

**BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS
CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT**



**NEATH PORT TALBOT
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD**

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Foreword

The Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board published its Well-being Plan for the county borough – “The Neath Port Talbot We Want” in May 2018, following a comprehensive assessment of the well-being of the local population and extensive consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

We are pleased to publish our third annual report which documents the progress we are making on the priorities we set out in our Plan. The third year of our Well-being Plan delivery has seen unprecedented circumstances and Public Services Board partners have worked together to support communities from response to recovery. As the body leading on the multi-agency recovery programme for Neath Port Talbot following the outbreak of Covid-19, the PSB has targeted its efforts in the areas of greatest immediate need. This report sets out the work we have undertaken to support our communities during the pandemic and also our plans for the future.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires us to secure the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of local people and to do so sustainably. The benefits of the partner relations developed as result of the Public Services Board are now becoming evident. Recent major incidents within Neath Port Talbot, such as the house explosion at Seven Sisters (June 2020) and the mine shaft collapse and subsequent flooding at Goshen Park, Skewen (January 2021) inevitably extend the need for effective partnership working to include a wide range of organisations including local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, Third Sector, Health Boards, Public Health, etc. Incidents of this nature are both dynamic and time critical and require strategic alignment in order to navigate through issues such as media and communications, political and economic impact, public confidence and future recovery plans. As a member of the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board for the past 4 years I have developed close working relationships with strategic leaders from a range of public and Third sector organisations. I have no doubt that these relationships, forged within the PSB environment, have proved invaluable in assisting strategic decision making and improving outcomes for the communities we serve.

We hope you will be interested in the work we are doing and would welcome ideas and contributions that can bring about change that creates the Neath Port Talbot we all want.

Roger Thomas
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Vice Chair of Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board



Background

The Welsh Government established public services boards to encourage local organisations to work together and with the local populations to improve the well-being of the people who live in their area. The way in which the Welsh Government wants to see this carried out in practice is set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other guidance.

The Board undertook a comprehensive well-being assessment of the local population which includes a range of statistical information about the many things that can impact on well-being. These include levels of crime and disorder, educational attainment as well as mortality rates and prevalence of disease, etc. The Board also gathered views from a wide range of people around what is important to their well-being. Finally the assessment included a Future Trends Report which set out a number of issues likely to impact well-being over the next 30 years or more.

The findings of the Well-being Assessment were used by the Board whilst preparing their Well-being Plan which was published in 2018. The plan lists the six well-being objectives that the Board have chosen to shape the direction of their work.

[Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing Assessment](#)

[Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing Plan](#)





Well-being Objectives 2018-2023

- 1. To improve the well-being of children in their early years, especially those at risk of adverse childhood experience**
- 2. To build safe, confident and resilient communities**
- 3. To create an environment where everyone can age well**
- 4. To support well-being through work and in the workplace**
- 5. Protecting and enhancing our green infrastructure**
- 6. Increasing levels of digital participation/inclusion**

Vision

We want Neath Port Talbot to be a vibrant and healthy place where people have an equal chance to get on in life – a place where people want to live, learn, work, invest and visit for many generations to come.

We want local public services, including the Third Sector, to be effective and value for money, easy for people to use, and offer quality employment where people are valued and appreciated for the work they do. Together with citizens, we will build on our strong and cohesive communities where the rights of everyone will be respected and protected.

We want our public services to be focused on enabling people and communities to be resilient and it will be the norm for citizens to experience seamless, personalised, high quality services. Public service delivery will create the right conditions for investment that will enable the county borough to attract and sustain quality, sustainable employment for local people.

Our communities will be well connected through a first class digital and transport infrastructure and our natural environment will be protected but also developed to support healthy living and investment.

We will have achieved our vision when all children and young people have the best start in life; when all young people and adults have the skills and resilience to be healthy and prosperous; when people are safe and feel safe; when all of our communities are thriving and supporting the people who live there; and where people can draw on the support of neighbours and well-developed social networks.



Achievements 2020/21

The Covid-19 emergency situation has significantly disrupted the Board's work since March 2020 and since then the PSB has focussed on addressing the immediate impact of the emergency situation on the wellbeing and safety of people across the county borough. We have also taken time to reflect on the longer term impact of the emergency and how this will need to shape the Board's agreed forward work programme.

