

# Public Document Pack

## Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

### Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.  
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich  
dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please  
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#### Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643513 / 643694 / 643696

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

**Dyddiad/Date:** Tuesday, 22 August 2023

Dear Councillor,

#### **TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM**

A meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Tuesday, 29 August 2023 at 16:00**.

#### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence  
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest  
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 6  
To receive for approval the Minutes of 06/03/2023
4. Planning Update - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods 7 - 52
5. United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund 53 - 80
6. Corporate Self Assessment 2022-2023 81 - 84
7. Urgent Items  
To consider any other item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Rule 4 of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber / remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have

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any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet\_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643513 / 643694 / 643696.

Yours faithfully

**K Watson**

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

H T Bennett  
HJ David  
C Davies  
CLC Davies  
S Easterbrook  
M J Evans  
R J Smith

Councillors

P Ford  
J Gebbie  
RM Granville  
P W Jenkins  
M R John  
M Jones  
I M Spiller

Councillors

J H Tildesley MBE  
MJ Williams  
R Williams  
E D Winstanley  
T Wood

To include a representative from each Town and Community Council

# Agenda Item 3

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM - MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD  
REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2023 AT 16:00

## Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

H T Bennett	E L P Caparros	C Davies	C L C Davies
S Easterbrook	M J Evans	P Ford	J Gebbie
RM Granville	M R John	L Lewis	R J Smith
I M Spiller	JH Tildesley MBE	MJ Williams	E D Winstanley
T Wood			

## Officers:

Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Guy Smith	Community Asset Transfer Officer
Sue Whittaker	Skills and Sustainable Development Manager

## 11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Smith declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5, as he was a Director of a company that was a recipient of a Warm Hub grant.

Councillor H Bennett declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5, as an employer of an organisation that was administering the grants.

Councillor E Winstanley declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5, as an employer of an organisation that was administering the grants.

Councillor S Parker declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5, as his wife was a member of Cornelly Warm Hubs who have also been in receipt of a grant.

## 12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum dated 21 November 2022, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## 13. CORPORATE PLAN 2023-28

The Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager presented a report, in order to provide an update on the Council's Corporate Plan and seek support from the Town and Community Council Forum on sharing the Corporate Plan 2023-28, that was attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report. This was due to be reported to Council later this month.

She confirmed that there are 7 wellbeing goals for Wales, set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Council like other local authorities, needed to demonstrate our contribution to each of these goals, which are –

- A prosperous Wales

- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager added, that the Council must also consider the 5 ways of working as it develops the new Corporate Plan. These were –

- Long term - balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs
- Prevention - acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse to help the Council meet its objectives
- Integration – thinking about how its wellbeing goals will contribute to the 7 national goals, on its other objectives and on partners objectives.
- Collaboration – working across different parts of the Council and partners to achieve its objectives
- Involvement - involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring those people reflect the diversity of its area.

The Corporate Plan is the Council's main vehicle for demonstrating and communicating the priorities to local people and businesses. It was also an important part of the assurance framework for its regulators. Audit Wales intend to test approaches to developing the Corporate Plan (especially the well-being objectives) across Wales over the next 6 months. These Objectives were outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

Welsh Government were also taking a keen interest in the development of well-being objectives, in line with the evolution of the Social Partnership Bill and guidance. They are keen to see evidence of the Council working with staff and Trade Unions on the development of its well-being objectives and plan.

The Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager then outlined some of the work that had been undertaken or was required, such as in relation to:

- Use of research, data and information to inform the Corporate Plan;
- Use of engagement, involvement and consultation to inform the Corporate Plan.

Further detail regarding the work carried out in these areas, was explained in the report, including feedback in terms of consultation both internally, for example through the Overview and Scrutiny process and externally with stakeholders, such as constituents, the Public Service Board and the Youth Council.

Following the consultation process, some changes had been made to the Corporate Plan based on the feedback received, such as:

- Rewriting the principles, and changing the icons that represent them, so they are more positive, aspirational and forward looking
- Adding a small section on context to each wellbeing objective to demonstrate the link with specific council services
- Reconfiguring the diagram on the Council's finances to reflect costs per day (per household)
- Adding references to town centres and Porthcawl
- Adding information in Wellbeing Objective 2 to focus on staff welfare, recruitment and pay.



- Adding information in Wellbeing Objective 6 to focus on listening to and responding to residents' views
- Adding information on youth employment, and the music service.

The Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager gave a power point presentation in support of the report.

Members of the Forum gratefully asked for the Corporate Plan to be shared with Town and Community Councils and the Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager confirmed that she would arrange this and, if necessary, either herself or members of her team could come along to talk on this for the benefit of Members.

A Member also felt that it would be advantageous to use the Corporate Plan as an opportunity to allow, where appropriate, Town and Community Councils to deliver some of the services included in the Plan, through joint working arrangements.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town and Community Council Forum, noted the Corporate Plan 2023-28 presented for approval to Council on 1 March as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

#### 14. COST OF LIVING / WARM HUBS

The Cost of Living Co-ordinator (Employability Bridgend) presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide the Town and Community Council Forum with an update on the cost-of-living support activity, more specifically Warm Hubs, being provided to communities across Bridgend County Borough.

By way of some background information, she advised that the impact of the rising cost of living affects everyone but there are groups who are likely to be hardest hit. These people spend a greater proportion of their total income on food, housing and energy costs and therefore have less flexibility to meet increased costs. Those who were able to balance their budgets instead start struggling or find themselves in crisis.

Issues with older housing stock means many homes are relatively less energy efficient. In rural areas homes are more likely to be reliant on solid fuel, oil, or LPG for their heating. These are all factors that increase energy costs.

The Cost of Living Co-ordinator confirmed, that in April 2022 the domestic energy price cap was increased to £1,971 per year leading the Welsh Government to estimate that up to 45% of households could be in fuel poverty and up to 8% of households could be in severe fuel poverty. As 1 in 5 homes in Wales posed an unacceptable risk to health prior to the cost-of-living crisis the increase in households affected by fuel poverty is likely to increase excess winter deaths overall.

In September 2022, in response to the escalating cost of living crisis, specifically the increasing cost of energy, Welsh Government announced £1m of funding would be made available to support communities to develop Warm Hubs or expand and enhance Warm Hub provision.

Then in October 2022 it was announced that the funding would be distributed via local authorities who would work with local partners in the development and delivery of Warm Hubs. Bridgend County Borough Council was allocated £44,590 to support Warm Hubs through a grant scheme to be spent by 31 March 2023.

She explained that Warm Hubs are intended as places in local communities where people can find a safe and warm environment during the day to help reduce the cost of

heating their own homes and to help people facing extreme fuel poverty this winter. Depending on their location and facilities, Warm Hubs offer a range of support including basic refreshments and snacks as a minimum, extending to a more substantive meal where possible, enrichment activities such as arts and crafts, exercise and cultural activity and the provision of advice and support services such as health and wellbeing, financial matters, and digital accessibility for those who attend.

The aim of the Warm Hubs fund is to provide safe, accessible, friendly, free to use spaces to provide support with the rising cost of living whilst helping communities to be well and stay as such.

To facilitate the allocation of grant funding a scoping exercise was undertaken across the County Borough. To reflect the diversity of local communities across the County Borough and help to address the unique challenges in different areas, a series of local meetings were held. 11 meetings were organised, and efforts were made to invite representatives from community groups, town and community councils, community venues, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Councillors and Third Sector organisation including Halo and Awen.

The purpose of the scoping meetings was to discuss community solutions to the rising cost of domestic energy, identifying and capturing information on the support and activities already available to avoid future duplication and create a position to build from. Following the meetings, circulation lists for each area were created to assist with future communication both to and between local representatives. The mailing groups had been an effective way of gathering further information and sharing local knowledge and updates on Warm Hubs.

The Cost of Living Co-ordinator advised that funding was drawn down from the WLGA and agreement was subsequently made with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) in January 2023 to provide the administration of the funds. BAVO's role extends to the advertising of the Warm Hubs funding scheme and the collation of applications, with BCBC responsible for the decision making through a Grant Panel, and monitoring and reporting to WLGA.

The BCBC Grant Panel is comprised of the Employability and Enterprise Manager, Group Manager – Sports and Physical Activity Prevention and Wellbeing and the Cost of Living Co-ordinator. The Grant Panel has been able to agree applications quickly, meeting twice weekly since the grant fund was opened. Applications to the fund have now exceeded the amount of funding available from Welsh Government and over 30 recipients have received Warm Hubs funding. Additional funds are being made available through BCBC's Discretionary Cost of Living Funds.

Officers from Employability then responded to questions from Members and further details regarding this can be found [here](#)

**RESOLVED:** That the Town and Community Council Forum noted the report.

15. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29 August 2023</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>PLANNING UPDATE – 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>JONATHAN PARSONS – GROUP MANAGER PLANNING &amp; DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>The report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The report outlines the Council’s position regarding the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods as put forward through the strategic development sites outlined in the Replacement Local Development Plan.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>20 Minute neighbourhoods are designed to allow people to have access to facilities such as schools, shops, recreation space and health facilities within a 20 minute walk or cycle ride from their homes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The concept is a well established urban planning principle and is widely seen as a key component to good placemaking</b></p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing on the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, which has been incorporated into the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The 20-minute neighbourhood is an established principle of urban design and planning that is becoming popular across the world. Developed in different ways in cities like Melbourne, Portland and Paris, the principle is intended to enable residents to access retail, leisure, education, primary healthcare and employment close to their place of residence and within the local neighbourhood i.e. within a 20-minute walk/cycle. It also means having access to greenspace nearby and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and wellbeing. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it. The 20-minute neighbourhood is all about ‘living locally’—giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle ride from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.

- 2.2 In the context of Bridgend, a 20-minute neighbourhood is one that enables access services within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood.
- 2.3 High Quality, Sustainable Places are the result of good planning and design which fully embraces placemaking. Adopting a placemaking approach has multiple benefits which not only helps improve quality of life, but also helps to tackle climate change, reduce carbon footprint and improve biodiversity and ecological resilience for the future. The legal obligations on Local Authorities under the Environment and Well-Being of Future Generations Acts must be recognised within the Council's approach.
- 2.4 This concept is enshrined in national planning policy – Future Wales 2040 (The National Plan) and Planning Policy Wales 11 (2021) and as such will be cascaded into regional and local development planning framework.

### **3. Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 The nature and form of a neighbourhood can have a direct impact on physical and mental health. This can be enabled by creating well-designed walkable neighbourhoods that are connected through a mix of land-uses, housing types and access to quality public transport. The spatial land use planning framework for Bridgend is set on the Local Development Plan (LDP), which is a statutory, high-level strategy which must be prepared and sets out in land-use terms the priorities and objectives of the Council.
- 3.2 The RLDP is at advanced stage following extensive consultation and an examination in public. One of its principal aims is to make neighbourhoods across the Borough more liveable. In Bridgend, whilst many established areas have some built form features for a 20-minute neighbourhood, they are not always walkable and may not offer affordable housing options. Therefore, the 20-minute neighbourhood principle has been considered and embedded into the RLDP from the outset of plan preparation.
- 3.3 As part of the preparation of the RLDP a report (Background Paper 19) was prepared to assess the practical delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle against the strategic and housing allocations proposed within the RLDP. A copy of this report is attached as **Appendix A**. The report considered the national policy context as well as outlining what a 20 minute neighbourhood could look like and its benefits. The report also highlights the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in people spending more time at home and within their local neighbourhoods. As a consequence of the crisis, it has been further highlighted that the importance of the provision of high-quality local environments and well located, secure and affordable homes make in making a positive benefit to people's health and well-being. The location, quality, size and features of homes influenced how residents managed through the lockdown periods.
- 3.4 The quality, flexibility and adaptability of the local built environment also has a huge impact on how healthcare, education, food, and medical supplies have been

provided. During the crisis, the importance of local services and infrastructure has also become more apparent, with people spending more time in their local neighbourhoods. The continuation of people working from home and more locally is expected to be a long-term trend. As such it is vital to ensure that the RLDP will enable new homes and neighbourhoods to be delivered and that these are quality places to live, with easy access to services and appropriate infrastructure and greenspace and key to this will be the development of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

- 3.5 The Placemaking Wales Charter, launched in September 2020, has been developed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership. This consists of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests and organisations working within the built and natural environment. The Charter is intended to reflect a commitment to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities. Bridgend County Borough Council, as a signatory to the Charter, pledges to:
- Involve the local community in the development of proposals
  - Choose sustainable locations for new development
  - Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport
  - Create inclusive, well defined, safe, and welcoming streets and public spaces
  - Promote a sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant
  - Value and respect the positive distinctive qualities and identity of existing places.
- 3.6 The commitment to the placemaking charter aligns with the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood and is incorporated within the RLDP to ensure that Bridgend is adopting a coordinated approach to placemaking and well-connected neighbourhoods.
- 3.7 Further work contained within the Health Impact Assessment as part of the RLDP preparation has also highlighted that the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in ensuring that opportunities to maximise health and well-being benefits within potential development are important. The Green Infrastructure Assessment also provides the opportunity to incorporate the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in to the RLDP process. In applying a green infrastructure approach to identify and enhance the natural assets present within the County Borough, the Council can ensure that proposed development is centered around proximity to green infrastructure and that natural green spaces can be easily accessed within 20-minutes via sustainable modes of travel.
- 3.8 What Should a 20-Minute Neighbourhood Look Like? The core of a 20-minute neighbourhood is its pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. This equates to 800 metres (approximately half a mile) in distance or 20-minutes in time (based on average walking times of healthy adult and taking into account waiting at junctions and meandering routes). These neighbourhoods should be well connected to public transport, jobs, and services in the region provide local employment opportunities, local shopping, health and school facilities, public parks/ green spaces and sport and recreation facilities. In so doing they must be safe, accessible, and well-connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport and offer high-quality public realm and open spaces.

