



Tai Tarian

Tai Tarian Update Report 2022 – 2023



Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide cabinet members with an update on the work Tai Tarian has conducted throughout Neath Port Talbot Borough during 2022–2023.

Highlights

Keeping our new homes promise

We have continued with our commitment to build sustainable homes with several ambitious construction projects.

At the heart of our programme is the re-development of the County Flats estate in Sandfields, Port Talbot. The first two blocks have now been renovated, with elements of the project being built off site at the Sevenoaks Modular factory in Neath, before being transported the short distance to site.



Natural materials including wood pulp and wool form a major part of the insulation along with the latest technology, meaning these homes are some of the most environmentally friendly homes in Wales. Attention now turns to the re-development of the next phase of the project.

The project has benefited from a variety of community engagement. Collaborating with primary contractor J.G Hale we have been able to conduct a successful community challenge at the neighbouring NSA Centre, donated equipment to Port Talbot Panthers RFC and donated towards the 'Funky Friday's' additional needs discos.

There have been several employment opportunities at the site which included, work experience positions, traineeships, apprenticeships, and full-time employment.

A community hub was created central to the site to encourage the residents to engage with the contractors and Tai Tarian. A local graffiti artist was appointed to design and paint two murals inside the hub. There was no fee for the works, instead a donation to be given to a local children's charity, Action for Children towards their Positive Outcome Play Services (POPS) that provides support and play sessions for children and young people with disabilities.



Work has continued to build 25 new homes at Pant Celydd in Margam by building contractor CJ Construction. Through community engagement, CJ Construction completed a community project for the local football club by building two new dugouts on the playing fields. They also gifted to local foodbanks during the Christmas period. With our partnership links with CJ Construction, two Tai Tarian apprentices have been given the opportunity to further their knowledge and skills, by spending time collaborating with our contractor on site.



Eaglesbush, just off Meadow Road in Neath, is Tai Tarian's biggest development to date, with a further 52 homes under construction. The project will include flats, large family homes and bungalows.



Through community engagement, Jones Brothers recognised two local boys who live opposite the site who had been intrigued by the work and the various machines on site. Both boys were invited to take a closer look and presented with a toy digger to remind them of their visit.

The contractors sponsored a beehive at Melin primary school. They visited the school along with the 'Bee1' project, where the children learned about how a beehive works and the importance of bees to our ecosystem. The pupils had fun making seed bombs during the session.

Another major re-development is also due to begin soon in Cwmafan. Thirty bungalows which have reached the end of their natural lives will make way for 43 modern, energy-efficient homes with improved public spaces.



Elsewhere, work is due to start on the re-development of the Eagle House site in Port Talbot town centre. This will involve the demolition of the existing building and the construction of 18 energy-efficient apartments with a commercial space on the ground floor.

Welsh Government Homelessness Grant Funding was used to convert the 'Big Cam', a well-known pub in central Neath, into 10 modern, energy efficient apartments.

Changing lives with job opportunities

We have continued to provide employment opportunities across the business with our apprenticeship programme recruiting four individuals. The four recruits are working towards qualifying in several trades, including plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry, and plastering.

Elsewhere we have marked a milestone with our Copper Foundation, with our 10th intake of recruits. Launched in 2016, the programme aims to give people struggling to find work a route back into employment, by offering them a 12-month contract as well as support to complete training courses and obtain qualifications.



Our contractors have also created job and training opportunities for local youngsters, with apprenticeships in trades such as scaffolding, site management and quantity surveying being offered as part of their commitment to us.



New faces for Board and Academy

All tenants were given the opportunity to take part in a Board Ready training programme. Following a recruitment exercise we have appointed 2 additional tenants to our Board and one to our Operations Committee initially, with a view to



her joining the Board during 2023. Our new recruits are already playing an integral part in the decision making of the organisation ensuring we are accountable to tenants and other stakeholders.

Elsewhere our Academy has been bolstered by 10 new members. The Academy, which is comprised of our tenants, assist in assessing how we have performed. By working jointly with our staff and reviewing performance information, they

helped us to develop a set of improvement actions, all of which are set out in our Making a Difference Storyboards which are reviewed by the Board for approval and published on our website.

This work is an important element of our self-evaluation, and we hugely value the work undertaken by the Academy, as this helps us to continually improve services to our tenants.

