

Let's Talk Report Final

Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23

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Introduction

This report outlines the findings from the questionnaire on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022-23. In total, the questionnaire received **485** responses.

The consultation started on Wednesday 5 January and closed on Tuesday 1 February 2022. The consultation took place against the backdrop of a revised version of alert level 2 restrictions, which came into place on Boxing Day 2021 to respond to the highly contagious omicron variant of Covid-19. The following arrangements were made to help ensure that the consultation was as inclusive as possible, despite the challenging situation:

- **Online questionnaire** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the council's website. The questionnaire was live from Wednesday 5 January (following Cabinet approval) until midnight on Tuesday 1 February 2022.
- **Email** – the email address LetsTalk@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Offline** – for public health reasons, we adapted our usual practice of making printed copies of questionnaires and reference documents available in public buildings. Instead we:
 - produced and distributed more than 1,100 printed packs and questionnaires for those who are not online. The packs contained an English and Welsh copy of the questionnaire for people to complete in the safety of their own home and return using a pre-paid envelope. These were:
 - made available at our 8 council run libraries (Neath, Pontardawe, Port Talbot, Baglan, Cwmafan, Glynneath, Sandfields, Skewen)
 - distributed by Local Area Co-ordinators and members of the Community of Practice (a group made up of officers from across the council who undertake engagement activities as part of their roles)
 - distributed by The Home Library Service, whilst delivering books and information to residents who have difficulty, or who are unable to visit their local library
 - distributed by Tai Tarian to their Haven schemes for people over 55 - there are 15 of these schemes across the county borough in Cwmafan, Port Talbot, Sandfields, Briton Ferry, Neath, Cadoxton, Crynant, Tonna, Glynneath, Banwen, Ystalyfera, Pontardawe (x 2), Cwmgors, Gwaun Cae Gurwen
 - made printed questionnaires available to employees in a number of internal services including the catering and cleaning services and the Service Response Centre at the Quays.

Almost a quarter of the responses we received (24.1% / 117) were submitted via printed questionnaires.

The consultation was promoted online (via: regular social media activity on corporate and service accounts, email marketing, and internal council channels), offline (via: radio, press releases, and posters), and by outreach activity via NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement.

Section 1 - Consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-27

1. Reactions to the 4 Draft Wellbeing Objectives:

1. We asked respondents to indicate how they feel about each of the 4 draft wellbeing objectives set out in 'Recover, Reset, Renew':

Figure 1: Responses to the question asking about respondents' reaction to each of the draft wellbeing objectives (nb: percentages relate to the total number of respondents who answered the question)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
All children get the best start in life	63% (300)	17% (82)	12% (57)	6% (27)	3% (13)
Communities are thriving and sustainable	46% (210)	25% (113)	18% (85)	8% (36)	4% (17)
Our environment, heritage and culture can be enjoyed by future generations	44% (202)	41% (187)	8% (36)	4% (19)	4% (17)
Local people are skilled and can access high quality, green jobs	40% (183)	31% (143)	16% (72)	8% (37)	6% (26)

2. All Children get the best start in life

Best Start in Life

In the feedback from the 'Let's Talk' campaign, this is what children and young people told us matters to them:

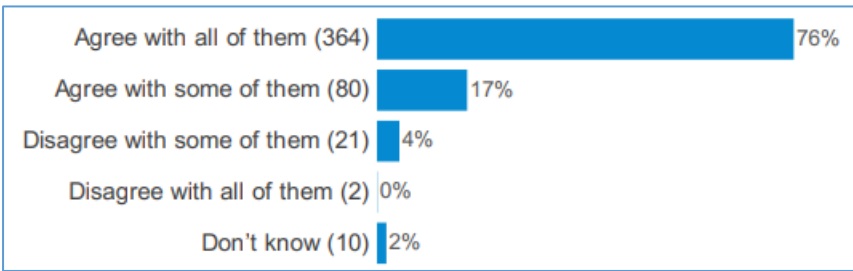
- Being safe
- Being happy
- Having a stable home life
- Spending time with family, friends and pets
- School – getting a good education
- Growing up to be strong and healthy
- Having good quality parks, sports facilities and other youth services
- Having enough money
- Being able to get a job and being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

Because of what children and young people told us matters to them, we are proposing to focus on the following:

Next 12 months:	Longer Term:
Keep schools open	More children are better prepared to learn when they start school
Improve play, leisure and other services for children and young people	All young people go on to training, education or work at the end of statutory education
Strengthen early help and support	Education reforms are embedded and standards are raised
Do 'what matters'	More schools have a 21st Century learning and teaching environment
Implement free school meals and childcare policy	The number of Welsh medium school places are increased
Ensure children are safeguarded and they can grow up in a loving and stable family	More young people will have registered to vote and will be using their vote
Strengthen transition from statutory education	The number of children and young people excluded from school will have reduced
Help young people leaving care to have appropriate support and accommodation	Play and leisure services will have improved and youth services will have been enhanced
Increase the number of opportunities offered by the Council to young people	All children know and understand their rights and responsibilities
Work with partners to refocus the Children & Young People's Partnership	Services for children and young people across agencies are joined up and improving young people's life chances and outcomes
Finalise and implement our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;	
Strengthen joint planning and commissioning arrangements for children who have additional needs	

2. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them:

Figure 2: Responses to the question 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' (base: 477):



2a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to do in response to what children and young people told us matters to them, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 2a: merges questions 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the next 12 months:

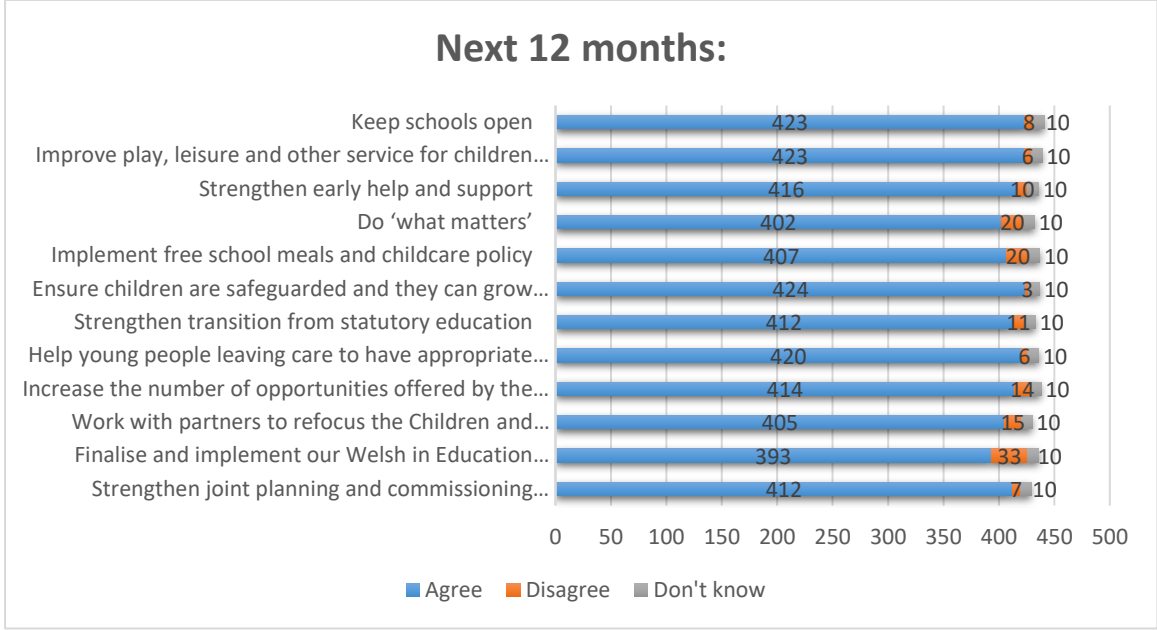
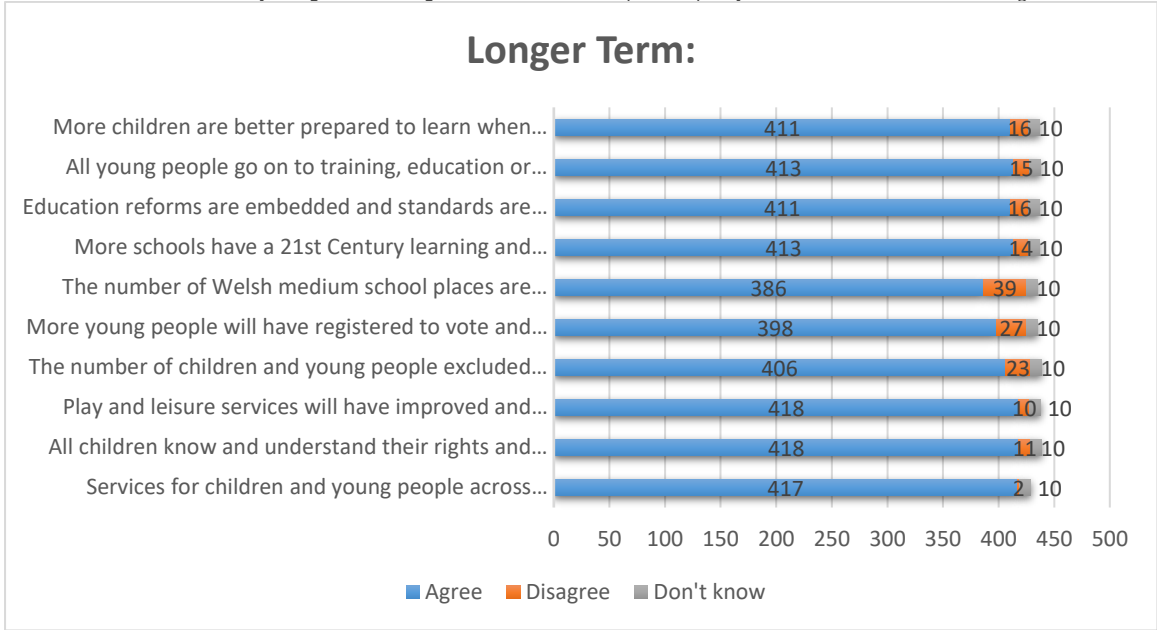


Figure 2b: merges questions 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what children and young people told us matters to them' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the longer term:



2b. We asked if respondents think there anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of giving children and young people the best start in life – there were 157 responses to this question, as follows:

- Hi not missing, but would really like to see the opportunities for apprenticeships and job opportunities given to young people to be expanded upon, the council is probably becoming one of the last places where a "job for life" is a real possibility.
- Real job opportunities, more Apprenticeships and high quality job opportunities for all our young people.
- Focus on lifelong skills and progression to adulthood not focus on jobs and education after - some people want to travel
- Having easily accessible mental health support within school environment. Opportunities for children to work together (maybe through the school council) with children in other local schools, to collaborate on initiatives collectively important.
- Support from social care is essential
- Adult Welsh learning improved so parents can help children with Welsh school work.
- For every child to be able to access flying start not a post code lottery system that I missed out on. Also more support for 17 year old like my daughter who was 'left to It' after the pandemic !
- Do what works ... if it doesn't work ... don't do it.
- Safeguarding is THE main priority. More needs to be done for children who are being mentally and physically abused in their homes - Social workers need more powers to act far quicker
- NPTCBC doesn't deliver on much of what it's targets are unfortunately
- A community approach to supporting young families - helping and encouraging each other - learning from older members of the community
- Related to free school meals and childcare, more emphasis on making sure they don't need free meals or childcare, parents and guardians are responsible for that, not the state.
- Ensuring that children are taught to respect both others and the environment. Help them to be part of caring for the local area and be part of the solution not the problem as in many cases.
- Reduce the size of schools to ensure all children are taught properly and none disappear under the radar.
- I don't feel it goes far enough. Improving provision would indicate the provision is there??? For a child whose parents don't work, where in Port Talbot can they go to play football or netball??? There is NO facility that isn't behind a lock and key. All facilities are locked up and only accessible to those who can afford. Children want 'free time' and not always have to join in at a specific time. There is a lack of facilities and places for children to go, keep fit and play with friends.
- Assistance in moving into higher education
- Access to leisure/community activities locally
- Free school meals for all children
- Keeping the streets clean from rubbish and back areas
- Access to learning about the practical things in life - not just an extension of current subjects but things like understanding finances - things they can use when they go out in the "real world"
- Increased funding for support of ALN learners to support inclusion.
- A particular emphasis on helping young people into work is needed with support for them to progress. This needs to be inclusive eg disabled and BME
- More creative opportunities regarding music, drama and film for young people
- Continue the move to provide 21st century schools for more of NPT young people.
- Restore NPT funding of services in the Upper Afan Valley, allowing additional funding from the windmills to be used for the benefit of the community, as intended, instead of being used to replace npt funding
- Public transport and employment prospects.
- Stop increases in council tax
- In the focus on the next 12 months and longer term - perhaps inclusion of something to help families who are living in poverty - affordable school uniforms, making sure families get any financial support they are entitled to etc.
- Being listened to, having their say and being able to participate in things that affect them.
- Someone outside of the home to talk to.
- INclusion for children with disabilities or better access mainstream services ie school and transport
- The school meals service needs to significantly improve its vegan and vegetarian provision, and reduce the quantity of meat and fish used, in order to meet NPTCBC's environmental sustainability targets.
- activities and support for 0-3 year olds. There is no mention of affordable buses to access services

- Lear for life. Learning for successful independent living. House keeping. Money sense, bills credit etc
- More emphasis on STEM subjects as this will support many of the other aims.
- Work with parents to help them to understand how best to support their children in terms of their education
- Perhaps introducing free public transport passes for young people under 18 to access services.
- No mention of accessible and affordable transport. Not everyone can afford a car.
- Access to nature and the environment, this is proven to help wellbeing and learning yet there is no mention about providing green spaces in school or giving them access to outdoor lessons
- We need to work more in partnership with Parents whose children are not in school, to ensure that their children reach their potential
- preventative services using a trauma informed response.
- Better Mental Health support for children and young people without stigma. Mental Health recovery from COVID19 for young people.
- Promote the importance of cleanliness to children in schools.- especially now with Covid.
- Not enough focus on training to support those with ALN for teachers, TAs, Families First staff, NPT Carers staff, etc. I deliver this training for the local authority and lots of staff attend unpaid and in their own time. Other council areas are not tapping into this free training to maximise the support they can offer.
- Support for parents to go back to work after becoming a parent through childcare facilities that are good quality and affordable. Information for parents on tax relief for child care to be made more readily available in a way that can be easily understood
- More school counsellors to help children living seriously grim and difficult lives. Better and quicker responses from CAMHS and all safeguarding agencies so that no child should ever think that suicide is their only way forward and the onus IS NOT on the school counsellor.
- I think there is more to do in relation to the objective on helping young people leaving care to have appropriate support and accommodation. The words strengthening transition is used in the item above in relation to education, and this is fundamental in the case of young people leaving care. It not just having appropriate support and accommodation, it's about having a supported transition to enable them to access and sustain appropriate accommodation.
- Improve child protection measures and special needs education - Social services and Teams around the family. Quicker intervention with struggling families. More
- help with big stages in life such as leaving primary, starting comprehensive, leaving comprehensive and starting college, apprenticeships...
- The security of knowing our local schools will stay local
- Higher education young adults. University Fees have had to paid although majority of education was by Zoom. Homeless. Other affordable forms of transport.
- Children and young people should be given access to heritage to break down barriers and to nurture an interest in heritage for life. It must not become the domain of elderly white middle class people.
- We are 22 years into the 21st century so what have we been doing until now?
- making parents take accountability for their children
- More children's social workers needed
- allow learning through play to be more of the focus in early years and really invest in pastoral care in primary schools not just secondary schools. Allow children that aren't academic to feel worthwhile by placing importance on non academic subjects, adopting forest school learning across the authority for a decent amount of time per week for all ages
- Increase awareness of the Welsh Government's 'mytravelpass' scheme for bus users aged 16-21
- Children and young people who do not attend school require support to help them lead as a fulfilling life as possible. Just because they do not attend should not mean that they miss out on other services that those who attend school are entitled to.
- Additional resources are required to support children in education with Specific Learning Difficulties including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, ADD. I am the guardian of a GCSE aged child. It has taken us years to get her tested for dyslexia, now that they are in year 11 they have finally be confirmed as having dyslexia, this is far to late into their education. We are still waiting on the formal report but in addition, basic tools and resources like coloured paper / notebooks and printing on coloured paper is severely lacking. This is down to a lack or resource, a lack of priority being given to reasonable adjustments and a lack of knowledge and understanding of schools and teaching staff. Supporting children with SpLDs must be given more priority.

- Understanding of personal finance.
- I think there could be a member of staff at school that could be a young persons champion and be identified as that if the child needs to have personal support.
- Ensure that young people understand working in business and have an appropriate bridge to employment or apprenticeships
- Put more focus on vocational training for some students
- Assist in placements with local companies for young adults
- I feel there should also be a focus on getting parents/carers onboard and enabling them to support children. Also NPTCBC does a lot for younger children but there are little or no provisions for teens and young adults, these should be a priority. Get them involved in the community, hear their voice.
- Voluntary or compulsory work required if not in education or employment.
- Improve social skills by interacting with older people.
- Ensure that children who need a little extra help, or learn differently to that offered through mainstream education, are given the support and opportunity to thrive.
- No mention of Young Carers
- There is nothing here about improving the physical and mental wellbeing of children or about being able to access affordable transport
- Morals. No one seems to know 'Whats right' (point 4) in order to teach that to the children.
- Are all of the Welsh medium schools full? Do we need more places.
- More support for those young people that may have got left behind academically during the pandemic
- To to also prevent and break the cycle of a non aspirational society by helping to educate parents and carers make better choices regarding their children or young people. In their care.
- Strife to keep comunity schools at the very heart of policy. To keep Children walking to school cancel all plans for factory schools immediately.
- Being able to walk in the area without stepping in dog mess - we walk to school and the bulk of the conversation is "mind the poo" - it's disgusting!!!
- Not only a focus on personal responsibility, independence and questioning, but as a society a heavy emphasis on health and environment.
- Up to date education about money, how it works, how to make it work for you and others.
- there is no direct mention of sport or other health based activities
- Maximising income - benefit support, where necessary
- Educations is needed for lifestyles choices which feeds in to Growing to Be Healthy & stronger
- Make being courteous part of the curriculum - not riding bikes on pavement / swearing loudly / littering etc.
- A timescale and how it will be paid for
- Giving them the chance to enjoy the pleasure of reading.
- Reduce discrimination against more deprived areas and facilitate a safe school environment by keeping primary schools smaller, keeping them within the community they serve and within walking/cycling distance
- I see hardly anything to help improve the schooling life and life in general for children with special educational needs. Teachers in mainstream school also need training on how to have the basic understand of children with special educational needs. More activities in the community that cater specifically for children with special educational needs. Assessments need to be a lot more quicker for children with special educational needs as they are suffering for a long time without the correct support especially if they currently don't have a diagnosis
- Ensure adequate support for mental health
- The objective needs to be SMART, these are not very specific or measurable
- Children and young people must have an opportunity to have fun whilst doing the above.
- It's not that i disagrees with what you want to put in place, it's actually achieving them, we have the highest council tax in the area yet there isn't flying starts for all children, there are 8+ staff at the dumps that just stand around not helping, there are areas like where I live where the grass doesn't get cut the residents are expected to do this, the fact that we only have bin collection every other week that's crazy when there are larger families or have family come to stay for holidays,
- There needs to be more for teenagers. They have very limited provision which is designed for them.
- extra support for children to catch up on lost learning and wellbeing activities missed as a result of covid

- Giving them guidance as a child, know the boundaries, advise them on finance and about taking responsibility
- Ensuring fair access to Welsh medium education across all areas of the local authority so that Welsh medium education is a fair choice for all children no matter where they live or their background.
- I think education should start as early as possible. With that said I believe children should have the opportunity to start interacting with other children from a younger age and the age of the 30 hour free learning should be reduced to the age of 2 not 3
- Review how children access Flying Start to ensure that children who would benefit are not excluded because of their postcode . It would be excellent if all children have access to flying start as it is superb
- Age appropriate and thorough sexual health and sexuality education, reducing stigma and prejudice for non-heterosexual and non-cisgender young people.
- Children to have an understanding of emotional literacy as they grow as is age appropriate. Encourage a child's passion and capabilities even if a child is not able to achieve a high level academically.
- We MUST remove the inequalities in the system. eg the postcode lottery of the Flying Start Scheme and some changes to the 30 hour CCO
- Free wraparound care in schools, using after school for extra curricular activities
- Affordable and tidy housing for people with gardens their children can play in.
- No, the Childrens vouces have been heard
- Sex has always been an important part of life, but sex is now exploited endlessly - TV shows, advertising, singers & entertainers. Children are being bombarded with sex from an early age. Restrictions should apply in what they watch. Parental guidance?
- Realise the importance of the voluntary youth sector and support them to flourish and grow
- Good quality parks when local has decimated all sporting leisure grounds.
- 1) a focus on protecting the environment 2) an impact assessment on building a super school in Pontardawe in terms of environment and child welfare
- It's not an ideal world, unfortunately. Health, both physical and mental need addressing.
- Ensure more safe and green spaces for children to play rather than build in any free space
- Teach young people to respect the elderly (one day they may be old)
- I am 85 and a little bit slow
- Help children and families with complex needs/mental health issues. Help for children living in poverty. Free gym membership for families needing to use food banks. Youth clubs. After school clubs with fun activities.
- Encourage proactivity in the community through voluntary projects from an early age - this teaches both personal responsibility and respect for the environment in all its forms.
- Wokeness, cultural Marxism, and left wing indoctrination will be stopped. Anti-English attitudes will be addressed. Misandrist attitudes to boys education will cease.
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Better transport options, particularly in the smaller communities around NPT.
- How you plan to work with children and young people to review and updates your proposals
- actions in preparation for the impacts they are going to have to endure due to the climate & nature emergencies.
- I think all these are statements without any indication how they are going to happen. What does the ambiguous do what matters mean?
- Dont think so. But our sports facilities across the Borough in most areas are poor or not available. Just look across the boarder in England to see the sporting facilities they have. We are 20 years behind. Education reform, surly after all these years we should have a good education framework for our children? If not, why? Leaving care in NPT needs a lot of work, this area is not up to standard. All the above is what we should have had in place years ago. To achieve the above you need a proper strategy with money, some of this looks like a wish list. Sorry for being so negative, but if the above was achievable it would have been in place by now.
- More families that live closer to the school their children go to Walk instead of driving there ok we all know about certain individuals however have a better communication system set up and if the children parents are unable to collect them then a designated person to escort them home
- Anything to do with making buses affordable, raised as an issue by children and young people

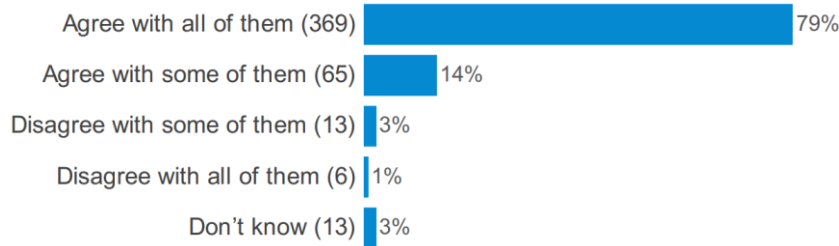
- Actively develop and promote links with Arts and Culture venues - for example specific activities with the Pontardawe Art Centre. Tailoring shows and offers to be alongside the curriculum; music acts for young people; drama and dance classes etc.
- Educational support for those with borderline abilities, it feels like the talented are nurtured and the less able are supported but those on the cusp are neither coping or helped, especially true of further education in the colleges
- Opportunities for work experience, links to business community, volunteering, life skills such as managing money
- Actively develop and promote links with Arts and Culture venues - for example specific activities with the Pontardawe Art Centre. Tailoring shows and offers to be alongside the curriculum; music acts for young people; drama and dance classes etc.
- I don't understand all of the above so couldn't really say if it's good or not to some points
- Raise more awareness for mental health in schools as well as providing more support for young people with mental health, educating others on it as well.
- I think more options should be available for children with additional needs (not just mainstream School)
- Children need the best support they can get
- Antisocial behaviour with youth culture in Neath particularly where I live is not being addressed. All schools should have places increased not just Welsh language. Why is there not a church in Wales senior school in Neath?
- No mention of parental support - too much focus on schools (what about those EOTAS?) No mention of post statutory education, what about young people?
- More co-operation between local schools and local sports teams to encourage active and healthy lifestyle so local teams are not charged exorbitant fees to use facilities. Parent/local clubs cannot afford the fees that some are charging i.e. Cefn Saeson. Parents already pay council tax.
- The younger generation are the future
- Being able to get a job and to afford decent accommodation. Getting a good education.
- More support for children with SEN
- Free school meals should be for ALL children. Flying Start should be more accessible to more families in the area. More activities that include disabled children
- We have a great beach with lots of space. Space which should be filled with things for families and children but our **** council have done nothing about it for 40 years
- Green skills: learning to grow food, forage etc.
- Mental health understanding and support.
- Library service is important for children
- Improve access to mental & physical health, nutrition, well-being facilities and education.
- What about older people who have lost a lot of things to help them keep active.
- The parks are disgusting and ruined. Children (teens) ruin it for the younger ones damaging equipment and being violent. Police let them get away with it because of 'home problems'
- Mental health support for children, it is abysmal in this borough. I'd go as far as to say it is criminal how hard it is to get help/
- More after school clubs run by the school for all ages of children both primary and comp.
- I particularly think that affordable buses with a regular time table would be invaluable.
- Re-introduce perhaps the last Labour Govs. Sure start scheme.
- Develop "SureStart" type comprehensive early help for disadvantaged families. Vital, as it helps the whole family.
- Better advice and guidance with the working environment as well as advice on all possible careers.
- What does do what matters mean?
- Schools should educate on LGBTQ+ issues. R.E should include paganism and Wicca.
- We are 2 90+ residents. This proposal is geared for the youth of today, whilst we wish them well, we would welcome more support for the elderly and for our daughter - our full time carer.
- They need to be informed/made aware that there are consequences to inappropriate behaviour.
- It's great
- Too old now 82 years
- All children need to be included no matter their background
- smaller classrooms of children - they are more likely to pay attention, learn + with a smaller class, a teacher can tend to those with questions/queries. I feel like my education (maths in particular) suffered due to larger classes. This was noticed from primary age onwards.

