

Appendix One – Annual Progress Report on Key Projects

<u>Strategic Housing</u>	
Housing and Homelessness Strategy	<p>The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Council) Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Strategic Plan) was agreed by Cabinet in January 2024 and complements our Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRP), which was agreed in October 2022.</p> <p>Following agreement of the business case and subsequent restructure, The Housing Strategy Team (HST) was established in October 2024, there are a few posts to still appoint into but it is expected that there will be a full team by December 2024. The HST will led the progression of the Strategic Plan and RRP, in collaboration with The Homelessness Team and the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), as well as our strategic partners such as the Third Sector and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).</p> <p>This Team will enable us to move forward at pace projects that have already commenced, for example the development of 'Triage', recommence work that has needed to be deprioritised due to capacity such as 'modern methods of construction' and also take forward new actions such as implementing co-production into our work.</p>
Housing First	<p>A project group is in place which consists of Officers from the HST and CCU who have researched different models and analysed local needs in order to develop a service model to meet the needs of NPT.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders to inform the service model and a market engagement event is planned for December 2024/January 2025 to present and test out the proposed service model. Following this event the service model will be finalised and presented to Scrutiny in early 2025.</p>
Review of Housing Options Information Technology (IT) Platform	<p>Work is progressing with the Transformation Digital Board and changes have been made to the Homelessness Web Page and Contact Detail Form.</p> <p>A discovery session is scheduled for the end of October 2024 and the outcome of this event will inform a joint report identifying needs. This report is due to be presented to the Transformation Digital Board November/December 2024.</p>

<p>Triage Centre</p>	<p>Key to replacing the number of B&Bs and hotels in use is the development of 2 triage centres in the NPT area.</p> <p>A service model and accommodation specification has been developed, alongside a financial case for investment. However to date it has not been possible to identify a suitable location/building for the scheme, Officers continue to work with the Property and Regeneration (P&R) Department to understand potential options and to undertake feasibility assessments on the proposed buildings/land.</p>
<p>Increasing the Number of Lettings to Homeless People</p>	<p>Review of the Housing Register A number of improvements have been made following the review and Officers now meet fortnightly with Tai Tarian to effectively manage referrals and allocations. A new data sharing agreement has been entered into with Tai Tarian which has enhanced information sharing, resulting in a reduction in housing options cases.</p> <p>Review of the Nomination Process The current nomination process has been reviewed with recommendations and next steps identified. This work will pick up speed once a Nominations Officer is appointed, this Officer will work with RSLs to put in place the identified changes to increase the nomination success rate.</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation (TA) An analysis has commenced with a target cohort of residents from The Ambassador and The Tree Tops Hotel to better understand people's wider housing and support needs. The next stage of this project will include working with RSLs and the Third Sector to identify housing pathways and provide wrap around support to move people into settled accommodation.</p> <p>Flipping Tenancy This is where an arrangement is made with a landlord to turn a tenancy agreement from temporary to permanent. To date there has been 2 households which have been flipped from TA to settled accommodation with a secure contract. There is also another household currently going through the process and the plan going forward is to identify more households that may benefit from this scheme.</p> <p>Review of social housing stock A review of social housing stock is underway, and this will provide an overall data set of all social housing which will include accommodation type, size, and location in the Neath Port Talbot area. This information will enable frontline officers to have more meaningful discussions with homeless</p>

