

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014-2017 – HALF YEAR
PROGRESS REPORT (1.04.14 TO 30.09.14)





IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 1

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

RAG Status	Comments
Green	Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.

What we said we would do:

1. Improve the quality and effectiveness of social work practice; continue to improve performance of our eight priority measures and also want the number of children looked after in the County Borough to show a 2.5% year on year decrease over the next two years

How are we doing? - 123 case file audits have been undertaken and findings show increased compliance with procedures and enhanced quality. Areas for continued improvement have been discussed in Business Improvement Meetings with support/training provision agreed. All eight priority measures are exceeding their target and the number of looked after children (*excluding Respite*) was 459, compared to 468 as at 31st March 2014. This represents a 1.9% decrease and remains on target.

2. Ensure the capacity and capability of the workforce would meet the demands on the service by minimising social worker vacancies and use of agency workers, ensure all employees in the service have an agreed Personal Development Plan and by March 2015, show that 72% of staff feel valued at work from our staff survey (it was 58.8% in 2012)

How are we doing? - Currently there are 3 fte social work vacancies across all frontline teams (our target by March 2015 is less than 10). There are fewer agency workers, 9 compared to 18 as at 31st March 2014). The findings of the most recent staff survey

(Sept 2014) will not be available until late 2014. Individual learning plans have been developed for 95% of qualified staff and 79% of unqualified staff. A training needs analysis has been undertaken and the results are used to inform the training plan for 2014/15.

3. Ensure that improving CYPS remains a priority for the Council and its partners and that there is continued strong and supportive political and professional leadership for the improvement programme

How are we doing? - The Strategic Improvement Plan was revised in July 2014 to reflect both the outcomes of the report received from CSSIW in January 2014, as well as the wider aims, objectives and aspirations of the service. In addition, we now have a Development Plan, a working document used to ensure relevant actions are undertaken in a timely and proper fashion.

4. Further enhance performance management and elected member scrutiny arrangements, by developing a new model which will put better checks and balances in place, so that service delivery is not compromised

How are we doing? - Performance Management information continues to be readily available, along with a comprehensive audit programme and a new scrutiny model was implemented which includes forward work programmes and the committee having sight of the cabinet work programmes to better plan their work. There is more structured and thorough questioning, making the process far more effective.

5. Formally adopt the new Corporate Parenting Policy and ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel hold a celebration and information day to recognise the achievements of looked after children; and support care leavers by commissioning contracts with Housing providers to provide suitable long term accommodation for young people who leave the care system

How are we doing? - Through the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, current contracts with supported housing providers are being reviewed to provide a better range of support packages to meet the needs of young people. We also held a looked after children information and fun day in July. The event was an excellent opportunity to listen to what is important to looked after children and their carers and how they can help shape the corporate parenting strategy. It also gave Members the opportunity to

promote their role as corporate parents so that looked after children know what they can expect from them and to recognise the work of foster carers.

In partnership, we said we will accomplish the work streams that are set out principally in the TAF, through the Think Family Partnership. This will mean: access to different services are clearer to service users and providers; early intervention and prevention will mean a reduction in demand for costly intervention services across the partnership and a reduction in the number of children looked after

How are we doing? - There is now a full team structure in place for Think around the Family and awareness training sessions for partner organisations are ongoing, with over 300 attendees to date. The criteria is clearly communicated to partners so they can make decisions as to whether families are appropriate for a referral to the Think around the Family team. Over 150 families have been referred to Think around the Family team, including approx. 50 'stepped down' from Children's Services. Partners are involved in supporting families in moving forward with their Family Support Plan and have accepted the role of Lead Family Contact as part of this and audits continue to monitor the extent and effectiveness of joint working with partners



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 2

Raise educational standards and attainment of all young people

RAG Status	Comments
Amber	The RAG status at present is set at amber with priority action areas being progressed. Work is continuing on the production of detailed business cases for all projects under 21st Century Schools Band A Funding. Schools have secured an improvement in pupil attendance in both sectors, in particular in the primary sector with a 1.6% rise. Key Stage 4 results have maintained in line with 2012/13 performance and we continue to compare favourably across Wales. Key Stage 2 results are steadily improving with Key Stage 3 maintaining their performance compared to 2012/13. However, there has been a rise in fixed and permanent exclusion in both the primary and secondary sectors, which we are actively working to decrease. Performance of pupils entitled to free school meals in Literacy & Numeracy has been identified as a risk area (seven of the measures did not achieve forecast performance for the 2013/14 academic year).

What we said we would do:

- 1. Continue with the delivery of the Strategic School Improvement Programme and following consultations (in some cases with Welsh Government determination), this will include federating (merging) some schools; relocating some schools; increasing the capacity in some schools; continuing with our arrangements to build some new schools; and to close some others**

How are we doing?