3. Communities are Thriving and Sustainable

Communities are thriving and sustainable		
In the feedback from the 'Let's Talk' campaign, this is what people told us matters to them:	Because of what you told us matters to you in relation to our communities, we are proposing to focus on the following:	
	Next 12 months:	Longer Term:
Contact with family, friends and pets	Map our neighbourhoods; what's strong; how can informal care and support be improved	Work with communities to agree what communities want to achieve for the future
Being safe	Expand the number of local area co-ordinators; bring greater consistency to their work; increase the number of people helped to connect with local informal care and support networks	Deliver training to council staff so they understand the principles of community development
Being healthy; good access to health services	Create a network of neighbourhood forums	Continue to support the development of more community groups and volunteers
Having a secure job and a good work-life balance	Provide seed funding for community and voluntary initiatives that strengthen early intervention and prevention support	Work with the community to prevent problems from happening or getting worse
Children have access to good education and schools stay open	Encourage and further develop community and voluntary groups	Improve connectivity, both digital and transport
Community relations; having events that bring people together	Encourage and support council staff to volunteer	Improve informal and formal support for elderly and vulnerable residents
The arts, our culture and heritage	Strengthen our neighbourhood management services and introduce a county borough wide programme to catch up, clean up and green up our neighbourhoods	Seek funding to improve the public realm and help to sustain community hubs
Better bus services	Continue to promote and develop our 'Buy Local' initiative	Improve facilities and services for young people
Cleaner and better maintained streets and green spaces	Continue to work through our community safety partnership to address the problems posed by alcohol, illegal drugs, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour	Work with developers to increase the supply of quality, affordable and low carbon housing; help residents to reduce the carbon emissions of their homes
More and cheaper outdoor leisure facilities	Bring forward proposals to strengthen our housing strategy function	Use our place making charter to ensure community developments bring out the characteristics of what is distinctive about each place
More support and facilities for young people	Begin to implement our place making charter	
Ensuring elderly and vulnerable people are supported		
Better interaction with the council		

3. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about communities:

Figure 3: Responses to the question 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' (base 466)



3a. Where people indicated that they "agreed with/disagreed with some" of the things we are proposing to focus on in communities, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 3a: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the next 12 months:

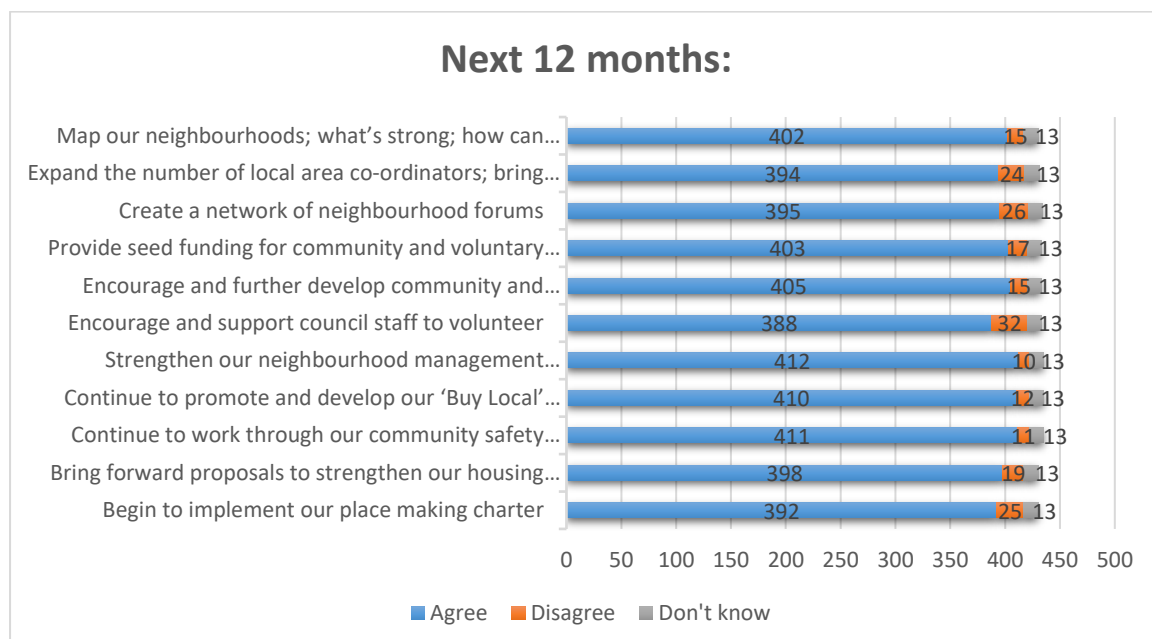
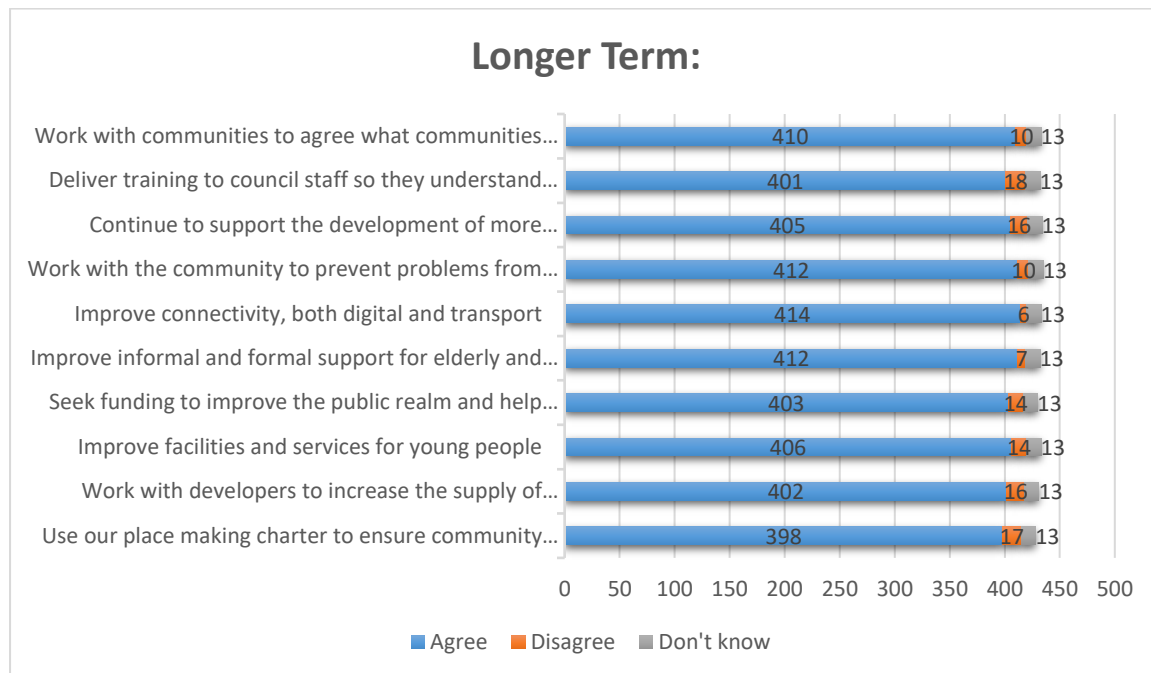


Figure 3b: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about communities' and 'if you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:



3b. We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of thriving and sustainable communities – 150 people responded to this question, as follows:

- A lot of elderly or adults without social media aren't aware of what's available in the community.
- Trying to develop strategy for individuals as start-ups and also the further development and help of tourism in the areas suited to bringing outside money into the authority.
- It's difficult to disagree with your aspirations but it's frustrating that the survey leads us instead of focussing on what we want to tell you, that's why I put don't know to have an opportunity to speak to you, I agree with all of them but I don't believe realistically you can achieve them in the current or future climate, just my view really.
- Hold surgeries with local community to get feedback directly from the community and understand any specific issues.
- A museum in the town.
- Continuing and prolonged cuts are impacting on the standard of service the council is able to provide but it has become more and more expensive for an inferior service. Firefighting is more expensive than proactive planning and strategy.
- Improved local sport facilities, amenities and shops
- More financial help for working families who are struggling.
- Funding to help ALL families deal with current rises in energy prices and inflation, not just those on benefits
- Stop wasting our money on glass bus stops
- Digital capability is priority - the pandemic isolated many residents and affected their mental health when face-to-face services were retracted. We need to learn from this and not just rely on libraries but set up supported internet cafes with universal access for all
- Need to stop the politics and look after the people better across all of NPTCBC, your ambitions are commendable but service delivery very poor indeed.
- Reduce the impact of cars - blocking pavements etc. Encourage people to walk more, even if it's from one side of car park to the other. Effective measures to slow traffic (speed humps don't do this)
- Nothing about better bus services, outdoor leisure facilities or being safe. It's all well and good writing lists but the Council needs to ensure it listens and acts.
- Bring back the old character of our town. Encourage small shops and businesses into the area and clear station road of drunks and layouts.
- School holidays reform. 6 weeks in the summer is too long esp when working from home.

- Opportunity to volunteer locally
- Make sure the community venues that already exist are used as part of the planning - libraries are a wonderful community venue and people see them as safe and unbiased, also community centres - why aren't these used more by the council?
- Better housing stock
- Affordable housing to include more and affordable social housing.
- Extend understanding of support to "community" to include victims of domestic abuse - e.g. train staff + Improve council's digital capability - e.g. ability to make payments online via website instead of phonecall
- Access to services for those that struggle with digital platforms also those with reading difficulties.
- Transport and good connectivity are essential to make sure everyone has equal opportunity. We need to talk up the area and make sure local people are engaged with the council
- More cultural opportunities for the community to express themselves and help with mental health
- A return town house leisure services and social housing.
- There is too much emphasis on the voluntary sector, where volunteers come in existing npt services go out..No help for people to gain employment outside of the Afan valley, no transport at shift change times..
- Council workers speaking to people with more compassion and not being unapproachable
- not from my view
- Better street cleaning, better bus services, stop people allowing their dogs to roam the streets off the lead and fouling pavements.
- Consider the cost to council tax payers
- To feel safe and not have so many incidents of anti social behaviour, for businesses in the communities to be considerate to local people living in the area, for car parks to be provided in area's where parking a car is becoming problematic , to have accessible roads and paths, more cycle paths, more rubbish bins to be emptied, for communities to be involved and listened too when developing anything in their area.
- 'Much much' better interaction with the local council!
- A level playing field for ALL areas of NPT. I am a resident of GCG and fortunate to have my own transport. There is a lack of public transport from the villages of the Amman Valley to allow residents to access Pontardawe, our local Town. Therefore they are unable to support the ' buy local' initiative. (We can access Ammanford through an hourly service.) We are the only area of NPT which does NOT have regular public transport to its nearby town.
- Clear strategic plan for a future without Tata
- Transport us always a difficulty with a sparse distribution of communities unlike London for example. Some thinking outside the box !
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points in order to encourage the transition to electric vehicles.
- Sustainability? Nothing about public transport
- To ensure important historic landmarks and sites are not lost, are preserved and well promoted. Also to support the arts in all its forms from grass roots clubs to venues including music venues and art galleries.
- green spaces accessible to communities, especially the more urban ones
- We also need to work better with our smaller communities such as Gypsy Travellers, we also need to understand that community development also means putting trust in local people to find answers within their own community.
- Glynneath has become grubby & unkempt with litter & dog fouling. It would be nice to see more teams of litter pickers on a more frequent basis. Glynneath has the opportunity to blossom as the gateway to Waterfall Country & the Brecon Beacons -an opportunity that is being lost at the moment. It would be great to see more 'greening up' of the town as trees are being cut down at a rate of knots. More importantly is maintaining Trem Y Glyn residential home in Glynneath. It is a treasured and well loved home that cares for our local elderly & vulnerable residents and needs to stay open when it is due it's review this year
- Libraries
- Better Mental Health and better housing support and options for 16+ who are not Care Leavers.
- There needs to be routine checks on care providers to make sure that they are doing their job correctly. Also providing elderly people with activities that kept them mentally well, provide interaction with other people for support and Company.
- We desperately need a single place to list all leisure facilities in the NPT area, to include everything from a photography club or group to gym classes with Celtic Leisure. Many people

don't have the digital skills to perform an effective search. This is why we need to make it easy for them with links to web pages and an easy way for service providers to input their own details so that they are always maintained and up to date without affecting council human resources.

- More housing like one/two bedroom flat and houses is necessary. Also please don't build too many housing estates etc as this will also go against your plan to 'green up' the plans to build housing on the old Lido site are an example of this. That land could have been used to develop something to improve green energy using the sea or greener areas inline with the seafront already and the easy option is to stick a load of houses there
- AS long as what is suggested is adhered to then the Communities and people should benefit
- Perhaps there is a lack of emphasis on poverty - with energy prices soaring - I think there are going to be more people facing poverty
- Bring back provision for learning art and craft within community venues - being active and creative help with health and wellbeing. ACL stopped all art and creative courses which means there is no scope in NPT for older (or younger) people to explore their creative sides. Digital inclusion is wonderful but many many people want to learn by sharing and being with other people within their community or making friends with others who have similar interests.
- Linking to the 'Buy Local' initiative should be an initiative to support capable and committed local third sector providers with long-term funding to ensure continuity of services should also be included in the long term.
- Help to provide job opportunities, training and support measures to get long term unemployed into the work place.
- education on how these things can and will happen so that people get involved
- Buy local could be extended to local farmers markets. Ensuring the homeless are supported. Support and facilities for young carers. Better use of empty shops- pop up businesses etc.
- The homeless and vulnerable need to be cared for and integrated into society with decent housing and education.
- Support and fund libraries I. No community measures can be achieved without adequately funding our main community hubs ie libraries
- Briton Feery not to be overlooked AGAIN when funding these projects
- There's a great emphasis on developing community groups, volunteering, LACs, etc. Not so much about service delivery - cleaning streets, for instance, I live in The Croft notorious for drains being blocked and have seen a street sweeping vehicle once in a whole year.
- better health and social care infrastructure - pay carers a decent wage and make the jobs appealing
- Ensure there are opportunities for young adults in our communities that fall between service provision as they are often forgotten/unable to access certain groups of support due to them being 25-30.
- revamp port talbot town centre. bring music and performers to the town centre. revamp aberavon beachfront also. lots of potential here
- Appoint Street 'leaders'.
- To support young unpaid carers
- Support business needs in the community through the establishment and support of networks
- Reduce business rates to encourage new businesses into Neath, Port Talbot, Briton Ferry and Skewen. Neath has very little to offer shoppers and there is so much anti social behaviour and drug use in the centre it is intimidating for people especially the young and elderly. The first impression when you step off the train or park your car is people drinking and drug taking
- More apprenticeship opportunities
- Encourage and further develop community groups, and 'continue to support the development of more community groups', sounds like you will only support them in getting set up. You need to enable them and provide ongoing support to facilitate action. There have been many instances of community groups feeling that working with the council is a barrier to them achieving their aims and you need to change that perception. You need to get the words 'enable' or 'support' into each of these actions.
- I think there are enough LAC's but need to ensure the best outcomes for communities by working closely with other organisations, needs more focus on carers
- There needs to be a stronger focus on community health and wellbeing
- Communities don't generally look to social services to come riding in like the cavalry so save their community. We're getting very 'worthy' and self righteous about our role. We are not the community. We're just an option.
- There isn't a specific strategic focus regarding the arts and culture. We know that if culture is thriving within a community, the community itself continues to prosper. This also can't be

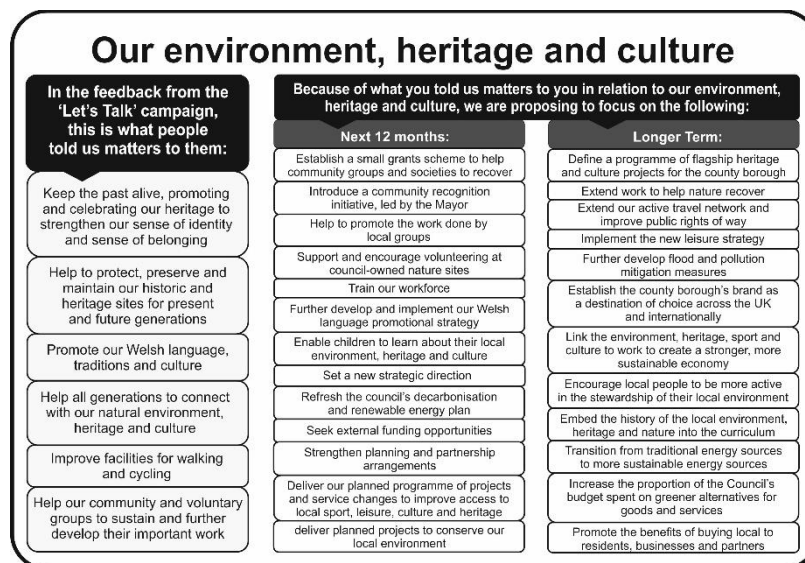
shoehorned into a "community hub" objective, it needs its own focus and long term vision. The development of the plaza is fantastic, but we need to be careful we don't just rely on the development of a building to solve our problems and address some of our challenges. What we fill the building with will have a far greater impact.

- Village schools are at the heart of every community. Close them and the community will wither and die. The reason we need any of the above is due to the systematic destruction of our village schools to save money. This must stop now. All of the above points that need to be funded are a side effect of School closures.
- Not sure what the place making charter is? With regard to working with developers, don't bother. They relieve the council of it's money quite easily. It's common knowledge in the industry.
- more focus on youth into self employment and creating jobs, not just applying for jobs (digital economy)
- Green spaces are not just about being cleaner or better maintained but about improving their biodiversity to help people interact with nature for their mental and physical health
- Maximising income - benefit support, where necessary
- Natural environment- integrating spaces for nature in our built environment enriches people and communities
- how much money do you give to public transportas some services have been stopped altogether
- Equality for all communities - some are better served by elected members than others. Poor local shops and no notice taken of environmental damage e.g. from TATA
- Timescale and funding for projects
- I never see anything where you help the quality of life for children with special educational needs, children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities.
- I have lived here all my life, now walk down the streets and they are dirty and uncared for , why cant you sweep the roads and drains more frequently, why does grass grow in the gutters, why are the drains blocked.....
- Needs to be SMART, specific and measurable, how will you know if you have met your objectives?
- Charging points for electric cars , also rubbish in streets is worse I have ever seen it introduce consequences for dropping litter , bin men need extra manpower to sweep up dropped recycling otherwise why are we bothering to recycle !
- More advertising about what's going on in the community
- if managed will benefit those in some areas but not in all areas
- Why are the young people services being put into the long term? Why can't you do anything for them in the short term too?
- disabled people need to be able to have dropped kerbs all around so they can access bus stops and crossing roads.
- You need an organisational chart to highlight accountability and specifics of who will deliver services. Most of the above are buzzword driven, community, sustainability, partnership all pretty meaningless but look good on an action plan
- Major improvement to accessing NHS services
- Reducing the rates on Neath premises in order to encourage more 'local' business to the area instead of everyone 'closing down'.
- More networking events for third sector and community organisations
- Ensure the digital and transport connectivity of communities is affordable and reliable
- There needs to be training available for volunteers to ensure that they meet good governance processes. Strengthen partnership work with volunteer groups. Communication with the council is not easy
- Increase Welsh language community opportunities and learning for all
- Community development is key, encourage members of the local community to become involved with service provision, communitie need more ownership of the services provided to encourage others to become involved.
- Second council staff to the charities that work on the ground in the borough to understand the principles of Community Development
- Reduce council tax
- What matters is also how a place looks and is presented. eg. Coming through Briton ferry looks terrible and shop and home owners should be made to make it presentable
- More food bank resources
- Speaking as a disabled person it is a vital requirement that mobile library services are at the very least maintained and improved
- Cheaper outdoor facilities when local authority washed their hands with leisure activities

- improved communication with residents so that we know what can be available
- Better communication between public and NPT [Transport etc]
- Develop disused areas for community developments and activities
- 'Buy local' needs to be more specific to local produce, independent businesses.....not Tesco which is across the road from me. Improved sustainable travel is vitally important, particularly for low incomes.
- Children should be told at a very young age NOT to throw litter etc. in the outdoors
- Not missing as such, but you state 'continue...to address problems caused by alcohol, illegal drugs...' etc. I feel this should say 'continuously review' as this is a huge problem for the town and has a huge impact on having (or not having) a thriving community
- Community gardens where local people can walk, meet, and help maintain. Invest in the Celtic leisure centres, they have warm empty rooms, use them to tackle loneliness, have fun, educate, alleviate fuel poverty. Free gym memberships to the poorest, give room space to charities to reach communities, advertise these services. Improve your website..
- Thriving on green initiatives such as solar wind and hydro for homes and businesses. Also better communication on all these initiatives
- Public transport. Public transport around the ages of NPT is non-existent or extremely poor.
- Reduce immigration and address those communities that refuse to integrate - both are seriously damaging social cohesion
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Advocacy
- Promoting community wellbeing through the use of open green spaces.
- Although it is mentioned that there will be a continuation in working to address problems with anti-social behaviour, mostly caused by drugs and alcohol, it does not say how this will be achieved, and this has now become a major problem in Neath, so although it is mentioned, I am concerned in how this can be achieved.
- Mental health support and funding is seriously required and is extremely poor in npt
- the box relating to carbon emissions should be listed under the next 12 month, not "longer term" - the climate crisis cannot wait. Also Support and encourage neighbours to hold street parties - they are amazing at creating doorstep connections
- Again how will this be achieved. I think all this is highly dependent on people feeling safe in their neighbourhood. We need to retain valuable people leaving Neath Port Talbot because of the degradation of the town and some of its inhabitants.
- Most of these are not achievable. Normally long term means never.
- And more importantly educational of drivers who, example Speed up Bertha Road. When the children are leaving school for the day.
- Better bus services are highlighted by the Lets Talk Campaign, but there appears to be scant recognition of that in the proposals for the next 12 months or longer
- Specific recognition of the importance of places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community and economic hubs which help create vibrancy and meeting space in the Community. More active links to Arts and social prescribing to help mental health and well-being.
- Community transport, particularly crossing between Neath area and Port Talbot. Help for home owners to install windows, doors, wall ties, rendering,. Options for installing solar panels or using water turbines to create energy
- Renewable energy projects, focus on locally sourced sustainable produce, ev charging ports / transport
- Specific recognition of the importance of places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community and economic hubs which help create vibrancy and meeting space in the Community. More active links to Arts and social prescribing to help mental health and well-being.
- i dont understand all of the above to be able to comment
- They should plant more trees in the area to help with the air pollution in Port Talbot from the steel works.
- Work to stop bullies in school
- More youth clubs
- There must be a strong commitment to fulfill these pledges backed by finance and actual practical solutions. A need to engage with the public more equally and not just when there is an election.
- Not enough support always for carers at home.
- No mention of older people in the proposals for the next 12 months. Also, no mention of how social isolation and loneliness are going to be tackled
- Treating all communities the same

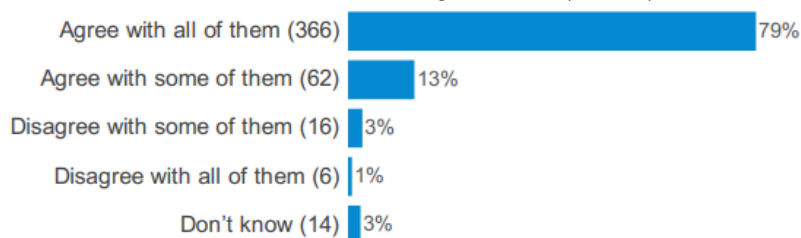
- We need a service for elderly people that are on their own, and would appreciate someone to talk to, take to hospital appointments, just to visit them and have interaction
- Why are our town centres full of down and outs
- Green neighbourhoods, sharing renewable energy, excluding cars
- More soft plastic recycling. What's being done about people who aren't recycling as much as they could be.
- Take back control of facilities currently run by private companies and make them council run
- Promote and support local business looking to operate locally (walking distance) reducing carbon footprint and enhancing the community.
- More cleaning of roads in the valleys as well as towns.
- Re bus services ... they need to be available early in the mornings... for shift workers and people with early starts. Also later for people again "workers" but also for people going out for a meal/concerts/theatre not everyone has a car.
- I agree with all stated above , but in our financial situation can't see how it can be achieved.
- I don't think anything is missing. I just think none of this will be carried out as there has been years of neglect.
- Call me a cynic, but all these surveys and promises, just a couple of months before the elections in May. Heard it all before, and thankfully people are starting to realise it as well.
- More buses in to discourage car use.
- Better public transport vital. If buses are frequent/reliable they'll be more used; fewer cars. BUT - drivers, cyclists, impeded by buses, leading to congestion. More road space needed BUT not more roads! How to solve this? Better organisation of existing space?
- Providing more work and education for adults around work.
- Facilities needed for older teenagers to 'meet up' instead of 'hanging around' children's parks/playgrounds, streets, where others may feel intimidated by them. Nb. 'Buy Local' usually means buy 'expensively' local.
- UPDATE PANT FEDWEN HOUSES, ESPECIALLY THE ROOFS. GET RID OF THE PLASTIC DOORS AND REPLACE THEM WITH WOOD DOORS. WOODEN DOORS KEEP HOUSES WARMER.
- 1. Free car parking (or free up to 3 hours) for town centres - this will encourage local people/those passing to shop in that location - the current parking situation are driving potential customers away; 2. opportunities for businesses to invest in the locality + create jobs; 3. provide "street marshals" to locate vulnerable people + either signpost them/arrange transport via taxi to their home/hostel

