



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## Policy & Democratic Services

Work completed during COVID-19 Emergency  
Response  
And Focus of Work Going Forward

# Policy & Democratic Services

## Service Areas

- Corporate Policy & Performance
- Electoral Services
- Executive Support Team
- Mayoralty
- Democratic Services
- Communications and Community Relations



# Our work since lockdown

## Corporate Policy (4):

- Worked remotely from home since March
- Members of team re-deployed (Safe and Well Service (2) / Insights(2))
- Community Impact Assessment (PSB) – supported the framework design, preparation of questions with partners, facilitated workshops
- Dissemination and sharing of key information to Armed Forces Community
- Co-ordinated VE Day and Armed Forces Day celebrations (virtual)
- Provided support and assistance to senior officers in completing Integrated Impact Assessments
- Assisted with enquiries from members of the public – in relation to equalities issues
- Liaised with external organisations on equalities issues – e.g. Equalities & Human Rights Commission
- Re-negotiated the Council's performance management and risk management software contract
- Started preparation of the Corporate Plan Annual Report (2019/2020)
- Started preparation of the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report (2019/2020)
- Preparation of a Daily Briefing Paper setting out key UK and Welsh Government announcements and guidance
- Research – behavioural insights, staff skills audit approaches, food poverty funding schemes
- Ongoing work to secure Health Foundation funding for research across Swansea Bay
- Supported the sourcing of material of the staff Coronavirus section on Intranet



# Our work going forward

## Corporate Policy:

- Prepare “Statement” setting out corporate priorities for the remainder of the year (due to draft Corporate Plan 2020/2023 prepared pre COVID-19 now obsolete)
- Continue to develop arrangements to ensure the Council meets the requirements contained in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill in terms of corporate planning, governance and performance management
- Present Welsh Language Standards Annual Report (2019/2020) to Cabinet (July)
- Present Strategic Equality Plan – SEP (2020-2024) to Cabinet for approval (September)
- Prepare for Armed Forces Festival – October (virtual)
- Present Corporate Plan Annual Report (2019/2020) to Cabinet for approval (October)
- Prepare a statement setting out the actions to achieve the equalities objectives set out in the above SEP and present to Cabinet for approval (December)
- Continue preparing Daily Briefing Paper setting out key UK and Welsh Government announcements and guidance
- Consider how best to refresh our race equality work going forward
- Continue work to secure Health Foundation funding for research across Swansea Bay



# Our work since lockdown

## Electoral Services (2):

- Worked remotely from home since March
- Team re-deployed to Communications and Community Relations (to support Social Media monitoring)
- Provided advice to Town and Community Councils on postponed by elections and casual vacancies following the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020 / Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020
- Started preparation for the 2020 Annual Canvass
  - Carried out tender exercise to appoint printer for Annual Canvass
  - Set up digital response channels in preparation for Household responses
- Implemented Canvass Reform (relevant training attended by team remotely in preparation)
- Prepared internal systems in readiness for applications to register to vote from 14 and 15 year olds and Qualifying Foreign Nationals as a result of the Welsh Government Franchise Changes which came into place on 1<sup>st</sup> June (relevant training taken remotely in preparation)
- Completion of Police & Crime Commissioners Election 2020 Reimbursement of abortive costs
- Completion of UK Parliamentary Election 2019 accounts for reimbursement from Central Government



# Our work going forward

## Electoral Services :

- Canvass correspondence to be received by approximately 60,000 properties on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, and responses to be processed accordingly by the team during August
- Toolkit to be developed to engage with schools and colleges to raise awareness of the Welsh Government Franchise Changes, allowing 14 and 15 year olds to register to vote (residents will not be able to vote at Senedd Elections until they are 16 years of age)
- Review of the Electoral Arrangements of the County Borough of NPT –Final Recommendations Report due
- Preparation for the physical canvass/door knocking stage while taking into account COVID-19 guidelines. This year also sees the introduction of iPads to collect responses from households, as opposed to forms as utilised in previous years
- Publication of Revised Register on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020
- Planning in preparation for the postponed by-elections to be carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> February to 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021; and for the combined Senedd and Police & Crime Commissioner Elections in May





