

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environment & Highways Cabinet Board

5th January 2017

Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection

Nicola Pearce

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All

Planning and Public Protection – Planning Policy Service Report Card

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present for Scrutiny the Service Report Card for the Planning Policy team.

Executive Summary

- 2 In accordance with the approved Divisional Business Plan for Planning and Public Protection, each Business Unit within the division is required to complete a Service Report Card for each financial year.
- 3 This interim report updates Members on the progress made over the current financial year and in particular outlines:
 - The ongoing performance against last year's Action Plan and Targets;
 - The ongoing challenges and opportunities faced in the short and medium term; and
 - The progress being made in respect of the actions and targets for the 6 months from 1st April 2016 to 30th September 2016.

Planning Policy Report Card

- 4 The Planning Policy Unit comprises the Planning Policy team and Countryside and Wildlife team. Consequently, the portfolio covered by the team comes under both Economic and Community Regeneration Board and Environment and Highways Cabinet Board.

- 5 The Service Report Card, set out in Appendix 1, summarises the service priorities, key measures and key actions for the Planning Policy team.

Consultation Outcome

- 6 Employees within the individual services have been consulted and contributed towards the development of the Service Report Card.

Financial Impact

- 7 The work delivered is fully covered by a combination of existing revenue budgets and grant income.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 8 Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

- 9 These are covered in the appended Report Card.

Legal Impacts

- 10 Not applicable.

Risk Management

- 11 A Risk Matrix for the Directorate has been prepared which incorporates the risks within this service area.

Recommendation

- 12 This item is for monitoring only.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

- 13 Not applicable.

Implementation of Decision

- 14 Not applicable.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 15 The activities of the Environment Directorate have an impact on all themes of the Corporate Performance Plan. Operational Business Plans contribute to service improvement by setting out service specific priorities for the next 12 months and how they will be met. Managers are required to consider corporate policies such as equalities and health when determining how they meet their service priorities.

Appendices

- 16 Appendix 1 – Planning Policy Service Report Card

List of Background Papers

- 17 Planning and Public Protection Business Plan 2016-17

Officer Contact

- 18 Ceri Morris – Planning Policy Manager [Tel: 01639 686320 / E-mail: c.morris1@npt.gov.uk]

Appendix 1: Service Report Card 2016-2017

Planning Policy Service

Quarter 2 Update (1st April 2016 – 30th September 2016)

Section 1: Brief Description of the Service

Planning Policy comprises the Planning Policy team (6 FTEs) and Countryside & Wildlife team (8.7 FTEs), with the areas of responsibility summarised below.

The **Planning Policy Team** is responsible for statutory duties in respect of the following:

- **Local Development Plan (LDP)** – the preparation, delivery, monitoring and review of the LDP. This ensures that development is delivered in a planned and sustainable way in accordance with the agreed corporate priorities and objectives of the Council.
- **LDP Evidence Base** – maintaining an up to date evidence base to support the LDP.
- **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** – preparing a raft of SPG setting out more detailed topic or site specific guidance on the way in which policies of the LDP will be applied in particular circumstances or areas.
- **Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments** – preparing and publishing the Council's 5 yearly Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments.
- **Joint Housing Land Availability Studies** – the annual production of studies outlining the extent of the housing land supply.
- **Active Travel** – preparing and reviewing the Council's Existing Route Map (ERM) and Integrated Route Map (IRM).
- **Cycling Network** – cycle route development and promotion.
- **Asset Sponsorship** – facilitating the partnership contract with Immediate Solutions to generate income through the sponsorship of infrastructure / assets.

In respect of these duties, the Planning Policy team work with all Departments of the Council, statutory consultees including Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, neighbouring Local Authorities, consultants, local businesses, developers, elected Members, voluntary organisations, environmental groups / stakeholders, walking and cycling organisations, voluntary organisations, local schools and members of the public.

The **Countryside and Wildlife Team** is responsible for statutory duties in respect of the following:

- **Public Rights of Way Network** – maintaining the registered network of footpaths, bridleways and byways [including the definitive map and statement]; diversions and closures; maintenance in respect of structures and obstructions; and delivering the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

(RoWIP).

- **Adopted Highway Network** – advising on the extent of the adopted highway network.
- **Biodiversity / Ecology** – advising on all aspects of biodiversity conservation [including habitat management and species conservation (e.g. bats); delivering biodiversity enhancement activities on Local Nature Reserves and other key sites; identifying Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation]; delivering the Local Biodiversity Action Plan; and leading on compliance with the Biodiversity Duty as stipulated by the Environment Act 2016.
- **Coed Cymru** – advising on the creation and management of trees and woodlands to deliver ecosystem services, including flood alleviation, clean air and improvements to health and well-being.

