

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016-19 ANNUAL REPORT - PART ONE

Assessment of our half year performance
Period: 1st April 2017 – 30th September 2017



FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this progress report for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017 which contains an assessment of the Council's performance over this period against the commitments set out in the Addendum to the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-19.

The former Council, very sensibly, rolled forward their six improvement priorities for this period, to enable the incoming Council - elected in the local government elections May 2017-a period of time to develop our own priorities.

I am able to report that the Council has made good progress across the six priority areas over the first half of this financial year.

On 30th September 2017, we published our new Corporate Plan. The new Plan sets out the priorities of the current administration for its five year term. We have built on the strong foundations already in place, placed a renewed focus on issues that our communities have told us are important to them, whilst also demonstrating very clearly how we will maximise our contribution to the seven well-being goals set by the Welsh Government.

I will be reporting on the progress we have made on our new Plan at the end of March 2018.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Rob Jones



This Report is available in English and Welsh, on our [website](#) and in printed format at the following 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 this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Strategy Team on 01639 763242 or email: improvement@npt.gov.uk

Assessment of our half year performance
Period: 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017



Improvement and Well-being Objective:
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

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Limited

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

We have sustained the improvements reported in previous periods:

The number of children looked after by the Council continued to steadily reduce as social work practice and family support services steadily improved. At the end of September, the number of children looked after by the Council stood at 347, a reduction of 30 children over the six month period;

The Council has also sustained an effective social work workforce. There were very few vacancies in our front line

teams at any point in time, staff received regular and timely supervision and the staff survey demonstrated that staff now feel well supported in their practice;

The work done to create a Team Around the Family demonstrates that we have become more effective at varying support according to need. There is clear evidence of families being “stepped down” from support provided through our statutory duties to other, relevant services as family needs changed. Conversely, there is clear evidence that when the needs of families receiving support through community-based services escalate mechanisms to intensify support are also in place. The Team Around the Family approach complements changes we have made to other family support services to ensure service responses are appropriate to need; and

It is particularly pleasing to be able to report that we have created further opportunities for children and young people to have a say in matters that affect them. Our Looked After Children Youth Council is just one example of a range of initiatives that are giving children and young people a stronger voice and a means of exercising their rights.

We said:

- 1. 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.**

What did we do?

- As at 30th September 2017, the number of children being looked after was 347;
- An outcome focused-model of Social Work practice is now embedded across all social work teams. This model of practice enables practitioners to work with children and families to discuss personal well-being goals and co-produce resolutions, so that children remain safe in their family home and get the best start in life. To support this, IT systems continue to be enhanced to better record and report data relating to ‘personal outcomes’. This should aid monitoring of personal outcomes reported moving forward;
- The introduction of new Assessment and Care Plan templates during the early part of 2017 has provided greater support to this new way of working and significant progress has been made to ensure all care plans/

pathway plans are converted into this new style of outcome-focused format; and

- An outcomes-focused conference was held with partner agencies to ensure a joined up approach to working with children and families in a co-productive way and this is will be further supported by work with partner agencies being taken forward by individual social work teams within their catchment areas.

2. We will have the right family support in place to ensure children and young people remain with their families.

What did we do?

- As at 31st March 2017, the percentage of children within NPT known to Social Services who were supported to remain with their families was **61.9%**
- The Family Action Support Team's (FAST) integration as part of Children and Young People Services has afforded greater flexibility and accountability in terms of delivering the vision set out in the Family Support and Looked After Children Strategies;
- A play therapist has been appointed and a clinical psychologist is soon to be appointed to help support Children and Young People Services in ensuring more children and young people remain at home, are rehabilitated at home or remain in a stable placement;
- A fully embedded resource panel has improved links with partner agencies in identifying and accessing resources for children and young people in need. The panel ensures that children and their families receive the appropriate support they need at the right time and to ensure that any admission into care is appropriate and that an early return to family is facilitated where ever possible; and
- A joint strategic meeting between Children and Young People Services and the education Directorate continues to take place bi-monthly. Senior managers from both services attend this meeting and its primary purpose is to promote more integrated working. Improved integration will realise many benefits for example, improved access to specialist services for those children and young people who require them.

3. Children, young people and families will have a say in the services they receive from us, tailored to suit their needs.

What did we do?

- Following on from the 2016-17 Welsh Government's qualitative questionnaire process, the Service is preparing to repeat this process for 2017-18. As with the previous information gleaned, it is anticipated that the results of the forthcoming survey will continue to inform the way in which we shape future services in line with the needs of children, young people and their families;
- A number of monthly thematic case file audits have been conducted, which have provided the service with an understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved. Findings of these audits continue to be reported to Members through the quarterly priority performance measures;
- A number of initiatives have been undertaken within the Service to encourage and support children and young people to participate and engage in decision making; to both assist in determining what matters to them on a micro level, as well as assisting the service in determining its strategic direction. Examples include:
 - A Looked After Children Youth Council has been established to give children and young people a stronger voice in matters that affect them;
 - Children and young people have been instrumental in re-designing support material, such as looked after children booklets and child protection leaflets;
 - Workshops have been undertaken with children and young people promoting their rights;
- Further development in participation and engagement during 2017-18 will enable the full involvement of children, young people and their families in the decisions and processes that affect them, for example, by better facilitating them to play a more active part in the creation and review of their care and support plans; and
- A system for recording and reporting the number of 'Active Offers' made under the new statutory Advocacy arrangements has recently been introduced. This process will ensure the rights, views, wishes and feelings of

children and young people are heard as part of their care and support arrangements.