# Our work since lockdown

## Executive Support Team (4):

- Worked remotely from home since March
- Provided support to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet, Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer
- Provided support to the following meetings:
  - Leader/Deputy/CEX/ACE update meetings
  - Group Leader Meetings
  - Constituent MS meeting
  - Regional MS meetings
  - Political Cabinet Meetings



# Our work going forward

## Executive Support Team (4):

- Continue to provide support to Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer
- Continue to provide support to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet





# Our work since lockdown

## Mayoralty(2):

- Worked remotely from home since March (1)
- 1 member of staff re-deployed to Safe and Well
- Provided on-going support the Mayor and Deputy Mayor



# Our work going forward

## Mayoralty:

- Continuing to support the Safe and Well Service
- Provide on-going support the Mayor and Deputy Mayor



# Our work since lockdown

## Democratic Services (8)

- Worked remotely from home since March
- One member of the team redeployed to Safe and Well , one team member redeployed to support the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer, one team member redeployed to TTP
- Development and coordination of the Urgency Action Decision Process
- Creation and ongoing facilitation of an amended Forward Work Programme
- Ongoing Member liaison/welfare phone calls / publication of Members Bulletin
- Worked with Digital Services to establish remote meetings
- Provided Member IT Training and Support to enable participation in remote meetings
- Facilitated Member survey for Recovery Panel
- Finalised webcasting proposals
- Facilitation and support of remote meetings requirements (agenda publication, minutes etc.)
- Provided support with Shielding phone-calls
- Provided support to meetings of CDG / CMB

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# Our work going forward

## Democratic Services

- Develop a robust Forward Work Programme for September to December and establishment of meetings accordingly
- Development and facilitation of 'hybrid meetings' model
- Development and facilitation of new scrutiny model
- Continue Member liaison/welfare phone calls
- Continue to develop arrangements to ensure the Council meets the requirements contained in the Local Government and Elections (Bill) in terms of public participation (e.g. producing a public participation strategy / petitions scheme)



# Our work since lockdown

## Communications and Community Relations (9)

- Worked remotely from home since March
- Early March – prepared a plan setting out our communications approach to COVID-19
- Member of team redeployed to support WLGA
- Published a special edition of the staff newsletter
- Within a day or so the team fundamentally changed the way it operated
- Set up a communications cell including corporate communications, digital services, web and customer services teams
- Delivered a communications service from 8am-9pm, 7 days a week in the early weeks of the pandemic
- Staff redeployed into the service with complementary skill sets from across the Council to manage different aspects of communications and to provide resilience
- Used new technology to create content which helped us communicate simply and quickly e.g. videos
- Started to utilise data and insight from analysis of a wide range of channels to evaluate and shape messaging and impact
- Utilised the Citizens Panel to gain feedback on how COVID-19 has affected them
- Supported the PSB in developing, delivering and analysing a survey as part of a Covid Community Impact assessment (1259 responses)



# Our work going forward

## Communications and Community Relations

- Update the Communications and Community Relations Strategy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and its continuing impact on communities and businesses
- To continue to use data and insight to inform how we deliver the right information in the right way (to change behaviour)
- Propose to introduce a NPT Safe & Well printed update to reach those who are not online
- Continue the wider communications team set up – i.e. corporate communications, web, digital services and customer contact centre teams
- Develop an ‘invest in NPT’ proposition based on the new NPT place brand
- Develop and deliver a NPT BuyLocal campaign – attracting shoppers back into town centres and promoting our local shopping offer
- Finalise and implement the Employee Communications Strategy
- Develop an internal mechanism for assessing which topics the Citizens’ Panel surveys will concentrate on as part of our engagement programme for the year.
- Recruit a Digital Communications Officer to support continued innovation
- Creating an apprenticeship opportunity, to build more resilience into the team and to support efforts to combat unemployment and NEETs

