



CABINET

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 24th February 2021**

REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

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

Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Welcome and Roll Call
3. Chairpersons Announcement/s
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Minutes of Previous Meetings (*Pages 3 - 26*)

8 January 2020
13 January 2020
22 January 2020
3 February 2020
6. Forward Work Programme 2021/22 (*Pages 27 - 42*)
7. Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 - Annual Report 2019 - 2020
(*Pages 43 - 90*)
8. Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Progress Report October
2019-March 2020 (*Pages 91 - 104*)

9. Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan - Progress Report
(Pages 105 - 126)
10. Officer Urgency Actions (Pages 127 - 128)
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

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 18 February 2021

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

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET

8 JANUARY 2021

Cabinet Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

K.Jones, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, N.Pearce, S.Brennan, A.Thomas, C.Griffiths, D.Griffiths, K.Warren, M.Shaw, C.Furlow-Harris, C.Plowman and J. Woodman-Ralph

Invitee:

Councillor M.Harvey (Scrutiny Chairperson)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor R.G. Jones be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor A.
Wingrave

Re: Miscellaneous Grant Fund Applications as she is a member of Blaenhonddan Community Council. She considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Re: Community Councils Minor Projects Scheme as she is a member of Blaenhonddan Community Council. She considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Re: Private Report - Proposed Agreement for lease, ground lease, licence to build and option to purchase land and buildings known as the former Dairy Site off Cribbs Row, Neath as she knows the owners of the business involved and they have donated prizes to online competitions for the benefit of the Community during lockdown organised by Cllr. Wingrave via Facebook. Cllr Wingrave has not personally received any of the prizes but she considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Councillor
E.V.Latham

Re: Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives as he is chair of governors at Twyn Primary School where he is being considered for re-appointment as L.A.Governor representative. He is also chair of governors at Ysgol Bae Baglan. Cllr Latham considered his interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Councillor
C.Clement-Williams

Re: Proposed Creation and Extinguishment Orders for the footpath from Hodgsons Road to the river Tawe – Community of Ystalyfera as she has family residing on Hodgsons Road. Cllr Clement-Williams considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Re: Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives as she has grandchildren who attend schools in Neath Port Talbot. Cllr Clement-Williams has dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor
D.Jones

Re: Miscellaneous Grant Fund Applications as she is a member of Blaenhonddan Community Council. She considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

Re: Community Councils Minor Projects Scheme as she is a member of Blaenhonddan Community Council. She considered her interest as prejudicial and left the meeting at the start of the item.

3. **CABINET (FINANCE) SUB COMMITTEE**

Decision:

That the Cabinet (Finance) Sub Committee be established pursuant to the report to Council on the 23rd December 2020!

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to have a fit for purpose decision structure.

Implementation of Decision:

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

4. **ASH TREE DIE-BACK**

Decisions:

1. That the findings in the tree survey be noted;
2. That approval be granted to fell unsafe trees by the Council due to Chalara Ash Die-Back tree disease where required on Council land, or as otherwise as falls within the Council's remit as Highway Authority;
3. That a Tree Surveyor be appointed and that Officers process the necessary establishment changes;
4. That Officers pursue private landowners to take mitigation action with respect to Ash Dieback on their land, further to their duty of care, including enforcement action where required;
5. That Officers continue to seek grants to assist with the replanting of felled trees in appropriate locations.

Reason for Decisions:

To manage the onset of Chalara Ash Dieback tree disease throughout the county borough and that the authority meets its legal obligations.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

5. **AUDIT WALES CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE - AUDIT OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT OF 2019 -2020 PERFORMANCE**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

6. **AUDIT WALES - AUDIT OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL'S 2020-21 IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

7. **COMMITMENT TO A PREFERRED I.T. SYSTEM TO SUPPORT SOCIAL SERVICES FUNCTIONS**

Decisions:

1. That the risks associated with the adoption of the Welsh Community Care Information System at this point in time are assessed as outweighing the anticipated benefits be noted;
2. That the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing delays participation in the programme until the identified risks have been sufficiently mitigated;
3. That the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing works alongside corporate I.T. colleagues and invest in the development of the Social Services Information System within the Oracle Apex Environment until such time that the Welsh Community Care Information System is deemed as fit for purpose.

Reason for Decisions:

To enable the Council to develop the SSIS within Oracle Apex will ensure we have an I.T.solution designed specifically for the needs of the Social Services Directorate, in addition to being built on a platform that will provide a stable I.T. environment for the foreseeable future.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

8. **MISCELLANEOUS GRANT FUND APPLICATIONS**

Councillors A.Wingrave and D.Jones reaffirmed their interests at this point and withdrew from the meeting for duration of the item.

Decisions:

That the following Miscellaneous Grant Fund applications be approved:

Cwmafan Welfare Association	Grant of £300pa awarded towards the cost of rent of £330 which will be payable from 1 st April 2021, in regard to the Lease of Land at Ebbw Vale Row adjoining Cwmavon RFC.
Blaenhonddan Community Council	Grant of £2,068 pa awarded towards the cost of rent of £2,395.80 pa which will be payable from 1 st April 2021, in regard to the Lease of Caewern Community Centre.
Blaenhonddan Community Council	Grant of £650 pa awarded towards the cost of rent of £715 pa which will be payable from June 2021, in regard to the Lease of Waunceirch District Park.

Reason for Decisions:

To decide on the amount of financial support in respect of the grant applications received.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

9. **COMMUNITY COUNCILS MINOR PROJECTS SCHEME - APPLICATION FROM BLAENHONDDAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Councillors A.Wingrave and D. Jones reaffirmed their interests and withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the item.

Decision:

That a grant of 30% of actual costs up to a maximum of £6,000 be approved to Blaenhonddan Community Council as detailed in the circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To comply with the approved policy and to enable community improvements.

Implementation of Decision:

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

10. **PROPOSED CREATION AND EXTINGUISHMENT ORDERS FOR THE FOOTPATH FROM HODGSONS RAOD TO THE RIVER TAWE - COMMUNITY OF YSTALYFERA**

Councillor C.Clement-Williams reaffirmed her interest at this point and withdrew from the meeting from the duration of the item.

Members received information that the ward affected was in Godregraig and not as stated in the circulated report.

Decisions:

1. That a public path Creation Order be made pursuant to Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 in respect of the route shown A1-B1-C1-D1-D2-E1 and also F1-G as detailed in Plan number 3 to the circulated report;
2. That an Extinguishment Order be made pursuant to Section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 in respect of the route shown A-B-C-D-E as detailed in Plan number 2 to the circulated report.

3. That if no objections are received to the two orders above then they be confirmed along with the modification order made earlier under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as shown as a bold line on plan number 1 to the circulated report.

Reasons for Decisions:

1. There was a need to provide a public path from Hodgsons Road to the river Tawe given this Council had agreed that a public path had existed from that road to the river prior to the housing development.
2. That given the housing development has obstructed the line of the original path, an alternative was needed. As the previous attempt to divert the path failed, the option to place one of the exit points at G1 as detailed in plan number 3 was the only alternative viable solution.
3. That due to the adoption of the estate roads within the housing development another diversion order cannot be made, but making an extinguishment and creation order at the same time would still achieve the same result. This would remove the line of the path that passes through the housing estate and provide an alternative by making a creation order.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

Consultation:

Consultation has taken place with a standard list of organisations such as the Ramblers Association, their local representatives, the Byways and Bridleways Trust, the Community Council, the Local Member along with Taylor Wimpey and Barratts homes as well as all those whose houses affected by the line of the existing path and those who live close to the proposed new route where it exits and enter the housing estate.

11. **BROMBIL ACCESS ROAD AND TUDOR GROVE, MARGAM.
PROHIBITION OF WAITING, LOADING AND UNLOADING AT
ANYTIME - ORDER 2020**

Decision:

That the objections be overruled to the (Brombil Access Road and Tudor Grove, Margam) (Prohibition of Waiting, Loading and Unloading at Anytime) Order 2020 as detailed in Appendix A to the circulated report, and that the scheme be implemented on site as advertised. Objectors be informed of the decision accordingly.

Reason for Decision:

To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interest of highway safety.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Consultation:

Consultation was undertaken in November 2020 with approximately 20 properties receiving hand delivered letters with a plan. The local member was also consulted.

12. **APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF LA GOVERNOR
REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor E.V.Latham reaffirmed his interest at this point in the meeting and withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the item.

Cabinet were supportive of the request to waive the 3 day call in period due to need to appoint candidates to governing bodies as a matter of urgency.

Decisions:

1. That, in line with the approved policy, the following changes be approved to the Local Authority Governor representatives up to and including the end of the Spring Term 2020/21:

Blaendulais Primary School
Re-appoint Cllr. Stephen Hunt as from the 1st April 2021
Re-appoint Mr. Gary James as from the 1st April 2021

Coedffranc Primary School
Appoint Mr. Andrew Addis-Fuller

Creunant Primary School
Re-appoint Mrs. Sarah Griffiths as from the 1st April 2021

Gnoll Primary School
Appoint Cllr. Sandra Miller

Godre'rgraig Primary School
Appoint Mrs. Glenys Protheroe

Rhydyfro Primary School
Re-appoint Cllr. Linet Purcell as from the 1st April 2021

Tairqwaith Primary School
Appoint Mrs. Elinor Ervine

Tywyn Primary School
Re-appoint Cllr. Edward Latham as from the 1st April 2021

YGG Blaendulais
Re-appoint Mrs. Gaynor Smith as from the 1st April 2021

Ynysfach Primary School
Re-appoint Mrs. Gloria Felton as from the 1st April 2021

Ysgol Hendrefelin
Appoint Ms. Beryl Richards

That the following vacancies for school governors be deferred:-

Coedffranc Primary School
Gnoll Primary School
Godre'rgraig Primary School
Sandfields Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Junior School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Neath)
St Joseph's RC School and 6th Form Centre
Tonnau Primary Community School

YGG Castell Nedd
YGG Pontardawe
Ysgol Bae Baglan
Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera – Bro Dur

Reason for Decisions:

To enable the Council to contribute to effective school governance through representation on school governing bodies.

Implementation of Decisions:

The decision is for immediate implementation.

13. **URGENT ITEMS**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute Numbers 20 and 21 below, the Chairperson agreed this could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason:

Due to time element.

14. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No 2290, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12,13 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

15. **HOUSING RENEWAL AND ADAPTATION SERVICE REPAYMENT OF DISABLED FACILITY GRANT MONIES (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 14)**

Decision:

That the full amount of grant monies be waived as detailed in the private circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure the Council exercises its discretion under the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008.

Implementation of Decision:

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

16. **WRITE OFF OF COUNCIL TAX (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 14)**

Decision:

That approval be granted to write off the amounts as detailed in the private circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to write off council tax accounts that are irrecoverable.

Implementation of Decision:

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

17. **DEBTOR WRITE OFFS (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 14)**

Decision:

That approval be granted to write off debts as detailed in the private circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to write off irrecoverable debts.

Implementation of Decision:

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

18. **MANAGER'S REPORT ON HILLSIDE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 13)**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

19. **THE REGULATED SERVICE (SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2017. (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 13)**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

20. **PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR LEASE, GROUND LEASE, LICENCE TO BUILD AND OPTION TO PURCHASE LAND AND BUILDINGS KNOWN AS THE FORMER DAIRY SITE OFF CRIBBS ROW, NEATH.**

Decision:

That the Agreement for Lease, Ground Lease, Licence to Build and Option to Purchase be granted as detailed in the private circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To enable an established local business to develop and expand its business through significant financial investment for the benefit of Neath and the wider community.

Implementation of Decision:

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

21. **REMOVAL OF LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE
(EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 12)**

Decision:

That, in line with approved policy, the named LA governor representative detailed in Appendix A to the private circulated report be removed with immediate effect.

Reason for Decision:

The conduct of the named local authority governor representative was not in keeping of the expected standards of this Council and which pupils/parents and staff would expect from someone occupying such a position of responsibility.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is for Immediate Implementation.

CHAIRPERSON

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET

13 JANUARY 2021

Cabinet Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

K.Jones, N.Pearce, H. Jenkins, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, C.L.Davies and J. Woodman-Ralph

Invitee:

Cllr. M.Harvey (Scrutiny Chairperson)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor R.G. Jones be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following officer made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Karen Jones,
Chief Executive,
Neath Port Talbot,
County Borough Council

Re: Returning Office and Acting
Returning Officer Indemnity Report
as she is the Returning Officer at
Elections for Neath Port Talbot
County Borough Council who would
receive the Indemnity as detailed in
the circulated report and left the
meeting at the start of the item.