- We have started the consultation process on the proposal to amalgamate Central Infant and Central Junior schools by 1st September 2015 and this will continue until 30th November 2014. The amalgamation of Cwmafan Infant and Cwmafan

Junior schools will take effect from 1st January 2015, following Cabinet approval. The amalgamation of Velindre Community School, Ysgol Hendre Special School and Bryncoch PRU, including an attached secondary assessment centre will take effect from 1st January 2015, following Cabinet approval.

- Plans to replace Cwrt Sart, Glanafan, Sandfields and Traethmeylin Schools with Ysgol Newydd (Bae Baglan) are progressing well, and planning approval secured. On-site work is scheduled to commence in November 2014. We have also started preparations for the outline business case for Ysgol Newydd Briton Ferry, to replace Brynhyfryd, Ynysmaerdy and Llansawel Primary Schools.
- We are still in discussions with the Diocese and School Governing Body for a new 3-16 school on the same site of St Joseph's RC Comprehensive.

2. Continue to work with developers to ensure appropriate educational provisions are available in the new Coed Darcy village commencing with a 3-11 primary school

How are we doing? – Plans for a new have been developed. Planning approval is yet to be secured and relevant statutory consultation is yet to commence.

3. Continue to implement our strategy for the provision of Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot and we will measure our success against outcomes as detailed in our delivery plan

How are we doing? -. The percentage of year 2 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh has increased from 17.6% to 18.1% (2013/14 academic year). The Local Authority's ambitions and priorities for Welsh medium and Welsh language education are encapsulated in the seven outcomes of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014/17, This WESP details how we will secure further development within the period April 2014 – March 2017.

4. Consult on a new Welsh medium school in the north of the County Borough and a new Welsh medium school in the south of the County Borough

How are we doing? - A formal consultation process will commence in the 2014 autumn term, on a new 3-18 Welsh medium school in the north and the south of the County Borough. A full business case for the north of the County Borough will be submitted to Welsh Government in November 2014.

- 5. Ensure that a school led improvement model is promoted and supported through: school to school collaboration; cluster development; and improvement partnerships and increase the number mainstream Schools which are good/outstanding (as per the criteria determined with regional partners) from 58% to 68% in 2014-2015**

How are we doing? - We currently have 67.4 % of our schools that are Good/Outstanding (as per the criteria determined with regional partners), which is an increase on last years baseline figure of 58% as at December 2013. The forecast for the year is to achieve 68%.

- 6. Support schools and enable schools to support each other in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes across all key stages (years 2, 6, 9 & 11)**

(Note: Foundation Stage = 6/7 year old pupils, Key Stage 2 = Year 6 pupils (final year of primary school), Key Stage 3 = Year 9 pupils (secondary school), Key Stage 4 = Year 11 pupils (final year of compulsory education in secondary school).

How are we doing? - Three of the four key stage Literacy measures improved and at least met their forecast performance for the year. One of the measures (at key stage 4) maintained performance but was below its forecast for the year. All four key stage Numeracy measures have improved. Two measures met their forecast performance for the year and two measures did not achieve forecast performance for the year.

- 7. Ensure that the 14-19 Learning Pathways programme supports all young people to achieve their full learning potential and by providing a range of relevant courses (including vocational courses) we aim to improve attainment levels for year 11 pupils and continue to work with young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at post 16 and have less than 3% being NEET in 2014-2015**

How are we doing? - We have increased the average wider point score for pupils aged 16 from 534 to 539 (provisional). However this performance is below our forecast for the 2013/14 academic year of 575. We have increased the average ‘capped’

points score for pupils aged 16 from 349 to 351 (provisional). However this performance is below our forecast for the 2013/14 academic year of 359. The figure for the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or training (NEET) for 2014 will not be available until April 2015.

8. Improve the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) in Literacy & Numeracy. This will include improving the quality of teaching; improving engagement with parents/carers and identify and facilitate opportunities for pooling resources, for example through Communities First & Flying Start projects

How are we doing? - Four of the eight measures improved, one maintained performance and three measures saw a drop in performance. One of the measures exceeded its forecast performance but seven of the measures did not achieve forecast performance for the 2013/14 academic year. This has been identified as a risk area.

9. Improve pupil attendance by continuing to provide advice and support to all schools and to those schools with lower attendance levels, scrutinise attendance and share best practice within schools

How are we doing? - In the 2013/14 academic year, we made improvements in pupil attendance. Primary school attendance increased by 1.6% to 94.6% and secondary school attendance increased by 0.91% to 93.51%. Core visits during the autumn will include attendance issues and all schools will be required to submit attendance targets with an action plan and evaluation.