- 3.9 The benefits of 20-minute neighbourhoods encompass health, social, economic, and environmental benefits, as well as the positive impact of access to local amenities and services as described above.
- 4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**
- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.
- 5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**
- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.
- 6. Climate Change Implications**
- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report, however, the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods aims to reduce dependency on carbon intensive transport options.
- 7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**
- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.
- 8. Financial Implications**
- 8.1 The report is for noting and current procedures are carried out within existing budget headings.
- 9. Recommendation(s)**
- 9.1 That the Town and Community Council Forum notes the report

**Background documents**

None

**Appendix A : Bridgend RLDP Background Paper 19 – The 20 Minute Neighbourhood**



# Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033



## Background Paper 19: The 20-Minute Neighbourhood

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## 1. Overview

- 1.1 The 20-minute neighbourhood is all about 'living locally'—giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk or cycle ride from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.
- 1.2 In the context of the county of Bridgend, a 20-minute neighbourhood is one that enables access services within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood.
- 1.3 The 20-minute neighbourhood is an established principle of urban design and planning that is becoming popular across the world. Developed in different ways in cities like Melbourne, Portland and Paris, people can meet most of their essential needs within a 20-minute walk. This principle enables residents to access retail, leisure, education, primary healthcare and employment close to their place of residence and within the local neighbourhood. It also means having access to greenspace nearby and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and wellbeing. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it.
- 1.4 Neighbourhoods can have a direct impact on physical and mental health. By creating well-designed walkable neighbourhoods that are connected through a mix of land-uses, housing types and access to quality public transport, the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) aims to make neighbourhoods across the Borough more liveable. In Bridgend, whilst many established areas have some built form features for a 20-minute neighbourhood, they are not always walkable and may not offer affordable housing options. Therefore, the 20-minute neighbourhood principle has been considered and embedded into the RLDP from the outset of plan preparation.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to assess the practical delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle against the strategic and housing allocations proposed within the RLDP.

## 2. The National Sustainable Placemaking Agenda

- 2.1 High Quality Sustainable Places are the result of good planning and design which fully embraces placemaking. Adopting a placemaking approach has multiple benefits which not only helps improve quality of life, but also helps to tackle climate change, reduce carbon footprint and improve biodiversity and ecological resilience for the future. The legal obligations on Local Authorities under the Environment and Well-Being of Future Generations Acts must be recognised within the Council's approach.
- 2.2 The National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and Objectives of Good Design set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 1: Objectives of Good Design**



Source: PPW, 2021, p.26

**Figure 2: National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes**



Source: PPW, 2021, p.19

### 3. Future Wales 2040 (National Development Framework)

3.1 The National Development Framework (NDF) considers the issues significant to Wales's prosperity and well-being, such as the economy, housing, transport, energy, and the environment. It identifies where national developments should take place, where the key growth areas are and what infrastructure and services are needed. The NDF is set in the context of a vision that will help deliver sustainable places across Wales by 2040, by supporting placemaking and ensuring development is directed to the right places, making the best use of resources, creating and sustaining

accessible healthy communities, protecting the environment and supporting prosperity for residents.

- 3.2 The NDF outlines that cities, towns, and villages will be physically and digitally well-connected places, offering good quality of life to their residents. High quality homes meeting the needs of society will be well located in relation to jobs, services, and accessible green and open spaces. Places will meet and suit the needs of a diverse population, with accessible community facilities and services. This approach aligns with the goal of the 20-minute neighbourhood and its principles should therefore be put in to practice within the RLDP to ensure that Bridgend is adopting a co-ordinated approach to placemaking and well-connected places.

#### **4. Staying Local & Creating Neighbourhoods**

- 4.1 Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic people have been spending more time at home and within local neighbourhoods, which has further highlighted the importance of the high-quality local environments. The crisis has also placed additional emphasis on the importance of well located, secure and affordable homes for people's health and well-being. The location, quality, size and features of homes influenced how residents managed through the lockdown. The quality, flexibility and adaptability of the local built environment has had a huge impact on how healthcare, education, food, and medical supplies have been provided. During this time, the importance of local services and infrastructure has also become more apparent, with people spending more time in their local neighbourhoods.
- 4.2 The continuation of people working from home and more locally is expected to be a long-term trend. It is important to ensure the RLDP will enable new homes and neighbourhoods to be delivered that are great places to live, with easy access to services and appropriate infrastructure and greenspace.
- 4.3 Enabling people to live in well-located and well-designed energy efficient homes is a key role for planning. Housebuilding is also an important part of the Welsh economy and delivering new affordable and market homes can make a significant contribution to economic recovery and social cohesion. Sustainable plan-led growth is key to ensuring socio-economic recovery post the pandemic, whilst also enabling delivery of better-connected neighbourhoods grounded in placemaking principles.

4.4 The planning system's most important role is in guiding how places grow and evolve. LDPs have a fundamental role in directing new development, especially housing, to the right locations. Forward planning can also establish key factors to the success of a place, such as the mix of uses, types of housing (including affordable housing), proximity to facilities and public transport, density, the street network and access to greenspace and nature. These are key aspects of placemaking, which are reflected throughout PPW, with specific policy and guidance in the strategic placemaking and housing sections.

4.5 National Planning Policy expects proposals for new communities (in rural and urban areas) and housing sites to integrate with existing services and infrastructure and, where extra provision is required as a result of the development, for this to be forthcoming. Creativity and innovation will be required in order for various agencies, infrastructure partners and public sector providers to come together to deliver truly sustainable sites.

#### 4.6 The Placemaking Charter

4.6.1 The Placemaking Wales Charter, launched in September 2020, has been developed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership. This consists of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests and organisations working within the built and natural environment. The Charter is intended to reflect a commitment to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities. Bridgend County Borough Council, as a signatory to the Charter, pledges to:

- Involve the local community in the development of proposals
- Choose sustainable locations for new development
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport
- Create inclusive, well defined, safe, and welcoming streets and public spaces
- Promote a sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant
- Value and respect the positive distinctive qualities and identity of existing places.

4.6.2 This will require a commitment across a wide range of departments and Council functions, all of which have a role to play in ensuring that new development and

supporting infrastructure are informed by placemaking objectives. This commitment from the Council aligns with the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood and should therefore be incorporated within the RLDP to ensure that Bridgend is adopting a co-ordinated approach to placemaking and well-connected neighbourhoods.

#### 4.7 Health Impact Assessment

4.7.1 The RLDP is required to plan for and detail how local land-use can support the local well-being objectives and priorities of the Bridgend Public Services Board's (PSB) Well-being Plan and meet the requirements of other national and local policies.

4.7.2 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a systematic yet flexible process that assesses the potential positive, detrimental, or unintended consequences for health and well-being of the proposed RLDP as it emerges and how it will impact on the population of Bridgend County Borough. It has considered inequalities and assessed the potential impacts on vulnerable groups within this population. The HIA provides a set of evidence-based recommendations and suggestions to be considered within the RLDP development process.

4.7.3 Overall, the key health and well-being impacts and priorities identified by stakeholders are reflected and addressed in the RLDP. The Sustainability Appraisal for the RLDP also identifies no gaps or incompatibilities. A number of follow up actions have been identified, all of which are focused on strengthening the opportunities that the RLDP presents for health and well-being.

4.7.4 The outcomes of the HIA demonstrate the RLDP's alignment with the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in ensuring that opportunities to maximise health and well-being benefits within potential development are incorporated within the process.

#### 4.8 Green Infrastructure Assessment

4.8.1 Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as a multifunctional network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, green corridors, rivers, and lakes that intersperse and connect places. At its heart, the aim of green infrastructure is to sustainably manage the many, often conflicting, pressures for housing, industry, transport and travel, energy, agriculture, nature conservation, recreation, and aesthetics. A green

infrastructure approach to land-use planning, design and management enables us to demand and deliver more from the land in a sustainable way.

4.8.2 The purpose of undertaking a GI assessment in this instance is to guide and shape the planning and delivery of green infrastructure in Bridgend. It forms the baseline for a holistic, positive and proactive approach to the management and enhancement of Bridgend's natural assets, in particular when associated with the level of growth identified in the RLDP.

4.8.3 The Green Infrastructure Assessment provides the Council with an opportunity to incorporate the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood in to the RLDP process. By applying a green infrastructure approach to identify and enhance the natural assets present within the Borough, the Council can ensure that proposed development is centred around proximity to green infrastructure and that natural green spaces can be easily accessed within 20-minutes via sustainable modes of travel.

#### 4.9 Covid-19 Policy Review

4.9.1 In order to provide an update and review on the preparation of the RLDP in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a Covid-19 Policy Review report has been undertaken to evaluate the foundations of the RLDP's strategic direction. The aim of the report is to determine whether the Vision, Strategic Objectives, Strategic Policies and supporting technical studies remain appropriate given the emerging impacts of the pandemic. It also considers whether any updates and/or modifications are necessary to ensure the RLDP remains sufficiently flexible to accommodate any potential eventualities.

4.9.2 Crucially to the RLDP's ability to implement the 20-minute neighbourhood principles, the report concludes that the overall direction of the RLDP still holds true, subject to minor flexibility amendments to ensure the RLDP Policies can respond to changing circumstances over the RLDP period. This is demonstrated in areas such as active travel, in which the pandemic has demonstrated an even greater reliance to access local services and to enable recalibration of households' work/life balance. The report notes that the RLDP policies already reflect the importance of active travel, sustainable transport and accessibility, which will prove key in overcoming issues presented by COVID-19.

4.9.3 The pandemic has also further served to emphasise the importance of having locally accessible open/green spaces for health, well-being and recreation. This will continue to remain a key element of sustainable placemaking. A refreshed and holistic Green Infrastructure Assessment has been completed to contribute to development of the RLDP's evidence base in this respect.

## **5. Active Travel: Exercise and Rediscovered Transport Methods**

5.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented changes that affect all aspects of life including travel throughout the borough. Transport, across all modes, has been affected due to the restrictions imposed. Large reductions in motorised traffic have been seen on all parts of the road network, reduced patronage of buses and trains, high levels of home working and higher rates of walking and cycling, both for essential journeys and for daily exercise. For the benefit of the environment, health, and well-being, it is important to build on the current positive transport modal shift.

5.2 The RLDP needs to secure, for the long-term, the continued shift from the private car to sustainable and active travel modes for everyday journeys both to and from and within places, without causing unintended inequalities. The increased walking and cycling infrastructure that has been temporarily created to accommodate a major shift to active travel during this time could be made permanent in order to continue to support healthy lifestyles and connect communities.

5.3 The RLDP will support developments which are sited in the right locations, where they can be easily accessed by active and sustainable travel modes without the need for a car. It will maximise opportunities for residents to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys and leisure. The planning system must also ensure the chosen locations and resulting design of new developments support sustainable travel modes and maximise accessibility by walking and cycling.

## **6. What Should a 20-Minute Neighbourhood Look Like?**

6.1 The core of a 20-minute neighbourhood is its pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. This equates to 800 metres (approximately half a mile) in distance or 20-minutes in



time (based on average walking times of healthy adult and taking into account waiting at junctions and meandering routes), as illustrated by Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Services and Facilities Within a 20-Minute Neighbourhood**



6.2 Liveable communities should provide the following features as part of sustainable urban extensions:

- Well-connected to public transport, jobs, and services in the region;
- Local employment opportunities;
- Local shopping centres;
- Local health facilities;
- Local schools
- Local public parks and green spaces
- Sport and recreation facilities

They must:

- be safe, accessible, and well-connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport
- offer high-quality public realm and open spaces

- provide services and destinations that support local living
- facilitate access to quality public transport that connects people to jobs and higher-order services
- deliver housing/population at densities that make local services and transport viable
- support thriving economies
- Rebalance nature of out-of-town shopping areas

**Figure 4: Features of a 20-Minute Neighbourhood**



### 6.3 The Role and Function of Neighbourhood Activity Centres

6.3.1 Traditionally, the focal point for neighbourhoods were its high streets and local centres. While the structure of local shopping centres has changed over time, these places are an integral part of community life and fundamental to creating an area of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

- 6.3.2 Neighbourhood activity centres provide retail services and goods (newsagent, bakery, and supermarket), local entertainment facilities (cafes and restaurants) and local health services and facilities to meet daily needs. While individually these places may only serve a local community's needs, the network of these places across the County Borough plays a significant role in creating a sustainable, equitable, and accessible Bridgend.
- 6.3.3 To ensure that the RLDP underpins the principles of neighbourhood activity centres, the Council undertook a revised Settlement Assessment to analyse the components of existing settlements, their functional relationships with each other plus their current and potential future roles. The Settlement Assessment can be used to identify the most appropriate locations to accommodate future development in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns of movement and support local services and facilities. This process is fundamental to achieving the RLDP's Vision of transforming Bridgend County Borough into an inclusive network of communities comprising strong, interdependent, connected, and cohesive settlements, in-keeping with the principles of neighbourhood activity centres and the 20 Minute Neighbourhood.
- 6.3.4 The findings from the Settlement Assessment evidenced a clear hierarchy that can be used to identify which settlements are most sustainable and have capacity to deliver additional growth. This evidence contributes to the Spatial Strategy formulation, based on the role and function of places and utilising principles of sustainable development.
- 6.3.5 The Spatial Strategy is an integral component of the RLDP and has ensured that the Council has been in accordance with the key principles of sustainability and placemaking throughout the process. The Spatial Strategy builds on the extant evidence underpinning the current adopted LDP to formulate four possible and realistic spatial strategy options moving forward which help to achieve the goals of the RLDP. These options have been successively evaluated based on a number of factors, including:

- The aspirations of the RLDP
- Availability and suitability of brownfield land in preference to greenfield
- Land and land of high agricultural, ecological or landscape value
- The need to minimise the need to travel, especially by private vehicles
- Capacity of existing and potential infrastructure
- Scale and location of market and affordable housing required
- Scale and location of employment opportunities
- Environmental implications, e.g., energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, flood risk, biodiversity, green infrastructure, mineral resources, and ground conditions, including mine gas
- Social and cultural factors, including consideration of the Welsh language
- Accessibility to jobs, shops, and services
- Viability (in terms of how different market areas can affect the viability of delivering private and affordable housing as well as associated infrastructure to support the level of development proposed)
- Deliverability of key sites and overall strategy
- National strategies and priorities, such as decarbonisation and health.

6.3.6 In this regard, the Spatial Strategy options are based on factors which share the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood, representing an aligned approach. The RLDP's cohesive Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver PPW's 'Town Centre First' principle by maximising placemaking principles, active travel provision, and transit orientated development, whilst ensuring that the 20-minute neighbourhood principles are implemented effectively across the County Borough.

## **7. Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods**

7.1 Tables 1-4 outline the benefits associated with a successful 20-minute neighbourhood. These encompass health, social, economic, and environmental benefits, and evidence the positive impact of access to local amenities and services.