Continuing to make homes greener

Green energy has made a big difference to tenants following the installation of solar panels and battery storage at 96 homes. The panels will help reduce electricity bills – but tenants will make bigger savings if they adapt their electricity use to make the most out of them.

Solar panels on just one of these homes can reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 tonnes per year. In simple terms, that is the equivalent of the amount of CO2 emissions that comes from using 536 gallons of petrol or charging 607,904 smartphones.



We have also been retrofitting empty homes to make them more energy efficient for new tenants. Our team look at homes on an individual basis before energy efficiency measures such as external and internal wall insulation, new windows, solar panels, battery storage, increased ventilation or insulated floors are introduced. The aim is to get these homes from on average an EPC D rating to an EPC A rating, that means not just a more comfortable home for tenants but a reduction in real terms energy usage which is great for the planet too.

We have continued with our External Wall Insulation (EWI) programme which has now been ongoing for several years. Its purpose is to keep homes cosy during cold weather and cool in warm weather. This means tenants enjoy a more comfortable home, plus lower energy usage. Thanks to its decorative outer layer, homes also look refreshed and the high-quality finishes we use are designed to be low maintenance over a long period of time.



Platinum Recognition for community efforts

Our continued commitment to making lasting positive changes in our local communities and our environment has been recognised with a prestigious accolade. Assessors from Healthy Working Wales have awarded us the Platinum status check for the work we have done to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff and the local community.

The award, which is the highest accolade given, is presented to exemplar organisations. The assessors were impressed by our commitment to biodiversity and engagement with local schools and communities, our Acts of Kindness Fund (donations made by Tai Tarian staff) and regular donations to foodbanks and support given to tenants struggling with the cost of living.

The Copper Foundation initiative and apprenticeship opportunities were also commended along with our sustainable planet commitment, especially our energy efficient homes.

Being bold for biodiversity

Last year we left many of our open spaces rewild for nature. By doing so we had lots of native wildflowers pop up along with 100s of trees which had self-seeded. It was a bold step which demonstrated our commitment to doing our bit for biodiversity, backed by Welsh Government’s encouragement to let it grow.

Reduced grass cutting on our land also allowed wildflowers to grow, creating a better habitat not just for bees and butterflies but invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles.



With many hectares of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach to managing our land will make a big difference. Our passionate neighbourhood team are driving the change and we are also sharing our knowledge with young people in the Borough through schools’ visits.

Renting Homes Wales

The Renting Homes Wales Act became law on 1st December. The Act improves how people rent, manage, and live in rented homes, which is good news for all tenants across Wales.

From December all new tenants have been signed up to new style contracts, with everyone else receiving theirs in the Spring. The contracts are large documents which legally have to be sent. To make things easier we included a letter explaining key areas, created an easy read guide, video series and included lots of frequently asked questions on our website.

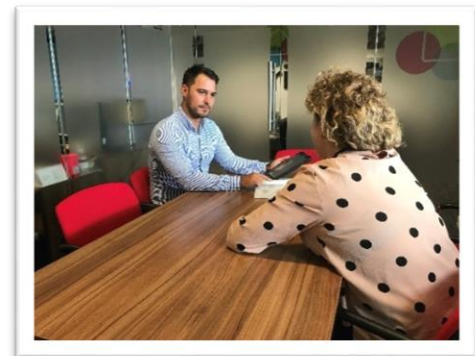
Support for tenants

The cost-of-living crisis is being felt keenly by tenants, so our Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit teams have supported them with money worries, budgeting help



and claiming or appealing benefits, which helps our tenants sustain their tenancies.

With energy costs higher than ever the team has worked tirelessly to ensure we have accessed as much income and funding as possible, to help support those most in need. The fuel bank support scheme demand has been very high, with 87 vouchers being issued on average each month. Tenants have been limited to three vouchers in 6 months and multiple vouchers have been issued to some individuals.



Our in-house Universal Credit team has also seen referrals up by 20 per month. Successful benefit claims are up 27% on last year and over £4 million in additional benefits has been raised for tenants. Demand for foodbank vouchers has also doubled in recent years, we are now issuing 44 per month on average.

