

CORPORATE PLAN / STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME 2023-2024

Half year progress April 2023 to September 2023

Well-being Objective 3

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

Objective
Natural processes are restored and they mitigate and have developed greater resilience to climate change. People actively conserve, improve and enjoy our stunning natural environment, treasure the Welsh language and are actively engaged with the rich sporting, cultural and industrial heritage of the area

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
1. Worked with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to define a programme of flagship heritage and culture projects for the county borough; by delivering the new culture strategy.	a. Help to promote the work done by local groups, making it easier for others to appreciate, understand and enjoy our local environment, heritage and culture.	<p>Work has been undertaken over the past few months including a heritage volunteer event in Victoria Gardens to promote the work of local groups and societies. The turnout at the event was excellent, with an average of 30 people attending each stall.</p> <p>Working with Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services on a Networking and Celebration event, which will take place on the 28th October at the Plaza.</p> <p>Promoting local Heritage groups events through @HeritageNPT on Twitter and Facebook</p>	
	b. Expand use of council's What's On database to amplify community messages.	<p>The use of the 'What's On' pages to the NPT Heritage network has been encouraged with delivery of training sessions to help the groups with this. Guides have been produced to support groups to upload information to the 'What's On' pages. Points of contact has been determined to fix issues community groups were having.</p> <p>Library services have offered the groups and societies a digital What's On screen within the libraries to promote their meetings, talks and events after we were asked where they could put up their paper posters. We explained that we no longer have notice boards for paper copies and asked the groups to send us a digital copy of their poster instead – nothing received to date.</p>	
	c. Finalise the Heritage & Culture Strategies, agree priorities and determine partnership governance strategy.	<p>Destination and Culture strategies were adopted by Cabinet on 20th September. Governance structure is an early action of the culture strategy and meetings have been set up with Swansea University to determine scope. Framework and action plans created governance structure to be determined in Qtr.4</p> <p>Still determining how best to launch both strategies. An agreed action plan has been developed for future delivery.</p> <p>Draft Heritage Strategy presented at All Members seminar, which took place during September. The Strategy was then agreed by Cabinet and went out for final round of consultation which closed 5th November.</p> <p>National Lottery Heritage Fund recently announced Neath Port Talbot as a "Priority Place" – Only one in Wales.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	d. Promote the £2.5 million Shared Prosperity funded Heritage, Culture and Events fund and highlight opportunities to community groups;	<p>Project application and guidance documentation finalised. Support available to guide project applicants on eligibility and criteria. 2 Officers recruited as part of the project team in July 23. Officers will manage the fund and support project applicants.</p> <p>As at end of September, 27 expressions of interest received from a variety public, private and voluntary sector organisations. 1 project approved at September funding panel for Aspire To Be to deliver an 'Autumn Rugby League International Event' at Ynys Park, Cwmavon.</p>	
	e. Continue to seek external funding opportunities to conserve and enhance, culture and heritage.	<p>£300,000 secured from Visit Wales' Brilliant Basics Scheme to deliver car parking improvements at Neath Abbey Ruins, as part of a wider project proposal in partnership with Cadw. Project team, which consists of NPT Council and Cadw officers, have met to initiate discussions.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing relating to the wider project which aims to develop a visitor centre and visitor facilities which will provide a link between the Neath Abbey Ruins and Neath Abbey Ironworks - drawing the local heritage attractions together.</p>	
	f. Implement our Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.	<p>The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was adopted in July 2023 and has since been published.</p> <p>'Hyder-ish' sessions were due to commence in September but were postponed due to capacity. These are sessions for Welsh speakers that can help alleviate the pressure around speaking Welsh will distracting with activities. These will commence in November 2023.</p> <p>Economic Development's Business Services Team have added sections into their enquiry form if businesses would like assistance with Welsh language to raising awareness within the business community</p> <p>Discussion have started with People and Organisational Development Service to incorporate Welsh language levels into the iTrent system. To encourage staff to reassess their language skills against speaking, writing and understanding Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh language awareness, use and visibility are key components of both the Culture Strategy and the Destination Management Plan, which were adopted 20th September.</p>	
	g. Consider the State of Nature report to determine the priorities of Neath Port Talbot Nature Partnership.	<p>State of Nature report and Nature Recovery Action Plan (SON and NRAP) has been published by the NPT Nature Partnership. The NPT State of Nature and Nature Recovery Plan Report is published via the newly created website The State of Nature of NPT Neath Port Talbot Nature NPTLNP (naturenpt.cymru) State of Nature in NPT is not considered resilient and the report includes actions for all partners.</p> <p>This report has been reviewed and recommendations have been included as part of the council's revised Biodiversity Duty Plan. The Plan is progressing through governance procedures and will be presented to full Council in November 2023. Additional work to improve resilience of our local nature will be necessary and will be looked at via a number of council actions to deliver improvements for biodiversity under the NPT SON and NRAP.</p> <p>The NPT Nature Partnership is presenting the State Of Nature report to Councillors at a Members Seminar in October 2023 and the Public Services Board in January 2024 with a launch event for SON and NRAP planned for February 2024. Through Welsh Government Local Places for Nature Funding, the NPT Partnership and NPT Council Countryside and</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>Wildlife Team have commenced delivery of a number of projects to address needed action of the SON and NRAP and are supporting local community groups to make a difference in their local area.