

**TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH**



**BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN**

Improving Well-Being in
Torfaen
2020/21 - Annual Well-being &
Performance Report

**TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DELIVERING OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 (CP3)**

OCTOBER 2021

OUR VISION FOR TORFAEN

Torfaen: A safe, prosperous, sustainable place where everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be

OUR VALUES AS AN ORGANISATION

Supportive; Fair; Effective; Innovative

OUR 2020/21 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT DELIVERING OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 (CP3)

	Foreword	Page 4
1.	Introduction	Page 5
2.	Selecting our improvement objectives	Page 5
3.	Reporting our improvement objectives	Page 6
4.	Responding to the global pandemic	Page 6
5.	Overview of Corporate Plan 3	Page 11
6.	Reporting our performance measures	Page 12
7.	Working in partnership	Page 12
8.	Our collaborative activity during 20/21	Page 14
9.	The costs of our services (our 20/21 budget)	Page 15
10.	External regulatory and inspection work	Page 16
11.	Public satisfaction and engagement with citizens	Page 18
12.	Challenging our performance	Page 20
13.	The year ahead and beyond	Page 20
Appendix 1 – Progress of our objectives for 2020/21		
–	A Clean and Green Torfaen	Page 22
–	Raising Educational Attainment	Page 28
–	Support for Torfaen’s most vulnerable residents	Page 34
Appendix 2 – Corporate Plan 3 – 5-year assessment on our objectives		
–	A Clean and Green Torfaen	Page 40
–	Raising Educational Attainment	Page 44
–	Support for Torfaen’s most vulnerable residents	Page 49
Appendix 3 – Our 2020/21 Performance – Public Accountability Measures		Page 54

This document constitutes Torfaen County Borough Council’s 2020/21 financial year assessment of its performance, prepared under part one, section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Well-Being Report, prepared under section 5 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Performance Report for 2020–2021. A statutory document we publish to set out the service improvements we have secured in a number of selected areas, during the previous financial year. The report reviews the work we have undertaken to improve our services and sets out our assessment of the progress we made during the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic means this report captures our work amidst a unique period of global crisis, impacting on the way we all live, work and interact. During the early stages of the pandemic it quickly became clear that sustaining our lifeline services and keeping our communities safe, would present an ongoing challenge like we have never witnessed before.

With everyone's lives having changed so suddenly and dramatically, the role we have played in people's lives has been more critical than ever. Throughout 2020/21, we have focussed our efforts on keeping our services running and delivering vital help for those citizens and businesses who need it most. However, we have not acted alone, and we would like to express our gratitude to partner organisations who have worked tirelessly alongside us and in particular members of the community who have selflessly volunteered to help those in greatest need.

We are grateful for the work our staff have undertaken, frequently in difficult circumstances. Their pride in working for Torfaen and the willingness to embrace new, innovative ways of working to deliver for residents and businesses has been vital to our response to the pandemic. We've all had to change how we work to respond and in doing so we have ensured our essential work can continue.

Recovery from the pandemic will dominate most of our lives for some time to come. March 2021 marked the end of our Corporate Plan 3 and we have therefore once again, needed to review our priorities with regards to how we plan to deliver our services to support local recovery effectively. We have decided to largely continue with our existing priorities, where we believe our greatest challenges either still exist and, in many areas, have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Through our report, we have set out where our performance has been impacted by COVID-19 and, where possible, set out how we're going to get back on track. Despite all the challenges of the pandemic, whilst we've had to pause or slow down delivery in some areas, in others we've been able to make real progress. This report fulfils our statutory duty to report on our performance but, more importantly, it provides a holistic picture of where we are at, assessing how we have dealt with one of the most difficult times in living memory.

Despite the ongoing difficulties we are still facing, we look forward to the year ahead and beyond. The process of recovery will not be straightforward, however as well as challenges there will also be opportunities and by working closely with residents, partners and other stakeholders we can make Torfaen an even better place to live, work and visit.



Councillor Anthony Hunt

Leader of the Council

Stephen Vickers

Chief Executive



1. Introduction

We are required, like all public bodies across Wales to comply with certain duties, under both the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Our statutory requirements are as follows:

In carrying out 'sustainable development' in accordance with the **Well-Being and Future Generations Act 2015**, we are required to...

- Set and publish well-being objectives that maximise our contribution to achieving the well-being goals;
- Take all reasonable steps to meet our objectives;
- Publish a statement about our well-being objectives which explains why we consider our wellbeing objectives will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals, and how we have applied the sustainable development principle;
- Publish an annual report of our progress; and
- Publish our response to any recommendations made by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 places a duty on all local authorities by the Welsh Government, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and account for it, by.

- Publishing a forward-facing improvement plan at the start of each financial year, setting out our short-term improvement objectives for the financial year ahead; and
- Publishing an annual performance report highlighting our progress against this plan before October.

This document, therefore, combines our statutory reporting requirements and statutory publishing duties, under both the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to;

- Publish an annual report of our progress against our Well-being objectives (WBFG Act 2015); and
- Publishing an annual performance report highlighting our progress against our Improvement Objectives (LGM 2009)

The introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (WBFG Act) put into law seven priority well-being goals that all public bodies are required to work towards, detailing the way in which public bodies must work, and work together to improve the well-being of Wales.

Public bodies are required to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This report is therefore as much about what we have done as it is about how we are doing it.

2. Selecting our Objectives

In March 2019, we undertook a review of our own corporate plan priorities to test the relevance of our own priorities, in light of the introduction of the well-being goals and the establishment of Torfaen PSBs Well-Being Plan and agreed objectives.

Our review confirmed that our three corporate plan priorities, are;

1. still highly relevant and continue to present a significant need in Torfaen,
2. strongly linked to both the WBFG Act's seven national well-being goals, and Torfaen PSB's seven published well-being objectives.

As a result of this conclusion, we were therefore of the view that our existing corporate plan priorities (and Improvement Objectives) remained relevant and should form our Well-Being Objectives going forward. Since 2019-20 therefore, our improvement and well-being objectives have been one and the same - as corporate plan priority areas.

Our improvement objectives for 2020/21 were adopted by full council in March 2020, as part of our [2020-2021-Well-Being-Statement](#). This document sets out not just what our objectives are but identifies some of the key projects and measures we intended to take forward and use during the year, to assess progress.

3. Reporting on our Objectives

Our Annual Well-Being and Performance Report will therefore demonstrate our compliance with our legislative requirements, through demonstrating our commitment to delivering against our own three corporate plan priority areas, setting out how we have concentrated our efforts on the right things and improved the areas that matter most to Torfaen citizens.

For each of our improvement objectives/corporate plan priorities, a "basket" of activities were defined to explain exactly what we are going to do, to deliver improvement to citizens in each of these areas. **Appendix 1** reviews the work we have undertaken and sets out a brief appraisal of our assessment of the progress we have made towards our well-being objectives, during the 2020/21 year. These updates have been monitored and reported to us by our service areas throughout the year, via our performance management and service planning processes.

Within **Appendix 1** there is also a set of performance measures for each of our Corporate Plan priorities, which were agreed in 2016, at the beginning of the Corporate Plan cycle, and seeks to demonstrate our progress over this time period.

However, at the end of 2019/20 and throughout 2020/21, like every other organisation and individual, our focus and efforts have been consumed by the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Like everyone, our immediate priorities have fundamentally been altered, scaled down or alternative delivery approaches have had to be adopted. This has been done, in an attempt to focus on maintaining business continuity, supporting the needs of our communities, whilst ensuring the well-being of employees.

Primarily due to the impact of COVID-19, but also due to other changes to reporting arrangements, a number of the published performance measures are no longer collected, therefore we are unable to report on them. In other instances where we can report, performance has been skewed by the impact of the pandemic. It is therefore not always easy to make any valid comparisons or judgement on our performance over last year.

4. Responding to the Global Pandemic

During the course of the pandemic we have therefore refocussed our resources in order to deliver vital services. Some of the key work we have undertaken includes;

Contact Tracing

This has been a priority for supporting the battle against further outbreaks of COVID-19 and is critical to help Wales get out and stay out of lockdown.

We identified over 30 staff to be redeployed/ employed into the service which has been established from the Ty Blaen offices. Discussions will continue with ABUHB and our partner Gwent Local Authority's on the future structure, delivery and governance of the Test, Trace and Protect Service.

The existing knowledge and expertise of our Environmental Health Officers in managing outbreaks of infectious disease is essential to this process.

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children was a key priority within Children's Services during lockdown. Our response was tailored to individual needs and includes, face to face, phone call, use of other agency by proxy, skype etc to ensure each child and family receives the right level of support and care. We also ensured that we use a number of common agencies and practices, linked with our counterparts in the rest of Gwent for consistency and access to services.

The MASSH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team operated on a split rota basis of home working and working from within the MASSH office. This proved effective in being able to deploy resource, in line with the service functions.

As we move through the recovery phase we will need to monitor and assess the full extent of the impact of lockdown on children and families. This may well mean an increased pressure on our safeguarding services.

Safeguarding adults and support services

Our adult social care, housing and commissioning were quick to respond to the changing and challenging COVID landscape. Adult social care established a COVID-19 hub in April 2020, which was a considerable task, undertaken in just 5 working days.

Operating 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week, the hubs provided rapid response to community and hospital referrals. Priority areas were identified, and solutions put in place to ensure continued safeguarding and domiciliary care capacity. Client and carer support have remained a constant throughout this period. The hub has subsequently been stood down, as the demand, once met, has moved back to the patch-based teams.

Due to the flexibility and commitment of our staff to support changing demand, we have trained 130 adult services staff members in manual handling, medication management, food hygiene and infection control, many of who have been redeployed to personal care roles, to support our internal service and private sector providers and our community meals service.

The distribution of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to all social care providers in Torfaen proved challenging initially, as lead commissioners for the Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Service (GWICES) in Torfaen led on the receipt, delivery and storage of Welsh Government supplies of PPE for the whole of Gwent Building on the partnership relationships forged with partners in Cefndy-Medequip. As the pandemic evolved, so too did the guidance in relation to operating procedures for social care and our providers. The application, communication and constant adaptation to meet requirements, proved a significant challenge, that was overcome with tremendous commitment and tenacity of all our staff and commissioned service providers, supporting and protecting the most vulnerable people in our community.

Whilst the pandemic has been a terrible time to live through, we are building on the partnerships and relationships that have developed with Public Health Wales (PHW), Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, the other Gwent local authorities and most of all our providers. Without them we would not have been able to keep the vulnerable citizens of Torfaen safe.

Using a mixture of physical and remote support, we engaged with existing individuals who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness on a regular basis so that they are kept fully engaged and offered help and assistance to manage, during the crisis. Additional accommodation has been provided to individuals who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, contributing to a reduction in the number of rough sleepers within the County Borough, as a result.

Residents in temporary accommodation have been provided with regular contact and support, so that any immediate issues are dealt with and residents are provided with help, as and when appropriate, addressing any problems that they encountered.

Supported Housing projects have been maintained through coordination of housing related support services to ensure services are delivered effectively and appropriately. The housing register functions has continued to operate business as usual, during this period.

Shielding

The UK Government introduced control measures to support and identify vulnerable people to “shield” themselves by staying at home for 12 weeks. This was national advice fully supported and then administered by the Welsh Government.

We responded to this new demand quickly and established a new Community Support Hub. Staff from various departments helped to manage and deliver services from the hub by co-ordinating volunteer support, handling telephone calls from vulnerable people, providing practical support on the ground, and managing an ever changing dataset that saw 2,850 people initially asked to shield, increase to over 4,000 people, in a short time. This required significant support from all involved.

A huge amount of hard work has been undertaken by our own staff and our elected members in this process, including co-ordinating and working with community groups, individual volunteers and partners such as Bron Afon and Torfaen Leisure Trust. This has been crucial in providing for vulnerable people’s needs, and the contribution of the wider network of support offered by family, friends, neighbours and community groups has helped prevent the Community Support Hub from being overwhelmed by requests for support.

In addition, we co-ordinated help with shopping, prescriptions and regular welfare calls, as well as support with utilities and essential repairs. We also provided specialist financial support from a dedicated team, ensuring people were not financially excluded.

Over 900 calls from vulnerable people requesting support were received in April and May 2020 alone. Of these, just over half were from people who were on the Shielding Scheme; however, no one was turned away. Some people just needed information or reassurance, others something more practical. We also proactively called or wrote to all people on the Shielding Scheme, to check on their welfare.

To facilitate this wider network, we adapted to rapidly changing circumstances and provided good practice and safeguarding advice where needed. The Community Support Hub has locally administered the Welsh Government scheme to provide some shielded people with food parcels, as well as finding solutions for securely and safely paying for shopping and medication.

We also developed and deployed a mobile App in around 4 weeks to allow volunteers to offer help and for vulnerable people to be able to request it. The App offered a further channel through which people can engage with the Community Support Hub, and offering the potential to help the way we work with volunteers in the future.

Supporting Education

The announcement by Welsh Government on 18 March 2020 that schools were to close in response to the pandemic, was followed by a herculean effort by our council and school staff, to plan and establish childcare hubs to support the children of key workers.

Five days later we had established 5 childcare hubs at Blaenavon, George Street, Blenheim and Llantarnam schools for primary school aged children, and at Croesyceiliog for secondary aged children.

Education hubs were supported by a combination of dedicated staff from schools and across our council departments to ensure children and staff would be in as safe an environment as possible with appropriate

layout, catering, cleaning, teaching, play and engagement. Hubs opened from 8am to 6pm every day and seven days a week, including holiday periods to begin with, whilst demand was at its peak.