	households about move on opportunities and enable more accessible data sharing for strategic development opportunities.
Community Led Development	<p>Work is progressing in partnership with Cwmpas and Tai Tarian to explore opportunities for establishing community led developments. A visit to 'We Can Make' in Bristol took place in April 2024 to better understand the potential for community led developments in order to inform our strategic thinking.</p> <p>An initial meeting has taken place with relevant Departments within the wider Council (Planning, Planning Policy, Highways, etc) to scope out various matters of consideration and meetings have also taken place with the P&R Department to understand potential land opportunities.</p>
Private Sector Landlord Forum	<p>In partnership with the Environmental Health Department, the Private Rented Network Forum has been reestablished.</p> <p>Two meetings have taken place, the first meeting attracted over 100 landlords and the second meeting 40 landlords. The Forums included presentations from Welsh Government (WG) in relation to the Leasing Scheme Wales initiative and Rent Smart Wales. In addition, there was representation from the National Residents Landlord Association and advice from a damp and mould expert.</p>
Youth Homelessness/Accommodation	<p>The Children & Young Peoples (CYP) Department and the Housing & Communities Department undertook a joint review of their approach to youth homelessness/accommodation. This has resulted in the development of a joint action plan that is overseen by the revamped Youth Accommodation Strategic Group, Chaired by the Head of Housing & Communities. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a single access point for service referrals (e.g. a 'Gateway/Brokerage') ▪ Develop 'Move On' pathways from youth accommodation services ▪ Implement a joint approach to the commissioning of youth accommodation services
<u>Capital Funding</u>	
Social Housing Grant (SHG)	<p>The budget for this financial year of £14.1million has been fully allocated over 6 schemes which will create 186 homes. A number of RSLs are involved and regular meetings and monitoring is in place.</p> <p>In the 23/24 financial year, the full £12.8 million was spent and we were able to secure an additional £9.4 million, which brought the total amount of SHG allocated within NPT to £22.2 million. This was £14 million (+166%) increase when compared to 22/23 (£8 million).</p>
Recycled Capital Grant (RCG)	RCG is SHG that is recycled by an RSL, usually following the sale of land or property and, as such, varies in amount available to spend. All RCG schemes are subject to 50% homelessness nominations

	<p>(However, negotiations are taking place to potentially increase this and 100% nominations for first lets have been agreed on a number of properties).</p> <p>To date in 24/25 we have allocated £1.6 million of RCG to purchase 10 properties from the open market. In the last financial year, £1.5 million of RCG was spent; roughly half of this funding was allocated towards a main scheme within the Programme Development Plan and the remainder to purchase 8 properties from the open market.</p>
<p>Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)</p>	<p>TACP provides grant funding to Local Authorities (LAs) and RSLs to bring forward longer term accommodation, to support those in TA. All schemes are subject to 100% homelessness nominations.</p> <p>The budget for this financial year has doubled from £2 to £4million and there are currently 27 Priority Schemes in place with a waiting list of another 9 if slippage or withdrawal occurs.</p> <p>In the 23/24 financial year, the full allocation of £2 million, plus £50k tolerance was allocated resulting in 18 priority schemes which are prioritised for reducing families in TA.</p>
<p>Housing Care Fund (HCF)</p>	<p>This is regional capital grant to support the development of health and social care accommodation and is managed by The Western Bay Regional Partnership Board. These schemes reduce the need for care home provision and helps people to remain more independent in the community.</p> <p>Currently, there are 3 schemes being progressed for NPT, which will provide homes for pan disability, mental health and young care leavers, as well as a specially adapted super-bariatric home. The accommodation is developed by our RSL partners and the CCU lead on the project, including commissioning the support services and ensuring the physical build is in line with the needs of residents.</p>

Adaptations & Renewals

ECO4 Flex Scheme

ECO4 Flex is an energy efficiency scheme which places a legal obligation on energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency and heating measures. This is provided to the least energy efficient domestic homes occupied by low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households. The purpose is to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

For local households to access ECO4 Flex, the Council must state publicly through a Statement of Intent (SOI), the criteria it intends to adopt to identify the households that meet the Flex eligibility criteria. The SOI confirms the Council's intention to participate in the Flex scheme and enables contractors / agents to engage with eligible residents on behalf of Energy Suppliers. Warm Wales Administers the scheme with the Council signing the declarations to approve the claims.

Key Facts Between March 2023 and March 2024

- 381 declarations agreed
- £73,000 in income fees to the Council
- Over £5 million ECO4 Flex energy efficiency works has been completed as part of the scheme

Key Facts Between April to end of September 2024

- 169 declarations agreed
- £25,350 in income fees to the Council

Empty Homes Scheme

In March 2023, the Council agreed to take part in WGs Empty Home Grant Scheme to further reduce the number of long-term empty properties in the area and increase housing supply. The Council agreed to invest up to £240,000 with WG providing up to £2.4 million of funding over the 2 year period.