4. Our environment, heritage and culture



4. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture:

Figure 4: Responses to the question 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture' (base 464)



4a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/ disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to focus on in terms of our environment, heritage and culture, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figure 4a: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' in relation to the next 12 months:

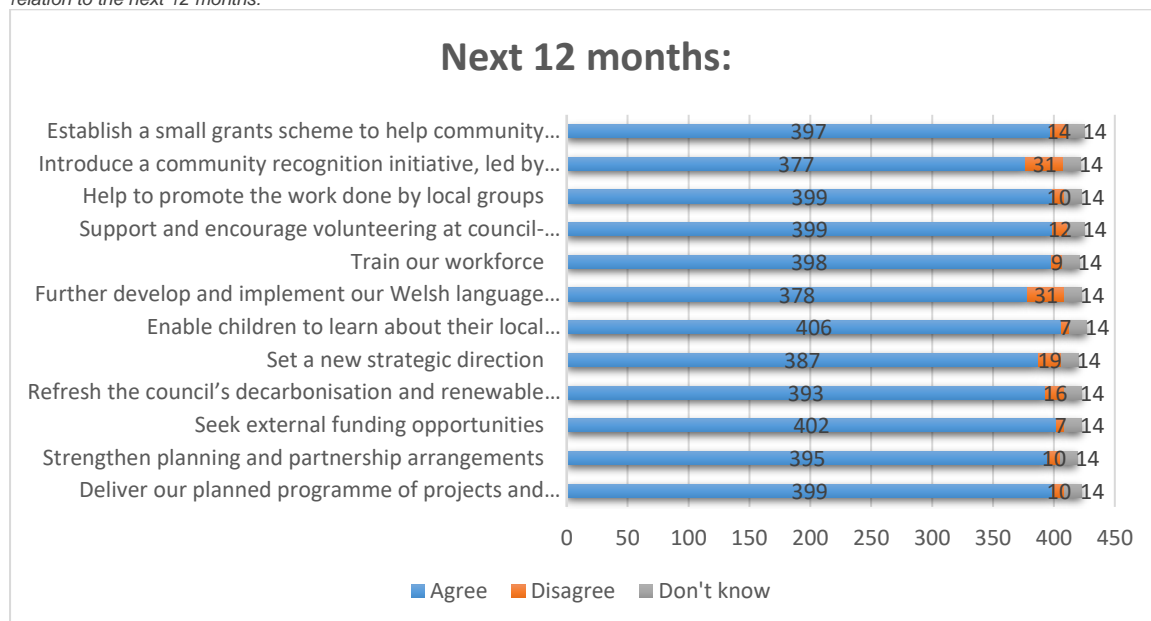
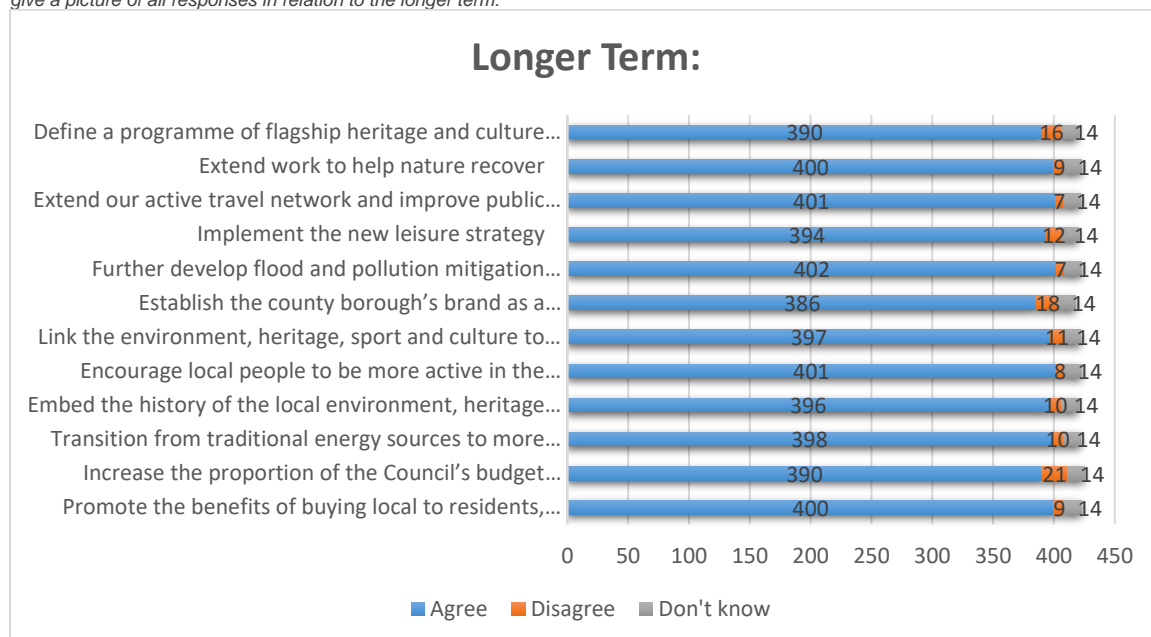


Figure 4b: merges questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about our environment, heritage and culture and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:



4b. We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of our environment, heritage and culture – 138 people responded to this question, as follows:

- The beach park area and streets and surrounding school are littered and filthy with dog faeces. Many dog owners want their dogs access all areas even the childrens playground which they arent allowed but they litter and dont pick up after their dogs which is a risk to children. The streets of port talbot are disgusting and embarrassing. The threat of fine is no threat at all!! I've challenged dog owners myself on the beach and they dont even pick up faeces when I have told them theyve forgotten to pick up. More patrols and greater fines. Dogs should be on a leas on the beach so owners cant use the excuse that the dog has runoff and they didnt notice. I am a dog owner and parent and there are a lot of dog owners who dont take responsibility.
- Again, our environment, heritage and culture are one of our biggest assets as attractions to tourists so we should try to further develop this. We should support and possibly be more involved with the Rhondda tunnel project and also look at the secondary tunnel from the Afan valley into the Pelenna valley, again enhancing what we have to offer.
- Again agree with your aspirations but deliverable I doubt it very much, things haven't improved in NPTCBC for a very long time unfortunately and it's not just down to the coronavirus situation, rural wards have and are still being left behind unfortunately
- Be more transparent on process when securing external funding and the process following successful outcome. For example, it seems funding was successful re restoration of bandstand in taibach memorial park however no works have began and it seems the local community group are currently doing more. The silence on this is very frustrating.
- A museum in the town
- Agree with them all yet our shops are closing, our church is closing, we have to travel for shops and petrol, and our landscape and local environment is not maintained
- this one to me is extremely important- connecting green spaces and our rich environmental and historic culture to the residents - ensuring it is preserved and understood- and not brushed over for a quick financial fix.
- Long term plan for the closure of the steel works to enable NPT to become a cleaner and more attractive leisure destination
- Training in schools for safe bike riding practices.
- Invest in our Parks which became a haven for all during the Pandemic. Develop the coffee/chatting/meeting facilities and update the childrens equipment which is sparse and boring in most parks in Neath Port Talbot. Margam Park is expensive to get into but it is run down, neglected with poor facilities - make it the jewell in the crown again. Celtic Leisure is a great facility - more free classes for 60+ perhaps and the more popular classes in the evening for those who work 9-5pm
- Maintain Margam Park and Castle and use the whole park, open it up similar ro pembrey Country Park. Have camping, camp site, cycle tracks ect
- Rural and most valley communities are let down with lack of investment for far to many years, nothing happened since the demise of the mining operations really
- Improve facilities for cycling and walking not strong enough. Provide proper facilities, even at the expense of reducing facilities for cars. Pedestrians and cyclists not sharing same space. Pedestrians and cyclists priority needs to be upped, more zebra crossings, fewer pelican crossings.
- Nothing about improving facilities for cycling and walking? Many areas eg parts of the Gnoll and public rights of way can be impassable because the council does not cut and maintain the paths. We regularly have to ring up to have a public bridleway near us to be cut back as it is impassable. There should be preset maintenance plans in place which also includes litter picking and drain clearance.
- These are priorities which should be in place anyway
- Not sure how you will encourage and enable young people to be active....when access to any areas or facilities are locked away for clubs only. This is a massive step back from how the towns and areas of NPT looked 30 years ago. Having big new schools is fantastic, but only allowed to use if you pay is ridiculous. All fields are now locked and available only if you hire. Whilst this benefits the council as there isn't a need to maintain, this takes away opportunity and facilities for everyone.
- Maintain/improve facilities for local residents
- From all I've seen, Libraries play a role in all of the above yet are not mentioned here and are probably being cut year on year. They always have lots of children's activities - great for their literacy and development but also for us parents as we get to socialise; they run author

events and local history talks and reading groups and would probably run more of all if they had the funding; they help lots of people trace their family tree and learn about their heritage; they help people use the computers (from what I can see a lot of them don't want to have to use the PCs but they have to for buss passes and COVID passports and things like that) and so much more than I know about.

- We need to ensure that the role of women in Welsh culture and history are not forgotten. Think about monuments/statues that are of incredible local people.
- The rubbish in the streets and back areas
- Put street lighting on road to brecon beacons
- Access for local residents, parking costs etc. We help to pay in to support schemes through our council tax but also then have to pay the highest costs often when compared to other LEA's
- More needs to be done to ensure neighbourhoods are clean and well maintained. The infrastructure for walking and cycling needs to be extended and better communicated
- I think the council should be working closely with NRW with the damage the aging steelworks is doing to the community and health
- Return to in house leisure provision and return to council ownership of social housing from Tai Tarian
- These proposals are "nice to have" great , interesting hobbies ,but not a need, this is one sector to hat should have minimal funding and be left in the be hands of enthusiastic volunteers..
- No, good on this view
- Stop pollution from local industry, especially Tata Steel.
- Consider the hardship of council tax payers. We can't keep on supplementing every social issue
- Find a good provider to take over Celtic Leisure who is a good employer for the staff who work there and can make it work financially so it doesn't rely on more public funding
- These are all a little non descript. An increase could be 1p or 1 minute, so in principle it sounds good but in reality and based on previous experience of LA etc so not holding out any real change improvement as its a political tick box. Do not trust anything NPTCC say or promise. Would love to be proved wrong.
- Levelling up needed. Amman area of NPT does not have walking/cycling paths linking neighbouring towns and villages.
- Set a new strategic direction; - this is vague, agree/disagree, depeends on the direction
- With the revelations about sewage etc entering our water courses more monitoring and prosecutions of polluters should have more priority.
- A programme of retro-fitting homes to become more energy efficient (along with the points raised earlier about diet and transport).
- Public transport
- Grants should be obtained so historic buildings, structures etc can be maintained and kept for future generations to enjoy
- more focus on biodiversity and protecting the natural environment, we are in a nature and climate emergency yet biodiversity seems to be taking a back seat in this plan to cultural and heritage. Its should be engrained as a base in all the objectives. Its proven to help mental health and wellbeing for people so it should be a focus to improve biodiversity on sites in NPT
- Libraries
- My previous point about a single access point for leisure activities would allow for better communication from all the ventures that develop as a result of the funding and initiatives explained above.
- What does 'Set a new strategic direction' mean? Disagreeing with the energy plan statement as there needs to be a lot of work done on this. It's really important to develop renewable energy etc but it seems to be as simple as build a windfarm. This shouldn't be the case.. The plans to build the Y Bryn Windfarm are incredibly detrimental to PT, Bryn, Cwmavon and Maesteg. Also it feels like putting heritage and culture in the same bracket as environment are quite conflicting. One thing we have in this area is amazing valleys, views, parks, biking trails and then something like the seemingly abundant plans to build windfarms will ruin this and destroy the heritage of the area. Use our seas and rivers, they are an outstanding asset for renewable energy that doesn't get a look in. Also how can you 'work to help nature recover' if it is being destroyed by 'renewable' energy? Welsh language is extremely important and glad to see there are plans to protect it.
- Again if everything is adhered too then these proposals should ensure a stronger understanding of environment, heritage and culture
- Stop tree planting everywhere and look after what you've got

- Make information clear regarding access to community grants to allow community to develop related projects
- People are more important than learning to speak Welsh. There is no mention here about how the Council is going to help elderly people live better and more fulfilling lives - they are part of our heritage and culture too!
- Not everyone wants to speak Welsh - people should be left to choose and not forced. There is far too much emphasis put on this and resources
- encouraging people to go out exploring what is on their doorsteps
- don't know what these planned strategies are? Wouldn't want 'leisure' facilities developed at the expense of heritage, natural environment, beautiful sites.
- A Heritage Champion Councillor - as in Merthyr Council. Link the Heritage sites in a Heritage Trail. Cadw should have a role. The Art work purchased by the Council and in storage should be displayed.
- I think there should be a heritage centre in Neath, where NPT's painting can be displayed, and an advice centre for making our homes and lives more sustainable.
- Joined up approach is vital. We have such a vast rich historical past which isn't utilised enough. Need more accommodation so perhaps campsites, green woodland lodges, encourage people to stay in our beautiful county. Develop cefn coed as a visitor attraction, gateway to Dulais valley and Brecon beacons. Opportunity for accommodation, museum and outdoor classroom space, small craft/business units, café
- Briton Ferry not to be overlooked AGAIN when funding projects
- Working alongside key partners such as Cadw to promote flagship sites of historical and cultural heritage.
- stricter measures on pollution from industry supporting transfer to greener steel making, better events in heritage sites
- Offer more community based leisure activities/groups for adults in NPT. Children's active promotion gets more funding from Welsh Government and this is needed for adults too
- the mayor is not a function I support and think should be scrapped
- If we could get rid of the Red Bricks from the Town Centre, and go back to what we had before, in the Long Run would we not save Money on repairing the Sinking Bits? back to the Da
- Ensure Welsh language place names are protected, encouraged and respected when promoting the county borough's brand and developing local tourism infrastructure and facilities. Will help to reinforce a sense of place and respect local history rather than risking renaming of places to appeal to English visitors, as is happening elsewhere in Wales
- Get more local culture and heritage taught in our schools, possibly at primary or early secondary phase
- build hubs with local businesses to attract coach tours, and have lovely shops selling Welsh produce and craft - This will help achieve the above also.
- More emphasis on supporting the workforce to learn Welsh and a Council wide policy on allowing the workforce time to do so. Many managers do not allow their staff time to learn. More Welsh and other learning opportunities in local classes for the public. Road improvements, safety and signage. Road side littering and fly tipping has also worsened since the closure of the recycling centre at Abernant.
- Embrace digital technology to educate communities and children of the heritage and history of PT.
- Provide unpaid carers with a reduced fee for gym and swimming pool use.
- Promote sustainability both at the individual and business levels
- Help to protect, preserve and maintain our natural, historic and heritage sites for present and future generations - environment needs to have higher priority
- Unless we make the area safer and less intimidating there is little point spending money on preserving the local heritage as people will not visit so there will be no revenue.
- free transport initiatives to attend culture venues including weekends for families to maximize their experiences
- More use of beaches for leisure activities
- Promote live events that enable local young people to participate in various art forms.
- The actions you have set for the natural environment are broadly focused on project delivery, supporting volunteers / partnerships to deliver, awareness raising / education and a broad statement on 'extending work to help nature recover'. All of these are important, but they do not demonstrate a commitment from the Council itself to embed biodiversity measures across all service areas. Recognition of the Biodiversity Duty Plan itself would have been welcomed, as would a recognition that there is a need to take strong action to halt the decline in biodiversity. Whilst the section on environment has given a higher profile to the natural

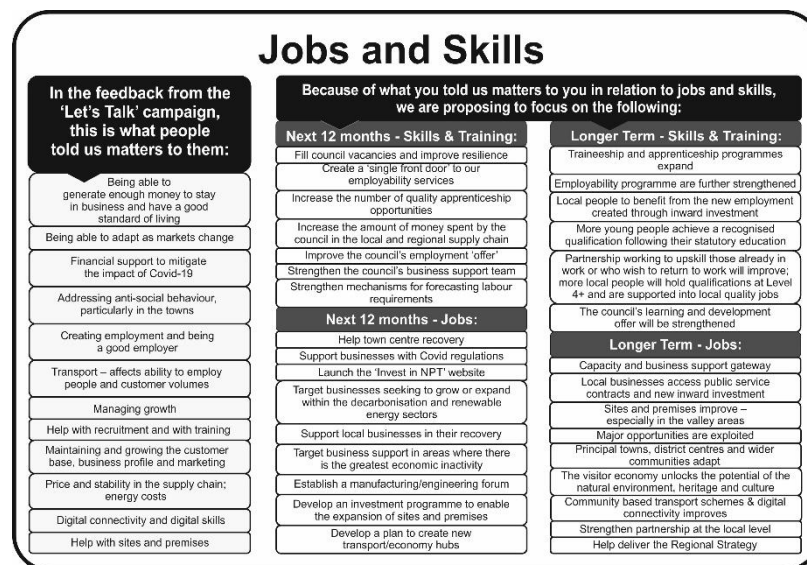
environment, it is not demonstrating greater action than that which has been achieved by the Countryside and Wildlife Team for some time.

- There seems to be a lot of talk about many of the above initiatives over the years but little action or positive outcomes
- Be careful who it is that decides and defines what our culture actually is. People will focus on what they say is worthy, not what actually is real culture and history.
- More messaging around littering and dog fouling, promote schemes such as Keep Britain Tidy
- Every single point above could be recognised and solved by a policy of revitalise, reopen, regenerate local village schools.
- Biodiversity
- With regard to expansion of Welsh language/culture, I don't disagree (only two choices available) but I would suggest that it would be more beneficial for the population to be multilingual like many European countries. With regard to the spend on sustainable fuel etc. That would be a project for WGov rather than local authority. With regard to culture, remember Wales virtually gave the world coal....and the industrial revolution....and hence global warming. However, I think we have a high potential for outdoor leisure and tourism but it is currently not regarded as important at all.
- Life skills training. Communication, assertiveness, negotiation, leadership, service, entrepreneurship by business owners
- Nature and the natural environment should be at the top of the list
- No- but note the nature recovery work is listed as long term. This should be in the priorities in the next 12 months as there is a nature emergency in Wales & it will build on the biodiversity service already in place at NPT
- one thing mayor has got a car. could they not use a bus service instead.
- More information about arts/culture/history. Not enough focus on making a pleasant environment for everyone - everywhere is dirty, scruffy and polluted. No notice is taken of environmental complaints and there is litter / dog droppings everywhere.
- Can't buy local as not many businesses in our village, improve opportunity like in a local farmers market
- Giving the library service more money and space to keep and maintain their important local heritage and studies collections.
- Focus on areas of relative deprivation rather than on more affluent areas
- Need more help to help provide home charging points for people who have electric cars whether your working or not
- Again needs to be SMART,
- It would be interesting to see what your budget is to cover this wish list
- The environment includes our streets. Action must be taken against fly-tipping and those who don't dispose of the rubbish and recycling properly.
- Having fun!
- Wow
- Mark pavements that are for pedestrians, because cyclists think pedestrians should step aside for them
- Finalise the Culture and Heritage policy and ensure it links up with other related Council policies and strategies such as the Welsh language promotion strategy, Welsh education strategic plan and more.
- There must be closer connections between the council and volunteer groups. As the landowners, the council need to be aware of and agree the strategic aims and objectives of groups. It is very stressful implementing projects when there are no clear lines of communication. We need opportunities to be able to present project/ funding proposals to the council for joint discussion, guidance and agreement. This is a big barrier
- Long term goals relating to the Welsh language
- A focus on the positives of our environment, be able to be proud of Neath port Talbot.
- More street parties for our community. Briton ferry's main road to be cleaned up and look presentable especially the fronts of shops and houses.
- Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more useful used for other things. Also see note on use of sex in entertainment.
- I think there needs to be a much stronger action to combat climate change and the declines in nature/biodiversity. Covid has highlighted how vital green space access is to people in the last couple of years but it has further exacerbated the problems we face regarding single use plastics (disposable masks, gloves and places less/unwilling to provide refills).
- Nothing is missing

- 'Further develop and implement our Welsh language strategy'. Explain what this looks like? When Ysgol Gymraeg Castell Nedd wanted to purchase the old court building to expand the school- it went to the council instead. These council offices could have been almost anywhere. The building would have made a huge difference to the school. Unfortunately this shows me where the council's commitments are with regards to Welsh medium education.
- I'm keen to see a programme of 'blue plaques' erected to celebrate those whose outstanding achievements in the locality should be marked.
- Develop ways that all people can participate. If you live in a village, on a low income, getting to visit places or enter them can be impossible.
- Improve the NPTC website. Grass verges to be wildflower meadows. Plant more trees, encourage community gardens and support adoption of unloved spaces. Benches. Reduce pesticide and herbicide use. Promote walking clubs for all abilities and interests. Use empty rooms in council run facilities to host classes/exhibitions/activities for all age groups. Aberavon beach is a gem, let's keep it clean and healthy.
- Poor recycling system. The current bag system is flawed and needs to change back to the previous simpler and less messy system.
- Compile public register of heritage and cultural asset including works of art, heritage and literature to encourage public access and use. Encourage volunteering in the field of culture and heritage by heritage /local history fairs and presentations at pre retirement courses. Promote and facilitate access to heritage sites many of which are not easily accessible from existing rights of way networks eg Mynydd y Gaer hillfort above Briton Ferry and Baglan with benefits for heritage, health and wellbeing. Promote online history walks both countryside and urban for residents and visitors. Some local authorities run museums and galleries (with support from volunteers) to promote heritage. Could this be considered in NPT particularly with Neath's old library becoming vacant. Considerable time spent on one example of street art while collections of local art are not on display. Preserve Welsh language and traditional English language place names by use in naming new developments.
- Man made climate change is the greatest scientific fraud in history. Even if it were true, only China & India could make any meaningful difference.
- Unbiased factual education on the environmental crisis that we are facing and what we can do, both personally and collectively, to try and prevent it
- Active travel and public transport need to be improved urgently as part of NPT's response to the climate emergency. Many communities in the area have little public transport and limited access to active travel.
- Work with the Local Nature Partnership to plan and execute actions that will improve the resilience of natural environment.
- Possibly more organised events using the Gnoll park, Neath Abbey ruins for events, to help make the most of what we have, plus to generate revenue. And to ensure that these events are well publicised. Possibly work with local drama groups for outdoor theatre in the Summer.
- Keep and improve bridal paths
- Declare a climate emergency - NPT is now one of the few councils yet to do so. It is good that the DARE strategy is being updated as it was weak in relation to target and deadlines. However, the council really needs to start conveying the urgency of the climate & nature emergencies and a declaration does this.
- Engagement and instilling a sense of pride in the town. Promoting clean streets and litter picking.
- Preserving and maintaining our heritage is an expensive and time consuming job. It would be good to look after and bring back the past, but just walk through Neath Town Centre. It looks like it is being left to look like the past. Cheap looking building materials, shops not occupied and it appears there is no vision or investment to create a vibrant town.
- Teaching about the environment and historical facts that today are being forgotten about, such as WW1 and Two
- A recognition Arts and Culture are important investments and move away from old thinking of them being services which are subsidised. Ensure the Pontardawe Art Centre is refurbished and renewed together with the resources it needs to be sustainable. Develop a culture strategy to provide a long term investment road map.
- public electric charging options in the county
- Make the refuse collectors pay for all of the broken bins they just throw around
- Encourage schools to use visiting tutors to demonstrate heritage,
- Promotion of the area as a tourist destination with investment in leisure and hospitality
- Improve, increase and connect bridleways

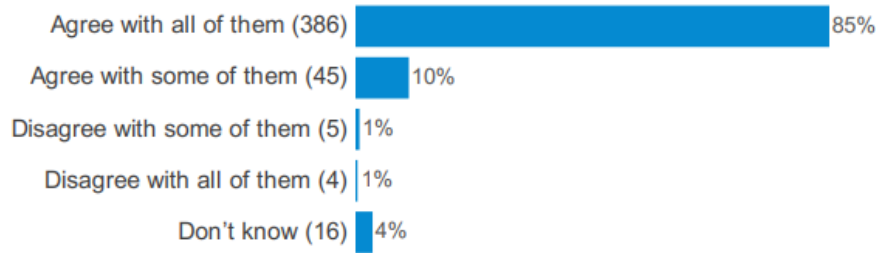
- A recognition Arts and Culture are important investments and move away from old thinking of them being services which are subsidised. Ensure the Pontardawe Art Centre is refurbished and renewed together with the resources it needs to be sustainable. Develop a culture strategy to provide a long term investment road map.
- More support for community groups with aim to help all not some
- After many years of neglect in Neath a very big commitment is required to achieve these goals. The town needs regeneration other than social housing. Neath town is full of social hoisting which has changed the culture and stability of the town.
- More facilities for and help people with disabilities
- Including sport, leisure, environment, heritage and culture under one objectives looks as though the impact on certain elements will be diluted, culture barely gets a mention here! They are all complex and sometimes contrary areas of work and should be split into two distinctive objectives, not one.
- It would be nice to see Margam Castle used more:- nice to see if renovated inside either as a museum or a country house hotel, and money from that put back into Port Talbot
- Margam Park should have more focus on the castle and there should be a caravan park there. It's a forgotten gem.
- Identify and promote more local historical sites using local residents' knowledge
- Reduce or stop Charging for Gnoll park parking
- More lighting (and possibly CCTV) along designated walking and cycling paths. Increase and promote outdoor facilities i.e. Forest Parks such as Afan Argoed, possibly Aberavon Beach. There is a lot of potential at these and other locations that feels wasted
- Engage with local businesses that may be interested in volunteering their time and sharing their experience to help support, encourage and engage with the community. d
- I think Social Media would be a great help to promote things.
- Develop NPT as a tourist/holiday destination. More help for industrial archaeology sites etc. Encourage holiday hospitality small businesses (B&Bs rather than holiday cottages). Think about sensitive development of provision of all - weather facilities - prolong holiday season! Encourage welsh identity in all ways.
- Opportunities for learning welsh for residents. 'greener' energy plans to improve.
- Culture should be enjoyed, but not enforced. We should also work to widen and explore various, older parts of our culture to "revive it" and make it more closed and specific to welsh people.
- Leave the past in the past - and focus on the future.
- Some people are unable to access these areas due to lack of transport (unless taxi which may be too expensive). Not accessible due to personal mobility issues.