Working jointly our income and Financial Inclusion teams provide support on benefit changes, budgeting, and digital support. Tenants are also supported to claim and manage their Universal Credit claims. Our performance:

- 1,445 Financial Inclusion referrals for benefit advice
- 1,285 Universal Credit referrals for claimant support
- 2,132 successful benefit claims
- 34 tenants supported with benefit appeals
- 85% benefits appeal success rate
- £4,706,962 money raised in unclaimed benefits
- 75 tenants received digital support
- 605 foodbank vouchers issued

The team have also shared their knowledge through ‘Steph’s column’ in Cartref, providing lots of useful information about reducing bills, government support and even awareness of scams, they have also created videos for social media to help share this information wider than just our tenants.

Community Reinvestment

Using the Welsh Government’s Value Wales Community Benefits toolkit, we have been able to demonstrate that, for every £1 spent on our major works programmes, £1.99 is reinvested in our local community out of a maximum £2 achievable.

Repairs

We want our tenants to feel proud of their homes and our dedicated staff and contractors are committed to delivering a high-quality repairs service. During this year we completed:

- 2,394 emergency repairs 100% were completed on time
- 16,156 non-emergency repairs 92% were completed on time
- 86% of tenants were satisfied with how we deal with repairs and maintenance (*1,031 tenants surveyed during 2022/23*)
- 99.99% gas safe homes *
- 99.83% electrical testing completed *



- 100% Fire Safety checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes *
- 100% Asbestos checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes *

(*as at 31st March 2023)

We completed:

- 21 New heating systems
- 88 External wall insulations
- 328 Windows
- 328 Doors
- 112 New roofs
- 271 Rewires
- 73 New kitchens
- 121 New bathrooms
- 140 Properties have benefited from improvement works to their external areas
- 5 Communal refurbishments



Customer Satisfaction

1,031 tenants were surveyed during 2022-23.

- 95% would recommend us to family and friends
- 91% overall service satisfaction
- 93% satisfaction with the overall quality of their home
- 93% neighbourhood satisfaction
- 90% say our rent provides value for money
- 63% say we listen and act on tenant views
- 92% trust us
- 93% say we provide a safe and secure home

Procurement

Through the procurement process we have awarded 17 contracts, to the value of circa £4,600,000. All tenders must maximise value for money and sign up to our community benefits scheme, which this year has seen a £63,000 donation to local groups and good causes.

£44,000 for local communities

We have continued to support our local communities, this year by investing over £44,000 worth of goods and services.

Through the Community Benefits Programme from April 2022- March 2023, we have donated to various projects in our communities within Neath Port Talbot. The donations have been broken down into the following categories:



Community Donation	£14,793
Community Projects	£11,097
Biodiversity Projects	£1,690
Community Challenge	£3,503
Sponsorships	£ 3,265
Welsh Procurement Alliance Funding	£10,000

Grand Total **£44,398**

Community Donations

Throughout the year we have collaborated with our contractors and gifted over thirty donations to the community, including:

Parc Howard Pony Club

Using our Community Benefit Programme, Joyners Ltd were able to purchase and deliver a fully equipped portacabin which will be used as a learning and development centre for young, disadvantaged community members.

NPT Pass Fit & Fed Programme

Through their community benefit obligations two of Tai Tarians contractors; Carl F Group and Jones Brothers Ltd kindly donated packed lunches for 135 children over two days of sport sessions. The purpose of the programme is to target the children in the most deprived areas and allowed them to enjoy free sports activities as well as a packed lunch.



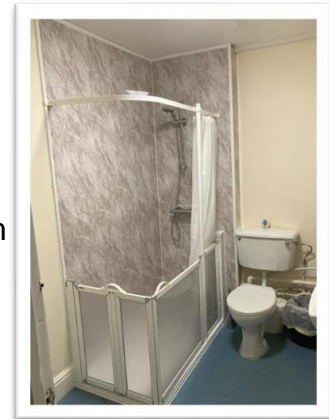
Community Projects

April 2022- March 2023, we completed seven Community Projects with our contractors through our Community Benefit programme.