This scheme works by providing grants to eligible homeowners to undertake the necessary work to bring the property back into use.

Key Facts – up to September 2024

- 155 applications received of which 93 progressed to survey and 85 surveys took place.
- 66 applications cancelled and 39 applications were approved.
- A further 50 applications are being processed.
- 9 grants have been completed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The total cost of approved and surveyed applications - £2,006,176. Total cost of grant fund awarded - £786,385.
<p>Leasing Scheme Wales</p>	<p>This is a scheme in which private sector landlords rent a property to the Council for a guaranteed period of 5-10 years and a grant of up to £25,000 can be used to make improvements to the property. The aim of this scheme is to provide access to good, quality private rental properties at the Local Housing Allowance Rate (LHA).</p> <p>Despite a range of activity to promote the scheme, we are yet to sign up any landlord. The main barriers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landlords do not wish to rent at the LHA. ▪ Mortgage lenders refuse to give approval to lease the property for a period of 5-10 years ▪ Costs of works to bring the properties back to a suitable standard is in excess of £25,000 <p><u>Key Facts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Received 5-10 enquires a week but very few led to formal requests. ▪ In total 37 formal requests have been received, however the majority have withdrawn. ▪ There are currently 2 properties progressing through the scheme and are at the legal stage.
<p>Home Adaptations</p>	<p>There continues to be significant demand for works, which is in excess of the available budget of £3 million for DFGs and £280,000 for ENABLE. This means that the available budget for DFGs is now being committed earlier in the year, which results in long waiting lists. In addition, the costs of some works is now in excess of the £36,000 DFG limit, which means that some people are unable to obtain the works they have been assessed as needing due to the cost.</p> <p>In October 2024 Officers presented an options appraisal to Cabinet with two recommendations on how to help address the key DFG challenges. The first recommendation was for Officers to undertake a public consultation to consider reinstating the means test for small and medium works. The second recommendation was to implement a discretionary ‘top-up’ fund for works that are in excess of the DFG limit. Both recommendations were approved by Cabinet and Officers are in the process of implementing the recommendations.</p> <p><u>Key Facts up to September 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 167 DFGs have been delivered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total end to end time 410 days in Q1 of 24/25 which is increasing due to the high demand and limited budget (284 days in Q1 of 23/24).
<u>Homelessness</u>	
Housing Options Restructure	<p>The implementation of the new structure was finalised August 2024, recruitment continues for some posts and are all expected to be occupied by the end of December 2024.</p> <p>A new training programme for Staff has been implemented with an anticipated completion date of March 2025. Training courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Focussed Support Neurodiversity Mental Health Substance Use Personal Resilience Violence and Aggression Psychologically Informed Environments Benefits training Dual Diagnosis Trauma Informed practices <p>Monitoring of cases is in now in place and well established so that Team Leaders can better support staff and ensure workloads are manageable.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring will be conducted at varying levels to ensure TA numbers are starting to reduce as well as the use of B & B's and time spent in TA. These figures will not reduce imminently but will be monitored to ensure the positive impact of the restructure is evident and quantifiable.</p> <p><u>Key Facts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% people successfully prevented from becoming homeless in Q1 (42.9% Q1 23/24) Number of Presentations June 2024 – 211 (232 in June 2023) Number of people in TA end of June 2024 – 223 (197 in July 2023)
Increasing Dispersed TA	<p>The Service continues to work on alternatives to B&B by increasing the number of leased units used as TA. Currently the Service has 18 units of owned stock, 9 units of long term leased hostel type accommodation and 68 leased self -contained units. This number has increased slightly since the last</p>