Community Impact Assessment

In the spring of 2020 the PSB commissioned an initial community impact assessment (CIA) to understand how people, businesses and organisations have experienced the pandemic and what impact it has had on them. A data and research group was established to coordinate the assessment and to agree the data that would be captured to get this initial picture.

It was understood that the CIA was a baseline for that point in time, but nevertheless it was anticipated that the evidence from the CIA would inform the approach to recovery. It was also anticipated that the CIA would help identify key areas where collective action by partners could reduce the negative impacts and identify potential opportunities for collaboration.

The CIA was based around the four pillars of wellbeing and specific features of the Covid-19 situation; and consisted of augmented data with survey information. Virtual workshops were held under each of the well-being pillars to collectively capture the key issues arising from the data, surveys and insights at that point in time.

These key issues were reported at the PSB in May 2020 and the PSB agreed that existing partnerships or groups, should where possible be tasked with taking forward the work to address the key issues arising from the CIA.

Consequently a mapping exercise was undertaken to align the key issues to the appropriate partnerships or groups so that the PSB could then task/ask the appropriate group accordingly. This mapping was based on a shared understanding of the role of that group or partnership, and their relationship to PSB from a governance perspective

As such the key issues around mental health are led by the Regional Partnership Board and Anti-social behaviour arising from Covid-19 non-compliance issues will be addressed by the community safety partnership. This mapping exercise highlighted some gaps in respect of extant groups to lead on key issues identified that related to economic, community and housing issues. The mapping exercise avoided adding in the business as usual issues and endeavoured to highlight the areas of work that need to receive focus as a result of C-19 and its impact, and not the issues that would be progressed anyway.

It is important to note that the mapping document did not capture all of the emerging issues, as it was intended to capture the key themes that emerged from the CIA and the multi-agency workshops, as reported to the PSB, at that point in time.

The CIA was a picture and it was understood that different things may emerge at different times. As such the intention was for the CIA to be an iterative process, as things changed and new evidence and insight emerged.

In attempting to address the key issues, each group or partnership was asked to refer to the most recent iteration of the CIA alongside a key issues template which provided more detail than could be captured in a mapping document, and then to develop their own actions or responses.

As a result of the findings of the CIA the following areas of work have been prioritised this year:

Economy

The PSB recognised a gap in its structure where the economy of the local area could be looked at from a multi-agency perspective. An Economic Forum was established chaired by the CEO of Coastal Housing and initially including representatives from NPTCBC, NPT Group of Colleges, Tai Tarian, DWP and Federation of Small Businesses.

This forum has monitored available data to analyse the additional impact of Covid-19 on the current economic situation in NPT this year. Partners are now looking at how they can work together to support some short term aims around getting the economy back on track. These areas of work include distributing Covid Recovery business support funding, employability, establishing sector appropriate business forums and a focus on local procurement; community benefits and supporting the Foundational/Circular Economy.

This Forum will oversee an Economic Action Plan for NPT which is currently in development.





Housing and Homelessness

A multi-agency Housing Forum was established to take forward the following key actions:-

To identify ways in which the increased population housed in temporary housing accommodation can be supported into more permanent accommodation - ie dealing with the consequences of the “all in” policy adopted at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic

To discuss current performance in meeting the housing targets set out in the Local Development Plan and to identify approaches that could be developed during the LDP review period that could lead to alternative policy mechanisms that would improve performance.

This work is ongoing and is the start of a more strategic approach to the housing and homelessness issues faced in the borough.

Children and Young People

The ongoing work of the PSB under *Well-being Objective 1 - To improve the well-being of children in their early years, especially those at risk of adverse childhood experience*, has been seen as particularly important this year and has adapted to continue to support families whilst complying with government restrictions. Further work has been prioritised to support young people not in education training or employment as this age group have been one of those adversely affected by the pandemic.



Sandfields West Children's Community

Sandfields West Children's Community

Sandfields West Children's Community has continued digitally throughout the pandemic with the Operational Group, regular partner meetings and catch ups happening online. A Local Reference Group has been established which consists of local residents and Councillors. This group already has a strong voice around what they wish to see in the community and what the potential issues are which will inform our work going forward. There are hopes to expand this group and new members are actively being sought. Meetings are taking place online at present but will hopefully return face to face when guidelines change.