**Improvement and Well-being Objective:
To raise educational standards and attainment for all young people**

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Modest

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

Construction work has begun on 4 new school builds: Ysgol Newydd Margam (replacing Groes Primary and Dyffryn School), Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur (Welsh-medium school in the south of the County), Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera - Bro Dur, phase 2 (at the Ystalyfera site and replacing YGG Y Wern) and Ysgol Carreg Hir (Briton Ferry) (replacing the primary schools of Brynhyfryd, Llansawel, Ynysmaerdy). We have also increased the number of pupil admissions to Ysgol Hendrefelin, provided 30 additional pupil places and extended the age range for admissions. Work is continuing to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities;

In relation to 2016-17 academic year, outcomes at Foundation Phase have declined in language and increased in numeracy whilst they have declined at key stage 2. Outcomes at key stage 3 have increased in nearly all key indicators. Key stage 4 results have declined due to changes to key indicator calculations;

Secondary School attendance for the academic year 2016-17 has fallen slightly to 93.6% when compared to the academic year 2015-16 (93.7%). Primary School attendance for the academic year 2016-17 has risen slightly to 94.7% when compared to Academic Year 2015-16 (94.6%);

There has been a rise in fixed exclusions in both primary and secondary sectors but a fall in permanent exclusions when compared to 2015-16 academic year. The service continues to work in partnership with schools to reduce permanent exclusions to an aspirational target of zero and a continuous year on year reduction in fixed term exclusions. The Education Welfare Service and the newly created Wellbeing and Behaviour team are working closely with both schools and parents to identify the cause of individual pupil absence with the aim of early intervention when and where needed to reduce absentees; and

Peer safeguarding reviews are programmed for all schools and impact positively on safeguarding standards across the Council.

We said:

- 1. We will merge or relocate some schools; increase the capacity in others; and continue to build new schools; and to close some others.**

What did we do?

- Construction work has begun on a new 3-16 school at Margam, Ysgol Newydd Margam. This new school replaces Groes Primary and Dyffryn School. The potential annual school revenue savings are estimated at approximately £700k. The estimated capital cost for the new build is £30m. Building maintenance and accessibility costs estimated at £7.5m are removed by this proposal. The new school will open in September 2018;
- Construction work has begun on a new school for the south campus of Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera-Bro Dur. The

capital build for this two site proposal amounts to approximately £34m. The new 3-18, Welsh-medium school opened in September 2017 with the new builds at the south campus (11-16) and the primary phase at Ystalyfera, to be occupied in September 2018;

- We have increased the number of pupil admissions to Ysgol Hendrefelin, provided 30 additional pupil places and extended the age range for admissions;
- Construction work has begun on a new 3-11 school for Briton Ferry, Ysgol Newydd Briton Ferry. Establishing this new school will deliver a potential annual school revenue budget saving estimated at approximately £167k. The estimated capital cost for the new build is £7.5m. Building maintenance and repair costs liabilities estimated at £1.4m are removed by this proposal. The new school will open in September 2018; and
- Officers continue to work with the developers on the new build school at Coed Darcy, although the continued effect of the economic climate on the housing market is impacting on the start date of this project. The language designation of this school, i.e. English-medium or Welsh-medium, has yet to be determined. (Note: The 21st Century Schools Programme of new build capital projects is jointly funded between the Council and Welsh Government).

2. We will continue to implement our strategy for the provision of Welsh-medium education in Neath Port Talbot.

What did we do?

We have continued to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we plan for future growth by:

- More seven-year olds being taught through the medium of Welsh: 2016-17 academic year performance was 16.6%, a reduction from 18.4%. This is likely to be as a result of size of cohorts rather than a trend. The development of Ystalyfera Bro Dur in the south of the county borough is likely to stimulate an interest in Welsh medium education when complete. The Council is working with Mudiad Methrin to ensure expansion of pre-

school provision and support for additional suitably skilled Welsh language care workers and the delivery of the “Cymraeg for Kids” project. The NPT Family Information Service also provides a directory of services available for families and assists in promoting the availability of Welsh medium schools to parents;

- More learners transferring from Welsh Medium Primary to Welsh Medium Secondary School: the general trend for more learners transferring from Welsh Medium Primary to Welsh Medium Secondary School is positive in most years, however, the transition to secondary school whilst improving is below the target;
- More learners aged 14–16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh (GCSE Welsh [1st language] and at least five further Level 1/2 qualifications): 2016-17 academic year performance was 95% from the Welsh first language cohort; this exceeds the Welsh Government’s targets of 68% by 2020;
- More learners aged 16–19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning: more options are provided (currently 31 against a target of 30) for learners’ aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning; however recruitment of suitable staff remains a challenge; and
- Welsh-medium provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN): no formal arrangements have yet been established with other Local Authorities or consortia to develop enhanced Welsh language ALN provision.

Following feedback on our draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, we strengthened a number of elements of the Plan and we initiated a further period of public consultation on our proposals. In relation to workforce planning and continuing professional development, schools continue to plan strategically for staff development and produce robust spending plans based on systematic analysis of need.

3. We will ensure that the 14 -19 ‘Learning Pathways’ programme supports all young people to achieve their full learning potential.

What did we do?