**Table 1. Economic Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods**

Economic benefits of 20-minute neighbourhoods	
<b>Local businesses</b>	Investment in better streets and public spaces for pedestrians can boost footfall and trading by up to 40% <sup>1</sup> and can help to reduce retail vacancy in high streets and town centres.
<b>Productivity</b>	Walkable environments with highly connected street networks are more likely to make a positive contribution to labour productivity. <sup>2</sup>
<b>New jobs</b>	Keeping investment local through community wealth-building can develop the skills of local people, encourage employers to expand within or move to the area and create stable, well-paying jobs. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Land value</b>	Investment in better place-making can boost land values. <sup>4</sup> Walkable environments sustain and increase their value because they are popular places in which to live and do business. This can be beneficial in that it could bring investment and jobs, but it also underlines how important it is to ensure that truly affordable housing is provided and protected in the neighbourhood. <sup>5</sup>
<b>Road congestion</b>	Many journeys under five miles long are often made by car when instead they could have been made by walking or cycling. <sup>6</sup> Making active travel safer and more inviting can help to minimise traffic and unproductive congestion.

<sup>1</sup> [Street Appeal: The Value of Street Improvements](#). University College London, for Transport for London, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> M Rohani and G Lawrence: [The Relationship between Pedestrian Connectivity and Economic Productivity in Auckland's City Centre](#). Auckland Council, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> [How We Built Community Wealth in Preston: Achievements and Lessons](#). Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), Jul. 2019.

<sup>4</sup> [The Pedestrian Pound: The Business Case for Better Streets and Places](#). Living Streets, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> [Walkability and Mixed-Use: Making Valuable and Healthy Communities](#). The Prince's Foundation, Dec. 2020.

<sup>6</sup> [Development: The Value of Placemaking](#). Savills, 2016.

Table 2. Environmental Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods

Environmental Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods	
<b>Air Quality</b>	Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health, and results in up to 36,000 deaths per year in the UK, with vehicle emissions the largest source of air pollution. <sup>7</sup> Evidence is also emerging which shows that air pollution increases the number and severity of airborne viruses. <sup>8</sup> Promoting a shift from private cars to active travel can help to reduce air pollution. <sup>9</sup> Urban greening, such as the introduction of street trees, can also help to improve air quality. <sup>10</sup>
<b>Climate Resilience and Mitigation</b>	Road transport is a major source of both greenhouse gases and air pollutants, with around a fifth (21%) of UK greenhouse gas emissions coming from road transport in 2017. Walkable environments assist in climate change mitigation by reducing the reliance on fossil fuels for transportation, as well as by supporting climate resilience through mitigation of the urban heat island effect.
<b>Energy Efficiency</b>	Creating walkable environments provides opportunities to develop community district heating systems and zero-carbon homes, reducing the demand for non-sustainable sources of energy. <sup>11</sup>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Planning for walkable environments offers opportunities to improve biodiversity, particularly when considering street connectivity and the movement of flora and fauna across landscapes. <sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> [Health Matters: Air Pollution](#). Guidance. Public Health England, Nov. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> D Carrington: '[Tiny air pollution rise linked to 11% more Covid-19 deaths – study](#)'. The Guardian, 4 Nov. 2020.

<sup>9</sup> [First Steps in Urban Air Quality](#). Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG), Jan. 2019.

<sup>10</sup> [Road Transport and Air Emissions](#). Office for National Statistics, Sept. 2019.

<sup>11</sup> N Robertson and C Hachem-Vermette: '[Walkability as an indicator of neighbourhood resilience \(breakout presentation\)](#)'. Journal of Transport & Health, 2017, Vol 7, Dec. (Supplement), S85.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

Table 3. Economic Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods

Social Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods	
<b>Sense of community</b>	Living in a walkable environment can support a sense of community and improve social interaction, as residents are more likely to know their neighbours and trust others, participate politically, and be involved in the community.
<b>Safety</b>	Increased pedestrian activity in public space can improve perceptions of safety through passive surveillance that naturally aids the prevention of crime, with more 'eyes on the street'. Investment in safe streets can also reduce the number of traffic-related pedestrian injuries and deaths. <sup>13</sup>
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	Creating a well-designed, more walkable environment provides opportunities to support inclusive design. <sup>14</sup> Older people are more likely to engage in walking than in other forms of exercise, which can help to prevent ageing conditions such as arthritis, and child-friendly streets allow for informal play and increased independence, which is important for child development.

<sup>13</sup> M Brierley and P Cockett: '[Urban biodiversity as strategy for walkability \(breakout presentation\)](#)'. Journal of Transport & Health, 2017, Vol 7, Dec. (Supplement), S28-S29.

<sup>14</sup> [National Design Guide](#). Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Jan. 2021.

Table 4. Health Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods

Health Benefits of 20-minute Neighbourhoods	
<b>Physical and Mental Health</b>	The physical and mental health benefits of regular physical activity are well established. Time spent walking in green spaces contributes directly to mental health and recovery. <sup>15</sup> Those who walk and cycle to work are at a reduced risk of early death or illness compared with those who commute by car. <sup>16</sup>
<b>Healthcare Costs</b>	Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the NHS up to £1 billion per annum. <sup>17</sup> Encouraging people to become more active can improve physical and mental health, helping to relieve pressure on the NHS. <sup>18</sup> Regular use of parks and green spaces saves the NHS £111 million each year, simply through a reduction in GP appointments. <sup>19</sup>
<b>Accessible Healthcare</b>	The Council has been liaising with the NHS throughout the RLDP preparation to enable alignment between primary healthcare services and growth areas with the aim of reducing the need to travel to healthcare facilities.
<b>Healthy Diet</b>	Poor diet is associated with heart disease, stroke, cancers and type 2 diabetes, and people on lower incomes are more likely to suffer from these diet-related illnesses. <sup>20</sup> Improving the local food environment in a walkable neighbourhood, through local food-growing, can enable people to access healthier options. <sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> KM Leyden: '[Social capital and the built environment: the importance of walkable neighbourhoods](#)'. American Journal of Public Health, 2003, Vol. 93 (9), 1546-51.

<sup>16</sup> [Green Walking in Mental Health Recovery: A Guide](#). Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, May 2020.

<sup>17</sup> [Health Matters: Physical Activity – Prevention and Management of Long-Term Conditions](#). Guidance. Public Health England, Jan. 2020.

<sup>18</sup> M Wood and S Finlayson: [Health on the High Street](#). NHS Confederation, Dec. 2020.

<sup>19</sup> [Cities Alive: Towards a Walking World](#). Arup, Jun. 2016.

<sup>20</sup> R Patterson, J Panter, EP Vamos, et al.: '[Associations between commute mode and cardiovascular disease, cancer, and all-cause mortality, and cancer incidence, using linked Census data over 25 years in England and Wales: a cohort study](#)'. The Lancet Planetary Health, 2020, Vol. 4 (5), e186-e194.

<sup>21</sup> [Putting Health into Place: Principles 4-8: Design, Deliver and Manage](#). TCPA, The King's Fund, The Young Foundation, and Public Health England, for NHS England, Sept. 2019.



## **8. Candidate Site Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal - Alignment with 20-Minute Neighbourhood Principles**

- 8.1 As part of the RLDP process, a Candidate Site Assessment (CSA) has been undertaken to assess the feasibility of potential sites put forward for allocation to align with the Council's preferred growth and spatial strategy. The RLDP has also been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which has assessed the likely sustainability and significant environmental effects of all substantive components of the RLDP (strategy, policies, site allocations, etc.) and any identified reasonable alternatives.
- 8.2 Welsh Government considers Candidate Sites and the SA process to be 'the building blocks of plan making'. Identification of suitable sites for future housing, employment, retailing, transportation, and other main land uses (such as recreation and community facilities) is a key foundation for the RLDP process and must follow a sustainable thread throughout.
- 8.3 Stage 1 of the Candidate Site Assessment process incorporated sustainability criteria into the site assessment process, based on the 14 objectives developed for the SA. The SA (incorporating the SEA) provides an evaluation / validation of the site selection process in respect of the overall contribution (or otherwise) to sustainable development. Following a base level assessment of all Candidate Sites, the SA excluded some sites for consideration based on significant environmental or deliverability criteria e.g., flood risk or common land. Stage 1 specifically addressed sites identified with major constraints that have been excluded from further consideration. This provided an opportunity for site promoters to provide further information to demonstrate that identified constraints could be satisfactorily overcome before any decision was made at Deposit Stage as to which Candidate Sites should be allocated.
- 8.4 Stage 2 of the CSA involved scrutinising the sites that progressed from Stage 1 in greater detail. During Stage 2, sites were examined based on any specific issues they raised in terms of their deliverability, general location, neighbouring land uses, existing use(s), accessibility, physical character, environmental constraints, and opportunities. In addition, there was an assessment of the policy context, together with the local geographical context, including known infrastructure issues. Following

completion of Stage 2, the Council obtained the views of a limited number of specific consultation bodies in respect of those sites considered suitable for future development and possible allocation in the RLDP. As a result of this assessment, a range of sites were identified for inclusion within the RLDP (Stage 4), acknowledging the conclusions drawn from Stage 2 and comments received from Stage 3.

8.5 This paper further evaluates the sites proposed for allocation in the context of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle, aiming to create healthier, more liveable communities over the RLDP period. The forthcoming analysis demonstrates how far each site will enable delivery of walkable neighbourhoods that are connected through a mix of land-uses, housing types and access to quality public transport.

## **9. Strategic Sites – Distances to Key Services & Amenities**

9.1 As outlined previously, in the context of county borough of Bridgend, a 20-minute neighbourhood is defined as the ability to access services and facilities within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood.

9.2 The sites proposed for allocation have been identified to ensure they are within close proximity of local services, facilities and active travel opportunities. All sites can therefore be accessed via sustainable means of travel, either by walking or cycling, within a 20-minute period. This is evidenced in the below maps, which illustrate the associated services, facilities and sustainable travel options within close proximity to each site.







**Table 5. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Facility	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Porthcawl Town Centre	9-minutes	3-minutes
John Street Bus Stop	10-minutes	5-minutes
Ysgol Gyfun Porthcawl Comprehensive School (The site also would deliver a 1 form entry Welsh Medium Primary School & 4 classroom block extension at the existing English Medium Primary School.)	16-minutes	5-minutes
Porthcawl Medical Centre	20-minutes	6-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Co-op)	9-minutes	3-minutes
Proposed Large Convenience Store (As part of the wider masterplans for the site, a new Aldi supermarket is proposed to provide residents with greater choice and flexibility.)	<1-minute	<1-minute
Amenity Green Space	<1-minute	<1-minute
Proposed Metro Stop	<1-minute	<1-minute



9.4 SP2(2): Land South of Bridgend (Island Farm), Bridgend Sustainable Growth Area










**Table 6. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Bridgend Town Centre	20-minutes	9-minutes
Bridgend Train Station	29-minutes	7-minutes
Priory Avenue Bus Stop	9-minutes	3-minutes
Brynteg Comprehensive School	7-minutes	2-minutes
Lower Brynteg Comprehensive School	16-minutes	5-minutes
Bridgend Group Practice Medical Centre (formerly Ashfield Surgery)	17-minutes	5-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Premier)	10-minutes	3-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Tesco Superstore)	20-minutes	5-minutes
Amenity Green Space	<1-minute	<1-minute
Employment Centre – Bridgend Industrial Estate	36-minutes	11-minutes





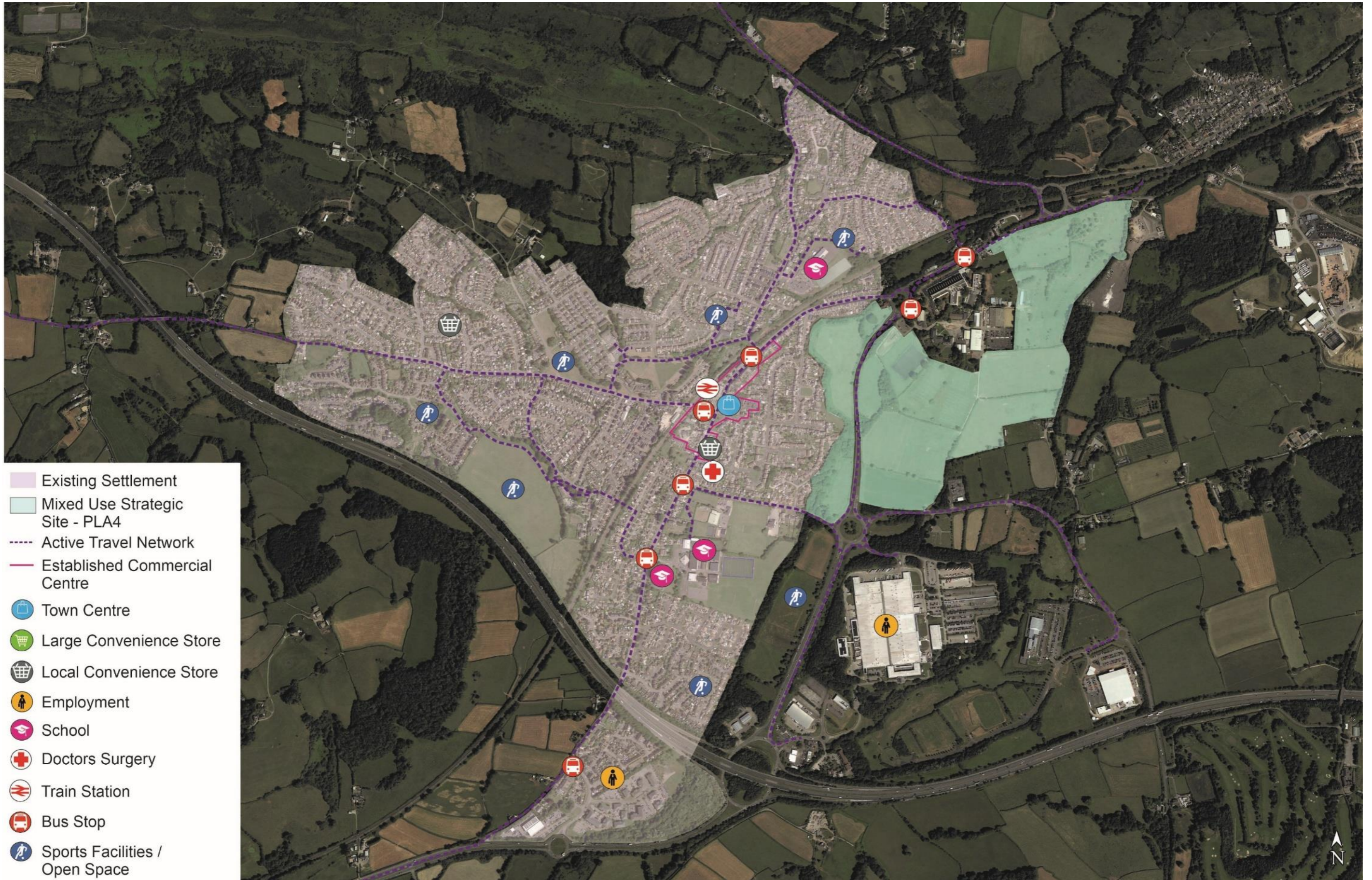
-  Existing Settlement
-  Mixed Use Strategic Site - PLA3
-  Active Travel Network
-  Established Commercial Centre
-  Town Centre
-  Large Convenience Store
-  Local Convenience Store
-  Employment
-  School
-  Doctors Surgery
-  Train Station
-  Bus Stop
-  Sports Facilities / Open Space