Contractor: ASW Property Services; The Haven Centre - Neath

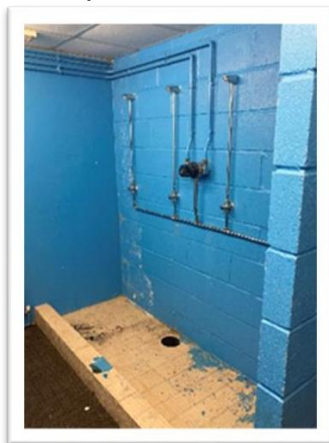
This project was identified as part of our working relationship with our housing department and their involvement with the Haven Centre. Our contractors ASW Property Services, installed a new walk-in shower facility in the existing bathroom area, giving the Haven Centre’s homeless service users a clean and safe bathroom space.



Contractor: Wynne Jones Property Maintenance; Neath Boys & Girls Club

Wynne Jones Property Maintenance at Neath Boys & Girls Club conducted this community project. Trades removed an old shower facility, upgraded the flooring, and decorate the area, so it can now be used as a multipurpose space when the club is re-opened to the public.

Before:



After:



Community Sponsorships

Multiple sports sponsorships and donations towards equipment have been given through our contractors’ community benefits programme throughout the year.



Target Recruitment and Training

Our Community Benefits programme is not just about giving donations to groups, it is also about giving opportunities to local people. Between April 2022- March 2023 our Target, Recruitment and Training programme has been a remarkable success. We have been able to work in partnership with our contractors and external partners to share a variety of employment opportunities on our website, complete mock interviews, provide on-site work placements, and provide apprenticeship opportunities.



Working in partnership with our contractor Hale construction and Cyfle Building Skills, two school leavers were given the opportunity to study for technical apprenticeships at our redevelopment site, County Flats.

Through our partnership with Pinnacle Scaffolding, two local young men were given the opportunity to work towards completing their apprenticeships before becoming fully qualified scaffolders.

School Engagement

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we completed four school engagements across the borough.

Trebanos Primary School:

We visited Trebanos Primary School to deliver a biodiversity presentation in their morning assembly and presented the school with nature themed gifts for their shared communal garden.



Community Challenge



Working in partnership with our contractors, Tai Tarian completed two Community Challenges during the year. These challenges saw staff volunteers and contractors help with maintenance and improvement works across Neath and Port Talbot.

NSA Centre - Port Talbot:

Tai Tarian and Hale staff took part in the Community Challenge at the NSA Centre in Sandfields, Port Talbot. The free day's maintenance included: clearance, gardening and painting the external areas of the building.



Giants Grave Boys & Girls Club - Neath:

This Community Challenge was held in the Giants Grave Boys & Girls Club. The works included fully decorating the internal sports hall. It will be used for community engagements.

Biodiversity Projects

Our Economic and Social Regeneration (ESR) team play a key role in stakeholder engagement. We collaborate with our partners and our communities, and naturally, engagement with schools is a key part of this. The team have been delivering sessions with local primary schools on biodiversity and the importance of nature. Primarily focusing on enhancing our own land for tree planting projects as part of our carbon neutral initiative while creating habitats to encourage the migration of bees by planting native plants alongside other environmental initiatives identified as part of the 'B- lines' project. We have also actively encouraged community growing to create sustainable communities.

Ty Banc Canal

PBM contractors through their community benefits obligations took part in a biodiversity project and assisted Ty Banc canal group with the installation of a nature and heritage trail along the Neath canal. The work included digging out old rotten posts, creating holes, and installing the new nature trail posts to include a QR code, linking to information and following the trail to find out the history of the canal and learn about the biodiversity in the area.



The Orchard Project Riverside Court - Pontardawe

After a successful consultation with the residents at Riverside Court Haven Housing Scheme, The Orchard Project gifted Tai Tarian an orchard of fruit trees to plant at the



scheme.

On the day, residents from the scheme volunteered, along with the ESR team and our Neighbourhood Officers. This was a wonderful opportunity for residents at the scheme and Tai Tarian staff to learn how to maintain the orchard trees in the future. The Orchard Project introduced orchard themed activities to prompt discussion around biodiversity. We will maintain our partnership work with the Orchard Project scheme on future projects.