In respect of these duties, the Countryside & Wildlife team work with all Departments of the Council, volunteers, community members, other wildlife and access related organisations, businesses, landowners and members of the public.

Section 2:

Overall Summary of Performance for 2015-16 Financial Year

Performance in respect of the key priorities for the 2015-16 financial year can be summarised as follows:

- **Local Development Plan (LDP)** – the Examination in Public (EIP) was completed and the LDP was subsequently adopted by the Council on the 27th January 2016. Officers involved in the preparation and adoption of the LDP were commended by the Chief Planning Officer of the Welsh Government for the quality of the Plan, and for their professionalism at all stages of the process.
- **LDP Monitoring** – a detailed procedure was designed to monitor the effectiveness and delivery of the policy aspirations within the adopted LDP. The first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is due for submission to the Welsh Government in October 2017 and annually thereafter.
- **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** – work continued on six strategically important SPGs including Planning Obligations, Affordable Housing, Baglan Energy Park Development Framework, Pollution, Parking Standards and Fabian Way Innovation Corridor (collaborative work with City & County of Swansea). The SPG are considered essential to support the LDP going forward and to assist access to funding streams for the Property and Regeneration section.
- **Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)** – the GTAA for the County Borough was prepared in collaboration with colleagues from Estates and Housing Strategy and in consultation with key stakeholders and submitted to the Welsh Government for approval in February 2016.
- **Active Travel** – the first Existing Route Map (ERM) for the County Borough was prepared, consulted upon and submitted to the Welsh Government within the defined timescales.
- **Public Rights of Way Network** – the management and maintenance regimes associated with our Public Right of Way (PRoW) network were

redesigned to reflect the relocation of the service from Crynant to the Quays, securing savings as part of the FFP from accommodation costs. A sum of £100k was identified for use in the improvement of hard surfacing of a network of regularly used footpaths throughout the County Borough.

- **Biodiversity** – officers continued to work with other departments to ensure the Council complies with the new statutory duty for Biodiversity Conservation under the Environment Act 2016, and the requirements of other national and European environmental legislation (current and emerging); and contribution towards the delivery of the goals and objective requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The revised budget for 2015-16 was £919,862 with a 4.5% underspend.

The 2015-16 average sickness Full Time Equivalent (FTE) days lost figure of 4.6 was markedly below the Council’s average of 9.7 days and the Environment Directorate’s average of 10.2 days. All officers received an employee development review.

No complaints or compliments were received / recorded during the year.

Section 3: Service Priorities 2016-17

Priority	Actions to Deliver Priority	Officer Responsible	Timescale	What will be different? Measures and/or Outcomes
1: Complete work on the five strategically important SPGs required supporting the Local Development Plan (LDP).	Work has commenced on the preparation of the SPGs. This will continue and will also involve consultation prior to their adoption.	Ceri Morris	November 2016	The SPGs will be adopted and will provide further clarity to developers and Development Management staff when interpreting policies within the LDP. This will reduce risk and should encourage good quality development within Neath Port Talbot. The adoption of the SPGs will be the appropriate measure.
2: Commence work on seven further SPGs: Port Talbot & Town Centre Development Framework; Open Space & Greenspace; Biodiversity & Geodiversity; Renewable & Low Carbon Energy; Design; The Historic Environment; Development & the Welsh Language.	Produce drafts, consult and prepare for adoption.	Ceri Morris	March 2017	The SPGs will be adopted and will provide further clarity to developers and Development Management staff when interpreting policies within the LDP. This will reduce risk and should encourage good quality development within Neath Port Talbot. The adoption of the SPGs will be the appropriate measure.