**Table 7. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

<b>Service/Amenity</b>	<b>Distance from site via walking</b>	<b>Distance from site via cycling</b>
Bridgend Town Centre	29-minutes	11-minutes
Bridgend Train Station	31-minutes	11-minutes
High Street Bus Stop	2-minutes	<1-minute
Bryntirion Comprehensive School	21-minutes	6-minutes
Lower Brynteg Comprehensive School	40-minutes	12-minutes
Bridgend Group Practice Medical Centre (formerly Newcastle Surgery)	19-minutes	5-minutes
Local Convenience Store (One-Stop)	2-minutes	<1-minute
Large Convenience Store (Tesco Superstore)	33-minutes	11-minutes
Amenity Green Space	7-minutes	3-minutes
Employment Centre – Trews Field Industrial Estate	35-minutes	12-minutes





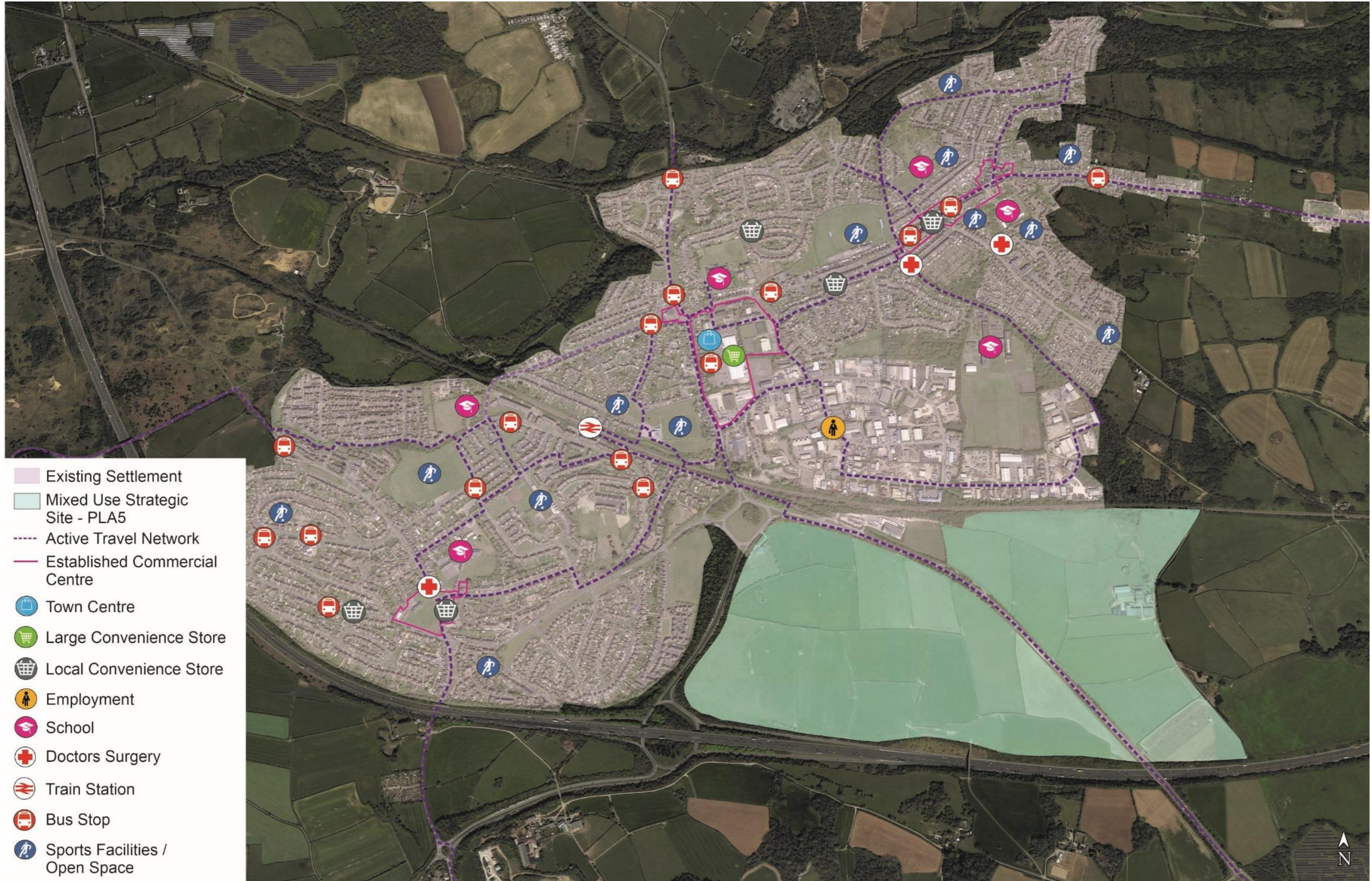


**Table 8. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Pencoed Town Centre	13-minutes	4-minutes
Pencoed Train Station	9-minutes	2-minutes
Ty Merchant Bus Stop	3-minutes	<1-minute
Pencoed Comprehensive School (The site would also deliver its own primary school to ensure sustainable travel is enabled and to remove strain from existing facilities.)	18-minutes	4-minutes
Pencoed Medical Centre	13-minutes	3-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Tesco Express)	12-minutes	3-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Co-op)	10-minutes	3-minutes
Amenity Green Space	12-minutes	3-minutes
Employment Centre – Pencoed Technology Park	15-minutes	4-minutes



9.7 SP2(5): Land East of Pyle, Pyle, Kenfig Hill and North Cornelly Sustainable Growth Area





**Table 9. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Pyle Town Centre	11-minutes	4-minutes
Pyle Train Station	9-minutes	2-minutes
Ael-y-Bryn Bus Stop	9-minutes	2-minutes
Cynffig Comprehensive School (The site would also deliver its own primary school to ensure sustainable travel is enabled and to remove strain from existing facilities.)	24-minutes	9-minutes
North Cornelly Doctor's Surgery	20-minutes	6-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Filco Supermarket)	16-minutes	4-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Asda)	15-minutes	6-minutes
Amenity Green Space	10-minutes	5-minutes
Employment Centre – Village Farm Industrial Estate	6-minutes	3-minutes



10. Non-Strategic and Regeneration Sites - Distances to Key Services & Amenities

10.1 COM1 (1): Craig y Parcau



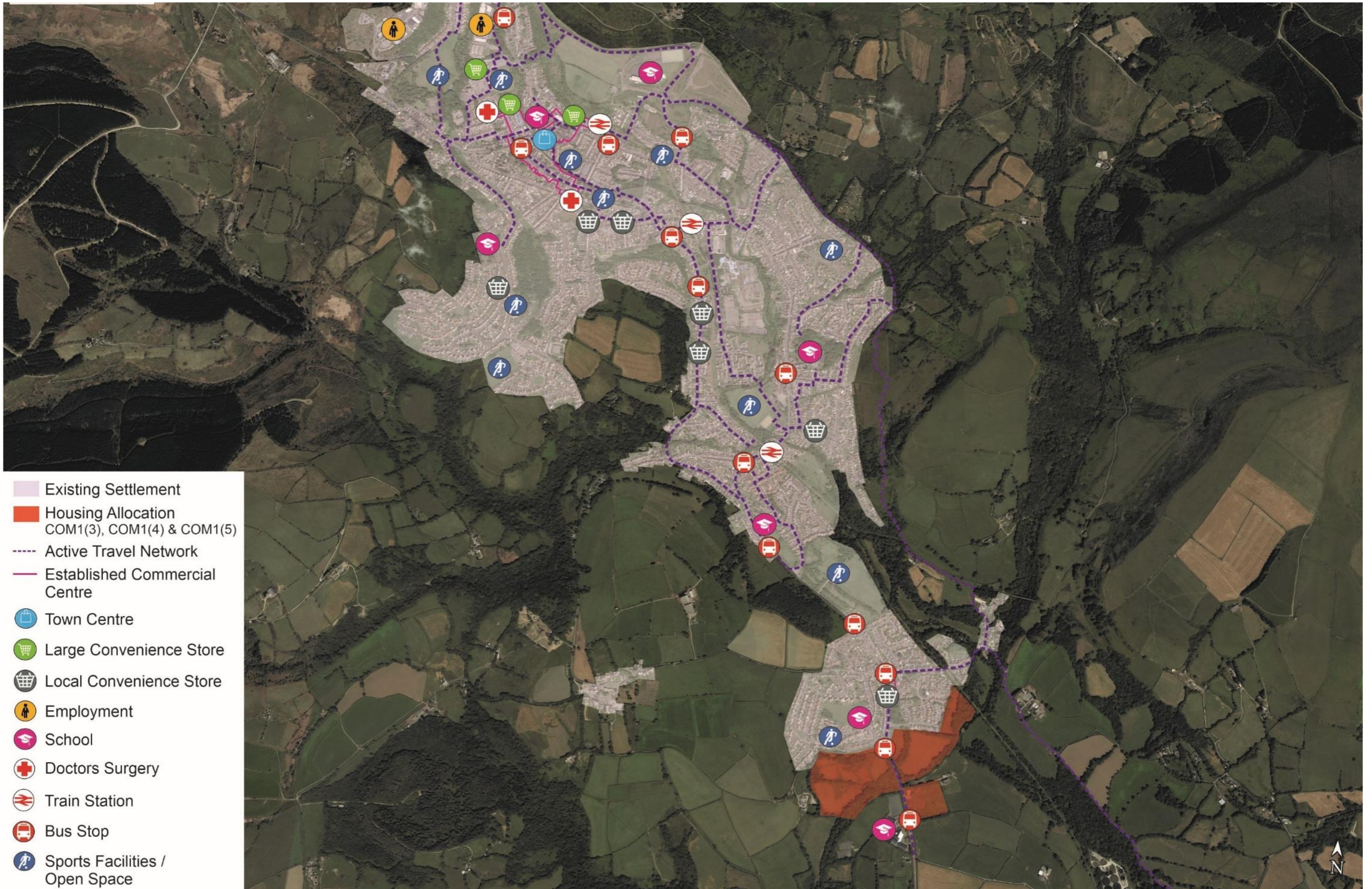


**Table 10. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Bridgend Town Centre	28-minutes	8-minutes
Bridgend Train Station	29-minutes	7-minutes
Gentle Way Bus Stop	8-minutes	3-minutes
Brynteg Comprehensive School	20-minutes	6-minutes
Bridgend Group Practice Doctor's Surgery	24-minutes	7-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Tesco Express)	9-minutes	3-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Tesco Superstore)	22-minutes	8-minutes
Amenity Green Space	6-minutes	2-minutes
Employment Centre – Bridgend Industrial Estate	38-minutes	11-minutes



10.2 COM1(2-4): Land Southeast / South / Southwest of Pont Rhyd-y-cyff



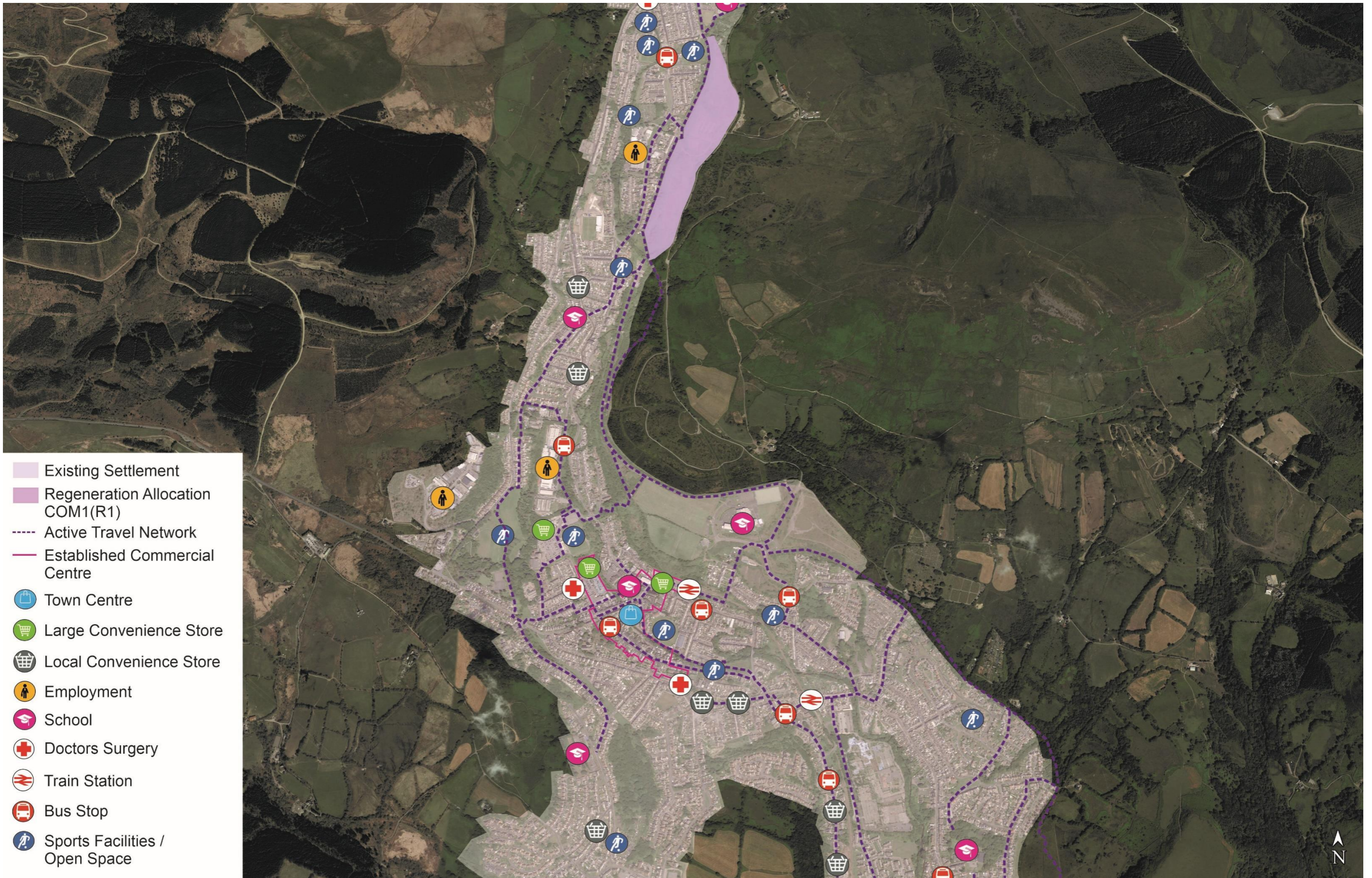
- Existing Settlement
- Housing Allocation  
COM1(3), COM1(4) & COM1(5)
- Active Travel Network
- Established Commercial Centre
- 🛍️ Town Centre
- 🛒 Large Convenience Store
- 🛒 Local Convenience Store
- 👤 Employment
- 🎓 School
- + Doctors Surgery
- 🚂 Train Station
- 🚌 Bus Stop
- 🏃 Sports Facilities /  
Open Space