In addition to the childcare hubs, and the result of a similar amount of effort by ourselves and our schools, we were also able to make available support for children with additional needs at Pontnewydd, Nant Celyn, Maendy, Abersychan, Cwmbran High, Crownbridge and the Pupil Referral Unit.

As the pandemic developed and time progressed further provision for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children was made available.

Our Social Care and Education staff worked together to support some of the County Borough's other vulnerable children, protecting children and providing much needed respite for families and carers.

Our staff have also worked with private sector providers to maintain provision for younger children, against a wider backdrop of challenges which forced many of those providers to have to furlough their staff.

For those children not receiving any direct support, all schools put in place arrangements for remote support and learning; and in collaboration with the SRS and schools we have 'recycled' laptops and made MiFi devices available, for children and young people in our schools, who otherwise would not have been able to access web based resources.

When schools were closed, to support those children entitled to free school meals, our staff, with great support from elected members, ensured children were able to access a meal, initially through 'community hubs', later by home delivery and eventually replaced by direct payments. This was a mammoth task. Members organised and established local hubs, with colleagues from catering and transport, supporting the food and delivery.

Following the return to school at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, our Education Department, schools and other settings continued to work closely together, to ensure face to face provision was being provided. This was however, further hampered by the frequent disruption caused by changes nationally, the ongoing challenges from increased illness and the need for schools to ask other learners to self-isolate, and the changing operational requirements placed on schools, as we moved through the various phases of the pandemic.

Throughout the entire period, our Play, Youth and Sports Development Teams have also delivered activities during holiday periods, where possible.

Environment

Recycling, food, cardboard and black bag collections continued throughout the pandemic through the support and dedication of our staff. There was a temporary delay to the collection of green waste due to staff shortages, but this quick returned to operating business as usual.

The Household Waste Recycling Centre was closed in March, following devolved government advice and reopened on 26th May with a new booking system in place, to effectively manage traffic and social distancing on site.

To effectively operate our front-line services, we introduced safe working systems and risk assessments for social distancing to enable our operatives to work. This has meant we have had to reduce the number of operatives in a cab and introduced more vehicles from our fleet to support staff and devised an operational convoy system to allow the service to be delivered. This has worked well with volunteer drivers supporting our crews through use of redeployed staff.

Cemeteries and supporting bereaved families remained key to our work, as was adherence to the requirement to maintain social distancing and limiting attendance at funerals following agreement on a Gwent wide basis. This proved a challenging issue that has been, understandably, very difficult for families and loved ones to accept.

Following a short delay, we resumed street scene services including emptying park bins, dog waste, clearing fly-tipping etc. Some staff were redeployed into these roles which supported our services across street scene and waste.

The four teams in public protection have been extensively engaged and involved in supporting our response to COVID-19, including activities around Commercial Services, Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards. They have provided advice and assistance for the management of social distancing to businesses and have issued notices, as required to ensure workforces across Torfaen are safe.

They also provided support to care homes through specialist Environmental Health advice, making regular contact with each premises every three days, advising on risk assessments and use of PPE, infectious disease control measures and outbreaks. This intelligence is fed through to Social Care to inform their commissioning, support and management of care homes.

Citizen and business support

We have provided extensive support to residents and businesses in the following ways:

- We have continued to provide business support, making contacts to determine the state of the local economy and as at the end of 2020/21 a total of 6,326 individual payments were made to local businesses totalling £29,965,000, through an integrated team approach between Revenues and Benefits and the Business Support team.
- Support has been provided to the market traders to help them access finance, temporarily moving business online or trade from different premises.
- Administering the business grant support scheme and that is underpinned by a specific grant approval; the rate relief scheme is also specifically supported by funding.
- Devising and implementing a new Free School Meal payment scheme from scratch, to pay money directly to parents in respect of over 3,000 children in Torfaen. Each child was entitled to a weekly payment of £19.50.
- Extending 1,000 ongoing discretionary housing payments from April 2020 so that some of most vulnerable residents did not need to re-apply and review their award until 4 October 2020.
- Prioritising support for Council Taxpayers facing difficulty paying their Council Tax, including the offer of revised instalment arrangements.
- Processing a significant new workload of Council Tax Reduction claims arising from the increase in claims for Universal Credit and economic impact of COVID-19.
- Putting in place systems to deal with contacts from customers arising from the shielding scheme, ensuring those customers are supported during self-isolation, linking in with other agencies and our council services.
- Setting up new online processes in rapid time and dealing with customer enquiries relating to new schemes devised; including the business support scheme, the Free School Meal payment scheme, key worker registration for schools and booking system for the Household Waste and Recycling System.
- The Strategic Regeneration Team worked with property owners in Pontypool & Blaenavon to prepare premise for reopening or to adapt for future uses. This was the first stage in Welsh Government's Transforming Towns project which issued over £500K in financial support to property owners.
- Over 420 COVID-19 related support/advice stories were carried on the Torfaen Economy website and actively promoted on all relevant social media channels, ensuring the most up-to-date information and guidance was available to local businesses.
- Torfaen Libraries Service was the first in Wales to offer a request and collect service, as well as a rapid expansion of libraries at home, ensuring continued wellbeing support for vulnerable residents.

Supporting Staff

We have extensively used the Microsoft Teams communication system, as a way of keeping our administrative and governance activities operational, whilst also maintaining communication dialogues with homeworking staff.

At the start of this pandemic, recognising the need to work remotely, an additional 2,000 remote access ports were enabled to support our staff to securely work from home and other remote locations.

To ensure we were able to continue delivering services, it was critical that we had a clear understanding of who was available for work, who was delivering essential front line services, who couldn't work as they were shielding or had caring responsibilities, who could work from home, who was available to assist in other areas and who was unavailable because for example they were ill.

Within a very short period, all staff were categorised and recorded, which enabled our human resources team to be able to respond when requested for additional staff, in critical areas. The response from our staff has been incredible and supportive. Many have come forward with offers to help and volunteered to work in other areas. The Trade Unions have been supportive and enabled the quick redeployment of staff.

Our staff have provided additional support in numerous areas, including: -

- Making and delivering packed lunches for school children,
- Providing childcare for children in the Hubs for frontline staff,
- Supported our residents that are shielding through telephone support, shopping and collecting prescriptions,
- Driving vehicles for waste crews to enable social distancing,
- Providing a COVID-19 test service working with ABUHB for providers of our services, and
- Setting up and delivering the new track and trace service

5. Overview of Corporate Plan 3

Our [Corporate Plan, CP3](#) came into effect in April 2016, following a number of extensive public engagement exercises. These were carried out to find out which services were viewed by residents as being most important or requiring improvement. CP3 and sets out our strategic direction over a five-year period with three main politically selected priorities;

... **A Clean and Green Torfaen**

... **Raising Educational Attainment**

... **Support for Torfaen's most Vulnerable Residents**

The priorities provide us with a clear vision and set out a natural framework for setting and delivering on our improvement objectives. Over the 5-year period they have enable us to;

- Define our future direction, clearly indicating what we expect to achieve;
- Facilitates the co-ordinated planning of our services and activities;
- Supports effective decision-making;
- Enables efficient allocation of our resources;
- Provides a way of measuring and monitoring our progress;
- Motivates and guides our employees in the work they do; and
- Ensures we work sustainably to improve the well-being of Torfaen.

2020/21 was the fifth and final year for implementing Corporate Plan 3, (CP3). As this plan has now come to an end, it is pertinent to reflect on our overall progress that has been made over the last five years, in delivering the aspirations as set out within our Corporate Plan. In particular, showing how we have evaluated lessons learnt, to help shape and deliver a new Corporate Plan, going forward.

In comparison to previous years, where we have carried out this type of review for our original Corporate Plan and Corporate Plan 2, this hasn't been straight forward, as there is a lack of performance data to be able to draw any valid comparisons from - mainly due to the pandemic, but also due to changes in the national data reported for Education and Social Care.

Much has changed during the course of our 5-year plan, which has affected the way in which we do things. Despite the considerable challenges presented by the financial climate over the lifespan of the Corporate Plan, a huge amount of activity has taken place with many innovative projects being taken forward.

As in previous years, there has been a strong emphasis on moving forward in partnership with other key stakeholders within Torfaen and beyond, to improve service and maximise value for money.

Despite these many challenges, much has been achieved during this time in delivering against our key priorities. Details of our progress, over the last five years, has been set out within the self-evaluation document, in **Appendix 2**.

6. Reporting our performance measures

Appendix 3, contains our performance against the nationally prescribed Public Accountability Measures (PAM's), which are a small set of "outcome focussed" indicators, published by Welsh Government, that all local authorities are required to collect and submit to Data Cymru every year. These measures have been defined by WLGA to reflect aspects of local authority work that are considered to be important, in terms of public accountability. For example, recycling, educational attainment, and sustainable development. They should also allow local authorities to compare service performance, across all councils within Wales.

Again, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the end of 2019/20, WLGA suspended their annual reporting and publication of performance measures for. We are therefore, at this current time unable to compare our reported performance against other local authorities in Wales, for the last two years.

However, where possible within **appendix 3** we have reported our performance for 2020/21 and made comparisons with performance from previous.

7. Working in Partnership

The last year has provided the biggest challenge and the pandemic has further highlighted the vital role that we play in working with communities and partner agencies to keep people safe and support public health and well-being.

We have worked in close partnership with our partners to respond to COVID-19, identifying opportunities for joint working that ensured residents quickly received the support they needed. The ways we work together continue to adapt as the COVID-19 guidance and restrictions changed. Our partnership working will continue to focus on how joint working can support residents and businesses in Torfaen to recover.

Public Service Boards (PSB's)

Our commitment to working in partnership through our Public Service Board remains strong.

The PSB builds upon previous and existing, strong partnership arrangements with the four statutory partners, made up of ourselves, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, South Wales Fire & Rescue, and Natural Resources Wales, together with other partners. The full list of members can be seen at www.Torfaenpublicservicesboard.co.uk

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 enables two or more PSBs to be able to merge if it would assist them in contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals. Over the last year, there have been discussions at the Gwent wide leadership group 'G10' and at each PSB, about merging PSBs to form a single regional PSB.

The main drivers for the change to a regional approach and Plan, which were considered by the G10 leadership were, as follows:

- Help to improve the well-being of people across Gwent, by strengthening governance, accountability, improving collaborative working and support a clearer partnership landscape,
- Will provide the catalyst for a regional well-being assessment and well-being plan, that maintains local accountability,
- Provide opportunities to align partnership legislation,
- Provide an opportunity to develop regional scrutiny arrangements,
- Provide an opportunity to align the focus of both the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and PSB that will reduce duplication of activity, align strategic priorities and encourage much closer collaboration over assessment and planning processes, and
- The approach supports Welsh Government's review on 'strategic partnerships' and specifically recommendation 3 of the recent Audit Wales review of Public Services Boards.

Each of the five PSBs Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouth, Newport, Torfaen have discussed the proposal and agreed to disband the local PSB and form a regional PSB, from September 2021.

The five PSB partnership leads have written a report on behalf of the five Gwent area PSB's on the development of a regional Gwent PSB that would be presented through their own governance structures. The report was presented to both PSB Scrutiny and to full Council for awareness and to note, prior to the commencement of the new arrangements being put into place, in September 2021.

The next well-being assessment and well-being plan is due to be published in May 2022 and May 2023 respectively. This will set out our local objectives and the steps we are proposing to take, to meet these objectives. The existing Torfaen well-being plan remains in place until it is replaced by the regional plan in 2023. Annual reports and local scrutiny arrangements remain in place until regional arrangements are in place.

The current thinking for the new Gwent Well-being Plan for 2023-2028, is that there are likely to be a set of overarching and strategic well-being objectives, which will be met by both regional and local activity particular to a locality and determined by local data and assessment. The Local Delivery Group will be tasked with contributing to the regional actions, as well as delivering any specific local activity.

The development of regional scrutiny arrangements for the Gwent PSB and its assessment and planning will continue over the coming months and will need to be collaborative in the approach to membership and interaction with the local Scrutiny Committees, particularly during the interim period ahead of the new Well-Being Plan.

Cardiff City Deal

The progress and results delivered by the Cardiff City Region has continued to strengthen, through the collective focus of a regional leadership and widespread collaboration with businesses and communities across South East Wales.

Our work with City Deal continues to be built on strong partnership and local leadership among ten councils and their leaders, working together to build a firm foundation and a common shared purpose.

Throughout the pandemic, the Cardiff City Region has not diverted from their strategy - to build a sustainable and resilient economy for citizens, although the need to become adaptative and respond to the continual changes has been required and has been critical.

The key activities undertaken by the Cardiff City Region, throughout 2020/21, are as follows:

- Many 'live' projects have been undertaken in direct response to the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic and as evidenced in the Covid-19 Priority-set which was approved by Regional Cabinet

in June 2020 – Plasma Technologies Investment, Challenge Fund for Local Wealth Building, Strategic Premises Fund and Zipworld.