3. **REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT 2020/21**

Decisions:

1. That the reserve movements and budget virements as detailed in the circulated report be approved.
2. That the operational and financial issues as detailed in the circulated report be noted.
3. That the Council to continue to work with Welsh Government and in line with legislation, regulations and directions to deliver services during these challenging times.
4. That the additional grants received be noted.
5. That the Council continue to seek additional funding from Welsh Government to cover COVID 19 consequences of increased expenditure, loss of income, increased cost of Council Tax Support and Council Tax collection shortfalls that adversely impact on Council funding and activity.

Reason for Decisions:

To enable the Council to monitor and update the Budget projections for 2020/21 and inform Members of the financial risks arising from COVID 19.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

4. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT 2020/21**

Decisions:

1. That the Capital Programme be approved.
2. That the updated Capital Programme be commended to Council:

- To approve the proposed 2020/21 budget totalling £70.682m;
- Note the position in relation to expenditure as at 31 December 2020.

Reason for Decisions:

To update the Council's Capital Programme for 2020/21.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

5. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2020/21**

It was highlighted that the maturity date for the Lloyds Bank investments was the 25th January 2021. As this was omitted from the circulated report.

Decision:

That the report be noted.

6. **DRAFT BUDGET FOR CONSULTATION 2021/22**

Cabinet asked that their appreciation be cascaded to all staff for all the hard work they had undertaken in preparing the budget as detailed in the circulated report. Thanks were also given to H.Jenkins, Director of Finance and Cllr. C.Clement-Williams. Cabinet Member for Finance.

Decision:

That the Chief Executive be authorised to consult the public on the draft budget, savings, service changes, additional income and council tax proposals as detailed in the circulated report.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to commence the consultation on the 2021/22 draft budget.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is for immediate implementation.

Consultation:

Consultation will commence today with the public and all stakeholders on the draft budget proposals for savings/income generation.

The consultation will commence immediately following today's meeting until the 12th February 2021 prior to the final decisions being made in March 2021.

7. **RETURNING OFFICER AND ACTING RETURNING OFFICER INDEMNITY**

K.Jones, Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council re-affirmed her interest at this point and left the meeting for this item only.

Decision:

That an appropriate indemnity under The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) (Wales) Order 2006 be provided to Mrs. Karen Jones in relation to her carrying out her duties as Returning Officer and/or Acting Returning Officer for Elections and Referrals taking place within the County Borough.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the appropriate indemnities are in place for officers who accepting personal responsibility for such matters.

Implementation of Decision:

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

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

No Urgent Items received.

9. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

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

10. **DELIVERY OF DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS FOR BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 14)**

Decisions:

1. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Adult Services to provide a Disabled Facilities Grant Support Programme to Bridgend County Borough Council in line with the arrangements set out in Appendix 1 to the circulated report.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Adult Services in consultation with the Head of Legal Services to agree the terms of a collaboration agreement between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Bridgend County Borough Council for the provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant Support Programme.

Reason for Decisions:

To enable the Council to enter into an agreement with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to deliver Disabled Facility Grants on behalf of BCBC.

Implementation of Decisions:

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

CHAIRPERSON

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EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET

22 JANUARY 2021

Cabinet Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

K.Jones, H.Jenkins, A.Jarrett, A.D.Thomas, C.Griffiths, D.Griffiths, P. Jackson, C.L.Davies and J.Woodman-Ralph.

Invitees:

Cllr. R.Wood (Scrutiny Chairperson)
Cllr. S. Paddison (Acting - Vice Scrutiny Chairperson)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor R.G.Jones be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

No announcements were made at the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **BUS EMERGENCY SCHEME 2**

Decisions:

1. That the principles of the Bus Emergency Scheme 2 agreement as detailed in Appendix 2 to the circulated report be approved to secure (conditional) financial support for the bus sector and to establish a relationship with the regional lead authority and signatory, which ensures that the ongoing emergency funding meets the authority's priorities and is delivered on its behalf.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Regeneration and the Head of Engineering and Transport in consultation with the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member to enter into a new umbrella Voluntary Partnership Agreement with Welsh Government Transport for Wales the constituent regional councils and operators as required.
3. That the current procurement process and consultation for the subsidised local bus network be terminated and that the existing contract arrangements be extended with operators for a period of one year to the 31st August 2022 and exclude the requirements of Rule 11 of the Contract Procurement Rules.
4. That a report on the bus reform proposals relating to the future management of bus services in Wales be brought to Cabinet in Spring 2021.

Reason for Decisions:

To secure the funding for bus operators while patronage is low and services are impacted by the pandemic.

Implementation of Decisions:

The decisions will be for immediate implementation.

Consultation:

There has been full consultation with regional partners, the Wales Local Government Association and Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers.

CHAIRPERSON

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET

3 FEBRUARY 2021

Cabinet Members:

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

Officers in Attendance:

K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.D.Thomas, H.Jenkins, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, H.Jones, S.Rees, C.L.Davies and J.Woodman-Ralph.

Invitee:

Councillor: S. Rahaman (Scrutiny Chairperson)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor R.G.Jones be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

The Chairperson made no announcement/s.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the 4th November 2020, 11th November 2020, 25th November 2020 and 10th December 2020 Cabinet meetings, be approved.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022**

That the Forward Work Programme 2021/2022 be noted.

6. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

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

7. **NEATH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BALLOT VOTE (EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 14)**

Decision:

That the recommendation contained within the private report be approved.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to consider how to vote at the Neath Bid Ballot.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision was for Immediate Implementation.

CHAIRPERSON

Executive
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

January 2021 – 2022

CONTENTS

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>Officer Responsible</u>
Council	Jayne Woodman
Cabinet	Jayne Woodman
Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board	Tammie Davies
Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Cabinet Board	Tammie Davies
Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board	Nicola Headon
Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board	Nicola Headon
<p>The Committees below Agendas are determined prior to the meeting so are not included in the Forward Work Programme. Dates of all meetings are available on the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council website Calendar of Meetings</p> <p>Planning Committee, Audit Committee, Personnel Committee, Licensing and Gambling Acts, Licensing and Gambling Acts Sub Committee, Registration and Licensing</p>	

Council (All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
2021			
27 th January	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22	Decision	Hywel Jenkins
	Capital Programme Monitoring Reports	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins/ Huw Jones
	Strategic Equalities Plan 2020/2024	Decision	Karen Jones/ Rhian Headon
	Appointment of Deputy Returning Officer	Decision	Karen Jones/ Craig Griffiths
	Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the Civic Year 2021/2022	Decision	Craig Griffiths/ Stacy Curran

COUNCIL

9 th March Tuesday pm	Budget 21/22 and Budget Items Only	Decision	Hywel Jenkins
	Interim Arrangements for the Head of Democratic Services Post	Decision	Karen Jones/ Craig Griffiths
	Pay Policy Statement 2021/22	Decision	Sheenagh Rees
	Chairman's Annual Report – Democratic Services Committee	Information	Stacy Curran/ Craig Griffiths
17 th March	ANNUAL MEETING		Stacy Curran/ Craig Griffiths

COUNCIL

24 th March	Dem. Services Committee Report regarding Member Induction Programme 2022	Decision	Craig Griffiths
14 th April	Corporate Plan 2021/2023	Decision	Caryn Furlow/ Sheenagh Rees
26 th May			

Cabinet (Following Cabinet Scrutiny starting at 2pm.)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
2021	CABINET		
22 nd January (2pm) (Special)	Bus Emergency Service 2 Agreement	Decision	David Griiffthihs/ Peter Jackson
3 rd February	Budget (Scrutiny Item)	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins
	Neath Bid	Decision	Hywel Jenkins
24 th February	Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Report 2019-2020	Decision	Caryn Furlow/ Rhian Headon
	Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Progress Report	Monitoring	Caryn Furlow/ Rhian Headon
	Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan – Progress Report	Decision	Caryn Furlow
8 th March (Monday pm)	Budget 21/22	Decision	Hywel Jenkins

16 th March	Budget Monitoring Reports	Monitoring	Huw Jones
	Complaints Policy	Decision	Caryn Furlow/ Sheenagh Rees
7 th April	Corporate Plan 2021/2023	Decision	Caryn Furlow/ Sheenagh Rees
	SSIP – Update	Decision	Andrew Thomas/ Rhiannon Crowhurst
21 April	Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021	Decision	Caryn Furlow/ Sheenagh Rees
12 th May			

Cabinet Finance Sub (Following Cabinet)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
2021	CABINET		
3 rd February	Miscellaneous Grant Fund Applications	Decision	Hywel Jenkins/ Huw Jones
	Glamorgan Further Education Trust Fund	Decision	Andrew Thomas
	The Harold and Joyce Charles Trust Fund	Decision	Andrew Thomas
	Business Rates Write Offs	Decision	Hywel Jenkins/ Huw Jones
24 th February	Miscellaneous Grants	Decision	Hywel Jenkins
8 th March	Items to be Confirmed		

16th March Budget only to Cabinet.	Items to be Confirmed		
7 th April	Items to be Confirmed		
1 st April	Items to be Confirmed		
12 May	Items to be Confirmed		

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

Immediately following Scrutiny Committee starting at 2pm

Meeting Date 2021	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
21 January	Budget (Scrutiny Item)	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins
18 th March	Aberavon beach lifeguard provision	Decision	Paul Walker
	School Admissions Policy 2022/2023	Decision	Helen Lewis
	School Holiday/ Term Dates 2023/2024	Decision	Helen Lewis

Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

Immediately following Scrutiny Committees starting at 2pm

Meeting Date 2021	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
28 January	Budget (Scrutiny Item)	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins
	Dwelling House At 46 Sycamore Crescent, Baglan, Port Talbot	Decision	Leighton Jones
1 April			

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board
Immediately following Scrutiny Committees starting at 10am

Meeting Date 2021	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
5 February	Budget (Scrutiny Item)	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins
	Alleged Public Footpath – Seven Sisters	Decision	Mike Shaw/ Craig Griffiths / Mike Workman
	Proposal to extend the current service provided by the Primary Substance Abuse Liaison team (PSALT)	Decision	Chris Millis/ Claire Jones
March 2021	Regional Technical Statement (RTS) 2 nd Review	Decision	Ceri Morris / Lana Beynon
	Rural Development Plan Update	Information	Angelina Spooner-Cleverly
	Biodiversity Duty Plan	Information	Ceri Morris / Lana Beynon
	Metal Detection Policy	Decision	Mike Roberts / Simon Brennan

July 2021	Food and Feed Delivery Plan 2021/2022	Information	Ceri Morris / Mark Thomas
	Food and Feed Enforcement Review 2020/2021	Information	Ceri Morris / Mark Thomas
September 2021	Local Air Quality Management	Information	Ceri Morris / Mark Thomas

Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board

Immediately following Scrutiny Committees starting at 10am

Meeting Date 2021	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
22 January	Budget (Scrutiny Item)	Monitoring	Hywel Jenkins
	Fleet Renewals Programme	Decision	Dave Griffiths/ Peter Jackson
	Traffic Orders (Various)	Decision	Dave Griffiths/ Hasan Hasan
April	Traffic Orders (Various)	Decision	Dave Griffiths/ Hasan Hasan
	Home to School Contract Extension	Decision	Dave Griffiths /Peter Jackson
	Arboriculture Management Plan	Decision	Mike Roberts / Andrew Lewis

	Scarlet Avenue Beach Access Ramp	Decision	Mike Roberts / Steve Owen
	Highways and Engineering Works Programme	Decision	Mike Roberts / Ian Carter
September 2021	Three year Review of Grit Bin Provision		Mike Roberts

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

24 February 2021

Report of

Report of the Head of Human & Organisational Development – S Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019: Annual Report 2019-2020

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 Annual Report for the period 2019-2020 for consideration and approval prior to its publication in line with statutory requirements.