</p> <p>In addition to this work the ‘Working with Nature’ project covers management of council owned nature sites including local nature reserves; support for volunteering at such sites, awareness raising activities connecting people to nature e.g. guided walks and biodiversity training for local people. Sites include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dyffryn Rhondda Railway Meadows 2. Abercregan Meadow 3. Giant's Grave 4. Maes yr Afon C&C parallel to Parr Avenue C&C management 5. Richard Burton Trail – patches that need vegetation/C&C management 6. Coed Bach and Y Cwm Meadow Cut 7. Maerdy Playing Fields 8. Eaglesbush Valley LNR 9. Bryn Tip LNR 10. Cwn Du Glen LNR 11. Glanrhyd LNR 12. Swansea Canal LNR 13. Tonmawr Heathland Restoration Site 14. Llandarcy Village Green 15. Tonna Woodland 16. Stratton Way Pond 17. Shelone Woods 18. Coed Cefnllan-isaf Pontardawe 19. Tonmawr water treatment works SINC 20. Wood street stepping stones site <p>We have progressed the creation of new meadow sites at Dwr y Felin and Caewathan for people to enjoy as natural green spaces. There have been biodiversity improvements and additional biodiversity features at Talbot Park Stepping Stone nature reserve and Glyncorwg Primary School. These projects will be ongoing for this year and into next year.</p> <p>Local Nature Partnership Fund – a fund for nature improvements/ delivery of SON and NRAP Actions for community groups and organisations has been launched. Funding for the first round of projects will be confirmed in Quarter 3 with further rounds open into next year.</p> <p>Events and awareness raising initiatives can be viewed via the NPT Wildlife Social media pages or via the NPT Nature partnership website The State of Nature of NPT Neath Port Talbot Nature NPTLNP (naturenpt.cymru)</p>	
	<p>h. Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>Destination Management Plan which was adopted on 20th September has been co-produced with public, private and voluntary sector visitor economy partners. Culture Strategy has again been co-produced with a governance structure that is independent from the council. Partnership working is also a key component of the Heritage strategy.</p> <p>The SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) funded Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund is open to our strategic partners (in addition to private and voluntary sectors). The team are currently working with a range of partners including NRW (Natural Resources Wales), Bannau Brycheiniog, Cadw and partner organisations to develop proposals.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>In addition, an application has been submitted for National Lottery funding of £139,000 to develop the 'Canal Connections' project undertaking a feasibility study for the Neath and Tennant Canals to look at potential options for improvement.</p> <p>Strong relationship with NPTCVS, working in partnership to deliver a variety of heritage events.</p>	
	<p>i. Support those who have settled in Neath Port Talbot to promote their culture and heritage within the community.</p>	<p>Discussions are taking place with relevant service areas and external organisations, e.g. NPT BME Community Association, to explore opportunities to promote and celebrate the cultures and heritage of our communities.</p>	
<p>2. Worked with communities and partners to engender a greater sense of stewardship, encouraging them to take a more active role in the ongoing management and improvement of their local environment</p>	<p>a. Continue to support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.</p>	<p>The number of volunteers working on our sites have is currently around 79, in addition to benefits for nature at our sites through appropriate management and monitoring the volunteering opportunities benefit volunteers health and wellbeing, knowledge and skills development. Volunteers are working on a variety of sites throughout the county through the Connecting GI project, projects at Craig Gwladys Country Park, and through the Lost Peatlands Project. Volunteering continuing, albeit with a slight break on some sites due to a lack of funding. Welsh Government funding has now been secured and volunteering will be able to restart on those sites.</p> <p>Local Places for Nature funding for the Working with Nature project has been secured for 2 years. Contractors for both volunteer coordination and awareness raising/connecting people with nature have been confirmed and volunteering at sites as part of the Working with Nature Project is now restarting. Volunteering on Lost Peatlands sites has seen an increase in this quarter including corporate volunteering.</p> <p>Volunteer co-ordination and nature/well-being events are being planned as part of the Working with Nature Project funded by Welsh Government under Local Places for Nature (see above). In addition to those sites where volunteering is already supported through Lost Peatlands and Craig Gwladus Projects, additional sites are being made available for volunteering – more than ever before. Numbers of volunteers are expected to increase in following quarters.</p>	
	<p>b. Establish a programme of training and development to enable our workforce to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of our local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>Final draft eLearning programme – 'On Our Doorstep – an introduction to Neath Port Talbot' has been developed, includes the key themes of history and heritage, biodiversity and sport, Welsh language and traditions. This is due to be launched early December and will be adopted as part of the staff induction programme.</p> <p>Heritage groups also have the opportunity to undertake training with the HeritageNPT project.</p>	
<p>3. Embedded the history of the local environment, heritage and nature into the curriculum and ensure all schools have access to environmental and outdoor learning opportunities.</p>	<p>a. Focus on supporting new school curriculum and develop opportunities out in the community for children to engage.</p>	<p>Continuing to meet with a school's learning teams directly and on training days.</p> <p>45 teachers over 2 sessions attended.</p> <p>11 school visits including 3 guided walks around Neath Town Centre</p> <p>18 School sessions delivered (490 participants) between June and September</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status															
	<p>b. Extend opportunities for children, young people and citizens to learn about their local environment, heritage and culture.</p>	<p>‘Hands On History’ Sessions (informal learning) throughout libraries during school holidays as an off shoot of the Young Archaeologists Club (currently full with an increasing waiting list).</p> <p>Monthly local history talks program / events throughout libraries for adults. Talks to community groups and residential homes.</p> <p>Class visits/ Young Archaeologists Club / Hands on History : April – June: 261 young people engaged July – September: 12 sessions: 180 participants engaged</p> <p>Local History Talks / Events / Community Sessions: April – June: 184 participants engaged July – September: 21 sessions: 210 participants</p>																