- Governance structures and systems have not only been tested but enhanced for the Region. A shift to digital platforms for meetings of Regional Cabinet, the Regional Transport Authority, Programme Board, Investment Panel, Regional Economic Growth Partnership, Regional Business Council, and the CSC Foundry Board – has enabled greater levels of interaction, enabling increased productivity and overall, the ability to better align and co-ordinate key governance procedures.
- Carried out a Gateway Review and fundamental assessment of our progress and performance to date. Preparation for this, required the principles of good governance to be applied in not just formal evaluation – but in our own review work and self-evaluation.
- Published the Chair’s Statement for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Joint Committee Draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21.
- Developed an enhanced programme of governance and monitoring that not only strengthens our approach to monitoring but is vital in ensuring the Cardiff City Region is future proofed, as far as possible, as it transitions from a single funding programme to a capability to support multiple funding programmes.
- Published a forward Business Plan. “Five for Five”, produced in 2020/21 sets out the need to Build Back Better and Fairer, forge ahead with research and development, establish our clusters, deliver our rapidly expanding Investment Programme and Pipeline, and build the foundations of the Cardiff Capital region.
- Produced and published an investment prospectus for 2020/21 which provides a strong platform for ‘levelling-up’ and articulating the asks and offers of Cardiff City Region as it moves into a more uncertain, but continually dynamic and evolving environment. All this significant activity is value-adding and enriches the journey and narrative.
- Built a competency framework to self-evaluate and to increase self-awareness. From the professional advisory team, to the partners, advisory bodies, and stakeholders with whom we engage and co-operate every day, a networked and integrated approach is being built.

Looking forward into 2021 and beyond, it’s clear that each of the key sectors are vitally important for the Cardiff City region. COVID-19 has simply reinforced the demand for all those sectors.

Going forward, the Cardiff City Region will continue to focus on area’s where they are strong and help create environments where local supply chains will grow working together, with a united sense of purpose - bringing the whole of the region forward.

The main aim will be to spread prosperity and make sure that the Cardiff City Deal delivers to the whole of the region, which will continue to be the focus for 2021 and beyond.

8. Our collaborative activity during 2020/21

In addition to working with all public services in Torfaen to plan and deliver integrated services across the County Borough, we have continued to work with other local authorities and organisations to establish shared collaborative services.

This way of working is used as a means of improving services for citizens and communities, reducing our costs and maximising the use of our available resources.

We are currently involved in six significant collaborative activities:

- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Shared Benefits and Revenues Service
- Youth Offending Service
- South East Wales Adoption Service
- Gwent Frailty Programme
- Shared Resource Service (SRS) ICT Service

Significant reports relating to our key partnerships received in the previous year are set out below ...

- i. [EAS Business Plan \(Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee\)](#)
- ii. [EAS Business Plan \(Cabinet\)](#)

9. The Cost of our Services (our 2020/21 budget)

Our Revenue Budget

Our financial performance for 2020-21 is contained within our [Statement of Accounts | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)

Our 2020/21 budget was approved in March 2020 with a £280 million gross revenue budget which was financed from £93 million of service specific government grants, fees and charges for services and other funding & contributions. The net budget of £187 million was funded by £140 million of un-hypothecated funding from Welsh Government and £46 million by Council Tax. During the financial year £293,000 of approvals were agreed from the General Fund.

Soon after setting the 2020/21 budget our operations, along with the rest of the world, were severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which placed unexpected changes and demands on the services that we deliver to our citizens.

The 2020/21 revenue out-turn has produced a net underspend, after contributions to reserves, of £1.2 million against the £187 million budget. This variance has arisen for several reasons, with the principle ones being:

- Receipt of general one-off Welsh Government funds of £16.4 million to compensate us to support service delivery and lost income (from COVID-19 restrictions) and funding for the costs of delivering the Welsh Government support programmes to the wider community;
- Creation of a resource from staff vacancies & lower than budgeted staff mileage;
- Delivery of 78% of approved 2020/21 service budget mitigations, despite the pandemic;
- Receipt of unbudgeted grants that have offset core budget funding;
- Underspends across many services in relation to costs of general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices and to general impacts of the pandemic;
- These positive one-off resources were offset by an over budget position in respect of the Children's Social Care placements budget (net £1.4 million), arising through a continuation in the increase in demand on the Children's Social Care placements.

Our Capital Budget

In addition to the revenue spending we have also spent £19.86 million on our assets through our 2020/21 capital programme and included spending on schools, roads, footpaths, and maintaining and developing our buildings.

The programme continued to implement the 21st Century Schools Programme, covering the construction of the new Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School, the new consolidated Post-16 College and the expansion of Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw to also create primary provision on the existing site, whilst also investing in implementing disabled facility grants to support our vulnerable citizens.

The programme also funded the staff change costs associated with the creation of the Post-16 College.

Resourcing our Recovery

The financial outlook for the foreseeable future will undoubtedly continue to be challenging.

Our current 2022/23 to 2025/26 financial forecasts, indicate that we will have to identify in the region of £11.4 million of mitigations to ensure that balanced positions are achieved.

It is recognised that our Medium-Term Service & Financial Plan (MTSFP) needs to be reviewed, but that can only be done when we have a clearer position on:

- How the UK Government will fund public services for 2021/22 and beyond;
- How the Welsh Government will fund of local government going forward;
- How any extra requirements arising from dealing with COVID-19 may impact on future years' service delivery e.g. social distancing; and
- The review of our Corporate Plan priorities;

To ensure that our MTSFP presents an accurate position as much as possible, it is proposed that the revised MTSFP will be developed alongside the 2022/23 budget process. This timeline is considered appropriate given the continually developing information regarding funding streams and support.

Welsh Government have continued to provide, through a reclaim process, resources to support local authorities where additional costs have been incurred in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, in tranches, including;

- General support,
- Homelessness,
- Free School Meals,
- Adult Social Care
- Education and schools,
- Test, Trace and Protect, and
- Lost income.

As we move forward, focus will be still be required on the extra costs/lost income as a result of COVID-19 and there may also be a requirement to maintain enhanced service provision in some areas e.g. homelessness. Welsh Government Covid support, however, will not cover costs that are part of our normal responsibilities e.g. failure to achieve in full our savings targets, usual budget and demand pressures, or local policy choices. Some of these pressures will no doubt have arisen / been affected by the impact of Covid on service capacity, but the current assumptions are that we will be required to manage those from our own budgeted resources.

We continue to face increases in demand and cost pressures. If we do not adapt by making changes across our services in the medium term, our only alternative is for our individual services alone to shoulder the savings burden through the annual budget process. This would create a level of risk to service delivery, our Corporate Plan priorities and our Medium-Term Financial Plan.

10. External regulatory & inspection work

Every year, each local authority is subject to a number of reviews being carried out by our external regulators, which includes Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

We have embraced the findings of these inspections and continue working in partnership with our regulators to put actions in place, to deliver the required service improvements.

2020/21 Audit Wales Annual Improvement Report

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic we did not receive our Annual Improvement Report from Audit Wales for 2019/20 or 2020/21.

The [Annual Report](#) was however received from Audit Wales in 2021, which summarises the findings of all improvement activity that has been undertaken, since their last report, issued in July 2019.

Our key audit findings, that we haven't previously reported through our annual performance reports are, as follows:

Financial Sustainability

Audit Wales undertook an assessment, as our financial sustainability continues to be a risk to us, in putting proper arrangements in place, to secure value for money in the use of resources.

As a result of the better-than-expected Welsh Government budget settlements, in the last two years we are now better placed to maintain our financial sustainability over the short term, but challenges remain over the medium term.

Audit Wales made one proposal for improvement:

- To bridge its estimated funding gap and contribute to strengthening its financial sustainability, the Council should;
 - develop and deliver a programme of sustainable planned savings over the medium term, including the financial benefits arising from the delivery of its T22 transformation programme

Continuous Improvement

The Auditor General certified that we have met our legal duties for improvement planning and reporting and believes that it is likely we are able to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, during 2020-21.

Commercialisation in Local Government (October 2020) – National Study

Councils have conducted commercial activity for a long time, and many councils are exploring additional commercial opportunities to mitigate against the financial pressures they face.

This report is specifically targeted at helping elected members and senior officers to examine and judge the potential impact on their organisations when considering whether to undertake commercialisation. It also helps councils to demonstrate how well they are discharging their value-for-money responsibilities.

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

National Fraud Initiative (October 2020) – National Study

The Auditor General published his report on the findings of the latest National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data-matching exercise in Wales. The exercise helped public bodies in Wales, including the 22 unitary authorities, identify fraud and overpayments amounting to £8 million. The report can be accessed on our website [here](#).

NFI continues to be developed and in the forthcoming NFI exercise (NFI 2020-2022), local authorities will have access to matches, designed to help identify potential fraudulent applications for COVID-19 business support grants.

Planned work for 2020-21

Audit Wales also looked at the key challenges and opportunities we are facing.

These risks could have an effect on our ability to meet its legal obligations in relation to the sustainable development principle, the use of its resources and continuous improvement.

The most significant risk and issue facing councils and the wider public sector during 2020-21 is the COVID-19 pandemic. Audit Wales has therefore, shaped their work programme to provide assurance and challenge in a way which helps to support us through this period.

Other work carried out by Audit Wales for the 2020-21 period, includes:

- Recovery planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- COVID-learning project – helping to identify and share learning from the way in which public bodies have responded to the pandemic
- Assurance and risk assessment
- A review of our financial sustainability

We will report findings of these reviews and others in next year's annual report.

Audit Wales' improvement proposals, together with our actions to address them have been added to our Action Plan for Governance and Improvement.

This plan is actively monitored by our Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on a six monthly basis.

As part of our governance and assurance processes, each relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee also receives an annual report which provides members with a progress update on proposals for improvement or any other recommendations received from our external auditors. Any recommendations or comments made by scrutiny, are thereby reported back to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, for assurance purposes.

Other Inspectorates

We are also subject to audit by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn.

- Early help, care and support and transition for disabled children

CIW undertook an inspection with assistance from Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), exploring how we are providing early help, care and support and seamless transition for disabled children and their families.

The review identified the following strengths and areas for improvement;

Strengths;

- Well-being – we found arrangements for direct payments are efficient and parents were positive about their use.
- People: voice and choice – we found practitioners and management within the disabled children's team are supportive and dedicated.
- Partnerships, integration and co-production – Torfaen County Borough Council often demonstrated effective multi-agency working resulting in good outcomes for young people.
- Prevention and early intervention – we established that there is a range of recreational and support services in the community, valued by disabled children and their families.

Areas for improvement;

- Well-being – we recommend that the local authority ensures disabled children and families receive the right care and support at the right time.
- People: voice and choice – we identified that there needs to be a rights-based approach ensuring disabled children and their families have a voice, informed choice and control over their lives.
- Prevention and early intervention – we identified a need for a planned strategic approach to timely and proportionate early help and prevention.
- Partnerships, integration and co-production – we recommend the local authority ensures effective partnerships and integrated arrangements to commission and deliver high quality and sustainable services that meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

11. Public satisfaction & engagement with citizens

We welcome all feedback from our residents and seek to make it as easy as possible for people to let us know their views.

During the last year, COVID-19 restrictions has had a significant impact on our ability to undertake face to face engagement and fully involve residents in our decision making. However, our digital suite of tools has enabled us to continue engaging and involving our residents.

Communication has played a major role in our response to COVID19 and will form part of our recovery. From all levels across the organisation we have kept our communities, members and staff informed through corporate and service channels, such as the TCBC website and intranet, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube and used local influencers and hyperlocal pages to reach out into the community. Local media coverage also plays a significant role in engaging the public in our business.

Our dedicated COVID-19 webpages, covering information from all of our service areas, were frequently updated, providing information on the services we deliver and the latest local partner information.

In response to the pandemic and the Government's Shielding Scheme, we launched the 'Torfaen Community Support' mobile app to help our most vulnerable resident's instructed to stay in isolation, to be able to link up with volunteers, who could provide a range of support.

In August 2020, we asked for members of the public to provide us with their views on the experiences that they have had, when they have contacted us, during the last 12 months. This was so that we could understand what actions we needed to take, to ensure our services were focussed on delivering the services that residents required.

The responses also helped to shape a customer and digital strategy, which informs how we can improve the ways in which we make our services available to residents and how they are designed for efficiency and effectiveness.

During the pandemic, the move to virtual council meetings and greater use of webcasting continued to provide the opportunity for public involvement in the democratic process, promoting openness, transparency and accountability for our decision making. Consultation events on strategic sites within the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) was also undertaken on a public teams meeting, which received significant public participation.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees continue to use its own dedicated and corporate social media channels to engage with the public so a range of views, opinions and questions can be considered as part of the committee's activity.

Our responsive website continues to grow the number of 'request it', 'report it' or 'pay for it' self-service options and user experience improvements have been made to the online customer portal. A recent My Torfaen campaign has encouraged greater take up of digital services and the new Torfaen Bot is answering frequent customer enquiries, 24 hours a day.

Our weekly news e-bulletin delivered via our 'Stay Connected' digital communication service has been critical during the pandemic and a dedicated COVID-19 Bulletin is sent out weekly alongside a wide range of bulletins to residents, partners and staff.

Our 'Stay Connected' service allows registered residents to receive automated, proactive information across email, SMS and social media on service specific issues or information relevant to their location or interests. Bulletins provide residents with statutory public information and news about corporate priority initiatives, our services and performance, consultations and events, key meetings and decisions such as changes to services and news from local public service partners.

We continue to use our consultation website, 'Get Involved' to enable citizens and young people to have the opportunity to tell us about their experiences and what they expect from local public services. The site contains current and future consultations as well as the responses received from previous consultations.

We also use the Dialogue tool to involve people in conversations, share ideas, views and challenges as one community. Titled Torfaen Together, this is an online space where we can really involve people, sharing and discussing ideas about the things that matter to them. Residents participate on this platform by browsing the challenges, submitting their own ideas or commenting on and rating other people's ideas.

The 'Torfaen Young People's Forum' continued to meet monthly to ensure young people's views are heard in our decisions. Every year the youth forum facilitates the 'Make Your Mark' ballot and our people's panel continue to be included on all consultation and engagement activities including Welsh Government consultations. Panel members participate in the scrutiny process by submitting questions to the panel and giving their views on scrutiny items.

Upcoming public engagement activity includes our annual residents survey, climate change consultation and budget consultation.