	<p>report, but some units have been returned during that time, as well managing voids in areas of redevelopment.</p> <p>A report was presented to Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board in January 2024 in respect of working with the private sector in the provision of TA. Since that report, further work has taken place and another report is due to be presented in the new year.</p>
<p>Strategy to reduce families in B&B's/overall reduce families in TA</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to increase prevention and reduce the number of families needing assistance. Whilst we are still seeing families presenting to the Service due to landlords selling, numbers are steadily reducing.</p> <p>The peak of families in TA since the implementation of 'The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016' was 55 families in October 2023. As of 14th of October 2024, there are 41 families in TA of which 6 are in hotels and waiting to be moved to a self-contained unit as soon as vacancies are available (28 families with children were in hotels before this project commenced).</p> <p>Move on options for families has also been reviewed with the allocations of acquisitions via TACP or RCG being prioritised for families in TA. Work is also ongoing to ensure families are put forward for new developments along with work to review and revise the nominations process, again ensuring households are put forward for the most appropriate properties.</p>
<p>Tenancy Sustainment Panel (TSP)</p>	<p>To date the TSP has not received any referrals. Enquiries with RSL's has fed-back that consent is the biggest issue as the tenants that need to be referred are not engaging, therefore the RSL is unable to get consent for the referral to be made. This will be reviewed in the coming weeks when the new Team Manager is in post and work will be done with the RSL's to maximise the opportunities for referrals and reduce any barriers that are currently preventing referrals from being submitted.</p>
<p>Policy Development</p>	<p>In response to the changing presentation and landscape for homelessness services, a new policy on charging fees to people who are not entitled to full Housing Benefit or have failed to make an application for Housing Benefit has been developed and implemented.</p> <p>In addition, the policy for rent arrears was updated to strengthen the Council's ability to recoup payments.</p>

Refugee and Asylum Support

Ukrainian Humanitarian Support

Both the Welcome Centre and Hotel was wound down by WG in Winter 2023, with the Ukrainian Support Team (US Team) providing intensive support to help households move into more settled accommodation. The US Team was able to offer 94% of the people in the Welcome Centre and 82% of the people at the Hotel more permanent accommodation, with the remaining people being moved into alternative Welcome Centres, alongside those that chose to not take up the offer of accommodation.

Currently 64 people are living with 28 sponsors within the Neath Port Talbot area, and it is anticipated there will be a further 51 people to be housed by the end of the year.

The US Team have supported 309 people since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis, 169 remaining in the WG Super Sponsor Route and individual sponsorship. Most people living in the area who now private rent are accessing education or employment.

Good prevention work has taken place, and the US Team have successfully prevented the majority of people from presenting to the Council as homeless (*only 2.9% have required homelessness duty*). This work will continue until March 2026 and case numbers will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Community Safety Team

Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy

The 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' was refreshed for 2023-2026 and officially launched in Autumn 2023. The strategy outlines the work that will be undertaken to eliminate all forms of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), and ensures the Council discharge its duties under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Key areas of work within the strategy are Communications & Engagement; Children & Young People; Perpetrators; Early Intervention & Prevention; Training; Accessible Services; and Criminal Justice. Each area has a series of actions and is overseen by the VAWDASV Leadership Group and its subgroups. The first annual report for this strategy will be prepared for Christmas 2024 and this will demonstrate progress made in all priority areas.

The Council operates an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service which supports those deemed very high-risk victims of domestic abuse. The Community Safety Team (CST)