- We increased the range and variety of courses provided to to give more young people a better chance of obtaining a recognised qualification (i.e. Health and Social Care, Construction, Engineering, Hair and Beauty,

Additional Maths, Drama and Business); and

- We continue to work to reduce the percentage of young people deemed as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) post 16. This data is collected annually and will be available at the end of this financial year, the latest data for 2016 was 3.6%.

4. Improve literacy outcomes.

What did we do?

- % of pupils achieving outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication skills at the end of Foundation Phase - this has declined from 82.0% (Academic Yr 2015-16) to 81.0% (2016-17). All schools are expected to target support to pupils. Trend analysis shows NPT performance to be strong in terms of pupil progress;
- % of pupils achieving at least level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in language (Best English or Welsh 1st Lang) - this has remained at 87% (2016-17);
- % of pupils achieving at least level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 in language (Best E or W 1st Lang) - this has increased from 84.7% (academic year 2015-16) to 85.6% (2016-17);
- % of pupils achieving level 2 threshold at the end of Key Stage 4 in language (Best E or W 1st Lang) - This has decreased from 69.6% (2015-16) to 63.1% (2016-17) - The wide ranging changes to KS4 key indicator calculations in 2017 has affected NPT results, as they have in all other local authorities, and now places NPT below the Welsh averages in all provisional measures;
- % of pupils achieve outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication skills at the end of Foundation Phase - 2016-17 academic year performance was 81%;
- % of pupils achieve at least level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in language - 2016-17 academic year performance was 87%;
- % of pupils achieve at least level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 in language - 2016-17 academic year performance was 85.6%; and

- % of pupils achieve level 2 threshold at the end of Key Stage 4 in language - 2016-17 academic year performance was 63.1%.

5. Improve numeracy outcomes.

What did we do?

- % of pupils achieving outcome 5 in mathematical development skills at the end of Foundation Phase, has increased from 84.2% (2015-16) to 85% (2016-17);
- % of pupils achieving at least level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in maths, has decreased from 88.4% (2015-16) to 88% (2016-17). Trend analysis shows NPT performance to be strong in terms of pupil progress;
- % of pupils achieving at least level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 in maths, has increased from 83.1% (2015-16) to 84.5% (2016-17); and
- % of pupils achieving level 2 threshold at the end of Key Stage 4 in maths, has reduced from 67.2% (2015-16) to 59.4% (2016-17). The wide ranging changes to Key Stage 4 key indicator calculations in 2017 has affected Neath Port Talbot results, as they have in all other local authorities, and now places us below the Welsh averages in all provisional measures.

6. We will improve the performance of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in literacy & numeracy outcomes.

What did we do?

- % of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) achieve at least outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development at the end of Foundation Phase - language has declined from 70.2% (2015-16) to 68.2% (2016-17) and mathematics has increased from 72% (2015-16) to 85.0% (2016-17). All schools are expected to target support to pupils. Trend analysis shows NPT performance to be strong in terms of pupil progress;

- % of pupils entitled to FSM achieving at least level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in language and mathematics - language has declined from 77.2% (2015-16) to 75.6% (2016-17) and mathematics has declined from 80% (2015-16) to 75% (2016-17). All schools are expected to target support to pupils. Trend analysis shows NPT performance to be strong in terms of pupil progress;
- % of pupils entitled to FSM achieving at least level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 in Language and in mathematics - language has increased from 70% (2015-16) to 71.3% (2016-17) and mathematics has declined from 68.4% (2015-16) to 65.8% (2016-17); and
- % of pupils entitled to FSM achieve level 2 threshold at the end of Key Stage 4 in language and mathematics (2016-17 academic year performance: % language (including Welsh): % mathematics: 35.2%. Key stage 4 data not yet available from Welsh Government.

7. We will improve pupil attendance.

What did we do?

- 16-17 primary school attendance has risen from 94.6% to 94.7% compared to 15-16 academic year;
- 16-17 Secondary Attendance has fallen from 93.7% to 93.6% compared to 15-16 academic year; and
- The Education Welfare Service works closely with both schools and parents to identify the cause of individual pupil absence with the aim of early intervention when and where needed. Individual pupil illnesses are monitored and challenged where there appears to be patterns of absence. Schools are encouraged to correctly code absences to allow for effective data tracking. Regular meetings are scheduled between Education Welfare Officers and key school staff to discuss individual pupil cases and provide advice, support and to determine appropriate course of actions. Education Welfare Officers will often attend at the home of the pupil to make enquiries as to the reason for the absence from school in an effort to assist and facilitate an early return to school and discuss with parents various strategies to encourage and improve regular attendance.

8. We will provide better support for pupils with behavioural needs.

What did we do?

- Number of permanent exclusions during the academic year per 1,000 pupils from both primary and secondary schools for 2016-17 academic year data was 1.6 (13 pupils). This has fallen from 2.6 (19 pupils) 2015-16 academic year;
- % of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the academic year, in primary schools for 2016-17 academic year data was 0.018% (308 days). This has risen from 0.0014% (244 days);
- % of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the academic year, in secondary schools for 2016-17 academic year data was 0.122% (1,741 days). This has risen from 0.101% (1,417days); and
- % of pupils with behavioural needs who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification - 2016-17 data not available at this stage in the year. Results will be reported in the end of year report.

Exclusion data has been monitored closely and in response to the rise in fixed and permanent exclusions a Wellbeing and Behaviour team, comprising of staff with a range of experience and expertise, has been established and a designated manager has been appointed. In addition to this we have increased capacity of assessment places across both the primary and secondary sector for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).