3: Undertake research in respect of a 'Biodiversity Compensation Scheme' to support the planning process feeding into the development of SPG.	Funding secured through RDP LEADER and Natural Resources Wales Competitive Fund to employ a consultant to deliver the project.	Ceri Morris	March 2017	A draft SPG will be prepared ready for consultation. This will secure longer term opportunities for off-site biodiversity compensation which will speed up the implementation of projects which would otherwise be stalled due to ecological constraints. The adoption of the SPG will be the appropriate measure.
4: Complete the joint SPG for the regeneration of the Fabian Way corridor.	The 8 week consultation exercise was completed on the 25 th January 2016. Work is now underway on assessing the representations received and updating the SPG if necessary.	Ceri Morris	December 2016	The SPG will be adopted by both Neath Port Talbot Council and the City and County of Swansea. It will direct developers to deliver the regeneration aspirations of both councils in addition to securing S106 money to improve essential infrastructure along the corridor. The adoption of the SPG will be the appropriate measure.
5: Establish systems and procedures for monitoring the performance of the LDP.	An outline of the monitoring indicators associated with the policies contained within the EIP was scrutinised and agreed at the Examination in Public. Work needs to commence on establishing a robust framework for collecting evidence to confirm whether or not the policies are working effectively.	Ceri Morris	Ongoing	There is a requirement to submit an Annual Monitoring Report, the first of which is required for submission to the Welsh Government in October 2017 and annually thereafter. This requires the collation and assessment of a significant evidence base. The evidence which will feed into the AMR will demonstrate whether the Council's policies are securing the objectives and Vision of the LDP. If not it may result in a partial or full review of the Plan. The monitoring procedure will be the appropriate measure.
6: Undertake / publish the annual Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS).	In consultation with the building industry produce a comprehensive review of the amount of available land for housing development.	Ceri Morris	September 2016	A report outlining the Authority's current position on the amount of housing land available for development will be prepared for examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The JHLAS

				report will be the appropriate measure.
7: Complete the Active Travel Act commitment in relation to the Existing Route Map (ERM) and commence work on the Integrated Network Map (INM).	The ERM was submitted to the Welsh Government in January 2016. Further amendments have been requested by the Welsh Government in relation to the justification statements which support some of our routes. Work will then commence on identifying what improvements are required to these routes to enable for their inclusion within the INM.	Ceri Morris	July 2016 for the revised ERM and ongoing for the INM	The submission of an acceptable ERM will ensure compliance with the duties relating to the Active Travel Act. The acceptance of the ERM by Welsh Government will be the appropriate measure. Work on the INM will facilitate the ability of the council to secure additional funding in the future to undertake improvements to pedestrian and cycling routes within our eligible settlements. The commencement of work on the INM will be the appropriate measure.
8: Amend the management and maintenance regimes associated with our Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and commence work on a review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).	Due to the reduced budgets associated with the maintenance of PRoW there is now greater reliance on the receipt of complaints to inform non-routine maintenance requirements. Following the receipt of one off additional funding in April 2016 a schedule of work to repair and/or resurface PRoW in urban and urban fringe areas has been drawn up and is currently being delivered with the Streetcare section.	Ceri Morris	March 2017	The additional funding invested into PRoW will improve the quality of our most frequently used routes, which will reduce the number of complaints submitted and will also reduce the maintenance liabilities and costs going forward for these routes. Other funding can then be diverted to the maintenance of other routes and associated structures. Agreed outline / timetable for the RoWIP review will be the appropriate measure.
9: Support and contribute to regional collaboration initiatives / studies particularly in the light of the new planning regime in Wales and the introduction of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs).	Working in partnership with SWW Authorities gathering data / information and collaborating on various projects.	Ceri Morris	Ongoing	The production of 'larger than local' projects / assessments / reports which will give strategic direction to developers. This will be difficult to measure as it is a long term project and relies on the cooperation of a number of parties.
10: Prepare and publish a plan on	The Act places a greater duty on	Ceri Morris	Ongoing	A draft plan, in preparation for

how the Authority intends to comply with the new, enhanced biodiversity duty outlined in the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016.	Councils in terms of enhanced biodiversity. NRW have also stopped providing services and is re-directing the responsibility to Councils without additional resources being made available. The plan will need to identify the extent of these emerging duties and protocols will need to be developed to ensure that all services within the Council are complying with this increased duty. Training of all staff will be developed and delivered.			publication in May 2017, outlining how the Authority will comply with the new biodiversity duty will be the appropriate measure.
11: Extend the sponsorship of council owned assets to secure fee income.	An extension of the contract with an existing third party provider is to be pursued to enable for a pilot scheme of sponsorship for our other assets including street-lighting, parks, car parks etc. A full procurement exercise will need to be undertaken to allow us to maximise our potential.	Ceri Morris	March 2017	An extension of the contract needs to be secured in line with the procurement rules and a pilot scheme associated with sponsoring additional assets shall be pursued. The appropriate measure will be whether an acceptable balance between protecting visual amenity and maximising sponsorship opportunities can be achieved together with an increase in income associated with such sponsorship.

Section 4: Service Performance Quadrant 2016-17

Priority 1: Complete work on the five strategically important SPGs required supporting the Local Development Plan (LDP) – five strategically important SPG were prepared for the purposes of consultation, including Planning Obligations, Affordable Housing, Baglan Energy Park Development Framework, Pollution and Parking Standards. The 7-week public consultation ended on 7th September’16. Responses to the comments received, together with amendments needed to the documents, were considered by ECR Cabinet Board on 28th October, with the documents being adopted and published at the end of October’16.

