



COUNTERCULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

FINAL REPORT - SPORT

JUNE 2023

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This is Knight, Kavanagh & Page's (KKP) final report for Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Council as part of KKP's support to Counterculture Partnership LLP with the development of a Culture Strategy for Neath Port Talbot Council. KKP has been commissioned to:

- ◀ Provide assistance with reviewing relevant context: commenting on what is developed and ensuring key 'golden threads' are identified.
- ◀ Stakeholder engagement: leading consultation with stakeholders in the sports sector and wider strategic partners.
- ◀ Strategy development: leading the development of recommendations and action plans, in relation to sport.

1.2: Leisure contract background

In 2015, NPT Council gave Celtic Leisure (a company Limited by Guarantee and registered charity, a social enterprise) a 10-year contract to manage and operate the Council's public leisure centres.

In 2018 the Council reduced the management fee to £1.4m from £2m. This reportedly had a negative impact on the services delivered by Celtic Leisure. The Covid Pandemic hit all leisure providers extremely hard and the cost of living crisis, and especially utility costs is extending those pressures.

In 2020, the Council decided to look for a new service provider for the next 25 years due to underperformance by Celtic Leisure.

The Council undertook a procurement exercise in 2022, and when the options appraisal went to Council members for decision, they voted to bring the provision back in house. This was the most expensive option put forward, but members felt it was the best option in the post Covid marketplace for local residents.

The current position is that the leisure facilities will be transferred from Celtic Leisure back to the Council by 1st April 2024. In the interim period NPT's Operations Co-ordinator with the responsibility for leisure will be seconded to Celtic Leisure to help address some of the underperformance issues and manage the transition of the facilities back to the Council, and work with the company board to best facilitate this transfer.

Like most local authorities NPT Council is facing significant budget difficulties the decision to in source the facilities have worsened these projections. The current estimate is for a £3.9m cost to the council in 2023/24 and £5.3m in 2024/25 once the transfer has taken place.

1.2: Context

This section sets out the context for the study, building on the national and local strategic rationale for leisure and the challenges faced by the County Borough Council.

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SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

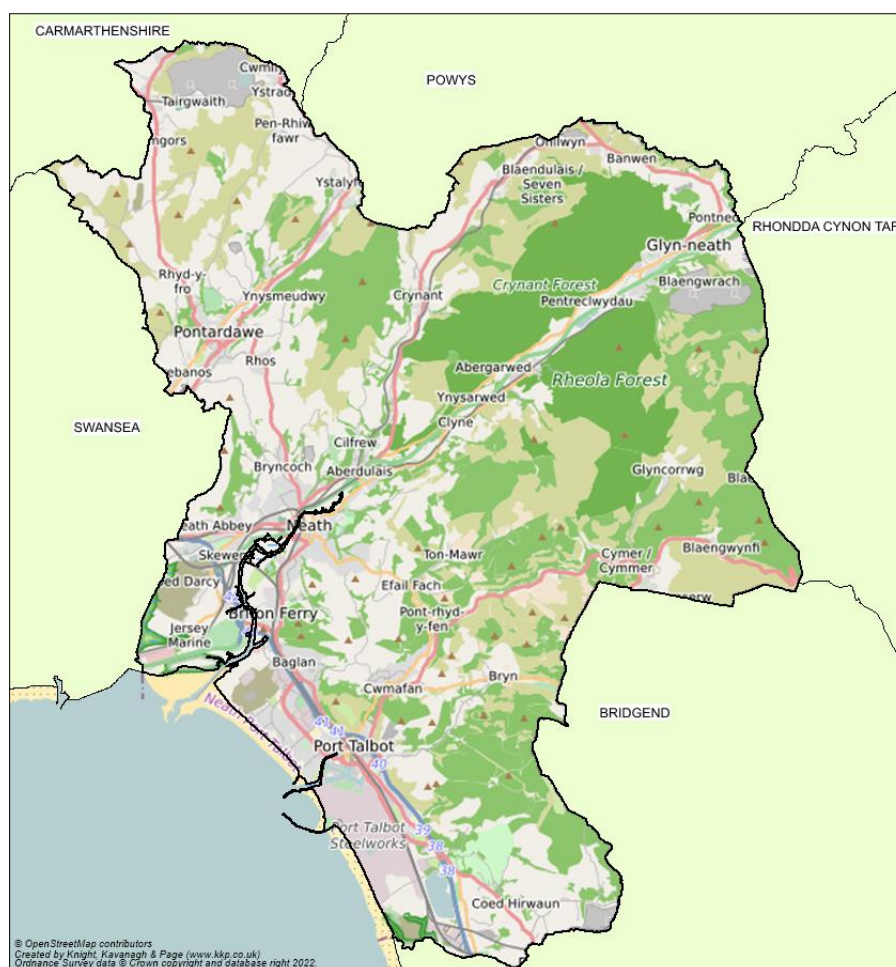
NPT is a county borough in the southwest of Wales. It is situated on the coast of the Bristol Channel, approximately 10 miles west of Swansea. The County Borough is bordered by Bridgend County Borough and Rhondda Cynon Taf to the east, Powys and Carmarthenshire to the north; and Swansea to the west. The principal towns are Neath, Port Talbot, Briton Ferry and Pontardawe.

NPT is a major industrial centre, with a number of steelworks, petrochemical plants and other manufacturing industries. The county borough is also home to a number of tourist attractions, including the Neath Canal, the Margam Country Park, and the Port Talbot Steelworks Heritage Trail.

The landscape is predominantly upland or semi upland and 43% is covered by forestry with major conifer plantations in the upland areas. The upland areas are cut by five valleys: Vale of Neath, Dulais Valley, Afan Valley and Swansea Valley (Tawe Valley) and the Upper Amman Valley. The settlements reflect the industrial heritage of the area, with urban development along the flatter areas of the valleys and some parts of the coast.

The main transport routes include the M4 which cuts Northwest to South East between Swansea and Bridgend and the A465 which traverses North East from Merthyr Tydfil to South West of the authority to Swansea.

Figure 1: Neath Port Talbot with main roads



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2.1 National context

The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 was introduced in 2016. It has been put in place to ensure that public bodies are doing all they can to contribute to the improvement of the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It introduces seven long term well-being goals, puts in place a sustainable development principle and defines five ways of working that public bodies must consider, demonstrating that they have applied sustainable development principles. Figure 2.1 shows how the seven national goals and the sustainable development principles working together.

Figure 2.1 Well-being goals



NPT's corporate plan incorporates these wellbeing goals and embeds the sustainable development principles of the Act. This Strategy will identify actions required to help achieve a vibrant culture in NPT. The Council is committed to making decisions that take account of the impact that they could have on people living their lives in Wales today and in the future.

Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines 2019

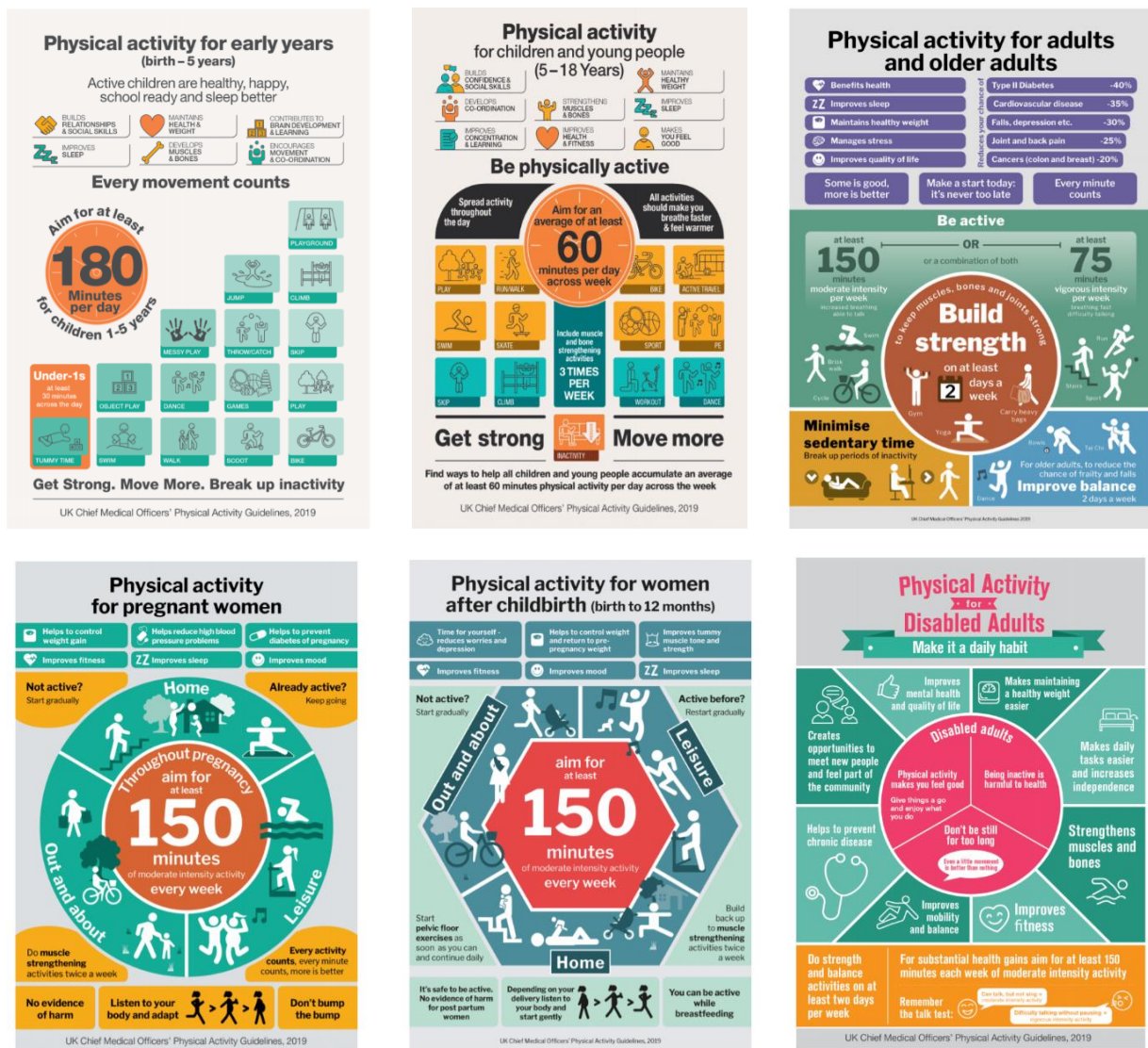
This updates the 2011 physical activity guidelines issued by the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It draws upon global evidence to

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present guidelines for different age groups, covering the volume, duration, frequency and type of physical activity required across the life course to achieve health benefits.

Since 2011, the evidence to support the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups has become more compelling. In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health and cardiovascular fitness, also contributing to healthy weight status. In adults, there is strong evidence to demonstrate the protective effect on physical activity on a range of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes, mental health problems and social isolation. Regular physical activity can deliver cost savings for the health and care system and has wider social benefits for individuals and communities.