12. Challenging our performance

Our [Overview and Scrutiny Committees](#) continues to play a vital role in holding our decision making Cabinet to account, developing local policy, challenging our existing policies, and reviewing current performance to drive service improvement. More and more people are becoming involved in our overview and scrutiny work, which is helping to shape the recommendations being put forward.

Our Corporate Governance and Audit Committee also continues to ensure our corporate governance arrangements are sufficiently robust and plays an essential role in ensuring any recommendations made by our external inspectors, as part of their regulatory and inspection programme, are addressed in a timely manner.

During the course of the year we have reviewed our;

- Reviewed our processes to look at the most efficient and effective way that the management of the organisation can view and monitor performance information
- Established a way forward to review performance and progress against Corporate Plan priorities, organisational health and other projects of strategic importance, and
- Continued to develop a system to record, monitor and report our performance management information following the discontinuation of our previous performance management system.

The Executive Member for Performance Improvement & Corporate Governance continues to play a vital role, ensuring we are delivering improvements, in the areas we said we would.

At the beginning of 2021 Welsh Government passed a new piece of legislation called the Local Government and Elections Act 2021. Part of this act places new responsibilities and duties on local authorities to self-assess and report on performance. In the coming year this new legislation will lead us to review our performance management arrangements.

13. The year ahead and beyond

As already mentioned, March 2021 brought to an end our previous Corporate Plan. Therefore, at that time despite all the inherent uncertainties, we needed to establish and commit to an approach which enables services to set out planned changes and show how their implementation will support a local recovery.

It was recognised that assisting recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 and coordinating this with key regional and national activity, will be a key feature of our corporate and service planning for at least the next 2 years, and possibly beyond. As such a single 2-year plan was agreed covering the period until 2022/23. The plan reflected WG's national priorities for transition and recovery, retained the existing Corporate Plan (CP) priorities, but within a framework of revised priority statements sitting below these.

Moving forward the resulting framework of actions and intentions, will enable us to assess progress towards the 8 key things for Torfaen's recovery, that our initial analysis suggests, as amongst the most important:

- A resourcing process to ensure organisational financial stability and solvency;
- Changes to consolidate remote working, distanced accommodation, ICT and workforce requirements;
- A multiagency approach to coordinating support for those most vulnerable to the non-health impacts of COVID 19;
- A set of actions to provide a new model for developing community leadership and volunteer capacity;
- A clear strategy for economic renewal and support, including a focus on Kickstart for young people, local job creation, and foundational economy;
- A plan for helping people to remain in their own home, wherever possible;
- An approach to supporting pupils whose education has been disrupted by COVID 19, and
- Our response to the separate, but related threats of climate change, and reducing carbon emissions.

We continue, as of October 2021, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of a national and global endeavour. Unlike many emergency situations, there is not likely to be a clear and linear transition from the “response” stage to the “recovery” stage. Even though we are part of a successful national vaccination programme, case numbers are still prone to dramatic fluctuation, resulting in hospitalisations and deaths. As a consequence, COVID-19 still has the potential to place huge pressures on public services.

There will undoubtedly be impacts on our communities and on ourselves, due to COVID-19 that are yet to become apparent. We will therefore, need to maintain some flexibility around our priorities, enabling us to effectively respond to any unforeseen consequences that the pandemic may have on our communities.

Consideration has already turned to the development of our next Corporate Plan, which will be developed following the local government elections in May 2022. We are currently working alongside our partners in the newly formed Gwent Public Service Board to produce a Statutory Well-Being Assessment. This published document will form a compendium of information, which will be used as an evidence base by the Public Service Board to inform the development of its Well-Being Plan for Gwent. The Well-being Assessment will also be instrumental in informing the development of our future priorities.

As the pandemic has progressed, the extent of the “evidence gap” has become more apparent; some objective data and research has become available, alongside the lived experiences of residents, but it remains too early to quantify the longer-term effects of COVID-19, beyond the more obvious implications for an acceleration and widening of the inequalities gap that existed pre-COVID-19. Addressing this ‘evidence gap’ in the months ahead, will be pivotal to informing the development of our next Corporate Plan.

Despite all the challenges we face, through using the information and intelligence available to us and by working closely with our residents, partners and other stakeholders, we can collectively understand and address the issues that matter most, making Torfaen an even better place to live, work and visit.

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY & 2020/21 WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...**... A CLEAN AND GREEN TORFAEN****Contributing to the Torfaen Public Service Board objectives ...**

- **Develop a functional, connected network of natural areas that support the current and future well-being needs of local populations**
 - **Develop mitigation and adaptation responses to the impacts of climate change**

Contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 vision for Torfaen ...

**Cleaner and greener communities and a sustainable local environment
that residents can be proud of**

And, contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 priority 2020 goals ...**Our 2020 goals for this priority ...**

As a Council, we will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep the borough clean and free of litter • maintain open spaces on council owned land to an acceptable standard and work with private landowners and local partners to ensure this • work in a sustainable way to ensure our local environment is valued and maintained for future generations • ask residents for their views on maintaining open spaces in their communities • prosecute those caught committing environmental crimes where possible
As a Council, we will support ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residents working to improve the appearance of their local community
As a Council, we expect residents ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not to litter, fly tip or allow their dogs to foul in public areas. Every pound we have to spend on inconsiderate and antisocial behaviour like this is a pound less to spend improving the area • increase recycling, reduce waste and report environmental crimes

Progress against each of our key activities, performance measures and targets we published for this improvement objective in 2020/21 are set out below ...

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
Activity 1	
<p>Develop a solar farm at Ty Coch former landfill providing up to 3.85MW of solar photovoltaic (PV) generation to both generate a sustainable income and move towards a zero-carbon economy and reduce carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Our proposed 3.04MW development, will generate around 3.047MWh of renewable energy per year, reducing CO2 by 48,140 tCO2 over its lifetime and bringing an income stream to authority of approximately £24k per annum.</p> <p>The generation is equivalent to annual use of 928 homes in Torfaen and will assist the target of Wales producing 70% of its electricity from local renewable sources by 2030</p>
Our progress update 2020/21...	
<p>In January 2020 Cabinet agreed to support the Final Business Case, for the delivery of a 3.04MW solar farm at Ty Coch former landfill site and to give approval to proceed to the next phase of the scheme. Council approved funding for the project on 28th January 2020.</p> <p>During 2020/21, a project review was carried out and a report submitted which sought further approval to amend the procurement strategy and to approve the release of further reserve funding to complete the pre-construction phase through to award of a preferred contractor.</p> <p>Public Power solutions was engaged as solar consultants, following Chief Officer (Neighbourhoods) approval and Executive Member approval was received to amend the procurement strategy.</p> <p>This scheme is currently out to tender with a deadline for tenders to be returned by 5 May 2021. Evaluations of tenders received will follow shortly after this time and the financial viability of the scheme will be determined by the end of May 2021.</p>	
Activity 2	
<p>Implementation of Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy.</p>	<p>Our strategy will provide a coordinated and strategic approach to tackling litter and fly-tipping moving away from our current reactive process.</p>
Our progress update 2020/21...	
<p>Within 2020/21, a draft strategy was published online, and members of the public were invited to provide comments. Comments were largely supportive of the strategy; therefore, a final draft was produced, taking into account comments received.</p> <p>It was scheduled to be considered by Cleaner Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2020, before going to cabinet for approval. However, the COVID-19 crisis resulted in the scrutiny meeting being cancelled, and the strategy was not finalised and approved by the original deadline.</p> <p>The final strategy was agreed by the Cleaner Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2020 and adopted by Council on 31 December 2020.</p>	

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
Activity 3	
<p>Complete the business case for the procurement of new waste/recycling collection. Recycling vehicles are coming to their end of life and need to be replaced. This could mean a different vehicle being procured which could mean a service change for resident</p>	<p>New vehicles will be more efficient and environmentally friendly. Additionally, it is anticipated that due to the layout of the new vehicles we will be able to reduce the numbers of vehicles required thereby reducing environmental impact from waste collections even further</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>Throughout 2021/21, work has been on-going, and trials have been undertaken with different vehicle suppliers.</p> <p>A draft Cabinet report has been prepared which covered vehicle procurement, development of the new depot and Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) collections and their associated financial impacts. Prior to Cabinet the proposals will be discussed with PDF at the beginning of May 2021.</p> <p>We have negotiated an option for securing a lease for a site for the development of a new Bulking and Baling operation. The site owners have agreed the draft head of terms and formal approval was provided by Cabinet within quarter 3 of 2020/21 to proceed.</p> <p>The construction project will be project managed by our Property Team.</p> <p>A procurement process was also undertaken during quarter 3 of 2020/21, to secure a lead contractor to design and construct the site. Award of the contract is contingent on the approval of option and funding by Cabinet and Council.</p> <p>During our procurement process we will also be including additional capacity on the vehicles to enable the introduction of new materials for collection.</p> <p>WRAP prepared a report identifying the types and numbers of vehicles required to provide a separate collection service.</p>	
Activity 4	
<p>Identify the impact of the Climate Change Declaration on the business of the Council and prepare a strategy/action plan setting out what the Council intends to do</p>	<p>An action plan is being developed to take forward the Council's response to the climate emergency. This will include both climate adaptation and mitigation actions and will impact on all areas of Council activity.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>Work continues to produce the Council's Carbon Baseline.</p> <p>Throughout 2020/21, a draft climate emergency action plan was developed that sets out the activity that we will need to focus on to become net zero by 2030. Leadership Team reviewed the draft action plan in April 2021, followed by engagement with the Leader and Cabinet Members ahead of the action plan being presented back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June.</p> <p>An informal officer group helped develop the draft plan. It is intended this will become a formal officer group across the Council to lead, facilitate and support the delivery of the action plan. It has also been agreed that a Cabinet sub-group will be formed to monitor and drive the delivery of the action plan.</p>	
Activity 5	

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
<p>Adoption by the Council and the PSB on the Green Infrastructure Strategy (which delivers Objective 1 of the Well Being Plan)</p>	<p>This strategy will determine how we maintain, enhance and promote our natural environment to achieve wider wellbeing goals and actions.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>Public consultation on the strategy was completed within 2020/21 and a report will be submitted to the next Public Service Board (PSB) within 2021/22, for them to approve the final document, before we seek approval from our Members.</p>	
<p>Activity 6</p>	
<p>Waste T22 Customer & Digital Project Development and implementation of business plan to improve the customer experience of the recycling and waste service</p>	<p>We will introduce an improved online experience for bulky waste collections. Furthermore, we will develop a business case for system and technology improvement in the service (aligned to procurement of vehicles</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>We continue to review the existing My Council Services (MCS) system that the Council has in place, and it looks promising. Newport Council are currently using the newly developed module and we are seeking feedback on the experience of its implementation. The Council already has access to the Waste Module. We are also continuing to undertake a further review of other systems that are being used within other Local Authorities.</p> <p>The next stage will be for the Council to consider investment in the development of a Corporate Digital Team to enable the development of the existing software packages to maximise their potential within the Authority.</p> <p>The extension of this service within the vehicles is being considered in a separate Business Cases. When Covid restrictions ease, we will be organising a visit to Newport Council who are in the process of rolling out the MCS module, within their waste collection vehicles.</p> <p>This work was delayed over 2020-21 due to operational staff focusing on delivering priority services and managing the workforce in a Covid compliant fashion. It will be merged with the project for the new vehicles roll out for September 2022.</p>	

How we have measured our progress during 2016-20 ...

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
% of reported fly tipping incidents on relevant land cleared within 5 working days	Higher is better	↓	82.03% 1046	98.18% 934	99.03% 915	98.55% 681	97.07%
% of cleanliness complaints responded to within the clean neighbourhoods' act standards i) smashed glass; ii) dog fouling on hard surfaces iii) overgrowth/obstruction requests	Higher is better	↑	i) 90.10% ii) 98.31% iii) 51.96%	i. 78.13% ii. 93.10% iii.48.91%	i. 86.60% ii. 95.78% iii. 29.81%	i. 50.77% ii. 55.93% iii. N/A	N/A
% of people surveyed that agree that the local area is free from litter and rubbish NSfW (2013/14)	Higher is better	N/A	No Residents Survey carried out this year therefore unable to report on this measure	29.66%	31.14%	31.34%	N/A
% of people surveyed that agree that the local area is well-maintained NSfW (2013/14)	Higher is better	N/A		41.40%	39.14%	39.44%	N/A
Amount of green space under bio-diversity management by March 2017	Higher is better	=	1470ha The measure has remained constant over recent years but has the potential to fluctuate depending on changes to land management policies and the availability of resources to support landowners to deliver beneficial management interventions.	1470ha	1470 ha	1,450 ha	1,450 hectares
% local authority waste recycled & composted	Higher is better	↓	62.12%	64.40%	60.53%	60.51%	63.58%
Tonnage of waste sent for disposal	Lower is better	↓	19,223.3 tonnes	15,692.84 tonnes	18,186.74 tonnes	17,737 tonnes	N/A

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
Resident participation in recycling a) food waste and; b) dry waste	Higher is better	N/A	No participation monitoring able to take place due to Covid restrictions	65.38% 94.08%	61.10% 96.15%	61.29% 95.49%	N/A
% of fly tipping cases which led to enforcement activity	Higher is better	↓	2.49%	6.64%	5.84%	N/A	N/A

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY & 2020/21 WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...**... RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT****Contributing to the Torfaen Public Service Board objectives -**

- Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
- Improve local skills through work-force planning, training, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities

Contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 vision for Torfaen -

All our young people are given the best possible chance in life by attaining a good standard of education.

And, contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 priority 2020 goals...**Our 2020 goals for this priority ...**

As a Council, we will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with schools and teaching staff to raise attainment and encourage all young people to participate in post-16 education or training • work towards all schools being rated as green or yellow in the National School Categorisation system • ensure all children receive a good quality education, particularly 'looked after children', those with additional learning needs or at risk of going into care • work to close the gender and socio-economic attainment gaps • work to ensure all learners have effective literacy and numeracy skills • plan for new and improved school buildings which are fit for purpose in the 21st century • support and encourage our young people to prevent them becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) • work with schools to ensure our young people develop into well-rounded citizens who have the best possible chance in the current jobs market • recognise the importance of early years education, identifying the needs of learners and tailoring services to ensure all children and their parents/carers are supported to learn and achieve
As a Council, we will support ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governing bodies to ensure they have the capacity to offer challenge and support for their schools and raise aspirations and achievement
As a Council, we expect parents and carers ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to have high aspirations for their children and to actively contribute to, and engage with, their children's education. This includes ensuring their children attend school ready to learn and make a positive contribution

Progress against each of our key activities, performance measures and targets we published for this improvement objective in 2020/21 are set out below ...

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
Activity 1	
<p>Review the effectiveness of Early Years and Post 16 transition planning arrangements and processes for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupil transitioning to the new college in September 2020.</p>	<p>Through strengthening transition planning we will promote continuity for all children experiencing transitions between settings, enabling children to settle quickly in new settings, supporting their development and improving pupil attainment. We will ensure all our ALN Post 16 pupils have a smooth transition to the new college through an enhanced transition process for ALN pupils transferring to the new 6 th form college (Torfaen Learning Zone).</p>
Our progress update 2020/21...	
<p>As pupils were unable to access a physical transition TEAMS meeting were held to discuss alternatives and schools (primary and secondary) were sent resources to create a virtual tour which they adapted for their setting. Additional transition materials were also shared to provide more information to support the transition. This included Early Years, KS2-3 and transitions to college.</p> <p>Our staff worked with schools to provide updated advice and support for pupils who required enhanced transitions. Each secondary school had a meeting with the SSEP to support them with transition planning and sharing of ideas and practise.</p> <p>Monitoring of pupils continues to take place, via school planning meeting and individual casework.</p> <p>We have a responsibility for the POST 16 element of the plan, and we are leading on work with colleges and transition to post 16. A trial of the post 16 transition planning was run with all Torfaen secondary schools in summer term 2020 where schools identified their learners who would require enhanced transition planning for college and meeting were held between the schools and colleges to plan for these pupils. This is planned to be rolled out across the region in 2021.</p>	
Activity 2	
<p>Develop policies and procedures in line with the new ALN Code and ALN Act. The timeline issued by the Welsh Government is followed for the move from statements of SEN to Individual Development Plans (IDP)</p>	<p>We will ensure we are ready (along with our schools) for the implementation of the new Additional Learning Needs Act. Including requirements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop individual development plans (IDPs) the emphasis of which will be on making provision that delivers tangible outcomes that contribute in a meaningful way to the child's or young person's achievement of their full potential. - Take responsibility for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) from 0 to 25, ensuring they can access suitable education and/or training, including compulsory education and specialist post-16 education or training where necessary. - Appoint an Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer role to contribute to improving early identification and intervention in relation to ALN and ensuring better planning for future provision.

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
	<p>– Provide children, young people and others with information and advice about ALN and the new system and ensure that it is accessible for all who need it.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>We have worked with the other local authorities for the South East Wales region, alongside the ALN transformation lead to deliver the regional ALN plan.</p> <p>Online training, advice and support has been provided by our half termly ALN forum, regional forums via the transformation lead and our professional learning offer, throughout 2020/21. We have also worked in partnership with our ALN Transformation Lead and other local authorities to provide a learning offer for schools. 2 of our ALNCOs are regional leads and also provide advice and support for schools.</p> <p>Schools have attended the regional training provided and have been in receipt of support from the Regional ALNCOs to develop the provision maps within their schools. A report is due to be submitted to scrutiny at the beginning of 21/22 so that members are able to provide their views on whether they feel the Local Authority have prepared appropriately for the Implementation of the new Act and Code.</p> <p>A formal professional learning offer is also now in place.</p>	
<p>Activity 3</p>	
<p>Review specialist provision available and determine what specialist provision is needed. Accurate data sets to be available to determine the provision needed in Torfaen for pupils with identified ALN.</p>	<p>Options will be considered for the expansion of the existing special school and the creation a new bespoke school for pupils experiencing emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>We continue to monitor the number of children who are put forward for specialist places, to determine the demand on specialist provision. This provides data in order to determine what specialist provision is required in future, what additional support is needed in mainstream and what funding is required.</p>	
<p>Activity 4</p>	
<p>Review the future purpose and business plan for Torfaen Training in light of Welsh Government's contract decisions for Job Support Wales and Work Based Learning.</p>	<p>A way forward for Torfaen Training will be identified in light of Economy and Skills strategy. Priorities determined by Welsh Government for delivery and investment will be implemented</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>Within 2020/21, the future of Work Based Learning contracts continued to change rapidly.</p> <p>WG confirmed a third temporary extension of the traineeships programme to March 2022. In addition, a consultation on future frameworks was published and responded to in February with Welsh Government now taking on the role of issuing authority for new apprenticeship frameworks. Finally, there were delays in issuing the replacement apprenticeship programme (WBL5).</p> <p>The uncertainty around the impending changes to contracts made future business planning challenging throughout the year. A new model was produced to assess the financial impact of changing multiple variables and a business plan</p>	

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
<p>developed and approved by Cabinet as a result. Torfaen Training remained reliant on apprenticeship contract income to sustain the service.</p> <p>The tender process for the new apprenticeship programme was launched in September 2020. Torfaen Training submitted a tender to continue operating as a prime provider in November 2020. Unfortunately, WG have opted to substantially reduce the size of the apprenticeship provider network going from 20 providers to 10. As a result, Torfaen Training's tender was unsuccessful with Torfaen Training narrowly missing the threshold for a new contract (scoring 12th out of the 20 bidders) 7 of the successful providers were either colleges or members of college consortia. Officers explored subcontracting options with a college consortium, but this was not financially viable.</p> <p>Consequently, Cabinet took the decision to close the Torfaen Training service from 31st July 2021. Traineeship provision will continue until March 2022 unless it becomes unsustainable to operate the service independently before that point. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to remain as a prime provider for Traineeships after the closure of the TT service and so officers have withdrawn from the Traineeship successor programme (Jobs Growth Wales+)</p> <p>The Economy & Skills Team have supported learners through this provision, engaging proactively with the incoming provider to ensure that learners transfer and that there is minimal disruption to their learning, during this transition.</p> <p>Similarly, the Youth Engagement and Progression Coordinator has made contact with the likely incoming JGW+ contractors to start discussions to strengthen their presence in Torfaen so that they can offer alternative 16-24 employability activities for our young people.</p>	
<p>Prepare a business plan on future sustainability models for NEETs projects</p>	<p>To ensure that vulnerable young people at risk of becoming NEET are still helped into appropriate destinations under the new model of Post-16 provision in Torfaen, and once ESF funding is no longer available to our projects.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>Throughout 2020/21, work commenced on appraising options for NEET support, when the European Social Fund (ESF) Ends, at the end of December 2022. An options appraisal has been requested by the Prosperous Communities Scrutiny Committee and is being prepared for a Committee meeting in December 2021.</p> <p>The Head of Economy & Skills has been leading discussions with regional colleagues on the potential objectives of post-EU employability programmes. This has resulted in a position paper which has been considered by wider employability stakeholders in the region and will form the basis of a policy proposal to the respective LA cabinets in late 2021.</p> <p>Guidance on the Shared Prosperity Fund priorities, which is due to replace ESF funding has not yet been announced which will impact on the potential resources and business models going forward for NEET support.</p> <p>An application to the new Community Renewal Fund (CRF) project funding has been made. The UK Government led Community Renewal Fund was designed as a 1-year programme to pilot innovative ideas that could be considered as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund whilst the main fund was developed. Applications were invited in May and Torfaen submitted a proposal for employability on behalf of the 10 regional local authorities, endorsed by the Regional Skills Partnership. Decisions on Community Renewal Fund have been delayed until September reducing the delivery window from 9 months to 6. Officers continue to press for a decision on this.</p> <p>Confirmation has been provided by WG that they will continue to provide support for the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators role, which will continue to be in place until April 2022. A full consultation has been issued on the engagement and progression framework.</p>	

How we have measured our progress during 2016-20 ...

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
% of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*- C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics for: All pupils Non-Free School Meals pupils Free School Meals pupils Male Female	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	48.3% 54% 23.60% 38.3% 55.40%	48.9% (521/1066) 54.5% 24.1% 43% 54.8%	51.3% 54.9% 29.9% 46.1% 56.4%	53.46%
% of pupils achieving Level 2 threshold including GCSE grade A*-A in English/Welsh and mathematics	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	12.5%	10%	11.34%	N/A
School Categorisation System - Number of Schools in Green, Yellow, Amber and Red (Percentage)	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement to suspend categorisation due to COVID	77.42% green or yellow (24 primary/1 secondary)	74.19% green or yellow (23 schools out of 31)	68.75% green or yellow (22 schools)	N/A
	Lower is better			12.9% red (1 primary/3 secondary)	6.45% red (2 schools)	15.63% (5 schools)	
% of schools at least step 2 (B) for Leadership (National Categorisation) Primary Secondary	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement to suspend categorisation due to COVID	92% (23 out of 25) 17% (1 out of 6)	88% (22 primary schools out of 25) 33.33% (2 secondary schools out of 6)	81% (21 out of 26) 0% (0 out of 6)	N/A
% of children [receiving care and support] achieving the core subject indicator at Key Stage 4	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	N/A due to change in performance measures	17.39% (4 out of 23)	9.09%	N/A

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
Percentage students achieving Level 3 threshold (and number)	Higher is better	↑	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	94.9%	92.3%	95.1%	N/A
% of Young People (year 11) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Lower is better	↓	2.31%	2.13%	1.12% (19 out of 1,058 not in education employment or training)	1.2%	2.04%
% of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	N/A due to change in performance measures	91.3%	89.49%	89.94%
% of pupils achieving English at L4, KS2 % of pupils achieving Mathematics at L4, KS2 % of pupils achieving Science at L4, KS2	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	N/A due to change in performance measures	92.4% 92.9% 94.6%	91.98% 91.52% 93.8%	N/A
% of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	N/A due to change in performance measures	88.3%	88.97%	N/A
% of pupils achieving English at L5, KS3 % of pupils achieving Mathematics at L5, KS3 % of pupils achieving Science at L5, KS3	Higher is better	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	N/A due to change in performance measures	91.3% 93% 94.63%	90.72% 92.36% 95.16%	N/A
Investment in schools and a sixth form centre, as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme	Higher is better	↓	£9.9 million	£22.7 million (underspend is due to the RC 3- 16 project being put on hold by Archdiocese)	£22.8 million	£9.4 million	N/A

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY & 2020/21 WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...

... SUPPORT FOR TORFAEN’S MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

Contributing to the Torfaen Public Service Board objectives ...

- **Support healthy lifestyles and enable people to age well**
- **Tackle the inter-generational patterns of poverty and develop economic resilience**

Contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 vision for Torfaen ...

A healthier community where the most vulnerable people are assisted to lead healthy, independent lives, where the council and other agencies work to prevent suffering and hardship and to reduce inequality

And, contributing to our Corporate Plan 3 priority 2020 goals ...

Our 2020 goals for this priority ...	
As a Council, we will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support those who need it most, giving our most vulnerable residents safe, appropriate and dignified support but also promoting independence wherever possible work with partners in the community and voluntary sector to help improve the lives of the most vulnerable identify vulnerable people as soon as possible so that we can intervene early to support them and where possible to prevent their problems becoming greater. We value early intervention services that help people maintain their independence and quality of life and help save the Council money in the longer term. work to tackle poverty, especially child poverty, and to reduce inequality support parents/carers and young people living in low-income households to improve their skills and avoid the health and social consequences of poverty.
As a Council, we will support ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the third sector and communities to help people become more financially and socially resilient, with the rights skills, knowledge and support to be more independent. We will help strengthen our communities, as places where people look out for each other and help each other out in times of need. the community to tackle specific health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles and promote information services which enable citizens to make informed choices unpaid carers, in recognition of the huge contribution they make to our society. We will also seek to better understand their needs
As a Council, we expect ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parents and carers to care for their children and keep them safe from harm people to take care of each other and keep an eye out for those most in need

Progress against each of our key activities, performance measures and targets we published for this improvement objective in 2019/20 are set out below ...