Welsh Procurement Funding Canolfan Maerdy

Using the £10,000 funding secured from Welsh Procurement Alliance, we were able to complete a biodiversity project at Canolfan Maerdy in Tairgwaith. In line with Tai Tarian's Corporate Plan, this project falls under our Sustainable Planet and Sustainable Community objectives. Works included:

- Creating a community garden
- Planting an orchard
- Clearance works
- Jet washing the external area
- Installed new fencing
- Provided a new path
- Installed new signage
- Created planters and planted a variety of flowers and shrubs
- Purchased a new glass house and provided the scheme with various gardening equipment
- Purchased and built a storage shed
- Removed unsafe trees and reutilised the stumps as a seating area
- Planted fruit and vegetables for the community



On completion of these works, the aim of the community centre is to provide a 'Food Cooperative' to grow and produce a small amount of fruit and vegetables, which can be allocated to their foodbank and donated to the community.



Before:



After:



Act of Kindness (AOK)

An 'Act of Kindness' initiative created from staff and Tai Tarian contributions helps to deliver acts of kindness to staff, tenants, and community members, who may have experienced difficult times or those who have/are making positive impacts within their community. With an aim that a small act of kindness will make a big difference to peoples' lives. The fund works on a referral basis, with all staff being able to make suggestions on a case-by-case basis at any given time. The Act of Kindness fund is split into two subgroups, the Hardship Fund and Community Award.

The Hardship Fund:

Will help those who are struggling with everyday expenses, like buying food or clothing, or any other essentials.

The Community Award:

Will make donations to organisations such as foodbanks and community groups, helping them to provide valuable services to the community.



From April 2022 to March 2023, 59 referrals have been made and £4,000 has been donated. Due to ongoing external pressures, such as the cost of living and energy crisis demand on the Acts of Kindness fund has increased. In a bid to continue supporting staff, tenants, and community groups the AOK committee worked to



establish fundraising events. These events include fitness classes, cake sales, raffles and much more. The committee group launched its first fundraising appeal in February 2023 and plan to continue these events into the future. The continuation of these events will enable to the AOK fund to support more referrals.

AOK Donations

The AOK fund was used to ensure sixty-five isolated tenants received a Christmas dinner and desert. The donations meant that our vulnerable tenants could enjoy a warm meal on Christmas day.

Through Community Awards, over £800 worth of donations were made to local foodbanks to assist our tenants and the community. Donations have been spread across the borough and in conjunction with the Community Benefit programme to ensure all foodbanks were covered.

An in-house foodbank drop-off point has now been set up at Ty Gwyn where staff can make donations, with a different foodbank being selected each month. The AOK committee also pledged monthly donations of sanitary products in line with the Welsh Government initiative, A Period Proud Wales.

Tai Tarian staff purchased and donated gifts for the Young Carers Christmas gift appeal. The initiative is set up to ensure all young carers in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough have a gift to open on Christmas day. The generosity of staff and the AOK fund meant that eighty children had something to open and enjoy over the festive period.



Corporate Plan

Our 5 year Corporate Plan, which was launched in 2020, focuses on three key strategic themes that we believe will improve the health and wellbeing of our tenants, communities, and staff. We reviewed these themes, detailed below, in 2021/2022 to ensure our goals were still appropriate, and although the projects feeding these have changed slightly to respond to external impacting factors, we still felt confident in our themes and associated goals. Our teams continue to work extremely hard on the goals highlighted below and some notable projects include (but are not limited to) building new energy efficient homes, creating community plans and partnerships, and developing our decarbonisation strategy.

Themes: Sustainable Homes; Sustainable Communities; Sustainable Planet.



We are committed to creating homes where people can thrive so will strive to provide affordable homes and tailor our services to support our tenants.

We want to see our communities achieving their full potential so will form community partnerships to deliver services that matter to our customers.

We will support tenants to be healthy and active within their communities, through involvement and learning opportunities.

We want to change our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow so will be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030.

We will implement the principles of the circular economy and maximise any potential to invest and contribute to the foundational economy. A very ambitious plan, but one we are confident we can deliver.



Sustainable Communities - Communities achieving their full potential

- Community partnerships delivering services that matter to our customers
- Tenants supported to be healthy and active within their communities through focused and targeted involvement and learning opportunities

Sustainable Planet - Changing our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow



- To be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030
- Implement the principles of the circular economy and maximise any potential for the foundational economy.



Sustainable Homes - Creating homes where people can thrive

- Affordable homes for our tenants
- Tailored services to support tenants in their homes



