternative means of disposing surface water have been considered and found to be unacceptable, unviable and impossible to design another alternative connection, this however has to be agreed writing by the highway authority.
11. Private drainage needs to be provided for parking bays, and all other non-adoptable areas. No surface water run-offs will be permitted to drain on to the public highways. Surface water from private ownership should not drain on to the adopted highways.
12. Street lighting shall comply with current local and national standards and approved by the Highway Authority.
13. To ensure that both vehicular and pedestrian visibility splays are provided and are compliant with Manual for Streets and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18 (as may be amended from time to time).
14. Any nonconformity of highway construction materials, surface water drainage and street furniture that would otherwise deviate from the standard highway and adoption specifications would require a commuted sum. These commuted sums shall be paid in full on signing of the adoption agreement. This shall cover the ongoing maintenance of highway infrastructure assets that are proposed for adoption.

15. All construction works, within the adopted highway, shall be undertaken by a competent contractor and the Council shall at any time during construction inspect the construction works.
16. The highways are traffic sensitive and forms part of the highway network that carries large volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
17. The highways serve a bus route(s) together with the community facilities.
18. Should highways proposed for adoption be situated on land that is freehold, the owner(s) shall dedicate the highway (road or street) to the public as a highway that is constructed to the Highway Authority Specification, at no cost to the Council, under section 38 of the Highways Act 1980.
19. On street parking bays/spaces/areas that are contiguous to the highway can be adopted as part of the public highway on the condition that they are used by the general public and its not restricted in any way whilst being considered as visitors spaces and are in addition to the parking standards requirements imposed by the Highway Authority and Planning Authority for all types of development.
20. Public footpaths and footways proposed for adoption shall allow for connectivity to all public amenities and public places such as schools, shops, public transport etc. these must be open, available, and unrestricted for the public use. Whilst joining amenities and public places footways/footpaths should be provided with an approved street lighting system and constructed up to an adoptable standard which will serve the public's needs.
21. Statutory undertakers (Utilities) apparatuses shall be laid in accordance with the Council's Highways Specification, and with the National Joint Utilities Group Guidelines and Requirements.

4.0 Criteria for when Highways are not adopted.

- 4.1 Any steps (ambulant or otherwise) and associated railings proposed within a highway will not be considered for adoption by the Highway Authority.
- 4.2 The Highway Authority does not adopt any footpaths leading to front, side and rear of properties, together with entrances, car parking compound areas, parking forecourt, driveways, communal shared drives, amenity areas, footpaths that do not serve the wider public utility, roads accessing businesses and industrial estates. Private car parking areas that have restricted use by residents will not be considered for adoption. Unless otherwise directed by the Highway Authority, adoptable footpaths/footways need to comply with the adoptable design guide and specifications.
- 4.3 Highways which do not meet with the design and construction of the design criteria and to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority will not be considered for adopted and maintained at public expense. The applicant, developer and contractor must ensure that the highway(s) offered for adoption meet with the Council's design guide, specifications and to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority.
- 4.4 The Highway Authority will not adopt and take on maintenance responsibility of a highway that is used as an access for construction traffic on phased approach to large developments unless an agreement is in place between the Highway Authority and the developer/applicant/contractor that all defective and damaged works on the adopted highway will be made good at no expense to the Council.
- 4.5 The Highway Authority will not adopt any highway without a formal legal agreement under Section 38 that has been legally ratified, approved, signed and all payments concluded, which will include bond(s), inspection fees, legal costs and commuted sums (if applicable).
- 4.6 The Highway Authority do not have a duty to adopt any highway. Housing developments can, if they chose, to keep their new highways private and set up a management company to maintain the highway whether it meets with the above criteria or not.

- 4.7 The Highway Authority will not adopt any private roads within any development whereby the developer(s)/applicant(s) has refused to pay commuted sums.
- 4.8 The Highway Authority will not adopt any highway that does not meet with the adoption criteria within this policy, regardless of any formal requests made by a developer or powers under which they are applied, such as section 37 of the Highways Act 1980. The Highway Authority must be satisfied that the highway has sufficient utility to the public and is also constructed to an adoptable standards.
- 4.9 Where development(s) have no through road, only the main access (spine) road will be considered for adoption by the Highway Authority subject to the main access road serving: more than 5 residential units; bus routes; community facilities; places of worship; serving transport hubs; and schools etc. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.
- 4.10 The Highway Authority will not consider for adoption residential access roads serving car parks/ industrial properties/ forecourts, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Highway Authority.
- 4.11 The Highway Authority will not consider for adoption residential access roads supported by structures, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Highway Authority
- 4.12 The Highway Authority will not consider for adoption roads with shared surface treatment, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Highway Authority.
- 4.13 The Highway Authority will not consider for adoption cul-de-sacs and/or development estates with no through routes, and serving no wider community benefit, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Highway Authority.
- 4.14 The Highway Authority will not consider for adoption access roads within supermarkets, and commercial units etc. unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Highway Authority.

5.0 Section 37 Adoption

- 5.1 The Highway Authority can reserve the right under this policy to apply the above adoption criteria for both section 38 agreements and adoption under section 37 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 5.2 A section 38 agreement is usually discussed and indicated at the planning stage between the developer and the Highway Authority. After technical approval is granted, and all relevant payments such as commuted sums, inspection fees, bonds and legal fees are completed on signing of the agreement and ideally before works commence on site.
- 5.3 For adoption of the road to proceed under section 37 of the Highways Act 1980, the Highway Authority must be satisfied that the road has been dedicated in accordance with the terms of the owner's notice, has been made up in a satisfactory manner and will be of sufficient utility to the public.