Executive Summary

2. The Annual Report for 2019-2020, attached at Appendix 1, provides an account of progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and in particular against the equality objectives set out in the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019.
3. The report is required to meet duties set out Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
4. The Annual Report reports on progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty through our work in relation to the equality objectives as well as through our other plans and strategies and through the various initiatives and projects we have undertaken.
5. Matters identified in the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 that require ongoing consideration and attention have been addressed in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024; equality objectives and the actions to meet them. The Strategic Equality Plan, including the equality objectives, and the actions were approved by Council on 23 September and 27 January respectively and are published on our website.

Background

6. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.
7. In Wales, specific duties have been introduced under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to help public bodies carry out the Public Sector Equality Duty. These include the requirement to publish a Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives every four years and to report on progress in an annual report for each those financial years.
8. The reallocation of resources to support the Council's response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic followed by our work to revise the Strategic Equality Plan (taking into account the impact of the pandemic on our communities and the Black Lives Matter movement) to meet statutory requirements, have resulted in a delay in bringing this Annual Report before members.
9. Even though delayed the Annual Report still meets the statutory reporting requirements; to be published by 31 March 2021.
10. **Key areas of progress**
 - We were awarded the Silver Award for Gender Diversity by Chwarae Teg in recognition of our clear commitment to making a difference to the recruitment, retention and progression of women in the workplace
 - In partnership with local service providers and survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) we reviewed the Strategy 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities' although its launch was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Working with a range of partners we have developed and realised the implementation of healthy relationship lessons for schools; reaching over 650 pupils in over 10 schools.
11. **Review of the Strategic Equality Plan**

Although work to review our equality objectives and produce a revised Strategic Equality Plan had begun early in 2019 publication of the Plan was delayed until October 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The review took into account various national and local publications/research findings; latest data available to the Council and issues raised by local equality groups during meetings of the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak the opportunity was taken to further review the equality objectives and actions in light of the emerging impacts of the outbreak on our various communities and the increase in awareness of racial inequality highlighted with Black Lives Matter movement.

Financial Appraisal

12. The performance described in the Annual Report was delivered against a challenging financial backdrop. Since 2010, spending reductions to c£95 million have been delivered to enable the Council to achieve a balanced budget. In 2019-2020, we achieved our target budget savings of £5.803 million against a total net revenue expenditure of £287.999 million.

Integrated Impact Assessment

13. There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment.

Valleys Communities Impact:

14. The Annual Report includes progress made in delivering some of the projects to support valley communities.

Workforce Impact

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

Legal Impact

16. This Draft Annual Report is prepared under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Risk Management

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

Crime and Disorder Impact

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

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

20. The Council has a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 when exercising relevant functions to ‘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.’
21. The Strategic Equality Plan contains specific proposals to prevent and address domestic abuse and progress has been made to meet these proposals thereby assisting us in discharging this duty.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

23. It is recommended that Cabinet considers and approves the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 Annual Report 2019-2020.
24. It is recommended that the Head of Human and Organisational Development be given delegated authority to make such changes as may be needed to the Annual Report prior to publication, provided that such changes do not materially alter the content of the document considered by Cabinet.

Reason for Proposed Decision

25. To meet the statutory requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

27. Appendix 1 –Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019: Annual Report 2019-2020

List of Background Papers

28. [Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019](#)
29. [Equality Act 2010](#)
30. [Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)

Officer Contact

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2015-2019

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



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

This document is also available in Welsh

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FOREWORD

In times of great uncertainty there are not many things we can be sure of, however, the need to work to address the many facets of inequality faced by our residents and our workforce is one of them.

This is the final annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 and while reporting progress on work undertaken to meet the equality objectives, the focus of our work during 2019-2020 has been the review of the Strategic Equality Plan, our equality objectives and the actions identified to meet them.

During 2019-2020 we made good progress to improve people's lives this inequality; through specific work to meet our equality objectives as well as with our work in the knowledge of and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty. We produced a revised 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' and implemented a 'Safe Leave' policy for staff who are affected by any form of domestic abuse. In December 2019 we launched the Hospital to Home (H2H) Service to support patients who require ongoing support after leaving hospital; since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak this has developed into a Rapid Discharge Service. In February 2020 we become a dementia friendly organisation. With an increased understanding of how dementia affects people we are better able to provide more appropriate support to those living with dementia. More progress is outlined later in this report.

Unfortunately the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the end of March 2020 disrupted many services which has affected data collection and reporting.

The inexorable challenges faced by us all over the last 12 months have been unprecedented and have tested us all. We began the work of revising the strategic equality plan during 2019 little knowing or fully understanding the changes that would take place before its completion in 2020.

With the delays in finalising our revised Strategic Equality Plan, necessitated by the outbreak of COVID-19, we had the opportunity to revisit our equality objectives, and associated actions, in light of the unfolding impacts it and the Black Lives Matter movement had on our communities. The Strategic Equality Plan, along with our equality objectives was published in October 2020 with the associated actions, which required a more detailed review, published in February 2021.

However, what has become more apparent is that there is so much more work that needs to be undertaken before we can truly say we have made a difference to people's lives. It is not always the big grand actions that can make a change for the good but small actions that when considered together really do make a difference.

Section 1 – Equality Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010, brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation, simplified and strengthened the law, removed inconsistencies and made it easier to understand for everyone. By implementing the Act our aim is to work towards creating a fairer society, improving public services, addressing entrenched inequalities and ultimately improving people's lives.

The Council, along with other public bodies, is required under the Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups (known as the Public Sector Equality Duty).

The protected groups, or characteristics, are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the need to eliminate discrimination)

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

In Wales specific duties have been introduced to help us carry out the public sector duty and these include the production of a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and the development and publication of equality objectives.

This Annual Report is prepared under Section 16(1) of The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and sets out the progress made against each of our equality objectives contained within our Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019.

Welsh Language Measure 2011

The Measure gave the Welsh language official status in Wales, established the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner, created a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards and made provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language amongst other provisions. The Welsh Language Commissioner's role is to promote the Welsh language, and improve the opportunities people have to use it, by emphasising the language's official status in Wales, and by placing standards on organisations.

Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015

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These Regulations, imposed on county councils and county borough councils, national park authorities and Welsh Ministers, include a range of standards of conduct in respect of the Welsh language. The standards were grouped into the following areas:

- service delivery
- policy making
- operational
- promotion
- record keeping

A [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2019-2020](#) has been produced, in accordance with these Regulations, which details how we have complied with the standards during the year.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This legislation also places duties upon the Council to set well-being objectives and to work in a sustainable way to achieve a fairer and more equal Wales. The Council has recently revised its integrated impact assessment tool to assist officers in weaving together all of the duties that arise in relation to equality.

Section 2 - Progress

During 2019-2020 our main focus was that of reviewing, revising and further developing equality objectives and actions in readiness for the new Strategic Equality Plan for its anticipated publication date of April 2020. However, we didn't lose sight of the work that was ongoing to meet the equality objectives and to integrate our equalities work with our wider Corporate Plan.

During this last year of the 2015-2019 Plan we continued to make made progress on meeting our equality objectives while turning our focus to reviewing and revising our equality objectives and developing new actions to better meet our commitment to reducing inequality in Neath Port Talbot.

The financial constraints we have all experienced over recent years continue as does the inequality and inequity within Neath Port Talbot, and beyond! However we, as a Council, continue to work towards reducing, and wherever possible eliminating, this inequality and the development of our new Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives along with better alignment with the Corporate Plan, will help us ensure this becomes a reality.

Equality Objective 1 - Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

1. Increase awareness and reporting of hate crime

- As in previous years we promoted and supported activities during Hate Crime Awareness Week in October 2019, including the Hate Crime Awareness event held by the Police Hate Crime Officer at Port Talbot YMCA.
- Our Supporting People Section commissioned a study to better understand the need of the local Gypsy and Traveller community in Neath Port Talbot, the findings of which were shared at an event in October 2019, which will help inform policies and practices going forward.

2. Strengthen partnership work to tackle domestic abuse and establish multi-agency mechanisms to support people at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime

- The roll out of the Welsh Governments National Training Framework for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continued throughout 2019-2020, which raises awareness of all form of domestic abuse, and ensures organisations are better placed to recognise signs of domestic abuse and act appropriately.
- We have been working with a range of partners, including Calan DVS, Hafan Cymru, and the South Wales Police Schools Liaison to develop and/or realise the implementation of healthy relationship lessons for schools.
 - 162 pupils at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School received lessons developed in partnership with Calan DVS and the Relationship and Sexuality Education Group
 - 'It's Your World' Wellbeing Workshops, developed in partnership with South Wales Police Schools Liaison piloted in Ysgol Bae Baglan and Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School, with a total of 500 Year 8 pupils attending.
 - Hafan Cymru's Spectrum project currently deliver Healthy Relationship lessons within eight Neath Port Talbot schools.
- We held our annual Crucial Crew event in June 2019 with 1600 Year 6 pupils participating in a range of sessions on topics including internet safety, cyber-crime and healthy relationships.

- Additional sessions to compliment Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training were held with staff and partner organisations, giving a more localised picture of the terrorist threat across Wales. Feedback from these sessions was very positive, giving people a better understanding of the need to refer to the Channel Panel anyone that they may have had concerns about.

Equality Objective 2 - Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

1. To improve the Council's website content

- We updated our education webpages to help promote Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot and work to further enhance the website is planned.
- We continue to update our website to ensure we give relevant advice in relation to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments. The use of digital channels is encouraged with residents and more online forms are being developed and a new online DHP (Discretionary Housing Payment) form is now live.

The availability of support is also promoted on all relevant documentation and signposting to support agencies is also provided.

- Our dedicated 'Website Survey' page invites the public to give us their views on our website to help us improve our content and ensure it continues to meet their needs.
- Consultations are posted on our 'Have your say' webpage which enables the public to comment on proposals etc. at a time and manner suitable to them as well as enabling us to reach as many people as possible and ensuring our proposals for plans and services are fully informed. While we aim to be 'digital first' we recognise that not everyone is able to access online consultation and so we continue to make alternative arrangements.

2. To increase the accessibility of information/documentation

- We continued to work with the Digital Accessibility Centre to ensure our website is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of technology or ability.
- Many of our older PDFs and Word documents on the website do not meet accessibility standards, for example they may not be accessible to a screen reader, and we are working to address this through the ongoing review of our website. We ensure that all new documents uploaded to the website are accessible and content is current.

- Our Digital Inclusion Ambassador has continued to promote the importance of digital inclusion to third sector organisations. He has also worked with many community groups through the year, building interest and confidence particularly amongst the elderly to use the Internet with some groups subsequently securing funding for digital infrastructure to take their work forward. A presentation on the benefits of accessing digital services has been delivered to a total of 352 individuals from 10 different community groups.
- The Public Services Board (PSB) agencies have made a commitment to designing online services with an understanding of the digital profile of the customers who need to access services. In March 2020 the PSB Digital Inclusion Steering Group was awarded full Digital Inclusion Charter accreditation.

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

Improve access to the provision of Social Services

- A 'Single Referral' form was finalised for use by both Children and Young People Services and Adult Services. This referral form emanated from collaboration between cross-sections of Social Services and Health staff. The form, launched in February 2020, facilitates the opportunity to capture adult safeguarding concerns which were previously recorded separately and is being implemented across partner agencies.
- Work continues across the region to review the types of services that are provided in the community to enable more people to retain their independence. We have already completed a mapping exercise to identify those people that are anticipated to require support and accommodation services and have secured funding to develop 14 units of accommodation and an extra care facility for people with complex needs.
- In December 2019 we launched the Hospital to Home (H2H) Service. This service supports patients who require ongoing support to leave hospital as soon as they are well enough to do so. It is expected that this new approach will see a reduction in the number of delayed discharges as assessments to determine a patient's longer-term care needs will be undertaken in their own home, rather than in a hospital bed. Since the COVID-19 outbreak the service has developed further into a Rapid Discharge Service.
- There is now an identified Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) lead in place to implement the ASD strategic plan within the county borough. The lead is meeting with relevant professionals, parent, carers and people with ASD to ensure that the plan is implemented to improve the lives of people with Autism, their families and carers.
A 90 day consultation was due to begin in March 2020 but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The consultation will now commence as soon as is practicable.
- We continue to offer carers an assessment and for those who do not take up the offer are provided with access to information, advice and assistance as well as services provided by Neath Port Talbot Carers service.