**Table 11. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Maesteg Town Centre	44-minutes	11-minutes
Garth Train Station	20-minutes	6-minutes
Llangynwyd Square Bus Stop	<1-minute	<1-minute
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd School (The site is also located within close proximity to Llangynwyd Primary School, an English Medium school which is a 3-minute walk or 2-minute cycle from the site.)	5-minutes	2-minutes
Llynfi Doctor's Surgery	48-minutes	12-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Premier)	3-minutes	1-minute
Large Convenience Store (Asda)	44-minutes	12-minutes
Amenity Green Space	<1-minute	<1-minute
Employment Centre – Ge Buildings Forge Industrial Estate	57-minutes	15-minutes





- Existing Settlement
- Regeneration Allocation COM1(R1)
- Active Travel Network
- Established Commercial Centre
- P Town Centre
- C Large Convenience Store
- C Local Convenience Store
- P Employment
- S School
- + Doctors Surgery
- T Train Station
- B Bus Stop
- P Sports Facilities / Open Space

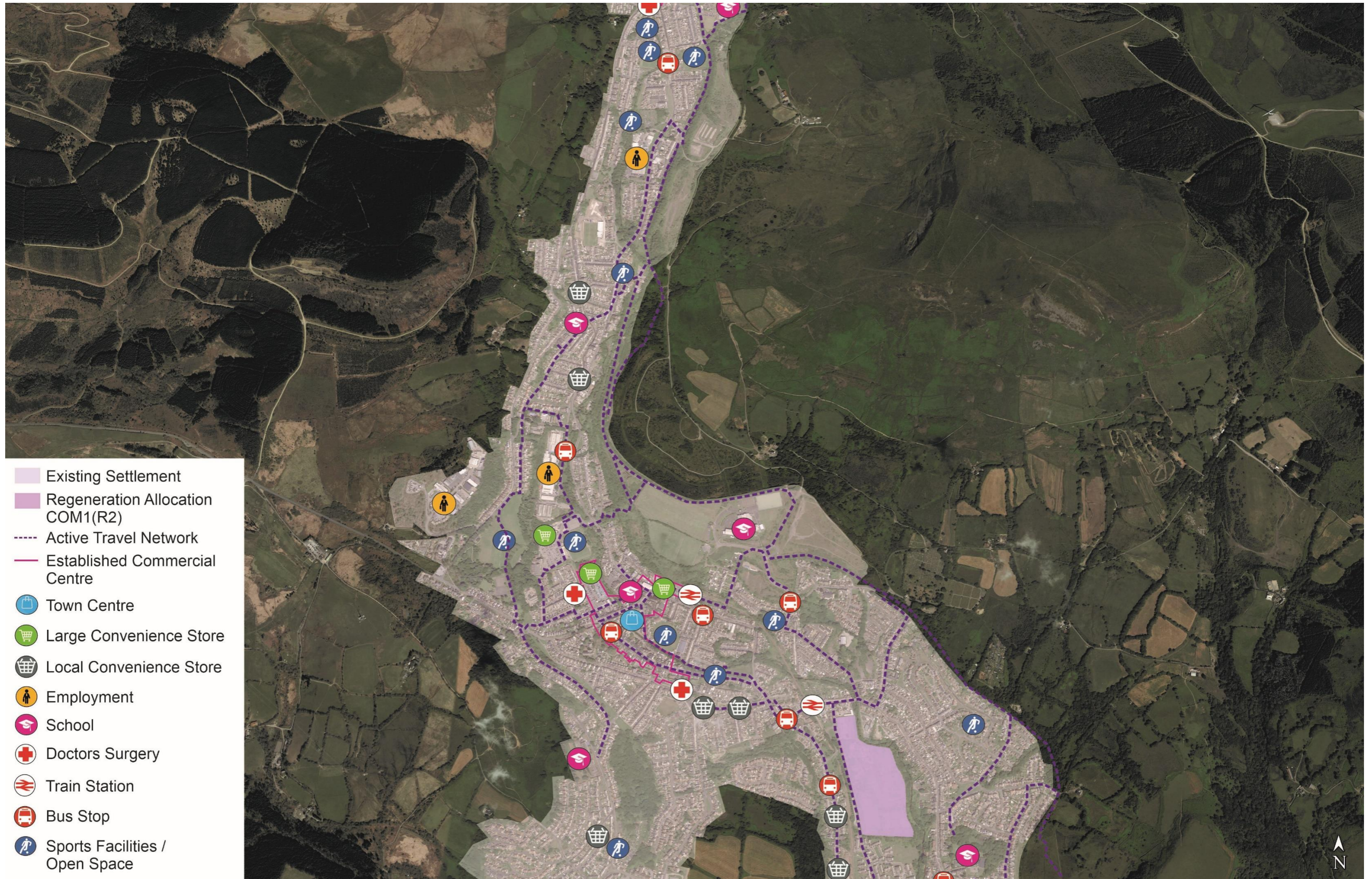


**Table 12. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Maesteg Town Centre	27-minutes	10-minutes
Maesteg Train Station	30-minutes	8-minutes
Hearts of Oak Bus Stop	3-minutes	<1-minute
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd School	30-minutes	8-minutes
Woodlands Doctor's Surgery	13-minutes	4-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Filco Supermarket)	9-minutes	2-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Tesco Superstore)	24-minutes	9-minutes
Amenity Green Space	2-minutes	<1-minute
Employment Centre – Knott Avonride	5-minutes	2-minutes



10.4 COM1 (R2): Former Cooper Standard Site, Ewenny Road

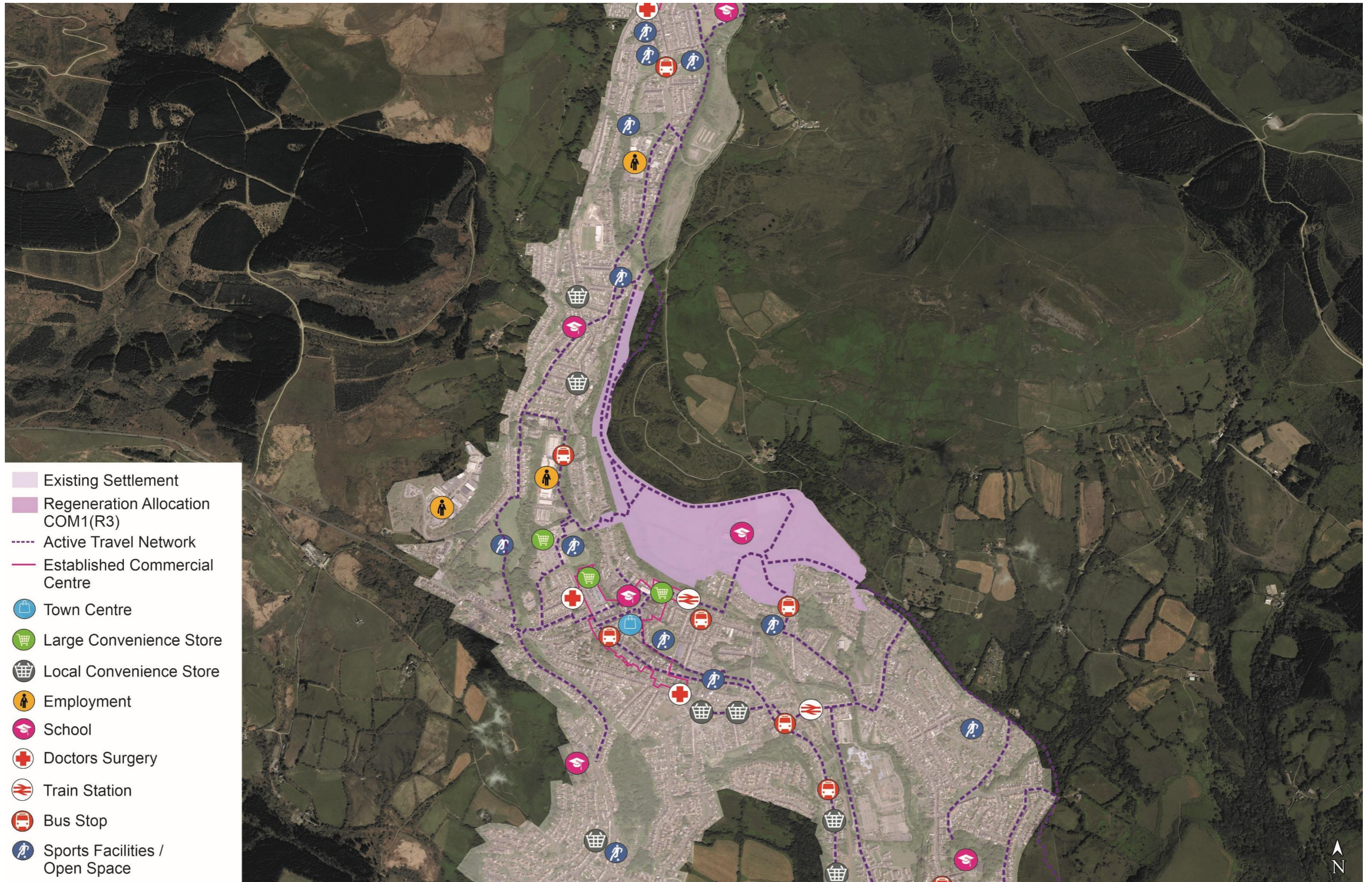




**Table 13. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Maesteg Town Centre	15-minutes	6-minutes
Maesteg Train Station	14-minutes	5-minutes
Llwydarth Road Bus Stop	3-minutes	<1-minute
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd School	19-minutes	8-minutes
Llynfi Doctor's Surgery	18-minutes	7-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Katko Supermarket)	6-minutes	2-minutes
Large Convenience Store (Tesco Superstore)	8-minutes	21-minutes
Amenity Green Space	11-minutes	4-minutes
Employment Centre – Forge Industrial Estate	26-minutes	8-minutes







**Table 14. Distances to services/facilities via Active Travel**

Service/Amenity	Distance from site via walking	Distance from site via cycling
Maesteg Town Centre	7-minutes	2-minutes
Maesteg Train Station	7-minutes	2-minutes
Castle Street Bus Stop	3-minutes	<1-minute
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd School	10-minutes	4-minutes
Llynfi Doctor's Surgery	6-minutes	2-minutes
Local Convenience Store (Nisa Local)	10-minutes	6-minutes
Large Convenience Store (ASDA Superstore)	2-minutes	<1-minute
Amenity Green Space	2-minutes	<1-minute
Employment Centre – Forge Industrial Estate	10-minutes	5-minutes

## **11. Conclusions**

- 11.1 As the strategic mapping above demonstrates, the sites proposed for allocation are all within an accessible distance of key local amenities and services by means of sustainable travel. Additionally, all sites are located within close proximity to the respective town centre and wider services and can be accessed by walking, cycling or use of public transport. The sites are shown to integrate with existing services and infrastructure, whilst also being conveniently located to enable a well-connected mix of access to public transport and sustainable travel options.
- 11.2 This report demonstrates that the strategic, non-strategic and regeneration site allocations within the RLDP are well-placed to positively impact and create cohesive local communities over the plan period. The sites actively promote the planning principles implemented at national level and are in alignment with the goals of the National Sustainable Placemaking Agenda set out by Welsh Government in PPW, as well as the NDF and the promotion of active travel within the borough.

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# Agenda Item 5

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29 AUGUST 2023</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>IEUAN SHERWOOD, GROUP MANAGER ECONOMY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the Council's policy framework or procedure rules as a result of this report.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p><b>The purpose of this report is to update the Town and Community Council Forum on the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund and a series of grant funds available as part of the delivery programme for Bridgend's Local Investment Plan through the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund.</b></p> <p><b>The funds are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bridgend Valley Placemaking Property Improvement Grant</b></li><li>• <b>Empty Property Survey Grants</b></li><li>• <b>Community Feasibility Fund</b></li><li>• <b>The Business Development Grant</b></li><li>• <b>Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme</b></li><li>• <b>Bridgend County Tourism Events Support</b></li></ul>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Town and Community Council Forum of the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and to outline a series of grant funds available as part of the delivery programme for Bridgend's Local Investment Plan.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union on 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund is the UK government's replacement for the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF).
- 2.2 The UKSPF is a key part of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda, forming part of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund.
- 2.3 The primary aim of the fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment Priorities: communities and place; supporting local business and people and skills.
- The **Communities and Place** investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level. The intention of this is to strengthen the social fabric of communities, supporting in building pride in place.
  - The **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow.
  - The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ringfenced element of the UKSPF called Multiply which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills.