Figure 2.2: Physical activity guidelines



The report emphasises the importance of regular activity for people of all ages, and for the first time presents additional guidance on being active during pregnancy, after giving birth, and for disabled adults. The new guidelines are broadly consistent with previous ones, while also

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introducing some new elements and allowing for more flexibility in achieving the recommended levels of physical activity for each age group.

Sport Wales Strategy- Enabling Sport in Wales to Thrive

The stated vision set out in this strategy is:

- ◀ To create an active nation where, as many people as possible are inspired to be active through sport.
- ◀ For everyone, from people who don't see themselves as sporty people to people who win medals.
- ◀ For life and it responds to the needs of people at different stages of their life.
- ◀ Focuses on creating a wide range of positive experiences so everyone can enjoy sport.

Seven Well-being goals for how sport in Wales can contribute to the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act:

Goal	Description	Action
1	A prosperous Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Promote Wales to the world through the performance of Wales's elite athletes. ◀ Promote Wales as a sporting destination of choice through Wales's outstanding natural environments and world-class facilities. ◀ Capitalise on sporting success. ◀ Employment and volunteering opportunities through sport and active recreation. ◀ Education and skill development through sport and active recreation. ◀ Increased supply of local provision, widening accessibility of opportunity. ◀ Apprenticeships and volunteering provides a route into employment.
2	A resilient Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Local opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint. ◀ Making use of locally built and natural resources. ◀ Low carbon/carbon neutral sports facilities. ◀ Socially, ethically, environmentally responsible employers in the sport sector. ◀ The natural environment as an environment for sport and recreation is understood and valued as protected ecosystems.
3	A healthier Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Unleash the benefits of sport for health issues, including mental health. ◀ Provision of sport and recreation opportunities for all ages, throughout life. ◀ Make use of opportunities that meet demands of changing lifestyles, through collaboration and co-production with citizens, and increase the opportunities for families. ◀ Employers create active workplaces utilising the land around them, e.g. the use of showers, bike racks or flexible working to promote participation in sport and recreation. ◀ Sport providers and employers understand the importance of well-being and mental health. ◀ Sport and recreation environments offer healthy food options. ◀ Education and community centres share assets for sports activity – creating health benefits for the local community. ◀ Social prescribing by primary healthcare providers.
4	A more equal Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ The real lived experiences and current needs of all citizens are understood. ◀ Local and flexible opportunities are available to meet the needs of the whole community. ◀ Opportunities are accessible and inclusive, and there are low cost and no cost opportunities as well. ◀ Activities take place in safe environments.

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Goal	Description	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Opportunities are available for families with childcare provided. ◀ Sports equipment is shared and recycled. ◀ Organisations working together to create routes into sport across sectors like education, housing, social care, youth services and religious settings. ◀ Positive action is used to support under-represented groups, no matter how low the numbers. ◀ Discrimination, harassment and victimisation is eliminated. ◀ An understanding of which groups may be negatively impacted by actions.
5	A Wales of cohesive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Community involvement and ownership meets local need. ◀ Local achievements are celebrated, no matter how small. ◀ Community safety is promoted, lowering crime and anti-social behaviour. ◀ Positive role models are developed through sport. ◀ Organisations share resources to provide a range of lifelong activities that positively impact on people's well-being. ◀ Local amenities are made accessible and are shared for the benefit of the community. ◀ Local amenities are utilised, valued and maintained. ◀ Organisations work together to create routes into sport across education, housing, social care, youth services, religious settings and more. ◀ There are local opportunities for volunteering and skill development through sport. ◀ There are routes from volunteering into employment.
6	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Bilingualism is promoted through sport. ◀ The successes of local communities and role models are celebrated. ◀ There are visible and accessible sporting events. ◀ Promote Wales to the world through the performance of Wales's elite athletes. ◀ Promote Wales as a sporting destination of choice, through Wales's outstanding natural environments and world class facilities. ◀ Visible sporting role models.
7	A Globally responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Resources are used responsibly, shared and recycled. ◀ Facilities are sustainable and responsible. ◀ Carbon footprint is reduced through local provision. ◀ Procurement across the sport sector is socially, ethically and environmentally responsible. ◀ Low carbon technologies are used and innovative technologies are found.

School Sport Survey – State of the Nation Report 2022

The School Sport Survey is a national survey of pupils from years 3 to 11, looking into attitudes, behaviours and opportunities for young people in sport. The survey is key to understanding who, where, and how often young people participate in, and have a demand for, sport(s). Teachers are also offered the opportunity to share their views on school sport provision and the support they need to deliver it.

This year (2022) over 116,000 pupils responded, from 1,000 schools. The survey took place from 28th March 2022 to 22nd July 2022.

Active Nation

- ◀ 39% (124,000) of pupils took part in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times a week (Future Generations Indicator 38) – a 9-percentage-point decrease since 2018.

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- ◀ 36% (111,000) of pupils reported 'no frequent participation' in organised sport outside of the curriculum (i.e., participated less than once a week) - an 8-percentage-point increase since 2018.
- ◀ 56% (174,000) of pupils took part in sport in a community club setting at least once a week in the last academic year – a 9-percentage-point decrease since 2018.

Everyone

- ◀ Less than two thirds (60%) of schools state that they have the equipment which enables inclusion of disabled pupils / pupils with an impairment or Additional Learning Need (ALN).
- ◀ There is a 15-percentage-point difference in participation in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times a week between the least (FSM1) and most deprived (FSM4) areas – an increase of an additional 2-percentage-points since 2018.

Lifelong

- ◀ 93% (292,000) of pupils in Wales had a demand to do more sport.
- ◀ 56% of pupils had *unmet demand for sport, the equivalent of 175,000 pupils.

*Unmet demand refers to demand for any sport among pupils not participating in organised sport outside of the curriculum three or more times a week.

Enjoyment

- ◀ 40% of pupils enjoyed extracurricular sport 'a lot', compared to 57% enjoying PE 'a lot' and 47% enjoying community club sport 'a lot'.
- ◀ 69% of pupils stated that they were 'very confident' or 'confident' in trying new sports, while 8% of pupils said they were 'not confident at all'.

Neath Port Talbot scored highest in Wales in the following three key areas:

- ◀ The number of children who take part in sport three or more times per week (46%);
- ◀ Those participating in community club sport outside of school (71.6%);
- ◀ Those participating in community sport at least once a week (62.3%).

Sport Wales – Activity Tracker Survey 7 – January 2023

The survey found that:

- ◀ The majority of Welsh adults (46%) did physical activity on 2-4 days per week.
- ◀ The proportion of Welsh adults who did no physical activity remained steady at 22%.
- ◀ The proportion of Welsh adults who did physical activity on 5+ days per week continued to decline, to 19%.
- ◀ Respondents aged 55+ were more likely than 16-34 year olds to have done no physical activity (25% vs 18%).
- ◀ Respondents in social grade C2DE were more likely than those in ABC1 to have done no physical activity (29% vs 17%).

The survey also found that the most popular activities for Welsh adults the preceding week were walking for leisure (57%), walking for travel (23%) and going to the gym, fitness or exercise classes (15%).

When asked about activity they have participated in over the last month (at least once per month for the last three months), three in five said they have walked for leisure (62%), one in five had gone to the gym, fitness or exercise class (23%) and 20% had been swimming regularly.

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The survey suggests that there is room for improvement in the levels of physical activity in Wales. However, it does show that the majority of Welsh adults are doing some physical activity, and that the proportion of people doing no physical activity has remained steady.

New curriculum 2022

The curriculum shifts away from a relatively prescribed content based national curriculum to a purpose-based broad framework within which, schools will design their own curriculum.

There are four purposes and six areas of learning and experience (ALOE's).

The Four Purposes will become a familiar term to parents, carers and children. For the first time we've defined in law what the purpose of education in Wales should be. The aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- ✦ Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- ✦ Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ✦ Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- ✦ Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

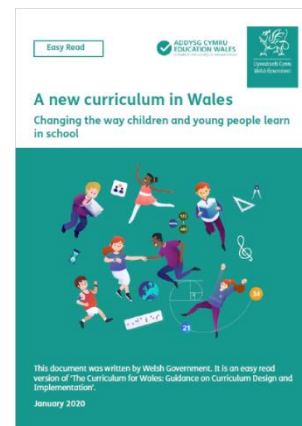
The Curriculum for Wales has six Areas of Learning and Experience:

- ✦ Expressive Arts
- ✦ Health and Well-being
- ✦ Humanities
- ✦ Languages, Literacy and Communication
- ✦ Mathematics and Numeracy
- ✦ Science and Technology.

Specific subjects will still be taught, but schools can decide to explore the links between them, so learners better understand the interconnectivity and breadth of their learning. A topic like climate change can be taught through geography, history, science and the impact on society.

Summary of national context

Engaging all residents in physical activity is a high priority. It is acknowledged that regular sport and recreational activity plays a key role in facilitating improved health and wellbeing. It also contributes significantly to the national and local economy. Sport Wales is acutely aware of the diversity of need, that it needs to collect evidence to continually improve what it does and that its approach needs to evolve over time. Ensuring an adequate supply of suitable facilities to meet local need is imperative if improvements to health and well-being are to be maintained and/or improved. Getting the inactive active has remained steady therefore, more needs to be done to improve the health of the nation.



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2.2: Local context

Corporate Plan 2022-2027

NPT Corporate Plan: Recover, Reset and Renew identifies the priorities that have been identified through extensive consultation with local people, businesses and Council employees. These include:

- ◀ All children get the best start in life.
- ◀ All communities are thriving and sustainable.
- ◀ Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations.
- ◀ Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs.

As part of the Enabling Programme, designed to ensure that the organisation is well-equipped to deliver on behalf of its residents, the Council has also set out its values and strives to ensure that these are embedded in all that it does:

- ◀ **Connected:** What matters to you matters to us.
- ◀ **Caring:** We care about you, your life and the future of our county borough.
- ◀ **Collaborative:** We work with our citizens and our partners because together we can achieve more.
- ◀ **Confident:** We are optimistic and confident about the future.

Swansea Bay Healthy Travel Charter

Neath Port Talbot Council has become the latest organisation to sign up to the Swansea Bay Healthy Travel Charter. Launched in May 2022, the charter contains a series of actions that support walking, cycling, public transport and ultra-low carbon emission vehicle use.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda. The fund provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025. All UK areas will receive an allocation via a funding formula rather than a competition.

The fund will replace some parts of European Structural and Investment Funds. It will invest in local priorities and target funding where there is evidence of need including:

- ◀ Building pride and place
- ◀ Supporting high quality skills and training
- ◀ Supporting pay, employment and productivity growth
- ◀ Increasing life chances

NPT's funding allocation is £28.4m over 3 years, from April 2022 to March 2025. The fund is a mix of revenue and capital funding and has been 'unlocked' by the Regional Investment Plan. The Investment Plan was approved by the UK Government in December 2022.