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

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

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

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
e.g. Version 1	Justin W. Griffiths	Senior Development Management Engineer.	23-07-2020

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Policy for Section 38 Agreements (Highway Adoptions) Under the Highways Act 1980.
1a	Service Area: Highway Development Control
1b	Directorate: Environment and Regeneration
1c	Summary of the initiative: Policy for Section 38 Agreements (Highway Adoptions) Under the Highways Act 1980.
1d	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Council, Landowners, Developers, Consultants, Contractors, sub-contractors, and owner/occupiers of buildings such dwellings and non-dwellings (i.e. commercial units, industrial units)

1e	When and how were people consulted? Making reference to the approved adoption policy before submitting an application for adoption of a highway.
1f	What were the outcomes of the consultation? This policy set-out clear guidelines on what is to be acceptable when requesting and adoption of any highway which benefits the Council and any potential applicant.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

Officers have been involved in many man hours of investigations in to this decision to implement this policy, together with research and attendance in other Magistrates Court in England.

The investigation has provided evidence that this matter is becoming more frequent and that It has proven that the current policy is unlikely to withstand a challenge in court. This section 38 Policy will seek to provide a clear understanding of highway adoptions for both the Council and Developers. This policy has the support of NPTCBC legal section.

3. Equalities

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

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Disability	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.

Gender reassignment	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Marriage & civil partnership	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Race	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Religion or belief	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Sex	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.
Sexual orientation	✓			Correct method of Adopting highway is essential for providing safe, and inclusive travel and wellbeing for all users and members of the public.

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

The implementation of this policy will seek to improve the process of highway adoption by providing a clear description of what would and would be acceptable for adoption by the council. The policy also has the benefit of informing developers of what the Councils Highways Authority accepts and will not accept.

Having a greater understanding of what is acceptable from a highway adoption point of view will encourage developers to enter into agreement as early stage and benefit from significant and essential feedback from the Highways Authority which in turn would improve construction works on site and the end user.

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

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	✓			This policy will be able to provide fairness and be informative to developers assisting them with design. Positive impact.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	✓			This policy will be able to provide fairness and be informative to developers assisting them with design. Positive impact.
To foster good relations between different groups	✓			This policy will seek to assist developers and encourage early intervention in terms of highway design, which improve good working relationships.

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

To approve the Policy and encourage developers to refer to policy before design is undertaken.

4. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	✓			Constructing sustainable developments and improving health and wellbeing of community.
Social Exclusion	✓			Encouraging good design and construction of infrastructure to improve upon connectivity for all modes of transport and assist on reducing social exclusion.
Poverty	✓			Encouraging good design and construction of infrastructure whilst assisting the economy in terms of good highway network links to housing, commercial and industrial development creating sustainable environments. For example; jobs and housing.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
To approve policy.

5. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
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<p>What effect does the initiative have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people's opportunities to use the Welsh language 	✓			All highways constructed and adopted will benefit from street naming and signage that will be bilingual – both Welsh and English.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - treating the Welsh and English languages equally 	✓			All highways constructed and adopted will benefit from street naming and signage that will be bilingual – both Welsh and English.

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

No action required.

6. Biodiversity

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

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓			Highways have embraced the SuDs Approval Body (SAB) implementation of ecology within and around the highways which has since been implemented from the 7 th January 2019. This seek to clean highway water naturally whilst creating areas for habitat to forage and access without conflict.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	✓			Highways have embraced the SuDs Approval Body (SAB) implementation of ecology within and around the highways which has since been implemented from the 7 th January 2019. This seek to clean highway water naturally whilst creating areas for habitat to forage and access without conflict. In addition, the SAB approval within highway also seeks to reuse, infiltrate or mitigate surface water exceedance routes that would otherwise adversely affect adjoin land and land downstream.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
<p>To approve policy. Highway and SAB are working simultaneously with the view to provide excellent highway design for adoptions</p>

7. Well-being of Future Generations

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

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	To provide and sustain good highway infrastructure which is adopted and maintained by the council at public expense.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The policy shall seek to improve working relationships with developers and highways authority by means of providing a details list of highways requirements which can be referred to and used. This shall seek to encourage good practice in design and construction of highways that are proposed for adoption.
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	The policy shall seek to improve working relationships with developers and highways authority.
iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	The highway adoption process involves consultations with internal and external organisations to ensure good design and construction principles are applied.
v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:	Early intervention by all parties is encouraged to maximise the design and needs of the end user.
Council’s well-being objectives	To create good highway infrastructure that will provide a sense of place and be sustainable for use classes whilst improving on health and wellbeing of any community
Other public bodies objectives	When necessary other public bodies such as Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Planning, NRW and SABs will be consulted as part of highway design prior to adoption of highways

8. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:
 Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

To continue to integrate Highways and SAB approval, together with any other local or Welsh government initiatives and legislation when required.

The council provides yearly statistics on performance which is fed into the Welsh Government model for SABs and Highways.

9. Assessment Conclusions

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

	Conclusion
Equalities	Positive impact
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	Positive impact
Welsh	Positive impact
Biodiversity	Positive impact
Well-being of Future Generations	Positive impact

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

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

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

10. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Implementing s38 Policy	Justin Griffiths	After policy is approved	When the policy goes live

11. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Justin W Griffiths	Snr Highway Development Control Engineer –Team Leader.	Justin W Griffiths	23/07/2020
Signed off by	David W Griffiths	Head of Engineering & Transport	David W Griffiths	23/07/2020

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