- 2.4 Following a series of internal workshops with officers from across all Directorates within the Council a draft set of proposals was developed to access UKSPF. This set of proposals was then discussed with the County Borough's Economic Partnership and the Public Service Board (PSB). In addition, the proposals were shared and discussed with Members of the Senedd and Bridgend County's two Members of Parliament, whose support is required for the proposed activity outlined in the Bridgend County Borough Local Investment Plan information. Following engagement and feedback, proposals were revised before being presented to Cabinet in July 2022. As information and guidance evolves and further detail is provided it may be the case that proposals change again.
- 2.5 In July 2022 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Cabinet delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities to submit the Bridgend County Local Investment Plan to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for inclusion in the overall submission of the South East Wales Local Investment Plan to the UK Government. As part of the funding process there was, and remains, a need to appoint one local authority to assume the role of the 'Lead Local Authority' for the region for the UKSPF. It was agreed by BCBC Cabinet that RCTCBC performs this role. A copy of the Bridgend Local Investment Plan that was submitted in August 2022 is at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 An overview of the Bridgend County Borough Local Investment Plan proposals presented to Cabinet in July 2022 is set out below under a series of regional theme descriptions, which were developed by RCTCBC:

## **Communities and Place**

<b>Regional Theme Description*</b>	<b>Proposed Bridgend County delivery</b>
Development and resilience of communities by improving facilities and access to services and supporting community-based organisations	Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning
Action to support individuals and community-based organisations to deal with the challenges of the current economic environment and cost of living crisis	
Supporting the improvement and redevelopment of town centres and community places to revitalise them.	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
Improving access to and facilities for local people and communities in sport, culture, arts and heritage.	
Supporting action to improve services and facilities for young people.	
Action to support decarbonisation, energy efficiency and green initiatives in communities and places.	Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme
Other activity such as feasibility studies	Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme

\*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

## **Supporting Local Business**

<b>Regional Theme Description*</b>	<b>Proposed Bridgend County delivery</b>
Business premises development and improvement.	Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise
Small business support and development including finance for growth and resilience.	-Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme -Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme
Small business support for key growth sectors, research and development and innovation.	
Action to support decarbonisation, energy efficiency and green economy initiatives for businesses and social enterprises.	
Support for the growth and development of the visitor economy including businesses, facilities, and events.	- Bridgend County Tourism Events Support - Bridgend County Local Destination Management and Marketing
Other activity such as feasibility studies	Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme

\*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

## **People and Skills**

<b>Regional Theme Description*</b>	<b>Proposed Bridgend County delivery</b>
Regional Employability and Skills Framework Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in employment and key sectors</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed and economically inactive people</li> <li>• Young people to enter employment</li> </ul>	-CELT**+ <i>Bridgend Inspire 2 Work / Achieve</i> -CELT + <i>Employability - Bridgend County</i> -CELT+ <i>Regional Joint Commissioning</i>
Regional joint commissioning  Jointly commission FE/HE/ training providers / specific organisations to provide the following type of support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap-around support for those at risk of disengaging from FE</li> <li>• Upskilling at work</li> <li>• Upskilling to meet skill gaps in sectors i.e., green jobs, manufacturing, creative and digital.</li> </ul>	

\*Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework may offer an opportunity to deliver across all.

\*\*Connect Engage Listen Thrive

2.7 **Appendix 1** is set against the challenges and opportunities that have been evidenced through the Bridgend Economic Strategy, the Bridgend Local Development Plan, the Bridgend Net Zero Carbon Strategy and the Bridgend and Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment. Whilst there are clear areas of alignment between these documents and opportunities through UKSPF it is not the case that all areas are aligned, nor is it the case that UKSPF is the only source of funding available to deliver these key strategic documents.

### 3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 In March 2023 the Corporate Director Communities exercised the authority delegated by BCBC Cabinet in July 2022 to authorise entering into a regional funding agreement regarding the UKSPF with RCTCBC, under decision reference CMM-ED-23-046.

3.2 The UKSPF allows Local Authorities to deliver activity via a range of mechanisms, namely:

- In-House Delivery
- Commissioning
- Procurement
- Grant Funds

3.3 In July 2022 Cabinet were presented with an overview of a suite of projects to be delivered in line with the delivery mechanism.

3.4 The following projects are to be delivered, either in part or wholly, via grant funds:

- Bridgend County Thriving Communities
- Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme
- Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme
- Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme
- Bridgend County Tourism Events Support

3.5 The grant funds outlined below, which form part of Bridgend County's delivery of the UKSPF, will be set up and delivered:

Name of Project	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
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Name of fund	Bridgend Valley Placemaking Property Improvement Grant
Purpose of fund	<p>There are two elements to this:</p> <p>1) To enhance building frontages and bring vacant commercial floor space back into beneficial use, by supporting commercial property frontage improvements, along with other external and internal works.</p> <p>2) To convert vacant upper-floor space into new residential accommodation above commercial units, including internal and external works to bring vacant space back into use for residential purposes.</p>
Areas covered	The District Centres & Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmored (excluding Maesteg Town Centre).
Grant Rate	<p>The grant will be a maximum of 80% of reasonable eligible costs, up to a maximum grant award of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o £30,000 for occupied properties</li> <li>o £50,000 for properties that have been vacant for more than 6 months.</li> </ul> <p>This will be subject to on-going review</p>
Maximum Grant	As above
Total funds available in grant	Minimum of £270,000

Name of Project	Bridgend County Thriving Communities
Name of fund	Empty Property Survey Grants
Purpose of fund	To offer applicants the opportunity to undertake building condition surveys/architectural assessments and concept designs in order to progress the redevelopment of empty commercial properties.
Areas covered	The District Centres & Local Service centres in the valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmored (excluding Maesteg Town Centre).
Grant Rate	100% of reasonable eligible costs
Maximum Grant	<p>Up to £2,000 for Condition Surveys (depending on size of property)</p> <p>Up to £3,000 for Architectural Assessments and Concept Designs</p> <p>This will be subject to on-going review</p>
Total funds available in grant	Minimum of £20,000

Name of Project	Bridgend County Community Future Scoping Programme
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Name of fund	Community Feasibility Fund
Purpose of fund	The fund has been set up to test the feasibility of longer-term community-led ideas. It will provide communities in the Borough the opportunity to gather evidence to support locally led community project ideas. Focusing on Health, Climate and Economy they will provide the required data, knowledge and understanding with the ambition to lead to future funding bids and continue community resilience planning.
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Up to 100%
Maximum Grant	Up to £35,316
Total funds available in grant	£282,531

Name of Project	Bridgend County Business Prosperity Programme
Name of fund	The Business Development Grant
Purpose of fund	The Business Development Grant will support Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bridgend County Borough to diversify, decarbonise and grow which will contribute to creating a vibrant and strong local economy.
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Provides 50% of eligible capital projects costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Maximum Grant	Up to £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Total funds available in grant	£392,377

Name of Project	Bridgend County Business Future Scoping Programme
Name of fund	The Business Feasibility Grant
Purpose of fund	The Business Feasibility Grant is to support businesses to explore feasibility of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of plans and studies, e.g. Business Plans/Feasibility Studies</li> <li>- Before purchasing a piece of machinery, the study could determine the market for increased production or new product is financially viable.</li> <li>- Explore using space in retail, hospitality to introduce new service / product e.g. new hotel spa</li> <li>- Cost benefit analysis to introduce Green procurement</li> </ul>

Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Provides 100% of eligible revenue projects costs. The minimum grant is £5,000 and the maximum grant available is £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Maximum Grant	Up to £25,000 (excluding VAT).
Total funds available in grant	£255,000

Name of Project	Bridgend County Tourism Events Support
Name of fund	Bridgend County Tourism Events Support
Purpose of fund	To support tourism events which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have strong potential to attract visitors from outside the local area, whether that is from other regions or other countries.</li> <li>- have a positive impact on the local economy, such as by generating revenue for local businesses, creating jobs, or promoting the region as a tourist destination.</li> <li>- have cultural significance or highlight a unique aspect of the local area's history, culture, or identity.</li> <li>- have the potential to raise the profile of the county borough in a positive way</li> </ul>
Areas covered	Whole County
Grant Rate	Tier 1 - Up to 50% of eligible revenue costs Tier 2 - Up to 20% of eligible revenue costs
Maximum Grant	Tier 1 - Up to £2,500 Tier 2 - Up to £10,000
Total funds available in grant	Up to £100,000

- 3.6 A grant panel will be set up to oversee and make recommendations for approval for the grants outlined in 3.5. The panel will include relevant BCBC departments, e.g. finance, regeneration and enterprise.
- 3.7 Decisions relating to award of grants will be made in line with the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.8 Any required statutory consents (e.g. planning permission, SuDS Approving Body) remain the responsibility of any grant applicant for any of the grant funds in 3.5.
- 3.9 Each scheme will have its own assessment criteria which will be robust but proportionate, depending on the different level of financial assistance available. Assessment criteria will be agreed by the grant panel.
- 3.10 The allocations of funding available through each grant fund and their associated criteria and processes will be kept under review and, should changes be required, these will be considered in line with BCBC policies and procedures.

3.11 A two-tier governance structure has been implemented as the result of the 2022 Economic Strategy, resulting in the establishment of the Bridgend Economic Partnership, which reports to the BCBC Economic Programme Board. Given that the majority of the UKSPF funded programmes address economic development challenges, it was agreed by Cabinet that the Economic Partnership and Economic Programme Board be involved in the governance and oversight of the UKSPF programmes within Bridgend County Borough. Close liaison and interaction will be required for oversight of the programmes that align more closely to the Public Services Board (PSB) agenda.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

#### **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 BCBC is committed to promoting sustainable development and to discharge its duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. A summary relating to the five ways of working and how they connect to the Corporate Well-being Objectives is below:

**Long-term:** The grant funds outlined in 3.5 that are included within the Bridgend Local Investment Plan have been identified following discussion with key stakeholders and in relation to current understanding of the potential long-term challenges on the County Borough. Building on the process of developing and creating the Economic Strategy, the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the Wellbeing Plan for the County Borough it has been possible to set out a long-term response.

**Prevention:** BCBC has for many years worked closely with stakeholders and the local business community to support the local economy in a wide variety of proactive ways. As well as a continuation of BCBC's ability to react to local situations, the development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan and the grant funds contained within it builds on strengths to plan for the future, take proactive action and support local businesses and local communities.

**Integration:** The work to develop the UKSPF Local Investment Plan is closely aligned with the BCBC Corporate Plan, the Local Development Plan and the Public Service Board's Well-being Plan and the Bridgend County Economic Strategy.

**Collaboration:** The development of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan has been steered by a BCBC officer group and will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.

**Involvement:** For the UKSPF Local Investment Plan to successfully operate it will require the involvement of senior members of local public sectors organisations,



community leaders, business leaders, representatives of business sectors and trade bodies and other key stakeholders.

## 6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The grant funds outlined in 3.5 will contain within the criteria detail relating to the expectations of applicants to support BCBC Climate Change and Decarbonisation ambitions. Assessment of applications will consider the relevance of proposals to the criteria and decisions made as a result.

## 7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

## 8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The UKSPF provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.
- 8.2 All places in the UK received a conditional allocation from the UKSPF to cover the period up to March 2025. Table 1 below details the allocation per Authority for the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR).

**Table 1: UKSPF allocation in CCR**

<b>Individual authorities</b>	<b>Core UKSPF £</b>	<b>Multiply £</b>	<b>Total £</b>	<b>% of regional allocation</b>
Blaenau Gwent	23,301,572	4,863,920	28,165,492	10.11
Bridgend	19,116,296	3,990,295	23,106,591	8.30
Caerphilly	28,272,298	5,901,499	34,173,797	12.27
Cardiff	34,587,594	7,219,740	41,807,334	15.01
Merthyr Tydfil	22,698,977	4,738,136	27,437,113	9.85
Monmouthshire	5,919,533	1,235,631	7,155,164	2.57
Newport	27,177,563	5,672,986	32,850,549	11.79
Rhondda Cynon Taf	37,320,994	7,790,305	45,111,299	16.20
Torfaen	20,431,241	4,264,774	24,696,015	8.86
Vale of Glamorgan	11,606,505	2,422,717	14,029,222	5.04
<b>Total for the region</b>	<b>230,432,573</b>	<b>48,100,003</b>	<b>278,532,576</b>	<b>100.00</b>

- 8.3 Bridgend's allocation is 8.3% of the total allocation for the region.
- 8.4 In September 2022 officers submitted a growth pressure proposal as part of the 2023-2027 Medium Term Financial Strategy process for an increase in funding of £2,523,289 to 'top-up' the budget to match the ambition of the proposals developed by project leads and ensure full delivery of the proposed activities outlined in Appendix 1. This growth pressure was not funded in the final MTFs proposal. As a result, all projects had to re-align their budgets and delivery to ensure delivery within the total UKSPF allocation of £23,106,591.

- 8.5 The amounts available through the grant funds outlined within 3.5 are contained within the overall programme budget which is set out in the funding agreement which is in place with RCTCBC and its ancillary documents.
- 8.6 Regular monitoring, reporting and claims will ensure that commitments and expenditure are in line with the funding agreement and its associated annual profiles.

**9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Town and Community Council Forum notes the report.

**Background documents**

**None**

# United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

## Bridgend County Borough Local Investment Plan information

### Challenges, Opportunities and Proposals

July 2022



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## UKSPF Programmes Overview

The UKSPF will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

Within the overarching objective of the UKSPF of building pride in place and increasing life chances, there are three key investment priorities:

1. Community and Place
2. Supporting Local Business
3. People and Skills

Within each of these investment priorities are the following objectives:

### Communities & Place

- Strengthening social fabric and fostering sense of local pride and belonging
- Building resilient, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.

### People & Skills

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through intensive life and employment support Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work

### Supporting Local Businesses

- Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions
- Promoting networking and collaboration
- Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for SMEs to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

This document identifies the challenges and opportunities identified through a number of key strategic documents in Bridgend County Borough which identify potential areas of alignment with the UKSPF. The document also highlights some areas of opportunity that align with the UKSPF. Current thinking in relation to governance arrangements for programme oversight and fund disbursement, and programme risks are detailed, to ensure that the programmes are well structured, fairly administered, and deliver real outcomes to the residents, businesses and communities in Bridgend County Borough.

It is important to note however that detailed technical guidance is yet to be published and therefore the information contained, whilst valid at the time of writing is subject to change.

## Local Challenges and Opportunities

The Bridgend Economic Strategy, the Bridgend Local Development Plan, the (draft) Bridgend Net Zero Carbon Strategy and the Bridgend and Cwm Taff Wellbeing Assessment set out key challenges across and within each of the three key investment priorities, accompanied by substantial evidence from research and from stakeholder engagement and consultations. Whilst there are clear areas of alignment between these documents and opportunities through UKSPF it is not the case that all areas are aligned, nor is it the case that UKSPF is the only source of funding available to deliver these key strategic documents.