10. Continue to improve safeguarding practices and procedures to ensure that all schools judged by Estyn meet statutory requirements

How are we doing? - Some of the key achievements include: Estyn reports for 2013/14 show that all schools meet the requirements; peer reviews undertaken in schools; safe recruitment audit undertaken in a sample of schools; supply staff agencies providing staff to our schools are being scrutinised and schools informed which agencies meet our standards.

11. Improve and enhance behaviour management by aiming to have fewer permanent exclusions across all our schools and to reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions. This work will include improving capacity within schools to manage behaviour, so that intervention is employed at the early stages of challenging behaviour and specific support for targeted schools on behaviour management

How are we doing? - We have not made good progress in achieving our aim to have less permanent exclusions across all our schools and to reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions. For the 2013/14 academic year, the actual permanent exclusions were 12 an increase of three on last year. We also saw an increase in the number of days lost in primary sector to 281 days (174 the previous year) and an increase in the number of days lost in secondary sector to 1,626 days (1,568 the previous year). As a priority we are working to improve performance in this area.

12. Continue to consult with pupils, parents, staff, governors on all aspects of education provision through dedicated consultation events and annual roadshow meetings across the County Borough

How are we doing? – To date senior officers from the service have met with Chairs of Governors termly and attended meetings with secondary and primary school Head Teachers. We have held roadshows in all but one of our Comprehensive schools with a view to completing all the roadshows by the end of this term. All feeder primary schools were invited to the roadshows.

In partnership, we said we will continue to deliver school improvement through our partnership in ERW (Education through Regional Learning). A South West and Mid Wales consortium made up of six partner authorities which are Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthen, Powys, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion who will: share best practice amongst schools in the ERW region; monitor school performance; support school leadership; co-ordinate high quality governor training, and ensure that the delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework is effective across all schools

How are we doing? - We have put in place the ERW Leading Learner Group, which will oversee the National Professional Qualification for Headship, Head Teacher and middle leader professional development programmes and the training of higher level Teaching Assistants. We also put in place a Regional Governor Support Officer group, all regions now share training programme on the ERW website.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 3

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

RAG Status	Comments
Amber	The programme is assessed as being a low to moderate risk although it is working at full capacity given existing resources. However, there are capacity issues which threaten the successful achievement of the financial benefits identified within the Forward Financial Plan. The two areas where capacity is impacting on the ability to deliver are: 1. social work capacity to complete the number of assessments and reviews within the agreed timescales in order to meet Forward Financial Plan savings targets, currently expected to slip and 2. Dedicated project management support for the Transition to Adulthood Project. In terms of the resources and capacity available within community care, we are maximising the capacity that can be put into all these work streams whilst trying to ensure we continue to improve operational performance and performance indicators.

What we said we would do:

- 1. Deliver on proposals for a new range of services for people with disabilities, which will cater for individuals with assessed needs in relation to physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health. This will focus on three discrete elements – a community independence service, an employment service and a care and support service**

How are we doing? - From October we will have fully implemented a new service, including putting a workforce in place to support the new service and developed referral criteria and operational policies. We have successfully exited from the

COASTAL project and all project outcomes have been achieved and sustainable future for employment and tracking projects are continuing. We have also established care and support service at Trem y Mor and extended service at 'Old' Rhodes House.

2. Modernise social work practice to ensure we meet or exceed practice standards in terms of timeliness of response and quality, and implement the safeguarding action plan to further improve safeguarding practices

How are we doing? - We have completed the engagement activity on the new social work model and the management of change proposals for the workforce is due start at the end of October. We are in the process of developing a system for the reporting of Care Response Measures and there is also a new supervision policy in place. We have developed our Quality and Performance system in partnership with the Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University and by the end of the year we will measure customer satisfaction levels. Providers attended a workshop, where there was an opportunity to discuss Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and to update them on current changes in legislation. An extensive training programme has taken place with a focus on the implications. We have also put in place quality assurance processes, which form part of our system of continuous improvement.

3. Continue to prevent homelessness by maintaining the high percentage of all potentially homeless households which were prevented from becoming homeless for at least six months

How are we doing? - There is a slight decrease in the percentage of potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented, from 96.1% to 92.8% but this is still excellent performance and against a backdrop of increasing presentations to the service.

4. Improve residents' ability to remain independent in their own homes by providing support and continuing to offer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for adaptations to houses to meet the needs of disabled residents and we aim to reduce the average time to complete a DFG to 225 days

How are we doing? - Currently the number of DFG's delivered this financial year is 169 and are taking an average of 270 days to deliver. This includes 2 extremely complex grants for children and a higher number than average of extensions. Also due to the introduction of a new Rapid Adaptation Grant for this year which is set to take approximately 70 smaller jobs out of the DFG

system, the forecasted figures have been revised to an average delivery time of 285 days and the number of grants completed is now forecast to be 245.