	<p>c. Continue with Lost Peatlands to develop school grounds to improve biodiversity and in relation to Glynccorwg Primary – provide a space for continued engagement with the outdoors through teacher led activities on school grounds.</p>	<p>Lost Peatlands Project continuing and significant improvements have been made to Glynccorwg Primary School grounds, with additional funding also provided by Welsh Government Local Places for Nature. New outdoor learning lessons currently being planned for the new term. Glynccorwg Primary School grounds have benefited from Lost Peatlands work.</p> <p>Lessons and additional features installed at Glynccorwg Primary and other schools in the Lost Peatlands Project area, have been very successful.</p> <p>Schools lessons and trips have been very well received at all the schools in the Lost Peatlands area. School based learning objectives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How peatbogs are formed – deeper understanding of the role of sphagnum moss (links to peatbog gardens installed previously) • Properties and uses of peat – importance of peat free compost • Reasons and techniques for restoring peatlands – bog in a bottle, bog gardens, sphagnum moss water retention, dam experiments • Deeper understanding of peatbog fauna and flora – top 10 species • Understanding of climate as opposed to weather <p>Children have been learning about peat bogs and their restoration and have even been up to our peat bogs to see them first hand. Significant improvement of school grounds has also been delivered, with Glynccorwg seeing the most benefit – moving from almost entirely concrete play areas to including wildflower planted beds planted by the children. Further improvements are planned as part of the Local Places for Nature Project for subsequent quarters.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1754 1461 2599 1749"> <thead> <tr> <th>School</th> <th>Current class size</th> <th>Max number of children taught from that class during one of the sessions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Croeserw</td> <td>20</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Glynccorwg</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cymer Afan</td> <td>32</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pen Afan</td> <td>21</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	School	Current class size	Max number of children taught from that class during one of the sessions	Croeserw	20	16	Glynccorwg	23	23	Cymer Afan	32	29	Pen Afan	21	21	
School	Current class size	Max number of children taught from that class during one of the sessions																
Croeserw	20	16																
Glynccorwg	23	23																
Cymer Afan	32	29																
Pen Afan	21	21																

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>4. Implemented our leisure strategy to improve access to high quality leisure and recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>a. Complete the transfer of Celtic Leisure back to the council by March 2024.</p>	<p>Internal working groups re-established and in plans formed. Costs increases around the staff transfer and ICT are a concern. Date of transfer being discussed as part of the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan).</p>	<p>Amber</p>
	<p>b. Refocus the strategic business plan for leisure services delivered by the council and bring forward medium term business plan.</p>	<p>3 year medium term financial plan targets for reducing costs have been put forward for consideration. Individual sites working up the detailed business case and investment requests. Re-profiled MTFP targets have been submitted for all leisure sites for the next 3 years – making a significant saving. Good progress with indoor leisure with excellent financial performance forecast this year and continued growth expected into 2024-25 and beyond.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>c. Start work to set a new strategic direction for leisure and recreation.</p>	<p>Work is directly linked to the future of Celtic Leisure. PASS (Physical Activity and Sport Service) and National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) teams are directly managed by Transition Executive to ensure work is closer aligned. PASS team now utilising leisure centres more, with NERS team working closer with colleagues within Celtic Leisure.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>d. Improve adult participation in leisure and recreation.</p>	<p>Support provided to those referred to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) by GPs practices. The PASS team assist adults within a club environment but do not physically deliver adult participation (this would require an Active Adult) officer due to restraints of current workloads.</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>5. Developed a clear understanding of how the environment, heritage, sport and culture can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy</p>	<p>a. Deliver our planned programme of projects and service changes to improve access to local sport, leisure, culture and heritage; deliver planned projects to conserve our local environment.</p>	<p>Clear action plans approved as part of the Culture, Destination and Heritage strategies. Discussions are underway to look at the reuse of Neath library. Bids are being developed for submission to SPF to support culture staff.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>6. Worked with partners to establish the county borough's brand as a destination of choice across the UK and internationally; implemented and delivered our destination management plan.</p>	<p>a. Administer the Shared Prosperity Funded Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund to enable public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver priority projects as identified in the Culture strategy, Heritage strategy and Destination Management Plan.</p>	<p>Project application and guidance documentation completed. Project team commenced employment in early July 23.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>b. Deliver the Shared Prosperity Funded Destination Marketing and Pride of Place Campaign to raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and change perceptions of the area by residents and investors across the South Wales region.</p>	<p>Procurement exercise completed and external communications agency in place to work with the Visitor Economy Team to deliver the Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaign is now complete. Planning of marketing activities across both campaigns is underway. The Destination Marketing campaign launched in August 2023 with the release of the 'Adventure Awaits' destination video. In addition, the Heart of Steel installation was placed at Margam Park between the 7th and 13th August to encourage visitor interaction with the campaign. Good progress has been made to date with marketing targets. Pride of Place campaign due to go live mid-October.</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>c. Deliver the Vale of Neath Heritage Corridor Visitor Attractor Levelling</p>	<p>Gnoll Estate Country Park project at detailed design stage. Pre application consultation has been completed and planning applications submitted. Further planning applications to be submitted as required.</p>	<p>Green</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	Up Fund Project at Gnoll Estate Country Park and Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan.	Waterfall Country Pontneddfechan scheme is currently in community consultation stage. The first of three consultation drop-in sessions commenced 28 th August. Online survey will remain live until early November. Negotiations with land owners are on-going.	