5. Jobs and Skills



5. Respondents were asked to consider the above table and indicate how far they agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills:

Figure 5: Responses to the question 'how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what you told us matters to you about jobs and skills' (base: 456):



5a. Where people indicated that they “agreed with/disagreed with some” of the things we are proposing to focus on in terms of jobs and skills, we asked them to indicate which they agreed/disagreed with:

Figures 5a & 5b: merge questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the next 12 months:

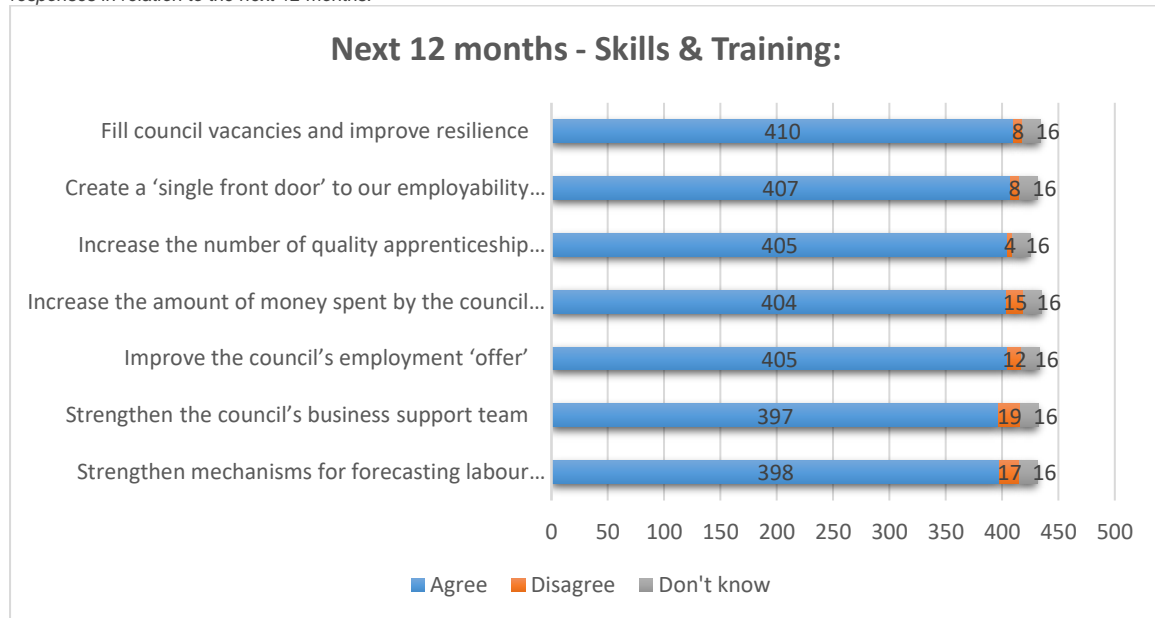
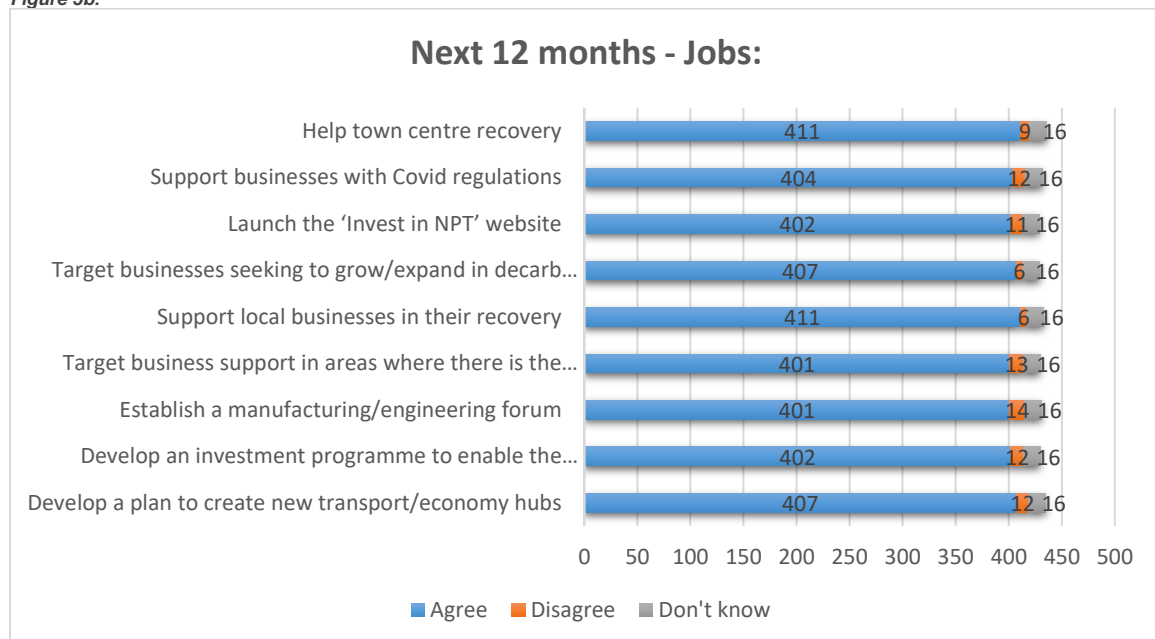


Figure 5b:



Figures 5c & 5d: merge questions 'please indicate how far you agree that these are the things we should focus on to respond to what people told us matters to them about jobs and skills' and 'If you 'agree with/disagree with some of them' please specify which ones' to give a picture of all responses in relation to the longer term:

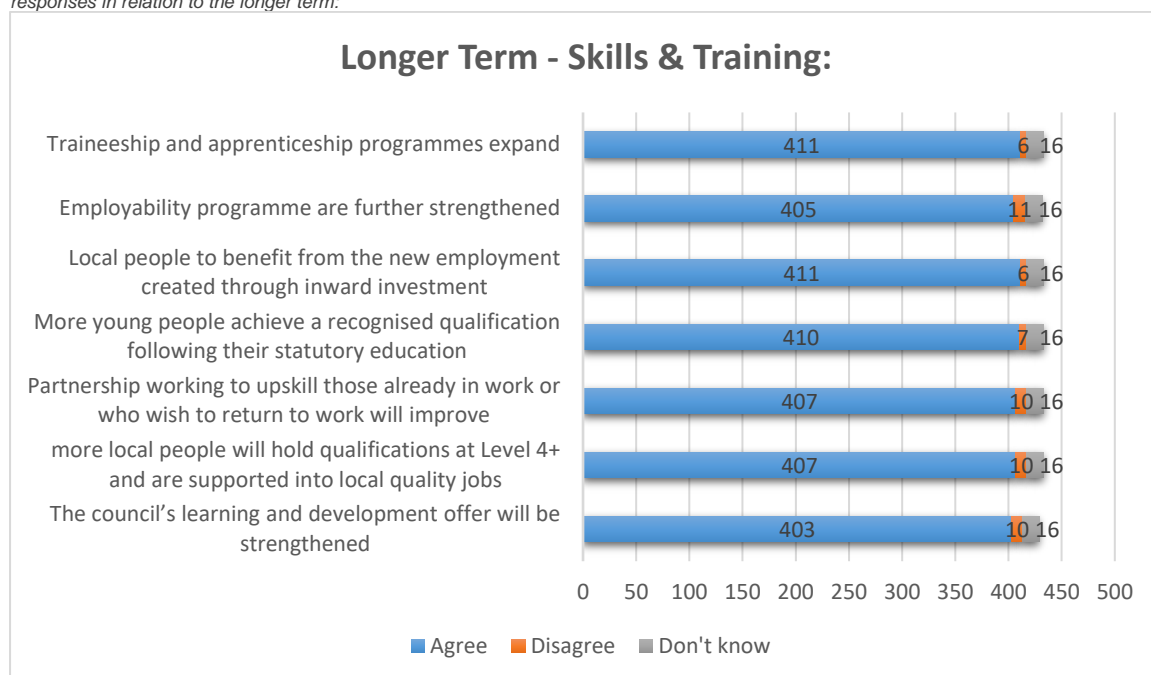
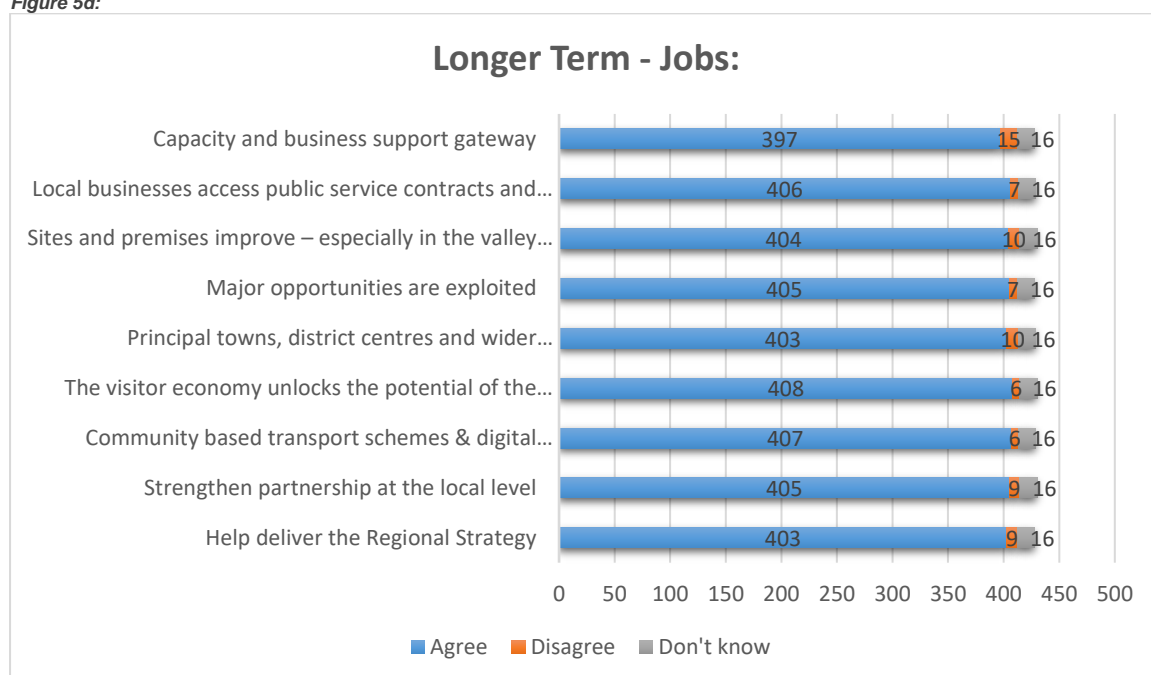


Figure 5d:



5b We asked if respondents think there is anything missing from what we are proposing to focus on in terms of jobs and skills – 95 people responded to this question, as follows:

- If not covered, perhaps more support to reactivate apprenticeships and training. We know we have a shortage of skills at the moment, a situation that is getting worse, so unless acted upon to redevelop, the knowledge of those already trained will not be passed on.
- Same view as other ones, we struggling to supply real well paid jobs right across NPTCBC as one of the most deprived areas across the whole of wales unfortunately
- Provide same opportunities to children across all schools to allow them to engage in vocational type courses/subjects to give them better chance of progressing on to further education.
- But again matching jobs to peoples skills and interest seems unrealistic

- Make formal links with Careers Wales, Jobcentres and L.Authority. Bring employability under one umbrella so employment provision is less confusing with no duplication making it far more cost effective to the tax payer. For years in Neath Port Talbot there has been some really good provision to those who are looking for a job but access to it is the biggest barrier.
- Lower the business rates in the town center to attract businesses instead of having empty shops or charity shops. Move the job center to a different location, or police the drunks and drug users from intimidating shoppers in Broad daylight.
- People again didn't communicate properly from the valley communities because they don't trust those running things at NPTCBC and I mean the ruling group of councillors, clearly shown by the previous leader and his comments, showed a complete disregard for us residents living in the valley.
- Pay and promote a living wage
- Full council vacancies??? What about all the other companies trying to recruit? This is an issue for all because it's all so confusing!!! More join up of services to make it more accessible and benefit everyone.
- Reduce the £750 covid isolation payment to the actual weekly amount they earned the week prior to isolation. Keep some benefits for people just starting work like free school meals for their children and buses to encourage people back into work and to stay in work.
- Lobby the uk government to buy uk (port talbot) produced steel
- Promote buy local initiatives
- New transport hubs? You need to address that white elephant in Port Talbot of a second bus station. Embarrassing waste of money. A small town by anyone's measure with TWO bus stations.
- Better transport links throughout NPT
- anti social behaviour is an issue in villages as well as towns. It needs to be addressed appropriately and promptly.
- The town centres need attention to bring out local culture and heritage. More events are needed to support our towns and seafront and housing needs to be a much bigger priority.
- More emphasis on the deprived ,under funded valley communities, more help on the transport problems..and quickly..
- The upskill of Current employees of NPT Council needs to be improved, this is touched on in "partnership working".
- This is going to cost council tax payers too much
- The reason why it is all in such a mess, got fed up of ticking things that should be in place. Anti social behaviour is a problem everywhere not just towns.
- Definitely addressing 'anti-social' behaviour in towns!
- More priority given to encouraging youngsters to take up quality apprenticeships considering the price of further education particularly Universities.
- we also need to help promote a better work / life ballance for council staff
- more support for care leavers to gain skills for employment
- Better 'Starting out in life' job opportunities for 16-25 year olds who decide not to stay in education.
- Provide apprenticeship schemes in Comprehensive Schools so young people get work related qualifications should the normal school curriculum not suit
- I also think we need a 'single front door' to out learning services for adults. This will better enable us to identify skills gaps that impact on employment prospects or progression.
- Create more green jobs
- What about skills in the arts and creative crafts - these have been totally ignored here.
- 'inward investment' for local third sector not just local businesses. Long-term funding to enable third sector to attract and develop a long-term skilled workforce.
- Encourage greater footfall in our towns by providing safer places to visit and also get Council staff back in their offices.
- where to find help when it comes to job searching
- Use the canals as a new form of transport. Utilise volunteers to achieve the above as well. .
- The homeless and ex-prisoners need to be trained for employment to prevent re-offending.
- Briton Ferry not being overlooked AGAIN when it comes to funding
- Much of this means very little at all. Language such as "strengthen", "help", "partnership working" are all too vague. It's just jargon that fills the page but means nothing much at all.
- let people continue to work from home, flexibly and dont push people back to the "old" and outdated ways of working thats why no-one wants to work for the council/nhs
- More of a push on bigger teams of social workers in order to promote preventative work
- Our town centre is wel out dated. We have great sites along the PDR road that could and should facilitate a retail park. Other than Bridgend, we are the only town along the M4 without

a retail park straight off the M4, which has good links. Instead people have to go to either Swansea or Bridgend areas. A good retail park could strengthen our labour market.

- Encouraging Artists, Crafts with events and fairs also helps boost community through a feel-good vibe. Street markets, Farmers markets also help
- Work closely with Trade Unions to draw on their expertise.
- Is there something here about encouraging volunteering to link to other targets?
- Support businesses with making the changes to more sustainable ways of working to reduce impact on the environment. Help them to take steps to contribute to the preservation of our natural heritage where possible.
- The council's commitment to meet these proposals
- Improve self employment opportunities and opportunities to learn new skills
- More start a business courses on offer
- Help fund apprenticeship schemes.
- Helping people to get online is really important
- Support local supply chain through the Council's procurement and improved Select List
- I think we should take a stronger stance in our rhetoric. Rather than "Help" town centre recovery, it should be "Lead" in the town centre recovery strategy, Communities will need a sense of purpose in order to get involved, but also strong leadership to implement this. Words like "help" and "support" don't instill a sense of action or forward momentum. Let us be a voice for positive proactive brave change.
- Support local businesses to fill vacancies, not just council jobs. Also work experience programme for young people, getting them ready for the world of work.
- Neath town center is depressing. I live here and have visited twice in ten years, I don't spend any of my income there. The council business support team will need people who have run successful business to advise it, not people with a A-Level in business studies. The council already supports local business by allowing the sub-contractors to overprice work. Economic activity is a symptom of something else. Address the cause of that and business will grow organically, forcing it will only mean a proliferation of weak businesses which fail.
- Wide publication and access to this - social channels, forums, media - we never hear about this stuff as business owners here.
- My bus service starts at 7 am in some jobs you need to be in by 7.20am. Impossible up here
- Prioritise local people getting important jobs / particularly in the LA. Make planning easier so that small businesses can open more easily especially when they are tourist focused. Do something important to the front at Aberafan beach - not houses!
- Timescale and funding
- Help people with learning difficulties and special educational needs transition into employment
- Accessible to those with disabilities, Applies to all, again SMART
- Desperately need a link between schools colleges and local companies to get students into apprenticeships. Local authority to support with the financial support. You really need to look long and hard at the pedestrian area of Port Talbot. The pedestrian area needs to be revamped. It needs to be made attractive to small creative businesses. Low council rates. Grants and expertise to help these companies.
- Reduce rates, free parking, try and attract businesses into town centre that appeal to young people such as Primark, Nando's, H&M why not have facilities such as climbing walls in town centre, encourage outdoor dining we have a huge town square outside the old next, this could have better seating and more greenery to encourage people to sit and enjoy
- More support for disabled people who are looking for work/training. The Jobcentre doesn't care about this anymore.
- This is all very good but where is the money coming from council tax is high enough as it is, everything else is going up and doing this will increase the tax for families that are already struggling
- Improve our ability to develop bids for new funding so that we don't miss any opportunities e.g. Levelling Up Fund
- Need to ensure there is scope for older people, still in pre pension age, the ability to retrain and gain employment
- Lack of follow-up for youngsters to be able to participate in real job/career opportunities. I know lots of parents with teenagers 16 yrs+ that have been cast adrift & left to sit at home - a severe lack of communications from the very people who are supposed to be a support - I think it's hard for all but our future is in our 16 yrs+ & I dread to think what our future is going to be like. CHANGES - SUPPORT communications for them NOW

- All these points need clarification. If helping town centre renewal means shops that are not needed - no. Other alternatives such as community centres, play centres etc are needed to bring community together.
- How you will do these things - we've got the 'whats'. Where are the 'hows'?
- Something urgently needs to be done to police better the town centre.
- To encourage people to buy local and support local business, offer free car parking.
- Encourage businesses to make themselves safer for clinically vulnerable people, promote those that are doing well. Have job and training boards in leisure centres and libraries. Parking is an issue, make it easy to bring people in to town centres.
- The Internet. Businesses depend on the Internet, whether it is a home-based business, office or workshop. Internet access, speed and reliability is fundamental to business.
- Support of green innovation and jobs
- Digital connectivity and skills are key, and urgent. Remote working is a massive opportunity for people here, and the infrastructure needs to support them.
- support & encourage businesses to develop environmentally sustainable practices and decarbonise their operations
- Can you tell me what is the strategy for the Town centre in the next 12 months is? why did we take over a old factory in the Melyn and refurb it and leave Neath centre looking like it is, baffling?
- Antisocial behaviour is not just central in town it happens in such places like Bertha Road Margam, unfortunately it's worse when parents are picking up their children from school,
- Again reference is made to the Lets Talk initiative, with comment about transport but the proposals seem limited on what is being proposed for the next 12 months and longer on this issue.
- Recognise, through investment and promotion, the importance of the Council's own assets, such as the Pontardawe Art Centre, in supporting local town's recovery and economies.
- Support for those who struggle in mainstream education, dyslexia and dyscalculia assessments and support, particularly for borderline abilities
- Focus the area on attracting high growth areas such as creative sector, digital, renewable energies to create demand for local highly skilled labour
- Recognise, through investment and promotion, the importance of the Council's own assets, such as the Pontardawe Art Centre, in supporting local town's recovery and economies.
- Ensuring financial support is given to all not just those on benefits
- Those out of work, get them to clean buildings so that the whole town looks cleaner. Young people to be encouraged to take up apprenticeships in all forms of work.
- Not much of a focus on training, upskilling those already in the workplace. Oddly, there is no mention of links to schools, colleges or FE providers, surely this would be key?
- Reduce business rates to encourage new businesses to open in the town. Sell or renovate the old post office by the station.
- Investigate job corruption at NPTCBC
- As a self employed person it be nice to see more support to help business employ more staff
- We need local jobs for local people. Need investment into Hydro Electric we have lots of moving water we do not use
- More focus on local employment opportunities, making NPT more attractive & financially viable for business. Less focus on centralisation & city commuting for jobs
- see Q4b and Q5b - lots of opportunity to create jobs throughout the borough
- Support and provide infrastructure for community based businesses that offer employment opportunities and skills development.
- Do not think anything is missing. Anti-social behaviour in Port Talbot is the highest it has ever been. Given chance after chance which allows them to get away with it. Reported many incidents and they have been ignored or been given a stupid reason behind it.... could go on.
- and general - Encourage LOCAL businesses to make attractive, interesting and diverse town centres. Assist don't depise charity outlets - valuable recyclers, loved by customers, provide work experience opps. Thriving Charity Shops are an asset to town centres.
- Not sure why support for onlone start ups isnt on here.
- Many find job hunting difficult due to lack of IT skills/equipment; even though computers are available in libraries, those using them haven't got jobs as a main goal. Bring back Job Centres with frontline support whether online or 'cards on notice boards'.