In partnership, we said we would:

1. Work with the ABMU Health Board, Neath Port Talbot Carers Service, Carer representatives, Third Sector organisations and others to develop a commissioning strategy focusing on services which support carers in Neath Port Talbot. The strategy will help us plan how we use the money available in a way which achieves the best outcomes for unpaid carers

How are we doing? - The Carers Strategy group has agreed a process for developing the strategy, an estimated time table and the development of a communication plan.

2. Implement an approach called ‘Pathways to Independence’ across community care to ensure adults of working age with care and support needs are assessed and supported in a way which maximises their independence and more people are living independently with minimal or no support in their own communities

How are we doing? - The number of individuals who are reliant on residential care in the Learning Disability population had reduced from 73 to 49. In terms of percentage of spend on residential care, this is has reduced from 48% to 26%. The current reduction in residential care costs in Learning Disability has reduced by £1.3million which is 10% of overall spend. Further targets have been identified for Mental Health and Physical Disabilities of which some success has been achieved. An outcome matrix has been developed to measure outcomes for individuals.

3. Work with neighbouring authorities and the ABMU Health Board as part of the Western Bay Programme to ensure services are integrated. Work will focus on community services for frail older people, those with learning disabilities and adult mental health services

How are we doing? - We are implementing a community services business case and robust performance measures are in place to assess the impact of the investment via the Intermediate Care Fund. The Western Bay Mental Health Project commissioned a

review of mental health services in May 2014. A ‘Joint Commitments for Mental Health Services’ paper was presented and approved by Western Bay partner Boards/Cabinets, which demonstrates a shared vision for improving services. There are also outcome measures in place for community services. There were 24 delayed transfers of care for social care reasons between 1st April 2014 and 30th Sep 2014 compared to 29 for the same period last year.

4. Develop and implement a Multi Agency Transition Policy and protocol to ensure all young people receive high quality advice, information and support to enable them to plan for their future as they move into adulthood

How are we doing? - A Transition Protocol has been agreed and signed off between Adult and Children’s Services which ensures a more seamless transition process. This includes an agreement to have a single plan for every young person coming through transition and a data collection process.

5. Open the first (of the four) new 60 bed residential care home delivered by Grŵp Gwalia in the summer of 2014, situated in Moor Road, Port Talbot

How are we doing? - Llys y Seren is open and delivering residential Enablement as well as long term residential care.

6. Increase the availability of good quality, well managed, affordable private sector accommodation via the Social Lettings Agency to address the future changes in homelessness legislation and work to have 100 tenancies in management by the end of 2014-2015

How are we doing? - The number of tenancies in management fluctuates significantly during any year and the figure is currently 65, having bottomed out at 59 earlier during the first half of the year. Social Lettings Agency staff are confident that the number can be brought back up to 86 by the year end and every effort will be made to exceed this. The forecast for the year was set at 100 tenancies in management.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 4

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

RAG Status	Comments
Green	Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.

Regeneration - what we said we would:

1. Continue work on Harbourside by developing pedestrian links to improve accessibility to employment opportunities

How are we doing? – We are in the process of formalising land ownership issues prior to submitting a planning application for the development of pedestrian links and a planning application has been submitted for the new NPT College campus and a proposed Business Park.

2. Begin work on the Baglan Link Bridge which will make Baglan Energy Park more accessible and enable local bus companies to provide a bus service to the site

How are we doing? - Construction work has started on site and is due for completion March 2015.

3. Begin construction work to deliver the first phase of the Neath Town Centre redevelopment to improve the town centre for the community and visitors to the town

How are we doing? - The first phase to include a new 600 space multi-storey car park, and 23,000 sq ft of new retail space is under construction and due for completion in August 2015.

4. Complete improvements in public areas in Port Talbot, Neath and Croeserw to enhance the environment for the community

How are we doing? - Initial works completed in Port Talbot and Croeserw, with additional work being undertaken in Lower Station Road, Port Talbot (due to be completed in June 2015). Also additional public realm works are being undertaken in Neath as part of the first Phase as mentioned in point 3 above.

5. Begin construction work, on the new Leisure Centre on Aberavon seafront

How are we doing? - Construction work is well advanced and the centre is due to open in December 2015.

6. Continue to drive forward regeneration projects in the Valleys to make enhancements to tourism, employment and public areas

How are we doing? - Regeneration projects in Pontardawe and Glynneath have been completed and a planning application has been submitted for the second phase at Sarn Helen.

7. Develop a comprehensive commuter cycle network to enable residents and visitors to access towns, employment centres and visitor attractions effectively and safely

How are we doing? - In partnership with the City and Council of Swansea we have introduced an integrated commuter route scheme covering the whole of Swansea Bay. This scheme has led to improved cycle signage in the County Borough, raising awareness to car/lorry drivers of cyclists and a full marketing programme is being implemented to raise awareness of the routes. This scheme so far has led to a 25% increase in cyclists on routes that have been measured.

