

NEATH PORT TALBOT
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2016-2019

Summary



Introduction

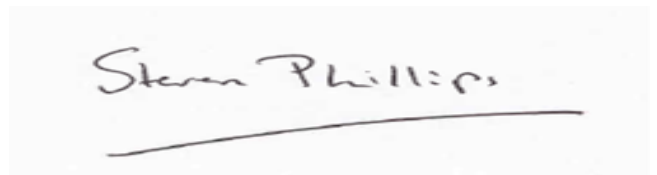
Welcome to our summary version of our Corporate Improvement Plan for 2016-2019. It tells you what the Council's six priorities for improvement are and what we will do to deliver these over the next 12 months.

Reducing budgets mean that we have to be absolutely clear about the areas that are most important and will make the biggest difference for people in Neath Port Talbot. In 2016-2017, as well as delivering the improvement priorities, we need to make a further £11.5 million savings to balance our budgets. We have listened to what you told us was important when we consulted on the draft priorities and savings proposals and we believe we have struck the best possible balance.

Planning forward at a time of such uncertainty is challenging. Recent events in the steel industry make such planning doubly challenging; but also doubly important going forward. However, we want to reassure the people of the county borough that we remain firmly focused on delivering the priorities we have set out in this Summary and to deliver the very best services for the people of Neath Port Talbot.

Handwritten signature of Ali Thomas in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'A' and 'T'.

**Councillor Ali Thomas,
Leader of the Council**

Handwritten signature of Steven Phillips in black ink, with a horizontal line underneath.

**Steven Phillips
Chief Executive**

The improvement priorities set out in in this Summary also support the vision for Neath Port Talbot in the County Borough's [Single Integrated Plan 2013-2023](#).

If you want the full details of these priorities and the proposed improvements, or would like to read the full version of the Corporate Improvement Plan, it can be found on the Council's website: www.npt.gov.uk/improvement

In order to be sustainable and to reduce printing costs, a hard copy of the full plan is available for reference at these locations:

Neath One Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Neath SA11 3QZ;
Port Talbot Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ; and
Pontardawe Library, Holly Street Pontardawe SA8 4ET.

If you require a hard copy or need this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please ring the Corporate Strategy Team on 01639 763172 or email improvement@npt.gov.uk

This document is also available in Welsh.

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

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

We want to continue to make improvements in the quality and consistency of social work practice and embed an outcomes based performance framework that clearly evidences the contribution that Children and Young People Services makes in supporting children and families to achieve their well-being.

We want to empower children, young people and their families to become, wherever possible, 'co-producers' in the care and support they receive and to encourage an ethos of independence as opposed to dependency and continue to safely reduce the number of Looked after Children. However, in those cases where children need to be accommodated, our aim is to place them in care settings which best suits their needs. In most cases, this will be with Neath Port Talbot foster carers.

We will:

- Work in a way that will make a positive difference to the lives of children and the families we deal with, so that children are safer, remain in their family homes and get the best start in life.
- Have the right family support in place to ensure children and young people remain with their families.
- Ensure children, young people and families have a say in the services they receive from us, and tailor services to suit their needs.

To raise educational standards and attainment for all young people.

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

We want to continue with our aim to increase standards in both school and pupil performance, so that all children and young people in Neath Port Talbot get the best start in life and so they can achieve the best possible qualifications for them at the end of their school life.

We will:

- Merge or relocate some schools; increase the capacity in others; continue to build new schools; and to close some others.
- Continue to implement our strategy for the provision of Welsh-medium education in Neath Port Talbot.
- Ensure the 14 -19 Learning Pathways programme supports all young people to achieve their full learning potential.
- Ensure literacy outcomes are improved.
- Ensure numeracy outcomes are improved.
- Improve the performance of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in literacy & numeracy.
- Improve pupil attendance.
- Provide better support for pupils with behaviour needs.
- Continue to improve safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Continue to deliver school improvement through the Education through Regional Working partnership.



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

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

We want to continue to modernise the way in which we will meet people's care and support needs. We want to continue to encourage greater take up of direct payments, enabling and encouraging people to have greater choice and control over the way in which their care and support needs will be met, reducing reliance on traditional establishment-based services.

We will:

- Develop community based early intervention and prevention services to support people to remain as independent as possible without formal care and support.
- Continue to improve the Gateway Service so we can be sure that people are getting the right response when they first contact adult social services.
- Increase the take up of Direct Payments to support service users and carers in exercising their right to have a choice and control over the way in which their care and support needs are met.
- Implement 'Pathways to Independence' across community care to ensure adults of working age with care and support needs are assessed and supported in a way which maximises their independence.
- Review the partnership agreement with Grŵp Gwalia to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
- Continue to implement the safeguarding action plan to further improve safeguarding practices.
- We will deliver full integration of community health and social care for frail older people, underpinned by the formal partnership agreement for intermediate health and care services.
- We will increase efficiency and value for money of direct services provided by the Council.

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

Recently, there have been significant developments in the UK steel industry. As the position crystallises, the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan will be reviewed and should adjustments to the priorities contained within this Summary become necessary an addendum report will be presented to Members.

