



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

# **Corporate Plan 2022-2027**

## **Recover, Reset, Renew**

## Introduction

Covid-19 is having an enormous impact on us all.

We have worked together over the course of the pandemic- council, communities, businesses and partners to support vulnerable residents, protect our NHS and to keep essential services running. This spirit of working together is the foundation on which we want to base the work we need to do as we learn to live with Covid-19 and begin to recover from the pandemic.

This plan sets out our thinking on how we will approach recovery in the short, medium and longer term. It has been informed by a lot of people – residents, employees, elected members, community organisations, businesses and other partners. We have also used a considerable amount of evidence to understand how things have changed as a result of the pandemic and looked at wider influences, like climate change, digital disruption and government policy. We have brought all of this information together to assess what this might mean for our future priorities. Of course, the pandemic is not over yet so there is a good deal of uncertainty that poses challenges to our planning. Neath Port Talbot residents will also elect a new council in May 2022. This means that our plan will need to be flexible so we can adapt as we move forward.

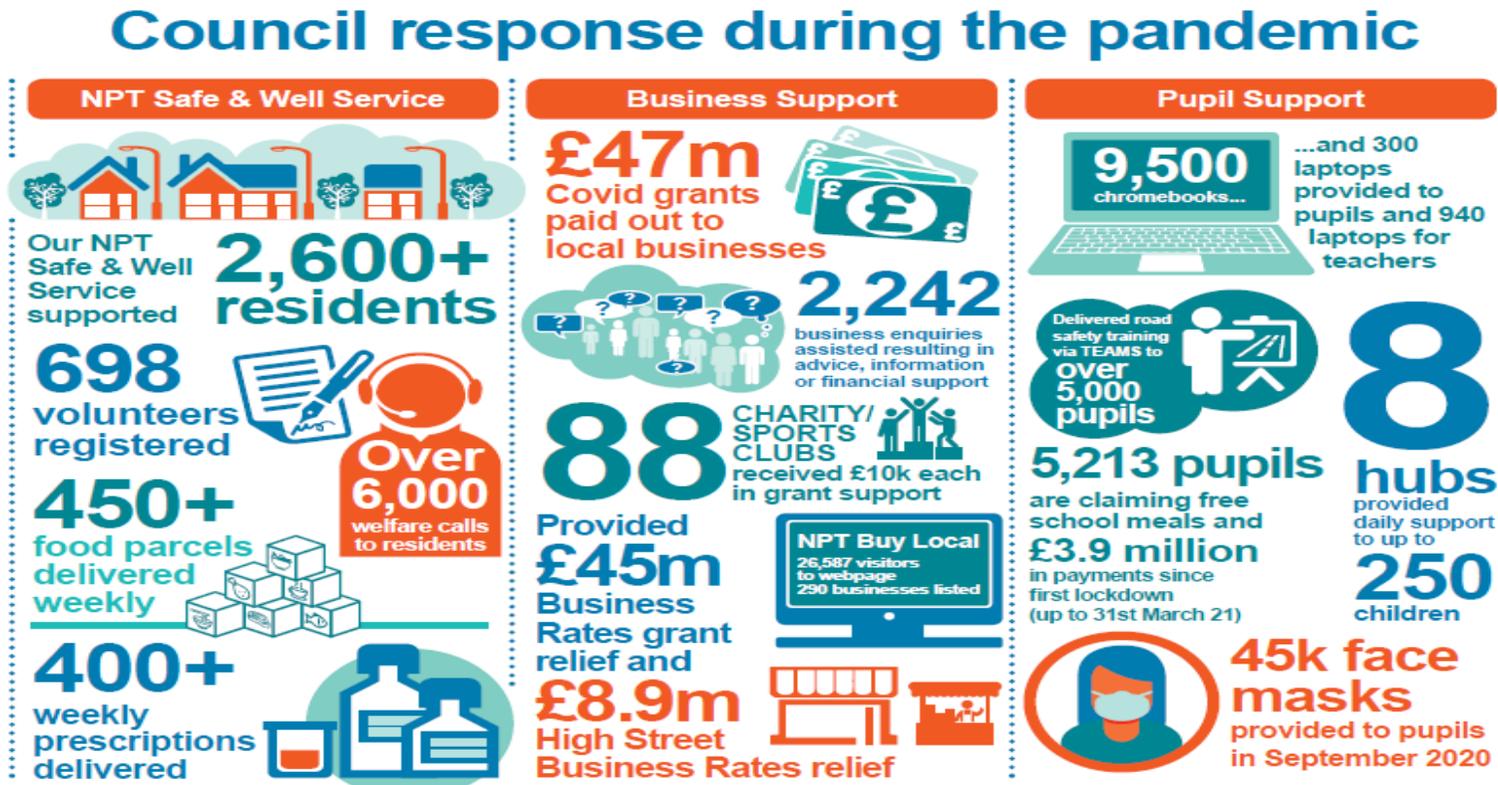
A key feature of this plan is the emphasis on working together to help the county borough recover and make Neath Port Talbot a place we are all proud of. We have learned through the pandemic that when we come together we can achieve remarkable things. This plan is the basis on which we can further develop that spirit of collaboration to create a place where everyone can live a fulfilled life.

**Cllr E V Latham**  
**Leader of Council**

**Mrs K Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

# 1. Covid-19 Response

In the middle of March 2020, the Council mobilised an emergency response to the developing COVID-19 national emergency situation. There was an immense effort to ensure the Council responded in step with the policy decisions taken by the Welsh Government and the UK Government. At all times, our approach we have worked with and in support of government policy, striving to protect our NHS, to support our communities and to save lives. The infographics below and over the page provide a visual summary of some of the work we carried out in the first year of response whilst also keeping essential services running– they are achievements we are very proud of.



# Council response during the pandemic

## NPT Staff Support

1st council in England and Wales to introduce a "safe leave" policy for victims of domestic abuse working for the council who can take up to five days of paid "safe leave" to access support



**OVER 700**

laptops provided to staff enabling homeworking

**85**

online employee training courses delivered to 3,809 attendees



**800 NPT staff** offered to step into different roles to help with COVID-19

## Other Support

**470 jobs**



created/safeguarded as a result of financial support by the council

**£19.4m**

Council Tax support to 17,389 households



**113,888** COVID-19 webpage views



Permanent accommodation secured for 258 homeless individuals or households

Accessible cycle routes increased by

**6.6km**

(during 2019/20 and 2020/21)



Homecare Staff; 200+ COVID trained and 10,700+ monthly visits to service users

50 playgrounds were made COVID safe



## Working with Partners



Project managed construction of 340-bed field hospital at Llandarcy



**Margam Orangery** used as a Mass Vaccination Centre



NPT Test, Trace and Protect Service contacted **31,079** people

up to 31st March 2021

As we moved into the second year of the pandemic, our response was greatly assisted by the availability of the Covid-19 vaccines.

We were pleased to be able to offer further support to our NHS, converting facilities at Margam Orangery for use as a mass vaccination centre and modifying a mobile library for use as a mobile vaccination centre. The mobile vaccination centre enabled the vaccine programme to be accessed by those hardest to reach. We also made facilities available for the rapid expansion of Covid-19 testing at various locations across the county borough.

We continued to administer government financial support programmes. This enabled financial support to be provided quickly to local businesses and also to individual residents – for example, residents required to self-isolate and those who had children eligible for free school meals.

By August 2021, sufficient progress had been made across Wales in vaccinating the population and bringing the virus under control to enable the Welsh Government to move to Level Zero where most restrictions on daily life were lifted. However, the course of the pandemic continues to be uncertain with the UK facing a fourth wave following the emergence of the Omicron variant. As we think about recovery from the pandemic and our future plans, we need to ensure our plans are flexible and capable of being adapted quickly to anticipate and respond to new issues as they emerge. The framework we have adopted is set out below:

- [A Re-opening and Recovery Phase](#) – supporting the safe restarting of activity as restrictions are lifted, whilst continuing to respond to the immediate demands of the pandemic; building confidence, supporting residents, businesses and employees as government removes support and restrictions;
- [A Reset and Renewal Phase](#) – where activities and policies to support long term plans are put in place to deliver sustainable improvements in services and in social, economic and environmental outcomes

## 2. Summary of Covid-19 Impacts

The impact of Covid-19 has been extensive. This once in a generation global public health crisis has impacted everyone in our community and disrupted our local economy. People have endured many months without contact with family and friends. 533 residents have sadly lost their lives due to Covid-19 and many families across our county borough are coming to terms with their loss. There are also many other residents who have had their physical and mental health impacted by the disease.

### Local Economy Impacts

Many local businesses had to shut their doors for extended periods of time (some permanently) with workers furloughed and many reliant on government financial support. Retail, tourism, hospitality and close contact services have been hit hard, disproportionately affecting women, young people and workers from BME backgrounds. While our towns have not experienced the level of devastation seen in some of the big cities, we have seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in these spaces and footfall is still well below pre-pandemic levels – the continued policy to work from home and a sharp increase in use of on-line shopping is likely to continue to disrupt our high streets, particularly in the short term.

For others, Covid-19 has presented new business opportunities. We have seen an expansion of employment in some existing businesses as they diversified to exploit new market opportunities and we have also seen an increase in inward investment interest from companies of varying sizes bringing much welcome new, quality employment opportunities into the county borough. The business cases for our City Deal programmes were also signed off by the UK and Welsh governments during the pandemic period – the programmes have a strong focus on decarbonisation of industry and residential homes and are expected to stimulate growth in new green jobs across the county borough and the wider city region. Local economic prospects have been further boosted with conditional planning permission granted for a Global Centre for Rail Excellence at Onllwyn in the Dulais Valley and the development of a high quality adventure resort – Wildfox Resort-Afan Valley – at Croeserw. Taken together, these latter two developments represent £0.5 billion investment and some 1,200 new jobs.