The establishment of this service and provision is a result of the reorganisation of the Education Other than at School Service (EOTAS) and has been implemented with Members' agreement. The Well-being and Behaviour Team are also working with key professionals to develop a training package for all schools in meeting the needs of pupils with SEBD and this will be rolled out during the spring term. This change to services and provision has been in place as of September 2017 with the aim of embedding a continuum of support and increasing capacity within schools, as part of the Council's long term plan in ensuring the needs of pupils with SEBD are effectively met.

9. We will continue to improve safeguarding practices and procedures. Protecting children and young people from abuse is a shared responsibility for all staff.

What did we do?

- On a three year cycle the Council has completed safeguarding health checks (peer reviews) in each of its schools which are undertaken by a team of peer reviewers; some of whom are head teachers, designated persons, senior officers and challenge advisers. The programme has been paused to allow for a period of evaluation. Currently, the terms of reference for the evaluation are being finalised by a group of peer reviewers, but will include questionnaires to schools, designated persons and all peer reviewer participants to identify strengths and weaknesses with the current system and areas for development. Additional meetings will take place with the established primary and secondary head teacher forums and there will be the development of a guidance document to assist with future peer reviews;
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in relation to safeguarding; these are reviewed and discussed in internal fortnightly safeguarding meetings. These meetings also monitor progress in relation to all live safeguarding issues. Officers from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Directorate attend the cross-service operational safeguarding group and Corporate Safeguarding Group; and
- As part of the Peer Review process pupil voice is sought, both formally & informally, and the pupil voice therefore also assists in the raising of Safeguarding standards.

10. We will continue to deliver school improvement through the Education Regional Working Partnership.

What did we do?

- Regional Measure: To improve the % of schools categorised as Green (25%) and Yellow (55%) schools under the National School Categorisation System – We have more effective and highly effective schools across the County Borough than previously;
- A comprehensive leadership programme has been developed by the region which has a focus on improving leadership at all levels from initial teacher training through to experienced head teachers. There is a particular focus on middle leaders in secondary schools and deputy heads in primary. This is enhanced by a newly

developed NPT leadership strategy which complements the regional strategy. It has a focus on providing coaching and mentoring for newly appointed head teachers and the allocation of bespoke support from the Challenge Adviser with responsibility for leadership;

- The menu of support provided by the Eastern Hub and region provides a range of courses and school to school provision, aiming to address key areas in literacy, numeracy and digital competency;
- A governor support programme is supported by Challenge Advisers, who frequently attend governor training and conferences as well as providing bespoke support for schools; and
- The School Improvement Team continue to develop the intelligence they hold on schools with regards to best practice and this is a good source of information to support and direct school to school work which is beginning to become an important factor in a self-improving school system.



Improvement and Well-being Objective:
To maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently with or without support within the home of their choice within the their community

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Modest	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Limited

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a clear emphasis on helping people to maintain their own well-being for longer, in particular by participating in community life and drawing upon the enormous range of

activities and services that exist across our neighbourhoods and communities.

During the period we improved the resilience of the team who deal with all new referrals (Gateway Team) so that they could signpost people effectively to help and support in the community. This reflects a change in eligibility for social services introduced by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

We launched a new service to help people find services within their local community, without the need to contact Social Services. The NPT Community Directory is an on-line, free service that contains details of a very wide range of well-being services.

Our work to promote direct payments as an alternative to directly provided care and support services saw a surge in the take up of direct payment options from 310 people to 387 people over the period.

We strengthened our partnership work with ABMU Health Board, ensuring that those services which prevent people from needing to be admitted to hospital or which help people return home from hospital when they are ready, extended to primary care settings. This work will have contributed to keeping the number of delays experienced by people ready for hospital discharge to a low level.

We made good progress in strengthening the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. The new Act brings the safeguarding of adults onto a more equal footing with those arrangements that have existed for many years for vulnerable children and young people.

We said

1. We will develop community based early intervention and prevention services to support people to remain as independent as possible without formal care and support.

What did we do?

- We used a range of approaches to help more people to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible in a home of their choice. These approaches included the further strengthening of re-ablement

services, assistive technologies and establishing a new service – local area co-ordination – where the local area co-ordinator is able to link people with care and support needs to existing community services that can support their well-being. Preventative services are making a difference. Over 55% of people who received a re-ablement service had either no care and support or a reduced care and support package six months after the re-ablement service had been completed;

- Under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, eligibility for social services has changed. Care and support is now only provided where an assessment of need has determined that the persons care and support needs can only be met by social services. Social work practice has been adjusted to reflect this change in eligibility. The rate of older people (aged 65 or over) supported in the community per 1,000 population aged 65 or over was 68.87 as at 30th September 2017 compared to 110.6 during the same period last year. The reduction in this indicator is as a result of a change in the way we calculate the rate. Supported in the community now measures only those with a care and support plan. As a result of this change, caution should be taken when making like for like comparisons with previous years' data. Over time, a reduction in this indicator should be seen as positive and is in line with the principles of the new Act; and
- The percentage of clients who are supported in the community during the year aged 65 or over was 80% during 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017 compared to 82.5% during the same period last year.

2. We will 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.

What did we do?