Levelling Up Fund

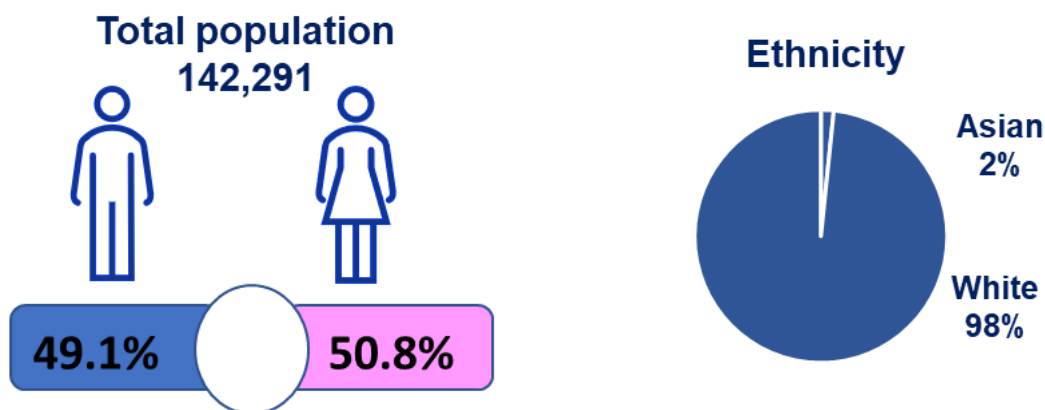
Neath Port Talbot Council has been successful in attracting £17.7m in UK Government Levelling Up Fund money to establish the Vale of Neath as a major heritage and natural environment led visitor destination.

The funding will deliver two major improvement projects along the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor.

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2.3: Demographic profile of NPT

Population (Data source: 2021 Census, ONS)

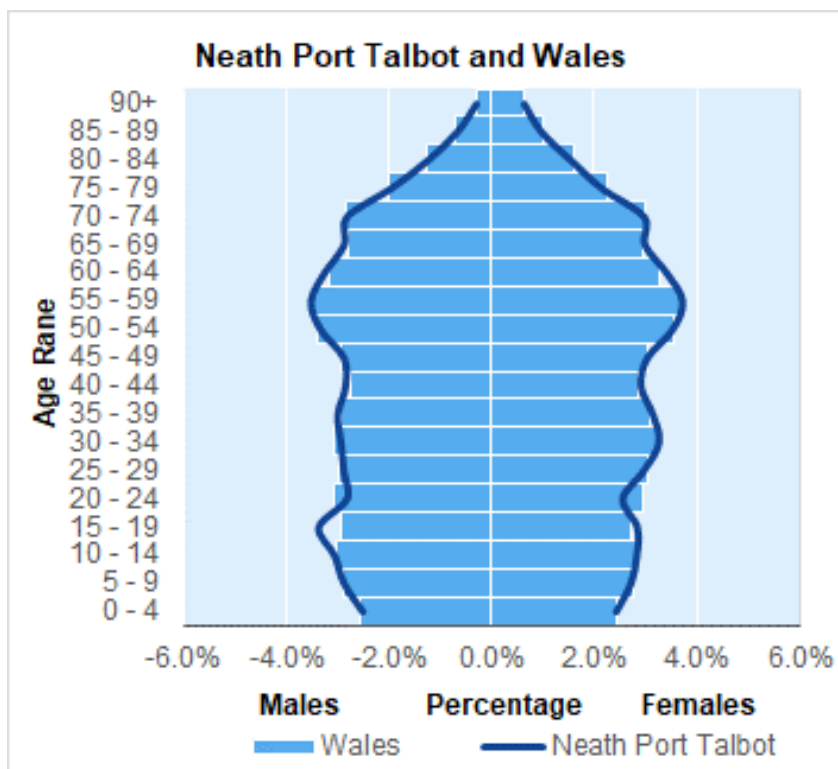


The following chart illustrates the population’s age and gender composition while, overlaying the dark blue line for Neath Port Talbot on top of the blue bars for Wales it is easy to see where one dataset is higher or lower than the other.

Figure 2: Comparative age/sex pyramid for Neath Port Talbot and Wales

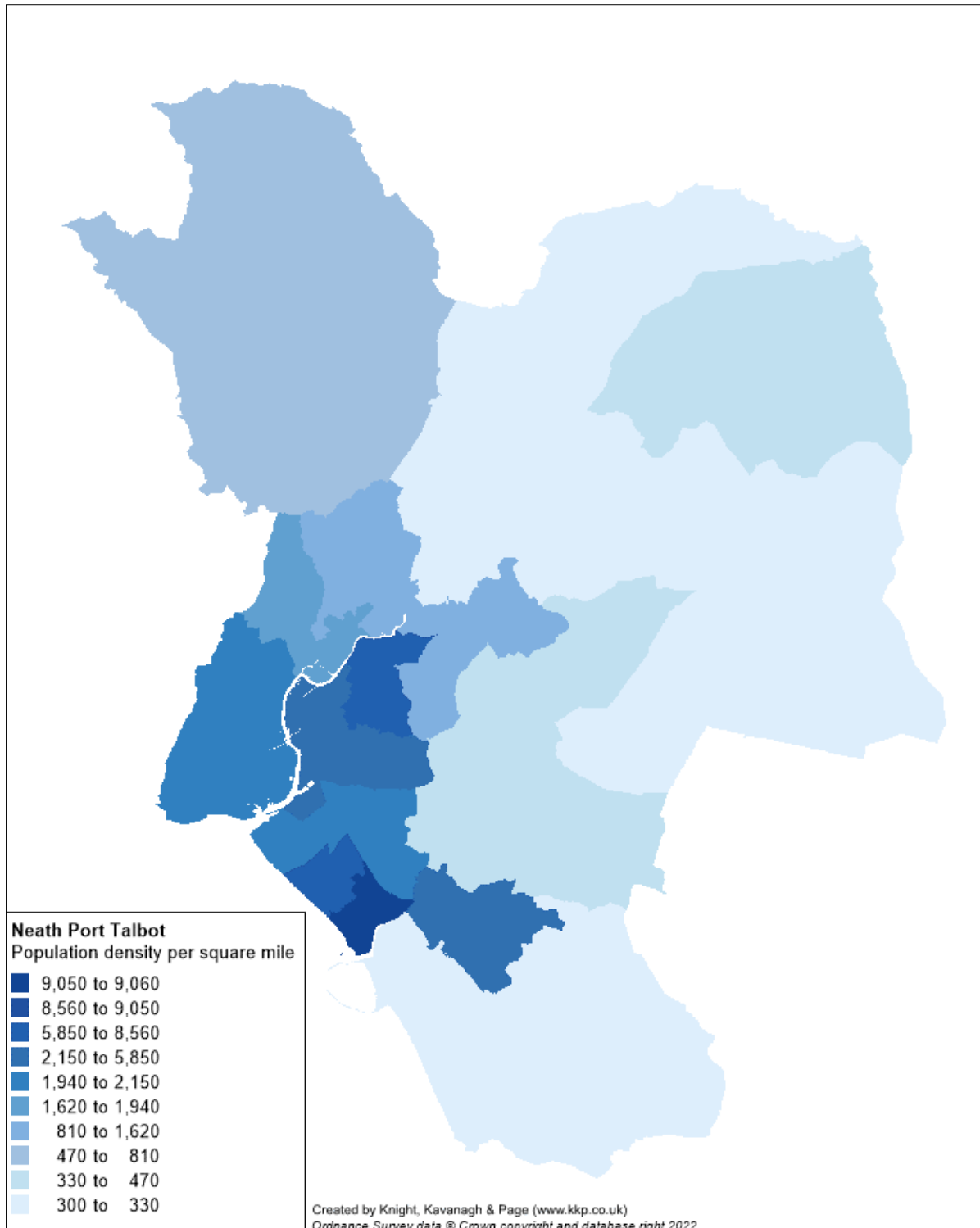
The population profile of Neath Port Talbot precisely reflects the profile of Wales. The only difference is that there is a lower proportion of 20-24 year olds (Neath Port Talbot has 5.4%, and Wales has 6.0%).

There are, however, slightly more in the age groups from 15-19 (Neath Port Talbot has 6.2%, and Wales has 5.7%).



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Figure 3: Population density 2021 Census: Neath Port Talbot (MSOAs)

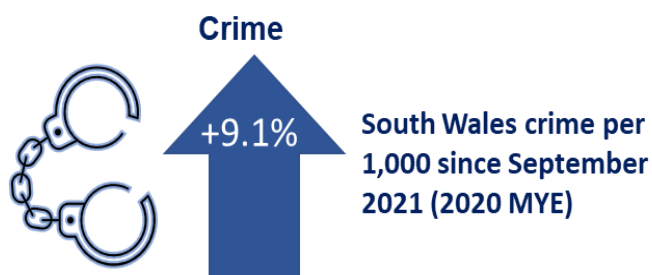


The population settlement is a mixture of urban and rural areas. As illustrated in the map above, the main population settlements are in the valleys and in the coastal plain around Port Talbot. Many of the larger towns lie within the Swansea Urban Area.

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Crime (Data source: 2022 Recorded Crime, ONS)

Crime data is only available for Police Force Areas. Neath Port Talbot is in the South Wales Police Force Area, which is made up of seven Local Authorities (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea, The Vale of Glamorgan). The population of Neath Port Talbot makes up 10.8% of the South Wales Police Force Area.



Income and benefits dependency (Data source: nomis 2022)

Median earnings



Neath Port Talbot £31,772

Wales £31,382

Great Britain £33,394

In January 2023 there were 2,635 people in Neath Port Talbot claiming out of work benefits¹; this represents a decrease of 12.7% when compared to March 2020 (3,020).

Deprivation (Data source: 2019 indices of deprivation, Welsh Government)

Relative to other parts of the country Neath Port Talbot experiences high levels of deprivation; over 4 in 10 of the Borough's population (44.7%) falls within the areas covered by the country's three most deprived cohorts compared to a national average of c.30%. Conversely, 16.2% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country, this compares to a 'norm' of c.30%.

Table 3: IMD cohorts – Neath Port Talbot

IMD cumulative norm	Multiple deprivation			Health deprivation			
	Population in band	Percent of population		Population in band	Percent of population		
Most deprived	10.0	21,779	15.3%	15.3%	23,086	16.2%	16.2%
	20.0	24,741	17.4%	32.7%	23,709	16.7%	32.9%
	30.0	16,961	11.9%	44.7%	17,864	12.6%	45.5%
	40.0	23,394	16.5%	61.1%	30,536	21.5%	67.0%
	50.0	10,161	7.2%	68.3%	9,957	7.0%	74.0%
	60.0	9,265	6.5%	74.8%	15,385	10.8%	84.8%
Least deprived	70.0	12,723	9.0%	83.8%	10,817	7.6%	92.4%
	80.0	8,696	6.1%	89.9%	2,904	2.0%	94.5%
	90.0	10,141	7.1%	97.0%	6,281	4.4%	98.9%
	100.0	4,229	3.0%	100.0%	1,551	1.1%	100.0%

¹ This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.

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A similar pattern, to that seen for multiple deprivation, is seen in relation to health. Almost half of Neath Port Talbot’s population (45.5%) falls within the areas covered by the three most deprived cohorts, this compares to a national average of c.30%. Conversely, 7.6% live in the three least deprived groupings compared to a ‘norm’ of c.30%.