### Local Community Impacts

The time spent at home has seen many people reconnect with their local community and the environment around them. It is evident that there is a new appreciation of the importance of local parks, trails, play facilities and local attractions and with this comes an increased demand for investment in our local infrastructure to help people sustainably access and enjoy what is on their doorstep. However, for others the pandemic has left them lonely and isolated. The importance of being connected

to family, friends and neighbours is unquestionably shared across all age groups and all backgrounds. The pandemic was the first time that some residents had volunteered their time to help those around them and this has enabled many residents to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of community. The impact of Covid-19 on community and voluntary organisations as a whole, however, has been mixed with some groups operating through the pandemic, some re-starting as restrictions lifted and others unable to resume.

Whilst children and young people were mostly not clinically vulnerable to Covid-19, the disruption to education has had a very significant impact on the routines and mental health of young people. For some young people, family stresses have increased during the several periods of lockdown with higher incidences of domestic violence and substance use experienced. Over 1,400 young people living in the county borough, identified as vulnerable, required targeted support by our education, youth services, children's social services and wider partners throughout the pandemic period. Support for unpaid carers and disabled people has also seen some disruption, particularly during the early part of the pandemic period. As we move into recovery, it is important to ensure that those needing care and support and carers are able to access the services they need.

### Council Impacts

The first year of the pandemic saw a huge disruption to normal council services. A number of services were stopped and staff, assets and financial resources re-purposed to mobilise the emergency response required by the UK and Welsh governments as part of the national effort to protect the NHS, save lives and maintain essential services.

Many staff found themselves working from home -virtually overnight – with rapid expansion of digital technology across the workforce to enable the Council to function. There has been radical innovation as services were forced to operate on an entirely new basis with a range of control measures applied to ensure staff and service users were protected against the disease. Communication and engagement has also transformed using new channels, data science and multi-media approaches to reach all sections of our community. New employment practices have been introduced at pace to support the Council workforce as we adapted to the changing situation. Over the summer of 2021, an extensive lessons learned exercise took place to inform our recovery planning and this has identified opportunities for further service transformation through digital approaches, deeper integration of services designed around the needs of our citizens and businesses, continued empowerment of the workforce and a permanent move to a hybrid model in place of traditional office work patterns.

The policy to work from home has also had a profound impact on our democratic arrangements. Face to face meetings were replaced by remote meetings. An unexpected benefit of remote meetings has been a greater participation in those meetings by local people. Whilst some face to face meetings will resume when safe to do so, the majority of serving councillors believe that greater use of remote meetings should be retained into the future to support greater diversity in the membership of the council and to facilitate better public access.

Demand for council services is changing as a result of the pandemic. In some services, we have backlogs of work that accrued during the periods where services have been required to stop. For example, many regulatory functions carried out by environmental health officers were suspended for those professionals to concentrate on supporting Public Health Wales in protecting the public health; neighbourhood management services were severely curtailed in order to maintain refuse and recycling services; care and support services for disabled people and unpaid carers were temporarily disrupted to protect the NHS; and there are many issues presenting across our schools and wider services for children and young people as the impact on children and young people's wellbeing becomes apparent.

Additional demand is also being seen in many other services. For example, many residents used the additional time spent at home to have a good clear out, increasing demand on waste services; there has been a sharp increase in planning applications as residents re-purpose holiday budgets for home improvements; the move to an 'all-in' policy has significantly increased the demands on Council homelessness services - this will be a permanent change in policy; the impact of the restrictions on daily living has also resulted in an increase in the number of people with complex needs, particularly in relation to the impact restrictions have had on people's mental health.

These increased demands are occurring at a time when the local labour market has bounced back much more strongly than initially anticipated. There are more jobs available in the economy and consequently more competition amongst employers seeing to fill vacancies. The combination of increased demand and greater competition for labour means that pressures are acute across many council services. A service resilience framework has been approved by the Cabinet to respond to these increased demands.

#### Impact on Inequality

The evidence demonstrates that the poorest areas have experienced the greatest impact both in terms of health and financial impacts. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic have been hardest hit and as a

consequence inequalities across Neath Port Talbot have widened. Addressing these inequalities will be a cross cutting theme across all of the recovery actions we propose to take in the short, medium and longer term.

### 3. Re-open and Recover

Since the Welsh Government moved to Level Zero in August 2021, we have been focused on the re-opening and recovery phases. The increase in social mixing since Wales moved to Level Zero triggered a third wave of the virus and at the time of writing, a new variant of concern – Omicron – had been identified and a fourth wave was underway. We continued to support our NHS through this re-open and recover period, flexing our Test, Trace, Protect response as community transmission spread whilst also continuing to offer practical assistance through use of our premises and other facilities. Over this period, we have also started to more fully understand the deeper impact of the pandemic, with more people coming forward for services, often with more complex needs, whilst also giving attention to the backlog of work in those services that were re-purposed earlier in the pandemic as we resourced the first phase of response.

Our priorities during this phase are summarised below:

Supporting our NHS	Keeping Essential Services Running	Helping our Communities and our Economy to Recover
Continue to adapt our <b>Test, Trace, Protect</b> Service to help stop the spread of the virus	<b>Social care</b> – Trem-y-glyn care home contract extended for 12 months to retain capacity in the system; 10% uplift in fees to external providers to aid recruitment and retention of carers; recruitment task force to increase the pool of available carers	<b>Community Support</b> - Additional £640,000 investment to improve community infrastructure eg upgrades to play facilities, support to sports clubs etc

<p>Continue to amplify the key <b>public health messages</b> issued by the Government and ensure those hardest to reach get and understand important public health advice.</p>	<p><b>Streetscene</b> – additional investment to ‘catch up, clean up, green up’ neighbourhoods across the county borough and increase resilience for drainage works</p>	<p><b>Early Intervention and Prevention</b> - Additional £250,000 grant support to third sector organisations to develop new preventative services in communities with a particular focus on people who are lonely and isolated. As part of this we have also expanded the number of Local Area Co-ordinators and integrated their work with NPT Safe and Well.</p>
<p>Continue to <b>make buildings and other facilities</b> available to support the mass vaccination and testing efforts</p>	<p><b>Engineering, planning, transport and regeneration</b> – additional investment to respond to the increased number of planning applications; inward investment enquiries; business enquiries and grant opportunities</p>	<p><b>Town Centres</b> - Two assistant town centre managers have been employed to work with traders and other town centre stakeholders to help the towns recover. Town centre forums are in place in Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe - programmes of events are being co-ordinated across partners to Christmas 2021 and then on a rolling programme basis</p>
<p>Continue to apply the policy of <b>work from home</b> where possible and ensure Government advice is adhered to in all Council controlled settings.</p>	<p><b>Schools</b> – support to school leaders to support continuity of learning; recruitment campaign to increase the number of catering and cleaning staff</p>	<p><b>Town Centre anti-social behaviour</b> – this has been significantly reduced in Neath and Port Talbot town centres through the work of the NPT Community Safety Partnership</p>
<p>Increased investment in <b>Emergency Planning</b> core team to maintain and adjust emergency preparedness</p>	<p><b>Environmental Health</b> – additional investment to begin to catch up on paused inspection activity</p>	<p><b>Business Support</b> – A small business grant scheme established by the council to support local businesses ineligible for WG financial support. Grants of up to £20k will be available from early 2022.</p>

	<p><b>Digital Services</b> – additional investment to support the rapid expansion of digital technologies</p>	<p><b>Town Centres</b> - Free parking for part of the summer and Christmas periods to encourage greater footfall to town centres</p>
	<p><b>Homelessness</b> – increased capacity to support the ‘all-in’ policy introduced by the Welsh Government</p>	<p>Improvements have been made in key <b>tourism</b> locations to help with the management of visitors e.g. Glynneath; Afan Valley</p>
		<p>Increased number of opportunities for <b>young people</b> to take up employment within the council, including engagement with the Government’s Kickstart programme</p>
		<p>A programme of <b>events</b> across the country parks and Council theatres has been established</p>
		<p>A programme of events for <b>children and young people</b> facing the greatest disadvantage has been delivered as part of the Summer of Fun</p>
		<p><b>Business Support</b> – The council has continued to administer financial support to businesses and eligible individuals</p>
		<p><b>Hardship Support</b> – the council is administering Welsh Government hardship schemes e.g. self-isolation payments, free school meal payments etc.</p>
		<p><b>Food Poverty</b> – the council is working with local organisations to increase help and support for those experiencing food poverty</p>

## 4. Reset and Renew

The remainder of this Plan describes how we will approach the Reset and Renewal Phase as we move into 2022. It is grounded in what matters to local people, businesses, community organisations and wider stakeholders. It takes account of the new Welsh Government's Programme for Government, the associated Co-operation Agreement and other developments we anticipate will shape our future priorities such as climate change, the continued digital disruption and likely financial settlements. It also complements and can be integrated into local partnership plans and other regional or wider area work, including the revision of the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board's Wellbeing Plan.