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

Develop robust monitoring systems within services

- The collection of our employment data continues to be challenging. However, with the self service employee portal now accessible to more staff more accurate data is available. It is anticipated that further improvements in data collections will continue to be made with the introduction of the new HR system during 2021.
- There were 218 respondents to the Community Cohesion (Brexit) Survey, undertaken in 2019 as part of the Western Bay Community Cohesion Programme; 6 respondents were members of our BAME communities. A report of the findings was produced in May 2020. The survey has provided information about people's experiences when they are accessing public sector services, how difficult or easy they are find engaging with people from other backgrounds and if they have been a victim of a hate incident/ hate crime in the area. Going forward this information will be vital to our work in developing policies and services for our residents
- There are 68 different languages and dialects spoken in our primary and secondary schools across Neath Port Talbot with 720 pupils out of 21,238 speaking languages other than English and Welsh as a first language; Bengali, Polish, Arabic and Romanian amongst the top 10 languages spoken. NPT has one of the largest Traveller communities/sites in Wales with 76 children in our schools. (Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) January 2020)

Equality Objective 5 - Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements

- A total of 1349 staff undertook training on specific equality topics including:
 - Understanding & Responding to Human Trafficking & Slavery
 - Home Office accredited WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent)
 - E-learning Prevent training
 - Dementia Awareness & Responding to Distressed Behaviours
 - Virtual Dementia Tour
 - Hidden Disabilities and Making Reasonable Adjustments
 - Equalities in the Workplace

- Guidance has been developed in partnership with our trade unions, to help line managers consider and agree reasonable adjustments at interview and when considering the best applicant for the post, ensuring a fair and transparent process.

Equality Objective 6 - Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

- Works to develop the Plaza cinema as a community hub are underway and will include a café, offices, a multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose rooms, a gym, two retail units and car and cycle parking. The following features have been incorporated into the design to assist with access:
 - Consent has been given by CADW to introduce a platform lift to the main entrance steps.
 - A passenger lift is being installed for access between the ground floor and first floor.
 - There will also be a platform lift between the first and second floors.
 - There is limited parking within the curtilage of the premises however three disabled spaces are being provided at the rear of the building.
- We commenced work to further develop the visitor facilities at Afan Forest Park. While already having accessible pathways to the visitor centre, disabled parking spaces and an accessible public convenience, a children's play area is planned to include fully accessible elements, both physical and sensory, which will enhance to visitor experience.
- New handrails were installed at Aberavon Seafront to improve disabled access to the beach.
- The Biodiversity Team are working in partnership to create an inventory of accessible greenspaces within Neath Port Talbot. Once completed the research/data will feed into the green infrastructure assessment to establish evidence for the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP). The assessment enables us to develop a clear approach to improving well-being through increased access to green infrastructure whilst enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecological resilience. It will provide an information baseline with which it can develop a greenspace strategy and policies for the LDP.
- We were awarded £334k active travel core funding for further design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes. A number of schemes to improve access to various paths and footbridges are being progressed across the county borough: works include resurfacing, new signage, the removal of barriers and some access control measures and the installation of dropped crossings/tactile paving.

- The bulk reissue of the concessionary bus cards commenced in September 2019, following changes in the Guidance for Community Transport the same month. To date over 14,000 applications have been successfully processed. We continue to work closely with bus operators and third sector partners organisations to assist in the roll out of concessionary bus card replacements.

Equality Objective 7 - Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

As progress is reported for the academic year 2019-2020 the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 has impacted full reporting on this objective. Information that has been made available for the period August 2019-March 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

1. To raise levels of attendance of pupils with the protected characteristics at school

- We provided over 1,350 devices for pupils who have no suitable device or Wi-Fi connection at home to continue with their studies from March 2020.
- Attendance figures in primary schools in the academic year 2019-2020 were affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on figures up to 13 March 2020 overall attendance was fairly consistent with that of the previous academic year (93.83% compared with 94.02% 2018-2019).

However, there is a significant difference in attendance amongst traveller pupils (77.92% compared to 84.58%). Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families; and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference.

- Secondary school attendance figures were similarly affected (92.51% compared to 93.46% 2018-2019). Again attendance amongst traveller pupils is significantly lower than in the previous academic year (65.65% compared to 76.62%). Again while no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families; and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference.
- There were a total of 13 permanent exclusions during the academic year 2019-2020, a reduction on the 18 exclusions in the previous academic year. The number of primary school exclusions increased to three (two boys and one girl) while the number of secondary school exclusions decreased 10 (six boys and four girls).

More significantly the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) across both sectors who were excluded fell from 14 to 11.

2. To reduce the gaps in educational performance attainment between boys and girls at Foundation Phase and Key Stages (KS) 2, & 3

With the disruption to learning and assessment during the latter part of the academic year it is not possible to provide a true comparison between academic years in respect of levels of attainment. While no Foundation Phase, key stage 2 or key stage 3 assessments were gathered by the Welsh Government during the academic year 2019-2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, teacher assessments were carried out for key stage 4, details of which can be found on page 36.

- A specific Neath Port Talbot Leadership section has been developed on Hwb which provides a toolkit of valuable resources for school leaders, including resources to support leaders to strengthen their self-evaluation processes and to make them more pupil-centred.
- Our Legacy youth workers continued to support secondary schools with tailored support provided to each school. A combination of group work and one to one support has proved to be successful within schools, and projects in the local community have given young people a range of exciting opportunities. Between 1 April and 30 September 2019, 608 young people (343 males and 265 females) were supported by the Legacy Team.
- The numbers of Gypsy/Traveller pupils on school rolls remained fairly constant with 76 pupils (Pupil Level Annual School Census 2020) for the academic year 2019-2020.
- As of September 2019 the Cam Nesa team had worked with 321 young people with 131 of them gaining employment. Cam Nesa is a project to help reduce the number of NEET young people, among 16-24 year olds across the South West Wales region.

Equality Objective 8 - Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.

- We were awarded the Silver Award for Gender Diversity by Chwarae Teg in recognition of our clear commitment to making a difference to the recruitment, retention and progression of women in the workplace.
- We signed up to the Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge in September 2019, which provides a framework for employers to support employees with their mental health. We have held a number of events to raise awareness of mental health, as well as signposting staff to advice, guidance and support. A network of Champions recruited from our workforce, will help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and encourage employees to talk about their mental wellbeing.
- We became the first local authority in Wales to implement a 'Safe Leave' policy for staff who are affected by any form of Domestic Abuse, allowing them the opportunity to access support services, legal advice, alternative housing or medical help in a safe, planned way.

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

- In our gender pay gap report published in December 2019, the difference between the average pay of the men and women who work in the Council reduced to 3.93% at March 2019. Whilst encouraging, the Council is committed to further reduce this gap.
- Chwarae Teg have helped us to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan, which includes specific actions to reduce the Council's Gender Pay Gap. There is specific consideration within the action plan to the lowest paid female employees, particularly important, as whilst the Council's overall gender profile is 70% female, 97% of those employed on Grade 1, the Council's lowest pay band, are female employees
- As part of the Fair Play Employer Scheme, which we joined in February 2019, Chwarae Teg has been supporting us in delivering gender equality and so achieve all the benefits of a truly balanced workforce.

Section 3 - Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties

In working to meet the equality objectives we were conscious of the ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectation and the changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot. We have undertaken our work in the knowledge of and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We placed a strong emphasis on ensuring equality and celebrating diversity across the range of our activities. There is also recognition of and work to address inequalities in all its forms, whether in relation to statutory duties concerned with people of protected characteristics, inequality caused by disparities in income, or by virtue of whether children and young people are cared for by their own families or the council.

We were keen to work towards a more holistic approach to our work which has included attempts to better align our equality objectives and corporate improvement priorities, so that any progress made is complementary to both.

Progress against our improvement priorities and the wellbeing objectives can be found in the [Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019-2020](#).

We continued our work to realise our commitment to the Welsh language and the rights of those who wish to use Welsh when dealing with us or using our services. Recent years have seen relatively small numbers of staff who are willing, and able, to use their Welsh language skills, limited recruitment opportunities and ever reducing budgets which have all impacted on our Welsh language service.

Our [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020](#) was published on 31 July 2020. Publication was delayed due to the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic and the Council's response to ensure its residents and staff were supported during the first lockdown period.

In light of the changes necessitated as a consequence of and our response to the COVID-19 outbreak it is likely service provision post COVID-19 will look different and will provide an ideal opportunity to review our Welsh language service more effectively.

The [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy](#) progress report for the period October 2019 – March 2020, **[LINK when published]** highlights progress on the various actions the Council and its community groups partners agreed to take forward to help support the Welsh Government’s aim of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Identifying and collecting relevant information

We continued to engage with members of the public, partners, local communities and interest groups to gather information, which helped shape our various strategies, policies and plans as well as influencing the delivery of our services.

The identification and collection of information remains a key element particularly of the impact assessment process and by gathering relevant information as part of service provision we are better placed to understand the complexity of our county borough and utilise this information in developing policy and services.

We continue to see improvements in the collection and analysis of employment data as a result of the roll out of the Employee Portal where staff are able to update their own individual records. As a result we are able to better understand our workforce and so develop internal policies that are informed by more robust information.

The Community Cohesion (Brexit) Survey, undertaken in 2019 as part of the Western Bay Community Cohesion Programme, sought to establish an evidence base and to understand the impact of Brexit on our communities. The survey has provided information about people’s experiences when they are accessing public sector services, how difficult or easy they are find engaging with people from other backgrounds and if they have been a victim of a hate incident/hate crime in the area. Going forward this information will be vital to our work in developing policies and services for our residents.

Some examples of our other work during 2019-2020 to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty

- We supported and promoted events and workshops across the county borough and Swansea aimed at assisting European citizens with information on and access to the EU Settlement Scheme. Information and links to a number of useful websites that have been set up by the Welsh Government and the UK Government to provide useful, official information about Brexit is also available on our website.
- The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy '[Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities](#)' was reviewed but its publication was delayed until May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy, which has a new set of agreed objectives and actions, was developed in partnership with local service providers and survivors of VAWDASV.
- We held a Smart and Connected 2020 event in March 2020 to explore how a more digital approach could benefit our service areas. Just a few weeks later this was put to the test with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw an increase in the number of staff providing services using remote technology, from an average of 50 per day to over 1,500 per day.
- Our Youth Service supported many activities and initiatives across the county borough including targeted support to young carers, LGBTQ+ young people, young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), young people with emerging mental health issues amongst others. In addition the Youth Service and the Think Family Partnership were the first in Wales to sign up to the National Participation Charter and received the National Participation Kitemark for the way they encourage children and young people to have their say in the design and planning of the services they deliver. A more complete [update on the work the service has undertaken during 2019-2020](#) was reported to Members in January 2020.
- We became a Dementia Friendly organisation in February 2020. With an increased understanding of how dementia affects people we are better able to provide more appropriate support to those living with dementia. Unfortunately, the event planned for April by the Older Persons Alliance, at which the award would have been presented and at which the Older Persons Commissioner was due to attend could not take place due to the COVID 19 outbreak.

- We continued to provide inclusive sporting opportunities across the county borough: four fully inclusive week long sports camps as well as a weeklong camp for disabled children were held during 2019-2020, along with an accessible community sport program for children with disabilities.
- The use of the Welsh language at early years setting increased with Welsh story sessions and story resource packs offered to all providers. CAMAU learn Welsh scheme for early years' education and childcare continues to be promoted.
- During 2019-2020 the Vulnerable Learners Service (VLS), which supports groups of vulnerable learners supported 11 learners and two parents to achieve 13 first language qualifications (Thai IGCE, Mandarin GCSE, Arabic GCSE and Arabic Advanced Level).
- We entered into an agreement with Swansea Bay University Health Board with regards to processes for developing and commissioning new schemes for people with complex needs.
- In order to gain a clearer insight into the impact of welfare benefit reforms on local people we commissioned Policy in Practice to develop a Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) for Neath Port Talbot. Using household level data and advanced analytics the tracker will enable us to identify the scale of the impact changes to welfare reform will have on residents. The knowledge that we have learned from this work will also enable us to better understand the impacts on our residents affected by financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- A multi-agency Poverty Symposium was held in September 2019 to facilitate discussion about what more we can do to protect those at greatest risk of financial crisis. A follow up, multi-agency poverty workshop took place in January 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak further work has been postponed but will be progressed as soon as possible.
- Resurfacing, improved signage and road markings and drainage improvements in an underpass on the cycle route alongside the Swansea Bay Golf Course at Fabian Way were completed and now provides a safer, more accessible route for both cyclists and walkers.
- In November 2019 a Menopause Drop in Session was piloted as a joint initiative between HR and Occupational Health and as a result of positive feedback this was to become a regular offer in 2020. However due to the

disruption to working practices since March 2020 this this has not been possible although a suite of guidance and advice documents is available on our intranet.