	<p>continues to work to increased demands when compared to the same period last year. The referrals of high-risk domestic abuse victims into the Service are far more complex in nature, post Covid pandemic. However, engagement rates remain high, at 65%. The Service continues to work with South Wales Police (SWP) and local specialist providers to manage this demand, and ensure victims are appropriately supported with robust safety plans in place. This element of the Service remains heavily reliant on grant funding for staff salaries.</p>
<p>Paws on Patrol</p>	<p>This scheme continues to empower residents to be the eyes and ears in the local community, reporting the issues seen whilst out in the community. It also offers a very light touch way of engaging with residents about other community safety related topics such as domestic abuse and hate crime.</p> <p>Paws on Patrol has celebrated its 10 year anniversary in October 2024, and now has over 1,600 members signed up. An annual survey was conducted early in the year, responses were very positive and the feedback from members will be used to shape the Service over the coming year.</p> <p>Quarterly newsletters are also distributed to our members with information on latest trends, emerging issues, as well as general crime prevention and safety advice.</p>
<p>Grant Funding</p>	<p>The CST has been successful in obtaining a number of grants to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tata Steel provided £3,000 to fund the annual Crucial Crew Event. This covered the cost of venue hire, press release (including vlog), uniforms for facilitators and refreshments. ▪ £4,700 from WG for Target Hardening equipment – This funding will support with the purchase of home security items for the high-risk victims of domestic abuse that are being supported. This includes items such as Ring doorbells, window locks, door jammers, security lighting, dash cams etc. Being able to offer items like this to the people supported, offers an extension of the holistic support, and helps with risk management. ▪ £97,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund is being used to continue with the Hangout provision to support young people who are vulnerable to being drawn into anti-social behaviour. This project will be extended to include a mobile unit that can be responsive to emerging hotspots of antisocial behaviour across the borough. This project is led by Community Safety and supported by SWP, NPTCBC Youth Service, Social Services Be Safe Team, and Youth Justice. ▪ The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) continue to fund 4 posts in the CST, to be responsive to issues around domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. ▪ WG continue to fund 3 roles within the CST which delivers on the Community Cohesion programme and support high risk victims of domestic abuse.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A bid has been submitted for £25,000 to support SWP with Operation Sentinel, a hotspot-based operation focused on serious violence and anti-social behaviour. ▪ During the first 6 months of the year, the CST were successful in securing another 2 additional grants.
Community Cohesion	<p>WG continue to fund Community Cohesion activity across Wales. During the first 6 months of the year, the CST have organised key events, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Cohesion Cup Rounder's Tournament which brought together local services and the local community through sport. The day provided an opportunity to engage with hundreds of residents on hate crime and domestic abuse. ▪ The second NPT Pride - in partnership with local LGBT community groups, Local Area Coordinators, and Local Councillors. ▪ Windrush multi agency awareness raising event at the Princess Royal Theatre, attended by the Mayor of NPTCBC. ▪ Chai & Chat – In partnership with Community Voluntary Services (CVS) support continues with weekly Chai and Chat sessions, aimed at women in our local BME Community. These weekly sessions are now being attended by over 20 people each week. ▪ In the pipeline is the Black History Month event and a film screening to recognise Hate Crime Awareness week.
'Safer' Events	<p>The CST have continued with the piloted approach to Community Safety engagement events and ensure all are bespoke to each area visited. Officers use local intelligence, and anecdotal information to ensure the most appropriate services attend with the CST on the day. This has generated greater footfall and allows residents to speak about what matters are important.</p>
Distribution of Grants to Local Community Groups	<p>The CST continue to form part of the Afan Tawe Nedd Crime Prevention Panel and provide small grants of £500 to the local community to support diversionary activities for young people.</p>
Crucial Crew	<p>Crucial Crew is Community Safety's flagship event and has been running for 28 years. Each year, at least 1500 Year 6 pupils attend the event, and visit a series of 10 -minute safety workshops. The aim of Crucial Crew is to make sure young people stay safe over the summer holidays and during the transition from primary to secondary school.</p> <p>Workshops include Fire Safety, Water Safety, Healthy Relationships, Road Safety, Railway Safety and many more. At this years' event, Year 10 drama students from Ysgol Cwm Brombil supported the event. Provided was a 10 minute peer education production to every school, which was incredibly emotive and thought provoking.</p>

Area Planning Board Team (APBT)

Reducing the Harms Associated with Substance Use

Drug Poisoning Task Force (DPTF)

Western Bay (WB) is the only area in Wales which routinely reviews non-fatal drug over-doses. This process involves assessing each case and assigning it to the appropriate service to make contact within 72 hours of the overdose being picked up. These professionals provide guidance, support, and referrals to specialized services and closely monitors the progress of each person until identified risks are mitigated.