	d. Deliver priorities for the visitor economy as set out within the new Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan	Destination Management Plan approved by Cabinet on 20 th September 2023. Next phase of implementation will be to establish the Destination Management Leadership Group to deliver the plan over the next five years.	
	e. Strengthen the strategic approach to tourism and visitor economy	Destination Management Plan approved. As detailed above Destination Management Leadership Group to be established and a range of partners are engaged in developing projects which will deliver against the actions in the plan.	
	f. Agree Afan Forest Park Masterplan and strengthen partnership arrangements with Natural Resources Wales. Work closely with the Wildfox investors to maximise the benefits of that proposal.	Afan Forest Park Masterplan is in draft stage, requires further consultation with Natural Resources Wales. Meeting postponed to November 2023 to discuss partnership approach. Advert has been issued for the lease of Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre, closing date December. An advertisement has also been issued to secure a short-term concession to be located in the car park, which will bridge the gap until a lease holder is secured for the main centre.	
	g. Create a masterplan for Aberavon Seafront	Procurement paperwork currently being drawn up to secure a suitably qualified consultancy to devise the masterplan.	
7. Delivered the Dramatic Heart of Wales Destination Marketing Campaign in order to raise the profile of Neath Port Talbot as a visitor destination and encourage overnight stays.	a. Deliver compelling marketing communications activities which engage with key visitor target markets in order to encourage the growth of the visitor economy.	As detailed above: Procurement exercise completed and external communications agency in place to work with the Visitor Economy Team to deliver the Destination Marketing and Pride of Place campaign is now complete. Planning of marketing activities across both campaigns is underway. The Destination Marketing campaign launched in August 2023 with the release of the 'Adventure Awaits' destination video. In addition, the Heart of Steel installation was placed at Margam Park between the 7 th and 13 th August to encourage visitor interaction with the campaign. Good progress has been made to date with marketing targets. Pride of Place campaign due to go live mid-October.	
	b. Provide tailored support to businesses and organisations within the tourism sector in order to encourage the growth of the tourism sector and the employment it creates	During this quarter advice and assistance was provided to 14 tourism businesses. This includes 8 existing, 4 proposed and 2 new business. All enquires related to the development, funding or marketing of accommodation provision in the self-catering, caravan and camping sectors.	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
<p>8. Extended our active travel network and improved public rights of way to encourage more people to walk and cycle.</p>	<p>a. To develop a Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Plan which sets out the strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot and demonstrates how the active travel network will be improved and extended through the County Borough over the next 5 years. At the same time, extending and improving our active travel network whilst also maintaining our public rights of way, both of which contribute towards a reduced reliance on private vehicles and encourage more people to walk and cycle.</p>	<p>The Active Travel Delivery Plan is being drafted to determine a strategic vision for active travel in Neath Port Talbot. Consultation has been undertaken with the internal active travel stakeholder group on developing priorities for the vision.</p> <p>A prioritisation exercise is ongoing by Transport for Wales (TfW) for all future active travel routes in Wales. Once received this data will be reviewed and used to feed into the Neath Port Talbot Active Travel Delivery Plan.</p> <p>EXTENDING AND IMPROVING OUR ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK In order to extend our network work is ongoing on the following schemes: Tonna hospital Link, Bryn to Goytre, Neath to Cimla, Dwr-y-felin, Newbridge Road Link, Sandfields Master Plan, Village road crossing.</p> <p>Monitoring A programme of works has been established to record the speed and volume of traffic, along with cycle and pedestrian counts. Data is being captured to record baseline data and to capture evidence to demonstrate the benefits that improving active travel routes create. This will allow NPT to discharge out duties under the Active Travel Act.</p> <p>Promotion NPT's website has been updated to promote Active Travel, publicise the revised ATNM and provide information on routes that have recently been completed. Staff attended the family fun day to promote active travel. Visitors were asked to complete a consultation – 48 Responses were received. Discussions are taking place on roundabout sponsorship to promote active travel.</p> <p>ATNM (Active Travel Network Map) Development Route audits have been completed against a set of Welsh Government specified criteria to determine if they are suitable for walking, cycling or both for the majority of the routes shown on our Active Travel Network Map. An exercise is ongoing to review the audits and the updated information will be uploaded to DataMapWales.