- A First 1,000 days workshop event was held for key service managers and partners in June 2019. Ahead of the scheduled event, online engagement with parents was conducted in order to understand parent experience during their child's first 1,000 days. Over 230 parents responded to the online questionnaire and their feedback informed the workshop. Following the workshop and feedback a delivery plan was produced to take forward identified actions. These will form part of the Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.

Further events were held in NPT and Swansea during December 2019 to identify support services available and to understand the process that link services and tiers of needs. A regional follow up event was held in March 2020 to review the mapping and to identify opportunities for regional work.

Focus groups with parents were planned for end of March 2020 but these have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We continued to deliver the Council's "[Digital Strategy](#)" (Smart and Connected) - embracing the benefits of digital technologies to improve the way the council works to better meet the needs of our residents and to make the county borough attractive to potential business investors. However we have not lost sight that many people are unable for a variety of reasons to embrace the digital world and we continue to make alternative arrangements.
- With the Rector of Aberavon and Police, we held an Equality in the Workplace Transgender Awareness Day in February 2020. The aim of the event was to raise awareness amongst local employers. Guest speakers, themselves transgender, highlighted the issues they had faced as well as the support given by friends and employers.

Integrated Impact Assessments

We reviewed and revised our equality impact assessment process to include our new legal duties introduced by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as well as maintaining the focus of equalities and the Welsh language. The aim has been to develop a more integrated approach to assessing

the impact of our policies and services not only on people who share protected characteristics but also on the wider community, both now and in the future.

The revised integrated impact assessment process was introduced across all service areas in April 2019.

The Council's Executive and Non-Executive/Regulatory Report Guidance was also updated to reinforce current and reflect new legislative requirements. This update of the report guidance also provided an opportunity to reinforce the way in which impact assessments are reported to members. This was circulated to relevant staff and along with the integrated impact assessment documents are available on our intranet for all staff to access.

A review of the success of the implementation of the integrated impact assessment process was scheduled to be undertaken in May 2020 but this has been delayed due outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Page 73 The requirements of the socio economic duty, now to be introduced from April 2021, necessitates a further revision of the assessment process. While the principles of the socio economic duty are currently considered in the assessment process some minor amendments have been required to explore the impact of the duty when making strategic decisions more explicitly.

Specific Employment Information

Equalities Employment Information for the period 2019-2020 was reported to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group during the latter part of 2020 and will be published in due course.

The data will be for the 12 month period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, or where appropriate, a snapshot of the workforce on 31 March 2020.

We recognise that gaps remain in the information available as providing this data is voluntary. Data collection is low in relation to the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. However, the employee portal has provided staff with an opportunity to update their own

personal records, including the ability to update their protected characteristics, securely and in confidence. The number of staff accessing the employee portal at 31 March 2020 was 3377.

Our [second gender pay gap report](#), published in December 2019, set out the difference between the average pay of the men and women who work in the Council for the years 2018 and 2019. The pay data has been taken from the Council's workforce at:

31 March 2018, 3,741 employees which represents 1,256 (33.57%) males and 2,485 (66.43%) females

31 March 2019, 3,784 employees which represents 1,277 (33.75%) males and 2,507 (66.25%) females

The pay data excludes casual employees and all schools' employees.

Section 4 - Review of the Strategic Equality Plan

On 30 October 2019 Cabinet approved an extension to the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 to April 2020 to allow sufficient time to improve its alignment with our Corporate Plan, to better explore the requirements and impact of the then soon to be introduced socio economic duty as well as to take on board the outcomes of various projects/initiatives such as the Poverty Symposium held in October 2019.

Work to review our equality objectives and produce a revised Strategic Equality Plan had begun early in 2019 taking into account various national and local publications/research findings; latest data available to the Council and issues raised by local equality groups during meetings of the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.

Following a period of public consultation in January and February 2020 the newly revised Strategic Equality Plan, along with the draft equality objective and actions, was set to begin its journey through our reporting process ready for publication in April 2020. However, this came to a halt with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 it became increasingly apparent that while all communities had been affected, Black, Asian and minority communities had been affected disproportionately in matters of health, as key workers, with the severe effects on employment as well as in relation to accessible education for children and young people.

The brutal killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020, along with other events in our recent history as well as the devastating impact the pandemic has had on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities brought into sharp focus the deep seated attitudes and behaviours that remain towards people from these communities.

As a consequence it was recognised that the equality objectives and actions would need to be reviewed to ensure we fully addressed the impact of these events on our local communities.

Having reviewed the objectives, and taking into account recent evidence as reported to various government committees, the equality objectives were considered to be still relevant. The [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#), along with the equality objectives, was published by 1 October 2020 (the revised publication date as advised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission).

Actions, however, fell short and alternative [actions](#) to better meet these objectives in the current circumstances were developed with the involvement of our workforce and our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. These were published as part of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 following approval by Council on 27 January 2021.

We recognise that this is not the end of our work. Not only do we need to implement and make progress but we are mindful that the actions, like our ever changing society and circumstances, are not set in stone. They will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of our communities.

This work has already begun with the consideration of the survey findings of the BME Community Association's recent work to help inform the Welsh Government's Race Equality Plan, as well as ensuring they fit with and are embedded into a comprehensive approach to recovery. Consequently, timelines for actions, and any new or amended measures, will be added when the detail of this work becomes clearer.

Section 5 - Have your say

We welcome feedback on the information contained with this Report via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk or post: Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

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



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Visit the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk

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Section 6 - Performance Measures

Performance Key	
↑	Performance has improved
↔	Performance has been maintained
↓	Performance has declined.
-	No comparable data (data not suitable for comparison/no data available for comparison)

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
1	EQ1.1	Number of hate crime reports	162	145	-
2	EQ1.2	Number of hate crime reports – Disability	19	18	-
3	EQ1.3	Number of hate crime reports – Race	106	95	-
4	EQ1.4	Number of hate crime reports – Religion	3	4	-
5	EQ1.5	Number of hate crime reports – Sexual Orientation	24	23	-
6	EQ1.6	Number of hate crime reports – Transgender	12	7	-
<p>It is always challenging to predict the exact number of hate crime, as there still seems to be people who are not reporting hate crime due to many reasons.</p> <p>The recent Community Cohesion (Brexit Survey) has specifically asked questions about the hate crime and its reporting. The survey results have already been shared with our Police partners and other key stakeholders.</p>					
7	EQ1.7	Number of referrals to the Channel Panel	2	6	-

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>Following on from the work to promote the referral pathway into Channel and the continued roll out of WRAP training across the authority, we have seen an expected rise in the number of referrals.</p> <p>It is important to note, that many referrals are not accepted into Channel, as they may be deemed inappropriate for this level of intervention by WECTU (Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit).</p> <p>Referral figures do continue to rise with the more training and awareness raising that takes place across the authority and within partner organisations.</p>			
8	EQ1.8	Number of new referrals to Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference/ specialist domestic violence agencies	2650	1967	-
		<p>This figure comprises victims at all risk levels from low-medium risk to very high risk and victims may be supported across more than one area e.g. open to the IDVA service and known to specialist provider or MARAC.</p> <p>It is impossible to give a particular reason for the decrease in referrals during the period. Having the confidence to report or disclose is a longstanding concern in this area of work. We encourage disclosure, through Communications and Engagement, through training, and continue to challenge the stigma that surrounds domestic abuse, but ultimately it is very much a personal choice to disclose and engage.</p> <p>It is likely that the number of referrals will increase for the period 2020-2021 not only a result of the continued roll out of training and awareness raising work being undertaken but also with the impact of the various lockdowns experienced during the period during which there has been a huge spike in demand across all agencies.</p>			
9	EQ1.9	Number of repeat referrals to Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference/specialist domestic violence agencies	617	731	-

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>Victims of domestic abuse can often struggle to engage with support due to the nature of the abuse and the controlling/coercive behaviour patterns of an abusive partner. For this reason, victims may disengage with a service but then present again at a later stage. Alternatively, some victims will fully engage with support and no longer require any services.</p> <p>However, there are a cohort of people with complex needs who struggle to engage with services and will continually access multiple services with very poor outcomes. There is ongoing work being conducted to better understand the approach in these instances and whether an alternative approach would be more appropriate and lead to better outcomes.</p>			

Equality Objective 2: Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
11	EQ2.2	% of website pages available in Welsh	100%	100%	↔
14	EQ2.5 (DBC/007)	% of customers very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with improvements made to service available on-line – general look and feel	100% (21 out of 21)	79% (23 out of 29)	↓
15	EQ2.6 (DBC/008)	More of our customers find the website easier to use: % very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with ease of getting around site	85.71% (18 out of 21)	83% (25 out of 30)	↓
16	EQ2.7 (DBC/009)	More of our customers can access the information and find the website easier/service they want (on our website) first time: % very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with ease of finding information/services	88.1% (18.5 out of 21)	82.7% (24 out of 29)	↓
A verbal update will be provided at Cabinet					
17	EQ2.8 (DBC/010)	Number of customers assisted to use self-service options by Customer Services One Stop Shop staff	23	-	-
Due to changes in working arrangements and limited staff resources data for this measure was not collected during 2019-2020.					

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
18	EQ2.9 (DBC/001)	% of transactions completed on line (new services)	80%	*	
* A verbal update will be provided at Cabinet					
19	EQ2.10 (DBC/002)	Number of new services available on line	16	*	
* A verbal update will be provided at Cabinet					
21	EQ2.12	Number of complaints upheld in relation to compliance with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme/Standards	1 out of 5	1 and 1 in part out of 8	↑
<p>A total of eight complaints were received during 2019-2020; seven via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council. Of the seven received via the Welsh Language Commissioner, one was upheld, five did not require investigation and one continues to be investigated.</p> <p>The complaint direct to the Council was in two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 – although the only Welsh speaker no longer employed in the service arrangements had already been made to ensure we were able to continue to offer a Welsh language service. <p>More information on complaints can be found in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020.</p>					

Equality Objective 3: Improve access to services by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people - Social Services

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
22	EQ3.1	Number of adults receiving services from adult services at 31st March	2,721	2,626	-
The cause for the reduction is suggestive of increased support being available in the community and from preventative services, reducing the need for people to require care and support, although the exact reason for the reduction is not identified.					
23	EQ3.2	Number of children receiving care and support from Children's Services at 31 March	1,182	1,154	-
24	EQ3.3	Number of carers who were assessed as at 31 March	287	216	-
The Carer's service undertake assessments on behalf of the Council, however many carers do not take up the offer of assessment. All identified carers will, however, receive information and advice from the service to support them in their role.					

Equality Objective 4: Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
25	EQ4.1	Number of equality impact assessments undertaken and reported to the relevant Cabinet Board	6	13	↑
26	EQ4.2	Number of people actively participating in: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association	10	9	↔
BME Community Association – the figure quoted is the number of trustees on the Executive Committee. The reduction in the number of trustees was as a result of the death of one of its trustees in March 2019.					

Equality Objective 5: Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
27	EQ5.1	Number of staff attending training on specific topics	1876 (1485 of which were NPT staff)	1349 (NPT Staff)	-
A number of specific courses were delivered during 2019-2020 including Equalities in the Workplace and Hidden Disabilities and Making Reasonable Adjustments. Other scheduled courses e.g. Unconscious Bias/ Equalities in the Workplace/Introduction to Transgender Issues were postponed due to impact of Covid-19.					