### Covid-19 – ongoing response

The availability of vaccines and improved treatments is already have a beneficial impact however, the course of the pandemic remains far from certain and we will need to sustain and adapt our Covid-19 response for the foreseeable future. Key areas of focus will continue to be:

- **Helping to protect the public health** – we will do this through our Test, Trace, Protect Service and through the work we continue to lead regionally to warn and inform our residents and businesses about the steps they need to take to keep themselves and others safe and well;
- **Supporting and Protecting our NHS** – we will continue to offer facilities and other help to support testing and vaccination programmes. We will also work through our Regional Partnership Board to ensure there are joined up arrangements between primary care; hospitals, our social services and wider community services and support.
- **Implementing Government Policy** - we will provide advice and guidance to ensure people and businesses comply with any government COVID-19 regulations in force and we will continue to provide assistance to government, for example, administering financial hardship payments to local businesses and residents.
- **Maintaining essential services** – we will ensure we remain prepared to respond to changing circumstances, adjusting our service delivery with a focus on maintaining essential services that our local businesses and residents rely upon.

The next sections summarise the evidence we have used to develop the four well-being objectives that provide a framework for our reset and renew phase.

## Let's Talk

Over the summer 2021, we ran a campaign to engage people from all backgrounds and of all ages with a view to testing our understanding of how the pandemic has impacted on different parts of our county borough and to also understand what matters most to local people as we take forward our recovery work. Almost 1,800 people engaged with the campaign with a mix of on-line and off-line surveys completed and supplemented by focus groups in our five valleys.

Capturing the views and opinions of local businesses and residents at an early stage in our planning has enabled us to shape our four well-being objectives and associated actions on what matters locally. The summer campaign sought views at a much earlier point in the planning process than is usual. It is our firm intention to continue to engage with people as we move into implementation and as we review and refine the plan over the coming years. This change in approach reflects a renewed commitment to working with our communities, local businesses and partners and it is also enshrined in our new values.

There is a separate, comprehensive report that describes what people said as part of our Let's Talk campaign. The main themes are summarised below:

### **What matters to you now?**

The ten responses most frequently mentioned were as follows:

1. Friends and family (including pets)	6. Health/wellbeing/mental health
2. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)	7. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses
3. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)	8. Leisure/hobbies recreation
4. Staying/keeping safe	9. Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering
5. Education/keeping open	10. Socialising

In the words of respondents...

*'Family, health, friends and making memories'*

*'That children are given more opportunity to grow, learn and be confident to know they are valuable in our communities and they ALL have strengths'*

*'Helping people recover from the mental and physical impacts of the pandemic. Particularly social anxiety'*

*'Heritage and its preservation now matters to me. The past must be cared for'*

*'There needs to be a concerted effort to eradicate this virus from taking any more lives.'*

*'Seeing my friends and family. Ensuring our important local green spaces are improved for nature and are protected/managed for people to continue to use. Doing my best to deliver and push for positive action to address the climate and nature emergencies.'*

*'People get back to some sort of way of life, communities get much needed support to revamp parks/ gardens and fields with benches where people can go and sit and meet friends neighbours outdoors'*

*'The area needs a clean-up. The town centre and surrounding areas need attention'*

*'Supporting local businesses by helping them become far more resilient.'*

*'Safe streets, people's behaviour'*

*'A safe future for my children, with equal opportunities for the children living up in the valleys as to those in towns'*

*'Keeping my business open and having more family time events etc locally to attend'*

*'Keeping covid under control working towards the cessation of global warming'*

*'Reducing the council tax'*

## What matters to you in the future?

The ten responses most frequently mentioned were as follows:

1. Friends and family (including pets)	6. Returning to normality (easing restrictions)
2. Investing in and protecting the economy/jobs/local businesses	7. Work-life balance, working from home, office environment
3. Education/keeping open	8. Community relations/spirit/bringing people together/volunteering
4. Environment, climate crisis, recycling, maintaining green spaces	9. Staying/keeping safe
5. Health and wellbeing/mental health	10. Health (mine and my family, friends, neighbours)

In the words of respondents...

*'The facilities in the village are enhanced.'*

*'My child's education she has missed'*

*'That Port Talbot gets cleaned up and a great place to go'*

*'Health, Crime rates, Policing'*

*'Opportunities/activities for teenagers within the town. Continuing a slower pace of life. Reconnecting with friends.'*

*'Having services starting to re-open again and looking at what services are needed for people in the community'*

*'I would like to see that community feeling that we had in the beginning. I feel as though we appreciate the our natural environment and want to see more focus on looking after what we have'*

*'Helping my children catch up on things they've lost. Concentrating on ensuring their mental health has not been adversely affected, striking a real balance between work and free time.'*

*'NHS at local and wider area response. Help for community centres.'*

*'The education of my children without continual disruption. The school experience for my children i.e. concerts, activities. The ability for my children to interact in groups and activities outside of school. Building on the work/life balance offered by working from home. The development of towns and high streets The parks and open spaces'*

*'Things are put in place to prevent future lockdowns, Neath Port Talbot continues to redevelop and invest in order to continue to improve for all that live there.'*

*'Capitalising on the agile working acceleration covid created and a thriving community'*

*'Concerned about what the future will be like, with all services diminishing less things being done to keep the areas clean and tidy, I understand about lack of money and staff shortages but every street looks dreadful, grass, weeds and littering. I wish that something could be done about the current anti-social behaviour in the community but more in the towns, if this could be addressed and acted upon with fines that suit the crimes as otherwise not going to be a very bright future.'*

*Our elderly neighbours feel safe, small steps. Our groups all get back together.*

### **Valley Areas – Focus Groups**

To ensure the Let's Talk campaign included all sections of the county borough, a number of focus groups were also held in valley areas. Residents in valley areas held many similar views to those who completed questionnaires. Additional issues raised in the focus groups highlighted the importance of transport; having greater levels of engagement with the council and concern about council tax levels.

In the words of the people who took part in the focus groups:

*'It is assumed that you can get to a leisure centre or get to where the resources are put. It's not necessarily recognised that in the more rural areas, public transport is more difficult to get there,'*

*'I want transport for our children to do the extracurricular activities. If they're down the comprehensive in Port Talbot, I want to make sure they can do after school clubs, sports teams and training after school hours. I want them to have exactly the same start as the children all the way down from Cwmafan.'*

*'They always say we haven't got the money. We have one of the highest tax rates in Wales, where is the money going?'*

*'More of a partnership approach to service delivery with the wider third sector and local authority'*

*'...To actually listen to the needs of the community and the people that live in the communities and act upon them. Not a guess of what people need or do what they call a 'best interest'. Actually listen to the needs of the people and the communities. Each community is completely different.'*

*'There are no early buses at 6:30 for people working in factories or construction. There are no buses, to my knowledge, after 7:30 at night, so if you work shifts then you can't get home. Our bus service has gone to one every two hours.'*

Megatrends

Whilst Covid-19 is a major consideration within our forward planning, there are also other important factors that need to be taken into account:

Megatrends	Key Issues
Poverty, deprivation and inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Structural inequalities were evident across the population prior to the pandemic. These structural issues have been accentuated as a result of the pandemic</li></ul>

Public finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The demand for greater spending on health and social care may squeeze spending on other services – many of which are highly valued by the public</li> <li>• Costs of dealing with the consequences of Covid-19 including impact on income generation</li> <li>• Uncertain public spending outlook including uncertainty over replacement EU funding</li> </ul>
Green recovery and decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society has more appetite for clean, sustainable growth</li> <li>• Government has signalled new policy and service responses needed to deliver on this agenda at pace</li> <li>• Residents have become more engaged with their local environment, heritage and culture</li> </ul>
Digitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-19 has accelerated the growth of the digital economy, bringing changes to working patterns and skills requirements</li> <li>• Adds to inequalities challenges but also brings new strategic risks – eg cyberthreat</li> <li>• Growth in on-line shopping likely to result in permanent changes to the use of town centres</li> <li>• The growth in data sciences offers new opportunities but also requires new ethical frameworks</li> </ul>
Demographic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPT has a relatively older population</li> <li>• NPT has a relatively high proportion of unpaid carers and people living with life limiting conditions</li> <li>• NPT has a relatively deprived population using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation</li> </ul>
Future of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees likely to want a better work-life balance permanently</li> <li>• Shift to home working on a significant scale likely to continue with consequential impacts on the amount and type of office accommodation needed, the importance of appropriate digital infrastructure and consequential impacts on our main town centres</li> <li>• Working practices will need to permanently change to embed the health protection behaviours that will be needed on a long term basis to protect the public health</li> </ul>