Figure 6: IMD and health domain comparisons – Neath Port Talbot

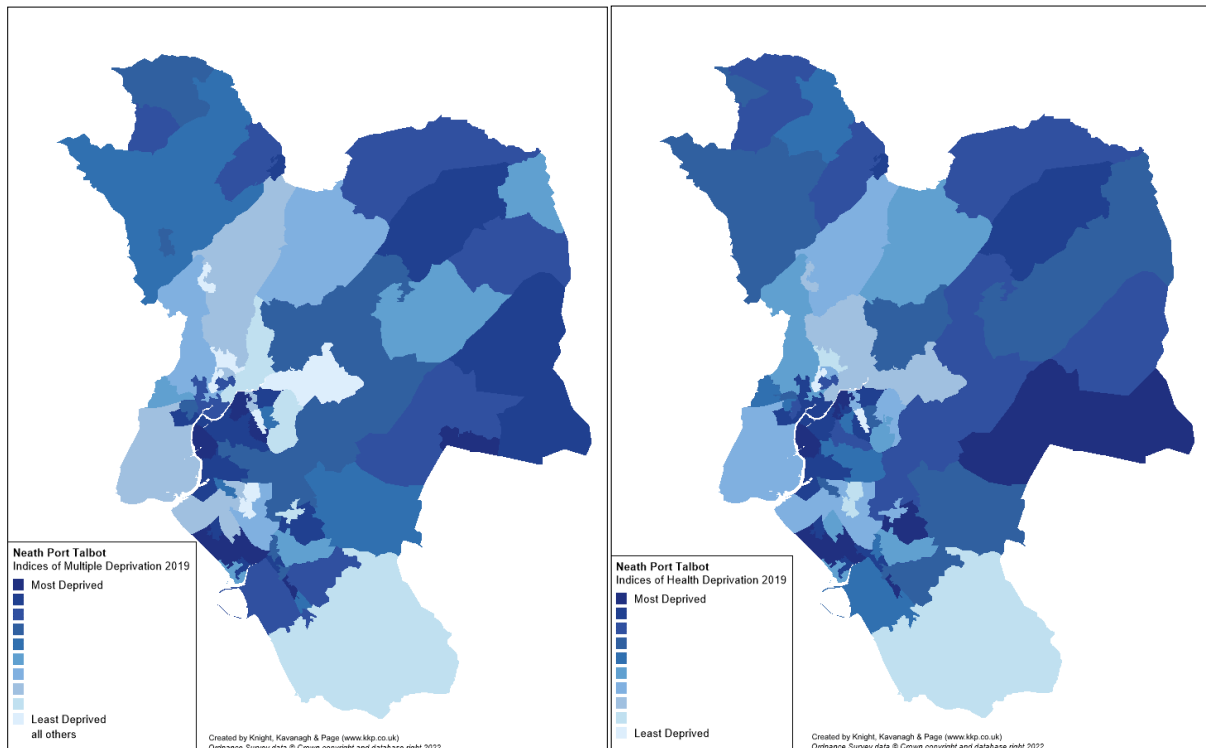
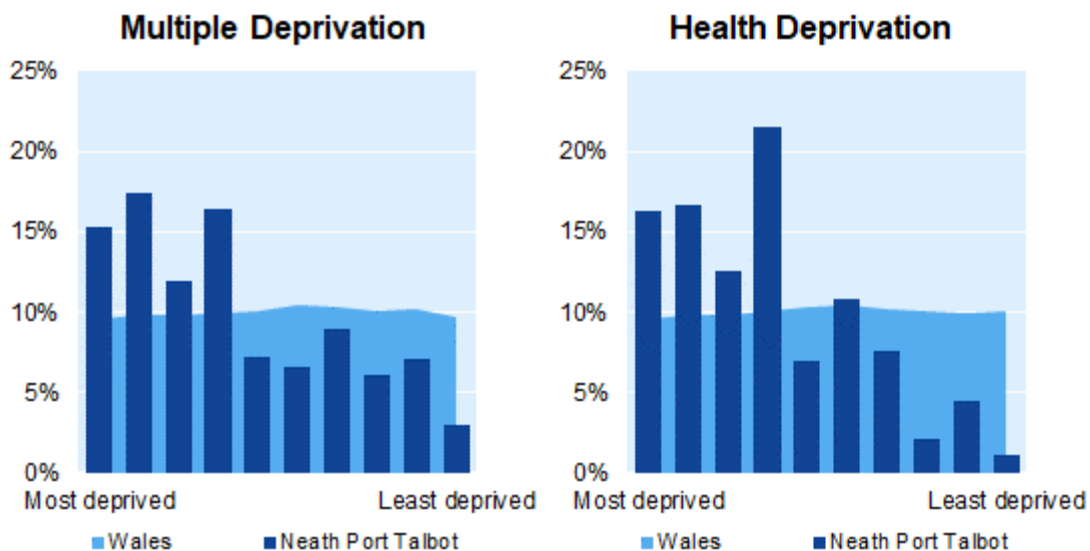
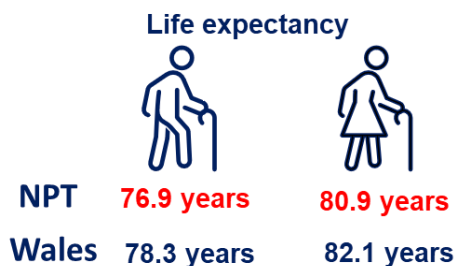


Figure 7: IMD and health domain comparisons – Neath Port Talbot and Wales.



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Health data (Data sources: ONS 2013)



In keeping with patterns seen alongside higher levels of health deprivation, life expectancy in Neath Port Talbot is lower than the national figure.²

Weight and obesity (Data sources: NCMP³ and NOO⁴ 2020/2021)

Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. In Neath Port Talbot 1 in 5 children age 4-5 are classed as obese (20.3%).



64.1% of children aged 4-5 year olds were either underweight or healthy weight.
15.6% were overweight
20.3% are obese. (2020/2021)

Mosaic (Data source: 2022 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

Mosaic 2022 is a consumer segmentation product and classifies all 28.6 million households into 15 groups, 66 household types and 238 segments. This data can be used to paint a picture of UK consumers in terms of their social-demographics, lifestyles, culture and behaviour and tends to be used to draw out population characteristics for the backdrop to cultural activity.

The following table shows the top five mosaic classifications in Neath Port Talbot compared to Wales as a whole. The dominance of these five segments can be seen inasmuch as they represent two thirds (63.9%) of the population compared to the equivalent rate of over less than half (47.4%) for Wales.

Table 6: Mosaic – main population segments in Neath Port Talbot

Mosaic group description	Neath Port Talbot		Wales %
	#	%	
1 - Rural Reality	31,072	21.4%	14.9%
2 - Modest Traditions	18,129	12.5%	8.2%
3 - Aspiring Homemakers	16,240	11.2%	9.2%
4 - Suburban Stability	15,090	10.4%	6.3%
5 - Family Basics	12,341	8.5%	8.7%

The largest segment profiled for Neath Port Talbot is the Rural Reality group, making up 21.4% of the adult population in the area, this is higher than the rate for Wales (14.9%). This group is defined as people who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.

² Office of National Statistics: Life Expectancy at Birth by local areas in the United Kingdom, 2013.

³ National Child Measurement Program

⁴ National Obesity Observatory

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Table 7: Dominant Mosaic profiles in Neath Port Talbot




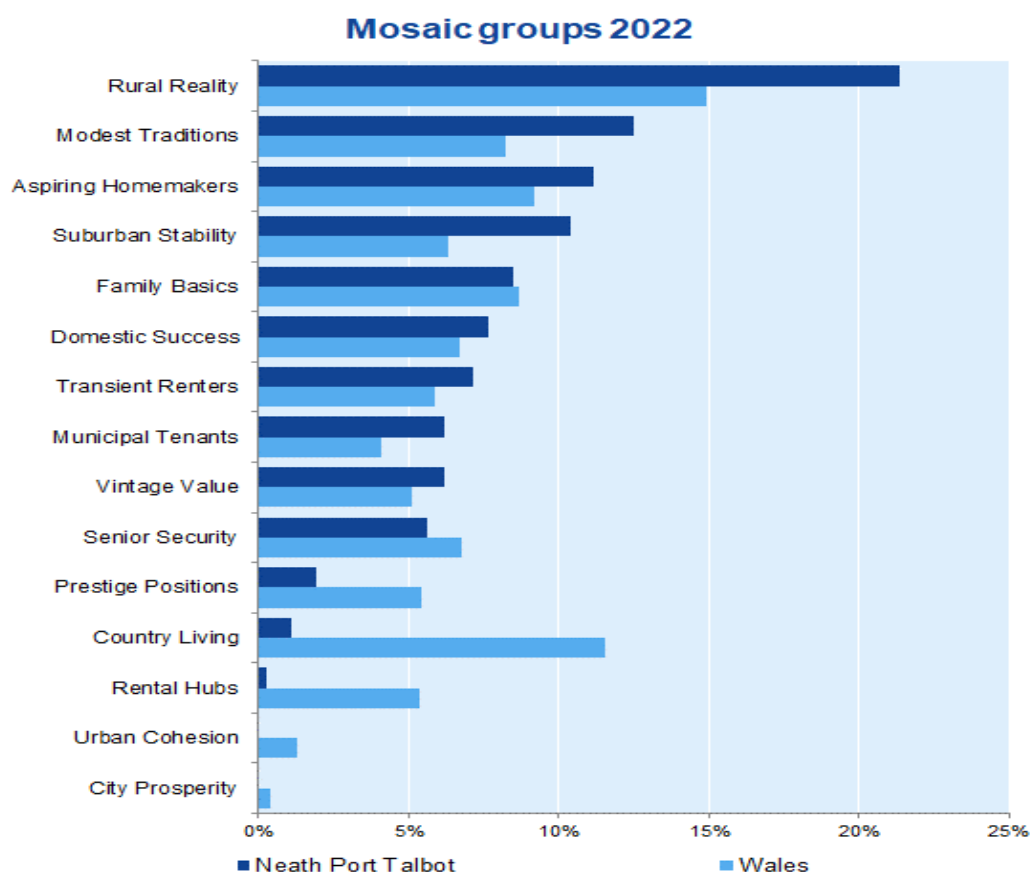
Rural Reality		People who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.
Modest Traditions		Older people living in inexpensive homes that they own, often with the mortgage nearly paid off. Both incomes and qualifications are modest, but most enjoy a reasonable standard of living. They are long-settled residents having lived in their neighbourhoods for many years.
Aspiring Homemakers		Younger households who have, often, only recently set up home. They usually own their homes in private suburbs, which they have chosen to fit their budget.