</p> <p>INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE REGIME During the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan, the need for other important work has been identified in relation to the inspection and maintenance regime of Active Travel routes. There is presently disparity between the management of different types of Active Travel Provision, this needs to be rationalised to ensure that footways, cycleways and shared use paths are inspected and maintained in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The HAMP relates to the adopted highway, some Active Travel Routes are on land that is outside the adopted highway. A review will be undertaken into the inspection and management of footways, cycleways and shared use paths and looked at across the adopted highway network, un-adopted highway and other land. This review will take a significant amount of work to complete and will be completed over the coming year.</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>9. Increased the proportion of the council's budget spent on greener alternatives for goods</p>	<p>a. Work with Cwmpas (Wales Co-op) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies, developers of the</p>	<p>Procurement commissioned consultants to prepare a report to highlight ways in which the council can enhance and develop local spend, while considering different procurement approaches such as the "Preston Model", Circular & Foundational Economy concepts to develop a tailored NPT Procurement Strategy.</p>	<p>Green</p>

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
and services and which are sourced locally and within the region, strengthening our foundational and circular economy	'Preston Model') to review procurement supply chain strategy. Maximise the local social and economic benefits of council spend, prioritise goals and objectives for social value and community wealth building in Neath Port Talbot.	<p>Final report issued week commencing 4th September, to be reviewed with Procurement. Information on the SPF Business Anchor project and its activities to support local procurement, supply chain development and use of Social Value policies have been provided for consideration.</p> <p>Decision has been taken to mirror the 'Let's Talk Business' events. Similar style event to take place on October 19th which will take place in the community, offering advice and support to local businesses.</p> <p>Formation of working group with Legal and Procurement team to progress.</p>	
10. Worked with our community groups, partners and stakeholders to extend our work to help nature recover and to improve the quality of and access to our natural environment; further implement our biodiversity plan.	a. Drive the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan.	<p>Biodiversity Duty Plan implementation is currently being evaluated for 2020-2023 in line with legal requirements. A report on the implementation along with recommendations for a revised version of the Plan for 2023-2026 is currently being prepared for full Council approval by the end of the year. Current assessment has identified some areas for improvement.</p> <p>The analysis of the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan up until March 2023 has been completed. A report on this implementation, along with a revised Council Biodiversity Duty Plan is progressing through governance procedures and will be presented to full Council in November 2023.</p> <p>The assessment of the implementation of the Biodiversity Duty Plan has identified a number of areas that required some improvement and additional actions have been added to reflect the NPT SON and NRAP and changes in UK and Welsh policy.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the plan service assessments of each service area have progressed, with most service areas being so far reported either Green or Amber – meaning there is some room for improvement in the duty implementation. The audit of Council owned land has also progressed with areas of biodiversity value being flagged on internal systems to ensure biodiversity if considered in any land changes etc.</p> <p>The amount of council owned land being managed with biodiversity in mind is currently improving with the ongoing roll out of the NPT Bee-Friendly Scheme. Showing that a simple change in management can result in a big difference for nature.</p>	
	b. Further develop the Neath Port Talbot Nature Partnership	The launch of the NPT SON and NRAP (State of Nature report and Nature Recovery Action Plan) is planned for February 2024 and a PR contractor is delivering the organisation of a launch event. The Partnership continues to meet every 2 months throughout the year. NPT4Nature sub-group has continued to meet and provide community groups with opportunities to access expertise, discuss ideas and can increase their skills and knowledge on nature to ensure their works are good for nature. The focus of the NPT Nature Partnership has been the publication of the NPT State of Nature and Nature Recovery Action Plan and the launch of this in February is a key piece of work currently being undertaken. A Small grants fund for nature improvements/ delivery of State of Nature and NRAP Actions for community groups and organisations has been launched. Funding for the first round of projects will be confirmed in Q3 with further rounds open into next year.	
	c. Apply for and deliver external grant-funded projects to manage, improve and create new council sites for the benefit of nature and local communities	Grant funded projects delivered this year: Lost Peatlands Project – National Lottery Heritage Fund, Connecting Green Infrastructure Project – Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Fund (WG/EU) (coming to an end), various nature projects including management of nature reserves, community meadows – WG Local Places 4 Nature, Craig Gwladys – National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and Greening the Grey in Port Talbot – WG/NLHF Local Places 4 Nature (capital	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status																		