6. Other views on the Draft Corporate Plan

6. We asked if respondents had any other views on 'Recover, Reset, Renew' our Draft Corporate Plan that they would like to share with us? There were 116 responses, as follows:

- I don't know much about this but I'm sure as a council you do your best, but the political side of it ruins any real progress because of your councillors in the main, we would have a better county borough if we could do without them lol just my thoughts I'm afraid
- Covid has prevented children from being able to take up work experience and open days for further education are now online which is much less of a positive experience. Could Education dept work with local employment groups to deliver online sessions to give career guidance, an insight into their roles and following that opportunities for low level mentor ship to support those who want to proceed with vocational courses.
- There needs to be more investment in time out on the street and practical vision instead of continual planning and changing of theories and blueprints
- Also feel that bringing council service back under the control of the authority would help strengthen the community both in terms of how residents think of the council and for local jobs
- Be innovative - that's not always digital based. Be inclusive - many have been isolated and left behind because of IT during the pandemic. Start at the very beginning again with fresh eyes, with the future of our children at the forefront of everything you do.
- More support and respite for people living with dementia and their carers.
- Not really as we doing what need to do already here in the valley , helping our disadvantaged and struggling residents , we are a close community and wouldn't like to see anyone struggling.
- Vastly improved public transport and additional affordable housing are crucial cross-cutting themes
- Bit alarmed at the 'train council staff', is this not there already? Do you employ staff who are not trained?
- These are just lists. The Council should already be doing most of this but it doesn't. The County Borough is in dire need of a good sort out due to the neglect of the Council workforce. In many cases employees spend longer trying to avoid doing any work rather than just getting on with it. The whole culture of the Authority needs to change and become a can do organisation not can't. COVID has only resulted in a neglected County Borough as quite frankly many feel it has been used as a convenient excuse not to do anything.
- Good luck and hope you stick to your plans
- Let's make this a reality and not another talking shop!!! People will support change and want to see this plan work!!!
- How to ensure involvement of those without internet access
- the plan is far too long and unwieldy to expect people to read through and digest in one sitting. I think you should have broken it down into smaller sections and run a consultation on each so that we can look at the detail.
- Keep Neath's culture and history at the heart of future plans
- Use the recovery from COVID as a real opportunity to reset partnership working with the community and between agencies. Be ambitious and invest in the area
- LAC workers should be managed by NPCVS and work more on Community Development not a arm length provision of Social Services
- Ensure the council support jobs are REAL jobs where there has been an identified need established by outside agencies as well as NPTCBC.
- Generally a good plan, but with the highest rates in the country, we should be having the best services..And the practice of replacing publicly funded services with funding from the side and the expectation that volunteers will pick up the slack is wrong...
- As long as the plan considers the current factors of the ongoing pandemic and the aftermath, which could lead to not meeting these targets.
- Stop people walking their dogs off the lead in public places.
- These issues have nothing to do with the responsibility of a council . Council tax payers are fed up with funding this nonsense
- no only that most of these should already be in place.
- There is a real opportunity here to reimagine npt through clean energy transport and digital
- Review council tax prices - for example why are our council taxes higher in NPT than the equivalent hours in affluent areas of Swansea eg Mumbles - seems unfair.
- Insufficient focus, so far, on environmental sustainability

- I think there is a real lack of focus on the environment and Welsh language
- New projects are great but properly maintaining existing assets is equally important. I see too many assets left to decay through poor maintenance.
- I'm happy the council is putting greater focus on tourism as it will help boost the economy and the area's profile
- This plan looks to be an exciting opportunity for a fresh start after a tremendously difficult 2 years. Whilst I might not agree with all of the proposals, the plan as a whole looks great. Bring it on!
- I am concerned about an absence of libraries in the plan. The library service users responses have been extremely positive whilst the service has remained running since last summer through the pandemic. Equally, local communities have made clear their views on how important the libraries are in delivering the objectives every time budget proposals have come out. I would have expected the roles libraries play in delivering; community cohesion, strong communities, helping vulnerable people, tackling joblessness and digital exclusion to have been recognised and given a role in the plans
- Particularly enjoyed the inclusion offered at all parts of the consultation process
- Please ensure the people are listened to going forward, not just in an election year.
- Promote inclusion and diversity in all that we do
- It would be good if we have regular updates on the difference the plan is making
- Facilities should be brought back to in house management
- Already stated
- Be bold and brave. Work with larger organisations such as urban splash to develop neath town centre. Green town, green businesses, well being centre, a place where people want to live, utilise the river and canal
- There is no mention of the library service, this needs to be amended
- Yes - I am fed up of funding going to either Neath or Port Talbot and our community in between being left out until it comes to dumping undesirables and approving planning for facilities not welcome here - then we are suddenly suitable. No more HMOs or secure unit for "problem" teenagers. Put them in the parts of the borough where the councillors on the planning committee live!!!
- It's what you might expect really from a council that is failing and is now looking to put a greater emphasis and a lot of its responsibilities onto voluntary and community groups.
- better community based resources for parents, affordable child care, community centres back open and running
- Be careful of green washing whilst awarding future contracts.
- I feel NPT town, and surrounding areas is missing a culture vibe. There needs to be more music, big bands to watch in open spaces. More arts&craft, and more hubs with high quality craft / gift shops selling local artist / designers / manufacturers produce. This would also help local small businesses.
- remove focus on 'Staff' in NPTC as they are employees of the 'business' - seems self serving?
- Proposals are all well and good but unless there is a commitment to deliver these they are just a pipe dream
- quick access funding to start up a business and less paperwork too
- Whilst this Corporate Plan is giving greater recognition to the importance of the natural environment and the climate crisis, it doesn't reflect a strong commitment to deliver action which will address these two urgent issues. Both the climate and biodiversity crises need to be seen as corporate priorities, with a clear mandate for action.
- Supporting the needs of carers, prioritise mental health support, engage with the Regional Partnership Board on the Carers Strategy
- I'm not sure it's ambitious enough. It feels solid and safe. I'm not sure "solid" and "safe" will encourage recovery or jump-start a greater sense of community or ambition within Neath Port Talbot.
- Distinct lack of ambition on addressing the biodiversity crisis
- It sounds great but seeing whether it can be implemented in a reasonable timeframe will be interesting. Is it deliverable?
- Set test questions, such as 'does a development support optimal wellbeing, health or independence?' If a plan does not meet the test questions then it should be low priority.
- Ambitious - lets do it. Let us know if we can help
- During lockdowns people made more use of their local countryside and that should be a primary focus for the future.
- Need to look at open areas and reinforce good healthy sport play zones.
- help with disabilities

- Start up the renovation of unused buildings in the area. Use Margam Park more (caravan clubs, more leisure activities, more shows/game fayres/events)
- Stop talking and get on with it!
- How are you going to pay for this? Who is going to do it and over what time?
- There seems to be no mention of the importance of libraries in providing part of a social network for elderly and lonely people. Nor does it mention its importance in education.
- I would like to see specific measurable targets, and more mention of disabled access, engagement for all areas.
- Take school children to local businesses (fourteen/fifteen) Saturday workshops use local tradesmen
- Cycle path from skewen to neath
- The leisure centre... absolute waste of money. Will still be going to the LC2 due to it being better for children. Why didn't this questionnaire come around before the planning of that building. We would have all told you to have something more appropriate for children of NPT to enjoy, as is what your plan states. Terrible! I am utterly dismayed.
- No support for the local men's shed group from the community council after being evicted by them.
- Ensuring qualified Youth Workers are at the heart of delivery is absolutely vital to the success of this work.
- Town centre of Neath needs rejuvenation at just about every level .
- Get back to basics, this will take enormous dedication to deliver. never mind award schemes and Mayor-led ceremonies
- Great to see the match between what the public want and what the Council aim to deliver
- Invest in the more deprived areas rather than the towns.
- Draft corporate plan seems robust, hopefully there will be regular reviews re progress made.
- Include more streets in the flying start eligibility.
- I pleased to see you have spoken to our community, listened and have a plan moving forward. Well done to the team of people that have worked hard to organise this and for the future team that implement it. I am skeptical it can be done but hopeful.
- Have a pride in our town and keep our streets clean and consequences for those who don't
- With nptcbc cutting back and losing all their identities. How are they going to recover no sporting facilities run by nptcbc shocking
- I am very unhappy at the way the super school in Pontardawe has been pushed through despite local opposition.
- Neath TOWNRIDER, PLEASE bring it back. Here, no supermarket has easy pedestrian access.
- The important and the benefits
- Reduce council tax as its miles too high and we are not getting any value for it
- I'm especially concerned that our historic heritage should be safeguarded with many sites little known and appreciated and becoming ruinous.
- Some of the leisure centres run by Celtic Leisure are long overdue investment. There are plans for improvement which have been on hold for reasons unknown. Lockdown and the subsequent changes to how these facilities are used, make these improvements more important than ever.
- please free council tax
- 1. A reliable, pro-commuter joined-up public transport system with neighbouring areas. 2. Improve Internet services - critical for businesses, education, social interaction for the marginalised, and social mobility
- The term "reset" is too connected to the evil 'Great Reset', 'Build Back Better', and the WEF.
- Increase emphasis on supporting people in poverty and recognising the more recent impacts of cost of living increases
- This plan is OK, but it's hopelessly unambitious in the key area of transport and digital connectivity. In the middle of a climate emergency and a pandemic, I would have expected more.
- We have all come through an unprecedented period of uncertainty during the last 2 years and, for many people this has meant hardship, fear and sorrow. During this time, the value of the natural environment as a place of peace, comfort and inspiration has become obvious and it is clear that a significant number of people have discovered this for the first time. More people walk in and enjoy our natural environment now than at any time in the last 50 years and more will join them in the future. It follows that a resilient natural environment is a high priority not just for its own intrinsic value but also for community well-being, heritage and culture. Everyone agrees that it is a precious resource which we have to protect and enhance as much as possible. We can only accomplish this by assessing the state of nature in NPT

and acting accordingly. As we have steered our way through the Covid crisis by 'following the science', we must also listen to the evidence-based advice and opinions of informed experts on environmental matters, like resilience, if we want to aspire to the current vision of the NPT CBC that is outlined in the Corporate Plan. Fortunately, NPT has a Local Nature Partnership populated by people representing all the relevant environmental bodies and experts in NPT's wildlife and wild places, as well as individuals who represent communities and the general public. NPT is also fortunate to have a dedicated team of ecologists in its local authority offices who work

- I would like to see the council take over facilities, such as The Gwyn Hall, and swimming pool.
- It is very important that NPTCBC continues to support leisure facilities, for example the footballer fields in Pontardawe and Pontardawe Arts Centre. These enable our young people to gain skills and experiences that will help them in future. With a decrease in funding, there is a danger that fewer extra curricular activities would be available and this would have a detrimental effect on many hundreds of children and young people.
- Reduce our council tax!!
- I acknowledge I have only read overview, but it comes across as weak on addressing the urgency of the climate & nature emergency. It is the biggest challenges humanity has ever face, and with the gravity of the situation we now find ourselves, addressing the issues within NPT should be front and centre of the budget. Off the top of my head I would suggest: Training ALL staff and councillors in current climate science; ceasing funding to organisations that are not actively reducing the ecological footprint; Create a role / dept overseeing climate and responsible for ensuring this issue is embedded in every decision taken by the council; utilise social media post to connect the dots for local people and how they relate to the things that you are doing - talk about the climate & nature emergencies
- As previously stated there needs to be a sense of pride in the town, clamping down on litter dropping, helping people feel safe to walk the streets and asking people feel that Neath is a good place to live, stopping the migration of residents to other more desirable towns.
- To bring in new businesses to our Towns that will attract people and investment. Who is working on this? Because who ever they are it doesn't appear to be working.
- I agree with RRR idea and hope to see vast improvements happening
- Only in so far, it needs to look beyond electoral timescales and be a plan for not just one year but each year. Particularly those which do not have an election in them.
- It is difficult to be more specific without sight or knowledge of the finances attached to priorities and in sufficient detail to give a reassurance plans to invest in the Pontardawe Art Centre remain as communicated. In general terms there is a lot to be welcomed and supported in principle if followed through. We emphasise the importance of the Pontardawe Arts Centre as a community asset /hub, and it has a key role to play in the "recover, reset and renew" of Pontardawe. We very much support the direction of improving/broadening access to disadvantaged groups and others. There must be opportunities to link with Social Prescribing / health (particularly mental health) agenda.
- Better facilities and opportunities for disabled and those with additional needs.
- Very disappointing to see the lack of attention to building/restoring resilient environments or nature recovery as a priority for wellbeing of communities and young people. NPT has suffered decades of degradation of our natural environment, often as a direct consequence of shortsighted local development policies. 'Recover, Reset, Renew' appears to be a lost opportunity to begin putting this right.
- More natural environment focus
- It is difficult to be more specific without sight or knowledge of the finances attached to priorities and in sufficient detail to give a reassurance plans to invest in the Pontardawe Art Centre remain as communicated. In general terms there is a lot to be welcomed and supported in principle if followed through. We emphasise the importance of the Pontardawe Arts Centre as a community asset /hub, and it has a key role to play in the "recover, reset and renew" of Pontardawe. We very much support the direction of improving/broadening access to disadvantaged groups and others. There must be opportunities to link with Social Prescribing / health (particularly mental health) agenda.
- there needs to be more for young people to do in their areas. parks and youth clubs would be great or something to do in the evenings
- It appears that the plans cover most things for an improved future, hopefully if these are achieved our town will be a better place for the next generation
- Yes a huge increase in litter clearing in town and neighbourhood. I ring the council weekly to highlight the hotspots. As a council tax payer I should not have to do this. It is a known fact that the environment you live in affects your well-being. Therefore living in a rubbish dump cannot be healthy. The amount of funds being put aside for working from home is

disproportionate to the funds being made available for litter, antisocial behaviour and maintaining acceptable standards in Neath.

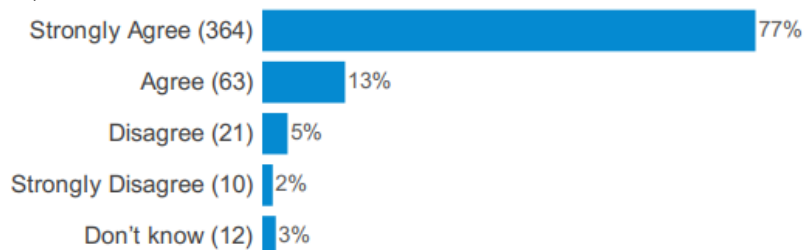
- Surprised that older people, disability, veterans, mental health, poverty and inequalities barely get a mention (certainly not in the proposals and especially with all the research findings regarding the impact of the pandemic. It's a shame this opportunity wasn't taken to start thinking about the Council's offer to some of our most vulnerable communities and how services could be better structured to deliver what is really needed.
- Neath could become a thriving town. It has some amazing buildings and facilities but there are dilapidated buildings that let it down. There is a thriving community spirit who care about the town and this could be tapped into see Facebook: Neath Voice, This is Neath. Work with vandals to stop destructive behaviour.
- I feel all aspects have been covered in the draft corporate plan and it would be great to see these met in the near future. It would be nice to see our young and elderly community in particular being able to walk our streets without anxiety and fear due to the increase of street crime, alcoholism and drugs
- Put all the roads and repairs of, out to private tender, to get our town and villages up to a decent standard
- A toboggan ride in Margam Park would attract more visitors, e.g. like the one in Pembrey
- Please keep libraries open for free accessible services
- My only view is that we should listen to our communities and avoid wasting money on facilities that offer very little value to the vast majority of the population.
- Homeless people in Port Talbot are neglected unless well known such as Terry Alan you will be ignored.
- Yes, as alluded to on another question. It is pie in the sky, pre-election promises that will be shelved by this winter.
- More public toilets in towns and disabled parking.
- NPT Council recently sold they were going to spend £60 million on repairing a rusty bridge rather than spending it on better mental health services. It is clear that priorities are wrong and money is being put in the wrong place.
- improve roads and pavements. More buses

Section 2 - Budget consultation responses

2.1 Council Tax

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23

Figure 6: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal that there should be 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23?' (base: 470)



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 30 responses, as follows:

- I disagree because we have had council tax rises since this NPTCBC was formed, we in my knowledge but might be wrong ever had a freeze or reduction, and listening and reading how healthy you are this time around I believe you can give back as further cut, say 1% or even 2% which isn't an awful lot of money as I understand it's 800k per 1% so with the healthy reserves, welsh government settlement and other monies in the council, given the two years we all have had, inflation through the roof, heating prices as gas doubling and eat or heat becoming a reality then every little help is important to us all so cut it further please.

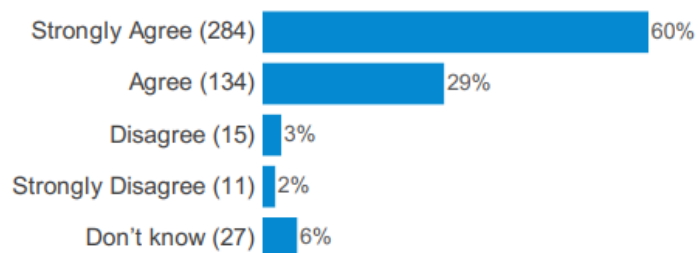
- A small increase should be implemented. Freezing is nothing other than political bargaining. Minor yearly increases i.e. 0.5-1% yearly in healthy budget years avoid requirements for a larger increase later down the line in years to come.
- I feel there should be at least a 1.5% reduction. I purchased my home 11 years ago and every year it has risen. However as a service user who uses very little I feel quite aggrieved that I am paying over £100 a month to have poorly lit streets and the rubbish collected twice a month.
- If we could all pay a little more it would enhance services further- those unable to pay are helped out with additional payments so it could be affordable
- Because you have burdened us council tax payers with years of council tax rises and freezing it now doesn't make much of a difference as it's political, council tax gone up over probably 30% over many years and we have all struggled, this year after covid we have struggled more, so we going to either heat or eat in my opinion, so you should take a couple of % off the 0% so I would suggest a -2%
- 0% freeze will have to be recovered in future years
- All in this together, by adding more funds would that not help the reserves
- Freeze for those who may struggle with an increase (means tested), increase for those who could afford to cover.
- There's so much that needs to be done just to maintain and improve existing council services - let alone the new challenges - and the council will need money to address these.
- I would like to have seen the proposed increase put at 0.5% as much investment will be needed as the area recovers from the pandemic
- I think someone has to pay for Covid and recovery. I would have had a 3% increase
- Inflation is running at 7.5% and if 0% is implemented then people will lose out both in services and increase in staff wages etc
- With inflation so high, I think there should be a rise to pay for services.
- Happy for Council Tax to be increased to further invest in Services
- Services will have to be cut and how can you achieve your recover plan with reduced revenue
- Services need to be paid for.
- Can you really afford not to increase council tax. Looking from the outside, you seem to be fire fighting on all areas.
- Council Tax always goes up and we need to pay for services we require.
- With the good settlement from WG, now would have been a good time to set a very modest increase in the precept to try and claim back some of the lost ground over the past years
- Follow the normal procedure and use any surplus towards your own community proposals.
- There is not a bottomless pit available to the council and to get more out, you have to put more in.
- We need to maintain the reserves so an inflation level increase is needed
- A small increase in council tax will allow a positive impact on local services e.g to support increase payments to social care staff and to increase care provision in local communities
- The council need the money, so an inflationary rise would not be unexpected.
- Not manageable for families we pay highest in most of wales
- If an increase freeze is going to affect how some services will be carried out, or effect potential benefits to those employed by NPTC, then I disagree. However, we have one of the UK's highest council taxes, and our bins aren't even collected consistently
- More work needed on fixing roads and pavements, also more Police needed.
- Don't have money
- NPT Wastes council tax money if anything it should decrease.
- Need to reduce council tax!! Need discount for un-employed. NPT is one of the poorest counties with the highest tax!

2.2 Best Start in Life (Budget - £700,000)

This proposal would increase community based and specialist youth service provision, early intervention and prevention activities (including educational psychology and key worker support for children and young people affected by the pandemic), extra support for children with additional learning needs and an increase in adult community learning provisions to support people in the journey back to work.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'

Figure 7: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life'?' (base: 471):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, as follows:

- Money should be used to reduce Council Tax
- These services should be already in place. Use existing funding more effectively. If it doesn't work don't fund it.
- THEY SHOULD BE DOING THIS ANYWAY
- I think it's a drop in the ocean - this should have more investment. I'd like to know the number of children and young people in the area who this could impact on and work out how much that means for each child, my feeling is that it would probably amount to £100 each. You need more trained staff, more resources at the very least and that £700,000 is not going to go far is it? Especially as I imagine those same resources have probably had cuts over the last few years so if we're lucky we'll just be getting back to where we were a couple of years ago. You're laying lip service to improvement.
- I feel the youth service provision is adequate.
- is this amount not enough, we have a freeze on council tax this year but spending too much will only make an increase next year
- If people can't provide a good start for their children then they shouldn't be having them.
- You should concentrate getting people back into work, some have lost jobs,
- 700,000 sounds a lot of money. But how much is that per capita or per area
- Older people have had no help. Yet help out with the kids.
- More important issues that need addressing
- The so called support teams that are employed are part of the problem - they are not doing what they should and should be held accountable to their leaders. More money may partly pay for services - money does not solve all the problems - people who are not really fulfilling their responsibilities should be replaced. Youngsters are being penalised but the poor lack of guidance and this will have a wider impact on the future
- Wasting more money instead of lowering bills
- There is lots of support for those in some of these categories already.
- Invest to help working people and mental health.
- 700,000 is far from enough compared with places like Cardiff, NPT gets missed out and underfunded by the Welsh government
- Not only young need support. Older people also need support.
- Not enough money to help children from the valleys.
- More people should put something by for a 'rainy day'. Some spend more on groceries than i earn in a week.
- Invest in the services already available and make them better - re-branding same services wasting money

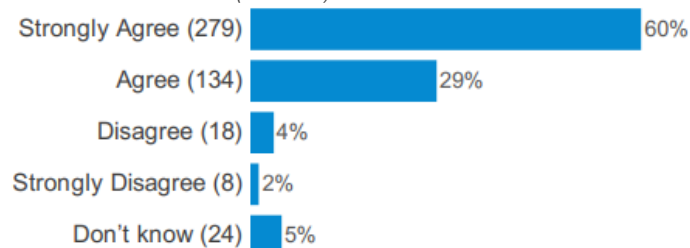
2.3 Thriving and Sustainable Communities (Budget - £1.2 million)

One of the key messages from 'Let's Talk' was how much people value the environment and neighbourhoods where they live and work. In the pandemic, the council has had to re-prioritise neighbourhood services to ensure continuity of priority services like refuse and recycling collection. To re-address the issue it's proposed a range of proposals are

developed to deliver a county borough wide range of highly visible projects to ‘catch up, clean up and green up’ our neighbourhoods.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support ‘Thriving and Sustainable Communities’

Figure 8: Responses to the question ‘how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £1.2 million in services to support ‘Thriving and Sustainable Communities’? (base: 463):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 20 responses, as follows:

- REDUCE Council Tax instead
- Review the existing expenditure before further investment.
- It would be interesting to know how many staff are still currently deployed on refuse and recycling. The staff who work on Neighbourhood services are noticeable in their absence from tasks such as litter picking, grass cutting and general tidying up of our local area. This was apparent before the pandemic and still continues. Perhaps having local bylaws for the dropping of litter would be a great idea and save the employment of staff to pick it up or not in NPTs case. Prevention is better than cure.
- Think it's important, but there are higher priorities..
- surely you have been doing this anyway with the constant council tax increases where has the money gone??
- A huge amount of investment that could be less in order for other areas to benefit
- Why is there a need for an additional £1.2 million?
- I feel this money could be better spent on more realistic things in the short term, Like the care sector and energy bills everyone is facing
- spend it all now approach will leave us in financial trouble next year
- I feel our services are enough at the present and the money could be used to help in other areas
- Again, 1.2 mill. Sounds a lot. what is it costing to send plastics, paper and cardboard glass to distribute our recycling to brake down further.
- Waste of funds. Volunteers been doing the work
- More money not always the answer. Real informed people are needed
- Let's hope all rubbish gets collected properly and not left in streets on collection day
- Waste of money reduce council tax instead
- We have no faith in the council to make the correct decisions regarding finances. It's a waste of money
- this needs to be looked into as it is a very wasteful cost
- Need more investments
- Money better spent elsewhere
- More effort should be put into renewable energy, the refuse and recycling in the local area has been running fine.

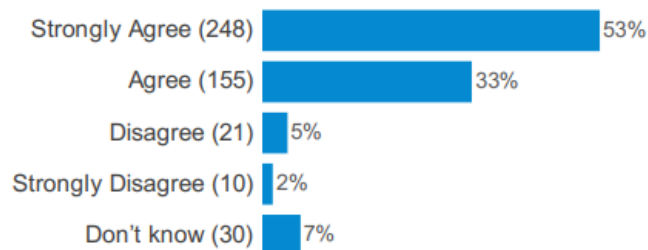
2.4 Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills (Budget - £200,000)

It is proposed strategies be developed in relation to both culture and environment, leisure and tourism so further proposals can be developed in relation to jobs and skills.

The 2022/23 budget pressure schedule includes for additional long term funding to provide additional support for economic development and regeneration which will be key for supporting existing businesses as well as attracting further inward investment into the county borough.

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposal to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'?

Figure 9: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposals to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills'? (base: 464):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 22 responses, as follows:

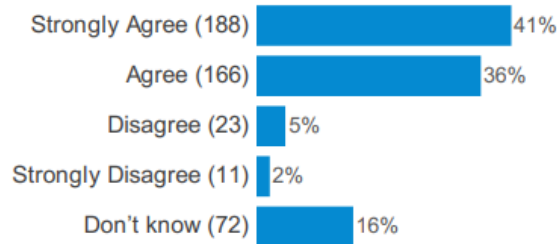
- Too little given the other investment being made.
- As per previous reasons
- Should be more as the figure will not do much in culture and heritage and you have already removed £800k from our own heritage here in the Dulais Valley as Cefn Coed. We need proper investment in our valley communities.
- I would agree but there need to be predetermined outcomes to gauge the effectiveness of the proposals rather than just throwing money at it. How will success or improvement be determined?
- This budget is laughable. What on earth is going to be achieved with this across such a large remit - is that £50k for Culture, £50k for Heritage, £50k for Jobs and £50k for skills? Even with my most optimistic hat on I don't think this budget is going to make a jot of difference as the budget for culture has been slashed again and again hasn't it? As a library user I firmly believe that if all of that budget (and more) were invested in the library service they could impact positively on ALL those areas.
- Outsource this, currently large areas are used as dumping grounds and until enforcement happens why waste more money
- Should be more, this will bring in more jobs, investment in the area and have a positive effect
- I think £100,000 from the Best Start could be transferred to here.
- Needs a larger budget due to lack of jobs
- more funding needed
- NEEDS TO BE MORE MONEY ON GETTING PEOPLE INTO EMPLOYMENT
- I personally think that the council would need to invest a bit more money here if the budget allowed
- Unfortunately this isn't enough to make a lasting impact on Jobs/skills
- 200k is well below the money needed to achieve objectives
- If the cultural places are not making money, why keep them open?
- The amount is not enough.
- Again - it used to be a career/or employment with/for the council was a job for life (maybe still is) but with poor standards of the people put in place in these very important posts. I think it always starts at the top so if it isn't filtered through to frontline no point throwing more money after bad.
- More needed
- More money needs to be invested here to support actions that will increase the resilience of our natural environment.
- 200,000 is not enough, it needs to be a higher level for improvement of this Area, compared with Cardiff and Swansea,NPT area is stunning
- It needs to be a larger amount. One of the borough's assets is its heritage, culture and natural beauty, which has not been utilised in the last few years.
- Needs to be spent in the right place.

2.5 Covid recovery reserve (Budget - £2.8m)

In order to fund these one off investments outlined above, we are proposing to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve. This will fund the 3 proposals outlined, and leave £700k unallocated to support further investments..

We asked respondents how they feel about the proposals to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above.