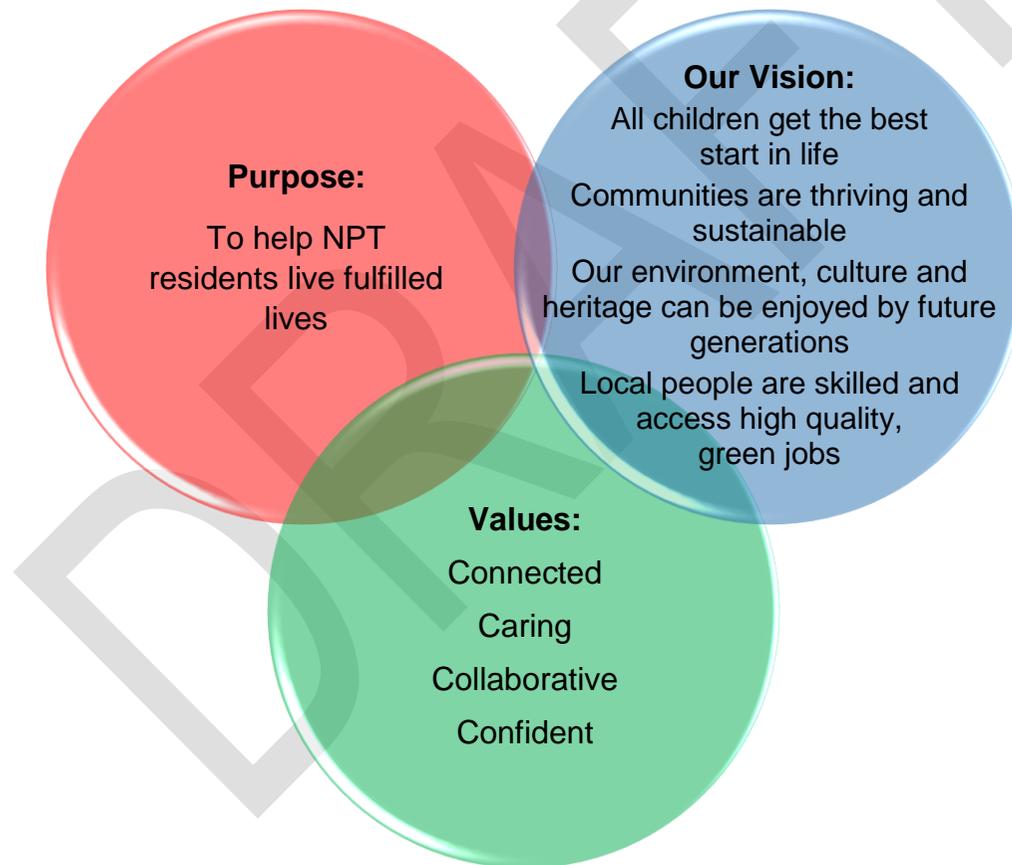
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater competition for labour in a very competitive labour market</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People have reconnected with their local environment, neighbourhoods and outdoor spaces</li> <li>• Social contact is the single biggest issue that matters to people. Opportunities for bringing people together are a priority for people of all ages</li> </ul>
Government Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh Government has published an ambitious programme for government and an accompanying Co-operation Agreement. There is a strong emphasis on reducing inequality, alleviating poverty and important commitments to put the provision of social care on a sustainable footing, with parity of esteem and terms and conditions with the NHS</li> <li>• There is a continued growth in complexity in governance arrangements with an increase in regional, pan-regional and local partnership arrangements</li> </ul>

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## 5. Resetting and Renewing our purpose, vision and values

The Council's vision, values, relationships and priorities has been reset and renewed taking into account:

- what matters to local people, businesses and our staff
- the impact that we know Covid-19 has had on our communities, our local economy and wider stakeholders;
- the lessons we have learned from our pandemic response and from elsewhere; and
- other anticipated changes in our external environment.



## 6. Achieving Our Vision

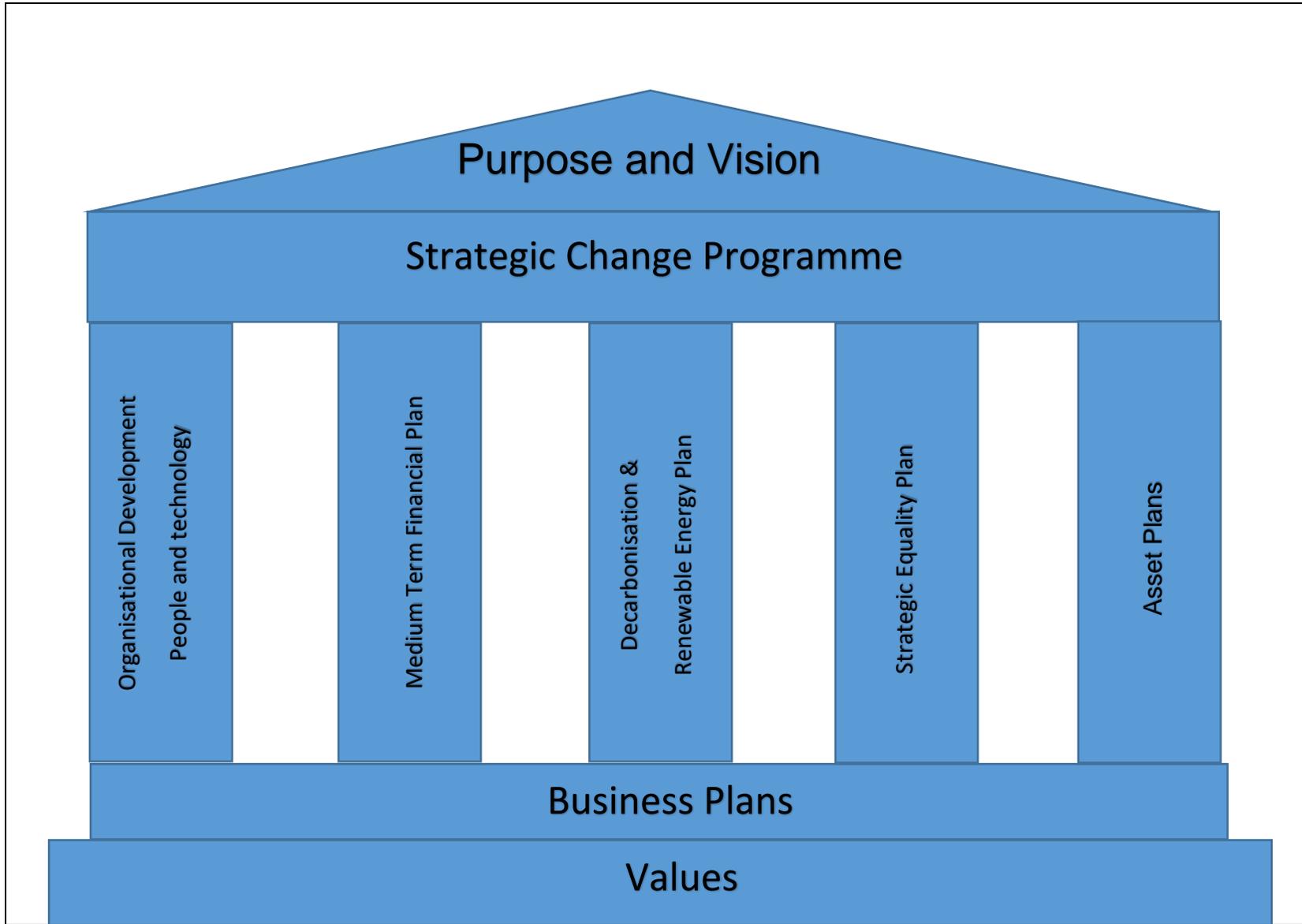
The work we will do to achieve our vision is organised at three levels:

Strategic Level - We will initiate a strategic change programme to ensure we are embracing a 'one council' strategic approach to achieving the vision. The key wellbeing objectives will initially include:

- All children get the best start in life
- Communities are thriving and sustainable
- Our environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations
- Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs
- Enabling Programme - Organisational Development

Corporate Level - corporate strategies will be realigned to support the achievement of the vision and the delivery of the strategic change programme.

Operational Level - Every service and function within the Council will align their service plans to maximise their contribution to achieving the vision that we have set.



## 7. Strategic Change Programme – Initial Focus

Our strategic change programme describes the changes we aim to make over the next 12 months, the next 5 years and the longer term. It will evolve over time but its initial focus will be as set out below. Further detail is contained in Annex 1:

### **Best Start in Life**

All children have the best start in life

Next 12 months...

- Support our school leaders to keep schools open and help children and young people recover;
- Enhance play and leisure opportunities for children and young people;
- Make sure it is clear how early help and support can be accessed by those children and families who need it;
- Make sure 'what matters' to children and families is at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services;
- Work with the Welsh Government to increase access to free school meals and childcare;
- Make sure all those children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family;
- Make sure it is clear for young people leaving full-time education how they move on to further training or education or work;
- Increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the Council to young people;
- Work with partners to refocus the Children and Young People's Partnership so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, meet people's needs and that our communities are child friendly;
- Finalise our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to further strengthen our commitment to the Welsh Language, our traditions and culture;
- Establish new joint planning and commissioning arrangements for children who have additional needs

## **Communities are thriving and sustainable**

People live healthy, long and fulfilled lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another

Next 12 months...

- Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what's strong about each community) and mapping community vulnerabilities. Work with the community and other partners to identify opportunities for additional informal care and support networks to be developed.
- Expand the number of local area co-ordinators and bring greater consistency to the way they work across the county borough. Increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks.
- Create a network of neighbourhood forums to increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward.
- Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support at the neighbourhood level.
- Work alongside the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service to encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups across the county borough.
- Introduce a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer.
- Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods.
- Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local businesses;
- Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function;
- Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.

## **Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations**

Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change.

People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

Next 12 months...

- Establish a small grants scheme to help community groups and societies to recover from the pandemic;
- Introduce a community recognition initiative, led by the Mayor, to celebrate the important work being done by volunteers and community groups to enable future generations to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Support and encourage volunteering including at council-owned nature sites;
- Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Further develop and implement our Welsh language promotional strategy;
- Provide refresher training for officers responsible for carrying out impact assessments when undertaking policy and service change;
- Extend opportunities for children and young people to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture;
- Work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism/destination management;
- Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan and ensure there is increased momentum to implement measures to decarbonise the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio;
- Seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment, culture and heritage;
- Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture.

## **Jobs and Skills**

Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and help local people acquire the skills they need to access those jobs.