Equality Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
28	EQ6.1	Number of complaints received in relation to accessibility	0	0	↔
29	EQ6.2	% of complaints upheld in relation to accessibility	0	0	↔
30	EQ6.3	% of adults aged 60 or over who hold a concessionary bus pass	87%	68.82%	-
<p>Between September 2019 and March 2020, Welsh Government via Transport for Wales undertook the bulk renewal of all Concessionary Travel Cards in Wales. This was a large piece of work which encouraged people to apply online for their new and replacement cards. Prior to this work being started It was anticipated that following the renewal process there would be far fewer cards in circulation.</p>					
31	EQ6.4	Number of mobility scooter trips facilitated by Shopmobility			
		Neath	1,555	1,319	↓
		Port Talbot	2,402	2,137	↓
32	EQ6.5	Number of customers enrolled with Shopmobility			
		Neath	164	89	↓
		Port Talbot	202	146	↓

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Equality Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>The following information has been provided by Shopmobility: Neath continues to be significantly impacted since the move to the multi-storey car park site in 2016. There was a continued decline in usage due to being located much further away from the main shopping area than at the previous location and so are more impacted by adverse weather conditions. As Port Talbot Shopmobility is located in Aberavon Shopping Centre itself it is largely unaffected by weather for car users. At the previous location free onsite parking was available for shopmobility users, and although a small number of parking spaces are allocated for shopmobility users in the Neath multi-storey car park, these are not free and the cost of parking is becoming prohibitive for many. This is reflected not only in the decline in daily usage but also in the number of new registrations at both Neath and Port Talbot.</p>			

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
33	EQ7.1	% of girls attaining Outcome 5+ in literacy at Foundation Phase	77.12%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Outcome 5+ in literacy at Foundation Phase	65.29%	N/A	-
34	EQ7.2	% of girls attaining Outcome 5+ in numeracy at Foundation Phase	76.58%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Outcome 5+ in numeracy at Foundation Phase	70.77%	N/A	-
35	EQ7.3	% of girls attaining Level 4+ literacy at Key Stage 2	89.27%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 4+ literacy at Key Stage 2	81.38%	N/A	-
36	EQ7.4	% of girls attaining Level 4+ numeracy at Key Stage 2	87.64%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 4+ numeracy at Key Stage 2	85.25%	N/A	-
37	EQ7.5	% of girls attaining Level 5+ literacy at Key Stage 3	90.16%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 5+ literacy at Key Stage 3	80.48%	N/A	-
38	EQ7.6	% of girls attaining Level 5+ numeracy at Key Stage 3	86.27%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 5+ numeracy at Key Stage 3	80.00%	N/A	-
39	EQ7.7	% of girls attaining Level 2 literacy at Key Stage 4	76.12%	80.35%	-
		% of boys attaining Level 2 literacy at Key Stage 4	52.55%	64.05%	-
40	EQ7.8	% of girls attaining Level 2 numeracy at Key Stage 4	60.81%	70.32%	-
		% of boys attaining Level 2 numeracy at Key Stage 4	57.12%	63.14%	-

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>No Foundation Phase, key stage 2 or key stage 3 assessments were gathered by the Welsh Government during 2019/20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>From 2018/19 the Welsh Government no longer publishes 'Level 2' key stage 4 data although figures have been included which are gathered from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate Data Unit's analysis spreadsheets. Key stage 4 literacy includes both language and literature; numeracy includes mathematics and numeracy</p> <p>2019-2020 figures are based on teacher assessments due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>			
41	EQ7.9	% of pupil attendance in primary schools:	94.02%	93.83%	-
		girls	94.20%	94.04%	-
		boys	93.86%	93.62%	-
		pupils identifying as non-white British	93.63%	92.76%	-
		pupils identifying as white British	94.07%	93.93%	-
		pupils with special educational needs	92.70%	92.24%	-
		pupils with no special educational needs	94.55%	94.41%	-
		traveller pupils	84.58%	77.92%*	-
		non-traveller pupils	94.07%	93.92%	-
<p>2019-2020 attendance data was available up to 13 March 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>*Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have</p>					

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		disrupted support and confidence amongst families and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference			
42	EQ7.10	% of pupil attendance in secondary schools	93.46%	92.51%	-
		girls	93.51%	92.49%	-
		boys	93.41%	92.53%	-
		pupils identifying as non-white British	94.40%	93.44%	-
		pupils identifying as white British	93.43%	92.50%	-
		pupils with special educational needs	91.47%	90.05%	-
		pupils with no special educational needs	94.23%	93.37%	-
		traveller pupils	76.62%	65.65%*	-
		non-traveller pupils	93.49%	92.92%	-
2019-2020 attendance data was available up to 13 March 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic *Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference					

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
43	EQ7.11	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year in primary schools	1	3	↓
		Boys	1	2	↓
		Girls	0	1	↓
		SEN	1	3	↓
		Travellers	0	0	↔
		BME	0	0	↔
44	EQ7.12	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year in secondary schools	17	10	↑
		Boys	13	6	↑
		Girls	4	4	↔
		SEN	13	8	↑
		Travellers	0	0	↔
		BME	0	1	↓

Equality Objective 8: Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
45	EQ8.1	Number of staff attending recruitment training	29	49	↑
46	EQ8.2	% of participants of training sessions that considered their knowledge had increased	100%	100%	↔
47	EQ8.3	Number of recruitment complaints	0	0	↔
48	EQ8.4	Number of new starters commencing above the minimum point of the grade	35	27	↑

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

24 February 2021

Report of the Head of Human & Organisational Development – S Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Welsh Language Promotion Strategy - progress report October 2019-March 2020

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy progress report for the period October 2019-March 2020
2. To seek Members' approval to realign the reporting period to reflect other statutory annual progress reports.

Executive Summary

3. The report provides information on progress made during the six month period October 2019-March 2020, Appendix 1.
4. The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, and associated action plan, was adopted by Council in September 2018. With the Strategy being adopted midyear, reporting periods have followed a similar arrangement; an annual reporting period of 1 October to 30 September.
5. While progress must be reported annually there is no statutory annual reporting period, unlike many of the Council's other plans or strategies. Although in itself this is not an issue, with the reporting period out of step with other progress reports it does hamper members' holistic oversight of the Council's progress.
6. Bringing the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy reporting period in line with other plans will allow for a more holistic understanding of the Council's progress in relation to its statutory requirements.

7. During early 2020-2021 the redeployment of many of our workforce into other service areas to support the work of tackling the COVID-19 outbreak and to support residents in these unprecedented times impacted on our ability to provide Welsh language services to pre outbreak levels. However, as time has progressed matters have eased and while we continue to face challenges our Welsh language services are being stepped up.
8. Although a decision was made early in the lockdown for all communications in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak to be in English only to provide information as quickly as possible (a decision made on the basis of health and safety as well as on the more practical issue of limited resources in such challenging times) over the summer we were able to reintroduce bilingual communications. With the recruitment of two Welsh speakers to the Communications Team during the autumn we have ensured there is ongoing capacity for all future communications.

Background

9. Standard 145 (Promotion) of the Welsh Language Standards states that every Local Authority must produce and publish on their website a 5 year Strategy that sets out how they propose to promote the Welsh language and to facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in their area.
10. The Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and action plan were adopted by Council on 26 September 2018. The first progress report for the period October 2018-September 2019 was approved by Cabinet in December 2019.
11. The annual reporting period has been dictated by the date of adoption of the strategy, October – September, which is inconsistent with other progress reporting periods.

Progress October 2019-March 2020

12. Progress reported is primarily in relation to activities in the education sectors as well as in relation to 'Welsh in the Workplace'
13. In light of the short reporting period there has inevitably been limited progress to report which has been compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak toward the end of the reporting period that affected, and continues to affect, service provision and data collection.
14. Any additional information that becomes available for the period 2019-2020 will be included in the annual report 2020-2021 which will be reported during autumn 2021.

Realigning the reporting period

15. By reporting annually for a period that is inconsistent with other statutory reporting requirements it is difficult to fully appreciate the Council's progress.
16. A realignment of the reporting period at this time is considered appropriate given the limitations on services and activities as a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak, the disruption to services, redeployment of staff (although temporary) as well as the reprioritisation of work within the Council as well as by our external partners.
17. As a result it is proposed that a six month progress report for October 2019- March 2020 is presented initially with future annual reports presented that are consistent with our other plans and strategies i.e. April – March each year. Thus the progress report for April 2020 – March 2021 will be reported during autumn 2021.

Financial Appraisal

18. There are no additional financial impacts attached to the implementation of the Strategy as all actions have been developed within budgetary constraints.

Integrated Impact Assessment

19. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Valleys Communities Impact:

20. Progress against a number of actions in the action plan will help promote and support the Welsh language within the valley communities.

Workforce Impact

21. There are no direct workforce impacts associated with the Strategy as all actions have been developed taking into account our current workforce and resources.
22. By realigning the reporting period it is anticipated that data collection will be streamlined and will ensure that more seamless reporting for staff and members will take place.

Legal Impact

23. This report sets out how the Council meets its legal duty under the Welsh Language Standards which has been referenced in the body of this report.

Risk Management

24. There are no direct risk management impacts associated with the report however; there may be a financial risk to the Council for failure to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

26. Members note the progress made against the actions in the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy action plan for the period October 2019-March 2020.
27. Members agree the new reporting arrangements.

Reason for Proposed Decision

28. To enable the Council to meet the Welsh Language statutory requirements.

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

30. Appendix 1 – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy - progress report October 2019-March 2020.

List of Background Papers

[Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and action plan](#)

Officer Contact

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy Progress Report - October 2019-March 2020

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

www.npt.gov.uk

Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
Progress Report - October 2019-March 2020

The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy action plan set out what we plan to achieve over the life of the strategy, 2018-2023. As a result some actions span the whole period while others have specific target dates – some of which were reported on last year in the progress report covering the period – October 2018-September 2019.

Some actions, particularly those with more immediate target dates, have been completed or are ongoing in nature. As a result consideration will need to be given to amending the action plan – which will be considered as part of the next annual report for the period 2020-2021 due to be published in the autumn 2021

In light of the short reporting period there is limited progress to report which has been compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak toward the end of the reporting period that affected, and continues to affect, service provision and data collection.

Any further information that becomes available for the period 2019-2020 will be included in the annual report 2020-2021.

Strategic Priority 1. Children and Young People

1.1 Early Years provision

- We provided and promoted courses, such as PACEY FUN with Welsh: Next Steps and CAMAU Welsh in Childcare to childcare providers.
- We developed an 'Everyday Welsh in Childcare' course which was to be included in the Early Years Training Programme for 2020-2021, unfortunately with the outbreak of COVID-19 this has been delayed.
- We have continued to complete the 'Use of Welsh in Settings' evaluations with childcare settings. All childcare staff are encouraged to complete the CWLWM Welsh Level Checker online. CMLWM is a partnership of five childcare organisations, Mudiad Meithrin, Early Years Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru, National Day Nurseries Association and Pacey, which work closely together to ensure that families across Wales have access to affordable, quality and flexible childcare and play opportunities that meet their needs.
- Number of children accessing Welsh language in Flying Start has increased year on year as has the number of Welsh Flying Start childcare places: from 104 in 2017-2018 to 130 in 2019-2020 and 76 in 2017-2018 to 90 in 2019-2020 respectively.
- We are working to ensure a consistent message and service is being offered in both childcare setting and schools. The Early Years Development Officer planned to attend 'Fflic a Fflac' training provided by schools for further ideas and support in childcare however due to COVID-19 restrictions the session was cancelled. We continue to provide bilingual story books, to encourage Welsh story sessions, and encourage and train staff on how to use incidental Welsh within the settings. More resources are being planned to aid the promotion of Welsh.

1.2 Education – primary sector

- The 'Being Bilingual' booklet has been created and shared with schools. Partnership work with Menter Iaith Castell-nedd Port Talbot (MICNPT), is strong and most Welsh Medium schools engage well with MICNPT to develop Welsh medium activities within their schools for pupils and parents. However, we need to turn attention to reaching the wider community to further promote the advantages of Welsh medium education and the benefits of bilingualism.
- Welsh Government grant funding was awarded for improvement/extension of facilities at three Welsh medium schools, YGG Pontardawe, YGG Cwmllynfell and YGG Tyle'r Ynn. Works have been commenced with completion dates during 2021-2022. Improvement works have been completed at YGG Castell-nedd with further works currently being undertaken at YGG Rhosafan.
- Seven Welsh medium primary schools are currently following the silver award targets for the Welsh Charter, with three following the Gold award. Nearly all, English medium schools are currently engaged in the Welsh Charter scheme. 'Athrawon Bro' work very effectively with the English Medium schools to promote and develop the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Charter scheme and continually encourage more schools to get involved.
- Our development officers continue to work closely with schools to secure a better and more ambitious language learning continuum between current key stages. We work with curriculum leaders to promote a more meaningful relationship between the learner and the Welsh language that goes beyond the academic focus as well as working effectively with MICNPT, yr Urdd and other key agencies to ensure that informal opportunities to use Welsh are facilitated and promoted.
- Work is progressing on identifying areas in the borough for Welsh Medium education development, however, this work has been affected in the last quarter of 2019-20 due to COVID-19.