Our activities ...	The expected impact ...
Activity 1	
<p>We will continue to implement our Domiciliary Care Strategy (subject to available funding) aimed at increasing in-house provision from 10% to 14% focusing on short term enablement, long term dementia and complex care</p>	<p>Address the rising demand for domiciliary care services (in line with demographics and complexity) and waiting list for client waiting for packages of care (POCs) which results in delayed transfers of care (DTC) and / or additional pressures on informal carers.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>This work stream was put on hold for 2020/21, for a number of reasons, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding was not available to expand the team to increase in-house provision. • The new recruitment process requirement to increase provision was also not able to operate during the pandemic, due to social distancing requirements. • Management capacity was also stretched due to the pandemic and resources have been focussed on the Ty Glas y Dorlan project, which is focused on providing long and short-term bed-based provision that will, provide appropriate solutions for individuals to promote independence. • The Commissioning Team have been unable to progress the scoping paper on the implications of introducing the Ethical Charter. Again, activity has been focussed on supporting external providers throughout the pandemic. <p>We are however, planning to resume workshops with providers in early 2022.</p>	
Activity 2	
<p>We will review our long and short-term bed-based provision that will, provide appropriate solutions for individuals that promotes independence, positive risk taking and social inclusion. We will make use of alternative housing stock such as community hub short stay beds.</p>	<p>Current arrangements are not cost effective and opportunities for the promotion or maintenance of independence programmes are not used during respite provision. The development of a community short stay unit would provide better outcomes and flexibility for individuals.</p>
<p>Our progress update 2020/21...</p> <p>The project build is on schedule to open in October 2021 and has been renamed Ty Glas y Dorlan.</p> <p>Throughout 2020/21, a project team was established which was funded through the Transformation Grant.</p> <p>A draft staffing model was also formulated, and job descriptions developed with a view to start recruitment from June 2021.</p> <p>Pathways and admission criteria continue to be developed with partners.</p>	

Activity 3

We will redefine and redesign day opportunities with our key partners aimed at providing a person-centred support, that enables people to take part in interests and activities to achieve their outcomes and improve their well-being.

A day opportunities service where everything starts with the person will lead to individuals achieving more positive life outcomes and achieving real dreams and aspirations.

Our progress update 2020/21...

Work with people who use the service, carers, staff and providers has continued, throughout 2020/21.

Due to government regulations around the pandemic, Day Opportunities in their previous form, have however, not been able to operate. Face to face engagement has also been limited, but virtual engagement has continued.

Feedback has been pulled together and included in A Good Day Review.

A project group was also established and are meeting fortnightly to progress the plans.

A series of staff workshops have also been scheduled to take place in 2021/22.

Activity 4

We will continue to implement our over-arching housing strategy to deliver affordable and sustainable accommodation solutions, ensuring that individuals are provided with the right support and interventions.

To address the continued demand for affordable housing within the borough and to take every reasonable and practicable to avoid homelessness from either occurring in the first instance or to ensure that any incidence of homelessness is brief and non-recurrent.

Our progress update 2020/21...

The work around the strategy and associated action plan has been undertaken, where this has been possible. A significant amount of work has been progressed around the review of the Home seeker Policy and this is to be revised over the course of the next year, together with the development of a "Move on" strategy.

Additional work has been undertaken to reshape services and to develop additional projects to tackle and alleviate homelessness, despite the restrictions on service development, due to COVID-19. Actions within the strategic plan have been revised and are reflected in how the Council has adopted the Phase 2 Homelessness Plan, which is heavily focused on reshaping services and delivering better outcomes. The additional resources provided by Welsh Government through the Housing Support Grant (HSG) funding and other sources, have been directed at the core values of this plan and are developing how the services evolve.

Furthermore, the Housing and Commissioning Team is being re-structured with additional staffing positions being created within the teams to assist in service delivery and delivering the outcomes required. This is due to be implemented in June/July 2021.

Additional guidance from Welsh Government provides for the Council to adopt a combined Housing Support Grant and Homelessness Strategy. This is being developed and will be finalised later this year. This will replace the regional homelessness strategy and provide the strategic steer for how we and our partners will seek to tackle and alleviate homelessness, in the county borough from 2022 onwards, for a period of 4 years with review of the associated actions taking place each year.

Activity 5

We will build on the multi-agency approach to the safe triaging of referrals.

Address the issues of demand management and appropriate access to the relevant services and to ensure that families and children with any level of need are provided for by receiving the right service at the right time.

Our progress update 2020/21...

An investment report was considered by Cabinet in February 2021 with funding approved for additional capacity (for 18 months) in our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASSH), as well as funding to progress the beta phase of the 'contact gateway and online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

Regional 'buy in' was however, not secured for the contact gateway and online MARF within 2020/21.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) have recently advertised a Support Worker Post to sit within the MASSH. Interviews for this Post are pending.

Activity 6

We will review our risk management processes with the intention of adopting a formal approach to risk / strength-based management.

We will ensure consistency of approach and service delivery and that the correct service is being provided to families and that need is not inappropriately escalated.

Our progress update 2020/21...

The strength-based approach training programme was rolled out throughout 2020/21 and was warmly received by staff.

Feedback from each cohort was provided to senior management so that the impact of adopting this change and gains and challenges could be understood.

The mentoring programme also commenced and will require some planning, going forward, as to what the expectations upon mentors will be and what benefits will be available for the service/staff.

The risk model training programme was rolled out, however there were some technical difficulties, which requires the programme being adapted, potentially converting it to a webinar / e-learning resource; which will further support staff to maximise their full attendance and provide a clear record of attendance.

Strength based approach training:

- 67 members of staff have completed the training
- A further 44 members of staff are booked on future training
- 45 members of staff have partially completed the training
- The first mentoring training workshops have taken place

Assessment & Analysis of risk of significant harm:

- 45 members of staff have completed this training
- 42 have partially completed – this number is high due to significant number of staff missing one or two days and a few sessions cancelled by Torfaen due to technical difficulties
- A further 27 members of staff are booked on future sessions.

How we have measured our progress during 2016-2020 ...

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
% of adults who completed a period of reablement: a. And have a reduced package of care and support 6 months later b. And have no package of care and support 6 months later	Higher is better	N/A	N/A (measure no longer collected)	a) 85.21% b) 82.84%	a) 80.94% b) 77.28%	a) 46.03% b) 79.24%	N/A
% of adults who have received advice and assistance from the information, advice and assistance service and have not contacted the service for 6 months	Higher is better	↑	93.52%	90.86%	93.26%	90.74%	N/A
Rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1000 population aged 75 or over	Lower is better	N/A	Data supplied by Health Board. Not collected in 2020/21 due to COVID-19	4.35	3.24	6.32	4.95
% of Torfaen residents where hospital admission was avoided following a 'Rapid Medical' referral to Frailty from the GP	Higher is better	↓	92.47%	96%	97.78%	98%	N/A
% children supported to remain living within their family	Higher is better	N/A	N/A (measure no longer collected)	52%	51.92%	56.84%	N/A
% of looked after children returned home from care during the year (N.B. The measure does not include children who are returned home but not discharged from care)	Higher is better	↓	11.11%	11%	24.02%	11.82%	N/A
Average time on the Child Protection Register	Lower is better	↓	238.64 days	183 days	203 days	187.46 days	N/A
% of re-registrations of Children on Local Authority Child Protection Registers	Lower is better	↓	5.2%	1%	1.14%	5.8%	2.91%
% of carers reporting they feel supported to continue in their caring role	Higher is better	N/A	N/A (measure no longer collected)	N/A (measure no longer collected)	57.78%	55.17%	N/A

our measures of performance	direction of travel	5-year trajectory	Reported performance 20/21	Reported performance 19/20	Reported performance 18/19	Reported performance 17/18	Reported performance 16/17
% (& number) of families supported by Family Support Programme that have made a demonstrable improvement in at least 3 outcomes	Higher is better	↑	90.09% 100	82.44% 108	83.51% 81	85.6% 126	N/A
% of cases where Homelessness was successfully prevented (s66)	Higher is better	↓	56.09%	59.20%	54.59%	56.44%	N/A
% of people owed a s75 duty whose duty is positively discharged	Higher is better	↓	67.83%	84.21%	68.04%	71.79%	N/A
% of 'Supported People' achieving following outcomes: SP1: Feeling Safe SP6: Managing Money SP9: Physically Healthy SP10: Mentally Healthy	Higher is better	↑	91.1%	94.36%	92.89%	55.89%	N/A
		↑	90.7%	93.84%	91.51%	53.26%	
		↑	85.5%	92.87%	91.84%	54.54%	
		↑	87.4%	91.32%	90.21%	52.07%	
% of adults (16 plus) engaged in employability support that we progress into employment	Higher is better	↓	24.98%	25.47%	22.65%	34.94%	N/A

CORPORATE PLAN SELF EVALUATION – REVIEW OF PROGRESS 2016-2020

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY AND WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...

... A CLEAN AND GREEN TORFAEN

Over the last five years, our emphasis on a clean and green Torfaen has continued at pace, with improved performance, as a result of changes being made to working practices and additional investment being provided to the service.

Street Cleansing

Since 2016, fly-tipping clearances and street cleanliness targets continue to be met with a renewed focus on community engagement and community ownership, encouraging community volunteers to work with us on “Spring Clean” sessions, to help create a cleaner and greener Torfaen.

The Streetscene area-based model, was further embedded, offering a seven day a week reactive service across the county borough and has identified further opportunities for sharing experiences and working methodologies across teams.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of 2020, as a result of the pandemic, there was a short delay in our street scene service, which includes emptying park bins, dog waste, and clearing fly-tipping. We were however able to resume service provision fairly quickly by redeploying other staff into these roles to support our services across street scene and waste.



At the end of March 2021, as part of the national campaign to eradicate litter, the Council launched its new five-year litter and fly-tipping strategy. The strategy is our commitment to keeping Torfaen a clean and green place to live work and visit, and our aim is to encourage residents to show the same commitment and help reduce the Council’s yearly clean-up costs, which is estimated at over one million pounds.

Enforcement

In 2019, following a decision by Gwent Police to cease responsibility for enforcing highway parking restrictions, we developed our own integrated approach to enforcement. Previously, we used an external enforcement service for litter and dog control offences but following active participation and recommendations from our Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which were later approved by Cabinet, a joint in-house Civil Parking and Environmental Enforcement Service has now been set up.

Waste



We have made a number of improvements to waste and recycling over the last 5 years. This begun with the successful rollout of the skinny bin system in 2016, resulting in a significant increase in recycling performance.

Statutory waste targets continue to be met, and performance was in excess of 64%.

During 2019, an additional 1-year contract was procured for kerbside collected dry recycling. This provided significant revenue into the department. Our food waste partnership between Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire has also procured and introduced the same food waste liners across the region, which has also delivered savings and consistency of message, across the region.

Collaborative procurement of waste contracts with other neighbouring Local Authorities, including residual waste, food waste and garden waste continues, and we now have joint contract management arrangements in place, monitoring progress.

Planning permission for the development of Ty Coch depot was also obtained within 2019 for a new/expanded depot to accept recycling from the new types of recycling collection vehicles.

Since introduction of a new bag sorting system at our Household Waste Recycling Centre in March 2019, we have significantly reduced the amount of waste sent for disposal (11,719 tonnes after quarter 3 of 2019/20, compared to 13,882 tonnes after the 3rd quarter of 2018/19) and we project to realise savings in excess of £80,000 whilst delivering an improved recycling performance. Our initiative has and continues to have delivered, behaviour change to users of the HWRC Site, focusing on reducing the amount of waste disposed of at the site.

In April 2019, we adopted a new Recycling and Waste Strategy, following consultation with residents and consideration by Scrutiny. This establishes the future strategic priority and Action Plan for waste up to 2025. The Strategy goes beyond simply meeting Welsh Government targets through the delivery of a single integrated strategy, which identifies how we will: – Achieve our vision; – Develop infrastructure required to do this: – Collaborate with others, – Initially engage and educate residents and where appropriate take enforcement action, and – Place the Well Being and Future Generations goals at the heart of all that we do.



In September 2019 FCC Environment, in partnership with Circulate and Torfaen County Borough Council, opened a Re-use Shop in New Inn. The shop sells items that were destined for recycling or disposal. By selling these items for reuse, we significantly reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and help support local communities and residents who benefit from the sale of the low-cost items.

At the latter part of 2020, working in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Capital Valley Plastic and FCC Environment, the Council was shortlisted for the best local authority recycling initiative for its low-density polyethylene recycling project. This award for excellence in Recycling & Waste Management is considered the most prestigious awards scheme for waste and recycling professionals and recognises organisations, partnerships and individuals across 17 categories.

To help tackle the problem of low-density polythene, which is the commonly used in such things as bread packaging and carrier bags, the council and Capital Valley Plastic provided an education and collection programme about this issue to 22 primary schools in the borough. Participation from schools has been fantastic and we are hoping to roll it out to more in the future and as a result of our efforts to innovate, work

with partners, and help residents recycle more, low density polythene can now be recycled at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (New Inn).

Recycling, food, cardboard and black bag collections continued throughout the pandemic through the support and dedication of our staff. There was, however, a temporary delay, to the collection of green waste, and bulky waste during this time, due to staff resources and the Household Waste Recycling Centre being closed, following devolved government advice. Our site reopened on 26th May with a new booking system in place to effectively manage traffic and social distancing on site. Bulky waste remains suspended due to staff resources and is unlikely to be reintroduced until guidance changes and staff are able to return to normal working duties.

Open Spaces

In October 2020, we received confirmation that we had retained two green flag awards from Keep Wales Tidy for Pontypool Park and Cwmbran Boating Lake and gained further green flags for Panteg Park and Garn Lakes.

The Green Flag Award programme is delivered in Wales by environmental charity Keep Wales Tidy, with support from Welsh Government. This is an international mark of a quality park or green space and in recognition of excellent visitor facilities, high environmental standards, and a commitment to delivering great quality green space.

Green Infrastructure



Throughout 2016-2020, targets for managing biodiversity and public access have also been met and a positive contribution to Torfaen's Well-being Plan has been made, resulting in Green Infrastructure becoming an important component to Torfaen, in providing multiple well-being benefits for our residents.

Towards the end of 2020/21, work was completed on installing 10 new dual electric vehicle-charging points in Torfaen. The council is committed to making Torfaen greener, not only through our work to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, but also by undertaking green infrastructure initiatives, such as this.

In partnership with other local authorities in Gwent, the Council was awarded a share of £459,000 funding from the UK Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), to start to develop the infrastructure for the vehicles of the future.