The next 12 months...

### Skills and Training

- Review our training offer to help people adjust to the changing labour market;
- Create a 'single front door' to our employability services so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need;
- Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work;
- Further develop council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible;
- Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment 'offer' to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities;
- Strengthen the council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers;
- Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision.

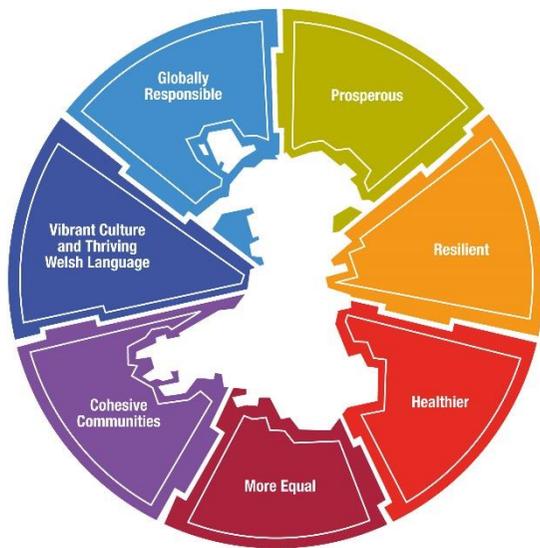
### Jobs

- Launch the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales;
- Target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough;
- Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks;
- Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support;
- Establish a manufacturing/engineering forum to improve networking opportunities within this sector and to provide improved opportunities for businesses to inform future plans and funding programmes;

- Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses;
- Develop a plan to create new transport hubs that improve connections between the places where people live and the places where people work, learn and enjoy their leisure time.

## 8. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Our revised, purpose, vision, values and associated wellbeing objectives will contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) act 2015, in working towards our vision we will adopt the five ways of working set out in the Act:



- Balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs
- Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse
- Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of our own organisation) that could help us meet our well-being objectives
- Involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area we serve
- Considering how our well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, or on the objectives of other public bodies

## 9. Resetting Relationships – #TeamNPT

Over the course of the pandemic we have seen a transformation in relationships between the Council, our communities, businesses and wider partners, a transformation that we want to build on, putting our partnership working on an even stronger footing.

We have encapsulated the way we want to reset and renew our relationship with our residents and with our business community below. Over the next 12 months will undertake further work to reset and renew relationships with our local third sector and wider partners.

### Resetting relationships with our residents

<b><u>OUR PART</u></b>	<b><u>YOUR PART</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be ambitious - believe in our county borough</li><li>• Create the best opportunities for all of our children and young people</li><li>• Build services around what matters to people</li><li>• Encourage communities to be places where people get along together and support each other</li><li>• Support the local economy to grow</li><li>• Protect and support our natural environment and our rich heritage</li><li>• Seek out new investment and provide value for money</li><li>• Keep the Council Tax as low as possible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be ambitious - believe in our county borough</li><li>• Help protect and support children, young people and vulnerable residents</li><li>• Use our on-line services</li><li>• Tell us what matters to you and let us know if we get things wrong</li><li>• Get involved in your community</li><li>• Support local businesses</li><li>• Be healthy and be active</li><li>• Re-use items and re-cycle more</li><li>• Enjoy and help protect our natural environment</li></ul>

## Resetting our relationships with our business community

<u>OUR PART</u>	<u>YOUR PART</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create vibrant town centres for everyone to access and enjoy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use your town centre and buy local. Keep your town centres clean and tidy by not dropping litter</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in more events, festivals and other initiatives that help people to come together and help local businesses to prosper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend events and help to organise them where you can</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote our area to investors so we can create good jobs for local people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be confident and access the help and support you need to help you start a business or take advantage of new jobs in the area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen our business support team to help people start new businesses and to help existing businesses to grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy from local businesses where you can</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help residents to get the skills they need and help them find work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you run a business, take on an apprentice</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay the living wage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are an employer, pay the living wage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy goods and services from local businesses where this is possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you run a business, learn how to bid for goods and services that are being procured by public services</li> </ul>

## **10. How we will measure success and monitor progress**

Our corporate performance management framework will measure the success of the delivery of this plan. It will include a range of measures and indicators that, taken together, will provide a picture of the difference / impact the work set out in this plan is making and how it is enabling people to live fulfilled lives.

The framework could include, but not limited to:

- Case studies that describe the difference this plan is making
- The experiences of residents via our ongoing Let's Talk conversation
- A set of specific, measurable output and outcome measures
- Data visualisation tools to better communicate the impact of this Plan

## **11. How will we resource the Plan**

The priorities described for the next 12 months will be reflected in the revenue and capital budgets set for 2022/23. In early 2022 we will develop a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for discussion with the new council elected in May 2022. The MTFP will be the means through which the revenue and capital resources likely to be available over the term of the new council will be aligned with the longer term actions set out in Annex 1 and the priorities of the new council.

## **12. What happens next**

The Council will undertake formal consultation on this plan for a four week period commencing 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The feedback from the consultation will be used to finalise the proposals with a view to the plan being approved by Council in early March 2022.

**Recover, Reset, Renew**  
**Strategic Change Programme**

## Foreword

This document sets out the detail of the strategic change programme that will be initiated to enable the Council to achieve its revised purpose and vision. It is intended to be read alongside the Corporate Plan 2022-2027.

The programme will be built on the Council's revised values and will be adapted, where needed.

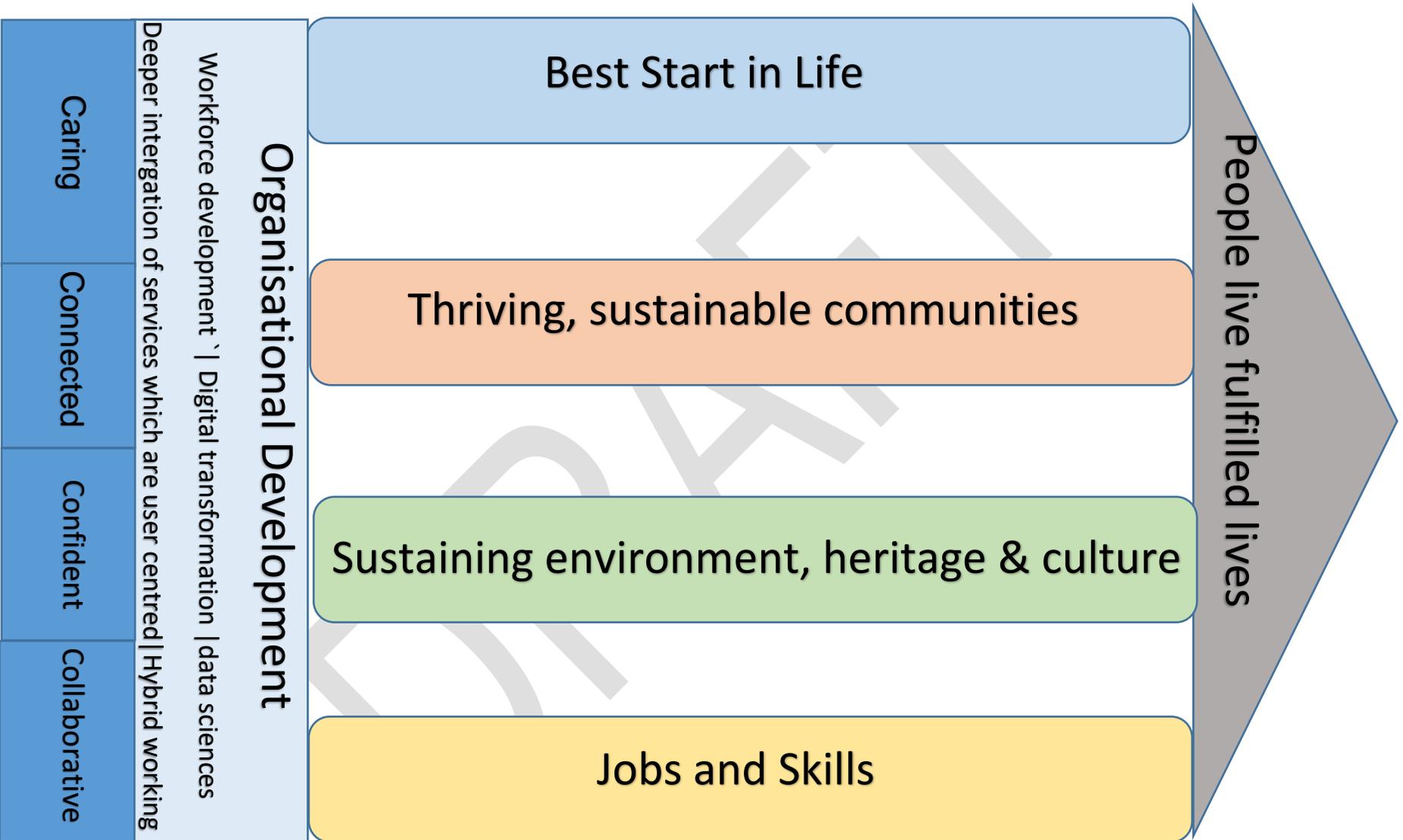
There are a number of specific actions to be taken in 2022/23 which have evolved from the analysis of how Covid-19 has impacted across Neath Port Talbot. The programme also takes account of the new Programme for Government, associated Co-operation Agreement and wider factors. It will be adjusted, as necessary, following the Local Government Election in May 2022 to reflect the incoming Administration's priorities.