		<p>fund). Further projects are also currently being developed with the intention to apply for UKSPF and WG Coastal Capacity and Challenge Fund grants.</p> <p>The Connecting Green Infrastructure Project has ended its delivery this Qtr. and therefore further funding is being sought to continue to develop GI projects. Welsh Government Coastal Capacity and Challenge Fund Projects have been applied for and UKSPF funded projects are also being developed. Further NLHF grant is also being applied for Craig Gwladus.</p> <p>Projects:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1160 642 2585 1247"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>Grant funding amount/ Project value</th> <th>Areas</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project (Partnership Project) (until Feb 2025)</td> <td>£1.56million / over £2.8 million including match funding</td> <td>Upper Afan Valley and Upper Rhondda Valley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Connecting Green Infrastructure (Partnership Project) (Delivery ended July 23)</td> <td>£2.25 million</td> <td>Regional (NPT, Swansea, Carms)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Places for Nature (Confirmed until Mar 25)</td> <td>£500,100 for 23/24 £575,300 for 24/25</td> <td>NPT Wide – various sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Craig Gwladus – Coal and Community (Delivery until Mar 24)</td> <td>£181,225 / with match funding £213,113</td> <td>Craig Gwladus Country Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Returning Green to the Industrial Grey of Port Talbot (Delivery until Dec 24)</td> <td>£208,153</td> <td>Port Talbot – various sites</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project	Grant funding amount/ Project value	Areas	Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project (Partnership Project) (until Feb 2025)	£1.56million / over £2.8 million including match funding	Upper Afan Valley and Upper Rhondda Valley	Connecting Green Infrastructure (Partnership Project) (Delivery ended July 23)	£2.25 million	Regional (NPT, Swansea, Carms)	Local Places for Nature (Confirmed until Mar 25)	£500,100 for 23/24 £575,300 for 24/25	NPT Wide – various sites	Craig Gwladus – Coal and Community (Delivery until Mar 24)	£181,225 / with match funding £213,113	Craig Gwladus Country Park	Returning Green to the Industrial Grey of Port Talbot (Delivery until Dec 24)	£208,153	Port Talbot – various sites	
Project	Grant funding amount/ Project value	Areas																			
Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project (Partnership Project) (until Feb 2025)	£1.56million / over £2.8 million including match funding	Upper Afan Valley and Upper Rhondda Valley																			
Connecting Green Infrastructure (Partnership Project) (Delivery ended July 23)	£2.25 million	Regional (NPT, Swansea, Carms)																			
Local Places for Nature (Confirmed until Mar 25)	£500,100 for 23/24 £575,300 for 24/25	NPT Wide – various sites																			
Craig Gwladus – Coal and Community (Delivery until Mar 24)	£181,225 / with match funding £213,113	Craig Gwladus Country Park																			
Returning Green to the Industrial Grey of Port Talbot (Delivery until Dec 24)	£208,153	Port Talbot – various sites																			
	<p>d. Support and encourage volunteering at council owned nature sites.</p>	<p>The number of volunteers working on our sites is currently around 79. Volunteers are working on a variety of sites throughout the county through the Connecting GI project, projects at Craig Gwladus Country Park, and through the Lost Peatlands Project. Volunteering continuing, albeit with a slight break on some sites due to a lack of funding. Welsh Government funding has now been secured and volunteering will be able to restart on those sites.</p> <p>Local Places for Nature funding for the Working with Nature project has been secured for 2 years. Contractors for both volunteer coordination and awareness raising/connecting people with nature have been confirmed and volunteering at sites as part of the Working with Nature Project is now restarting. Volunteering on Lost Peatlands sites has seen an increase in this quarter including corporate volunteering. In addition to those sites where volunteering is already supported through Lost Peatlands and Craig Gwladus Projects, additional sites are being made available for volunteering – more than ever before. Numbers of volunteers are expected to increase in following qtrs.</p>																			
	<p>e. Strengthen planning and partnership arrangements so that greater weight is given to conserving and improving the local environment, heritage and culture</p>	<p>Nature/natural heritage: Continued partnership working with the NPT Nature Partnership, NPT4 Nature and the PSB (Public Services Board) Group. A number of projects are being delivered in partnership with partners including Natural resources Wales, Swansea University and other councils such as RCT, as well as charities such as Coed Lleol. New partnerships are also being developed e.g. with Public Health Wales. Further work to do with partners outside of Environment Sector.</p>																			

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>Continued partnership working with the NPT Nature Partnership, NPT4 Nature and the PSB Group. The PSB has also made links with the NPT Nature Partnership. The NPT Nature Partnership will be presenting the State of Nature Report to the PSB in January. A number of projects are being delivered in partnership with partners including NRW, Swansea University and other councils such as RCT, as well as charities such as Coed Lleol. New partnerships are also being developed e.g. with NHS. Further work to do with partners outside of Environment Sector.</p> <p>Current Projects being delivered in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Peatlands of South Wales Project – NPT Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and Coed Lleol • Connecting Green Infrastructure Project – NPT Council, Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire Council, Cwmaman Town Council and Coed Lleol. • Local Places for Nature is delivered in conjunction with the NPT Nature Partnership • Further projects are being developed with the NHS. 	