SWCC now employs an Engagement Officer which is funded by the Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme. Both the Engagement Officer and the Co-ordinator work closely with the Early Years Integration Pathfinder Coordinator and have agreed a criteria to target in terms of engagement. Outcomes will be reported on a monthly basis and the work will overlap both Pathfinder and Families First programmes. Due to restrictions relating to Covid-19, face to face engagement work has only recently begun. The Engagement officer will also be working alongside Save the Children to carry out the Families Connect programme at our targeted schools in Sandfields.

The outdoor area at the Children's Community has been enhanced following a successful bid for Play funding. This will greatly increase our opportunities to work outdoors with partner agencies and families.



An Easter Event held on line generated contact with a small amount of families.

The team are continuing to look at ways to identify gaps in provision and potentially vulnerable families through the LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) project.

The proposed steel garden project due to be created at Tir Morfa in partnership with Tai Tarian Housing Association will now be going ahead after being on hold due to the pandemic. A funding proposal has been submitted for a nature garden to be used by the childcare setting and the local schools for group work. There are plans to work closely with Bug Life and the Biodiversity Team on this project.

SWCC has been allocated an allotment and plan to use this to help the childcare setting on site as well as local schools who will be able to develop this a part of a project. The Bio Diversity Team will also be on hand to support when restrictions allow.

SWCC are working closely with the NPT Youth Service on their Slow Cooking Meal preparation initiative. This scheme helps to engage young mothers, improve their cooking and self-management skills and teach them how to eat well on a budget.

A recent example of local partnership working has included assisting the churches who provide families with all different kinds of support. Some families require food

parcels, financial advice and guidance or help with school uniform or clothing for their children. As a community we can work together to help local families become self-sufficient and have a more positive home life.



Youth Unemployment

Recognising the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on young people, the PSB has overseen some work led by the Department of Work and Pensions to provide support and advice.

Hubs were set up fairly quickly as a source of information and advice for young people who were not in employment education or training. With the rapid changing picture of the COVID situation, the hubs have moved between a face to face and a virtual service.

Hubs have focussed on the two routes of employability, health and wellbeing. Youth Leads have worked closely with partners to develop sessions around CV's, interview skills, anxiety and depression and have invited inspirational speakers to attend (peer to peer) along with mock interviews, work experience and Kickstart and sector based opportunities.

Cyfle Cymru have delivered courses around anxiety and depression with the pilot session achieving 70% engagement levels and excellent feedback. A mapping exercise has also been completed with the Children and Young Person's Group to identify areas of support and opportunities around the two route ways. Next steps will be to evaluate these offers and engage with partners to deliver/support elements of the youth hubs.

Community Support

PSB partners have responded to the crisis situation to support residents and communities through the pandemic. They have also recognised how communities have pulled together and helped each other through these tough times, and would like to build on this renewed community spirit to support recovery as restrictions ease.

Safe and Well

On March 23rd 2020, the UK and Welsh governments announced a formal lockdown to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Welsh Government advised certain groups of people to shield themselves and avoid social contact. Some people who fell into this group did not have the support of families or friends. As such Councils were advised that they should make arrangements for people to receive support with food shopping, get hold of necessary prescription medicines, receive help with other daily living tasks; and also to enable people to have social contact e.g. by telephone, or on-line. Many residents had started to form Covid-19 support groups at the neighbourhood level.

Therefore S&W was established to provide humanitarian assistance to a vulnerable group of people on a temporary basis. Whilst not within the aegis of the PSB, the delivery of Safe & Well has required a mutually supportive partnership approach from PSB members.

There were 4,056 people identified in need of shielding at the time in March but this subsequently grew to over 5,500 people in the summer as GPs and consultants added additional people to the list, and other groups of people were identified who needed humanitarian support .

Safe and well was established against in a landscape, where at the time people could not obtain an online delivery slot, or click & collect, local shops were not geared up for delivery, or over the phone payments, etc. and key staff were prioritised to support core social services. A Food scheme was established as part of S&W, given the advice (at the time) that shielding people shouldn't go out shopping, this was an emergency solution and time-limited

A letter was sent to every household across Neath Port Talbot, explaining the NPT Safe and Well Service and encouraged people to contact the Council if they were in need of support. The Service was also promoted by radio, social media, through elected members, and by partners, etc. The delivery of safe and well relied on Community Leads and volunteers. The community leads coordinated activity at local level referring to S&W volunteers, partner organisations, etc. for example S&W worked closely with our social housing providers.