**Cllr E V Latham**  
**Leader of Council**

**Mrs K Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

## Purpose, Vision and Values





## Draft Well-being Objective 1

Every child has the best start in life.

In 20 years' time...

- All children and young people will be:
  - ▶ ambitious, capable learners;
  - ▶ enterprising, creative contributors;
  - ▶ ethical, informed citizens; and
  - ▶ healthy, confident individuals.
- There will be a shared culture across the county borough that supports aspiration and ambition for all children and young people;
- Inequalities in health, education and economic outcomes will have reduced;
- All families in need will have access to high quality early help and support services and these are ensuring children are ready for learning when they start school and families are being helped to move out of poverty;
- We will have completed a programme of school reorganisation and have the right schools in the right place and all children and young people are accessing the schools that are right for them, first time, every time;
- The Council will be systematically removing the barriers to learning and aspiration by convening and working in partnership with other services and agencies that touch the lives of children and young people;
- We will have created an environment that secures access to learning and opportunities for all children, young people and adults in order that they reach their potential and their ambition;
- We will be championing the needs of all learners, particularly our vulnerable and disadvantaged, and building strong relationships with families, schools and communities;

- We will have created environments where learning is a safe, nurturing and fulfilling experience in all settings, where there is respect and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- We will be working in partnership to ensure that schools and other providers meet the learning needs of all their pupils and students, building professional capital and collective responsibility throughout the system and ensuring that literacy and numeracy are at the heart of learners' development.

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## **Why is this important?**

Covid-19 has had a significant, adverse impact on children and young people, with disruption to their learning and consequences for their social development and physical and mental wellbeing;

35% of children aged 7-24 live in the 20% most deprived wards in Wales;

84% of children entered nursery without the appropriate literacy, language and communication skills to access the curriculum;

27% of pupils of school age are entitled to free school meals;

Flying Start offers support for approximately 1,800 children per year having approximately 79% of pupils lie outside Flying Start areas which results in inequality of support;

A significant percentage of pupils finish statutory education without the expected levels in language, mathematics and science;

Over half of the pupils who are eligible for free school meals do not achieve a grade C or above in either language or mathematics;

Too many children and young people are being excluded from schools on a fixed term and permanent basis;

At least a quarter of children in our schools have a known or identified additional learning need;

2,237 young people aged 16-24 are economically inactive in Neath Port Talbot – some of these consider themselves unfit for work due to mental health issues; and

The Welsh Government has set a target that 1 million people will speak Welsh by 2050 and we need to play our part in helping to achieve this.

## What matters to children and young people?

325 children and young people took part in the Let's Talk campaign and expressed their views about what mattered to them now and what mattered to them as they thought about their futures. There were clear themes from their responses:

- Being safe;
- Being happy;
- Having a stable home life;
- Spending time with family, friends and pets;
- School – getting a good education;
- Growing up to be strong and healthy;
- Having good quality parks, sports facilities and other youth services;
- Having enough money;
- Being able to get a job and being able to afford to live in decent accommodation; and
- Affordable buses to access services.

## Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

- Support our school leaders to keep schools open and help children and young people recover;
- We will make sure it is clear how early help and support can be accessed by those children and families who need it;
- 'What matters' to children and families will be at the centre of the way we plan and provide our services;
- We will work with the Welsh Government to increase access to free school meals and childcare;
- All those children in need of protection are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family;
- Young people leaving full-time education will be helped to move on to further training or education or work;
- We will build on our role as corporate parents and help young people leaving care to have appropriate support and accommodation;
- We will increase the number of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities offered by the Council to young people;
- We will work with partners to refocus the Children and Young People's Partnership so that all services for children and families are easy to identify and use, meet people's needs and that our communities are child friendly;
- Our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be finalised, further strengthening our commitment to the Welsh Language, our traditions and culture;
- New joint planning and commissioning arrangements for children who have additional needs will be established.

In the next 5 years...

- More children are better prepared to learn when they start school;
- Arrangements for supporting young people when they finish their statutory education will improve with all children going on to training, education or work;

- Education reforms related to the curriculum and support for pupils with additional learning needs will be embedded and these changes are raising standards across our education system;
- We will progress our Strategic Schools Improvement Programme increasing the number of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and teaching environments available for children and young people;
- We will increase the number of Welsh medium school places in line with our targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
- More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote in Welsh elections;
- The number of children and young people excluded from school will have reduced;
- Play and leisure services will have improved and youth services will have been enhanced;
- All children know and understand their rights and responsibilities; and
- Services for children and young people are aligned across sectors so that the needs of children and families are identified early and support is joined up across agencies and improving people's life changes and outcomes.

## **Making a Difference - Measuring Progress**

We want to work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures to be developed:

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## Linked Plans and Partnership

### Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- NPT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

### Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT Think Family Partnership
- NPT Adult Learning Network
- NPT District Sports Council
- Partneriaeth – regional education consortium
- South West Wales Regional Skills and Learning Partnership

## Draft Well-being Objective 2

People live healthy, long and fulfilled lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another

### In 20 years' time...

- Every community is thriving;
- Inequalities in health, economic and social outcomes have reduced;
- People are involved in decisions that affect them, more people are involved in community life;
- People are welcoming of newcomers and treat each other with respect; every individual is included and has an equal voice;
- People can access good quality, affordable, low carbon housing in their community;
- People are connected within their community; communities are connected to each other and the wider world through good quality digital services and transport networks;
- People are resilient; they respect and take care of their environment and they can come together and act at times of crisis;
- Communities are age and disability friendly;
- Communities are pleasant, clean, safe and green;
- Vulnerable people are supported in their community through a range of informal and formal care and support networks;
- Communities can access a range of quality services necessary for daily living; and
- Communities benefit from a high quality of design that reflects the unique heritage and characteristics of each place.

### **Why is this important?**

Covid-19 has had an adverse impact on many people with more people becoming lonely and isolated. There has been a disproportionate impact on young people, women and people from BME backgrounds;

There were 144,000 people living in NPT in 2021. This is expected to grow to 147,000 by the mid-2030s;

The population is aging – the number of people retired is growing but the number of young people is declining;

People are living for longer and living healthier lives but life expectancy and health life expectancy is below the rest of Wales and the gap between those who are best and worst off is significant;

GVA (Gross Added Value) is lower than the Welsh average;

23.8% of children are eligible for free school meals;

There are estimated to be over 20,000 unpaid carers in the county borough;

There is a need for more affordable housing of a good quality; and

We expect to see a 35% increase in those aged 65+ who will be living alone by 2035.

## What matters to people?

We heard from over 1,800 people during our Let's Talk campaign. During periods of lockdown, people have rediscovered the importance of their family, friends and wider community. What they said matters to them now and as we look further into the future is captured below:

- Contact and being able to spend time with family, friends and pets;
- Being safe;
- Being healthy and making sure family and friends are healthy; good access to health services;
- Having a secure job and a good work-life balance;
- Children have access to good education and schools stay open;
- Having good relationships within the community and having events that bring people together;
- The arts, our culture and heritage;
- Better bus services;
- Cleaner and better maintained streets and green spaces;
- More and cheaper outdoor leisure facilities;
- More support and facilities for young people;
- Ensuring elderly and vulnerable people are supported; and
- Better interaction with the council.

## Moving Forward

### In the next 12 months...

- Further develop our work at neighbourhood level, mapping local assets (what's strong about each community) and mapping community vulnerabilities. Work with the community and other partners to identify opportunities for additional informal care and support networks to be developed;
- Expand the number of local area co-ordinators and bring greater consistency to the way they work across the county borough. Increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks;
- Create a network of neighbourhood forums to increase opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect them and provide greater support for the work of local councillors in their ward;
- Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support at the neighbourhood level;
- Work alongside the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service to encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups across the county borough;
- Introduce a corporate policy to encourage and support council staff to volunteer;
- Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods;
- Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative, encouraging local people to support their local businesses;
- Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour;
- Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function; and
- Begin to take the actions that will implement our commitment to the place making charter.

### **In the next 5 years...**

- Work with communities to develop a clear and detailed understanding of what is strong about each community and what communities want to achieve for the future;
- Complete detailed mapping of community assets and hot spots;
- Deliver training to council staff so they understand the principles of community development and have the skills and confidence to put those principles into practice;
- Support the development of more community groups and greater numbers of volunteers;
- Work with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse;
- Improve connectivity, both digital and transport;
- Improve the range and quality of informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents;
- Seek out funding to improve the quality of the public realm; help to sustain and develop community hubs;
- Improve facilities and services for young people;
- Work with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; help residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes; and
- Use our place making charter to ensure community developments bring out the characteristics of what is distinctive about each place.

## **Making a Difference - Measuring Progress**

We want to work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures might include:

- Poverty indicators
- Life expectancy and health indicators
- Social mobility and educational indicators
- Crime and disorder indicators
- Level of service interventions to families within the area
- Measures of how the local people feel

## Linked Plans and Partnership

### Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan
- West Glamorgan Area Plan

### Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT Think Family Partnership
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board

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### Draft Well-being Objective 3

Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change.

People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area.