A joint bid was put together by the authorities, supported by the Energy Saving Trust and submitted by Blaenau Gwent Council. As a result of this, 62 fast charge points were installed across Gwent.

Over the same time period we have also went out to consultation with our residents on our Green Infrastructure Strategy, which has been designed to help shape and coordinate the delivery of green infrastructure in Torfaen, to provide social, environmental and economic well-being benefits now and in the future, in accordance with Welsh Government legislation. This strategy will also help us to address the concerns and priorities identified by residents and stakeholder organisations in the Torfaen Well-being Assessment.

Climate change

In response to the climate emergency and the local authorities attempt to reduce carbon emissions through increasing energy efficiency and exploring the potential for renewable energy generation within the County Borough, we have started work to develop a solar farm at the former Ty Coch landfill site. This development will seek to reduce CO2 emissions, as well as provide a return on our investment over a 35-year period.



Over 2020-21 the Council also engaged through its online engagement tool “Dialogue” with its community, to understand what our residents wanted to see the Council do to respond to its Climate Change Emergency.

As a result of this, and other previous engagement undertaken with both Members in Overview and Scrutiny and an Officer Working Group, a draft Climate Change Action Plan has been developed. This will be reviewed once more by Scrutiny and will go out to public consultation ahead of the Conference of the Parties (COP) 26.

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY AND WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...

... RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

21st Century Schools

We have continued to deliver proposals to manage surplus places and improve school buildings/sites in both primary and secondary education.

Over the last 5 years we have:

- continued to reduce surplus places in our schools, achieving levels set by Welsh Government and successfully managing the transition of pupils to their new schools.
- invested £91.6 million in partnership with Welsh Government as part of Band A of the investment programme on the following:
 - 3 primary schools replaced (Blenheim Road, Llantarnam and Ysgol Panteg)
 - 2 primary schools extended and remodelled (Garnteg and Cwmffrwdroer)
 - 1 primary school refurbished and remodelled (Penygarn)
 - 1 secondary school partially refurbished and remodelled (Cwmbran High School)
 - 1 secondary school replaced (Croesyceiliog)
 - A new centre for post 16 education, the Torfaen Learning Zone in Cwmbran, replacing 6th forms in our English Medium secondary schools
- replaced the infant block of Coed Eva Primary school which was destroyed by fire following an arson attack.
- added a Community Café at Crownbridge Special School, and a new rugby compliant 3G pitch at West Monmouth School.
- supported schools to introduce energy efficiency schemes such as lighting replacement, automatic lighting controls and boiler replacement, achieving carbon and financial savings, and making them more aware of energy conservation.
- begun further investment of around £33 million in partnership with Welsh Government, as part of Band B of our investment programme and two specific grants to support the 2050 vision of 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales and separately increasing the number of places at the special school:
 - 1 primary school replaced (Maendy)
 - 1 secondary school with an extended age range (3-18) and added nursery/primary age provision (Gwynllyw)
 - 1 extended special school (Crownbridge)
 - 2 refurbished primary schools (Ysgol Bryn Onnen and Ysgol Cwmbran)



Attainment

Since 2017, a total of 28 new GCSE qualifications were developed and taken by learners in Wales, seven of these were taken for the first time in 2019. Over the same period the Welsh Government developed new evaluation and improvement arrangements to replace parts of the then current accountability system, designed to help support the realisation of the new curriculum and associated reforms.

Over the past five years, it is fair to say there have been successive changes in the assessment regime that have resulted in volatility in results across Wales and this region. In collaboration with the EAS and Torfaen Headteachers, we continued to improve performance of primary school outcomes, which were at, or above expected levels.

Performance in our secondary schools, however remained disappointing. Whilst Key Stage 3 results improved in the core subject indicator, there was significant volatility in the results across Wales for Key Stage 4, with all Authorities seeing a drop in performance on the key indicator L2+ i.e. five GCSEs including English or Welsh and one Mathematics GCSE at grade C or better.

Supported by colleagues from both Welsh Government and the EAS, we have continued to engage in a supported self-evaluation review of how we discharge our statutory functions through the work we undertake directly and through the EAS. Involving our schools, members and other stakeholders has enabled us to look at what additional steps we needed to take to help accelerate progress across our secondary schools and review the impact of the current support being provided, particularly within leadership development and improving the quality of teaching, particularly in secondary schools.

In 2018/19 Welsh Government announced that there will no longer be a requirement to publish teacher assessment data, as it was felt that the existing system and its use of performance measures had many negative unintended consequences, such as narrowing curriculum choice, encouraging disproportionate focus on particular groups of learners, and driving competition between schools rather than encouraging collaboration.

As a result of WG’s announcement, performance data relating to attainment was no longer required to be published at school or local authority (LA) level, so it is therefore difficult for us to assess progress, over the last five years, for attainment.

Attendance



At the beginning of 2016, school attendance in schools remained very much a focus for our work in light of some concerning performance figures in schools in the borough.

Headteachers engaged fully with the Education Service staff to understand where the issues were and to examine a range of options that could be implemented to make sure every child is in school as much time as possible to maximise their learning opportunities.

Our new “Strive for 95” initiative was launched in 2018, to offer guidance, support and encouragement to pupils and their families to reach a minimum of 95% attendance each term, every year, prior to intervention being made by our Education Welfare Service. As a Council we recognised that every day a child misses from school is a day’s learning they are missing out on and that poor attendance can and does impact on children’s attainment and life chances so we are committed to working with all families to tackle attendance issues before they become entrenched.

This new initiative helped to improve attendance in secondary schools and reduce the decline in primary schools. Alongside this, working in collaboration with our primary schools, support was also put in place to develop provision for pupils and reduce the number of exclusions.

Aligned to national trends, attendance figures in Torfaen have declined because of the pandemic. WG suspension of punitive measures and an increase in the number of parents electing to educate their children at home have adversely impacted on overall rates of attendance across the borough. We are therefore, planning to work in collaboration with our schools to reinvigorate our “Strive for 95” initiative and reflect on how we can improve attendance further, going forward.

Learning

During the pandemic, for those children not receiving any direct support, we worked with all of our schools put into place arrangements to support remote learning.

In collaboration with our Shared Resource Service, we ‘recycled’ laptops and made MiFi devices available for children and young people in our schools, who otherwise would not have been able to access web-based resources.

When schools were closed, to support those children entitled to free school meals, our staff, with great support from elected members, ensured children were able to access a meal initially through ‘community hubs’ and later by home delivery. This was a mammoth task, which our Council Members organised and established local hubs with colleagues from catering and transport to support food provision and delivery. This was well received by the community and has now been superseded by a cash payment.

NEET's

Throughout the corporate plan period we have continued to strengthen our NEETs processes to ensure that we are identifying those most at risk early in the process and that we are putting in place support, guidance and interventions to help manage those most at risk of becoming NEET. In 2016 our NEETs figures were 1.9%, with Torfaen falling below the Wales average in that year.

Since then our NEET numbers have remained at a low level, with fluctuations year on year. The fluctuations depend on the number of specific barriers for individual young people in that year (e.g. number of learners with severe health conditions, pregnancy or with a confirmed placement that doesn't start until after the destinations survey). Despite the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on young people our NEET percentages in 2020/21 remained low at 2.3%

The European Social Fund operations, Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work programmes helped to support young people at risk of becoming NEET, and those who are NEET to re-engage and have been instrumental in supporting those most at risk of becoming NEET or helping those who have become NEET to find places in further learning or employment. Throughout the plan period, the team have supported young people to improve their confidence, gain nationally recognised qualifications, undertake meaningful employment opportunities and progress to further education. Several of our supported young people have been inspired to progress to university to study youth work so that they can provide the same type of support to future generations.

We also supported young people who face barriers in their life, have volatile and destructive behaviours, or are isolated and suffering with low mood to develop their confidence, self-worth, and engage with peers who face similar challenges. The ‘Moving-On Up project’ helped 15 beneficiaries in their transition from primary to secondary school and received amazing feedback, lowering anxiety levels and increasing confidence.

During 2020, Welsh Government confirmed that they will continue to provide financial support for the Youth Engagement and Progression coordinator role which will continue to be in place until April 2022. However, the wider Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work teams are funded through EU funds and will cease to operate from October 2022. In late 2021 work on the options for pre-16 and post-16 NEET support after EU funding commenced. This will continue to be developed over the coming years.

Play Service

The announcement by Welsh Government on 18 March that schools were to close, in response to the pandemic, was followed by a herculean effort by council and school staff to plan and establish childcare hubs to support the children of key workers.

During the summer period of the pandemic 2020 our Torfaen Play, Youth and Sport Development services came together to provide provision for keyworker children and the most vulnerable. (The Play Service provides a number of different play related projects, which impacts positively on the community, reduces crime, and increases levels of physical activity, well-being, volunteering, and citizen engagement).

Seven school based childcare hubs were created for keyworker parents and parents with vulnerable children, providing the equivalent of 4600 days of support. The education hubs were supported by a combination of dedicated staff from schools and across the Council's departments to ensure children and staff would be in as safe an environment as possible with appropriate lay out, catering, cleaning, teaching, play and engagement. The hubs opened from 8am to 6pm every day, seven days a week, including holiday periods to begin with, whilst demand was at its peak.

By working collaboratively, our dedicated play, sports and youth teams were able to deliver fun activities whilst following social distancing rules, in the midst of the pandemic, to ensure children have a fun and safe environment to play. At these sessions' children had the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, including the daily mile, team games, music, arts and crafts and more.

In addition to the childcare hubs, and as a result of a similar amount of effort made by the council and its schools, we were also able to make available, support for children with additional needs at Pontnewydd, Nant Celyn, Maendy, Abersychan, Cwmbran High, Crownbridge and the Pupil Referral Unit. The equivalent of 1000 days of term time support was delivered at this time, with some additional support provided for children from Crownbridge, during the holiday period.

Due to the Play Service being unable to provide their usual events over the past year, they worked in partnership with Pontypool and Cwmbran Community Council's to provide and deliver 280 play packs for families across Torfaen. The play packs provided various home play activities, sports equipment and specialist disability equipment, which were very much welcomed by children and parents.

We also worked with Social Care colleagues to ensure support was being provided to some of the County Borough's other vulnerable children, protecting children and providing much needed respite for families and carers.



School Categorisation

(The National School Categorisation uses four colour-coded judgements to assess where a school is in their improvement journey and what level of challenge and support it requires. Schools are categorised as being: Green, Yellow, Amber, Red.)

In terms of primary schools, there have been clear positive changes in the categorisation of schools in Torfaen over the last three years, which means there are significantly fewer schools needing higher levels of support from the EAS and the Local Authority.

Our secondary schools' performance does however remain an area of concern, with the majority of schools requiring the highest levels of support from the EAS and the local authority. The proportion of schools in the green category is in line with the regional average but below the national average and the proportion of schools in the red category is above both the regional and national.

Again, due to the pandemic, WG have for the second year, taken the decision to suspend National Categorisation. It is, therefore, difficult to assess progress over the last five years.



OUR CORPORATE PLAN 3 PRIORITY AND WELL-BEING AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE ...

... SUPPORT FOR TORFAEN'S MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

The demand for services and support across the Social Care and Housing Service Area has remained high. As in all areas of the Council, the service area faces significant budgetary challenges, in an environment where demands on resources, both internally and externally, are increasing.

Children & Family Services

From 2016 onwards we have seen an increase in the number of referrals, relating to children and young people, demonstrating a continued demand in Torfaen for safeguarding and support services. Since this time, we have therefore continued to be more focused on preventative services, in an attempt to reduce the need of children becoming looked after.



During 2017, we created a Transformation Team, which set out key clear objectives around early intervention and prevention and developed additional capacity within our Family Support Services. This has seen the Family First Team transferring from our Education Service to our Children and Families Division within Social Care and Housing, thus strengthening projects with social work support and providing a better partnership approach to resourcing early intervention, at referral stage.

Our Family Focus Team was also strengthened with additional staff provided to support the work of Family First.

We also created a Rapid Response Team to deliver intensive crisis intervention for children at risk of becoming looked after or to prevent placement breakdown. We continue to ensure children, young people and their families receive appropriate services based on assessment of their needs and implementation of their individual care and support plans, reducing the risk of family breakdown and ensuring that children are safeguarded by timely interventions and outcome focused planning. Additional staff have also been provided to our MIST Therapeutic foster care service, to work with children to return them nearer to home, when appropriate, and we have recruited a specialist social worker to recruit and support additional MIST foster carers.

During 2018, a new out of hour's service was established providing phone and direct support at times of family crisis outside of normal working hours. Family feedback about this new service has been positive.

Children who cannot live safely with parents, continue to come into care in a timely way and have been able to benefit from swift adoption, or other long-term care arrangements. Care proceedings have also progressed to ensure that wherever possible, children could continue living with their extended family.

The Family Focus Service is now utilised prior to, and within the Court Care Planning process, which has received positive feedback. A high number of in-house fostering placements have been provided, and despite increased volumes we have delivered court-led kinship assessments, within court timescales.

We continue to have a good success rate in maintaining children with local Torfaen foster carers, although this is continually challenging, due to the demand for placements that meet the needs of children, particularly those who exhibit damaging behaviours to themselves or others.

Following a number of successful campaigns supported by our Communications department, we have recruited additional foster carers to help provide placements for sibling groups and older children. We have also recruited parent and baby placements, which will help provide accommodation for parents and their babies, whilst we assess their parenting skills.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last year has required us to concentrate on how we meet; our statutory responsibilities, expectations from other agencies and Welsh government. In light of these demands, throughout 2020/21, safeguarding children has been a key priority within our Children's Services.