Key Facts

- 171 cases reviewed/monitored by the DPTF; 150 cases (88 %) of those referred received a positive intervention by drug services.
- 30 people were directly referred into services.
- Streamlined the monitoring of positive interventions and expanded the DPTF membership to enhance support available.
- Participated in the Pan Wales approach to drafting a new Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) for fatal/non-fatal overdoses and this will be live in 2024.

Independent Review Panel (IRP)

The APBT plays a pivotal role in coordinating and facilitating the Independent Review Panel (IRP) for suspected drug-related deaths. The primary objective is to identify recommendations, learning points, and best practices from these cases. Subsequently, the findings are shared with relevant services, enabling to adapt the practices and improve service provision.

Key Facts

- Suspected deaths – 97% were reviewed within the 6 months’ timeframe (set by WG) and surpassing the Department’s 90% target.
- Key themes from the reviews have been identified and recommendations made to improve service provision and mitigate risk.
- Reviews identified gaps in co-occurring work between substance use services and mental health services and collaboration took place with a number of working groups.
- Coroner’s input led to the development of an information sharing protocol (ISP) between substance use and mental health services.
- Worked closely with the local coroner’s office to gather intelligence on the drugs taken which supports to produce robust, accurate and timely drug warning alerts to partners and the public.

Learning from Practice

A pathway has been introduced for service providers and other agencies to report matters of concern with current cases and specific issues with practice. The APBT conducts an audit of concerns raised and these are immediately addressed. Over the last year 16 cases were reviewed.

Intensive Multi-agency Meeting (IMAP)

The APBT are collaborating with the PCC Office to coordinate the IMAP. This service was launched in October 2023 and discusses cases referred from a wide range of partners that require multi-agency assessment, treatment, and management. The panel shares information and problem-solves, working together to support those individuals most at risk of a fatal drug poisoning. These individuals may not find services easy to engage with and may also be involved in drug related offending. The panel captures areas of good practice and areas for development from the discussions. The panel received 9 referrals and 7 have been referred to the panel for full discussion.

Naloxone Distribution

- During the year there was an 8% increase in naloxone supply across WB compared to 22/23
- SWP continue to widen the reach of Police Officers carrying nasal naloxone, to date, there have been over 500 named police volunteers to carry naloxone, with over 500 kits issued. There have also been 5 successful uses of naloxone in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot area from officers first at the scene of an overdose.
- 80 members off staff have been trained in the signs of overdose and administration of naloxone.
- Probation Staff in Swansea are due to be trained in the use of nasal naloxone.
- S.A.F.E (Swansea Bay Against Fatal Episodes) This peer intervention project has now been running for a year and provides vital outreach services across WB and supports key partners such as housing and homelessness, to ensure those at risk of harm have access to timely interventions. Evidence suggests that S.A.F.E became the first peer led project in Wales which delivered all 3 specialist harm reduction interventions. This included take home naloxone (THN), needle and syringe programme (NSP) and blood borne virus screening (BBV).

Key Facts include:

- 263 take home naloxone kits distributed.
- 115 naloxone kits distributed to people at risk.
- 153 naloxone kits distributed to relevant professionals.
- 8 known overdoses where naloxone from the project has been used to reverse an overdose (7 successful reversals) and 2 cases where the peers have administered naloxone.