1.3 Education – secondary sector

- A sub group of the WESP forum continues to work on reviewing and improving our website provide appropriate information on and to promote the advantages of Welsh-medium education.
- Transfer rates between Welsh medium primary schools located in the south east of the county borough (YGG Castell-nedd, YGG Tyle'r Ynn and YGG Rhosafan) to Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur were very high for the academic year 2019-2020. It is expected that it will have a positive impact on transfer rates over a 6 year period and beyond.
- Transfer rates between Welsh medium schools located in the north west of the county borough, traditionally viewed as the Welsh speaking heartland, to Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur increased for the academic year 2019-2020. This was mainly due to the effective cluster and continuous transition work between primary schools and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera.
- Welsh speaking youth workers delivered Young Carers Awareness raising sessions to pupils at YGG Gwaun Cae Guerwen, YGG Pontardawe and YGG Trebannws. These sessions help schools and young people to identify any young carers so that they can receive additional support.
- The Youth Service was instrumental in delivering Welsh language social activities and Welsh culture and heritage to secondary age children. Its work has included:
 - A variety of activities around Welsh culture were delivered in youth clubs across the county including: Welsh quizzes in Crynant, Seven Sisters and Taibach, Welsh Bingo in Bryncoch and Glynneath and making Welsh cakes in Taibach
 - Welsh Scrabble was purchased for use at Cwmllynfell Youth Club and Six Nations Rugby Activities were run in Bryn Youth Club

- Dydd Gŵyl Dewi - all youth clubs were provided with packs containing daffodil bulbs, hessian bags and gift tags. The idea was that young people would draw a national symbol on the hessian bag, place the daffodil bulb inside, write a note on the gift tag and give the bulb as a gift to someone for St David's Day: some young people chose to write their message in Welsh. The rationale behind the packs was to provide young people with an opportunity to make something while discussing the traditions and customs of Wales. It also gave young people the opportunity to plant daffodils which can be enjoyed every year around St David's Day.
- Dydd Santes Dwynwen - youth clubs were provided with candle making packs and an information sheet on the story of Santes Dwynwen. The young people were supported in making red candles which they placed in a presentation box along with the information sheet on the Santes Dwynwen story, again providing opportunities to discuss the traditions and customs of Wales.
- Several youth clubs delivered the Agroed Cymru course on the Traditions and Customs of Wales. Unfortunately as youth clubs had to close several weeks early as a result of the pandemic the young people were unable to complete the course.
- A Welsh Language residential course was delivered to Welsh speaking young people and held at Llangrannog. Young people took part in the Traditions and Customs of Wales Agored Course. The course was delivered in Welsh by Welsh speaking Youth Workers. The young people were given the opportunity to use Welsh in a social setting throughout the residential course.
- A Welsh speaking activity worker was appointed to work primarily in Cwmllynfell Youth Club but also covers sessions at Seven Sisters and Crynant Youth Clubs. All activities are held bilingually along with conversations held in Welsh between Welsh speakers.
- As part of their Welsh Baccalaureate young people from Ysgol Gyfyn Ystalyfera were supported by and had volunteer placements with Cwmllynfell Youth Club. They were encouraged to use Welsh on their placement

and delivered a range of activities to club members, served in the tuck shop and helped make bilingual posters promoting activities amongst others activities.

- Year 12 pupils who were currently employed by the youth service held an assembly at Ysgol Gyfyn Ystalyfera for year 11 pupils, to promote youth clubs, youth work posts and also to show pupils that the Welsh language was valued in the workplace.
- The Youth Council now has a Welsh Language representative whose role is to think of ways to help promote Welsh language and culture and help identify any issues young people are experiencing in relation to these areas.

Strategic Priority 2. Families

2.1 Language Transmission in the Home

- Open access courses continue to be promoted to all childcare settings
- Croesi'r Bont continue to operate in all cylchoedd meithrin and Georgie Peorgie's Tir Morfa.
- Work to identify and secure venues and volunteers for Ti a Fi groups have been put on hold following the outbreak of the pandemic, although work has continued with the Family Information Service to promote Welsh.

Strategic Priority 3. Communities

3.1 Welsh in the Community

- We continue to advertise vacancies in accordance with our Welsh Language Standards on our dedicated jobs page which is available via the intranet and the internet.

3.2 Welsh in the Workplace

- We continue to update our Equality and Community Cohesion Group on progress in relation to compliance with the Standards. Compliance is monitored internally, via mystery shopper exercises and service reviews, as well as by the Welsh Language Commissioner as part of his regulatory duties. To address issues identified via compliance testing exercises training sessions to address language awareness and reinforce compliance requirements were developed and delivered by MICNPT in January/ February 2020. In addition Equality and Community Cohesion Group received updates on complaints received in relation to non-compliance and the actions undertaken to ensure this is not repeated.
- Our Welsh Language Officer Group continues to work to promote and support Welsh language compliance amongst staff. Articles providing guidance and support were published in the internal online newsletter, In the Loop with help and support available on the performance hub section of the intranet.
- HR is able to report on the number of employees who have Welsh language skills via the employee portal. This is a self-service tool, which enables staff to update data re their Welsh language skills. While not all staff have registered for the employee portal currently 4,000 have done so: with 3,377 active users as at March 2020.
- We held a short-term campaign for the first Welsh Rights Day on 6 December 2019 to promote the rights of staff to use Welsh in the workplace.

- We continue to comply with the Welsh Language Standards with our HR processes and procedures; providing Welsh employment documentation where required and ensuring staff are able to access policies and procedures in Welsh.
- Our Training Section provided opportunities, e-learning and face to face sessions, for staff to improve both spoken and written language skills. Courses included:
 - Welcome- Parts 1 and 2
 - Welcome Back- Parts 1 and 2
 - Teachers -Parts 1 and 2
 - Headteachers - Parts 1 and 2
 - Improving Your Written Welsh (Gloywi Iaith)
- The new HR/Payroll system, which will be implemented in 2021, will provide an opportunity to align its capabilities with a language skills strategy to enable us to plan and manage staff language skills.

Mid-term review of the action Plan

As some actions have been completed or are ongoing, along with the impact of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic on service delivery and which will inevitably affect progress during 2020-2021 it is an appropriate time to undertake a mid-term review of the action plan.

This review will help ensure the action plan remains relevant, that completed actions are deleted as well as ensure that information collection and reporting arrangements are appropriate going forward.

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

24 February 2021

Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title

Half Year Progress Report - Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2020-2021 – period 1st August 2020 – 31st January 2021

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with a half year update on the progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2020-2021 (attached at Appendix 1). The action plan reflects the governance issues (improvement areas) identified in the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019-2020 reported to Cabinet on 21st May 2020.

Executive Summary

2. On 21st May 2020, 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 requirement, the Corporate Governance Group prepared an Addendum which contained a revised table of improvement work for action during 2020-2021 which was prepared in accordance with guidance issued by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy). The Addendum was approved by Cabinet on 30th July 2020.

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.
5. However, between 16th and 31st March 2020, changes were required to the Council's system of internal controls to ensure the Council was able to mobilise its emergency response to the pandemic. These changes, along with a review of the effectiveness of these arrangements informed the improvement work contained within the attached improvement action plan.

Progress to date

6. The Corporate Governance Group continues to oversee the improvement work identified in the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan to ensure the Council's processes and procedures enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively.
7. During the period August 2020 – January 2021, good progress has been made on the improvement work areas contained within the action plan.

The improvement work progressed includes:

- The audit of the Urgency Action procedure undertaken by Internal Audit which concluded all decisions had been taken in accordance with the Urgency Action Protocol which ensured all decisions have been taken lawfully
- “Homeworking Guidance – during Covid-19” - guidance and information prepared on what it is recommended an employee should have in place to ensure home working is carried out in a safe manner
- The commissioning of a community impact assessment by the Public Services Board to understand how people, businesses and

organisations have experienced the pandemic and what impact it has had.

- No breaches referred to the Standards Committee in 2020
- Revised Corporate Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy approved by Cabinet September 2020.

More detail is contained in Appendix 1.

Financial Appraisal

8. The progress described was delivered against a challenging financial backdrop.

Integrated Impact Assessment

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

Valleys Communities Impact:

10. No implications.

Workforce Impact

11. The progress set out in Appendix 1 has been delivered during the Council's response to the pandemic which has been a challenging time for the workforce. During that time the Workforce Planning Group met and a key role of the Group was to review key employment strategies to support the Council's response to the pandemic.

Legal Impact

12. This monitoring report is prepared under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and discharges the Council's duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions".
13. The Council also has a duty to reflect the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to ensure that our governance structures enable different parts of the organisation to work together on

setting well-being objectives and taking all reasonable steps to meet well-being objectives.

Risk Management Impacts

14. The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk. Failure to monitor progress on the action plan may lead to non-compliance by Audit Wales and statutory recommendations the Council would be obliged to address.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

16. It is recommended that Cabinet note the half year progress made on the Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2020-21 for the period 1st August 2020 to 31st January 2021 - attached at Appendix 1.

Reason for Proposed Decision

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

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

19. Appendix 1 – Corporate Governance Improvement Action Plan 2019-20

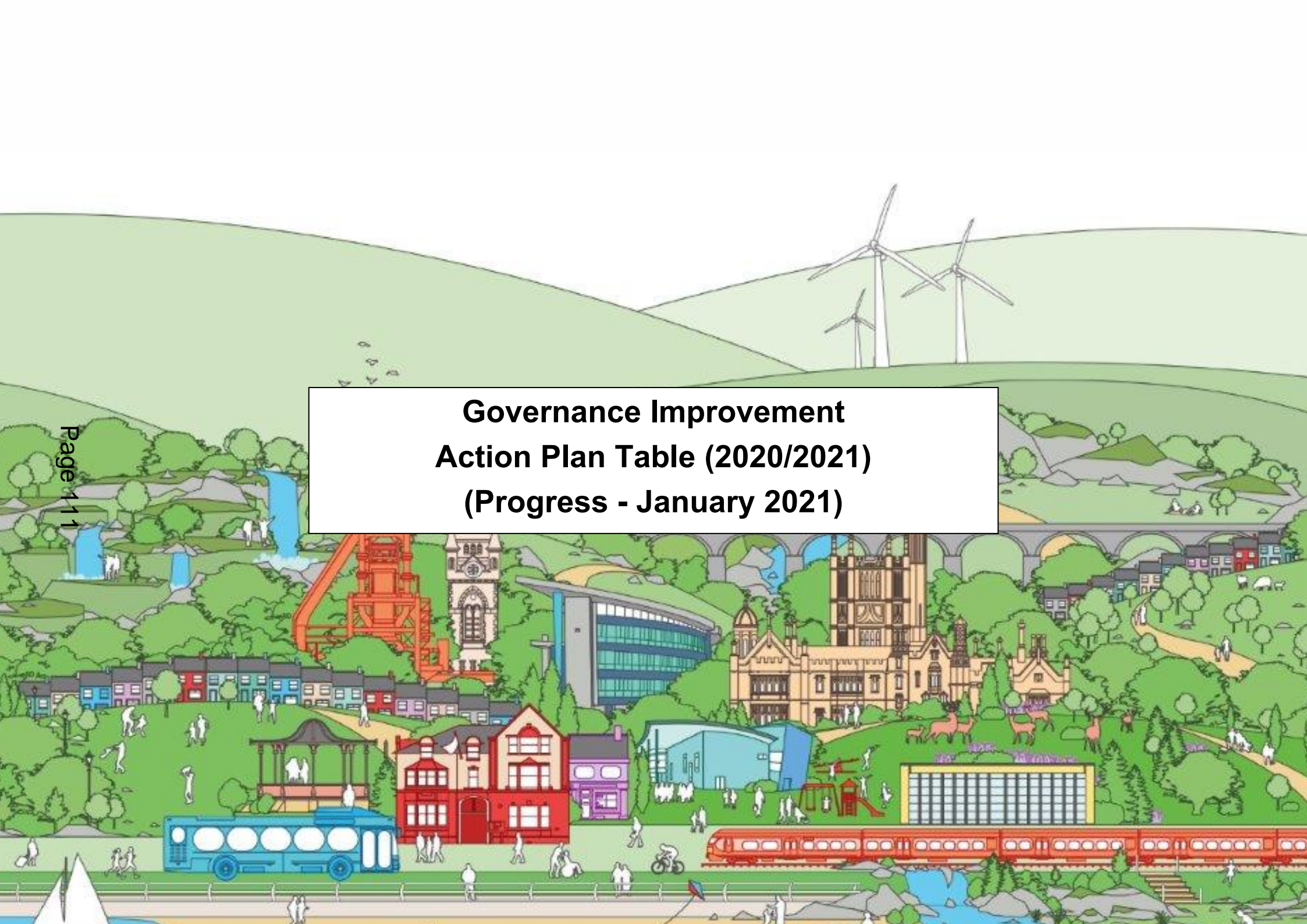
List of Background Papers

20. Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020
21. Annual Governance Statement Addendum 2019-2020