In terms of case management, we risk assessed and RAG rated (red, amber, green) all of our cases to determine the required level of response, based on safeguarding assessments and statutory responsibilities. Our response has been tailored to individual needs and has included, face to face, phone call, use of other agency by proxy, skype etc to ensure each child and family receives the right level of support and care.

We also ensured that we use a number of common agencies and practices, linked with our counterparts in the rest of Gwent for consistency and access to services. Our MASSH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team, introduced in November 2019, continued to operate on a split rota basis of home working and working from within the MASSH office. This has proved effective in being able to deploy resource, in line with the service functions.

The technology, and in particular use of Teams, has been very effective in enabling a remote working process across the service; and going forward will be a tool that can and should continue where appropriate, however, there is no replacement for human contact and we will need a mix of activity moving forward, to support both clients and staff.

Adult & Community Services



The beginning of 2016 saw a frenzy of activity in preparation for the implementation of the Social Service & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. In line with the principles of the Act, Adult Services piloted a new way of responding to people in the community.

The North Torfaen Wellbeing Team was established in March 2016; based in Blaenavon and serving the residents of Blaenavon and Abersychan. This multi-agency team focuses on 'what matters' to the person and identifies solutions, using the strengths of the individuals, as well as the strengths of the community.

As a result of this new arrangement, the outcomes for individuals improved and feedback from citizens and staff were overwhelmingly positive and we have now implemented this way of working out to the rest of our citizens in Torfaen.

By far, the greatest achievement during 2017, was the development of five patched based Social Care Teams. Learning from the North Torfaen Wellbeing Pilot, these teams were designed to be conterminous with the North and South Neighbourhood Care Networks.

This significant piece of work has helped us to manage demand more efficiently, enable staff to make closer connections with the community and deliver better outcomes for individuals. Continuing with the focus on community engagement, the Community Connectors have also gone from strength to strength, where staff have worked tirelessly to establish groups in the community, to facilitate social activities.

The number of people with dementia is increasing both nationally and locally. Torfaen was accredited as 'working to become dementia friendly' within 2015 -2016.

In 2016, considerable progress was made to raise awareness of dementia and encourage organisations to adopt dementia friendly practices and support people living with dementia and their carers. As with all statutory services, we are subject to routine scrutiny by regulatory bodies. As part of the National Thematic Inspection Programme, the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out an inspection of our Learning Disability Service, in January 2016.

Overall, inspectors concluded that there were significant examples of good and excellent support, which improve outcomes for most people. Within the report published in June 2016, CIW stated that “the personal commitment, professionalism and skills of individual staff, including those at a senior level, have helped to create a service that has a strong value base and demonstrates a commitment to the voice of people with learning disabilities.”

2016 also seen progress towards the delivery of the long-awaited Integrated Autism Service. The development of the service was made possible through additional funding from the Welsh Government and delivers more timely adult diagnostic intervention and provide an all age service that cuts through organisational boundaries. The relationships forged between individuals and their formal carers, and the quality of the care provided, is so important to the wellbeing, dignity and respect of the individuals on a day to day basis. The sector has been supported for some time by our Workforce Development Team, focusing on carers’ learning and development needs. It was acknowledged that the same level of support and guidance was not available for Direct Payments Personal Assistants (PAs), particularly those working with people with complex needs. Led by staff in Adult Services, an Online Guidebook for Personal Assistants (PAs) was developed, in conjunction with Unison, Digiskills Cymru and Services for Independent Living (SILS).



The Online Guidebook contains awareness training within a number of modules to support learning. This was intended not only for newly employed PA’s, but also those existing PA’s who would benefit from further awareness training or a refresher, as part of their continued professional development. This enterprising and innovative project was the first of its type in Wales, which was acknowledged in 2016 within the BASW Cymru Awards, where the project received a certificate of Achievement Award.

2017 saw increased activity with informal carers, which prompted us to establish new carer groups across the borough to ensure engagement is ongoing and to make effective use of the Intermediate Care Carer grant.

It is always positive to gain wider public recognition, therefore building on from our Awards successes in 2016, during 2017 the Torfaen Falls service won first prize in the NHS awards for their delivery of a seamless service, which is a fantastic example of partners working together. The Better Lives initiative is another excellent example of where we have worked with individuals to develop alternative models of support.

Adult Services continues to embrace change and adhere to the principles of a new patch-based, way of working. By moving accommodation and becoming more accessible to the public, relationships with communities have been built and stronger relationships with professionals established. We are now better able to respond to clients and have improved knowledge of the diverse health and cultural needs, and resources, people and communities on a smaller patch basis.

Safe and timely discharges from hospital continues to be enabled through a discharge to assess model. We continually test different ways of working with our providers, such as the Carer’s Trust and we collaborate with the Local Health Board, Groundwork Wales, Bron Afon, and various multi-disciplinary teams on a number of projects, to support older people to continue living within their communities.

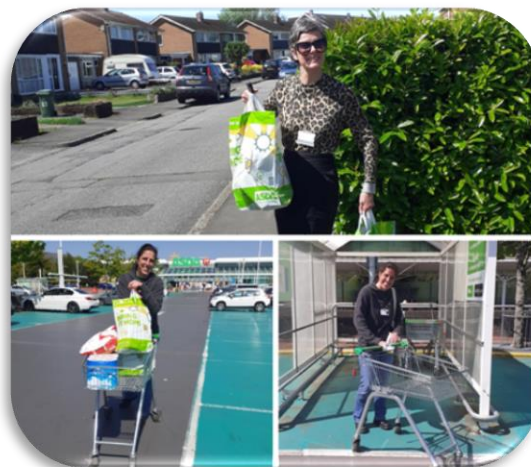
Robust partnership commissioning arrangements have also continued resulting in more conducive relationships with providers and better support and services for residents.

During 2020, Adult social care, housing and commissioning were quick to respond to the changing and challenging COVID-19 landscape. Since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown, more than 470 vulnerable residents across the borough received vital support from the Council, which has enabled them to stay safe at home.

Central to our response to the crisis has been the establishment of a central Community Support Hub team, which has received many requests for help.

The Hub, which comprises a central team of Torfaen officers and community volunteers, has been able to offer many types of support to residents, some of which have included:

- help to access essential food supplies through the provision of food parcel deliveries
- advice on accessing online shopping services
- arranging for the collection of medication
- arranging welfare calls
- advice and information on services running in the community
- and, perhaps most importantly, providing re-assurance to people at this time.



Staff managing and delivering services from the hub have led the co-ordination of volunteer support, handled telephone calls from vulnerable people, provided practical support on the ground, and managed an ever changing dataset that saw the 2,850 people initially asked to shield, increase to over 4,000 people in a short time.

A huge amount of hard work has been undertaken by our own staff and our elected members in this process, including co-ordinating and working with community groups, individual volunteers and partners such as Bron Afon and Torfaen Leisure Trust.

Some people just needed information or reassurance, whereas others required something more practical. We therefore proactively telephoned or written to all of our residents on the Shielding Scheme to check on their welfare and provided good practice and safeguarding advice, where needed.

We also developed and deployed a mobile App in around 4 weeks to allow: volunteers to offer help and for vulnerable people to be able to request help. The App offered a further channel through which people can engage with the Community Support Hub, providing the potential to help the way we work with volunteers in the future.

The council's support to the people who are shielding will continue for the foreseeable future to help the people who are most vulnerable to Covid-19, to stay safe.

As a result of the commitment by our staff to support changing demand we also trained 130 adult service staff members in manual handling, medication management, food hygiene and infection control, to help provide support to the independent sector, both care home and domiciliary providers. This has proved to be an invaluable resource to our providers, during the height of the pandemic in Torfaen.

The distribution of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to all social care providers in Torfaen proved challenging initially, as lead commissioners for the Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Service (GWICES) Torfaen, led on the receipt, delivery and storage of Welsh Government supplies of PPE for the whole of Gwent. This built on the partnership relationships forged with partners in Cefndy-Medequip.

As the pandemic evolved, so too did the guidance, in relation to operating procedures for social care and our providers. The application, communication and constant adaptation to meet requirements, proved a significant challenge, that was overcome with tremendous commitment and tenacity of all our staff and commissioned service providers to support and protect the most vulnerable people in our community.

Whilst the pandemic has been a terrible time to live through, we are building on the partnerships and relationships that have been developed with Public Health Wales (PHW), Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, the other Gwent local authorities and most of all with our providers. Without them we would not have been able to keep the vulnerable citizens of Torfaen safe.

Homelessness

In 2018, the Homeless Strategy was launched, and the Housing Solutions Service reviewed. This strategy provided a focus for renewed partnership working, to deliver improved customer focussed initiatives, such as the establishment of drop-in surgeries, as part of the early intervention & preventative approach.

During 2020, using a mixture of physical and remote support, we engaged with existing individuals who were either homeless or at risk of homelessness, on a regular basis, to ensure that they were kept fully engaged and offered help and assistance, during the crisis.

Additional accommodation was been provided to individuals who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, contributing to a reduction in the number of rough sleepers within the County Borough as a result.

Our 2020/21 Performance – Public Accountability Measures (PAM's)

Summary – 26 indicators

↓	10 indicators - Reduced performance (38.46%)
=	2 indicators - Constant performance (7.69%)
↑	9 indicators – Improved performance (34.62%)
N/A	5 indicators – (19.23%)

Indicator	Year on year performance (between 2019/20 & 2020/21)	Reported performance for 2020/21	Reported performance for 2019/20	Reported performance for 2018/19	Reported performance for 2017/18	Reported performance for 2016/17	All Wales position in 2020/21
Adult Social Care							
PAM/025 - Rate of people kept in hospital while waiting for social care per 1,000 population aged 75+	N/A	N/A No longer collected	4.35	3.24	6.32	4.95	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Children's Social Care							
PAM/028 - Percentage of child assessments completed in time	↑	99.5%	95%	97.6%	97.86%	94.6%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/029 - Percentage of children in care who had to move 3 or more times	↑	9.87%	12%	11.3%	6.28%	6.54%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Housing							
PAM/012 - Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	↓	54.09%	59.20%	54.59%	56.44%	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)

Indicator	Year on year performance (between 2019/20 & 2020/21)	Reported performance for 2020/21	Reported performance for 2019/20	Reported performance for 2018/19	Reported performance for 2017/18	Reported performance for 2016/17	All Wales position in 2020/21
PAM/013 - % of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority	=	0.4	0.37	13.15	6.97	33.23	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/045 - Number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use	=	0	0	N/A (new measure for 2019/20)	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/015 - Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant	↓	394	275	280.85	218.41	228.00	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Planning and Public Protection							
PAM/018 - Percentage of all planning applications determined in time	↑	85.91%	82.86%	86.61%	82.64%	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/019 - Percentage of planning appeals dismissed	↓	62.50%	78.95%	90.91%	54.55%	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/036 – Number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	↑	39.94	30.28	33.35	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/023 - % of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards	N/A	Only several reactive food hygiene inspections were undertaken in 2020/21 as officer resource was diverted to respond to the pandemic	93.68	92.29	88.73	94.29	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Education							
PAM/006 - Average capped 9 points score for year 11 pupils	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	346.6	N/A (measure revised for 2019/20)	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)

Indicator	Year on year performance (between 2019/20 & 2020/21)	Reported performance for 2020/21	Reported performance for 2019/20	Reported performance for 2018/19	Reported performance for 2017/18	Reported performance for 2016/17	All Wales position in 2020/21
PAM/007 - % of pupil attendance in primary schools	↓	92.1	94.8	94.52	94.60	94.8	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/008 - % of pupil attendance in secondary schools	↓	88.9	93.9	94.04	93.71	93.7	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/009 - % of Year 11 leavers not in Education, Training or Employment	↓	2.31	2.13	1.8	1.12	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/033 – % of pupils assessed in Welsh at the end of the Foundation Phase	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	12	N/A New measure for 2018/19	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/034 – % of year 11 pupils studying Welsh (first language)	N/A	N/A due to WG's announcement on restricting publication of data	16	N/A New measure for 18/19	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Neighbourhood Services							
PAM/010 - % of highways and relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness	↑	97.2%	96.67%	96.51%	93.5%	93.4%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/020 - % of principal (A) roads that are in overall poor condition	↑	1.8%	2.56%	2.48%	2.12%	1.69%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/021 - % of non-principal (B) roads that are in overall poor condition	↑	2.8%	4.81%	4.77%	4.33%	4.19%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/022 - % of non-principal (C) roads that are in overall poor condition	↑	3.5%	4.72%	5.07%	5.31%	5.97%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)

Indicator	Year on year performance (between 2019/20 & 2020/21)	Reported performance for 2020/21	Reported performance for 2019/20	Reported performance for 2018/19	Reported performance for 2017/18	Reported performance for 2016/17	All Wales position in 2020/21
PAM/030 – Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	↓	62.00%	64.67%	60.53%	60.58%	63.59%	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/035 - Average number of days taken to clear reported fly-tipping incidents	↓	2.9	1.31	1.17	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
PAM/043 – Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	↓	204.59	182.28	201.95	N/A	N/A	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Leisure							
PAM/017 - Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres during the year per 1,000 population where the visitor will be participating in physical activity	↓	923	9002.10	8905.55	9043.79	8,593.00	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)
Human Resources							
PAM/001 - Number of working days/shifts per FTE local authority employee due to sickness absence	↑	10.1	11.51	11.23	11.12	10.82	N/A (no all Wales comparative data for 2020/21)



Produced by Torfaen County Borough Council

October 2021

For further information or to comment on this document, please contact:

The Improvement and Scrutiny Team
Civic Centre,
Pontypool,
Torfaen
NP4 6YB

Telephone: 01495 766298
Email: corporate.plan@torfaen.gov.uk