- We developed the workforce employed in the team (Gateway Team) that deals with new referrals for care and support to make sure that they could accurately assess people's needs and provide the right service response.
- We launched a new service – the NPT Community Directory – which provides an on-line directory of activities and services available in neighbourhoods and communities. The Directory will make it easier for people to find services on their doorstep that will help them maintain their well-being, but the Directory will also be immensely useful to professionals working with service users and carers;

- We saw a slight reduction in the percentage of referrals screened within 24 hours: Performance dropped from 67% in the period 1st April 2016 to 30th September 2016 to 61% in the same period of 2017. This is likely to be attributable to the changes we made in the Gateway Team in the short term, however, we expect performance to steadily improve as we move forward;
- We continued to successfully signpost people to community based well-being services with 86% of people being helped this way during 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017; and
- As a result, the percentage of people contacting the Gateway Team whose needs can only be met by social services continued at 14% during 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017.

3. We will 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.

What did we do?

- The Council's policy to promote direct payments as a means through which service users and carers can have choice and control over the way care and support needs are met saw a significant increase in the number of people supported this way. The number of people taking a direct payment increased from 310 as at 30th September 2016 to 387 as at 30th September 2017 – this represents 18.6% of all people receiving care and support from social services.

4. We will implement 'Pathways to Independence' approach 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.

What did we do?

- Over a number of years, we have looked carefully at the way the care and support needs of younger adults have been met, to guard against approaches that encourage people to become dependent on services. Over time, we have identified new ways to help people to live more independently, in the community rather than in

institutionalised care settings. Even when people have complex needs, opportunities for people to progress towards greater independence are examined; and

- The percentage of clients who were supported in the community during the year, aged 18-64 was 98% during 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017, compared to 98.6% during the same period last year, demonstrating that this approach to independence has become embedded in social work practice.

5. 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.

What did we do?

- Council approved a formal pooled fund arrangement for the delivery of the Intermediate Care Services between NPT CBC and ABMU HB in accordance with Section 33 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006. Anticipatory Care Planning has been launched across the Local Authority in collaboration with GP practices, District Nursing and CPN's with the aim of proactively managing vulnerable people with complex care needs who are at risk of losing their independence. Early indicators are showing positive results; and
- Very few services users aged 75+ experienced a delay in being able to return home from hospital due to social care services not being available, demonstrating the Council's continued commitment to partnership working.

6. We will continue to implement the safeguarding action plan to further improve safeguarding practices.

What did we do?

- We made good progress in strengthening adult safeguarding arrangements, to reflect the more robust arrangements required by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014; and
- 177 safeguarding referrals were received between 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017, compared to 168 referrals within the same period last year. This slight increase can be attributed to the introduction of the Adults at Risk process, in line with the new Act



Improvement and Well-being Objective:

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

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Modest	Limited

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

Regeneration

Despite continuing challenging circumstances surrounding the economy, a number of the Vibrant & Viable Places projects-such as the Green Park Housing and Landscaping project-have been completed and other key projects

including the former Police Station site, Glanafan School and Aberafan House continue with construction. In addition, the second phase of the redevelopment of Neath Town Centre is now progressing. A report on the detail of this next phase was presented to Cabinet Board in December 2017, with the same detail to be formally launched in the New Year;

There continues to be a focus on regenerating our town centres and communities because they are important aspects of the County Borough and need to be made as attractive and sustainable as possible. This has led to a number of town centre businesses being supported with grants, including the Commercial Property Grant. In addition, several annual events such as the Real Ale & Cider Festival and Neath Food & Drink Festival have been established which help attract more visitors into our towns;

Access to towns and employment centres are being improved by introducing new bus corridors, the construction of a new integrated transport hub in Port Talbot and the development of a commuter cycle network;

There is a continuation of delivering business support measures to help kick start new businesses, assist the private sector to create new and sustainable employment, promote economic growth and attract new investment. There is also a focus on increasing private sector investment to promote employment and growth within our valley communities; and

The granting of Port Talbot Waterfront with Enterprise Zone status continues to support the team in identifying companies looking to set up in the area. There is also a focus on providing the infrastructure and facilities to further grow the visitor economy in the County Borough by working with local businesses and stakeholders to deliver the Destination Management Plan. Importantly, on key regeneration projects, the team continue to deliver community benefits, helping get people back into work, supporting apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience placements and improving the prospects for local businesses to win work on public sector contracts.

Anti-poverty

We are continuing to work with our partners, to ensure people who need support to make and maintain their Universal Credit claim can access that support. The full service for Universal Credit was scheduled to roll out in the county

borough on 4th October 2017.

Housing

Tai Tarian (formerly now known as NPT Homes) achieved its target of 100% of properties WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standard) compliant by the 31st March 2017;

Significant improvements have been made in the number of empty properties being brought back into use through the Houses to Homes Loan Scheme and we anticipate an increase in the number of properties that were made warm safe and secure by the end of the financial year; and

The review of the Homelessness Service was completed and implemented on the 9th June, which resulted in changes to service hours and staffing to better reflect the needs of the service.

Regeneration - we said:

- 1. We will encourage inward investment and bring forward a range of opportunities, including residential, retail and commercial developments, as well as promoting the borough to companies as a great place in which to locate their business.**

What did we do?

- The team continue to manage inward investment and expansion projects across many different business sectors. To date, 6 local business expansion schemes and 18 inward investment projects are being progressed. Collectively, these projects have the potential to support economic growth through the creation of up to 900 new jobs and the safeguarding of more than 50 existing jobs; and
- The team continue to progress and seek a range of funding opportunities from sources such as Buildings for the Future, the successor to Vibrant & Viable Places (Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme) and Coastal Communities, amongst others.