Figure 10: Responses to the question 'how do you feel about the proposal to re-purpose £2.8m of the current insurance reserve into a Covid recovery reserve to fund the one-off investments outlined above?' (base: 460):



Where people indicated that they “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed”, we asked them to tell us why. There were 24 responses, as follows:

- I would need further information before I could confirm
- Council can't afford it!
- Reserves should be used once existing expenditure has been reviewed and re-prioritised.
- Is this correct use of an Insurance reserve? This expenditure is not in respect of insurance so why should it be used for this ?
- Isn't the reserve there as an insurance? Should covid mutate and become aggressive causing a nationwide catastrophic financial meltdown and we receive a massive reduction next year. Couldn't it be kept back until the country for definite knows where we are financially. Before we spend it on school psychologists and extra binmen, when next year we may need it for emergency care.
- we lost money before
- Provide that money to existing overstretched services no new headline grabbing services
- Once spent, reserves are gone. Better, in my opinion, to raise the addition funds through a small rise in the council tax.
- What is Covid recovery? Just get on with life and go back to normal!!
- Covid recovery should be for the people - there are many initiatives that are more business related, these should be removed.
- the welsh gov have already given enough money to help with this, dont you think we will pay for this in future years with the workers tax being increased
- There seems to be lots of pots and support for COVID recovery, we need some normality returned
- How are you going to judge which investment gets money, and which doesn't?
- What is the covid recovery reserve?
- I feel people take advantage re covid and are untruthful to gain money
- I don't feel that setting money aside for reserve purposes is necessary at present.
- I would like to know how much you have saved by your liberal homeworking policies and disuse of council offices. I am not clear on what impact COVID had on your plans. From what I can see your staff worked from home, and services reduced. Why would you need more money to reinstate existing services?
- Waste of money
- It would depend on what exactly the money was going to be spent on.
- We will only end up paying for it next year!
- Sorry no,Covid has caused a lot of problem such as future fuel bills, it should be pushed more with the British government to support NTP and it's not fair on families who have no other option than work from home, They should be better supported than being made to pay over the top bills, we have the increase in the income tax rate as well
- Spend the money on what people need now, you have enough in savings now

- If the reserve hasn't already been used then why not?
- Money was set for something should be used for that purpose.

2.6 Other views

We asked respondents 'do you have any other views on our draft Budget 2022-23 that you would like to share with us?' There were 97 responses, as follows:

- With the excess accrued from council tax increases last year because services were under pressure and government didn't offset losses (which have now been recovered and no longer in austerity) invest further in to youth services and youth clubs within the borough. This will have a positive effect on mental health of youth and the community will benefit as there will be less youth ASB due to boredom.
- Yes I believe it's time NPTCBC actually listened to us the residents of the borough, the survey is set up in a way to make your council look in the best possible way, a lot of what your saying you have said for over 10 years and the record of delivering is poor, we need what you are asking us to agree disagree etc etc on to be delivered as it's no point doing these surveys if at the end of the day you do not listen.it's time consuming for many of us, but if our views actually were taken on board and listened to then that would be something I guess.or even feedback after taking so much time to fill these surveys in would be great also.
- More support for Armed Forces, Police in area including subsidised gym/swim and access to vital support such as mental health. It has all been about the NHS and education, the police and military have been ignored when they deal with the large bulk of deaths, mental health and work related stress.
- My only concern would be whether the freeze in council tax will mean a higher increase the following financial year. If projections show this may be the case I would prefer a slight increase, to counter that impact,
- Establish a town museum asap.This should link in with the excellent potential historic sites located around Neath.
- Proactive strategy for carrying out basic tasks instead of fire fighting. Eg have a programme of clearing drains regularly rather than unblocking them when they are flooded. Divert the continual resurfacing of Neath town centre money to aid this. Just stop cars driving in the pedestrian area and balance the disabled parking and restrictions which prevent Neath being accessible. Have more regular free parking not just at Christmas. This would increase visitors to Neath
- Need to concentrate on services that the council know and have experience of providing - investments should not be made into 'possible income generating schemes'
- Council Tax should be REDUCED
- Use the money wisely
- More funding to be allocated in helping homeless people and possibly adapt council buildings and empty properties to support these vulnerable adults
- You really need to start listening to the people living in the County Borough , as what's the point in this exercise if you don't?
- Budget for culture heritage job and skills seems low. Welcome the decision to freeze council tax but more must be done. This is a massive burden on my household nearly as much as my mortgage. It is unfair and the system should be reviewed
- The commitment to review the strategic housing function over the next 12 months will inevitably lead to necessary greater ongoing expenditure on staffing and so this should be budgeted for
- Nice to be given the option to voice concerns. And that NPT as a whole is being invested in. Also as a resident and an employee, now are advertising that after 10 years finally welsh government have given us an increase in our yearly budget, but yet 10 months later we still havent had a pay rise. Its a bit of a kick in the teeth, with ever increasing gas and electric prices, could we be given our pay rise on time next year. Employees are now in debt, as we are working harder and being paid less.
- How to sustain existing usefulvoluntary organisationsocial care provision to enable independence
- The council should use the financial position it finds itself in to make wise choices about tge future of services which the community need and value and to improve infrastructure. I DO NOT support the campaign to spend£3 million plus to transfer Celtic Leisure back to the Council. This would be incredibly short sighted and a poor deal for the council taxpayer. That money needs to be used to improve services for young people and our elderly frail residents

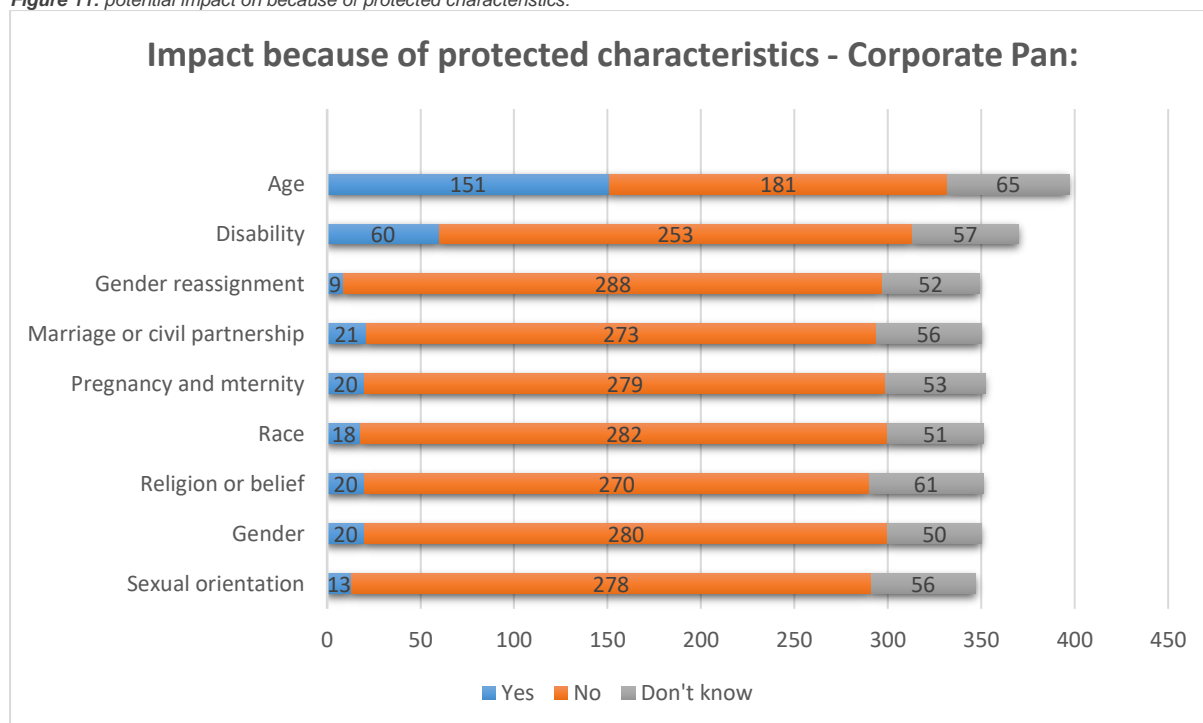
- I'm quite skeptical being in a taibach ward in Margam it feels like the councilors are non existent
- Moves to keep investing in 21st Century schools .
- The Budgets looked at are inline with previous accounts and the increasing service costs. The pandemic has changed our accounts in the past two years. If savings are made, will this go back into further services in need?
- Help small businesses
- Good to see plans for investment in important services and facilities, and a freeze on council tax after years of cuts passed on from Government
- investment has been under funded for years
- Under para 5 it states that NPTs allowance is the '18th lowest'. It should read '5th lowest'.
- I think it's disingenuous to say the freeze in council tax is due to additional funding from the welsh government - the tax should not have increased in 21/22,.
- It is generally good but would have liked a small increase in Council Tax to help fund recovery from the effects of the pandemic
- Libraries played an important part in keeping many people entertained, well read and included during lockdown, will they benefit from extra funding?
- It should not only be about investment of money - we need clear steer from all service directors about the need for co-production and council staff having a responsibility to promote change within their area's of responsibility
- I Think that more than 700k should be put into the Children's services
- As above, there needs to be a recognition of libraries as the leading hub in our local communities and this department being given a priority.
- Plans to stop the council tax increase are a good thing however, this MUST be something that continues over the following years. its funny how an election year spurs this to happen, when it didn't happen last year during the pandemic with millions in reserve. What are the plans for 2023 onwards for budget?
- Consider your staff when allocating funds - they worked to get the town through the Pandemic and have had below inflation rises for the last ten years or so!
- invest more in staff - pay increases and training
- Very concerned that NPTCBC's budget was so low compared to other Councils. I believe that we are 18th out of 22 councils. There are high levels of poverty in Neath and Port Talbot.
- Incredadr support for our libraries service
- Yes - make sure Briton Ferry gets its fair share - we pay an extortionate rate of council tax only to see funds either invested in Neath or Port Talbot
- I would like to see further investment into SEN provision, this does not appear anywhere in the draft proposal
- Please could you make sure not to spend any of our Money on the Climate Change Scam, or any other Political Correctness? Thank you
- Do we have the staffing capacity to deliver plans set out in the budget? or will there be a recruitment drive in order to deliver what the council can. The pandemic has had a huge affect on children and young people with their mental health especially those who have been unable to return to school. There seems to be a gap in services for this chort, due to staffing levels and funding. If we want to help re build our communities and labour market, we also need to invest in those who have struggled during the pandemic.
- i don't think the £200,000 mentioned previously will go very far.
- Financial covid recovery support for SME's and Micro business not just the large businesses within PT
- I'd like to see a higher proportion of the budget directed towards Environment in order to allow more investment into nature recovery. In the budget lines for Environment there is no mention of budget for management of important wildlife sites. Decarbonisation could be achieved much more efficiently than with electric cars, through recovery of sites such as peat bogs
- Not enough emphasis on the real effect issues scheduled to hit everyone locally and nationally in the next 12 to 18 months
- The budget proposals seem positive providing they are attributed to the correct investments. Too often money is spent on projects that are wasteful and not managed effectively. It is important investments are prioritised and managed properly to ensure they stay within budget.
- £200k doesn't seem like much money for jobs and skills and culture and heritage. It is a wide area to cover
- Cancel all expenditure on factory schools.
- Mental health issues in wales have gone up yet funding has gone down. More investment is very urgent in this current climate

- No, it's anyone's guess how these things turn out and there's likely to be some disguised motivations anyway.
- what about disabilities
- Vital the Council continues to prioritise Education and Social Care
- you need more money to recover from covid as i feel it will be around for a few years yet to come you need to save jobs and keep economy going
- Council tax is a very unfair tax. My bill is higher than other people living in Chelsea and other rich areas. I am a carer for my wife yet our council tax bill is £244 per month. Millionaires pay a lot less - it is very unfair
- What about leisure services and other facilities for older people?
- So long as it's directed to projects with measurable outcomes and these are monitored
- As a single parent that works I feel saddened that I only live on benefits wage. My council tax shot up. And 66p taken from every £1 after earning a tiny £292 a month. Also need registered childminders in the Glynccorwg area.
- Invest in child and family support services and children safeguarding
- Keep our Jewel in the Crown Aberafan Beach clean and safe.
- as long as the budget is used where most needed the plans should go ahead,
- Help the retired people who have been given nothing yet provide so much free service. Savings the council does not see.
- Improve the town centre. Get people back using/spending facilities in the town centre.
- The money you have set aside for the best start in life does not seem like it will be enough
- I agree to not increasing council tax due to the financial climate post Covid however, people need to appreciate that if they want good services within their community, they have to pay for them. There is a need for people to have a greater understanding about what the council has to pay for.
- I feel you are devaluing the need for our childrens wellbeing support and that should be inline with the sustainability budget not less than.
- See previous comments on the Welsh language (Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more useful used for other things. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.)
- Reduce council tax one of the highest in whole uk
- Again the TOWNRIDER minibus transport. Withdrawn for lockdown 2 years ago. Yet the valleys transport has continued throughout. :(
- As it is the first time in a decade that there is not gap, would it be possible to air on the side of caution for this year and keep some of the money in reserves in case we are back to the normal funding gap we have experienced over the last decade. That way we have a safety net in case there is a shortfall next year and if there isn't a shortfall we can spend money on more of the things we would have liked to do this year.
- Reduce council tax to more manageable level in keeping with other local authorities
- Investment is needed in the leisure centres. They are underutilised and could be used as community hubs and hBringing members of Celtic Leisure on to the decision making board would inspire innovation a how the centres can be better used, better occupied and have more appeal to the wider community. Poverty, fuel poverty in particular needs to be brought to the forefront of plans to help. All council run facilities are warm when open, most have unused rooms. There must be a way they can serve their communities.
- More investment in green innovation and jobs
- Recent analysis of the state of nature in NPT and the resilience of its ecosystems do not paint an optimistic picture. This will need funds to promote action.
- Council tax should be reduced to fall in line with other boroughs in wales
- You have 3 one-off investments listed and none of them are focused on dealing with the climate & ecological crises. You either believe there is an emergency or you don't. Welsh government are getting it (at least partially) but I can't see NPTCBC rising to the challenge before them any time soon. Please read and digest the Carbon Budget report for NPT produce by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research - you have a long way to go to get where NPT needs to be to remain within it's fair share of the UK carbon budget. You need to start treating this issue with the urgency it demands otherwise nothing else you are talking about will matter in just a few years time.
- It says something when £100,000 is reserved to support working from home and only £15,000 on antisocial behavior.
- To increase budgets you should also look at where money is going and is it going in the right areas. Also there may be a lot of money being wasted. Who is looking at this and checking that money is being well spent and the council is getting value for money?

- Decisions on areas important to me, such as car parking need a wider discussion. It continues to intrigue me that car parking fees, or indeed car parking policy is subject to so little analysis and scrutiny
- In the Culture and Heritage budget section neither Agree options permit comments. Our response is contingent on 'Culture' includings Arts specifically - linking explicitly to the vital role of the Pontardawe Arts Centre. It doesn't seem a lot of money compared to other proposals and we will need confidence coordinated investment (including capital) will follow. It does offer the opportunity to link up areas such as art/environment/leisure/tourism for better outcomes of investment.
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- Get people back in offices as quick as you can.
- Put more money in to cleaning up Neath especially it's very high litter content everywhere. I phone weekly to highlight hit spots. More money on youth antisocial behaviour and keeping our neighbourhood safe especially from drug dealing and arson attacks. Where I live by the Gnoll antisocial behaviour has escalated and so has arson in the park
- Investigate job corruption at management level
- We need cleaner streets. More business down the beach - there is nothing to do there
- Reduce single person discount on Council Tax to 50%. 2 people living together would pay 50% each, yet 1 person pays 75% - this is an increase for single people - currently Council Tax is more a year than a full time minimum wage
- Investment is greatly needed in parks - new, better equipment especially. Re-opening previously closed off parks would be a huge asset. Skewen Park is very popular, we could & should have the same in Cwmavon. Leisure services need to be a priority.
- Some money could be used to fix the roads in and out of Cwmafan i.e. Depot Rd!
- Light up the main footpaths. Cwmavon - Oakwood, Cwmavon - Age Concern would both benefit from some mild lighting
- Q13a should invest a lot more
- Q10a - it is good there is a freeze as long as services are not cut. Should NPT residents have a say on how the additional monies can be spent
- How about cutting moneys paid to councillor who go from one meeting to another on the same day being paid for each meeting.
- Freeze Council tax for about 10 years! Highestin wales and much of the UK?
- Not at this time
- The Knowle and Victoria Gardens are 2 examples of the great things that can be done, and are very well enjoyed by most. Thank you for that. M,J Palmer
- Investing money to better skill the population - must be a good idea. Reduce council tax; discount for un-employed 'Homemakers'. Before/after school clubs in all NPT schools - i.e Cwmavon has none! Free school meals.
- Strongly agree to invest additional £700,000 in services to support the 'Best Start in Life' - Because the facilities in the area are currently very poor. Strongly agree to invest additional £1.2million in services support 'Thriving and Sustainable communities - Any investment is needed because current services are very poor. Strongly agree to invest an additional £200,000 in services to support 'Culture and Heritage / Jobs and Skills' - Need the investment.
- Little emphasis on elderly support! But good luck!
- Strongly agree that there should be a 0% increase to council tax in 2022/23 - Council tax should be based on income ratio to adults per household. Q14 comment - I don't know until informed exactly where it should be allocated.
- I'm a single mum with two teenage daughters who are both doing apprenticeships so i get no help with my council tax=x and find it so expensive, so a 0& increase is a great help to me.
- I want to start back attending groups within my local community

We asked respondents if our draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 or Draft Budget 2022-23 would have an impact on them and/or their families because of any protected characteristics. A summary of the responses is outlined below:

Figure 11: potential impact on because of protected characteristics:



If respondents answered 'yes', we asked them to tell us why. There were 91 responses, as follows:

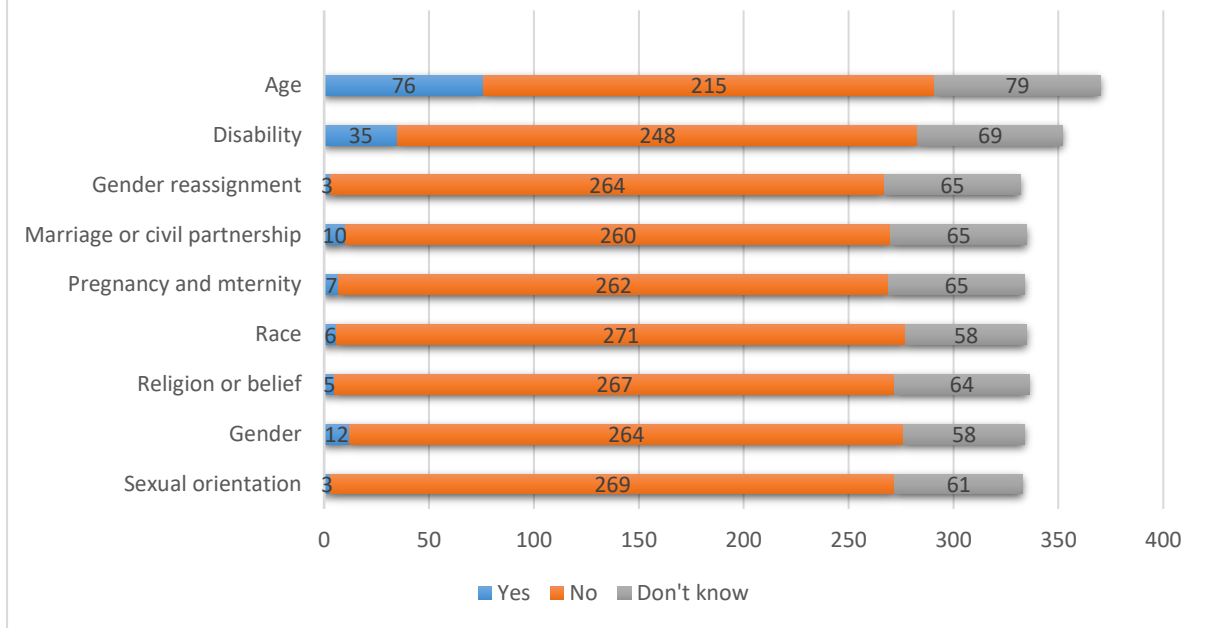
- Children in education
- Please make better provision for children and young people with disabilities.
- Disabled people have been forgotten about, only certain religion count now.
- More of interest within the town would increase footfall and benefit all businesses.
- Lack of services affect mobility and transportation
- Older age group seem to be low on priority needs
- At my age I want to feel safe and supported when I have newborn who I want to join me in speaking welsh and help his father to join in.
- Working class people have no incentive, children that go to school and get by don't get rewarded, children who are disruptive and excluded get support and taken on trips.
- Improve facilities for young people so we aren't giving them fuel the reasons they give now. Building the resilience of our youth is key to everyone's future.
- Less homeless and drunks in town centre, maintain our heritage and culture as it should be, maintain our parks and woodland would just give a better quality of life irrespective of who I am.
- School age child
- I am a retired older woman caring for a partner with early stage of dementia. Much caring work falls on the shoulders of women like me, We need support and opportunities outside of the house.
- Heading towards retirement age
- school age
- It might provide additional opportunities for employment in the NPT area. Better transport links. More access to services for local people.
- I'm over 65!!!!
- I'm a pensioner and can't afford to pay further increases in council tax
- Faculties available for retired people.
- I have a child and am expecting a second. The plan will impact my family with regards to childcare, free school meals, and spaces in Welsh medium education
- Of working age. So a positive impact
- Our children would benefit from the short and long term proposals.

- My parents are now past retirement age and may soon be looking to access services for the elderly.
- Opportunities for young people - training, jobs.
- I work fulltime and i'm also a carer for my disabled partner
- positive impact for the young people we foster
- Better recognition and support for Gender Reassignment is needed.
- I have two 'tweenage' children who will benefit from many of the initiatives as they move towards adulthood, plus we all benefit when society is healthy and prosperous.
- Schemes being introduced for children within NPT are fantastic and my children will benefit from activities and events
- I am 60 plus and I work look after my grandchildren and my elderly parent this means I am interested in ensuring that NPT is an authority that addresses the needs of all ages for myself children father and grandchildren. In relation to work in social services I also understand the needs of the population of NPT and what matters.
- Provide a safer, greener and more prosperous County Borough for people of all ages
- each point will effect people depending on their age as young children would be more interested in education and parks being built whereas older people would be more interested in jobs
- young children
- Leisure, safety and regeneration of town centres so important for an ageing population
- My son is 12
- It will improve the quality of my life since I do not travel far out of Neath and its surroundings.
- More services for elderly, might need help with partnership, church might need help to stay open, regarding sex, more male orientated activities such as Men's Sheds.
- This survey question is particularly stupid. Given the terms used and the reliance on jargon there is a very wide interpretation on what almost anything could mean and what would be the actual outcomes of the strategy whether that be in the short term or longer. It is quite difficult to even envisage the purpose of this questionnaire as it is quite clumsy in its design.
- Did you mean 'Negative impact' in Q8 above?
- I'm not sure I understand Q8
- I think that unpaid carers did not get a bonus from the government like paid carers did. Also so many unpaid carers lost their support during the pandemic. There should be emphasis as on unpaid carers he'll and well-being . Also young carers.carers
- make barriers less challenging
- have a 7 yr old, feel more oppurtunities should be created around school, learning and engagement activities, not necessarily just sports.
- Retirement beckons. Finance will make an impact.
- All selected will impact on mine and / or my close family's future
- I have four children. The youngest being 9 years old. He is growing up in an era/area where opportunities for play, exercise and adventure are limited. This could ultimately have an effect on his physical and mental health and possibly his capability and productivity as an adult. He is lucky as I have the means to mitigate much of the problem, but many parents haven't got that. It will have (is having) a profound effect on the young population in the area. health and wellbeing should be the highest priority for those deciding how we build the future of the area.
- i am in my 50s some works require young people.
- I am disabled and find accessibility and engagement in community programs difficult to impossible.
- I have an 8 yr old daughter
- Difficult at myage to get my head around these issues
- I am old and disabled and find it difficult to access some bus stops and crossing roads in my manual wheelchair because od inefficient dropped kerbs
- the plan affects my childrens future
- Positive impact for both children in school and parents as we all grow older when this is delivered
- I am about to have my first child
- My children will be largely affected due to them starting school
- My 25 year old son may have local opportunities for life long learning and career development with support from services.
- As set out you intend improving services to people in the community whatever age and religious beliefs
- Such policy would have good effect for the aged
- i have children in education

- Knowing what is going to happening in the areas makes it possible to plan for the future
- young family need to ensure the best start in life
- Too much Wokeness & “diversity” is anti-white racism, misandry, heterophobic, ageist, anti-Christian, and anti-merit.
- Impact on woman of anti social behaviour
- Children,grandchildren & great grandchildren live in P T & want to work, live & learn here now & in the future
- 59 and disabled
- If focussed through places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community hubs it will have a positive impact on all ages and disadvantaged groups. Recognition through investment in arts will have benefits across all society and we'd like to see this brought out more strongly.
- We have children, including a young adult with profound special needs.
- My family members find it difficult to attend church, or to simply go into town because of disability and lack of transport facilities.
- If focussed through places like the Pontardawe Art Centre as community hubs it will have a positive impact on all ages and disadvantaged groups. Recognition through investment in arts will have benefits across all society and we'd like to see this brought out more strongly.
- I am getting older and may need support
- At present time there is a lot of discrimination on these topics which cause aggravation and disruption to peoples lives
- Better education leading to better job prospects for our grandchildren. Improved sports facilities and parks benefit all ages
- Prospects for our grandchildren and great grandchildren
- It's important for the younger generation to receive support with employment, skills and learning.
- I think it would help my children with their education having the best start in life.
- Both my wife and I are in our mid eighties. My wife is disabled.
- Lack of faith education at senior level. Antisocial behaviour. Litter.
- Buses need to be better to get people about.
- Looking at the draft it is impossible to say what the impact would be on those with protected characteristics, they barely get a mention so i doubt the impact of the proposals have even been considered
- I live in Neath
- Q3 - these plans would impact on my child in a positive way
- More needed for elderly and disability
- Not enough done to help disabled people of a old aged
- Brain epilepsy
- Freedom of choice
- Being aged 50+ i'm coming up to retirement in the next 10 to 15 years, if i was made redundant it would be difficult to find new employment on my age alone.
- I have parents who are getting on and are recovering from a stroke. I also have children in full time education. I have extended family with younger children.
- Q8. My problems, & many others', are the disabilities of age. Town centre planning should take these heavily into considration. E.G. short distances, short cuts, PLENTY of disabled parking. Also much improved public transport. There are more old than young citizens & we want help to remain useful, active participants in our communities which we love and value.
- I am a young person who identifies as a lesbian non binary individual, who is a pagan witch. I have, and a few family members have, a few health issues.
- I feel most of the above are discriminated against - even though, sometimes unintentionally.
- Limited income i.e. pensions
- I have an elderly relative who lives where there are hardly any transport links (buses). There's no train station + taxis are too expensive. I would like to see this change (increase bus services) to prevent isolation.