8. Pursue the establishment of quality tourist accommodation and facilities at sites including Rheola

How are we doing? - The Rheola planning application is anticipated to be determined in November 2014.

9. Continue to renovate properties in the Council's two Renewal Areas- Neath East and Sandfields East & Aberavon. We aim to improve 75 properties

How are we doing? – Energy Company Obligation funding has been secured to support the renewal area energy upgrade works and currently 45 houses have been completed to date. A further 30 properties will be completed by year end.

Employment & Prosperity - what we said we would:

10. Continue to work with Welsh Government to test and explore opportunities to reduce the number of individuals in South West Wales who are economically inactive or unemployed by working in a joined up, client centred way

How are we doing? - As at 30th June 2014, the latest data indicates that more people (73.6%) of working age (16 to 64) were economically active, compared to 71.6%, as at 31st September 2013. As at 30th September 2014, 2.7% of working age people were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, again an improvement compared to 3.5% as at February 2014.

11. Help economically inactive people and those who are long-term unemployed to improve their chances of getting a job through the Workways project and to explore self-employment through the Council's Innov8 programme

How are we doing? - 5,007 (cumulative figures) people were engaged in the project, above the target of 4,450 for this period (1.04.14 to 30.09.14) and 2,505 (cumulative figures) people were in sustainable employment, above the target of 1,871 for this period. This project has been extended to 31st December 2014.

12. Provide an effective and supportive service through our Business Development Team to local businesses to help them prosper creating more jobs and business start ups

How are we doing? - There were 388 business enquiries resulting in advice, information or financial support being given to existing companies. This output is on track to deliver the year end forecast of 430. We assisted 184 new business start-up enquiries and this output has already achieved the year end forecast. We have assisted 16 new start ups through the Innov8

programme and this output is on track to deliver the year end forecast of 28. 56.5 jobs have been created as a result of financial support by the Council and it is anticipated that year end forecast of 176 will be achieved.

13. Identify contracts for local companies and job and training opportunities for local people within major developments in the County Borough

How are we doing? -

- **Trem y Mor Respite Centre, Aberavon (value £4m)** - outputs achieved: four local companies secured contracts to provide materials/supplies; 47 people secured work on site, including 15 new job opportunities; two pathway apprenticeships completed; two apprenticeship training weeks completed.; 197 training weeks completed and all outputs agreed at the tender stage were achieved.
- **Neath Town Centre Redevelopment (Value £9.1m)** - outputs achieved to date: 22 local companies introduced to main contractor; five local companies secured contracts to provide materials/supplies; two local sub contractors secured M&E and Cladding contracts; 90 people secured work on site; there was one apprentice and one trainee work placement. The project is on track to achieve all outputs identified at the tender stage.

14. Provide opportunities for accessing training and employment, and support for businesses, in the community at the Croeserw Enterprise Centre

How are we doing? - We have established 30 training courses established, with over 150 participants gaining formal accreditation.

In partnership, we said we would:

1. Continue to monitor progress made by NPT Homes to ensure they meet the Council's promise to bring all former council housing up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to regenerate communities

How are we doing? – NPT Homes are on track to deliver this milestone and good progress continues to be made with the programme having completed the following works since transfer: 4,286 kitchens; 3,901 bathrooms; 3,698 heating system

installations; 2,670 rewires; 880 roof replacements; 1,544 window and door installations. The fifth NPT Homes half yearly progress report is due to go to Social Care Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 27th November 2014.

2. Continue to offer the “Housing to Homes” interest free loans to encourage landlords, developers and home owners to renovate empty houses that have fallen into disrepair and aim to support ten homes to be available for use

How are we doing? - 12 units have been brought back into the housing market this financial year, with approximately 10 further applications at various stages including application and on site.

3. Work with our housing partners to deliver affordable housing, through the Social Housing Grant (including Smaller Properties programme and revenue funded schemes), Vibrant & Viable Places programme and the Welsh Housing Partnership; whilst continuing to explore other and innovative funding solutions

How are we doing? - We are still on target for the delivery of 77 properties however one site is subject to matters outside our control and has an ‘amber’ status. The current housing market and financial climate is impacting negatively on the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106.

4. Develop projects and programmes to maximise the impact of the next round of European Funding

How are we doing? – The European and External Funding team are supporting the development of the following projects: NEETs, Neath and Port Talbot integrated strategies; Workways; Social Enterprise support; Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy; and Regional Technical Assistance proposal. *Note: the 2014 – 2020 ESF funds are not yet approved. WEFO proposed launch date is 20th November 2014.*

5. Prioritise the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment Grants to those in greatest need to prevent hardship

How are we doing? – To date we have made 568 awards totalling £252,000.