2. The next phase of Neath Town Centre redevelopment will be completed.

What did we do?

- Following the successful completion of the first phase which included the new multi-storey car park and the Wilko retail unit, planning has been approved for the next phase of the scheme. This will see the construction of up to six new retail units and 12 apartments on land at the rear of Boots service yard; and
- The team also continue to work with Coastal to deliver community benefits based on employment, training and work experience opportunities linked to the construction of the retail units.

3. Continue to promote development opportunities at Aberavon Seafront will continue and other destinations.

What did we do?

- The Council's Destination Management Plan priorities are being used to help the team establish stronger working relationships with existing businesses and potential new investors to support the further development of leisure and commercial opportunities at Aberavon Seafront.

4. Develop Margam Park including caravan and camping facilities on site.

What did we do?

- Options to bring forward the scheme are being considered.

5. We will access funding to refurbish, repair and maintain locally important buildings and structures.

What did we do?

- We secured funding from Cadw to refurbish the Turbine House at Margam Park – the outcome of the bid was not known at the time of preparing this report but is expected to be known by the end of the financial year and will be included in part two on this Annual Report which will be published shortly after the end of the financial

year; and

- Funding applications were made to Cadw for refurbishing War Memorials at Neath, Port Talbot and Briton Ferry.

6. We will drive forward regeneration projects in the valleys, to encourage tourism and improve employment opportunities.

What did we do?

- The Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan (DMP) the Council and its partners to secure funds for the delivery of tourism related initiatives in the area. Task and Finish groups have been established with private sector tourism operators in the valleys areas to deliver DMP priority actions and to date this year, £215,757 of external funding has been secured from Visit Wales to deliver improvements to visitor car parking at Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan and Margam Country Park;
- The Rural Development Plan funded “Tourism Development in Neath Port Talbot” project continues to be delivered with activities focusing on identifying the needs of tourism businesses; developing the tourism industry’s knowledge of the area through a series of ‘Sense of Place’ events and producing high quality videography and photography to enable tourism operators within the valley areas to promote the region more effectively. The project has also undertaken visitor research to ensure that the tourism sector is better informed on the needs, wants and characteristics of visitors; and
- So far in 2017-18, we have supported 6 businesses within the valley areas of NPT to deliver investment projects valued in excess of £32,000. These projects have supported the creation 7.5 new jobs and the safeguarding of 1.5 jobs. In addition, the Team are currently working on a further four key regeneration projects to encourage tourism development and economic growth within our valley communities.

7. We will continue to deliver the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme to combine support for people and places whilst encouraging partnership working.

What did we do?

The Vibrant and Viable Places Programme consists of 12 projects to be delivered over a three year period. Although the programme ended on 31st March with a near full claim made to the Welsh Government, some projects continue to be delivered in 2017/18. The status of each of the projects is outlined below:

- Housing Renewal – Phase 3 of the housing renewal scheme delivered. Schemes in Oakwood Street and Talbot Road completed;
- Integrated Transport Hub – scheme on site with works being undertaken by Andrew Scott Ltd. Completion due November 2017;
- Aberafan House – project underway and due for completion Summer 2018;
- Glanafan School site – Demolition works completed. Site redevelopment underway;
- Former Police Station - Demolition works completed prior to the redevelopment of the site for homes and new commercial space;
- Green Park Housing – project completed;
- Green Park Riverside – Phase 1 completed with Phase 2 underway;
- Employability Centre – project completed;
- Homes Above Shops – Pobl will not be proceeding with this scheme due to viability concerns;
- Plaza Cinema –Buildings for the Future grant approved in principle;
- Houses to Homes Loans – scheme being delivered; and
- Burrows Yard – pre-development work ongoing in partnership with Coastal Housing.

8. We will identify supply chain opportunities for local companies and employment and training opportunities for local people through the delivery of community benefits on key regeneration projects within the area.

What did we do?

- The Team are currently working with lead contractors on delivering community benefits on six key projects (i.e. Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, Ysgol Newydd Margam, Ysgol Newydd (Gymunedol Gymraeg), Ysgol Newydd Briton Ferry, Port Talbot Transport Hub and Renewal Areas (VVP and ARBED funded) within Neath Port Talbot.

Outputs achieved during the first six months of 2017/18 include:

- 54 local people helped to get back into work;
- 23 apprenticeship, traineeships and work experience training weeks completed;
- 39 contract opportunities secured by local businesses; and
- 69% of spend with contractors within Wales achieved.

9. We will continue to support local businesses to help them prosper; create more jobs and business start-ups.

What did we do?

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

Outputs achieved during the first six months of 2017/18 include:

- 256 enquiries from existing businesses looking for specific advice, information or financial support;
- Assisted 119 new business start-up enquiries;
- Supported 7 new businesses to start up through the Council's Innov8 programme; and
- Helped create 21 new jobs as a result of financial support provided by the Council.

Anti-Poverty we said:

- 10. We will deliver the commitments in the partnership agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support the introduction of Universal Credit.**

What did we do?

- As at 31st March 2017, there were 1,210 claimants in receipt of Universal Credit in Neath Port Talbot. This had increased to 1,250 as at 30th September 2017. An estimated 425 claimants have now had housing costs paid in their Universal Credit. (These would have been housing benefit claimants prior to the introduction of Universal Credit);
- Between 1st April 2017 and 30 September 2017, 14 claimants have requested and received specialist money management support and 31 have applied for and received digital support; and
- The partnership agreement with Department for Work and Pensions was successful and similar arrangements are in place for 2017-2018.