### Challenges aligned to Community and Place theme include:

- **Local resilience planning:** Support for local communities to undertake local resilience planning, focusing on Health, Climate and Economy. Linked directly to future delivery of key local strategies, such as the Climate Response Programme, Local Development Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Economic Strategy.
- **Nature recovery and resilience:** There is a pressing need for action to build resilient ecological networks across our whole land and seascape to safeguard species and habitats and the benefits they provide, addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss, and targeting interventions to help species recover where necessary (Economic Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Decarbonisation of the economy:** The need for individual, business and community action to live more sustainably has been identified in community engagement work, and detailed in the Net Zero Carbon Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment and Economic Strategy.
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Lack of, or deficiencies in, public transport infrastructure, especially regarding “last mile” connectivity, particularly in the valleys (Economic Strategy).
- **Active Travel:** The need to expand active travel infrastructure beyond current plans (Economic Strategy, Net Zero Carbon Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Town Centres:** Bridgend Town Centre in particular needs improvement, but all the town centres need attention (Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan).
- **Inequality:** The Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan and the Wellbeing assessment all identify substantial inequalities between areas (in terms of wealth/income, educational attainment, access to resources and employment, transport and digital connectivity).
- **Community Safety:** Whilst crime is generally lower in Bridgend than in many areas of Wales, there remain concerns for some feeling safe walking after dark, in particular, some worried about anti-social behaviour and gangs gathering (Wellbeing Assessment).
- **Feasibility Planning:** Feasibility studies will provide the required data, knowledge and understanding leading to further funding bids and will underpin the development of future bids to LUF, UKSPF and other strategic funds from any other relevant sources.

There are already 4 major projects ongoing in the County Borough which will all contribute to significant improvements across Bridgend:

- the proposed plan for Bridgend Town Centre in the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan;
- the renovation of the Maesteg Town Hall;
- the development plans for Porthcawl waterfront;
- and the “Employment Land” plans for the industrial areas outside Bridgend Town.

## Opportunities aligned to Community and Place theme include:

- Establishment of community resilience committees, the development of a 'Resilience Hwb' (a virtual hub as well as physical location) offering exhibition, demonstration space and a trader's corner.
- A fund for community-driven resilience response actions such as feasibility, action plans, options appraisals, and a scheme for community projects to include some capital.
- Work with community venues, tying in cultural and heritage sites, to increase engagement in the community and sustainability of community groups.
- Review, refresh and deliver the Nature Recovery Plan in Bridgend to create and improve green space.
- Ensure suitable commercial premises, and flexible working spaces / co-working spaces.
- Coordinating net-zero strategies across the County Borough, including public/private/voluntary sectors.
- Create a long-term programme for rolling out low-carbon retrofitting solutions to the wider borough.
- Support the attractions in the Valleys and Coast through improved signage and marketing.
- Develop more accommodation options to increase the visitor capacity of the area
- Working with cultural groups to increase and broaden the cultural opportunities across the County.
- Coordinating the planning of public transport services into the evening to support the local night-time economy and to support last-mile public transport connectivity.

## Challenges aligned to Supporting Local Businesses theme include:

Challenges identified through broad stakeholder engagement for the Economic Strategy in 2021 additionally identified:

- **Visitor Attraction / Marketing:** A perception of poor marketing and PR for Bridgend County (outside of the county) as a place to live and work (Economic Strategy)
- **Decarbonisation:** Significant challenges to businesses due to climate change, and the imperative to move to a low-carbon economy (Economic Strategy, Net Zero Carbon Strategy)
- **Business Premises:** A lack of available and suitable business premises prevents the Bridgend County business community from reaching its full potential with businesses required to be put on a waiting list for premises (Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan)
- **Recruitment:** Difficulties to recruit skilled individuals, specifically in hospitality, tourism, care etc., but more widely too (Economic Strategy consultations)
- **Business Skills:** Businesses require a skilled workforce, but they also need specific business skills to meet their full potential. The 2021 business survey undertaken by the council indicated that marketing, social media and digital skills (ranging from basic knowledge of Microsoft products to more technical IT knowledge) were deemed particularly important for local businesses. Industry-specific skills such as food hygiene were also indicated as important.

## Opportunities aligned to Supporting Local Business theme include:

- Working across sectors to support businesses to diversify, decarbonise and grow



- Support for the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plan and delivery propositions.
- Strategic capital interventions across the County that support adaptations to existing (council-owned) property to create more diverse business accommodation and development of new property.
- A local enterprise support programme to provide case and account management, training, advice and support to existing businesses and support the development of new business ideas.
- Supporting existing and developing tourism events across the County that offer opportunities in relation to targeted and niche markets and delivering a range of seasonal and targeted marketing campaigns in partnership with the local tourism industry.

### Challenges aligned to People and Skills theme include:

- **Skills Gaps:** Bridgend County has a structural economic constraint of skill shortage which has caused a trend of long-term unemployment (2021 Economic Strategy). This has meant that over time, families and communities have become embedded in cycles of unemployment, exacerbating already existing issues of deprivation and inequality.
- **Economic Inactivity / Worklessness:** The Economic Strategy and Wellbeing Assessment identify deep-rooted economic and social problems within some areas of Bridgend County Borough. This is most clearly recognised in the labour market where there are issues of high economic inactivity (almost 30% in some areas) and significant geographical inequality. There is a large pool of jobless people who are potentially available to work, although a significant proportion of whom are likely to require varying degrees of assistance to re-enter the labour market one of the large drivers of the higher economic inactivity rate is a comparatively high number of people who are long-term sick.
- **Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET):** There is a need to reduce the number of 11 to 19-year-olds who are in education but at risk of becoming not in education, training, or employment (Pre-NEET), and those who are 16 to 24-year-olds who are NEET, to bring about their sustainable integration into the labour market, thereby contributing to a reduction in youth unemployment (Economic Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment).

### Opportunities aligned to People and Skills theme include:

For Bridgend County, capacity building is essential across all levels of the community, to develop skills and competencies to take greater control of their own lives and contribute to inclusive local development.

- There is significant untapped economic potential to be unlocked by facilitating re-skilling and up-skilling of the existing workforce.
- Continued focus on basic skills is needed to ensure workforce (and potential workforce) with a strong and broad set of basic skills that encourages people into work and ensures they can succeed.
- Bridgend County can capitalise on its strong background in the advanced manufacturing sector, bringing economic advantage as that sector develops and enabling Bridgend County to consolidate its position as a regional hub.
- The Low Carbon economy is set to expand rapidly and create a wealth of new jobs. Bridgend County can capitalise on this with the right training programmes, aligned to national and local strategies to de-carbonise the economy.

- Support young people to make a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school, reduce the number of 11 to 24-year-olds who are NEET, and address wider issues such as poor emotional/physical/sexual health and youth homelessness.
- Boost learning, skills and employability in the immediate and future workforce especially those cohorts with barriers to establishing a secure employment situation.

## Summary of Project Proposals

### 1. Community and Place

#### Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning

Support for local communities to undertake local resilience planning, focusing on Health, Climate and Economy, linked directly to future delivery of key local strategies, such as the Climate Response Programme, Local Development Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Economic Strategy. To include activities such as community resilience analysis, the establishment of community resilience committees, support for community-driven resilience response actions, the development of the 'Resilience Hwb' (a virtual hub as well as a physical, town centre location) offering exhibition, demonstration space and a traders corner. Also, Resilience Hwb on tour (a series of local-level talks, seminars and workshops targeted at the local level. In addition to this the options for action in relation to sites identified as community challenges will be explored.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£1,000,050**

#### Bridgend County Thriving Communities

##### **Part (a): Community Capacity and Development Building Programme**

The community development and building capacity programme will include a range of new approaches co-produced with people and communities including the delivery of some approaches and programmes that have previously been progressed as pilot phases of development. This could include a new third sector fund to replace similar previous locally administered grant programmes.

##### **Part (b): Transforming Bridgend County Borough/ Transforming Commercial Centres**

Transforming Bridgend will support the design, development and feasibility of projects already identified through local placemaking and masterplanning strategies.

The capital element will extend funding to support commercial property grants beyond main town centres (outside of Transforming Towns Boundary), but also support major town centre infrastructure projects as match funding to the Transforming Towns programme.

Thriving Communities will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£2,080,000**

#### Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme

##### **Part (a): Bridgend County Local Nature Plan**

This will take forward the delivery of the Bridgend County Local Nature Plan and deliver key actions outlined in the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Recovery Plan. A targeted approach will be adopted to carry out a wide range of locally focused biodiversity enhancement schemes based on local engagement and local involvement. Alongside this, a 'biodiversity' budgeting concept will be rolled out with resources being made available for community-led green space and biodiversity enhancement activities.

This will be delivered at a local level, although it has the opportunity to operate on a Sub-regional level, using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.



### **Part (b): The Great Glamorgan Way.**

This is a project which aims to continue to deliver a coherent 270KM network of green corridors within the South Wales Central region for the purposes of improving bridleway access and habitat connectivity. The project will also continue to develop its work on assessing and growing the economic impact the network will have with the varying local communities it passes through.

Current proposed value  
**£725,000**

### **Bridgend County Community Future Scoping programme**

Support the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plans, funding bids and delivery propositions.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£400,000**

### **Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework**

This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£1,000,000**

## 2. Supporting Local Business

### Bridgend County Business Prosperity programme

This programme will work across sectors to support businesses to diversify, decarbonise and grow through a wide range of targeted, clustered and County-wide interventions that enhance the capacity of businesses to develop and support opportunity maximisation. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£1,100,000**

### Bridgend County Business Future Scoping programme

Support the creation of development and investment plans, built on local needs and engagement and the creation of 'fund ready' business plans, funding bids and delivery propositions. This will enable the exploration of longer-term options to diversify, decarbonise and grow. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£425,000**

### Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise

A series of strategic capital interventions across the County that support adaptations to existing property to create more diverse business accommodation and development of new property. This could include the target to develop the 'Net-Zero market'. Examples, such as:

- Bridgend carbon neutral indoor market
- Industrial property development
- Town centre business premises

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£ 3,500,000**

### Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme

A local enterprise support programme to provide case and account management, training, advice and support to existing businesses and support the development of new business ideas. To enable a focus on 'meanwhile' spaces as a mechanism for businesses to test new products and markets and a series of meet-the-buyer-focused interventions. This would work with the Bridgend Business Forum.

This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£450,000**

### Bridgend County Tourism Events Support

Tourism events support will provide a tiered approach to supporting existing and developing tourism events across the County that offer opportunities in relation to targeted and niche markets. Coordination will be through a central portal and point of contact that will enable local supply chain development. Alongside these opportunities to identify suitable assets and event spaces will be explored and developed as is considered feasible. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement, and grant fund.

Current proposed value

**£450,000**

## **Bridgend County Local Destination Management and Marketing**

This will enable local attraction enhancement and support the delivery of a range of seasonal and targeted marketing campaigns in partnership with the local tourism industry. That partnership approach will support the development of a new and unique range of package offers.

Coordination of County wide destinations will enable the local economy to better respond to peak and seasonal demand placed upon it by tourism and ensure that visitor experience is enhanced. This will be delivered at a local level using a mix of in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value

**£150,000**

## **Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework**

This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value

**£1,000,000**



### 3. People and Skills

#### CELT+ (as part of a regional model)

This programme has 3 parts:

##### CELT + Bridgend Inspire 2 Work /Achieve

Preventative work with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and other young people who are disengaging and disengaged with education, training and employment and need support to secure a suitable post-16 destination. Resources for participants (homeless, poor digital skills) to engage with services. The programme will delivery on the CELT model of engagement, community based using third sector partners as the point of contact, health board, young people.

This will be delivered locally and there is an aspiration for it to be co-ordinated regionally by a lead Local Authority. It will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£3,150,000**

##### CELT+ Employability - Bridgend County

The programme will support a number of key intervention stages to support people within the County Borough: Getting involved; Becoming more employable; accessing employment; staying in employment; employment progression.

The programme will delivery on the CELT model of engagement, community based using third sector partners as the point of contact, health board, young people.

This will be delivered locally and there is an aspiration for it to be co-ordinated regionally by a lead Local Authorities will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£4,000,000**

##### CELT+ Regional Procurement Opportunities

In order to support clients to achieve the best and most sustainable job we will work with regional partners, supported by the Regional Skills Partnership, to procure appropriate support for the CELT + cohort which will provide training and support to all age clients in Bridgend to access opportunities across the region. These industries which are currently new and niche are expecting high growth and investment and are predicted to provide secure sustainable employment going forward requiring skills which will be in high demand in the future.

Current proposed value  
**£875,000**

#### Multiply - Bridgend County

Multiply is a standalone programme within the UKSPF that will seek to support adults (19+) by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses.

UK Government has defined success measures under the Multiply programme as:

1. More adults achieving maths qualifications / participating in numeracy courses (up to and including Level 2/ SCQF Level 5).
2. Improved labour market outcomes e.g. fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
3. Increased adult numeracy across the population.

A range of delivery mechanisms are being explored for Multiply within the region and at a local level. Therefore, it is currently considered that it will be delivered locally via in house, commissioning and procurement.

Current proposed value  
**£3,990,295**

## Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework

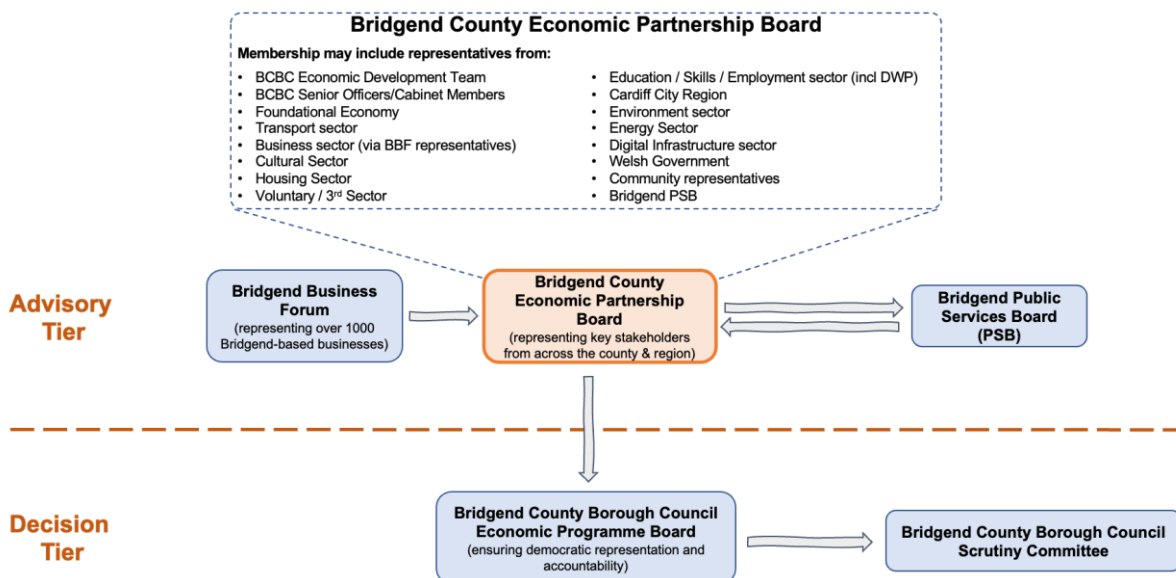
This cross-cutting framework will provide the opportunity to adopt a co-production approach to design and delivery and adaptable and responsive delivery mechanisms by specialist organisations with targeted local to regional delivery in response to needs as they are considered to be and change. This will be delivered locally and will involve in-house, commissioning, procurement and grant fund.