During June 2020, all cases open to Safe & Well were reviewed, and the focus became on helping people to make steps to returning to 'normal' life. However it was recognised that some people still needed help. By the end of July most people had transitioned from the food service as inter alia, the Food-box scheme was ending on the 16 August and no successor scheme was planned.

Over the summer, prevalence of C-19 falling and CMO was able to amend his advice, and those who were shielding no longer needed to do so after August 16th. A letter was sent to all people on the shielding list to confirm that the Medication delivery would end in September and S&W still there if needed (reassurance)

Restrictions were lifted, and the wider landscape had changed, for example, supermarkets offered more delivery slots, and quiet hours for the elderly, vulnerable and key workers

In mid-Sept, it was noted that case numbers were increasing and a new service model for Safe & Well was developed, which provided a safety net service to plug the gaps at community level. Local contingency plans were also drawn up and the Health Board resumed responsibility for medicines delivery

A key factor in the success of safe and well, was the role of volunteers. Initially Council staff volunteered/redeployed to S&W response. NPTCBC made a call to arms for volunteers to help the humanitarian response. There was a tremendous response to this request. NPTCVS assisted NPTCBC in developing its approach to the management of volunteers. Additionally NTCVS delivered extensive training to Safe and Well volunteers.

Safe and Well was established at very short notice (couple of days). RSLs, Age Connect NPT, Age Cymru and Care and Repair et al. were already mobilised, or mobilised quickly. In autumn 2020, NPTC established a Safe & Well partnership to prepare for the 'next wave' and potential reinstatement of e.g. shielding, and considered lessons learnt, better coordination of effort and sharing of information & best practice. The S&W partnership continues to meet and is considered as an important mechanism in developing relationships and sharing information and good practice.

An important legacy of the NPT Safe and Well Service is the clear opportunity to find ways of connecting with the group of people who are struggling to meet daily needs and isolated within their communities. This would fit into wider work on community development and recovery moving forward.

Green Infrastructure Core Group

This last year under Covid has been extraordinary and fundamentally changed the way that we all live and work. While this new way of working has created challenges for collaborative working, it has demonstrated our collective capabilities to work under pressure and our resilience to change. Some of these changes have been for the better and served to challenge our accepted norms and patterns of behaviour. In particular, COVID and lockdowns have demonstrated the huge importance of accessible natural green space, with many reconnecting with nature in their locality, and resulting in a greater appreciation and value we place on it. Importantly, through these new ways of living and working, we have demonstrated our ability to change and adapt to tackle complex problems.

As part of the PSB Covid response work, the GI Core Group supported the development of the Covid Impact Assessment. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative evidence, the Group highlighted some of the (short term) environmental benefits that were seen due to for example reduced traffic. The Group also informed some of the questions that were included in the NPT PSB public survey. The results of this survey demonstrated an increased focus and awareness of the nature and the environment. For example, 86% of participants felt wildlife and air quality had improved during lockdown. In addition, 38% had become more concerned and aware of nature, and 27% of climate change. Of note, 61% now place a higher value on accessible green space. These results demonstrated an increased emphasis on nature and the environment and its benefits for society.

We need capitalise on this state of change and apply a similar thinking to the dual nature and climate emergencies. Despite the challenges of Covid and remote working, the Green Infrastructure Core Group of Neath Port Talbot PSB has been able to progress a number of successful projects.

In line with this, we would like to share some examples of the good work and initiatives from the group and its members this past year:

Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF)

In 2020/21 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided a budget of £25,000 Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) to Neath Port Talbot PSB for projects that aligned with the [SW Area Statement](#). The SAF mechanism underpins NRW's work to deliver priorities identified in the corporate plan, Area Statements and functional plans and strategies. The section below provides further detail on these projects.

Community Green Space Mapping

The purpose of this project was to pilot an approach to the mapping of community greenspace. A suite of 30 sites were chosen, including local authority managed parks, community council managed sports facilities and open areas. The sites were investigated in terms of their accessibility (access points, parking), infrastructure provision, habitat features and connectivity to other green spaces. The outputs include:

- a tested methodology for surveying such sites
- a site sheet for each site detailing the above attributes, as well as suggested activities
- a GIS layer for transposing the information onto the local authority website (subject to future funding).

The project has proved the methodology to be successful and next phase of the project would be to extend the survey and formalise web-based accessibility. The information will be useful for Green Infrastructure Assessments and a resource for PSB partners.