#### In 20 years' time...

- More people speak the Welsh language and Welsh is an integral part of everyday life;
- People will value and cherish our local natural environment and have reversed the decline in our wildlife; our most precious sites will be in improved condition and connected via a network of green corridors;
- People will have restored natural processes to mitigate and develop greater resilience to the effects of climate change;
- Our urban areas will embrace and include space for nature that can be enjoyed by everyone;
- Residents of all ages across Neath Port Talbot will talk about the local environment, culture, sports and heritage with pride and confidence and more people will be actively involved in the conservation of our environment, culture and heritage;
- Local culture and heritage will be visible, brought to life through high quality, sustainable design that celebrates the past and connects it to the county borough's ambitions for the future;
- The area will be a destination of choice for people to live, work and spend their leisure time. The area will have built a reputation for excellence in the way it promotes a strong sense of belonging through heritage, the arts, sport and culture and supports everyone to connect to the natural environment and to enjoy a high quality of wellbeing; and
- We will increase the appeal of our area as a visitor destination by building upon our sense of place and encouraging sustainable development. Visitors will be encouraged to act responsibly for the benefit of our communities and local environment.'

## **Why is this important?**

Heritage is integral to our culture, people's sense of identity and sense of belonging which in turn impacts on people's health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Heritage and culture also contributes to the economy, supporting paid employment, helping to attract inward investment and generating value through voluntary action – part of our wider place shaping agenda.

The Welsh language is a very important part of our heritage and culture. We support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambition to achieve a million people able to enjoy speaking Welsh by 2050.

The importance of protecting our natural environment has, of course, never been so prominent. The Welsh Government officially declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and a Nature Emergency in 2021, recognising the significance of these two interrelated challenges and the urgency in tackling them. . The natural environment is vital to our communities and provides us with all our basic needs. It gives us all a better quality of life and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and Wales' natural beauty and heritage. People come from far and wide to experience our environment and it is intrinsically linked with Welsh culture and language.

While the area has many strengths, it also experiences relatively high levels of poverty, deprivation, ill-health and disability. There is a strong focus on encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to adopt active lifestyles to improve physical and emotional wellbeing. There is also a need to grow more quality jobs in the local leisure and tourism industry and to continue the long tradition of fostering local talent to achieve success as elite athletes and to perform on the world stage.

## What Matters to Local People

Through our Let's Talk campaign, local people have told us that their local environment, the Welsh Language and our heritage and culture matters to them. They want us to:

- Keep the past alive, promoting and celebrating our heritage to strengthen our sense of identity and sense of belonging ;
- Help to protect, preserve and maintain our historic and heritage sites for present and future generations;
- Promote our Welsh language, traditions and culture;
- Help all generations to connect with our natural environment, heritage and culture;
- Improve facilities for walking and cycling;and
- Help our community and voluntary groups to sustain and further develop their important work.

Without a clear commitment to action, there is a risk that we will see irreversible, further damage to our natural environment, a further decline in the use of the Welsh language and our traditions, culture and important heritage sites will be lost to future generations.

With the right actions, we can reverse the changes we have seen in our natural environment, increase the use of the Welsh language and preserve and build upon our traditions and heritage to make a positive impact on economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing positioning Neath Port Talbot as place where people want to live, work, learn and spend their leisure time.

## Moving Forward

### In the next 12 months...

- Establish a small grants scheme to help community groups and societies to recover from the pandemic;
- Introduce a community recognition initiative, led by the Mayor, to celebrate the important work being done by volunteers and community groups to enable future generations to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Support and encourage volunteering at council-owned nature sites;
- Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture;
- Further develop and implement our Welsh language promotional strategy;
- Provide refresher training for officers responsible for carrying out impact assessments when undertaking policy and service change;
- Extend opportunities for children and young people to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture;
- Work with the community, local partners, funders and other stakeholders to set a new strategic direction for heritage and culture and for tourism/destination management;
- Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan and ensure there is increased momentum to implement measures to decarbonise the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio;
- Seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance the local environment, culture and heritage;
- Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture;
- Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment:

## **In the next 5 years...**

- Work with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough; begin to deliver the new culture strategy;
- Work with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to extend our work to help nature recover and to improve the quality of and access to our natural environment; further implement our biodiversity plan;
- Extend our active travel network and improve public rights of way to reduce reliance on private vehicles and encourage more people to walk and cycle;
- Implement our new leisure strategy to improve access to high quality leisure and recreational opportunities;
- Work with partners to further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures;
- Work with partners to establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally; implement our destination management plan;
- Develop a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy;
- Work with communities and partners to engender a greater sense of stewardship, encouraging them to take a more active role in the ongoing management and improvement of their local environment.
- Embed the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum and ensure all schools have access to environmental and outdoor learning opportunities
- Continue to work with partners to facilitate the transition from traditional energy sources to more sustainable energy sources with an emphasis on the delivery of the City Deal programme and the opportunities created through the establishment of the Swansea Bay Corporate Joint Committee to decarbonise industry, housing and transport; implement our revised decarbonisation and renewable energy plan;
- Increase the proportion of the Council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods and services and which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy.
- Promote the benefits of buying local to residents, businesses and partners.

## **Making a Difference - Measuring Progress**

We want to work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures might include:

- Increased public participation in heritage and culture, sports and other recreational activities
- Wider access to the local environment, heritage and culture activities and extended reach
- Increased investment in Neath Port Talbot's creative talent, product and profile
- Successful funding bids
- Number and scope of new or expanded collaborative projects
- Media coverage, marketing, promotion and publicity
- Increased visitor numbers and spend
- Increased number of stakeholders/ businesses/ partners supported to deliver new or proposed tourism developments
- Reduced levels of CO2 emissions
- Increased participation in reduce, re-use and recycling activity
- Increased proportion of Council spend in local and regional supply chains
  
- Improvements in air quality
- Increased environmental volunteering
- Increased area of council owned land used as green space, local nature reserves
- Increased area of council owned land supporting habitats/species populations in favourable condition.

## Linked Plans and Partnership

### Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- National Resources Wales: Area Statement
- NPT Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE)
- NPT Biodiversity Plan
- NPT Destination Management Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- Gnoll Masterplan
- Afan Forest Park Masterplan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

### Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- NPT District Sports Council
- NPT Destination Management Plan Steering Group
- Afan Forest Park Tourism Group
- NPT Heritage Forum
- NPT Nature Partnership
- Lost Peatlands Steering Group
- Connecting Green Infrastructure Group
- NPT Public Services Board
- Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee/Corporate Joint Committee

## Draft Well-being Objective 4

### Jobs and Skills

Working with our partners we create the conditions for more secure, well paid and green work in the area and support local people into those jobs

#### **In 20 years' time...**

There is a strong and diverse SME base in the county borough which benefits from well-co-ordinated support, premises and finance;

Transformation of major sites at Port Talbot, Baglan Energy Park, the Global Centre for Rail Excellence will be complete;

Significant, new economic benefits have been delivered through the decarbonisation of industry, housing and transport; the area is an exemplar for renewable, clean energy;

Town centres and communities are thriving;

We have made the most of our natural environment, heritage and cultural assets and have a significant, sustainable visitor economy;

There is much improved connectivity to work, learning and services;

There is a skilled and resilient local workforce with rates of workless households or economically inactive people at or below the Welsh average; and

There is a strong partnership between the council, the business community, local people and wider stakeholders.

## Why is this important?

The world of work is changing rapidly, disrupted by the explosion in digital technology advances and now by the response to the climate emergency;

Covid-19 has caused an economic shock across the economy. Businesses have been affected in very different ways;

NPT has a distinctive industrial base which includes the UK's largest steel producer and a wide range of SME manufacturers;

NPT has a number of strategic employment sites and there are many opportunities for economic growth including new green jobs as industry and society decarbonises; the area is well served by rail, road and the deep water harbour is a strategic asset;

The local economy is reliant to a large extent on the activities of a small number of key industries;

88% of local businesses employ less than ten employees;

Start-up rates and business survival rates are on a par with the Welsh average;

There are significant numbers of people commuting into the county borough – possibly for the high quality of jobs; there are also significant number of people community out of the county borough for jobs of more modest value;

There are over 2,000 young people claiming Universal Credit in the county borough;

23,900 people of working age are economically inactive and there are approximately 9,000 households where there is no-one in paid work;

Over 17,000 households are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Scheme discounts as a result of having a low family income;

Qualification levels are low across each level compared with the Welsh average;

European funding programmes will soon finish and the nature and timing of replacement funding is still uncertain;

## What matters to local businesses?

- Being able to generate enough money to stay in business and have a good standard of living;
- Being able to adapt as markets change;
- Financial support to mitigate the impact of Covid-19;s
- Addressing anti-social behaviour, particularly in the towns;
- Creating employment and being a good employer;
- Transport – affects ability to employ people and customer volumes;
- Managing growth;
- Help with recruitment and with training;
- Maintaining and growing the customer base, business profile and marketing;
- Price and stability in the supply chain; energy costs;
- Digital connectivity and digital skills; and
- Help with sites and premises.

## Moving Forward

In the next 12 months...

### Skills and Training

- Review our training offer to help people adjust to the changing labour market;
- Create a 'single front door' to our employability services so that those seeking training and/or work find it easy to access the help and support that they need;
- Work with local employers to increase the number of quality apprenticeship opportunities and ensure these opportunities are seen as attractive to those seeking work;
- Further develop council procurement arrangements to ensure that the money spent by the council supports the employment of local people and the development of local businesses to the maximum extent possible;
- Develop clear pathways for local people interested in working in the council and further develop the council's employment 'offer' to attract, retain and develop a high performing public service that is rooted in its communities;
- Strengthen the council's business support team to help local businesses recruit skilled people and to help local learning providers to adapt learning provision to keep pace with the changing needs of employers;
- Initiate a local skills audit to identify the future work requirement of local employers and any shortfalls in the local learning provision.