6. Continue to fund benefits advice services, including maintaining the Council's Welfare Rights Unit, so that people are accessing the benefits to which they are entitled

How are we doing? - The welfare rights unit assisted and supported 108 people to successfully appeal benefit decisions that have cut or removed the benefits that they are entitled to. A comprehensive report will be going to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board meeting on 27th November 2014.

7. Complete the three pilot projects that we have set up with the assistance of European funding, to improve access to advice and support services for people with low incomes and recommend next steps to the Local Service Board

How are we doing? - The three pilot projects have been completed and evaluated and all have achieved their planned outcomes.

- **Project one**, the Multi Agency Hub at Pontardawe - the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (16th October) received the evaluation report for this pilot and approved the recommendation to extend the project for a further 12 months and for a number of follow up actions to be undertaken.
- **Project two**, the dedicated advice line set up in the Council's Corporate Contact Centre - a report will be presented to Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (27th November) on the evaluation with a list of recommendations, including extended the pilot to the end of March.
- **Project three**, one stop help for people actively seeking work through joint working between the library service and the Jobcentre - the Policy & Resources Cabinet Board (16th October) received the evaluation of the pilot and approved the recommendation to endorse the continuation of the partnership arrangements and to report back to Members on the outcome of discussions between Job Centre Plus and the Library Service re: availability of financial resources to support the work.

8. Deliver on the Strategic Aims of the Regional Economic Development Strategy to enhance the long-term prospects of our City Region economy, its businesses and communities and monitor the delivery via a newly developed performance management framework

How are we doing? - Work is continuing to develop a Performance Management Framework to monitor the delivery of the strategic aims of the strategy.

9. Work towards linking strategic employment sites by establishing priority bus corridors between key towns within the City Region

How are we doing? - Construction of the Baglan Energy Park Link Bridge continues as part of the Port Talbot to Swansea bus corridor (completion March 2015), through Harbourside and Fabian Way Strategic Sites. Work continues to develop on other schemes in liaison with the Regional Transport Forum.

10. Work with community transport operators to enhance and integrate their services to support local communities and ensure the schemes meet the transport targets as set out in the Service Level Agreements with the Council

How are we doing? - All targets as set out in Service Level Agreements have been met. There have been regular meetings with both Community Transport schemes and Shopmobility, to encourage closer working and combined bids, to improve future funding prospects. To date, an Regional Development Plan bid has been submitted and a project proposal put forward to Pen-y-Cymoedd Community Fund.

11. Redevelop Port Talbot Parkway Station, to improve access, parking and facilities for customers

How are we doing? - On target for completion in Spring 2015.

12. Implement the Vibrant and Viable Places Regeneration Framework to combine support for people and places, and encourage partnership working by the public, private and third sector

How are we doing? - First scheme at Green Park on site, 34 homes to be delivered by November 2015.

13. Develop key sites and premises across the County Borough to encourage economic growth Sites include: Harbourside, Coed Darcy Urban Village and Swansea University's new Bay Campus

How are we doing? - All sites under various stages of advanced construction.

14. Enable the establishment of caravan site facilities at Margam Park in partnership with the Camping and Caravanning Club to enhance visitor numbers to the County Borough

How are we doing? – A planning application has been submitted.

15. Make the most of community investment by working in partnership with developers/organisations who are delivering substantial investment programmes, to encourage and monitor training and job opportunities for local people, and local supply chain activity

How are we doing?

- **Residential Care Homes (Grwp Gwalia) - Value £3.7m, Moor Road** - contract completed. 18 companies introduced to main contractors; seven contracts awarded to local companies; 300 persons secured employment on site; four apprentices completed training weeks on site; eight trainee/temporary job opportunities/work placements. There were no set targets for this contract.
- **Caewern Home** – work on site to commence in October 2014...To date, 13 companies have been introduced to main contractors and four contracts awarded to local companies.
- **Welsh Housing Quality Standards (NPT Homes)** - 31 people have secured jobs with sub-contractors; eight apprentices secured placements with sub contractors and 25 people have been provided with temporary job opportunities.
- **New Leisure Centre (Aberavon)** – to date 80 companies have been introduced to main contractors; three contracts awarded to local companies and 11 people have secured jobs on-site.
- **Swansea University** - 450 companies have been introduced to main contractors; 40 local companies secured contracts; 33 job opportunities created; more than 50 individuals completed 1000 trainee weeks and the canteen facilities are being run by NPT COASTAL projects – providing jobs and training to those looking to get back into employment.
- Further projects due to commence shortly: **Vibrant & Viable Places Funded Projects** - Green Park Industrial Estate (Coastal Housing), Renewal Areas (Aberavon) and **Briton Ferry Health Centre (Deryn Properties Ltd)**.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 5

Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted

RAG Status	Comments
Amber	Work is progressing to implement the Waste Strategy that was presented to Cabinet on 24 th April 2013. The overall RAG status is given as amber as further funding needs to be identified to fully implement the agreed strategy.