- 11. We will work with partners, to identify the impact of the next set of Welfare Benefit changes announced by the UK Government.**

What did we do?

- The first six months of the year were focused on the roll out of Universal Credit, which happened in NPT on 4th October. In advance of this we worked with the DWP to ensure all partners were accessing training to fully understand its implications. We held a seminar for elected Members to raise awareness of Universal Credit. This will be repeated in November 2017.

- 12. We will work with partners to ensure citizens and service providers are aware of the community resources and how they can be accessed.**

What did we do?

- The work to implement the NPT Community Directory service has been further developed. The on-line directory

contains details of a wide range of advice and support services that people can access in communities. This should enable more people to access help and support at an early stage, and before crisis sets in.

13. We will further develop our Digital inclusion plans with partners.

What did we do?

- We worked with third sector partners to survey local community and voluntary groups to establish their digital capability. Increasingly, people are turning to community and voluntary sector organisations for support in accessing on-line services. It will be important as more and more services are placed on line, that there is enough support in the community to enable everyone to access the services that they need and to enjoy the benefits people who are on-line are able to achieve.

14. We will review our work to mitigate Welfare Benefit reforms and update our partnership work programme.

What did we do?

- Work concentrated on preparations for the roll out of the full Universal Credit Service during the period, as detailed above.

Housing we said:

15. Tai Tarian (formerly known as 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 (WHQS) and to regenerate communities.

What did we do?

- During 2016-2017 Tai Tarian (formerly now known as NPT Homes) made excellent progress in the delivery of its major investment programme and all 9,019 (100%) properties were WHQS compliant by the 31st March 2017 deadline as set by the Welsh Government.

16. 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.

What did we do?

- The continued interest in the Houses into Homes Loan scheme has seen an improvement in the number of loans paid out where the refurbishment works are currently ongoing. A total of 4 units of accommodation have already been brought back into use during the first two quarters of 2017/18 compared to 20 for the same period last year. It is estimated that the total number of units being brought back into use for the year will exceed 24, compared to 20 during 2016/17 and 8 in 2015/16
- The delivery of the Home Improvement Loan scheme has seen an increase in the number of loans issued with works currently ongoing. A total of 4 properties have been made warm safe or secure during the first two quarters of 2017/18, the same as quarter 2 last year. It is estimated that 17 properties will be made warm, safe or secure during 2017/18 compared to 5 properties in 2015/16 and 7 properties in 2016/17

17. We will undertake a homelessness review and we will prioritise those most in need by implementing single point of access arrangements for Supported People-funded homelessness prevention support services.

What did we do?

- A Homelessness service review was completed and implemented on the 9th June 2017 which resulted in a change in staffing hours of support staff (from shifts to 9am to 5pm, Mon to Fri working) and also changes to staff involved in the on call service. A further restructure exercise is scheduled to take place later this year.
- Increase the % of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months - 2017/18 quarter 2 is 33%. No comparative data is available due to a change in KPI/reporting. Changes are planned to the service to improve on this figure.

18. We will 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.

What did we do?

- Ongoing preparatory work remains on target for the production of a draft Homelessness Strategy in the autumn of 2017;
- Housing Association Co-operation Agreements are currently being developed under the auspices of Community Housing Agreement arrangements; and
- The percentage of Housing Association partners with stock in the county borough the Council has a co-operation agreement with, will be measured once the above strategy and agreements are embedded.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

towards zero waste

**Improvement and Well-being Objective:
Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted**

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Modest	Modest	Strong	Modest	Modest	Modest	Strong

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

We have continued to promote the shift from a throwaway society to one that recycles first. We completed the roll-out of our improved Recycle+ weekly recycling service to 64,000 homes and implemented our side waste restriction policy, in addition to the fortnightly collection of residual waste and smaller wheeled bins.

The current recycling performance for the first 6 months of 2017-2018 is 63.72% up from 63.70% for the same period in 2016-2017. The next statutory targets are 64% by 2019-2020 and 70% by 2024-2025.

We continue to realise performance through current arrangements for waste treatment and disposal, whilst work is ongoing towards putting in place a new waste services contract.

We said:

1. More waste will be diverted from landfill through reuse, recycling and composting.

What did we do?

- Provided our source separated recyclables collection service: “Recycle+” to almost all of the County Borough
- The only properties that are not serviced by Recycle+ are the remote properties and farms and some terraced houses with collections in rear lanes. We have applied for further funding from the Collaborative Change Programme capital grant regime, for funding for 2 specialist kerbside sort vehicles and associated householder kit to service these properties;
- A household participation survey was carried out in autumn 2017, and showed an 80% participation rate, indicating that the previous on-going increase may have stalled, although a number of factors need to be considered, principally that garden waste data could not be captured (now being collected on the refuse freighters). Communication and engagement work has continued as resources have allowed and have included school visits, road shows / local events, social media and local press/radio promotions;
- The Council’s side waste restriction remains in place. There are around 1,300 current exemptions, and around 100 applications have been rejected. Exemptions last for 12 months and are only issued to householders that can demonstrate that they are already recycling as much of their waste as possible, but still produce large quantities of non-recyclable waste. The second phase of the restriction is due to be implementation following the complete roll-out of Recycle+;
- We now only offer trade customers a collection service where they recycle (offering refuse only services to only a small number of small businesses, for example mobile hairdressers); and
- Having achieved the 2016-2017 statutory recycling, reuse and composting target of 58%, performance for the first 6 months of 2017-2018 is 63.72% marginally up on the same period in 2016-2017. We are well on the way

to achieving the next statutory target of 64% by 2019-2020.