<p>11. Worked with partners to facilitate the transition from traditional energy sources to more sustainable energy sources with an emphasis on the delivery of the City Deal programme, and opportunities created through the establishment of the Swansea Bay Corporate Joint Committee to decarbonise industry, housing and transport; implement our revised decarbonisation and renewable energy plan.</p>	<p>a. Refresh the council's decarbonisation and renewable energy plan supported by a fully costed action plan to enable the transition of Neath Port Talbot to carbon net zero by 2030.</p>	<p>Appointed the Carbon Trust to support the energy/carbon reduction team formulate the Council's Net zero 2030 Strategy & Action Plan (Costed Plan). Commencement meeting scheduled for January 2024 with the programme running for 12 months.</p> <p>The DARE strategy has been re-scheduled to be updated at the start of 2024, when additional net-zero staff have been appointed.</p>	
	<p>b. Implement measures to decarbonise the operation of the council including the council's vehicle fleet and property portfolio.</p>	<p>Fleet Decarbonisation & Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure</p> <p>The Welsh Government targets set for the transition of car and light vans by 2025 and all other vehicles by 2030 are extremely challenging. The Council however have made very good progress in transitioning suitable vehicles thus far and continue to explore all options and trials when vehicles are due for replacement as part of the Councils annually approved vehicle renewals programme.</p> <p>Early independent evaluations of NPT's progress are that NPT are well ahead of the average for 'mixed' (not urban, not rural or valley authorities in Wales). NPT have 11.59% of fleet as ZE (Zero Emissions) , average mixed is 5.67% and 90% of vans purchased in the last year are ZEVs (Zero Emission Vehicles).</p> <p>At present thirty four (34) of the Councils vehicles have already transitioned too full electric and a further forty three (43) vehicles are scheduled to be transitioned to ultra-low emissions by the end of the financial year 2023/2024. The vehicles range from large goods vehicles to light vans and are assessed based on suitability, mileage, market research/trials and availability before procuring.</p> <p>Workshop technicians (94%) have successfully been upskilled completing a level 3 training qualification on the maintenance of electric and hybrid vehicles. This enables the fleet service to carry out service and inspections to the required standards on all vehicle types. Further training is planned in the future to achieve level 4 qualifications to enable the service to deliver more in-depth repairs in line with manufactures guidelines and to potentially offer more services externally to generate new income opportunities for the Council to offset overheads within the service area.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
		<p>There are a total of 62 electric vehicle charging points installed and operational in the depots and civic buildings. These comprise of a range of different chargers with various power outputs which charge vehicles at different rates Alternating Current AC and Direct Current DC power supplies.</p> <p>During this reporting period the back-office management of the charge points has also been rationalised from multiple charge point providers to Clenergy EV. This has made the management of the charging infrastructure more efficient, allows the fleet office to better facilitate charger breakdowns and simplifies recovering costs per vehicle for electricity, producing reports and data sets which are easier to access resulting in improved service delivery.</p> <p>Further chargers will be needed for future requirements such as the recycling transfer depot at Ffordd Amazon and provision has been put in place for all vehicles with the potential to be transitioned to EV at the site.</p> <p>Decarbonisation Operational Building Portfolio & Electric Vehicle (Public Facing) Charging Infrastructure</p> <p>The following activity and measures have been developed and implemented to progress the decarbonisation of the operational building portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression of the operational building rationalisation programme. • Celtic Trust - Instigated regular meetings to setup energy, carbon and water improvement, engagement activity and programme. • Sports Wales Grant – Successful £200k funding bid for LED lighting upgrade projects within three Leisure Centres. • BMS Optimisation reviews – Undertaken site survey reviews at the Quays/SRC and Neath Civic within the pilot programme. • Site energy best practice guidance - About to issue site energy/carbon good practice guidance across the operational building portfolio. • 21st Century school programme – Completed energy/carbon performance appraisal reports. • Energy Sparks – About to implement the Energy Sparks initiative throughout the school portfolio for applicable schools. • Solar PV programme – Progressing PV schemes at 14 schools, also undertaking solar PV feasibility investigation on the Quays/SRC. Installing PV system on the new catering blocks at Coedffranc and Sandfields Primary schools. • Completed net zero route map programme plans for the main civic accommodation sites. • Completed NPT (Public Facing) Low/Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Strategy for the council to ensure a co-ordinated approach to decarbonise journeys within NPT synchronised to the wider Swansea Bay City Region. • LED Lighting & Control Upgrade schemes - Completed number of LED schemes predominately within civic accommodation and schools also looking to formulate a wider LED lighting programme. • Developing LED lighting upgrade scheme at Neath Civic and Quays/SRC led by Facilities Management supported by Energy. • Formulating a Carbon Literacy engagement strategy programme. • Satisfied the minimum energy efficiency scheme (MEES), implemented EPC programme across leased building portfolio. (Key purpose of the programme to ensure NPT owned leased out properties have an EPC rating of E and above). 	
	<p>c. Draft a Local Energy Plan which accords with the South West Wales Regional Energy Plan, in addition to developing a deliverable action plan</p>	<p>The Local Area Energy Plan has been progressed in accordance with the set programme, completed wider factor workshop, modelling and pathway refinement elements currently progressing action prioritisation for the master plan. Completion timeframe of February 2024.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<p>which reduces the council's carbon footprint and reduces our energy consumption.</p> <p>d. Continue to progress the delivery of Homes as Power Station, our City Deal projects; In addition to amending the Business Case for the Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth programme, to secure an additional component in the form of a net zero training academy which will support the decarbonisation of our manufacturing sector and our economic aspirations associated with floating off-shore wind.</p>	<p>Homes as Power Stations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical monitoring contract awarded to Cardiff University School of Architecture • Financial Incentives Fund (£5.75m) round one launched and funding agreements to be awarded • Supply Chain Development mapping taken place, Supply Chain Fund (£7m) in development <p>Supporting Innovation & Low Carbon Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Net Zero Skills Centre of Excellence - Outline Business Case (OBC) approved by City Deal Joint Committee approved OBC for £5.3m to develop National Net Zero Skills Centre of Excellence to be incorporated in to the Advanced Manufacturing Production Facility • Property Development Fund (PDF) – a second call for applications is open until 31/12/2023 • SWITCH – design development phase of the project in progress to construct the South Wales Industrial Transition from Carbon Hub on Port Talbot Harbourside 	