### Jobs

- Launch the 'Invest in NPT' website to place business opportunities in NPT front and centre in Wales;
- Target businesses seeking to grow or expand within the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors and encourage them to focus their growth plans within the county borough;
- Support local businesses in their recovery, providing financial support when available and helping businesses to diversify so that they are more resilient to future economic shocks;
- Work in areas within Neath Port Talbot where there is the greatest economic inactivity to target business support;
- Establish a manufacturing/engineering forum to improve networking opportunities within this sector and to provide improved opportunities for businesses to inform future plans and funding programmes;

- Develop an investment programme to enable the expansion of sites and premises across the county borough that can support the development and growth of local businesses;
- Develop a plan to create new transport hubs that improve connections between the places where people live and the places where people work, learn and enjoy their leisure time.

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In the next 5 years...

### Skills and Training

- Traineeship and apprenticeship programmes expand across the county borough; the council will offer a larger number of quality traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities;
- Employability programme are further strengthened ensuring that all those needing help to find work can access it, including those who are hardest to reach;
- Targeted programmes are developed to enable local people to benefit from the new employment created through inward investment;
- More young people will access opportunities to achieve a recognised qualification following completion of their statutory education;
- Partnership working to upskill those already in work or who wish to return to work will improve; more local people will hold qualifications at Level 4+ and are supported into local quality jobs; and
- The council's learning and development offer will be strengthened ensuring that all employees are supported to access lifelong learning opportunities and develop the confidence to advance their careers within the council.

### Jobs

- Establish a strong gateway to business support increasing resilience to future economic shocks and helping to grow existing businesses and establish new businesses;
- Work with local businesses to increase access to public service contracts and new inward investment;
- Improve access to sites and premises – especially in the valley areas;
- Work with partners to take forward the major opportunities at Port Talbot Waterfront, Baglan Energy Park, Global Centre for Rail Excellence, Port Talbot Port and through the Council's Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy;
- Invest and attract investment into our principal towns, district centres and wider communities; respond to the demand for more flexible work spaces;
- Promote the visitor economy and unlock the potential of the natural environment, heritage and culture;

- Develop community based transport schemes to support access to work;
- Strengthen partnership arrangements at the local level to develop the economy ensuring business and communities have a strong voice in shaping future plans;
- Work through the new Corporate Joint Committee to deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy;
- Increase capacity within the economic development, business support and regeneration teams to better position the council to bid for funding and develop the local economy;
- Assess the impact of the changes made to the Council's operating model and bring forward proposals to re-purpose assets that are surplus to requirements; this could include shared workspace hubs, hybrid office and research and development workspaces, starter units etc; and
- Improve digital connectivity.

## **Making a Difference - Measuring Progress**

We want to work with partners and stakeholders to consider the best ways to measure the difference we make.

Measures might include:

- Firm creation and survival - new business starts and survival rates over time
- Firm expansion – additional turnover or employment as a result of business expansion
- GVA – additional gross value added
- Private investment – private investment levered
- Additional floor space – sqm commercial space added
- Access to employment – additional people accessing employment
- Carbon savings – carbon emission savings delivered
- Skills – additional people gaining qualifications, especially Level 4+

## Linked Plans and Partnership

### Plans

- NPT Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan
- National Resources Wales: Area Statement
- South West Wales Regional Economic Development Strategy
- South West Wales Renewable Energy Strategy
- South West Wales Transport Plan
- NPT Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE)
- NPT Destination Management Plan
- NPT Local Development Plan
- NPT Welsh Language Promotion Strategy
- NPT Active Travel Plan
- Gnoll Masterplan
- Afan Forest Park Masterplan
- NPT Strategic Equality Plan

### Partnerships

- Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board
- Swansea Bay City Deal
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- NPT Destination Management Plan Steering Group
- Afan Forest Park Tourism Group
- NPT Heritage Forum
- NPT Nature Partnership
- Port Talbot Waterfront – Enterprise Zone Partnership
- NPT Adult Learning Network

## Enabling Programme

Significant organisational change is needed to deliver the well-being objectives, cultural change and associated programmes of work and bring about sustainable changes to economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing.



A programme of organisational development will be delivered to develop the capacity and capability of the Council over a 3-5 year period. The scope of the programme is summarised below and will be further refined as the programme is defined and initiated:

- **People** – we believe people make the difference. We will ensure our people are well-led, supported, trusted and recognised for the contribution they make. People will be treated fairly and with respect and also encouraged to bring forward ideas about how we can improve what we do. We will develop a workforce which is representative of its communities and people will have equal opportunity to progress in our organisation. We will develop a culture where people are accountable for and recognised for what they do and how they do it.
- **Digital** – we will become smart and connected as a council and as a place. We will join up and use the data we hold to improve our understanding of what matters to our citizens. We will create new digital services designed around the needs of our citizens which are safe, easy and convenient to use. We will upskill our workforce so that everyone has the digital skills and tools to do their jobs and we will work to remove the barriers that some citizens who are not on-line face so they can enjoy the same benefits as those who are already on-line.
- **Governance** – we will adjust our risk appetite to encourage responsible innovation and invest in building a strong corporate culture where people are responsible and accountable for what they do, where people challenge behaviours that are unacceptable and where people continuously learn and improve. We will systematically replace unnecessary red tape with more modern approaches. We will continue to foster a culture of mutual trust and respect between councillors and officers with each clear about their respective roles and responsibilities and we will provide more opportunities for citizens to take part in our democratic processes.
- **Delivering value for money and ensuring financial sustainability:**
  - We will encourage the Welsh Government to replace Council Tax with a fairer method of funding local government and in the short term we will work to minimise the financial burden on council tax payers. In our community leadership role we will seek to influence the investment programmes of our partners and inward investors for the benefits of all of our citizens. We will encourage the community and voluntary sector to seek funding for activity that supports the wellbeing of our citizens and to extend programmes that provide early help and support. We will encourage people to take part in community life and promote the benefits of volunteering. We will work to increase the amount of public money spent in local and regional supply chains.

- We will take a ‘whole system’ approach to the way we manage our own financial resources, focusing on ‘what matters’, systematically removing failure demand, reducing duplication and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service operations. We will collaborate across the Council and with external partners to make it easier for citizens to get the services they need and we will integrate service planning, commissioning and delivery where this improves access to services and value for money.
- We will maximise available income through the further development of our commercial strategy, prioritising services where there are established market opportunities. We will invest in capacity to maximise external grant income and consider whether fees and charges are proportionate to the cost of services and regulatory activity.
- We will change the way we approach our revenue budget, placing more responsibility and accountability with service managers to find ways of mitigating service pressures. We will develop an invest to save culture to support this change in emphasis, making funds and support available to facilitate service change based on solid business cases.
- We will improve alignment between asset management, our capital programme planning and the new vision, values and priorities.
- **Engagement - a council in touch with its communities:**
  - We will further develop ‘Let’s Talk’ so that we have continuous feedback from our residents, our staff, our businesses and partners and increase participation in the Council’s work
  - We will revise the tone, channels and forms of communication to reinforce the new vision, values and priorities – this will include using case studies and other engaging ways of demonstrating ‘what good looks and feels like’
  - We will make sure people know what the Council is doing to help people live fulfilled lives and empower people in our workforce to communicate what we do and the difference we are making
- **Assets**
  - We will review our asset plans to ensure that our physical infrastructure supports the revised purpose and vision and enables the achievement of the changes we are setting out to make.

## Our Design Principles

In delivering the strategic change programme we will adopt the following design principles:

- One Council
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Trust and Empowerment
- Fairness and Equality
- Accountability
- Value for Money
- Agile and innovative
- Sustainable

One Council	
The whole council will focus on doing ‘what matters’ to our residents, local businesses and investors so we can achieve our purpose.	photo
Leadership and Teamwork	
Our leaders and managers have a tremendous impact on the council’s culture and through our leaders we want to provide a sense of vision, purpose and inspiration to our employees. Creating Team NPT will enable us to learn from one another, build organisational confidence, lead to innovation and improve outcomes for the people who live and work in Neath Port Talbot.	photo
Trust and Empowerment	

<p>We trust and believe in our colleagues. We will make sure they are trained, supported and authorised to do the things that matter so we impact positively upon people's lives</p>	<p>photo</p>
<p><b>Fairness and Equality</b>  We will recruit and develop a workforce that is representative of our communities. We will treat Welsh and English on the basis of equality and we will work to reduce poverty. We will celebrate diversity, ensure our services and places are accessible to everyone and root out discrimination in all of its forms.</p>	<p>photo</p>
<p><b>Accountability</b>  We will make it easy for people to access information and the meetings of the council. We will explain whether we have done what we said we would do.</p>	<p>photo</p>
<p><b>Value for Money</b>  We will use public money wisely and work hard to secure new sources of income and influence the investment decisions of our partners with the aim of achieving our purpose and vision.</p>	<p>photo</p>
<p><b>Innovative and Responsive</b>  We will take a user-centred approach to the way we design policies, services and places. We will encourage new ideas and creative thinking to challenge the status quo and improve what we do and how we do it. We will anticipate challenges before they arise and take proactive measures to face them, quickly reacting to new challenges and circumstances.</p>	<p>photo</p>

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Sustainable	Photo
We will play our part in responding to the climate and nature emergencies. We will increase the amount of Council expenditure spent in the local and regional economy and encourage local people to buy local. We will balance the actions we need to take in the short term with the long term impact those actions may have on future generations.	

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