Afan Valley Visitor Centre

Afan Forest attracts a significant number of visitors and has considerable potential from both an economic (tourism) and health (active and healthy lifestyles in the outdoors) perspective. As such, in 2019/20 NRW commissioned consultants to review future opportunities in the area to improve the baseline provision and broaden the market appeal. This latter funding enabled further, more detailed work to examine two of the priority actions in and around Afan Visitors Centre. The two options explored were:

- the feasibility of ‘play options’ on Welsh Government Woodland Estate adjacent to the Visitor Centre
- the potential for accommodation provision at the “old amphitheatre site”

The feasibility study will help inform future investment at the location; in particular the ‘play options’ will complement/augment the NPT investments currently being made at the Visitor Centre. The findings will now be developed further in partnership with the Afan Stakeholder Group and Land Management within NRW.

Jersey Park Pond Restoration

This is a project that was derived from the Building Safe and Resilient Communities work in Briton Ferry, involving the “Friends of Jersey Park” group and a local school. The pond at Jersey Park had fallen into disrepair over many years and the project proposed to restore it, as a key asset to the local community – improving the biodiversity and also the educational value of the site. The main work was improving its water retention, clearance of adjacent area and vegetating with native wetland plant species and the creation of a pond dipping platform. Relevant parties were consulted, including CADW. Unfortunately, Covid delayed commencement of the work and then the contractor had an accident (not whilst working on this project) which meant that the works could not be completed – vegetation clearance has been undertaken and footings for the dipping platform were laid. Much of the required materials have been purchased and it is hoped that monies can be found in 2021/22 to complete the restoration work.

Shared Outcome Requests (SORs)

Shared outcomes requests (SORs) are ad hoc, external proposals to NRW for funding to deliver projects/initiatives. The individual or organisation initiates the preparation of a proposal that they “own”.

Through this funding mechanism NRW was able to co-deliver a number of projects with partners in Neath Port Talbot that delivered against the SW Area Statement themes.

Craig Gwladus

The project was led by Neath Port Talbot Council and aimed to develop and consolidate Craig Gwladus Woods as:

1. A quality woodland space and facility for outdoor learning and activities, serving the local education, health and leisure sectors.
2. A showcase, historic drift mine site that forms part of a visitor experience that tells the wider story of the industrial heritage of the Neath Valley.
3. A thriving part of the local community that they are proud of, can enjoy and feel able to be involved with.
4. A self-sustaining park run by a thriving Friends group.
5. A rich, resilient and recovering Ancient Woodland wildlife habitat.

Into the Woods

Working with Crynant Community Council, the project aimed to improve and encourage public access to and increase use of the NRW owned forest by creating trails, with sculptures, distance markers, picnic tables and benches. The focus was to engage with local residents to improve health and wellbeing by being active outdoors and to create volunteer opportunities for the local community creating better understanding and appreciation of the local environment.

Conifer Biodiversity in Welsh Government Woodland Estate

The Biodiversity in the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) project aimed to propose a protocol for Local Nature Partnerships (LNP's) and community members to work together with Forestry Managers/Officers to identify, protect and enhance important local species and habitats in the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

Other projects

Lost Peatlands

The 'Lost Peatlands of South Wales' project will be delivered by the Lost Peatlands Partnership comprising Neath Port Talbot Council (Lead), Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Natural Resources Wales, Swansea University and Coed Lleol (Small Woods). It has been awarded £1.56m by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. With additional match funding from partners and Vattenfall's Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Habitat Management Fund, the overall project value is now more than £2.8m.

The project aims to restore historic peatland landscape and help people enjoy their local outdoor space. Once referred to as the 'Alps of Glamorgan', the upland area

between Neath Port Talbot and Rhondda Cynon Taf in the South Wales Valleys was historically an open moorland landscape of boggy peatland.

The project will restore and manage more than 490 hectares of this historic landscape and habitats, including heathland, grassland and native woodland. Of particular focus will be the direct restoration of 256 hectares of previously afforested peat bogs and pools.

Such habitat improvements will encourage many local wildlife species currently in decline to thrive again. These include birds like the skylark and nightjar; invertebrates like the dark green fritillary and small pearl bordered fritillary butterflies; and mammals, including the elusive water vole.