	<p>Blood Bourne Virus (BBV) Testing Levels BBV testing levels have increased by 56% from 2022/23 and the increase has provided data and intelligence to work collaboratively targeting known hot spot areas of infection. This works towards minimising the impact on the wider community and achieving performance targets.</p> <p>Work continues to ensure robust testing processes are in place across substance use services to screen people with current and historic risk factors. Benzodiazepine training was delivered to upskill and raise awareness of novel/street benzodiazepines that are causing significant harms in the community. This training is part of ongoing work to tackle the problematic levels of benzodiazepine use that is in WB at present.</p> <p>Additionally, the APB has representation of 'lived experience' on the EuroNPWUD (European Network of People who use Drugs). There is a mix of people who currently and historically use drugs, which includes young people.</p>
<p>Co-production and Involvement of People with Lived Experience</p>	<p>A Service User Engagement Officer (SUEO) has been employed as part of the APBT and is funded by the PCC (<i>via the Home Office</i>). This role works across WB and has made positive impacts for individuals with lived experience.</p> <p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer Interventions Project - This is co-ordinated by the SUEO and delivers 3 specialist harm reduction interventions which provide support and guidance. The project also distributes naloxone kits/needle & syringe kits and conducts dry blood spot testing for Blood Bourne Viruses. ▪ There are 2 monthly co-production forums which have now been established. These forums have developed governance arrangements for people with lived/living experience who can engage with the APB in line with co-production guidelines. Work is progressing on plans to help shape the work and the forums mantra is 'nothing about us, without us.' ▪ The Lived Experience Alliance Forum (LEAF) is now in place which contributes to the co-design outcomes for the new Alliance Service Model. The SUEO is working with forum members to develop terms of reference, logo and strategy and will also lead on the co-production/co-design of WB Substance Use Alliance. ▪ Work is underway to shape and develop the 'Co-production Strategy' and this will be adopted 2024/25. ▪ Key engagement takes place with a wide range of stakeholders at both local and national level which ensures best practice is implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research is taking place with partner organisations to ensure service users have a voice in the future development of services. This will identify other service user engagement methods which can be adopted to support this work.
Service Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interim Prescribing Service Pilot (StEPS) - Work has continued throughout the year to implement the new prescribing model. The new model increases investment in, as well as providing clarity on the criteria and processes for accessing, prescribing services. Although there were some challenges affecting implementation of the plan, a consensus has been achieved amongst providers. The changes made are benefitting staff and people who use services by improving movement around the system. The impact of the progress to date is evident in the reduced waiting times to access prescribing services. ▪ A Consultant was appointed to conduct a review of specialist substance use services for children, young people, and families. The report has been finalised and is due to be presented to the APB in Autumn 2024. ▪ Funding was allocated to the Council's Children's Services to increase capacity in the Hidden Harm Service by providing a practice support worker as a pilot project. The worker started in April 2024 and has brought a wealth of expertise by working directly with children and young people whose parents have been referred into the service.
Alliance Commissioning	<p>During 2023/24 a Programme Manager was appointed and partners agreed a Business Case to implement a new 'whole system approach' called the 'Alliance', which will replace the current range of substance use services.</p> <p>Significant work has taken place to develop a regional model for substance use services on behalf of the APB partner organisations. Tender documentation for the new Alliance model has been developed and the procurement 'go live' date is imminent.</p>
Western Bay Drugs Commission	<p>The scoping work of the Drugs Commission has now concluded and the first draft of the Drugs Commission Report has been presented to the APB. It is anticipated that the final draft will be published in early 2025, with the APB agreeing an action plan for implementing the recommendations which will be published alongside the Commission's report.</p>

Common Commissioning Unit (CCU)

Mid-Point Review of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Strategy	A mid-point review of the HSG strategy has taken place and shows good progress against the agreed priority actions. These actions link to the programmes of work mentioned within this report as HSG is the key funding stream in preventing and elevating homelessness, for example HSG funds the new Rapid Rehousing Officers within the Homelessness Team and HSG will fund/commission the Housing First support service and the Youth Accommodation services.
HSG Commissioned Services Review and Remodelling	<p>A review of all HSG services is underway to ensure alignment with our strategies, WG Guidance and Best Practice, with the intention of all services being recommissioned within the next 24 months.</p> <p>The Business cases for the Youth Accommodation Services and Housing First service will be submitted to Cabinet for approval early 2025 with the intention to commission new models of support.</p>
Violence against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Emergency Accommodation Review and Remodelling	<p>Following Phase 1, a review of VAWDASV Emergency Accommodation has taken place and a report was presented to Cabinet for approval to consult on a new model which was granted.</p> <p>The consultation commenced in September 2024 and will seek the views of those in receipt of services, those who do not access services and the public. The feedback will be used to develop a proposal for the service remodelling and be presented to Cabinet for decision in early 2025.</p>