2. New contract arrangements will be in place for waste treatment and disposal to ensure we are getting the best deal for the Council.

What did we do?

- Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) procurement including food waste treatment is on-going;
- A longer term cost model for Neath Port Talbot to achieve the 70% target is planned to be produced once the issue of longer term waste treatment/disposal arrangements is resolved;
- 11.02% of municipal waste was sent to landfill during the first 6 months of 2017-2018, slightly up on 10.60% for the same period in 2016-2017; and
- 30.22% of municipal waste was used to recover heat and power in the first 6 months of 2017-2018, compared to 33.50% for the same period in 2016-2017.



Digital by Choice
*improving customer experience,
 making better use of public money*

Improvement and Well-being Objective:
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

Contribution to Well-being Goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Strong	Modest	Strong	Strong	Modest	Strong	Limited

Summary of our progress period 1st April to 30th September 2017:

We maintained the improvements made to our bilingual corporate website and saw a further increase in the number of transactions completed on-line from 67% to 73.2%. Accordingly, the number of visits to our one stop shops has reduced compared to the same period last year.

The volume of electronic orders placed by the Council with suppliers continues to rise year on year.

The new administration also set up an Income Generation Group (chaired by the Deputy Leader), to look at additional ways of drawing in extra income that can help the Council to balance its budget in a climate of continuing austerity.

We said:

1. Our website will be easier to access and more services will be available online.

What did we do?

- Improved the professional rating of our website page rating from a 2 star to a 3 star (maximum rating is 4 star);
- 15 new online services have been developed in the last 4 years with a further 8 due to be implemented during 2017/18; and
- We saw an increase in the number of transactions completed on-line (new on-line services) from 67% (2016-17) to 73.2% for 2017-18.

2. More of our website pages will be available in Welsh.

What did we do?

- The website is now bilingual. All new web pages developed are translated into Welsh as a matter of course before being published to the Web. Where pages are not fully bilingual, this is usually because there are links to third party systems where information is not available in Welsh. The number of Neath Port Talbot website page views for the month of March 2017 was as follows: Welsh pages = 1,785 and English pages = 224,995.

3. We will change our one stop shops and support people to carry out transactions on-line to make it easier for people to access digital services.

What did we do?

- Demand on Customer Services in total for the both One Stop Shop (OSS) sites has reduced. Total callers for the period 1.4.16 – 30.9.16 were 37,998 compared to 32,315 for the same period this year. This is mainly due to a reduction in recycling enquiries – 4,618 (1.4.16 – 30.9.16), 2,809 (1.4.17 – 30.9.17) and Council Tax

enquiries – 3,167 (1.4.16 – 30.9.16), 2,106 (1.4.17 – 30.9.17). Staff in both the OSS sites continue to actively promote the online services available to customers. Additionally, an improved service to those people renewing a Blue Badge has meant that it is no longer necessary for people to attend the civic centre for reassessment if their circumstances have not changed.

4. More people in our communities will have the digital skills to access services.

What did we do?

The Public Services Board created a new partnership to take forward work on digital inclusion. The Group is addressing four barriers to digital inclusion: connectivity; affordability; skills; and confidence. The key pieces of work completed in the six month period include exploring how well served the area is by broadband; and conducting a survey of third sector organisations to identify how well placed the sector is to operate within a digital environment.

5. All services will use our on-line ordering and payment system replacing manual processes.

What did we do?

- Roll out of the iProcurement System is ongoing and the volume of electronic orders placed continues to rise year on year. During April-September 2017, 49.62% of transactions were processed through the iProcurement system.

6. Introduce self-service options across internal support services, starting with a self-service employee portal.

What did we do?

- The testing phase of the portal is now complete. A number of focus groups were held with a wide cross section of employees, including those who currently do not have intranet access / use ICT as part of their normal working day, and this helped inform the development of the portal, ensuring that it is user friendly and that it will

engage the workforce. The Portal has now entered 'Roll Out' phase, and is currently available to employees who have intranet access – employees are able to register themselves as Portal Users and then will have full access to the system. Registration is being marketed with the support of the Corporate Communications and Marketing team who are leading on the Communication Strategy that supports this project. Penetration testing will be taking place in October / November to ensure the security and integrity of the system prior to roll out to all Council employees. Full roll out is expected to be complete by the end of the financial year

- A site visit took place in May 2017 to explore how robotics technology may assist in the future development of the portal and a business case is being developed to examine the potential business benefits of taking this forward

7. Increased and new income generation opportunities.

What did we do?

- An Income Generation Group, chaired by the Deputy Leader has been set up by the new administration to look at ways of helping the Council to balance its budget. The Group is encouraging staff, trade union representatives and Members to put their suggestions forward on where new sources of income could be raised. To aid debate, the Group arranged for the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) to deliver a seminar to Members, chief officers and middle managers. The event raised awareness of the importance of seeking out additional income as part of the Council's Forward Financial Plan. Delegates explored a number of case studies of how other councils across the UK have generated new sources of income. The information generated from the event is being used to develop a Council-wide approach to income generation that will be brought forward for consideration by the end of this financial year.

Have your say on what matters to you

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

Email: improvement@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>

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



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This document is available in Welsh