The peat restoration works will be closely monitored and will inform important ongoing research by Swansea University to guide best practice restoration techniques and to understand impacts on biodiversity, water quality and CO2 emissions. Access to this remarkably wild landscape will also be made easier through improved, guided footpaths and interpretation.

As part of the project, local people will also be able to experience, learn about and get involved with the heritage on their doorstep through a variety of free activities, events, schools outdoor learning programmes and volunteering opportunities. People will be able to gain new outdoor skills and knowledge via dedicated training programmes. Families and adults will also be able to join or be referred to the project's health and wellbeing activity programmes.



Brynau Farm – Woodland creation case study (SMNR in practice)

Brynau was identified as an area suited to new woodland creation on the Glastir Opportunities Map, the land was also identified in the Working with Natural Processes report (Environment Agency, 2017) as a priority for catchment woodland planting to alleviate flooding. The Woodland Trust recently acquired the land, with a substantial financial contribution from Natural Resources Wales, as an opportunity to

create new native broadleaved woodland on a catchment scale and to buffer the remaining fragments of ancient woodland and tackle threats such as invasive rhododendron. The project will deliver multiple benefits to the community of Neath such as:

- Natural flood mitigation;
- Accessible greenspace;
- Biodiversity enhancement;
- Carbon capture (up to 23,000 tonnes); and
- Improved natural capital.

The site was chosen as the venue to launch the Welsh Government's Wales National Forest initiative in March 2020. School children planted the very first trees, and the Trust will plant around 150,000 to create a new woodland, hedges, and wood pasture, as well opening up new public access. This new woodland will be dedicated and partly funded through Welsh Government's PLANT! project, that plants a tree for every child born or adopted in Wales.

This project is proceeded with close collaboration with Neath Port Talbot council, to offer recreational opportunities that complement the adjacent Gnoll Country Park to improve local wellbeing and enhancing this destination. Aberystwyth University are also involved to gather evidence through a collaborative monitoring project on carbon sequestration and run-off.

It is underpinned by extensive public participation, with new volunteer opportunities, research, and consultation to ensure activities and features are shaped and influenced by local people, as well as a final name for the woodland.

We hope Brynau will inspire others to create native woodlands for the future.

Tai Tarian: My Place My Space Nature Competition for Young People

Tai Tarian launched an engagement project and competition relating to young people in Neath Port Talbot between 16 and 24 years old and the benefits for them of being positively engaged in the natural green spaces within their communities.

The project is called My Place My Space and it's designed to build on the awareness raised during Mental Health Week of how important nature is for mental health, which rang especially true during lockdown.

It's a social-media based short video competition and was launched on the 12th July and is running until 20th August. Entrants from the age-group are asked to share why they love their go-to green space in NPT. This could be a woodland, local park, piece of wasteland, riverbank, even an urban tree with a character all its own, or a place which helped them during lockdown.

Competitors have been asked them to share a video maximum length of 45 seconds on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or TikTok and tag TaiTarian adding #MyPlaceMySpace.

NPT CVS: Toolkit for Greenspaces and Green Recovery

NPTCVS are working with partners across the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership on the Welsh Government Recovery Grant for Volunteering.

One of the aspects of this grant is developing a library of resources, toolkits and factsheets for the third sector in an attempt to uphold the increased interest in volunteering and community action that has developed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. This is known as the [Green Recovery Toolkit](#). Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the green recovery is the opportunity to refocus our aims and activity in ways that increasingly benefits people and the planet, to create a more sustainable future. Our response to the pandemic must follow a pathway that restores nature and decarbonises our economy.

This toolkit aims to help individuals and organisations to:

- Gain a better understanding of what the green recovery means;
- Explore your opportunities, considering the action you've already taken and how to identify new ideas;
- Choose practical actions your organisation can take; and
- Connect with the wider third sector through environmental volunteering.



Well-being Assessment

The first Well-being Assessments took place in 2017/18 and we are now due to develop a new Well-being Assessment by March 2022. This will be the second iteration, and the first time that Area Statements are considered in the Assessment.

The Green Infrastructure Core Group is responsible for the 'Environmental' chapter of the Well-being Assessment (2022). This assessment will take account of the long-term needs of the area as well as the short term, looking at both the Neath Port

Talbot local authority area as a whole and at a smaller communities and localities within the county.