Figure 12: potential impact on because of protected characteristics:

Impact because of protected characteristics - Draft Budget:



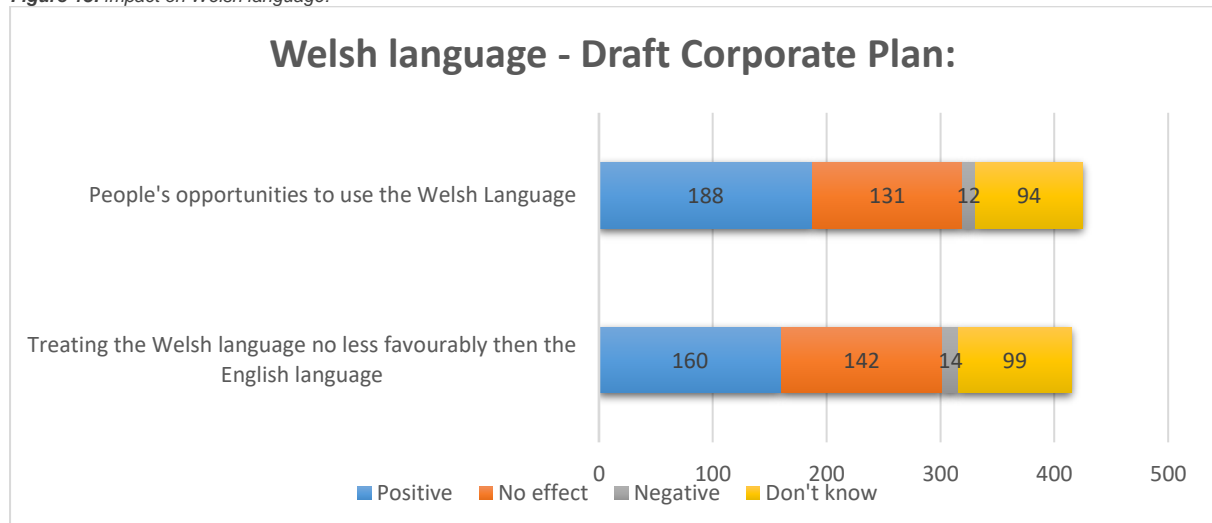
If respondents answered 'yes', we asked them to tell us why. There were 41 responses, as follows:

- Children using youth services
- I am an unpaid carer. I have a child with autism
- Adult learning can help with goals
- It will have an impact on future generations I suspect
- see previous answer
- Welsh language is a divisive element. I don't want Welsh speakers having an advantage over my grandchildren
- Positive impact
- Our children would benefit from future long term improvements.
- My daughter has ADHD and Autism so I welcome increased focus on ALN. The freeze on council tax is also very welcome, especially with increases in the price of food, fuel and utilities some of which is exacerbated by working from home for the majority of the time.
- Access to activities and events for children will benefit us as a family
- it would be more important and effect older people who understand how these budgets work
- Anything that improves the environment is welcome
- Hopefully a better future for my granddaughter
- As I get older I will need to access more of the services available.
- More funding for elderly, more for church access and for male orientated activities such as Men's Sheds.
- Pension funds. Will the council still pay a pension to it's retired workers?
- This is in no small part why communities need this extra funding. The soul has been ripped out with the removal of the centerpiece of the community.
- Benefit from childrens services, gain financially with council tax freeze
- I've said I don't know for disability - currently trying to get support for my child who has ADHD, finding it extremely difficult, hopefully the support proposed will help, but who knows? There are so many children struggling, schools have to prioritise the ones causing problems in class, leaving the other students who need support abandoned.
- Doesn't look like a lot for older people, mostly aimed at kids etc
- No mention of improvement of disabled access etc
- No council tax rise would be a big help as my business continues to recover from the pandemic, I see that as age related as it is more difficult to find the energy and motivation for rebuilding!
- I'm about to have my first child

- Npt are severely lacking educational psychologists and CAMHS services and I feel more support needs to go into this area which will impact the young peoples futures and create a happier family unit along with improvements within the education system
- Older generation needs to be one of the main priorities in your budget proposals, along with education and health
- Would help ensure recovery and positive measures as outlined in your budget plans
- young family, need cost of living break
- Anti-white racism, misandry, heterophobia, anti-Christian, & anti-merit, are rife in our woke country
- As before
- The council Tax is a massive problem for me. I pay a substantial amount more than residents in same size house living just a few miles away. im currently considering moving because i cant afford to pay it
- Help me secure a job
- It is important that young people have improved standards giving them a better lifestyle and better opportunities. We are known for being a deprived area and this needs to change
- My daughter is 17 so would benefit
- The things that matter to me are litter antisocial behaviour and preserving the town as a place worth visiting. I see this fast disappearing.
- Young children with not many outdoor play areas walkable from town.
- Treating all as equal
- I have family who will benefit from changes hopefully.
- I certainly hope the proposals would impact older people helpfully. See my other responses.
- What's this got to do with it?
- It's a pity I hadn't retired at 60 - as was the plan years ago to claim state pension.
- To old now 18/8/40

We also asked respondents what they think our draft Corporate Plan 2022-27 or Draft Budget 2022-23 will have on people's opportunities to use the Welsh Language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. A summary of the responses is outlined below:

Figure 13: impact on Welsh language:



We asked people to give the reasons for their responses. There were 168 responses, as follows:

- Peoples viewpoint on welsh language won't change because more emphasis is put on it
- I am hoping that equality and promotion is built in, but, I think we should or could tie into what other authorities are doing as lots can be done over the internet. I joined a Welsh carol singing initiative organised by menteriaith Newport this year which had people from all over the world taking part so these initiatives could be spread across all.
- We been through this many times and we don't see any real change as far as the welsh language goes really.

- Tax payer money should not be used to promote the Welsh language where children are getting left behind and vital services suffering. Rethink priorities!
- It will continue to be a choice and I feel despite a strong Welsh language culture in our locality - English is still the main language
- Those that wish to learn can
- Majority of population don't want to speak Welsh
- Too much emphasis on the Welsh language. If you only speak English you face discrimination in several areas.
- Bigger things to worry about but we are Welsh and should support that
- People have the opportunity to speak Welsh, I don't see the Welsh language as a disadvantage or treated any different
- Not relevant
- We are in a transition period to being a bi-lingual nation, it will take a generation or so to stabilise.
- Too much emphasis being placed on Welsh Language by Welsh Assembly, therefore restricting talent and expertise from non Welsh speakers.
- We have both Welsh and English schools in our locality
- You've said you're addressing this issue, but I'm not sure if it will have any impact. None of the shops -including the supermarkets- have bilingual signs for example.
- The Welsh language can only thrive if it is supported through education starting with young children.
- Welsh is part and parcel of Welsh culture and ought to be celebrated.
- Encouraging use of the language
- There is not a high proportion of Welsh spoken routinely within NPT, promoting and supporting Welsh Language will make little difference to the residents that do not use Welsh Language currently or are unable through various reasons to learn the language to a conversational level. There is already choices for Welsh Language speakers and most signage and documents are bilingual.
- Encourage everyday use of Welsh and celebrate it as part of our culture. This is more important than complying with technical requirements
- The Welsh language isn't used much in Neath Port Talbot and another area could receive the attention given to the Welsh language that is more important
- We are Welsh- so the language should be promoted at all times.
- If you want to transition to a global effort, by forcing Welsh Language will have a negative impact
- Welsh language needs to be used, or it will be lost. I believe the commitment to this, is a positive.
- Waste of time and money
- Includes plans to provide for Welsh language in both the 'Best start in life' and 'our Environment, Heritage and Culture'
- because its only lip service. it needs to take a lead and I don't speak Welsh but would like to hear more of it.
- I believe the Welsh language SHOULD be taught in all Welsh schools from an early age all the way through!
- I am a Welsh speaker and believe that there has been a massive decrease in Welsh use in the local community. Sad. Can we recover? Doubtful.
- Welsh is our native language and should be encouraged in all schools.
- Shopping local is likely to lead to more Welsh being spoken
- the plan, and Welsh is too weak. The language in the valley will erode, and it will be because of the council's lack of vision and care.
- English speaking schools have less opportunities with learning Welsh and I believe if this was encouraged more when I and other adults were in school then it would have benefited us. Many adults wish they were able to speak Welsh or even attended a Welsh school.
- English is the business language of the world so Wales must focus on this to provide the best living standards for its citizens. There are other better choices for a second language such as Chinese..
- Any opportunity to promote our language and heritage is positive
- By raising the profile of and opportunities to learn Welsh the language will have a much stronger chance of thriving in our community
- Particularly in education there are plans to increase Welsh medium schools
- A lot of people these days do not use the Welsh language I can't see it becoming more popular

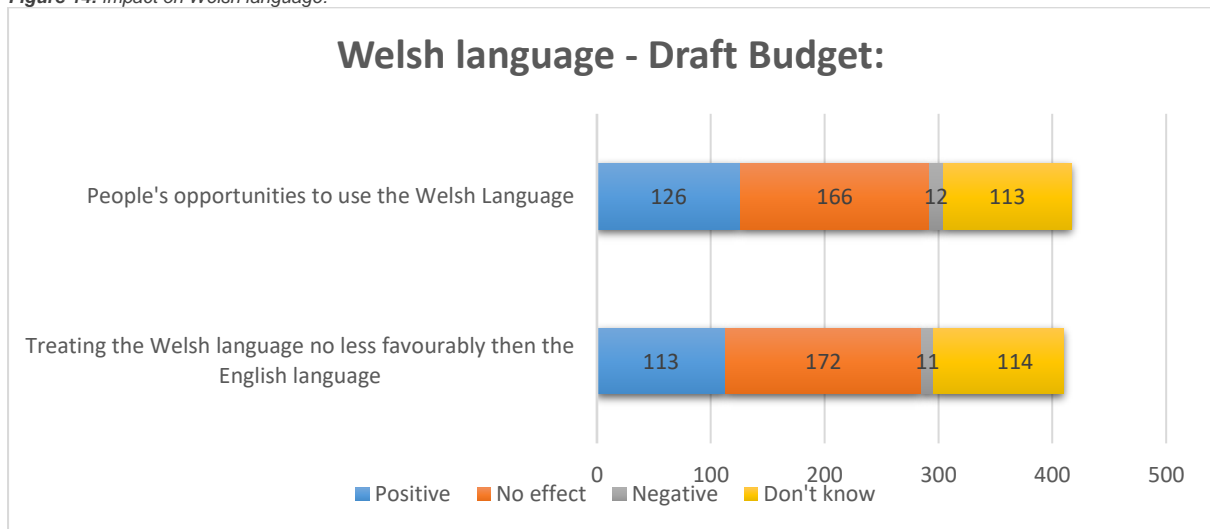
- The use of the Welsh language looks to be promoted in the plan and I can see no negative impact suggested.
- The language should be promoted as much as possible.
- I believe in promoting the Welsh language but what I find extremely time consuming and frustrating is having to scroll through endless Welsh to get to the English. The majority of people in Wales use English as their first language so I believe it would be more beneficial to put the English first in correspondence then the Welsh rather than the other way around.
- Neath has a shortfall of Welsh speakers compared to some of its neighbouring counties.
- To use the language you first have to understand it. We lack a single point of contact for opportunities to learn and develop the Welsh from beginners to fluency, just as we lack a single point of contact for access to learning in general.
- Allowing opportunities to train in Welsh and becoming more confident will encourage more people to use it as part of their daily life
- Opportunities to learn are already available, however its encouraging individuals to join without having to react to numbers in a class
- Emphasis on Welsh language in the cultural well being objective - acknowledging the importance
- I have mixed feelings about this. You can't force people who have lived and worked here all their lives and who have never had to speak a word of Welsh to suddenly think that the Welsh language is vital or even necessary. Our heritage is extremely important and I am glad that people care about the Welsh language and that children are learning this at school but you can't force this issue down people's throats if it has never really been that relevant in their personal or working lives.
- With investment in schools and local culture and heritage, I would hope achievement of the priorities in the Corporate Plan would have a positive impact.
- People will choose - there are plenty of opportunities to learn Welsh if a person wishes to
- brought to the forefront
- gives the language more importance
- local area is very low with Welsh speakers - so minimal effect
- No need to encourage the Welsh language - concentrate on better English and foreign languages
- The Welsh language has been lost in many communities and around the town areas of NPT. A lot of people who can speak Welsh no longer do as a result of confidence of not using it day to day. Treating the Welsh Language no less favourably than English will encourage those who can or want to learn Welsh to start using the language more often.
- Too much money and educational time spent on Welsh language, Very little chance being used locally
- There should not be discrimination on Welsh or English speakers.
- There should be no differentiation between the two.
- I think we need more opportunities to learn and speak Welsh. More mainstream cultural opportunities
- Increase in Welsh school provision will have a positive impact.
- I think unless all schools in Wales are full Welsh speaking schools then the language is not learnt properly, most people leaving English speaking schools can't speak Welsh because 1 lesson a week and text book learning is not the way to learn a language
- WESP is referenced as part of the draft plan
- I don't see Welsh language pushed enough in schools. If we want Welsh Language to have an impact it needs to be compulsory during primary and early secondary phase
- this should have been done years ago
- People can be encouraged to use the Welsh language in more subtle ways. Poetry readings / using actors like in Llancaiac Ffawr Manor (Not sure if I spelt that correctly). Perhaps something at Margham Castle - Great resource!
- The more we do the better we get! However there is still a lack of acknowledgement and implementation of the language amongst the workforce.
- I think it's a good thing
- the plan should be balanced
- The country isn't run in Welsh and more opportunities will always present themselves in English
- Unfortunately, the Welsh language is not recognized in business sectors and until that changes, there will be no effect
- happy for Welsh language to improve
- There is no provision to encourage the use of the Welsh language
- not many people actually speak Welsh in NPT

- Apart from more Welsh medium schools I didn't see anything else on there relating to Welsh language.
- Would like to see more support for the use of the Welsh Language
- From your previous assertions in this survey you will provide better facilities for youngsters to learn Welsh. This enriches our culture.
- No effect - I don't see big enough changes to instill lasting change.
- We need to keep the Welsh language alive
- We need to keep our language alive
- The Welsh language is consistently being promoted as part of every day life
- People will or will not speak Welsh regardless, I think it's a complete waste of resources sending out printed information as standard in both Welsh and English, I agree that Welsh should be made available, but at a request. I don't know a single person who would prefer communication in Welsh and I can't imagine how much money is wasted by printing out Welsh versions of everything for everyone!
- I don't really have an opinion on this. While I generally think learning Welsh is a good thing, it should not be at the expense of speaking other languages.
- It's not seen or recognised as essential language
- I don't think it's specific enough
- it will take generations to reimplement the Welsh language
- Good ideas
- Recognition of WL within the objectives
- I don't think many people are bothered about the Welsh language.
- I am English speaking my child went to Welsh school. so I am OK with people talking in native tongue
- Not a very Welsh speaking area and there has not enough support to keep what little there was alive over many years. New appointments to the LA should be Welsh speaking or willing to learn
- You're trying to upgrade Welsh accessibility in all areas
- The Welsh school Rhos Afan wouldn't even accommodate my daughter who has SEN. So how can you help promote children to speak Welsh when they won't even accept children in the first place
- People should be encouraged to send their children to Welsh school
- I put positive but unfortunately many people aren't interested to learn /use Welsh
- Some people are used to speaking on either Welsh or English and it's up to you what language you want to speak
- Important to preserve our language
- I find a lot of people speak Welsh and those who don't do have the option to learn it
- In line with the WG 2030 Welsh Language Strategy
- I am not Welsh but people need to learn with own language
- you are wasting so much paper printing etc on bilingual information. it should be on request only
- I'm unsure how many people have the motivation to learn and use Welsh more often.
- Pessimistic about the use of Welsh, don't see much gain from previous initiatives
- We are so used to speaking English, most people wouldn't want to change.
- The Welsh language should be an integrated part of each of the main aims, as it directly impacts everything mentioned.
- Through the strategy for Welsh language education
- I think there is room for more positive effects by including more explicit commitment to the Welsh language, but already the proposed changes will increase opportunities for existing Welsh speakers and new Welsh learners. A focus on bringing these communities together would be fantastic eg in libraries or new social spaces. Learners lack opportunities to practice their skills.
- Not sure, historically this has been a slow process.
- We are only tinkering around the edges with the Welsh language
- Welsh language needs to be encouraged in all ages in community
- See previous observation on the Welsh language. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.
- Being a parent who is a non Welsh speaker I sent my son to a Welsh School because there was transport available, if this was the case when I was of school age I think this could have encouraged more people to have gone to Welsh medium schools and therefore there would now be more Welsh speakers in the community thus giving more opportunity for more to speak the language.

- The plans are still vague
- Welsh, but not a Welsh speaker, tho kids & grand kids are. Speaking it hasn't given them any better opportunities. In my opinion.
- Anything to encourage use of the Welsh language will hopefully have a positive effect. Not sure how positive though.
- What it brought and what it have to offer
- Because I am unsure of the council's commitment to the Welsh language given the fact that the old court buildings are now being used by the council when they would have been hugely beneficial to the schoolare
- Various measures cited in your Plan would have a positive impact.
- Wirh everything else that is happening, I do not think it is relevant enough
- More free classes to learn Welsh for adults.
- The Welsh language is used as a tool to bully and exclude, it is fundamentally anti-English.
- I honestly have no idea.
- I think language should be a choice and English should be treated no less favourably, which often happens.
- It states that it is going to positively promote the Welsh language
- I hope it will be positive but am not really sure, the standard of Cymraeg in some of your social media posts is not always good!
- Not specific enough to be able to see that there would be a difference.
- No comment
- This is trivial. So much poverty currently happening. Minimum wage workers struggling. What support will you be offering them!
- Investment in the Pontardawe Art Centre offers the potential to develop the Council's Welsh Language offer
- People frequently state they are embarrassed at their lack of ability to converse in Welsh, however they need to invest time to study and also need opportunities to use it in practice.
- More emphasis on cultural history
- Investment in the Pontardawe Art Centre offers the potential to develop the Council's Welsh Language offer.
- We need to move forward
- As Port Talbot is generally English I cannot see that people would want change
- Promoting the use of the Welsh language can only have a positive effect.
- It is important to promote and maintain our heritage and language.
- Keep our Welsh language going
- I think it's positive to incorporate Welsh language into daily life as it is part of where we live and who we are. It is important for it to be equal.
- As the Welsh language is going to be encouraged I think it will make a positive change.
- Societ's perceptions are difficult to change and though it is great that we continue to fight these perceptions it will always be a fight we need to continue. I hope to be proven wrong.
- English language is more widely used.
- Welsh is a language that is not used
- I think the WG initiative promotes the Welsh language well which allows council to promote it at little cost to them.
- There is insufficient detail in the plan to come to a decision on whether or not there would be an impact - what are the Council actually going to do (the detail behind the aspirations are not included in the plan)
- It benefits people to speak both languages
- I don't know anyone that speaks Welsh
- Equal to all
- Don't think people are interested in learning Welsh
- Don't speak Welsh
- No one speaks Welsh
- People have to want to engage so it means a change of mindset and societal changes
- I don't believe the Welsh language is treated less favourably at the moment so the corporate plan will have no impact
- Too much natural English speaking
- Providing increased opportunity to develop and promote the Welsh language is a positive.
- Tried to learn but found it hard.
- I think it will be great to encourage and use the Welsh language in businesses where needed and can be helpful. But good it won't be penalised for not speaking fluent Welsh.

- Firmly believe all junior schools should be taught Welsh not some. Six Grandchildren - 3 fluent Welsh (Trebanos)
- Freedom of choice
- Being able to speak welsh or english would be an advantage to a firm/business if the employed someone who was bilingual.
- I am unfortunately not a welsh speaker but would love to learn and think it should be encouraged and provided for.
- Optimistoc response - don't really know!
- There is already opportunities to use the language, but not enough training for non-speakers.
- Everypne speaks English
- Too little too late for our generation. Hope future generations benefit
- I wish Welsh/English road signs were different coloured; by the time i've scabbled through, i've missed direction.
- Welsh language needs to be encouraged and improved for future generations.
- Migration. English spoken more widely than Welsh in My experience
- Welsh language is being lost, so more oppourtunities for it to be spoken is positive
- It will encourage more people to learn
- If all schools taught bi-lingually Welsh/English from 4+ years, then pupils will grow up fluent in both

Figure 14: impact on Welsh language:



We asked people to give the reasons for their responses. There were 83 responses, as follows:

- Peoples viewpoint on welsh language won't change because more emphasis is put on it
- I don't think it's going to make the slightest bit of difference sorry.
- There's a chance for improvement but welsh is still seen as a optional extra in Wales
- As previously explained
- Too much emphasis on the Welsh language.
- Haven't a clue sorry
- Not relevant
- More bilingualsigns and more Welsh road signs.
- Investment in the language
- I feel there is already opportunity and NPT do treat both favourably
- People have far more pressing issues than a nice to have hobby such as learning Welsh..or any other languages..
- I do not believe the welsh language has anything to do with a financial budget, unless the translation costs are considered.
- Complete waste of time and money
- The budget includes some extra money for heritage and culture, so hopefully will benefit the Welsh language
- it would be fab if the welsh language was used more.
- I hope the effect is positive but I will not hold my breath on this matter. Sadly.