Officer Contact

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**Governance Improvement
Action Plan Table (2020/2021)
(Progress - January 2021)**

Governance Improvement Action Plan Table (2020/2021)

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	Progress – January 2021
A1	Areas of work identified following a reassessment of governance arrangements as part of recovery planning and the associated governance improvement priorities:		
Page 112	<p>A1i</p> <p>Democratic arrangements - continuous review of arrangements being undertaken to evolve democratic arrangements when meetings will be held remotely.</p>	<p>Strategic Manager - Policy & Executive Support</p>	<p>Continuous review has been undertaken by the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with Leader and Group Leaders and Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and Democratic Services Committee.</p> <p>Cycle of meetings for remainder of 2020/2021 agreed at Council – 23rd December 2020 (which includes the standing up of Cabinet Boards).</p> <p>Amended Guidance and Protocol for the Remote Attendance at Meetings circulated to all Members (following consideration by Chairs and Vice Chairs – on 26th October 2020).</p> <p>Digital Democracy Fund - £500,000 funding been made available by Welsh Government to support the digital</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
Page 113			<p>transformation of democracy (with a focus on the requirements set out in Part 3 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Bill. Application submitted.</p> <p>Simultaneous translation – no solution to date.</p> <p>Audit of Urgency Action procedure completed by Internal Audit. The main conclusion of the report was:</p> <p>‘During the period when Council meetings were suspended the urgency action protocol was utilised which ensured that there was scrutiny in place and decisions taken were lawful. All Urgency Actions tested conformed with the Urgency Action Protocol.</p> <p>Further action was also taken to ensure lawful decision making in the event that the Urgency Action Protocol could not be utilised.’</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
Page 114	<p>A1ii</p> <p>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</p>	Head of Finance	<p>Audit Committee (14th September) approved an Audit Plan for the quarter September 2020 – December 2020.</p> <p>A further update was presented to Audit Committee at their meeting of 14th January 2021 in relation to Audit work completed to date and plans for the remainder of the financial year.</p> <p>The focus of Internal Audit work in 2020/21 is on auditing areas considered to be a higher risk due to remote working due to the pandemic and the subsequent changes in control processes.</p> <p>Coverage of these areas should provide the Head of Internal Audit with sufficient assurance not to have to issue a limitation of scope when</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
			providing the opinion required for the financial year.
Page 115	<p>A1iii</p> <p>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.</p>	Corporate Governance Group	<p>“Homeworking Guidance – during Covid-19” - guidance and information prepared on what it is recommended an employee should have in place to ensure home working is carried out in a safe manner.</p> <p>“Return to Workplaces Processes – following COVID-19” – a framework developed within which services can commence their planning in relation to how they return to the workplace and deliver services in a sustainable way.</p>
	<p>A1iv</p> <p>Equalities and other impacts - ensuring there is scrutiny of the extent to which the changes implemented and planned discharge the Council’s legal obligations.</p>		Assessing the impact of various new/changes to policies and services

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	Progress – January 2021
Page 116	(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 & Executive Support	<p>is a requirement of the Council’s reporting arrangements. First stage assessments, and/or full assessments as required, are undertaken as part of the policy development process and consider the impact of policies and/or services to meet legal requirements. The assessment provides members with information on which to make an informed decision with the minutes reflecting the consideration given.</p> <p>With the recent changes and developments as a result of the commencement of the socio economic duty, the evidenced disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on our various communities as well as our ongoing work to address racial inequality, the IIA framework will be reviewed in the coming months to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>The Public Services Board is leading on the multi-agency recovery planning for the County Borough following the</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
Page 117			<p>Covid-19 outbreak. An initial community impact assessment was commissioned to understand how people, businesses and organisations have experienced the pandemic and what impact it has had. The evidence from the community impact assessment will inform the approach to recovery and to help identify key areas where collective action by partners could reduce the negative impacts.</p>
Page 117	<p>A1v Finance – understanding the one-off and recurring costs associated with the situation and the impact of this on the Council’s financial health</p>	Head of Finance	<p>Monthly claims process set up to reclaim additional costs from the WG Hardship Fund. Claims also submitted for income loss resulting from Covid. First quarter and second quarter claims have been paid; Welsh Government have requested a third quarter claim to be submitted in January with a fourth quarter estimated claim anticipated in February.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports to Members have moved to bi-monthly from</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
			quarterly to ensure Cabinet are kept informed as to the financial impact of the pandemic.
Page 118	<p>A1vi</p> <p>ICT - ensuring there is an assessment of the impact of innovation on Information Risk and suitable measures in place to manage the risks.</p>	Strategic Manager - ICT	Digital Services and Information Governance will conduct a DPIA including Risk Assessment in respect of the introduction of a new Digital solution and to cover any significant change to an existing process.
	<p>A1vii</p> <p>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).</p>	Head of Human & Organisational Development	In September the Emergency Planning Team published the “1 st wave Covid-19 debrief report”. There are a number of recommendations within the report which will need to be actioned (prioritised) and included within the cell reactivation document which is to follow.
	<p>A1viii</p> <p>Statutory duties – careful consideration of Council responses to statutory duties suspended or relaxed during the emergency situation</p>		Ongoing review takes place of current and forthcoming legislative obligations and consideration will be given to all

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	Progress – January 2021
	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	legislative aspects that has and will take place during the pandemic as part of any recovery plan developed.
Page 119	A1xi Partnership working – ensure the lessons learned from mobilising the emergency response inform future choices made about partnership working	Corporate Governance Group	Mapping exercise to be undertaken (as part of recovery planning) to capture the lessons learned including the identification of those partnerships that were effective and the de-prioritisation of those that were not.
Page 119	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 Resource & Organisational Development	The already established Workforce Planning Group has met more frequently throughout the emergency, weekly, and since June fortnightly. This forum supports the identification of critical skill shortages, enables the rapid redeployment of staff to plug identified gaps, critical recruitment, and reviews key employment strategies to support the Council’s response to the Covid-19 emergency. It is an inclusive approach, ensuring participation of all

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	Progress – January 2021
Page 120			<p>directorates and trade unions. Provides sounding board for the HR Team on key workforce strategies and ensures that directorates have a framework for providing workforce data and intelligence.</p> <p>Audit Wales are working with the Council to identify learnings and future improvements for workforce planning with focus groups for key stakeholders planned (subject</p>
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 & Democratic Services	<p>A report was presented to Standards Committee in January 2021 which provided assurances on the Member Code of Conduct.</p> <p>To date there have been no breaches referred to the Standards Committee in 2020 and a suitable assurance can be given to the Corporate Governance Group in due course.</p>

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	Progress – January 2021
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 & Democratic Services	<p>The updating of the Constitution is continuing and a report was brought to Council in December 2020 seeking authority for the Democratic Services Committee to establish a task and finish group to review the appropriate provisions and to consider the implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.</p> <p>Democratic Services Committee will now undertake this work stream in Spring 2021.</p>
A1.4.6	Whistle Blowing Policy to be reviewed in 2020 and published on the council website.	Head of Human Resource & Organisational Development	This was actioned in January 2020.
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;	Strategic Manager Policy & Executive Support	<p>Revised Policy approved by Cabinet September 2020.</p> <p>Further work to be undertaken to produce an external facing Policy in line with the PSOW Model Policy. To be completed by end of February 2021</p>

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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	Progress – January 2021
	further staff guidance in relation to covert recording and further staff guidance in relation to managing querulous/persistent complainants).		and forwarded to PSOW by end of March 2021.
A2.2.2	Deliver six courses in relation to Recruitment and Selection and Safe Recruitment.	Head of Human Resource & Organisational Development	Only two courses have been provided this year as a result of re-prioritising HR activity.
Page 12 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 & Democratic Services	As a result of Covid-19 an extensive training programme was not able to take place. Officers adopted a new approach therefore of training officers in smaller groups via Microsoft Teams and issuing briefing and guidance notes to colleagues to assist in implementation. Ongoing support is provided by Corporate Procurement Team to any issues.
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 & Democratic Services	A report will be brought to Cabinet for information in Spring 2021 as to the how the Ethical Employment in Supply Chain Policy has been implemented in Council Contracts.

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	Progress – January 2021
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 & Democratic Services	Work is presently ongoing and a definitive record of arrangements will be produced by Spring 2021
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 & Democratic Services	Feedback will be provided to the Corporate Governance Group at the next meeting and ongoing.

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Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Ref (action)	Improvement Action to be undertaken during 2020-2021	Responsible Officer	Progress – January 2021
A4.1.3	To undertake a review of FOI Publication Scheme in 2020-2021 with a report to Cabinet for approval.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Work is presently ongoing with this and an updated report will be provided to the Corporate Governance Group in 2021.
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 & Executive Support	Corporate planning arrangements underway for 2021/2022 and where relevant will incorporate proposals for improvement from external regulators audit work.

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	Progress – January 2021
A5.1.1 Page 124	Incorporate the findings from the Audit Wales review of our performance, risk and business planning arrangements in 2020-2021 into CPMS.	Strategic Manager Policy & Executive Support	Review undertaken in September 2020 (slightly scaled back from original scope). “Opportunities for improvement” received in December 2020 which will be considered as part of the corporate work to be undertaken early in 2021/22 to further develop the Council’s performance management framework to meet the requirements set out in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Bill.

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	Progress – January 2021
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 & Democratic Services	This work is ongoing but due to Covid-19 and staff priorities being redirected to other areas it was determined not appropriate to commence this stream

			of work in the Autumn 2020 and will instead being in early 2021.
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	No further training has been undertaken at present.

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	Progress – January 2021
A9 Page 125	To deliver governance awareness training across the Council in 2020-2021.	Head of Legal & Democratic Services / Strategic Manager Policy & Executive Support	Sessions will be delivered by March 31 st 2021 (3 sessions). The sessions will be a refresh for officers on how the Council makes decisions and the role of scrutiny.

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th February 2021.

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services- C.Griffiths

Matter for Information

Ward Affected: All

Officer Urgency Actions

Details of the Urgency Actions taken by the relevant Heads of Service in consultation with the requisite Members, for immediate implementation can be seen in the table below.

Urgency Action No	Requesting Officer	Subject	Approved Yes / No	Relevant Board/Cttee
85TD	Simon Brennan/ Andrew Thomas	Private - Local Coronavirus Vaccination Centre	Yes	R&SD Cab Board
86TD	Craig Griffiths	Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020	Yes	Cabinet
87TD	Hywel Jenkins/ Huw Jones	Extension of Grant Support to Non Essential Retail Businesses	Yes	Cabinet
88TD	Simon Brennan	Mass Testing Centre	Yes	Cabinet
003JWR	Nicola Pearce	Peripheral Road - Payments	Yes	R&SD Cab Board
29NH	Huw Jones	Grants to Support households affected by Storm Christoph and Skewen mine water floods	Yes	Cabinet
89TD	Huw Jones	Grants Paid to Business (Covid 19)	Yes	Cabinet

Financial Impacts

There is no financial impact associated with this report

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Not Required.

Valleys Communities Impacts

There are no impacts associated with this report

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

Ensuring adherence to the Council's constitutional requirements.

Risk Management Impacts

No impact.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That Members note the schedule of Urgency Actions taken.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure the Council adheres to the rules set out in the Constitution.

Implementation of Decision:

There is no call-in of this matter.

Officer Contact

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