Our group has agreed to use Natural Resources Wales' [Second State of Natural Resources Report \(SoNaRR2020\)](#) as the foundation of the Environmental pillar of the Well-being Assessment. SoNaRR2020 builds on a number of Welsh, UK and global assessments of the status and trends of natural resources. It looks at the risks those trends pose to our ecosystems and to the long-term social, cultural and economic well-being of Wales, in terms defined by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

SoNaRR makes an assessment of environmental well-being (“the extent to which the sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved”) at the Wales level. It is structured around the following Sustainable Management of Natural Resources aims:

1. Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced
2. Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change
3. Wales has healthy places for people protected from environmental risks
4. A regenerative economy achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption

In addition, we will draw upon the [South West Area Statement](#) to gain a deeper understanding of the localised priorities for action. This is the first iteration of Well-being Assessments in which Area Statements will be considered (as required under the Well-being of Future Generations Act).

The Area Statements demonstrate how each of these four measures are reflected within respective local areas, and what data may be used to assess our progress. The SW Area Statement has already worked with stakeholders to identify the key challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Importantly, this assessment will build on the evidence and information established during the last [Well-being Assessment \(2017\)](#). The assessment is the foundation on which everything else is built. We aim to have a robust, objective understanding of Neath Port Talbot, to inform our decisions on where we should focus our combined efforts. This is the point at which we *consider everything* to enable us to prioritise.

Digital Inclusion

Prior to the pandemic, the Digital Inclusion Steering Group was nearing the end of the work programme that it embarked upon. The intention was that the programme would leave in place a network for partners to continue to support and learn from each other whilst also embedding digital inclusion into the terms of reference of all other work initiated by the PSB.

During a year where digital availability and capability has been more important than ever before, the work of the DI Steering Group has provided a strong starting point and put PSB partner in a good position to react swiftly to the challenges faced. There was a good level of understanding of the current picture in terms of digital inclusion and partners were able to disseminate public information using a variety of channels to avoid excluding those who were not digitally active.

There have been changes to service delivery as result of the pandemic that have proved more efficient and cost effective and these lessons learned will inform future provision.

The next phase of work in this area will look at infrastructure and the availability and affordability of high speed broadband. Also building trust and confidence with residents to ensure no one is left behind.



Collaborative Working

Well-being Assessments and Population Needs Assessment

Neath Port Talbot PSB is committed to taking a regional and collaborative approach to its second local assessment of well-being which will be published by May 2022.

We are working closely with Swansea PSB and also the Regional Partnership Board as they undertake the regional Population Needs Assessment. Regular meetings take place where support officers of the three Boards share and discuss progress on the assessments working together wherever possible to avoid duplication. This group is co-ordinating the collation of data for the three assessments to ensure that there is 'one ask' of partners that cover both areas. Plans are underway to develop a shared access point for this data which will be updated annually and provide an extensive resource for both PSB and RPB partners in the future.

A Co-ordination Board has been established consisting of statutory partners of both PSBs and RPB representatives. This Board will oversee the completion of the two Well-being Assessments and the Population Needs Assessment ensuring the following:-

- Minimising duplication of effort;
- Mitigating the risk that there could be multiple demands for similar input to the exercises from stakeholders;
- Ensuring involvement/engagement and consultation activities are planned and co-ordinated to secure good levels of participation and avoiding fatigue;
- Ensuring there are no important gaps left between the exercises;
- Pooling data, intelligence and resources to produce quality products that support and inform decisions that are taken within the respective partnerships;
- Bringing greater coherence and focus to work regionally and locally in relation to health inequalities and to wider work to sustain good levels of wellbeing and to ensure effective preventative and early intervention programmes; and
- Ensuring good fit with national policy.

This Board will not have a decision making function as any decision relating to the assessments will be taken by the relevant Boards.

It is intended that this approach will be continued into the planning stage to ensure coherence and avoid gaps.

Substance Misuse

In 2018 following reports of high levels of drug-related deaths, serious infections and a growth in organised crime across the area, a Critical Incident Group was formed. Membership was drawn from a wide range of agencies to assess the risk, threats and harm in detail and to activate an immediate and appropriate response. Work has continued to progress since.

Trends are seen to be moving in the right direction, but it is acknowledged that there is still a lot of work to do in the Welsh context.