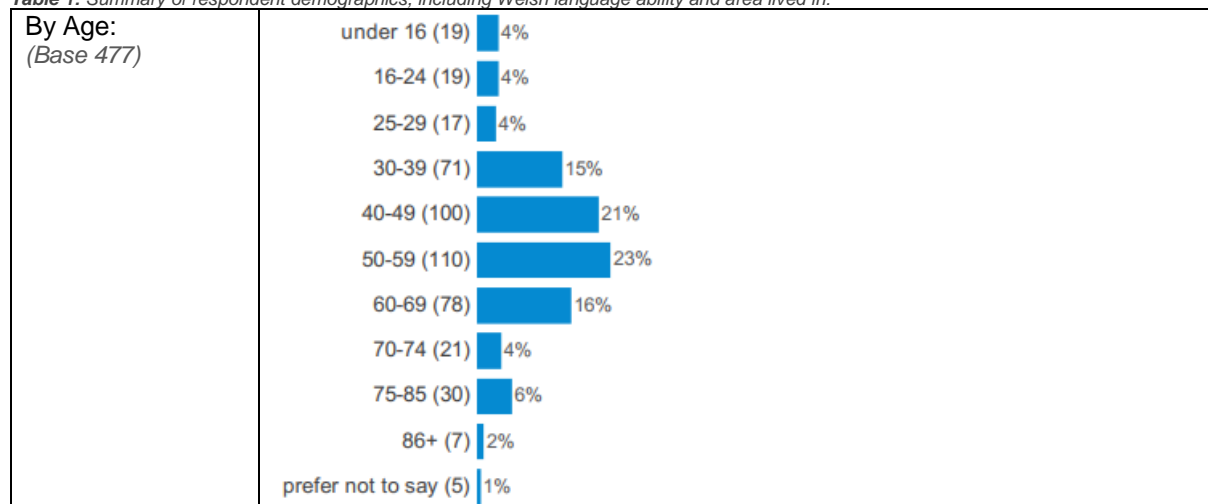
- There are excellent opportunities for promotion of our language
- Funding for Welsh medium education
- All schools need to use Welsh if the whole population is going to be able to speak Welsh in years to come
- Positive but only if individuals take the opportunity to learn
- People will choose - most don't want to speak Welsh
- more money being invested to help
- Not required
- Too much time spent on Welsh language means less education
- The Welsh language and culture need to be protected and preserved.
- More money is needed.
- due to lack of funding for culture and heritage
- Again I feel that if Welsh language is not taught compulsory in school then it will be hard for people to use it on a regular basis
- not applicable
- Welsh language should be a choice and not influenced
- I have a daughter who teaches in a Welsh medium school so I am all for using more Welsh
- Not popular in NPT
- If undertaken then there should be a positive effect
- There does not seem to be any correlation between the two
- More funds available to teach children the language.
- Good ideas
- people need to learn to keep minds free of bad thoughts. so to learn a new language is good
- This is a long term aim and there needs to be a much more focused programme
- Need to see more detail on the proposals to answer question accurately
- It's positive but ultimately up to the individual choice to want to learn /use
- It's up to you what language you want to speak
- Welsh Language, Culture & History important
- just my opinion
- Positive but more is needed as a local authority.
- Important issues , but not at the cost of improving other facilities in Neath , this issue is not a priority
- Unsure if this is a top priority for people with the current energy price worries and after effects of the pandemic.
- Non-Welsh speakers will just continue to speak English.
- Anything to improve the use of Welsh in our community is essential to the future of the language
- See my previous comments on the Welsh language (Although I am a fairly good Welsh language speaker, I disagree with using money to promote Welsh. It should be allowed to sink or swim on its own merits, The money would be more useful used for other things. I am NOT anti-Welsh language, but it must support itself.)
- There are many areas where the council fail miserably - budgets are set and budgets then lose a lot of funds because lack of real achievement goals show afterwards - I am so sorry I have no confidence in the council at all and as I am only 1 nothing that I can do that would improve our way forward even this draft that I am writing on is full of twaddle. Most people want straight talking easy to understand without finding out what this or that means. I am 78 years never used computers/smart phones etc. etc. retired at 67 yrs working for NPT Community Team. So I do know a little what I'm writing here.
- Not speaking FLUENT Welsh can be a JOB disadvantage. Town dwellers rarely use it so there is limited 'practice' available.
- Any initiatives will hopefully have a positive effect
- What it has to offer
- I'm unsure as to the council's commitment to the Welsh language as stated previously
- Your positive objectives on language parity.
- The Welsh language is used as a tool to bully and exclude
- Again - I feel that language is a choice. It is very hard to ask for English only comms.
- Past experience.
- There needs to be more definite plans made to ensure this - locally and by WG.
- seems to be mentioned frequently
- It is person choice to learn Welsh

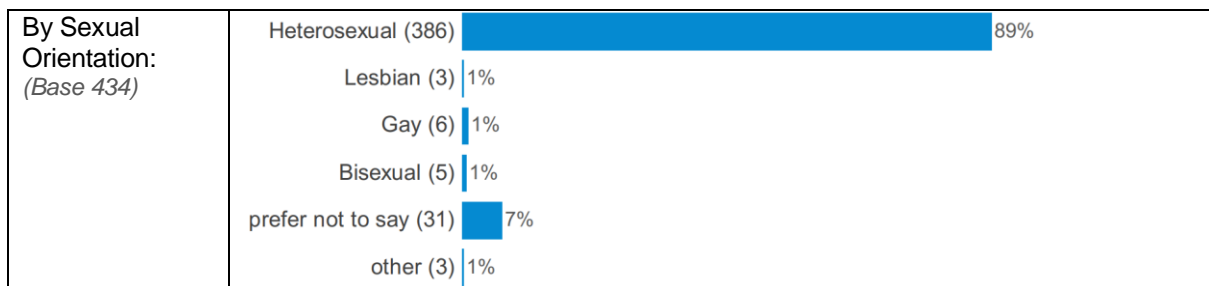
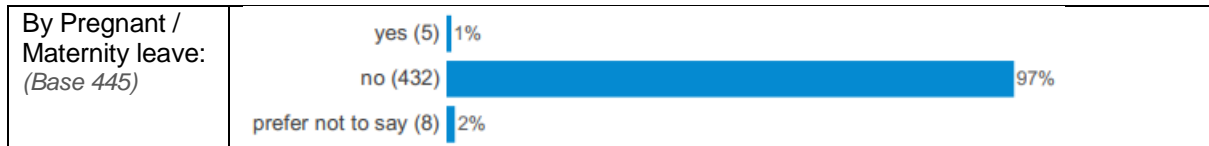
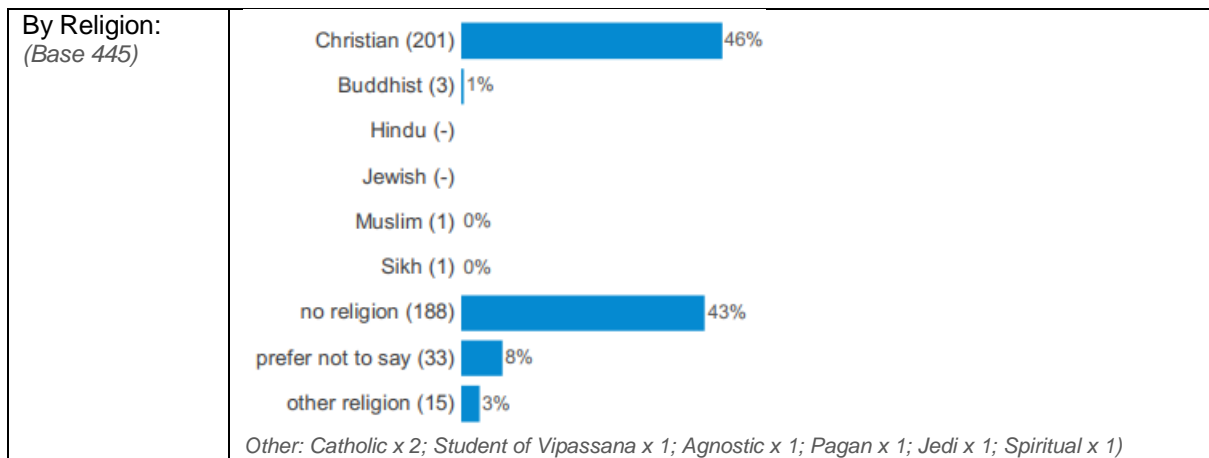
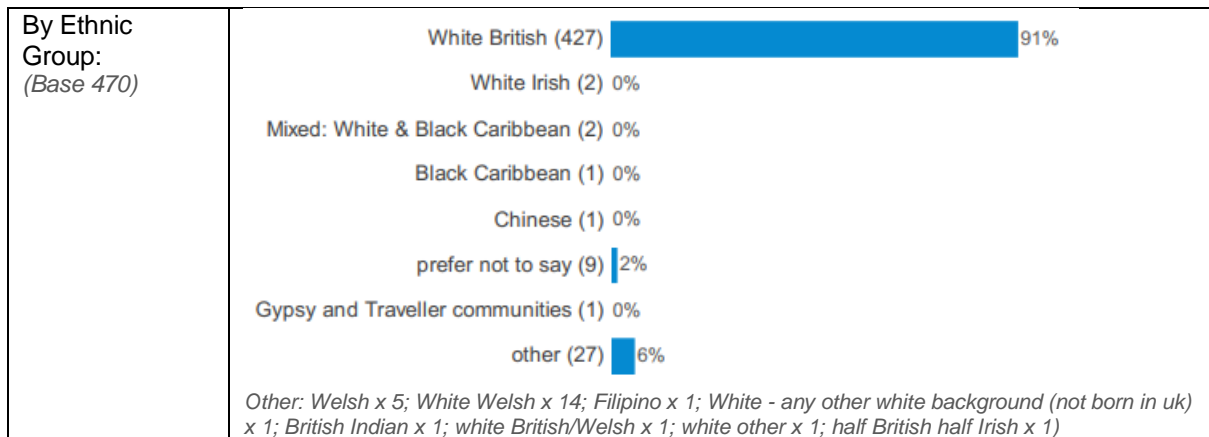
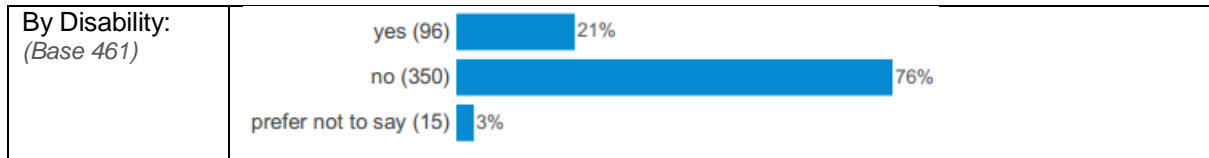
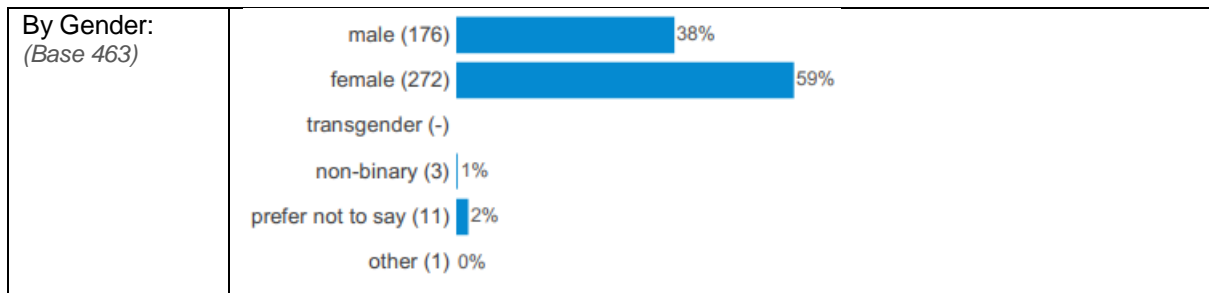
- Welsh language is extremely important to prioritise. I feel like we're often in a tick box mode where English is the focus and if Welsh is used it's not really developed. Welsh should be celebrated not kept separately. A lot more work could be done on this. .
- Cannot speak Welsh personally and most of the population are English speaking. The only advantage to being able to speak Welsh would be jobs in Cardiff Welsh Assembly.
- Promoting the Welsh language can only have a positive effect
- Society's perceptions are difficult to change and though it is great that we continue to fight these perceptions it will always be a fight we need to continue. I hope to be proven wrong.
- It's good to see the Welsh language promoted in Neath Abbey Primary School
- Welsh is not spoken here
- Everybody is equal no matter what language you speak
- Not many people in the area speak Welsh
- Don't speak Welsh
- No one speaks Welsh
- I think it's about giving people more and also equal opportunities within their skill sets to help in areas where it is needed.
- Opportunities yes but as several people of my age we spoke Welsh prior to going to infants and junior schools
- The reason for my response is that it will give favourable opportunities to both languages. People who speak Welsh, people who speak English, also people who are bilingual and speak both.
- I think that the Welsh language should be always encouraged and provided for.
- I hope the effect will be positive as it deserves to be.
- Hopefully, I don't know the extent of enthusiasm for / resistance to the Welsh language in the people of Wales
- People who want to speak Welsh; speak Welsh - those who don't, won't. Spending 1.2 million isn't going to change that. Welsh is preferred over English - and so it should be.
- Question 15 very poorly written. What's your sex orientation got to do with anything?
- Weigh up how many people want the Welsh language & why.
- Migration - English spoken more than Welsh in this area
- Particularly in relation to heritage projects
- If people speak English as a first language, it will be their choice if they want to learn Welsh. However, if schools (all of them) were bi-lingual equally in both English + Welsh from 4+ years, then Welsh will be fluent + widely spoken in Wales alongside English. I'd like to see this happen.

Who responded

The response profile to the questionnaire is summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of respondent demographics, including Welsh language ability and area lived in:





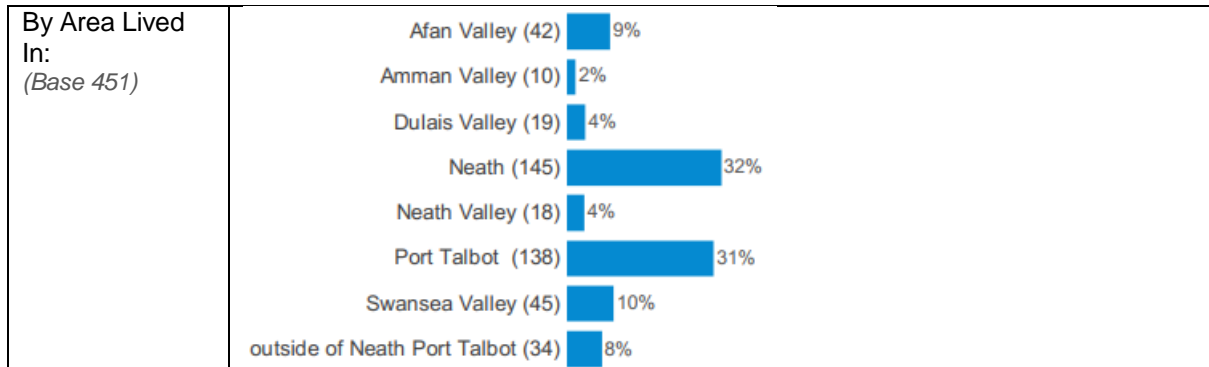
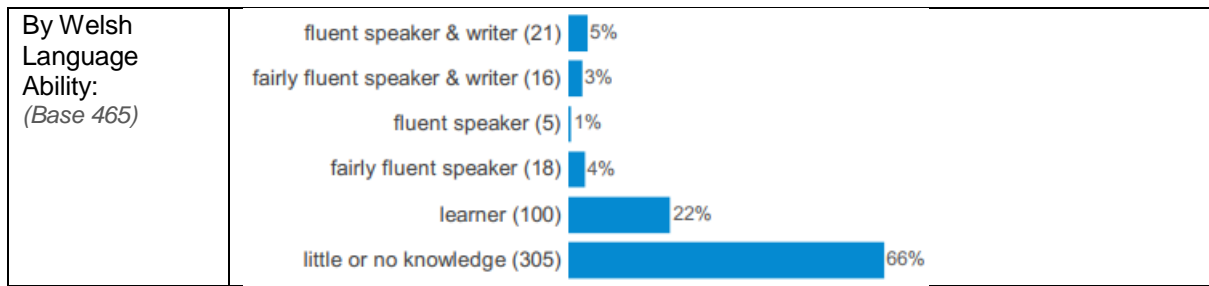
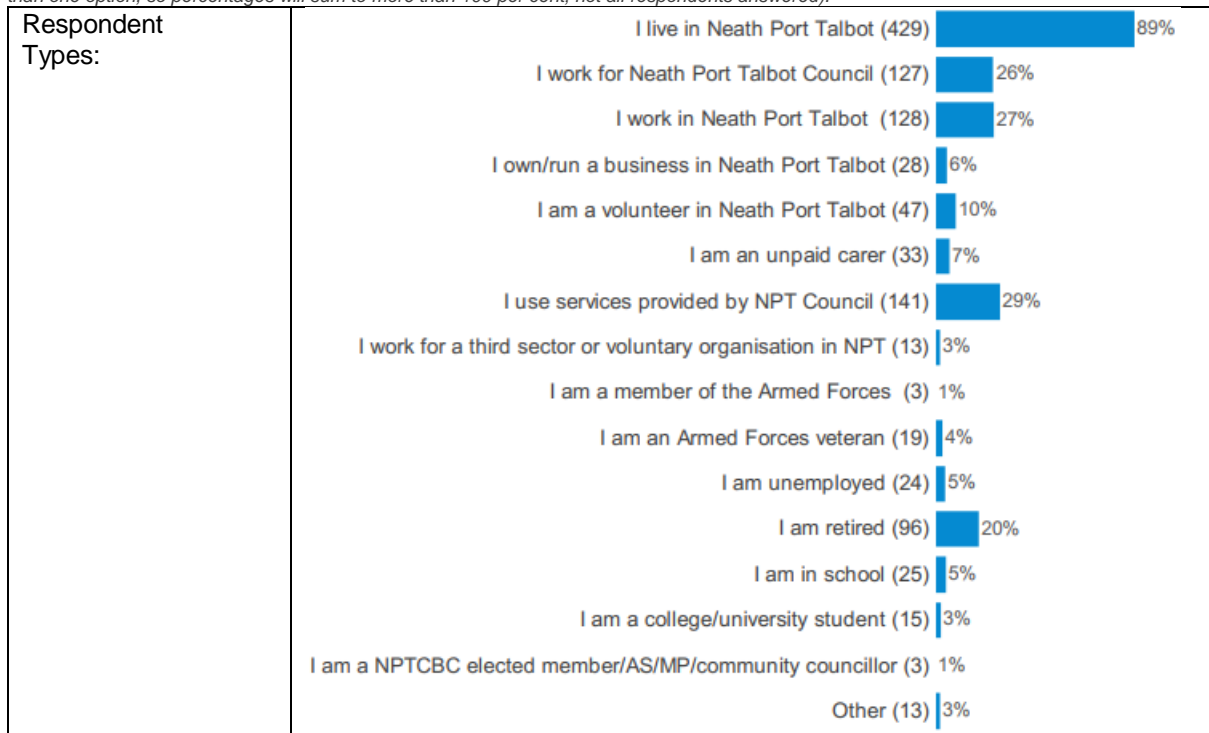


Table 2: Summary of the ways in which respondents described themselves and their relationship to NPT (NB respondents could choose more than one option, so percentages will sum to more than 100 per cent; not all respondents answered).



Responses from Groups and Partners

Three formal responses were received from:

- Natural Resources Wales (via NPT PSB)
- Pobl Group (Via NPT PSB)
- Gwynfi Mners' Community Hall

Natural Resources Wales

The last 2 years or so has been life changing for us all and we have faced and risen to enormous challenges in our personal and professional lives in delivering our "business as

usual” as well as managing the impacts of the Covid pandemic. We share your vision for continued working together as we progress through the recovery and renewal phases of the pandemic. The successful delivery of the ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act relies on good collaboration and synchronicity across the public and private sectors. There are many examples where this is working well already, and we were pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Natural and Cultural Heritage wellbeing objective of this plan. Our further comments are as follows.

General comments

By way of background to the broader picture, NRW’s State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) 2020 highlights that Wales has more to do in how it is managing its environment. SoNaRR sets this out as the 4 aims of sustainable management of natural resources:-

- Stocks of natural resources are maintained for future generations
- Ecosystems are resilient
- Healthy places for people
- A regenerative economy with sustainable production and consumption

Presently we are not meeting any of these aims and we have recognised that the following three key systems are where most gains are to be made:

- Energy
- Transport
- Food

Neath Port Talbot’s corporate strategy and associated plans can help influence positive action within these systems. We would encourage the sustainability question to pervade all decision making across all 4 wellbeing objectives.

Cross-cutting comments

Climate change adaptation and mitigation feature under the Natural and Cultural Heritage (NCH) objective and there is a focus on decarbonisation/renewables in the Jobs/Skills objective. The impacts of climate change, however, will be relevant across all wellbeing objectives and we must also ensure that we are resilient to the anticipated risks that a changing climate will bring. The UK Climate risk website contains useful tools for considering the risk and actions in a range of sector briefings, e.g. energy, housing, health and social care.

Best start

The natural environment can play an important part in the early years development of our children and the county offers significant opportunities for outdoor learning with added value of connecting young people to their local communities and environment. This links to the NCH action around raising awareness and interest in the local environment and environmental issues.

The links between outdoor green space and blue space/wild play opportunities and physical and mental wellbeing in young people are well documented. Action is needed to secure adequate provision of safe, accessible natural green spaces.

Thriving communities

We support the asset based approach. As above – community resilience to climate change should feature as part of the assessment.

We are pleased to see action to “clean up and green up”, recognising the important role of a high quality local environment, e.g. good air quality, accessible natural green space in place-making. Often social and environmental inequities go hand in hand - some of the most deprived communities are also areas of poorer environmental quality and will often be home to those who are most vulnerable to the risks of climate change. Targeting these areas will derive greatest benefits. In developing greater community resilience there will be opportunities to build in nature based solutions - this is highlighted in the NCH objective.

We support action around place making and high quality/low carbon housing. Active travel links, as well as improved public transport should feature as a fundamental consideration of better connectivity within and between communities.

Natural and Cultural heritage

The Biodiversity Duty Plan is referenced in linked plans, but there is perhaps merit in more overt recognition of the actions required under that plan in the actions section. This plan will also be a relevant consideration under the other objectives.

Jobs and skills

We support the focus on sustainable, well paid “green” jobs and the action to develop the decarbonisation and renewable energy sectors. Part of this should see the development of the circular economy and shortening of supply chains. Interventions may provide the opportunity for delivering multiple benefits, for the economy, communities and the environment, e.g. the Pen y Cymoedd windfarm.

It is positive to see a link to provision of good transport hubs and connections between home and work. Similarly, active travel routes provide opportunities to deliver health and wellbeing, environmental as well as connectivity benefits.

The plan recognises that the natural environment of the county provides significant economic opportunities, e.g. supporting recreation and tourism. There is also a need to ensure that the environment is protected and improved (i.e. sustainable management) to secure these natural assets in the long term.

I hope you find the above useful and we look forward to future collaboration with you in taking some of the above action forwards. If you do have any queries then please get in touch.

Pobl Group

Overall – the plan is ambitious and inspiring. The four pillars around which its structured make good sense. I like the way the plan sets a long term vision for each pillar, articulates why this is necessary using data and evidence, talks to what citizens consider important ... then sets short and medium term goals to progress towards the vision.

The agenda is enormous .. feels a bit overwhelming but then its hard to find things that could be struck out . The organisational challenge will inevitably be resourcing and creating wider ownership and specific accountability. I like the fact that the council talks about partners throughout the document as the achievement of many of the aims will need a ‘shared endeavour’ approach . This is definitely the case in relation to the homes, communities and wider decarbonisation challenges.

Some of the enabling actions in the plan in terms of offering small grants to community groups to take some ownership can also be extremely powerful. With this in mind I wonder if the decarbonisation aims could embrace the education and involvement of citizens more widely beyond the Councils own carbon footprint (I may have missed this) .

The plan is very comprehensive and I don’t have much to add but would say you can count of Pobl’s to support its delivery.

A tiny point which may be a nice touch The plan is signed off by the leader and CX . It might be nice to have their pictures in there and their first names which may help citizens see the two key people behind the plan ?

Gwynfi Miners Community Hall



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL BUDGET 2022-23

Consultation Response on Council Budget.

Gwynfi Miners Community Hall welcomes the Welsh Government's proposed uplift of 8.8% for Neath Port Talbot CBC next year with subsequent annual uplifts of 3.5% and 2.4%. These are the most generous settlements that local government has received for very many years. And in this context we are particularly pleased to see that the Council leadership states:-

“We propose to increase youth and outdoor leisure services to boost the wellbeing of young people as well as providing new funding for schools to support children with additional learning needs.

We propose to strengthen support for vulnerable people, including those who have become lonely and isolated due to the pandemic and also increase the number of neighbourhood teams as part of a drive to catch up, clean up and green up towns and villages.”

In the last decade the Council has almost totally withdrawn from the provision of non-statutory services to our community. Indeed the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Arwelfa shows that even statutory services are not immune or protected.

Through a massive and sustained local community effort some of the services that the Council had withdrawn have been restored. This has involved local groups and individuals in the Upper Afan Valley securing £150-250,000 in grants and donations annually. This is simply not sustainable on a year by year basis. This has been achieved with minimal or no Council support. It is a time for a reset on this lack of support if we are to have thriving and sustainable communities across Neath Port Talbot.

We know from research by Sheffield Hallam University that our community has been one of the hardest hit by the effects of austerity. We also know from Public Health Wales data, that as a disadvantaged and low income community, we have borne an excessive burden of the Covid pandemic. This is acknowledged in the Council's own draft strategic plan which states:- ***“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.”*** However it is not at all clear in the budget proposals how this cross cutting objective will be met as there are no clear programmes identified to achieve this.

Our Council now faces the choice of continuing to ignore the gross and ever growing inequalities within its own boundaries or it can choose to genuinely Reset and Renew by making a greater effort to provide services and facilities in line with need, fair play and social justice. A physical infrastructure of buildings and people is needed if the Council is to be able to deliver on its draft vision of **“community support”, “early intervention and prevention”** as well as boosting tourist and local enterprise and to deliver schemes such as **“the Summer of Fun”**.

There is little point in calling for **“...a strong focus on encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to adopt active lifestyles to improve physical and emotional wellbeing.”** when local facilities and staff that would facilitate this happening are not being actively supported by the Council and other statutory bodies.

If the Council is serious about its declared objective to **“Reset and Renew”** through **“investing in the recovery of our communities and our local economy”** its work must begin in those communities who have lost the most over the last decade and who have been left with the least provision.

Basic common sense demands that those with the greatest need should secure a fresh start in terms of investment rather than a continuation of the endless disinvestment and managed decline that residents in the Upper Afan Valley have experienced. Without this investment it will be impossible to restore **“Communities (that) are thriving thriving (and where) inequalities in health, economic and social outcomes have reduced.”**

We all recognise that the causes of the last decade of austerity did not start at the doors of Neath Port Talbot Council. But how the Council has responded has meant that virtually all new investment has been concentrated in the bigger urban centres and south of the M4 corridor while the areas with the greatest social need and most remote from mainstream provision have had to face cutback after cutback.

We are aware that the proposal to freeze Council Tax will be politically popular across most of the Borough not least because of the unfairly high levels in Neath Port Talbot. And it will benefit some hard pressed families. But it will not benefit severely disadvantaged families and communities who are already outside the council tax net. As such the proposal to freeze council tax is a re-distributive measure that will reduce the resources available to address current inequalities and service cutbacks. In its budgetary plans, fairness requires the Council to ensure that all residents and communities will benefit.

To begin this process of putting fairness and need at the heart of the budget process Gwynfi Miners Community Hall believes the following steps are urgently needed:-

- provide guaranteed grant support for staff in our existing community centres. Without this support it will be impossible have the facilities from which priorities such as social isolation, promoting the wellbeing of our young people or community recovery can be delivered.
- review the physical fabric of these facilities with a view to their remediation.
- provide more support for outdoor sports facilities to complement the excellent voluntary work that is already taking places.
- review existing patterns of public transport to make it easier for people to get to work, education, public services and amenities that are available to more affluent communities in urban locations..
- work with local businesses and groups to improve the tourist and leisure opportunities that exist in the Upper Afan as an important economic driver.
- invest in the good upkeep and cleanliness of our public spaces and work with the local voluntary groups that are doing excellent work in this regard.