What we said we would do:

- 1. Progress with the implementation of the Council's Waste Strategy to increase recycling and composting to achieve statutory recycling targets. We aim to increase our rates to 55% and work towards achieving the 2015-2016 statutory target of 58% (which is currently 52%)**

How are we doing? - The first six months performance of 60.78%, indicates that we are on target to exceed the 55% forecast for 2014/15 and on track to achieve the statutory recycling target of 58% in 2015/16.

- 2. Implement the Council's communications and engagement plan to improve public participation by undertaking surveys to identify areas of low participation and prioritise efforts to increase participation in these areas**

How are we doing? - A recycling participation survey will be completed by December 2014. Following this survey, areas will be prioritised through our Communications and Engagement Plan to increase participation. We will also review the delivery of our Communications and Engagement Plan by the end of March 2015.

3. Introduce a phased roll out ‘Kerbside Sort’ recycling waste collection service in 2014-2015, to all accessible areas of the County Borough

How are we doing? - The council currently operates six new waste collection vehicles for kerbside sort of recyclable waste. Progress with the new service has meant that circa 20,000 households now receive the new service. The evaluation of this new service is ongoing.

4. Continue the introduction of smaller wheelie bins, prioritising the areas that have low recycling participation

How are we doing? - The Council has removed around 1,000 excess bins from some households that had more than one bin. Progress with the rollout of smaller bins is around 70% complete and has contributed to our on going improvement in recycling performance.

5. Introduce specific enforcement of commercial waste, to ensure all businesses comply with legislation by writing to all businesses. We will ensure they have valid trade waste agreements, take action against businesses that do not and undertake ad hoc inspections to ensure that businesses are presenting appropriate waste in line with their agreements (trade waste agreements with the Council only)

How are we doing? - All businesses that are not customers of the council will be contacted by March 2015 to determine their arrangements for waste collection. This will assist in ensuring that legitimate arrangements for business waste collections are in place for all businesses in the County Borough. Random ad-hoc inspections of business waste have taken place and will be ongoing to ensure waste presented matches the relevant waste agreement. By the end of March 2015 we will measure if there has been an increase in the percentage of traders (non council customers) with a waste agreement.

6. Increase the level of waste recycled by council staff in the three main centres namely Neath Civic Centre, Port Talbot Civic Centre and The Quays by increasing the recycling provision available, offering food waste recycling provision and rationalisation of ‘general’ waste bins

How are we doing? - In Neath Civic Centre and the Quays we have introduced a 40 litre box for glass at each break-out area's recycling station. We have also added a food waste caddy in each break-out kitchen area. A 1100 litre container for cardboard and two, 240 litre containers for glass have been added to the outside waste collection area at Neath Civic, as well as a 240 litre bin for glass, to the outside waste collection area at the Quays. Following a trial to recycle food waste in Port Talbot Civic Centre, it was not feasible to accommodate food caddies in all offices and this was also hindered by the ongoing accommodation changes within the building. We are considering alternative options to increase recycling amongst staff as the original options similar to those in Neath Civic Centre and the Quays may no longer be feasible. Overall, approximately 2,480 litres of extra capacity for recyclable waste equipment has been provided. We will measure the quantity of waste recycled in each building to establish a baseline and use this data to monitor the success of our staff recycling more.

In partnership, we will continue to participate in procurement of the regional treatment of food waste through Anaerobic Digestion (conversion of food waste into energy and fertilizer) which will contribute to the Council achieving statutory recycling targets

How are we doing?

- Our regional waste procurement process began in 2009 but ended in 2013/14 with the regions preferred bidder withdrawing from the procurement process. Delivery of the regional anaerobic digestion facility has therefore slipped and we are currently considering a way forward.



IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 6

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

RAG Status	Comments
Green	<p>Overall we are on track to achieve the milestones for this improvement objective.</p> <p>The review of performance management has progressed and has moved into implementation stage. The action plan to implement the 3rd Sector Review was agreed by P&R Board on 08/05/14 and work is now progressing on the development of a new grant making policy..</p>

What we said we would do:

- 1. Continue with a programme of efficiency reviews, using our Systems Thinking approach, and prioritising services where we receive most complaints**

How are we doing? - By working together, we have reduced the number of calls we receive for NPT Homes considerably and continue to educate its tenants of the correct procedures. As part of the Improving Customer Experience programme, new technology has been introduced into Streetcare Services, allowing the streamlining of front line processes, significantly reducing paperwork for all staff concerned and resulting in a faster delivery and collection service for the public. Our Welfare Rights team have identified a number of new working processes and are currently investigating a new IT system to replace its paper processes.