It was agreed in January 2020 to adopt a Public Health approach in the longer term, in relation to substance misuse. A report prepared by Public Health Wales and the Police and Crime Commissioner was presented to the Joint Swansea and Neath Port Talbot PSB in October. This had already been approved at the Area Planning Board (APB) and was subsequently endorsed by the Joint PSB. This work will now be progressed via the APB.

Despite initial concerns around the substance misuse picture during the pandemic, agencies and treatment providers have responded innovatively resulting in the situation being a lot more positive than first feared.



Early Years Pathfinder work

At the end of 2019/20, mapping work with partners was concluding, which looked at the systems and services in place for children aged 0-7 years across four areas – health, education, childcare and play, family support. Focus groups with parents were scheduled for early 2020/21 to supplement the information from the mapping, however, there were limitations to these as a result of the Covid restrictions in place at the time.

In 2020/21, the Welsh Government co-ordinator funding was utilised to employ two co-ordinators (one for each local authority area) to take forward the programme aims

and objectives across the region. Further funding was also provided, intended to test new ways of working in identified areas of the early years system. £214k was utilised across the NPT and Swansea region to deliver pilot projects, including improving co-ordination of services in non-Flying Start areas, purchase of Wellcomm resources to support speech and language development, and workforce development to support early years physical literacy. Delays in the award of funding from Welsh Government resulted in a late commencement of employment for the co-ordinators and set up of the pilots (September/October 2020).

An evaluation of the pilots was undertaken (albeit it with limited info due to the delay in starting) and the findings have been used to reshape and refine those projects that have continued into 2021/22.

Moving in 2021/22, pilot projects will focus on the following areas of the early years system:

1. Improving access to Speech, Language and Communication Support
2. Family Support
3. Early Years Nutrition
4. Additional Learning Needs and Occupational Therapy support
5. Transition through Health Services
6. Physical Literacy

Town and Community Councils

Our local Town and Community Councils continue to be represented on the Board. They will be updating on their plans to support the well-being objectives this year and will incorporate this into their Annual Reports. Links to Annual Reports are provided below:-

<https://www.coedffranc-tc.gov.uk/council-information/well-being/>

<http://www.blaenhonddan-wcc.gov.uk/home/>

<http://www.neathtowncouncil.gov.uk/default.aspx>

Looking Ahead

Each Public Services Board must carry out a Well-being Assessment and publish a local Well-being Plan every five years. This plan sets out how they will meet their responsibilities under the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#).

Each PSB is required to carry out an Assessment of Well-being to understand current levels of well-being and what matters most to local communities and to produce a Local Well-being Plan in order to improve well-being.

Our second local assessment of well-being is due to be published in May 2022 and work is now well underway. As mentioned previously we are taking a collaborative approach with Swansea PSB and the Regional Partnership Board to maximise resources and avoid duplication.

We are working closely with our statutory and invited partners to ensure we capture an accurate picture of well-being in our communities.

The NPT Community of Practice (CoP) on involvement and engagement was originally launched in September 2019. It is a group of colleagues from across the council and partners who carry out close and regular engagement with a number of our key stakeholder groups.

PSB partners were invited to join this group in 2021 as the council launches its Let's Talk' campaign. This is a large scale engagement exercise where residents will be asked what matters to them and their communities now and in the future. Council employees and partner agencies will be speaking to residents, businesses and stakeholder groups throughout the county borough over the summer months, attempting to reach as many people as possible.

The findings of this exercise will not only inform the Council's Corporate Recovery plan but also the Well-being Assessment. We want this to be the start of an ongoing conversation with our communities that PSB partners will all be a part of.

As we start to think about our next Well-being Plan which will be published by May 2023, we are considering ways in which our PSB can work differently and have more opportunities to share information. We recently held a more informal version of our PSB where three partners presented on their planned investments for the area and aspirations for the future. We plan to hold more meetings like these, separate from the usual formal business items, to ensure we have a good understanding of what work is planned and ongoing in NPT. We feel this will put us in a stronger more informed position when we come to choose our next well-being objectives.

During 2021/22 NPT PSB will continue to progress the work-streams prioritised as part of the Covid recovery work.

How can you track progress and get involved in our work?

The work undertaken by the Public Services Board is published on its website which can be accessed via <http://www.nptpsb.org.uk/>

You can also contact our Public Services Board Co-ordinator directly via email nptpsb@npt.gov.uk We welcome involvement in any area of our work and we would welcome ideas and suggestions as to other areas of work that we could consider for the future