It is essential that we focus our attention on our town centres and communities, with the aim of regenerating them, as they are important aspects of the county borough. We will improve access to towns and employment centres by introducing new bus corridors. To do this we will bring forward proposals to reduce traffic congestion, including the construction of a new integrated transport hub in Port Talbot and develop a commuter cycle network.

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

For regeneration we will:

- Encourage inward investment and bring forward a range of opportunities, including residential, retail and commercial developments.
- Complete the next phase of Neath Town Centre redevelopment.
- Continue the development of leisure and commercial opportunities at Aberavon sea front which will include a new adventure golf course.
- Develop caravan and camping facilities at Margam Park.
- Access funding to refurbish, repair and maintain locally important buildings and structures.
- Drive forward regeneration projects in the valleys, to encourage tourism and improve employment opportunities.
- Continue to deliver the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme to combine support for people and places whilst encouraging partnership working.
- Identify supply chain opportunities for local companies within major developments in the county borough by working in partnership with

developers/organisations who are delivering substantial investment programmes.

- Continue to support local businesses to help them prosper; create more jobs and business start-ups.

Anti-poverty:

Research studies conducted by Sheffield Hallam University demonstrate that areas within the county borough are disproportionately and negatively affected by the UK Government's welfare benefits changes. Our over-riding corporate priorities are to protect services to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Consequently, continuing to work in partnership to mitigate the impact of the welfare benefit changes will have on those with the lowest incomes remains a priority for us and our Local Service Board partners. We will support people to maximise their income ensuring people are helped into work or are receiving the benefits they are entitled to and have the skills and support to manage their income appropriately. We will also increase support for people who struggle to access on-line services.

For Anti-poverty we will:

- Deliver the commitments in the partnership agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions to support the introduction of Universal Credit.
- Work with partners, to identify the impact of the next set of Welfare Benefit changes announced by the UK Government.
- Map existing community resources that can be drawn upon to mitigate the impacts of Universal Credit and Benefit changes. Focusing particularly on: digital inclusion; financial literacy; employment support; and benefits advice.
- Work with partners to ensure citizens and service providers are aware of the community resources and how they can be accessed.
- We will develop an understanding of unmet need across the county borough and produce partnership proposals to address the unmet need.
- Further develop our digital inclusion plans with partners.

Housing:

We want to provide people with an opportunity to live in a home that they can afford; that is safe, warm and secure, a home that meets their needs whether that be owned or rented and is in an area where they want to live and we support them to do so.

For Housing we will:

- Provide loans to effectively target empty properties to bring them back into use and make sure existing housing stock is safe, warm and secure.
- Undertake a homelessness review;
- Prioritise those most in need by implementing Single Point of Access arrangements for Supported People-funded homelessness prevention support services;
- Develop a Homelessness Strategy that will ensure co-operation agreements are in place with our Housing Association partners to deliver the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act and monitor the contribution they make to help the Council fulfil its duty; and
- NPT Homes will continue to meet the Council's promise (as detailed in the 'offer document') to bring all former council housing up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to regenerate communities.



Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted.

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

For economic and environmental reasons the Welsh Government has set us very challenging legal targets for reuse/recycling and composting as well as for landfill in their Waste Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste'. In response to this we are working towards achieving the next target of 64% (2019-2020) and if we do not meet these targets we could end up with fines of £200 per tonne.

Currently 80% of households recycle their waste and our aim is to increase this number through our Waste Strategy. This will help us meet the legal targets above and enable us to manage our resources better.

Where possible we want to exploit all funding opportunities to further improve the service and make efficiencies to re-invest back into the service. We also want to make the service as affordable as possible and capable of collecting all waste in a way that both helps us meet the targets and is convenient to the public.

We will:

- Ensure more people have an extended recycling service (e.g. collect more items such as batteries) and their waste sorted at the kerbside.
- Put in place new contract arrangements for waste treatment and disposal to ensure we are getting the best deal for the Council (money spent well).



Digital by Choice

*improving customer experience,
making better use of public money*

To improve customer/citizen access to services and functions provided by the Council or on behalf of the Council and to improve the efficiency of those services and functions.

What are we going to do in the next 12 months?

As more and more people in our communities adopt digital technologies in their day to day life, we are responding by providing more services online. We will prioritise those services that are requested most frequently.

Expanding our online services will provide more choice for our customers and make it easier for people to access services and at a time convenient for them. We will work with our partners to ensure everyone in our communities has the opportunity to use our on-line facilities. We will also continue to streamline and modernise our internal support services and by working smarter digitally reduce the need for costly manual processes. We will revise the way in which we charge people for services so they are fair and consistent and where it makes sense to do so, create opportunities to generate money for the Council.

We will:

- Make our website easier to access and make sure more of our services are available on-line.
- More of our website pages will be available in Welsh.
- Change our one stop shops and support people to carry out transactions on-line to make it easier for people to access digital services.
- More people in our communities will have the digital skills to access services.
- Ensure all services use our on-line ordering and payment system replacing manual processes.
- Introduce self-service options across internal support services, starting with a self-service employee portal.
- Increase and identify new income generation opportunities.

Have your say on what matters to you

We would like to hear what you thought of this Summary of the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan and our future priorities for improvement that we should consider when planning and delivering services in order to help shape decisions on important matters.

Please send them to the Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ or email them to: improvement@npt.gov.uk

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>

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



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



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