Figure 13: Mosaic segmentation – Neath Port Talbot compared to Wales



COUNTERCULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

Figure 14: Distribution of Mosaic segments in Neath Port Talbot

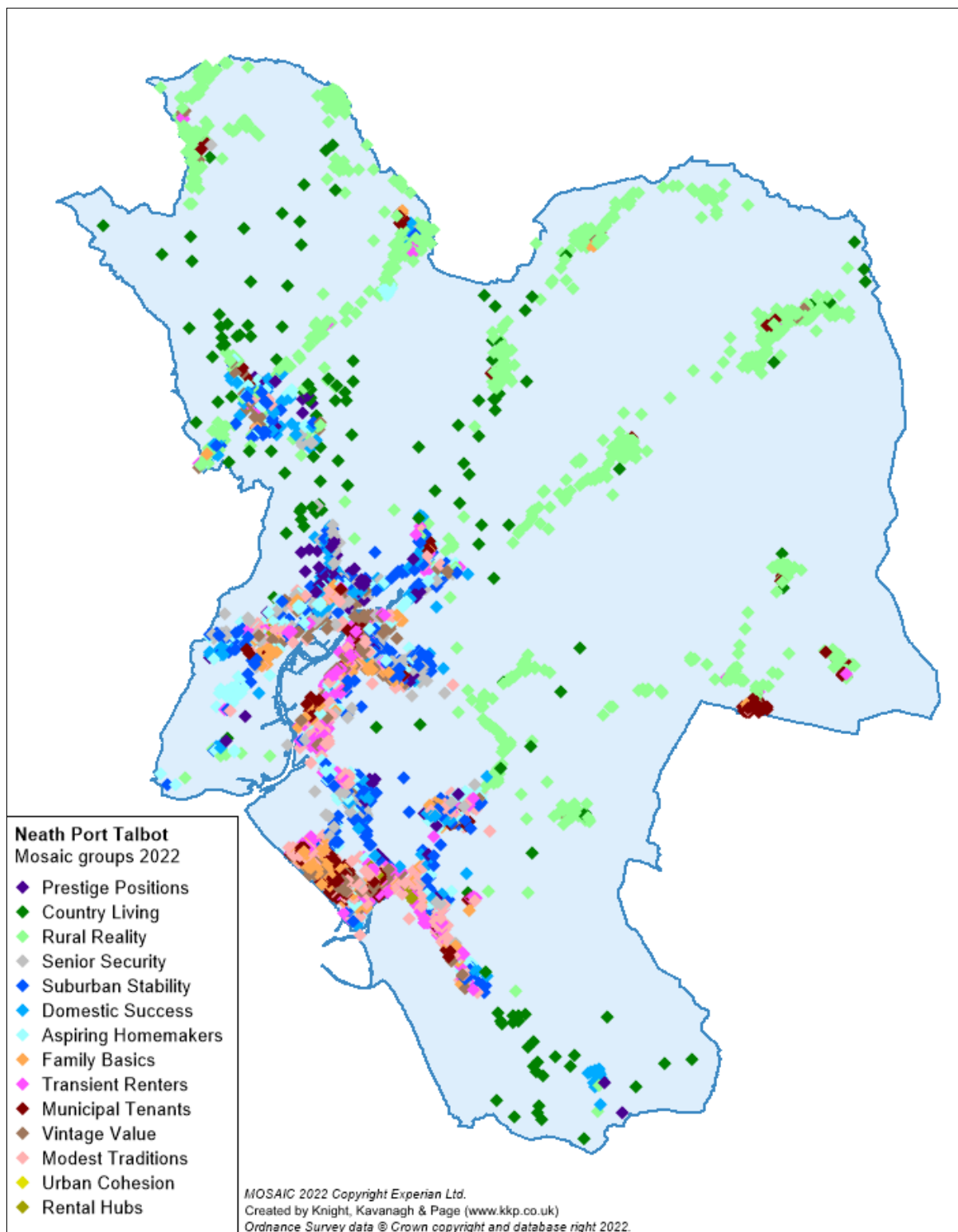


Figure 14 illustrates the landscape of the NPT, whereby people living in the valleys of the hills are predominantly the rural reality and country living segments and the more urban (and more deprived) segments residing at lower levels.

COUNTERCULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

Population Projections

Strategic planning: Change over 25 years (2018 to 2043⁵)

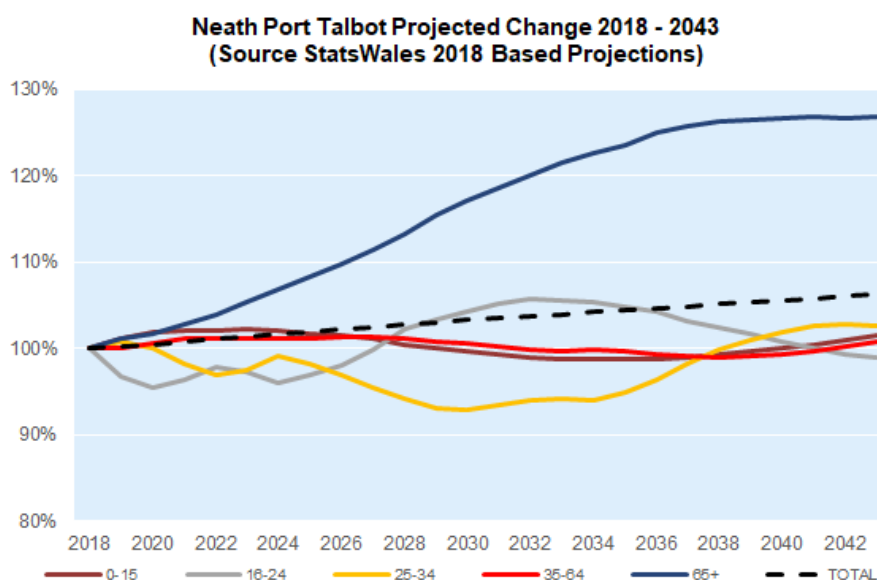
The most recent StatsWales projections (2018 – based) indicate a rise of 6.3% in Neath Port Talbot’s population (+8,983) over the 25 years from 2018 to 2043. Over this extended timeframe fluctuations are seen in rise and fall at different points across the majority of age groups. Key points for Neath Port Talbot are outlined below:

- ◆ The number of 0-15 year olds, falls by -78 (-0.3%) over the first half of the projection (to 2030) but then rises by 448 (+1.8%) over the second half.
- ◆ In contrast, there is predicted to be an increase in the number of 16-24 year olds, +4.3% in the first period (+624) followed by a decline of -5.2% (-789) in the second period.
- ◆ There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+ age group. This represents an increase of +17.1% (+5,056) in the first period continuing to rise to +26.9% (+7,930) between 2018 and 2043. While the age group represented 20.7% of Neath Port Talbot’s population in 2018 it is projected to be 24.7% of the total by 2043 - this is one quarter of the population.

Table 8: Neath Port Talbot - StatsWales projected population (2018 to 2043)

Age (years)	Number			Age structure %			Change 2018 – 2043		
	2018	2030	2043	2018	2030	2043	2018	2030	2043
0-15	24,952	24,874	25,322	17.5%	16.9%	16.7%	100.0%	99.7%	101.5%
16-24	14,463	15,087	14,298	10.1%	10.2%	9.4%	100.0%	104.3%	98.9%
25-34	17,512	16,260	17,965	12.3%	11.0%	11.8%	100.0%	92.8%	102.6%
35-64	56,449	56,748	56,844	39.5%	38.5%	37.4%	100.0%	100.5%	100.7%
65+	29,530	34,586	37,460	20.7%	23.4%	24.7%	100.0%	117.1%	126.9%
Total	142,906	147,555	151,889	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	103.3%	106.3%

Figure 15: Projected population change (2018 -2043)



⁵ Office for National Statistics 2018-based population projections (data released March 2020)

COUNTERCULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

Summary

Improving the health and wellbeing of NPT residents is strategically important and recognised by the county borough council. The main challenges are:

- ◀ Life expectancy in NPT is lower than the national average, linked to high levels of deprivation and unhealthy lifestyle choices.
- ◀ Over a third (35.9%) of children are overweight or obese.
- ◀ There is an increasing older population, a quarter of residents (24.7%) will be over 65 years of age by 2043.
- ◀ There are high levels of deprivation (44.7%). This is likely to increase as the current cost of living crisis continues.
- ◀ The local environment, culture and heritage is important.
- ◀ There is ambition and development through the major heritage and natural environment led visitor destination.
- ◀ Sport and physical activity are vital in ensuring that NPT residents live well and stay well. The Government driver, the new curriculum, focusses on wellbeing. It aims to ensure young people are leading healthy lives. Key to this is people remaining active as they get older. This is of increasing importance with an ageing population.

COUNTERCULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

SECTION 3: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

3.1: Audit of public leisure provision and programmes

Building on the consultation we undertook an audit of facilities, programmes and interventions that are relevant to the wider strategy. This will take account of the quality of provision as well as its presence.

Old Neath Leisure Centre closed 31st December 2022. It was over 50 years old and required significant maintenance, so a new development was deemed the most viable option. New Neath Leisure Centre & Library opened in January 2023.

Celtic Leisure sites

It should be noted that the following observations were made on a single site visit in December 2022, there may have been changes since the visit.

(New) Neath Leisure Centre		
Facility mix	Site visit observations	Strategic action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 6 lane 25m swimming pool ◀ Learner/teaching pool ◀ 100 station health & fitness gym ◀ Two aerobic studios ◀ Jacuzzi, sauna & steam room ◀ Café ◀ Library 	<p>This site was still under construction at the time of audit. It has since opened. (30th January 2023).</p> <p>The facility has been built to BEEAM excellent standards.</p>	<p>Drive up membership.</p> <p>Increase the number of fitness classes (currently 24 per week) to meet the needs and current trends in group exercise.</p>
Pontardawe Leisure Centre		
Facility mix	Site visit observations	Strategic action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 4 court sports hall ◀ 1 activity hall / theatre ◀ 1 studio ◀ 2 squash courts ◀ 40 station health and fitness gym (distributed over 2 rooms) and a HIIT room with c.4 stations. ◀ Creche ◀ Indoor bowls – 6 rinks 	<p>The sports hall programme consists mainly of basketball, netball, indoor cricket, trampolining and events.</p> <p>The sports hall floor requires replacement due to wear and tear.</p> <p>The activity hall / theatre primarily accommodates large fitness classes. It has good ceiling height and has a sprung floor but is showing signs of wear and tear.</p> <p>The spin studio is under-utilised and accommodates only 3 classes per week, the rest of the time it is set up for virtual classes but has little usage.</p>	<p>There is a need to refurbish and modernise the centre.</p> <p>There is a need to reconfigure the health and fitness provision, the current layout is not attractive and does not make best use of the space available.</p> <p>Participation is reported to be in decline, as other newer facilities are more attractive. It is hoped that the transfer of newer fitness equipment may increase attractiveness. However whilst newer</p>