- 2. Modernise and improve on-line transactions available to the public and increase the number of on-line transactions undertaken**

How are we doing? -

- To date bulky household collections, the ordering of refuse and recycling equipment, pest control appointments and van permits are available online. We have received over 80 compliments from members of the public using the new online services since its inception 1 year ago. Prior to the Improving Customer Experience programme, there were no true online services. The public would only have the option of completing an email which would be sent to the Customer Contact Centre for processing. From the first online service going live, (Bulks in Oct 2013) to date, there have been 10,854 online transactions. The next phase of the programme, on-line map based reporting (will enable the public to report streetcare issues on-line) is currently in the user testing phase, this includes fixed assets such as litter bins, grit bins and dog bins. It is envisaged that this first phase will go live by December 2014.
- Web improvement work is currently taking place, to ensure our website is fit for purpose and easy to use for the public. Currently, we have 3000 live web pages but 83% of the views are only on 250 pages and 17% view the remaining 2,762 pages. Development is taking place to smarten the top 250 pages, remove obsolete pages and ensure that the Welsh translation of pages is up to date.

3. Improve our telephone response times in our corporate Contact Centre (main switchboard) and reduce the number of abandoned calls

How are we doing? – Customer waiting times in our face to face sites continue to improve, with fewer customers leaving before being seen (walk offs). However we have seen a drop in performance in our average time to answer telephone calls and in the percentage of call abandoned after five seconds. A comprehensive analysis of contact centre performance is scheduled to go to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Cabinet Board on 27th November 2014.

4. Continue the work we started last year to transform our internal management and administrative processes. Once complete we expect to reduce the cost of administration associated with these processes and have much improved management information available to inform our future improvement plans. In the next 12 months we expect to have made progress as follows:

How are we doing? -

- **By March 2015 all services will be using the new procure to pay system** - Currently we have 109 departments live on the new system. We aim to have a further 23 departments live by the end of the current financial year (64%) and will continue to work with others during 2015/16. We also estimate that by end of March 2015, approximately 40% of invoices will operate via the new system. Members should note that some invoices relating to capital projects, grants etc. will also be paid and are in addition to what is purchased via the new system.
- Purchasing cards have been deployed to 170 users across all departments. This has improved the process time and ability for buyers being able to get their goods when they need them; in many areas replacing petty cash.
- Currently our ‘on contract’ spend (where there is a contract in place for buying goods/supplies corporately) for 2013/14 measured at 52%. As more departments go live on the new system, this will increase as more non contract spend turns into contract spend.
- **Staff currently receiving pay on a fortnightly basis will be moved to monthly pay** - Approximately 80% of staff have been transferred from fortnightly to monthly pay.
- **The Council’s staffing data will have been audited and we will have new systems in place that make it easier to keep records up to date and report on that information for management purposes. A new, improved absence management module will be developed. This will help managers continue to maximise the attendance of staff at work and reduce sickness absence levels by at least 5% on 2013-2014 levels** - Information about the organisation and staff held in the Vision IT system is being systematically validated and where necessary corrected. Measures are being put in place to ensure this information is maintained accurately and in a timely way. This exercise will significantly improve the quality of workforce information available to managers. Sickness across the Council has fallen slightly during this period from an average of 4.20 FTE days for the first six months of 2013/14 to 4.18 days this year, which is a reduction of 0.5%. The Council is not on target to reduce sickness by 5% for the year; however, a taskforce to examine potential to improve long term absence management commenced in summer 2014.

5. Implement a revised corporate performance management framework which will support continuous improvement and employee development across the Council’s services and functions

How are we doing? - At Head of service level, 100% of business plans have been produced. Training and support is being provided to officers across the Council in preparing their report cards, with the aim to have 100% of report cards in place by

March 2015. Personal objectives were set for all senior officers for 2014/15. Employment Development Reviews were due for completion by the end of August 2014 for all other staff.

In partnership, we said we would implement the recommendations from the review of funding provided by the Council to Third Sector organisations, which will include the development of a new grant making policy to encourage organisations to work towards achieving financial sustainability and the building of capacity across the sector locally

How are we doing? - As the original timetable for the review of the policy was no longer feasible (it was originally proposed for the review to be completed by the end of March 2014 to inform grant allocations in 2015/16), a revised timetable was approved by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board on the 16th October. The draft policy and procedures will be ready by end of March 2015 for formal consultation with stakeholders and the final policy will be available by end of July 2015 to inform grant allocations in 2016/17. The Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee will be consulted throughout the process.