Priority 2: Commence work on seven further SPGs: Port Talbot & Town Centre Development Framework; Open Space & Greenspace; Biodiversity & Geodiversity; Renewable & Low Carbon Energy; Design; The Historic Environment; Development & the Welsh Language – the preparation and publication of the remaining SPG are being carried out in stages. The next batch of SPG being prepared for consultation includes

those relating to 'Open Space and Greenspace', 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy', 'Design' and 'Development and the Welsh Language'.

It is anticipated that a report seeking endorsement of 'Consultation Drafts' will be presented to ECR Cabinet Board on 20th January and 3rd March respectively, with the public consultation taking place through March/April and adoption by early May. Work on the remaining SPG will commence thereafter.

Priority 3: Undertake research in respect of a 'Biodiversity Compensation Scheme' to support the planning process feeding into the development of SPG – a contractor has been appointed to deliver the project. Potential compensation sites have been identified and work is underway to work up costings that can be used to devise a costing schedule and mechanism for mitigation / compensation works that cannot be included within a development site. It is anticipated that the research project will be completed by January 2017.

Priority 4: Complete the joint SPG for the regeneration of the Fabian Way corridor – work is ongoing on the preparation of the SPG for Fabian Way through collaborative work with colleagues in the City and County of Swansea. A draft version was prepared for the purposes of consultation with the consultation stage completed in January'16.

Work has continued to compile and assess consultation responses and make any necessary changes to the document prior to its adoption by both authorities. Prior to finalising the document however, and given the importance of the Tidal Lagoon to the area/corridor, officers have agreed to await the outcome of the Hendry Review (anticipated early January). Pending this review, it is the intention to progress and adopt the SPG in the early part of the new year.

Priority 5: Establish systems and procedures for monitoring the performance of the LDP – a work programme has been devised setting out when and what data needs to be collected. Procedures have been established to secure the efficient and effective collection of data. The first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is due for submission to the Welsh Government in October 2017 and annually thereafter.

Priority 6: Undertake / publish the annual Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) – the 2016 JHLAS, which outlines the amount of land that is genuinely available for housing development, was prepared, consulted upon and submitted to the Welsh Government within the defined timescales. The Planning Inspectorate reviewed the study and subsequently made a recommendation to the Welsh Government on the housing land supply, concluding the Council has an appropriate and adequate 5 year land supply. Work on the 2017 JHLAS will commence in due course.

Priority 7: Complete the Active Travel Act commitment in relation to the Existing Route Map (ERM) and commence work on the Integrated Network Map (INM) – following the Welsh Government direction to revise its ERM, further work was undertaken on the highlighted routes and an amended ERM was submitted to the Welsh Government on 1st July'16. The Council subsequently received Ministerial approval of the amended ERM on 12th August'16.

Work on the INM has now commenced and a timetable devised to ensure delivery of the INM to the Welsh Government by the deadline of 24th September 2017.

Priority 8: Amend the management and maintenance regimes associated with our Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and commence work on a review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) – an amended Community Council Path Maintenance scheme is in the process of being finalised and will be presented to participating Community Councils by the end of March 2017. A draft timetable and outline for the RoWIP has been produced, notification of the impending review and commencement of the assessment is on progress to be carried out by the end of January 2017.

Priority 9: Support and contribute to regional collaboration initiatives / studies particularly in the light of the new planning regime in Wales and the introduction of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) – in addition to the team working collaboratively with the City and County of Swansea in preparing a Masterplan Framework for the Fabian Way corridor, Neath Port Talbot is also a member of the South West Wales Regional Planning Group (SWWRPG) along with colleagues from the City & County of Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Bridgend, Pembrokeshire and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The group regularly meets to discuss planning issues and share good practice.

The team also attend and support the South East Wales (SEW) LDP Pathfinder Group. This group is currently involved in assisting the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) in the preparation of the evidence to support a Strategic Development Plan (SDP). A series of employment land workshops have been arranged to agree a methodology to review the employment land throughout the region.

Priority 10: Prepare and publish a plan on how the Authority intends to comply with the new, enhanced biodiversity duty outlined in the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016 – a draft plan has been produced and internal consultation is underway. The amended plan is intended to be presented to Environment & Highways Cabinet Board in due course, in preparation for the necessary publication by May 2017.

Priority 11: Extend the sponsorship of council owned assets to secure fee income – a contract to generate sponsorship revenue from highway roundabouts has been in place between the Council and its partner 'Immediate Solutions' since 2011. In respect of the first two quarters of the current financial year, the scheme has generated £10,680.