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<p>◀ 3G pitch (football and rugby)</p>	<p>There is c.695 health and fitness members at the site, pre Covid it had 1,100. It delivers 34 fitness classes per week.</p> <p>The two squash courts have increased in popularity since the closure of the Neath Leisure Centre courts. These courts are of strategic importance as they are now the only publicly available courts in the area. There are 2 courts at David Lloyd, however, a high-cost membership is required to access these.</p> <p>Indoor bowls is reported to be busy. A new carpet and underlay were laid in July 2022. Welsh disability bowls is based at the centre. Over 60s programme at this site is particularly popular.</p> <p>The 3G pitch was refurbished in 2019. It has a shock pad to enable it to be used for rugby training and junior matches. (It is not large enough for senior rugby matches). It is reported to be well used by clubs and teams.</p> <p>Consultation indicated that since the new Neath leisure opened the footfall to this site has deteriorated, and it is having a detrimental effect on user numbers.</p> <p>There is a need to improve energy efficiency and invest in green technology in order to meet the NPT carbon reduction targets.</p>	<p>equipment is welcomed, it is unlikely to have a significant impact as the building itself requires investment and modernisation.</p> <p>The sports hall floor requires replacement.</p> <p>Any future proposals for a new swimming pool may provide a good opportunity to modernise and improve the quality and attractiveness of facilities generally.</p> <p>There is a need to protect the existing squash courts and to drive up participation to ensure the courts are well used.</p> <p>Any future leisure development in this area should consider a matted studio for martial arts due to reported demand.</p> <p>Improve the energy efficiency of building fabric, including M&E to reduce overall running costs (and carbon emissions).</p>
<p>Neath Sports Centre</p>		
<p>Facility mix</p>	<p>Site visit observations</p>	<p>Strategic action</p>
<p>◀ 400m athletics track ▶ 25 station health and fitness gym. ▶ Strength and conditioning gym. ▶ 8 court sports hall. ▶ 3G football pitch</p>	<p>This facility has significant school use during the day. (It is not a dual use site).</p> <p>The 5 grass pitches are managed by a sports association and the remaining facilities by Celtic Leisure.</p> <p>This site is reported to have the largest sports hall in the area, an 8-badminton court hall which is below average quality. It is primarily used for shows, events, and roller skating.</p> <p>The 3G pitch is in good condition, the carpet was replaced in 2019. It is reportedly well used.</p>	<p>New floodlights are required for the athletics track.</p> <p>Consider reviewing the use of the sports hall, consider if a 4-court hall would be sufficient in size and whether the other four courts could be used to attract more users to the centre. (e.g. children's adventure play).</p> <p>Improve the quality of the health and fitness and strength and conditioning gyms. There is a need to ensure that the provision is geared primarily towards the athletes and club members (athletics, football, rugby, cricket) and has an emphasis on strength and</p>

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	<p>The bar area which overlooks the pitches is reported to be well attended and a good income generator.</p> <p>The fitness gym and strength and conditioning are tired and require investment to improve the quality. Provision is distributed across two rooms.</p> <p>Fitness classes have typically taken place in the bar area or the sports hall. The plan is to move them to the new Neath Leisure Centre when it opens with the exception of circuits which has a large number of attendees that cannot be accommodated at the new centre.</p> <p>Consultation reports that the NERS programme - is popular and well attended.</p> <p>There is a need to improve energy efficiency and invest in green technology in order to meet the NPT carbon reduction targets.</p>	<p>conditioning. The new Neath Leisure Centre (0.5 miles away) needs to focus on health and wellbeing and getting the inactive to be active to avoid duplication.</p> <p>Ensure that the fitness programme complements the fitness offer at the new Neath Leisure Centre and that the two centres do not try to offer the same programme.</p> <p>Improve the energy efficiency of building fabric, including M&E to reduce overall running costs (and carbon emissions).</p> <p>Ensure that any developments on site continue meet the continued needs of the school and college.</p>
Aberavon Leisure & Fitness Centre		
Facility mix	Site visit observations	Strategic action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 8 lane 25m pool, learner pool ◀ 100 station health and fitness gym plus free weights ◀ 2 studios ◀ 1 spin ◀ 4 court sports hall ◀ Childrens soft play ◀ Café 	<p>Opened in January 2016, the sea-front facility is modern and attractive. It has 83 parking spaces (including disabled parking) which is insufficient for the size and scale of the facility particularly at peak times.</p> <p>As a modern facility, the centre has some energy saving measures in place such as LED lights, sensors, PIRs taps/water flush, pool covers, light reflectors. It however could do more, such as investing in PV panels on the roof of the facility.</p> <p>There is a need to improve energy efficiency and invest in green technology in order to meet the NPT carbon reduction targets.</p> <p>There are currently 1,700 health and fitness members (2,200 members pre-Covid). Celtic Leisure delivers 41 fitness classes per week and there is a youth fitness programme delivered 3.30pm-5.30pm of a weekday and 11am – 6pm at the weekend.</p>	<p>Seek opportunities to work with neighbouring businesses to enhance the parking provision.</p> <p>Improve the energy efficiency of building fabric, including M&E to reduce overall running costs (and carbon emissions).</p> <p>Continue to drive up participation to pre Covid levels. Undertake membership postcode analysis to see where members live and target the places where there are fewer members within a reasonable catchment.</p>

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	<p>A Watt bike area has been trialled at the top of the stairs and is proving to be popular with members.</p> <p>The spin studio has x25 bikes including Myride and virtual classes. It is 18m x 10m and has a low ceiling. There is also a dance studio that is used for fitness classes.</p> <p>In terms of aquatics provision the 8 lane 25m pool has a moveable floor on one half of the main pool and there is a separate learner/teaching pool. It accommodates school swimming lessons during the day and has an evening programme which caters for casual swimming, swim for fitness, clubs and aquatic classes. The site visit identified that the pool was not particularly busy with lots of down time between sessions.</p> <p>The learn to swim school currently has 650 children accessing swimming lessons (750 pre-Covid). Swimming lessons take place Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and on a Saturday morning.</p> <p>Consultation identified that the capacity of children receiving swimming lessons was being hindered by the lack of swimming teachers. It should be noted that there is a National shortage of swim teachers since the Covid-19 Pandemic due to people leaving the profession during the lockdown periods. In addition, the centre hosts the national water polo team one Sunday per month.</p> <p>The site audit identified that there is a link to health through the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS). The health team operates from the centre then there is a reduced rate membership / pay and play access agreement. In addition, there are some free activities for people aged 60+ to attend which includes keep fit, Jazz, fit for life, aqua aerobics. Aqua aerobics is reported to be the most popular activity.</p>	<p>Conduct a programme review to ensure that pool sessions have seamless transitions, and that there is opportunity for fitness members to access the pool of a midweek evening. Consider whether some Club swimming could take place early morning to release pool time of an evening for fitness and casual swimming.</p> <p>Devise and implement a plan to recruit and train lifeguards and swim teachers. Consider partner opportunities with Active Young People, the Colleges and University. There may be a need to consider the 'package' on offer and the rate of pay to make the role more attractive.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for people living in areas of higher deprivation.</p> <p>Work with health partners to increase physical activity to people that need to be healthier and more active.</p> <p>Conduct a programme review to ensure that the sports hall groups are delivering a well-balanced programme with opportunities for</p>
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	<p>The sports hall has large run offs and good spacing between each of the badminton courts. (It is understood that the hall was initially built as a tenpin bowling alley and then had the roof raised to accommodate sports hall sports). The main sports hall users are basketball, indoor rounders, football, netball, walking for sport, large fitness classes and circuit training.</p> <p>The Café bar is situated in the reception area (a separate desk and function to the reception desk). It is operated by the leisure centre. With the need to make efficiencies, the operating hours of the café is limited, and vending machines have been installed for the times that the café is unstaffed. The audit identified that at peak times the café is not open, and people are choosing to bring their own food and beverage or visit a neighbouring outlet and bringing the hot drinks into the centre and sit in the café area.</p> <p>There is also a soft play area in the entrance to the facility which was added in summer of 2016. It is a 3-storey structure that opened in February 2022. It is open Monday – Friday 10am until 7pm and 9.30am – 7.00pm of a weekend. Costs are £3 for a member and £3.50 for a non-member. Consultation identified that when it first opened it attracted more families to the centre and the substantially increased the utilisation of the café area; however, this has not been sustained.</p> <p>When the building opened, it had a youth club area, which had a separate entrance/exit and consisted of a community room with kitchenette and a small classroom adjacent. Consultation identified that unfortunately the co-location of the two elements did not work for either party and the youth club is no longer based at the leisure centre, The area is now used a multipurpose room and the classroom area for birthday parties / coach education courses etc.</p>	<p>women and girls, older people, recreation sport as well as competitive play.</p> <p>Seek opportunities to amalgamate the reception and café as a single desk, that will enable at quieter times the café to remain open and be served by the reception staff and at peak times there to be dedicated staff to serve food and drink. Being able to access quality food and drink is important to increase dwell time and generate secondary spend. This is also very important from a social aspect.</p> <p>There is a need to consider investing in new features / new elements to refresh the facility. This facility also delivers the best financial outcomes when it has a good food and beverage offer. If parents cannot access good quality food and drink whilst their children play, they will not be attracted to the facility.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to re-purposing the youth facility, some suggestions for consideration are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Additional studio. ◀ NHS/Community health space. ◀ Adult social care. ◀ Nursery / creche. ◀ Library.
Vale of Neath Leisure Centre		
Facility mix	Site visit observations	Strategic action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 30 station health and fitness gym ◀ Free weights room ◀ Activity hall (1 badminton court) 	<p>Built 1996, and refurbished in 2008. The facility is ageing and will, in the future require refurbishment.</p>	<p>Consider whether moving the health and fitness provision to the activity hall would increase the space available. The health and</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure pool 25m x 3 lanes with flumes 	<p>This is an important facility for the people living in the rural north of the county borough.</p> <p>Consultation identified there are 500 health and fitness members at the site. It is understood that there are plans to upgrade the fitness equipment in early 2023 when the new Neath LC site opens.</p> <p>The health and fitness offer is restricted by the size of rooms available. 9 fitness classes and three aqua aerobics classes are delivered per week.</p> <p>The activity hall is below average in quality– previously used for NERS / stroke support but not anymore. It is now primarily used for group fitness classes.</p> <p>The swimming pool accommodates school swimming during the day and lessons and casual swimming at other times.</p> <p>The 1:1 swim lesson programme is reported to be in high demand at this site. Also popular are the aqua aerobics classes.</p> <p>There is a need to improve energy efficiency and invest in green technology in order to meet the NPT carbon reduction targets.</p>	<p>fitness gym and free weights area could then become studio space for fitness classes.</p> <p>Improve the energy efficiency of building fabric, including M&E to reduce overall running costs (and carbon emissions).</p>
Portardawe Swimming Pool		
Facility mix	Site visit observations	Strategic action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 lane 25m swimming pool Learner/teaching pool 	<p>Built in 1974, this facility was not audited as it was temporarily closed awaiting urgent maintenance due to serious structural defects.</p> <p>Consultation identified that the site caters for 900 swimming lessons per week and delivers 3 aqua aerobics classes per week.</p>	<p>The building is beyond economic repair and it is only a matter of time before the poor condition forces permanent closure.</p> <p>There is a need to undertake a swimming masterplan to understand if there is a need to replace the facility.</p>

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General observations:

- ◀ There appears to be a passive approach to programming leisure centres with the operator not developing and delivering programmes of activity.
- ◀ The centres seem to be focused solely on what is happening within their buildings with little outreach and external engagement with their local communities. All outreach work is currently completed by NPT.
- ◀ There is a need to do more to attract local people into facilities, especially those within walking distance of the leisure centres.
- ◀ The youth gym is popular, is there scope for a broader range of junior activities at the centres.
- ◀ There is an opportunity to develop and deliver more daytime activities for the 60+ age group.
- ◀ Celtic Leisure staff are not as energy-conscious and environmentally aware as we have seen in other parts of the country. There does not appear to be an awareness that every member of staff has a role to play in minimizing consumption of energy, such as when activity areas are not in use.
- ◀ There appears to be a notion at Celtic Leisure that because of the wind farm subsidy there is no need to be concerned about energy. Moving forward, there is a need to check and challenge current behaviours.
- ◀ The sites are seemingly not as busy as they should be. There is a need for a review to identify programming opportunities which deliver key outcomes and income generation and provide a slicker transition between activities.