<p>12. Worked with partners to further develop flood and pollution mitigation measures</p>	<p>a. Engage with key partners to scope out the possibilities of joint working in the short, medium and long term with the view to making our communities more sustainable and resilient.</p>	<p>Since undertaking a Stage 1 Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA), (a broad assessment of potential flood risks from all sources of flooding), with planning authorities in the South West Wales region (Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Swansea Council, Pembrokeshire Council, Bannau Brycheiniog (formerly Brecon Beacons National Park Authority) and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) led by consultants JBA, the group has been waiting for Welsh Government to publish its revised Technical Advice Note (TAN 15) <i>Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion</i>. The advice contained within the revised TAN (anticipated to be released in Spring 2024) will help determine how we as region (and as an individual Authority) address flooding in the short, medium and long term.</p>	
<p>13. Increase awareness of the climate change and nature emergencies.</p>	<p>a. Increase engagement by the workforce and citizens with the climate change and nature emergencies.</p>	<p>Formulating a Carbon Literacy engagement strategy programme aimed at workforce and citizens.</p> <p>'Naturewise' training programme has been developed and is currently being rolled out to all staff. Training for members has also been undertaken on a variety of biodiversity topics. Nature training for the public, schools, community groups and even for professionals has been delivered through the Lost Peatlands Project together with Local Places for Nature with projects taking place across the county borough.</p>	
<p>14. Adopted the council's new Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and begin implementation.</p>	<p>a. To prepare, engage with stakeholders and undertake consultation on the RLDP Preferred Strategy, setting out the council's growth and spatial strategies for the county borough for 2021 – 2036, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing key issues, vision and objectives for the plan. 	<p>Key Issues, Vision and Objectives for the RLDP (Replacement Local Development Plan) drafted and engagement and consultations undertaken with stakeholders;</p> <p>Initial call for candidate sites completed and assessment of submitted sites undertaken;</p> <p>Extensive work undertaken on the viability and deliverability of development sites, leading to the identification of significant issues potentially impacting on the available range of strategic options for growth, the spatial strategy and the future implementation of the plan;</p> <p>Further discussions are on-going with stakeholders and WG about these issues and the need for an additional call for candidate sites which is likely to result in a delay to the plan preparation timescales.</p>	

2027 Outcome	Key Priorities for 2023/2024	Progress Comment	RAG Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting out appropriate strategic options and identifying the proposed scale of future growth in population, housing and employment to be planned for. • Agreeing and setting out the council's preferred spatial strategy for the built development necessary to address the level of growth. • Identifying proposed key strategic development sites to accommodate the growth. • Drafting key strategic planning policies to deliver the vision, objectives and strategy. 	Preparation of the Replacement Local Development Plan may be delayed.	

Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total to date April – September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
1.	% of persons (aged 3 and over) who say they can speak Welsh.	22.8%	23.4% (March 2023)	Available annually	Increase
2.	% of people (aged 3 or over) who say they speak Welsh daily.	10.1%	12% (March 2023)	Available annually	Increase
3.	Total (£) external funding achieved to protect historic environment assets.	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	Available annually	Increase
4.	% of pupils participating in sport three or more times a week.	46%	Not available	Available annually	Increase
5.	% of pupils participated in sport in a community club at least once a week.	64%	62.3%	Available annually	Increase
6.	% of adults active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week.	56%	62%	Available annually	Increase
7.	% people participating in sporting activities 3 or more times a week	34%	38%	Available annually	Increase
8.	Total value of funding secured to enhance the quality of the visitor experience	£557,000	£18,000,000	£300,000	Increase
9.	Number of visitors to Neath Port Talbot Note: - Initial 2022 results across Wales are showing a decrease in day visitors in comparison to 2019, in NPT this represents a 4.5% decrease in 2022 as we continue to recover from the pandemic. However during the same period, NPT has seen a promising 1.9% increase in staying visitors in comparison to 2019 which is a key objective of our Destination Management Plan and Destination Marketing activity as staying visitors spend over 15 times more within the local economy than day visitors.'	1,205,000 (2021 data) 1,539,000 in 2019 (2019 pre-covid data is used as baseline)	1,495,000 (2022 data)	Available annually	Increase

Performance Measures 2023-2024		Baseline April 2022	Actual 2022-2023	Accumulative Total to date April – September 2023	Outlook for 2023 - 2024 (increase, decrease or maintain)
10.	Total value of grant aid awarded to local projects via the Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	£10,000	n/a New measure
11.	Total cumulative reach of destination marketing and pride of place campaigns.	New Performance Measure	New Performance Measure	370,724 people reached	Increase by March 2025
12.	% of waste reused, recycled or composted.	66%	64.73%	Apr to Sep 2023 - 66.86% (Increase on Apr to Sep 2022 figure of 66.08%)	Increase
13.	Kilograms of residual waste generated per person.	204.37	195.56	Apr to Sep 2023 - 97.69 kg (Increase on Apr to Sep 2022 figure of 96.01kg)	Decrease
14.	Area of council owned land (or within council control) used as green space, local nature reserves.	820ha	971ha	971ha	Increase
15.	The extent of council owned land (or land in council control) that is protected through designation and/or is subject to appropriate management for biodiversity conservation as set out in an approved management plan.	160.8ha and 23.12km for linear habitats	287ha and 30km	287ha and 30km	Increase
16.	The extent of council owned land (or land in council control) that is designated or meets the criteria for designation as a Site of Importance for Conservation (SINCs).	782ha	782ha	782ha	Increase
17.	Number of PM10 breaches in the Air Quality Management Area (Port Talbot/Taibach).	27	30	Apr to Sept - 16 breaches (Within the target of 18)	Statutory target of 35 – Maintain