Unfortunately over recent months, the number of companies choosing to renew their roundabout sites has fallen. The reasons cited include either that this form of marketing has not worked for them or that budgets have reduced to the extent that companies are not able to continue. Immediate Solutions are however working hard to retain sponsors, looking at all options to keep companies on board wherever possible, and are also proactively marketing the scheme to new companies in order to build a strong sales pipeline.

In addition, as of July'16 the existing contract with Immediate Solutions was extended in the short term and varied to allow the trial of additional pilot schemes, including gateway / boundary signs, roadside verges and lighting columns. Such schemes will allow the Council to determine whether such arrangements prove viable for the Council to pursue in the longer term, albeit it is too early at this stage to make an informed judgement.

In parallel, a procurement exercise will commence in due course to obtain a long term partner with any future contract to commence after the current extended period has expired (i.e. end of June'17).

Measure	2014-15 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	Comparative Performance	2015-16 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)
Corporate measure (CM01): a) Number of transactional services fully web enabled b) Number of transactional services partially web enabled	Difficult to quantify in % terms. The LDP is available on-line and all consultations in relation to the LDP and Active Travel were undertaken online.	Difficult to quantify in % terms. The LDP is available on-line and all consultations in relation to the LDP and Active Travel were undertaken online.	Not available / applicable	Planning Policy has always embraced the digital agenda and for this reason the LDP is fully interactive (including a Proposals Map facility). All consultations (i.e. LDP, Active Travel, ROWIP) will continue to be in line with the digital e-government agenda.	

Section 5: Financial Quadrant 2016-17:

The LDP team has lost 3 Planning Officer posts which were deleted from the staffing structure as a contribution towards the Council's FFP. Whilst to date all deadlines have been achieved in respect of Plan preparation, significant challenges lay ahead in respect of resources available for future LDP monitoring / review, preparation of SPG and maintaining an up to date evidence base.

In recent years the Countryside and Wildlife team has lost 3.4 FTE posts which were deleted from the staffing structure as a contribution to the Council's FFP. The need to deliver such savings has therefore led to re-evaluating the role of the team to now provide a greater emphasis on consultancy style advice to other departments. It is becoming increasingly difficult however to meet the statutory duty for the conservation, including enhancement, of biodiversity.

Measure	2014-15 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (projected to year end)
Corporate Measure (CM03): % revenue expenditure within budget Revenue Budget £	4% underspend £1,023,015	4.5% underspend £919,862	0% over/underspend £758,332
Corporate Measure (CM04): Amount of FFP savings at risk	n/a New	£0	£0

Section 6: Employee Quadrant 2016-17

Notwithstanding the fact that staffing levels have significantly reduced, and the ongoing need to deliver 'more with less', staff sickness levels are minimal. Our cumulative sickness figure for the 2nd quarter identifies an average of 1 working day lost to sickness. This is significantly lower than the Directorate's average of 5 days and the Council average of 4.6 days. The limited periods of sickness that do occur are managed in accordance with the Council's sickness management procedure.

It is understood that a scheme to measure staff engagement is being piloted elsewhere within the Council and will be rolled out in due course. Currently there is no data to record.

There were no unplanned departures of any employees and 4 employee performance appraisals have been completed by the end of the 2nd quarter. The delay in rolling out the appraisals was due to a new system being introduced at the beginning of the 2nd quarter. Employee performance appraisals continue to be conducted, and the target of 100% being completed by April 2017 remains the objective.

Measure	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)
Corporate Measure (CM05): Average FTE (full time equivalent) working days lost due to sickness absence			
Service: Planning Policy	4.6 Days	2.0 Days	1.0 Days
Total Service FTE days lost in the period	90	47	20
Directorate: Environment	10.2 Days	4.7 Days	5 Days
Council:	9.7 Days	4.2 Days	4.6 Days

Measure	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)
Corporate Measure (CM06): Staff engagement measure	New	New	-
Corporate Measure (CM07): % of staff who have received a performance appraisal during 2016-17 (Target 100%)	100%	100%	24%
Number of staff who have received a performance appraisal during 2016-17			4
Corporate Measure (CM09): Number of employees left due to unplanned departures	New	New	0

Section 7: Customer

Measure	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)
Corporate Measure (CM10): Total number of complaints			
Internal	0	0	0
External (from the public)			
Corporate Measure (CM11): Total number of compliments			
Internal	0	0	0
External (members of the public)			
Corporate Measure (CM12): customer satisfaction measure/s	None	None	