Celtic Leisure also operates the Gwyn Hall theatre. This was not audited as part of the KKP sports facilities review; however, consultation identified no cross selling between the theatre programme and the leisure centres. This is a missed opportunity.

3.2: Sports stakeholder consultation

A number of key stakeholders were identified by NPT for high level consultation. This included Council officers and key community sports clubs and providers. The key findings from the consultation process have been summarised below:

- ◀ There is a general consensus that there are ample sports facilities in NPT.
- ◀ Provision is generally good quality, there is however a need to maintain and improve current provision.
- ◀ Stakeholders are passionate about the where they live and the importance of sport and physical activity.
- ◀ Stakeholders are proud of the area in which they live/deliver activity.
- ◀ NPT environment offers lots of opportunity for all levels of activity.

In addition, the following points / opportunities were raised by consultees:

Consultee	Overview
Pontardawe Community Sports and Recreation Association	<p>Asset transfer of site 8 years ago. It has a 50-year lease of 2x cricket and 1x rugby pitch. The association maintains the pitches.</p> <p>The Association feels that the poor quality facilities limit growth. The pavilion is in very poor condition it is not accessible for people with disabilities, the floodlights don't work, the pitches are not secure and are heavily used by dog walkers.</p> <p>The rugby section is particularly passionate about investing and improving the facilities at the site. It reports that there are no opportunities for girls as the facilities do not cater for girls. The layout of the</p>

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Consultee	Overview
	<p>pavilion means that it can only be used by a single sex (which includes officials and players) and there are no spectator toilets.</p> <p>Parking is also a challenge; the site has a single track and not enough parking to accommodate the range of activities taking place.</p> <p>The Association has been successful with a regeneration grant to improve the quality of the pitches; however, as it does not own the pavilion it is unable to apply for grants or funding to improve the facility.</p> <p>The site is on a popular walking cycle route.</p> <p>The future of the pavilion is of major concern to the Association. It fears that if it gets vandalised or any worse that it cannot be used. On this basis, the clubs and teams that train there will not be able to continue to use the site.</p> <p>The Association has an ambition for a skatepark to be located on site.</p>
Sports Development Officer	<p>The Sports Development Team currently consists of 35 staff, three of which are core funded with the rest funded by Public Health/Sport Wales. The majority are part time. They are based in schools and at the 15 community centres in NPT.</p> <p>There is no cross selling of activities. As an example, the theatre hosts the sports awards but there are no initiatives to cross sell activity and opportunity between the theatre and leisure centres.</p> <p>There is no cohesive aquatics pathway; there are swimming lessons and clubs (lifesaving, swim waterpolo) but they all work independently.</p> <p>There is good gymnastics offer locally; the Club has its own dedicated venue which is good quality.</p> <p>There are enough facilities in the area, they just require ongoing maintenance and future investment.</p> <p>There is a need for better quality youth rugby offer in the area.</p> <p>There is a lack of girl's football provision.</p> <p>There is a lot of bowls provision in NPT, a review is required to determine if there is too much or could they be consolidated.</p> <p>There is a need for better links from school to community sport – Pupils complete bronze, silver and gold levels in volunteers for Active Young People, but this it is not linked to Celtic Leisure employment opportunities. This is a missed opportunity especially given the lack of swim teachers and lifeguards.</p> <p>The successful NERS programme has two co-ordinators and three instructors; by increasing this there is an opportunity to expand the delivery of the programme.</p>
Relationship Manager Sport Wales	<p>Sport Wales is in the process of creating new partnership areas (the existing 22 authorities will feed into five strategic areas across Wales) which will be established by April 2024. It is a partnership between Police, Public Health, Rugby, and Street Games and will change how NPT can access funding.</p> <p>It is indicated that NPT council could access more funding support if meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tackle inequality based on the results in the school survey. ▶ Focus on funding for staff and programme delivery, but not facilities. <p>To access the funding, a five-year investment plan is needed.</p> <p>Sport Wales considers NPT to be a well valued service and reports great relationships with officers.</p>

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Consultee	Overview
Trefelin Boys and Girls Football Club	<p>It reports there is two years of investment left and then funding will change. Early indications show there is likely to be an increased capital pot of a few hundred thousand pounds that can be applied for.</p> <p>The Club has 12 junior teams, 2 senior teams and one youth team. It has increased its number of teams over the last few years and aspires to continue to grow and improve its facilities.</p> <p>Recent investments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ New bar area ◀ Floodlights <p>The Club's facilities are available for other community groups to hire. Recently it has delivered mental health talks to its members and the wider community and lets its facilities to an annual Caravan Club event.</p> <p>Consultation identified that the Club is concerned about the increasing cost of energy and would like to invest in PV panels on the roof of the Clubhouse. It reports that it has identified a grant for £15k but the Club needs to pay £50k upfront to deliver the improvement. The club does not have the funds available to do that.</p> <p>It also has aspirations to replace the junior pitch fencing (behind the main pitch) and install floodlights and a 3G training area. The Club currently pays £80 per hour to hire a school 3G which is too high for the number of teams it has. It hopes that by having its own facilities it can reduce this cost and make the pitch available to the community.</p> <p>Since the consultation took place, it has been reported that the Club has secured £37k funding for PV solar panels and a storage battery.</p>
Baglan Education Training Centre	<p>There is a need to focus on the local community offer and the use of natural resources more. There are some good recent examples of this with the opening of old railways into cycle and walking routes. There is a need for communities to know what is available to them on their doorstep and for more opportunities.</p> <p>Public transport locally is a challenge particularly for people living in the more rural areas. For people living in areas of higher deprivation, there needs to be a physical activity offer available to them for little/no cost and good quality provision in schools (including extracurricular).</p> <p>Schools would welcome more sports coaches to deliver in schools however, they do not have the funds available to pay for it. The experience that qualified sports coaches bring is essential for the teaching of skills to pupils and really enhances the school offer.</p> <p>School swimming is highly valued by the schools however, the transport required to access swimming pools is a key challenge.</p> <p>The new curriculum presents opportunities to think and do things differently. There is an opportunity to consider how the sport and physical activity sector engages and re-engages with the community. Ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ There is a need for local community champions – like Joe Wickes but lives in NPT. ◀ Tandem promotions would be good between sport & culture e.g. swim and theatre.
Bryncoch Sports Club	<p>Consultation identified that the sports club mainly caters for cricket and rugby with some football. It was established in 1898 as Bryncoch Rugby Football Club. The Club disbanded during the First and Second World Wars and reformed in 1947.</p> <p>Pre the formation of the Club, the site consisted of five mining shafts. Unfortunately, there was a tragic accident, and a large number of miners lost their lives. Coal mining resumed and the company finally closed in 1928.</p> <p>The land was privately owned and after WW2 local residents bought the freehold (in 1949) and WRU loaned the money for the sports facilities to be developed. Since then, the club has continued to develop and has rugby teams at all ages from under 5 to seniors; with two senior teams. It has also</p>

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Consultee	Overview
	<p>developed a football and cricket section with junior football teams from 6 years to under 17s and two cricket teams. More recently, the club has welcomed an archery club (Neath Archery Club) and introduced a darts team.</p> <p>The sports club maintains all the grounds and uses the money from the membership to fund this and applies for funding as and when the opportunity arises. There is currently a drainage issue with the cricket outfield, and it is raising funds to resolve this.</p> <p>The Club has recently taken steps to reduce its carbon emissions and energy costs; it has installed solar panels, (grant funded and the coal board paid for the installation), and its floodlights are LED.</p> <p>There are ambitions to further extend the club to provide accessible toilets, a lift, meeting room, changing room, plant and fitness area. Costs are estimated to be in the region of c. £200k. This will enable some of the users with disabilities to access the whole of the clubhouse and use the Club's facilities. The archers currently have some members with disabilities and there is scope to increase the membership, but it is unable to due to the lack of accessible facilities.</p> <p>At the entrance to the site, in the woodland, there is heritage land identified as 'pristine woodland'. There is a desire to create a memorial garden and to improve the access to the site. Plans are in place to transition it from being natural woodland to become a garden of celebration in dedication to the miners. The Club is proud of its history and wants the site to reflect its history and be proud of the happy place it has become.</p> <p>The Club has started to engage with environmental, wildlife and historical groups and discussions with Heritage Lottery have taken place. Early indications are that they are keen to invest in the project (clubhouse extension and the development of community room) and the area generally.</p> <p>Longer term, the Club would like to increase the number of football pitches at the site, it has identified an area of land to do this.</p>
<p>Active Young People Coordinators (Neath Port Talbot Council)</p>	<p>The AYP team is grant funded by Sport Wales. The section is responsible for developing and delivering inclusive physical activity and sport opportunities across the County Borough. It works with a number of partners to reach as many young people as possible. Its main remit is school and community club delivery and holiday provision. In recent years, the move out of schools and into the community is reported to have been a success and has been well transitioned. It is important to keep the link with schools and officers being attached to them and this should remain.</p> <p>There are six officers delivering in all of the secondary schools. They deliver a Young Ambassador scheme and an inclusive clubs. They are based in school for a ½ day per week. The programme targets deprived areas and delivers as much free activity as possible to ensure that all young people can participate.</p> <p>Planning The team plan bottom up with information from the Sport Wales sport survey results, data from other surveys and focus groups. An away day is held in summer and winter time to plan and review the programme this should be used to bring staff together and plan. An annual Sport Plan is submitted to Sport Wales as per the funding agreement. Some of the projects and initiatives it has delivered include:</p> <p>Young Ambassadors This is key to the work the team do, it has created a pathway for sports leaders and coaches of the future and is reported to have been very successful.</p> <p>Health project One officer is taking the lead on a research project that is looking into girls participation at secondary level. The officer is working with the Health Authority obesity team looking to set up a community based multisport activity club that can link at risk / obese children into as a targeted approach.</p>

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Consultee	Overview
	<p>Netball Two officers are leading on the primary school netball. There have been a number of competitive festivals, which gives the opportunity to link girls into the netball clubs in the community. It is reported that there has been limited NGB resource in NPT over the past few years as the officer is operating over the South and west as a region. There has been large growth in the sport on recent years. Swansea Bay netball league has grown in 10 years to one of the biggest in Wales.</p> <p>Mountain Biking- This is another sporting pathway created through the AYP team, a twice weekly junior MB club has been developed at Margam Park, and a number of MB events have been staged.</p> <p>Schools Healthy Eating Programme (SHEP) The AYP team is the lead for physical activity element of the Welsh Government programme during school holidays.</p> <p>Holiday Sports Camps. The school holiday inclusive sports Camps are now well established with school-based camps in all holidays (apart from Christmas), the camps are free in our deprived communities. There has been a partnership developed with the local housing association, to pilot two fit and fed camps in deprived communities. This was successful and will be rolled out further in the summer holidays.</p> <p>The team lead the delivery of teaching children and adults to ride a bike and cycling skills. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Lead Mountain biking projects (April – September) ◀ Evening sessions and tasters in schools ◀ Supporting Welsh cycling – British champs and marathon biking ◀ Hiring of E bikes ◀ Organises events every month for inter school challenges. ◀ For 4 feeder schools in Aber Valley it delivers a biking programme, balance bikes, learn to ride etc ◀ Holiday programme – 2x day camps in x4 areas of NPT charging £15 per day 8.30am – 3pm and a trip at the end of the week ◀ Organises and delivers an Outdoor Adventure Activities camp which includes kayaking, surfing, mountain biking, inflatable park, disability programme, and inclusion camp. <p>The summer camps are sponsored and funded by local companies who also have volunteers to support delivery. Some sessions are funded by Sport Wales however, it does not cover staffing costs. Moving forwards there is a need to charge for activities to enable them to be sustainable. This will result in less opportunity for those that cannot afford to attend.</p> <p>It also operates a Friday night netball league. Consultation identified that there is latent demand for swimming and basketball in the area. In NPT each school receives two weeks of swimming lessons.</p> <p>In order to deliver more activity, additional staffing is required. Moving forwards, it highlights a need to promote existing and tourist opportunities in the area such as bike hire.</p>
Corporate Director of Education, Leisure and Culture	<p>There are good community facilities in NPT, they are highly valued by the community. The transfer of Celtic Leisure back in house will cost the Council more, however, it will have more control and will be able to address some of the underperformance issues. There is a need to maximise commerciality.</p> <p>There are however a number of key challenges ahead, including increased financial pressures due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ The National minimum wage increase, there will be a significant increase in the cost of staffing leisure centres. ◀ Increase in the cost of energy. ◀ The risk of decrease in income levels. (The cost-of-living increase are likely to impact the level of disposable income and items that are deemed luxuries such as fitness memberships).

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Consultee	Overview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ The high levels of investments required to make the Council's assets carbon neutral/as energy efficient as possible. <p>The Council wants to sustain and improve the leisure offer to its residents and the transition to in-house delivery should enable a more streamlined service.</p> <p>The sporting heritage of the area is important, there is a need to capture the sporting history, celebrate and promote it.</p> <p>There is a need to attract more tourists to the area and tourists to know what is available in NPT.</p> <p>Welsh Rugby Football Union was established on 12th March 1881 at the Castle Hotel in Neath. Neath RFC is the oldest rugby club in Wales, it was formed in 1871.</p>
Surf School Wales	<p>Based at Aberavon Beach seafront, the company operates from four shipping containers with a decking and covered area. If it has groups, it has pop up tents that it uses as changing rooms. The main challenge is the lack of toilet and changing facilities.</p> <p>There is a public toilet and outdoor shower further along the seafront, but this presents challenges for groups with children with regards to safeguarding. It is also not accessible for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Consultation identified that there used to be taps located along the beach front which the public could use to wash sand off feet and for dogs to get a drink but these have been removed and are missed by members of the public. There is also a surf lifesaving group that operates on the beach.</p> <p>The beach is reported to be one of the best beaches around, it has the least natural hazards, no currents or rocks.</p> <p>Other beach users include jet skiers, surfers, say kayakers and sea swimmers/dippers. There are also events that take place in the summer months which include running, and triathlon. There are reported to be three surf schools operating from the beach. Plus, additional 'nomadic' surf school providers. Stand Up Paddleboarding operates only when the conditions allow.</p> <p>The general opinion is that the beach is not used to its full potential, and there appears to be no collective vision for it and that everyone is operating in silos. There is a need for partnership working to reach its full potential. The group is concerned that activities are being delivered from the beach that are unsafe and that are unlicensed. In terms of surf delivery, it feels that the Welsh Surf Federation affiliation should be in place for large groups operating at the beach.</p> <p>Opportunities for beach improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ A dedicated beach manager ◀ A 'friends of Aberavon Beach' group could be established for operators and users of the beach. ◀ A need for improved food and beverage offer in the summer months. ◀ Improved signage especially for people using inflatables in the water. ◀ Improved signage and way marking/distance marking. ◀ Increased safety and supervision in the summer months (RNLI only cover until 6pm). ◀ Increased parking on the beachfront. ◀ Increased activities such as skateboarding – the current area is inadequate. There is a close link between surfing and skateboarding, as it is easy to transfer skills from one sport to the other. ◀ Signage to on the motorway to encourage people to stop at NPT.
Triathlon Coaching Wales	<p>The group operates coaching sessions for adults. It has c.15 members and caters for adults only. It used to provide for juniors pre Covid; however, the juniors have increased in age and are now seniors. It hires three lanes of the swimming pool at Aberavon Beach for 3 hours per week 6.30am – 7.30am Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. For running and cycling, it links to other running and cycling groups.</p>

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Consultee	Overview
	<p>Consultation indicates that there is a running track and cycle ways and routes that can be on/off road and that there are options for all abilities. For some people, they cycle online only, and that Zwift racing is increasing in popularity.</p> <p>It identifies a need for more junior provision and talent development; however, it recognises the challenges with accommodating juniors as there is a need for an increased number of volunteers and the club volunteers require more qualifications and training. This is not something that it can accommodate at present.</p>
Port Talbot Harriers	<p>Established in 1921, the club is a running and multi-sport club (run, cycle and swim). It is located in a portacabin at Port Talbot Town Cricket Club.</p> <p>The Club has experienced rapid growth from 45 members to 500 in recent years. Approximately 5 years ago it added the cycling and swimming to the club and this it feels has resulted in its expansion. The Club charges £20 per year plus subsidises events and transport. There are no weekly subs.</p> <p>The weekly programme consists of two running session and two swimming sessions at Aberavon Beach Leisure Centre. The cycling elements take place individually or on the few spin bikes it has located at the clubhouse.</p> <p>The Club also organises the Tata Steelman event every year (a half ironman).</p> <p>At present, the Club currently does not cater for juniors, it aspires to; however, the running elements take place on the road and it is not safe for juniors. A track is required for junior activity. It identifies that there is a shale track at Ysgol Bae Baglan School. It is, however, only available in the summer as it has no floodlights and the surface is affected by the weather. This means that the Club could only offer junior activity in the summer months which does not work in terms of growth and retention.</p> <p>The Club recently celebrated its 100th anniversary and accessed heritage funding. To celebrate the centenary, the Club President John Davies wrote a book about the Club's 100-year history which is available to buy. It has roller banners on display in the clubhouse for members and visitors to read.</p> <p>One of the main assets of NPT is reported to be the topography of the land. For walking/running/cycling as there is flat, hilly and mountainous terrain to suit all tastes and abilities.</p> <p>Consultation identified a need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Increased signposting in the area for walk/ cycle/runs. ◀ Distance markers on the promenade. ◀ There is a need to promote sporting activity for tourists in the area, especially once the Wildfox Adventure Resort development is completed. (Summer 2026). ◀ Identified that the car park area of the old BP site could be used by clubs/groups for junior activity if cleared and some drainage installed. ◀ Feel that Celtic Leisure needs to focus on health and wellbeing and physical activity especially mental health.

COUNTER CULTURE – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY (HERITAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM & ARTS)

3.3: SWOT and gap analysis

Strengths

- ◀ The importance of health and wellbeing is understood.
- ◀ The natural assets (topography) of the area – mountains, forest, rivers, canals and the beach.
- ◀ People – NPT sports stakeholders are passionate about the area, and its people.
- ◀ Residents are proud of its sporting achievements to date.
- ◀ There are aspirations to enhance the current offer and improve current facilities.
- ◀ Continue to maintain the good quality sports facilities and plan for future investment in those that are ageing.

Weaknesses

- ◀ Celtic Leisure appears to be operating as a caretaker of facilities. It is not pro-active in the programming of facilities.
- ◀ Celtic Leisure has no relationship with health partners.
- ◀ It is a passive hirer of spaces.
- ◀ Junior community sports opportunities in NPT are lacking. Clubs aspire to have juniors but struggle to have the resources required (volunteers).
- ◀ There is a need for more girl's sport and physical activity opportunities.
- ◀ There is a need to invest in reducing energy consumption and decarbonisation.
- ◀ There is a need for improved signage to NPT and its assets.
- ◀ Community clubs are keen to make their facilities more energy efficient however they do not have the funds to be able to 'invest to save'.
- ◀ Need to develop more effective structures for cross-sector collaborative working, both within and beyond the Council.
- ◀ Not all built facilities have been considered as part of this report. (Only public leisure centre provision has been audited and reviewed).

Opportunities

- ◀ Opportunity for better links between leisure operations and health and wellbeing partners.
- ◀ Utilise the opportunity to co-locate services and build partnership working at Aberavon Leisure Centre (youth club space), with potential partners such as health care, adult social care etc.
- ◀ To create a dynamic service with opportunities for young people including future workforce pathway– apprenticeships/ young leaders – assistant coaches – qualified staff.
- ◀ Increase slow travel (cycling and walking) and active travel.
- ◀ Bringing the leisure service back in house presents an opportunity to link Active Young People Ambassadors with staff recruitment challenges at Celtic Leisure, particularly the recruitment of lifeguards and swim teachers.
- ◀ Increase partnership working opportunities such as creating a 'Friends of Aberavon Beach' group.
- ◀ Approach Sport Wales for additional funding and consider future capital projects.
- ◀ Consider amending the layout of the reception area at Aberavon LC to incorporate the café to reduce the levels of staffing required to operate both reception and the café at quieter times.
- ◀ Identify opportunities to cross sell activities such as theatre/cinema and a free swim pass etc.
- ◀ Consider undertaking a Sports Facilities Needs Assessment and Strategy and action plan to determine the current and future need for sports facilities in the area and what investment may be required. This would also review the capacity of existing facilities to understand if there is a need for replacement / additional provision.

Threats

- ◀ The cost of bringing the leisure service in house will put additional financial strain on the Council.
- ◀ The increased cost to operate and run facilities (staffing and energy increases).
- ◀ The cost-of-living crisis makes it more challenging for people to be able to afford to participate in activities that cost money.
- ◀ Pontardawe Swimming Pool is beyond economic repair and it is only a matter of time before the poor condition forces permanent closure. There is a need to determine future demand for a pool in the area and identify the costs involved to replace the pool.
- ◀ People in rural communities may become more isolated with limited public transport available.

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3.4: Conclusions and recommendations

Following the site visits and consultation, it is clear that utilising the area's natural assets and preserving it for future generations is imperative to all stakeholders. There is an urgent need to decarbonise assets and reduce energy consumption in both the public and community facilities.

The insourcing of Celtic Leisure presents an opportunity to review staffing structures, programmes and business operations to ensure it meets the current and future needs of the NPT population.

In increasingly difficult financial times, the ability of people living in more rural and deprived communities to access provision is critical and consideration needs to be given to transport (including active travel) and the connectivity of people and communities.

The new curriculum presents opportunities to be creative and innovative and for sport and physical activity to demonstrate where it can contribute to this.

There is a need to ensure that the 'area of power' (steel, wind, coal and water) creates powerful people (strong and skilful) and well-connected communities through collaborative working.

There is a need to access any funding opportunities that arise and ensure that the maximum amount of funding is obtained from any current funders. NPT stakeholders are proud and passionate, they care about the future.