Current proposed value  
**£1,000,000**

## Local Governance

A two-tier governance structure has recently been implemented at a local level as the result of the 2022 Economic Strategy, resulting in the establishment of the Bridgend Economic Partnership, which reports to the BCBC Economic Programme Board. Given that the majority of the potential UKSPF funded programmes address economic development challenges, it is proposed that the Economic Partnership and Economic Programme Boards are appropriate structures for governance and oversight of the UKSPF programmes within Bridgend County Borough. Close liaison and interaction will be required for oversight of the programmes that align more closely to the Public Services Board (PSB) agenda.

This is represented in the following diagram:



The focus will be on balancing requirements for business recovery/growth with community wellbeing, environmental imperatives and ecological health, and recommending short, medium and longer-term actions to address these.

The council already has well-established governance models for programme execution in the existing Programme Board model. This model, along with the existing Council, Cabinet and Committee structures is employed to ensure democratic oversight, decision making and accountability for decisions that affect the communities, businesses and the natural environment. The Economic Programme Board is comprised of representatives from key departments, is chaired by the relevant cabinet member or director, and reports into the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB).



UKSPF funded proposals face a number of key risk areas that could impact their success in achieving the target outcomes. General risks include:

- **Mobilisation and scale-up of delivery capacity:** there is a significant amount of delivery expected within a two-year period. A key risk relates to a failure to recruit sufficient project delivery staff, to ensure capacity to deliver (this applies equally to BCBC staff and staff within delivery partners).
- **Insufficient funds to complete target objectives:** In preparing the UKSPF proposals, informed assumptions have had to be made regarding the cost of delivery. Given ongoing inflationary pressures, there is a risk that funding falls short of the actual cost to deliver.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** All of the proposals will require on-going engagement with local residents, businesses and stakeholders in order to deliver true co-production of programmes. Insufficient engagement with stakeholders will lead to poor take up of opportunities provided by UKSPF, resulting in likely shortfalls in target outcomes.
- **Poor collaboration / alignment across delivery partners and within the council:** Effective collaboration across council departments and delivery partners will be vital to ensure effective and integrated delivery planning and delivery.
- **Council Processes:** The ability of participating local authorities to process all the required actions within a timely manner will be vital to delivery success.
- **Unknown support landscape from March 2023:** There exists a risk of planning a programme without full knowledge of the support landscape post March 2023, which may subsequently turn out to be insufficient to sustain the programme.
- **Significant external events:** large scale, disruptive external events or developments (e.g. Covid, International Conflict) beyond the influence of BCBC or delivery partners could cause significant disruption / delay to delivery programmes.
- **Poor quality of contractors:** Where contractors are required to deliver works or elements of a programme, it is essential that appropriate minimum quality standards are maintained.
- **Alignment of UKSPF with Welsh Government Programmes and funding:** It will be important to ensure alignment between UKSPF and WG programmes and funding streams, to maximise the benefits from both.
- **Timing of UKSPF funding:** Delays in the decision-making timetable of UKSPF could have knock-on impacts in relation to the delivery timetable of UKSPF.

## Summary of UKSPF Programme Proposals

### Community and Place

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
<b>Bridgend County Local Resilience Planning</b>	Health; Economy; Climate	In-house; commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional	£1,000,050
<b>Bridgend County Thriving Communities</b>	Capital/revenue grant fund for community group access	In-house/commission; grant fund	Local	£2,080,000
<b>Bridgend County Green Spaces Enhancement Scheme</b>	Targeted green space and biodiversity enhancement programme, including Great Glamorgan Way	In-house; commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional	£725,000
<b>Bridgend County Community Future Scoping programme</b>	Fund to test the feasibility of longer term community-led ideas	In-house/commission; grant fund	Local	£400,000
<b>Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework</b>	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				<b>£5,205,050</b>

## Supporting Local Business

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
<b>Bridgend County Business Prosperity programme</b>	Grant fund to support business diversification, decarbonise and growth	In-house; grant fund	Local; sub-regional	£1,100,000
<b>Bridgend County Business Future Scoping programme</b>	Grant fund to support feasibility of longer-term options for diversification, decarbonise and growth	In-house; grant fund	Local; sub-regional	£425,000
<b>Bridgend County Centres of Enterprise</b>	Capital support to create more diverse business accommodation	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£3,500,000
<b>Bridgend County Local Enterprise Support Programme</b>	Networking, training and development for local businesses	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£450,000
<b>Bridgend County Tourism Events Support</b>	Tiered grant fund to support events across the County	In-house; grant fund	Local	£450,000
<b>Bridgend County Local Destination Management &amp; Marketing</b>	Product-led marketing campaigns	In-house; commission; procurement	Local	£150,000
<b>Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework</b>	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				<b>£7,075,000</b>



## People and Skills

Proposals	Activities	Delivery model	Delivery level	Current proposed value
<b>CELT+ Bridgend Inspire 2 Work / Achieve</b>	Support for NEETS	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local	£3,150,000
<b>CELT + Employability -Bridgend County</b>	Employability support for employees to improve labour market position	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local and regional co-ordination	£4,000,000
<b>CELT+ Regional Joint Commissioning</b>	Support for local employers to improve the skills of their workforce	Commission; procurement; grant fund	Sub-regional; regional	£875,000
<b>Multiply – Bridgend County</b>	Adult numeracy support programme	In-house; Commission; procurement	Local; sub-regional; regional	£3,990,295
<b>Bridgend County Prosperity Co-production Framework (cross-cutting)</b>	Core fund to support deliverability across all themes	In-house; grant fund	Local	£1,000,000
				<b>£13,015,295</b>

# Agenda Item 6

Meeting of:	TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM
Date of Meeting:	29 AUGUST 2023
Report Title:	CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022/23
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER- LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	ALEX RAWLIN, POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	Council priorities arising from the self-assessment inform Service Plans and the Annual Improvement Plan which form part of the Policy Framework.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report outlines the process and findings of the Council’s self-assessment for 2022/23.</li> <li>• The approach is considerably more embedded in regular quarterly reporting than in the previous year.</li> <li>• The main differences in the final report from last year’s final report are – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Challenge sessions took place earlier in the year</li> <li>○ Case studies are included</li> <li>○ More comprehensive coverage of consultation and engagement throughout the year is included</li> <li>○ Annual performance data will be published alongside the self-assessment</li> <li>○ Planned consultation is more comprehensive.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The self-assessment judgements are – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wellbeing Objective One – Good</li> <li>○ Wellbeing Objective Two – Adequate</li> <li>○ Wellbeing Objective Three – Good</li> <li>○ Use of resources – Adequate</li> <li>○ Governance – Good</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council’s second corporate self-assessment report and judgements, and to seek comments on the draft report in **Appendix 1**.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which received royal assent in January 2021, set out a new local government improvement regime. One of the requirements of the Act is for the council to make and publish a self-assessment report once each financial year. The self-assessment report has to set out conclusions on whether the Council met the 'performance requirements' during that financial year, and actions needed to improve. The 'performance requirements' focus on -
- Are we exercising our functions effectively;
  - Are we using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
  - Is our governance strong.
- 2.2 The Council published its first self-assessment in October 2022 based on performance in 2021/22. The process was new, but based on existing data, reports and review / challenge meetings where possible. Feedback on the report was generally positive in terms of the honesty and transparency of ratings, length of the report and simplicity of the language. However, some Elected Members felt that annual performance data should have been published alongside self-assessment.
- 2.3 Many parts of the self-assessment process have now been embedded in the Council's regular performance management process, for example the regulatory tracker and inclusion of consultation, engagement and involvement exercises in the quarterly dashboard. By design, it was intended that the process for 2022/23 should be simpler and less resource intensive than the previous year.
- 2.4 Existing end of year performance process and timelines have been used to capture Directorate self-assessments of performance to satisfy the first performance requirement (as in 2021/22). However, this year a simpler template was designed with the previous year's information pre-populated for Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) to update. Directorates were asked provide a realistic assessment of their progress, use plain English to outline their challenges and achievements, retain the format of the information and keep contributions brief and to the point. The 4 templates were then collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.
- 2.5 The main change to this section is the inclusion of case studies. Having reviewed all other self-assessments in Wales, this is the one feature that stood out. Around half of local authorities included case studies, and they added an extra dimension to the reports.
- 2.6 The second performance requirement, on use of resources, also followed a similar process to last year. The 7 use of resources templates were reviewed and updated by the lead officers. All of the 7 areas have been included in the work of Audit Wales in the past year, and in many cases reviewed and discussed by the Governance and Audit Committee, or Scrutiny Committees, or are included in the



year ahead, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These 7 were then collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.

- 2.7 The third performance requirement, on governance, is largely covered by the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which is scrutinised and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee. This document was summarised, and used to inform the self-assessment.

### 3 Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements were pulled together into a single presentation for a full-day Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) meeting on 14 June 2023 and considered alongside end of year performance. Comments and changes from CPA have been used to inform a draft self-assessment report.

- 3.2 The Council's proposed self-assessment judgements for 2022/23 are –

<b>Wellbeing Objective One</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing Objective Two</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Wellbeing Objective Three</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Use of resources</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Good</b>

- 3.3 The Forum may want to reflect on the fact that these are exactly the same scores as last year. There are numerous reasons for this, including the short time since consideration of the Council's previous self-assessment in October 2022, turnaround time for significant improvement in use of resources, for example performance management and asset management, issues with workforce capacity and financial constraints included at the start of the self-assessment report for context. On balance therefore, while there have been improvements in some elements of the self-assessment judgements, it is felt that there has been insufficient change to alter the overall judgement.
- 3.4 The Forum may also want to reflect on the addition of case studies and whether this adds value to the report, and whether the publication of quarter 4 performance information alongside the report adds context and value to the self-assessment.

3.5 Following its consideration at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee, the Council has commenced formal consultation on the draft document with the public as well as discussing with this forum as well as -

- discussion with Trade Unions
- discussion with Partners and neighbouring local authorities at the Public Services Board

3.6 Following engagement and consultation over the summer, it is proposed that the final self-assessment be presented to Cabinet and Council in September 2023.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this information report.

#### **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 This report measures progress against the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that formed part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-23:-

1. Supporting a successful sustainable economy
2. Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient
3. Smarter use of resources

5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act form a key part of the key lines of enquiry for officer and member challenge of the self-assessment findings. The annual wellbeing assessment will be merged with the annual self-assessment for 2022/23, as it was for 2021/22.

#### **6. Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the self-assessment will consider the Council's performance and progress on specific climate change related commitments and targets in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

#### **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the self-assessment will consider the Council's performance and progress on specific safeguarding and corporate parenting related commitments and targets in the Corporate Plan 2018-23

#### **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with these arrangements.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 The Town and Community Council Forum is recommended to: -

- Review and provide any recommendations for change to the corporate self-assessment report 2022/23 at **Appendix 1**.
- Consider whether the additions to the report since 2021/22 add value to the document
- Consider how best to raise awareness of the report and feed in the views of Town and Community Councils around Bridgend County Borough.

### **Background documents**

None.



## Appendix 1 – Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23

### 1. The purpose of this report

In January 2021, the Welsh Parliament passed a new law that changed the way councils work. Every year, we must publish a self-assessment report. This report covers 6 April 2022 to 5 April 2023.

We want the report to assure Welsh Government that we are performing well. We also want it to tell them that we are using our money and other resources properly and making decisions in a sensible, open way. Most importantly, the report must tell local residents, businesses and all stakeholders how we are doing.

Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association published guidance that told us how to develop our self-assessment and what evidence to use to judge ourselves.

### 2. The changing world for local government

The world has changed a lot since the pandemic, and it is having a big impact on the way the Council works.

The cost-of-living crisis is making things difficult for you as residents and businesses, and it is making it harder for the Council to manage too. Some of the challenges your Council faces are –

- Increasing energy costs for community centres, leisure centres and schools
- Increasing fuel costs for school transport, home carers and recycling vehicles
- Changes to the cost and availability of goods like food for residential homes and building materials for new schools
- Pay rises for our staff who provide indispensable services
- Government asking us to provide extra services like distributing cost of living payments
- Impacts on residents that add demand to services, including increased homelessness and safeguarding referrals
- Funding for the Council not increasing at the same rate as prices.

### 3. How is the council performing?

Every 5 years the council publishes a new Corporate Plan. This plan describes the council's priorities, why they are important and how progress will be measured. The priorities, or well-being objectives, show our commitments to our citizens and our contribution to Wales's seven well-being goals -

Well-being Goal	Priority 1: A successful sustainable economy	Priority 2: Helping people be more healthy & resilient	Priority 3: Smarter use of resources
A prosperous Wales	✓		✓
A resilient Wales			✓
A healthier Wales	✓	✓	✓
A more equal Wales	✓	✓	✓

Well-being Goal	Priority 1: A successful sustainable economy	Priority 2: Helping people be more healthy & resilient	Priority 3: Smarter use of resources
A Wales of cohesive communities	✓	✓	✓
Vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language	✓	✓	
A globally responsible Wales	✓		✓

The Future Generations Act says we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Based on the sustainable development principle, our well-being objectives will deliver long-term positive outcomes. We review progress every year to make sure our actions are getting us closer to our goals. This report covers the final year of the corporate plan published in 2017, (although it is refreshed and updated annually), with three priorities for the council -



When we developed this corporate plan, we thought hard about the type of organisation we wanted to be. Our vision is to act as **One Council** working together to improve lives. We have a process for measuring how we are doing on these priorities. We use –

- performance indicators,
- evidence on delivery of our projects,
- feedback from residents, businesses, and partners, and
- the views of our regulators and auditors.

Each part of the council pulls this information together and presents it to councillors who look at the data, check it and ask questions. This was done for the year 2022-23 in June 2023. We use this information to come to a judgement on each priority using this scale -

<b>EXCELLENT</b>	Very strong, sustained performance
<b>GOOD</b>	Strong features, minor aspects need improvement
<b>ADEQUATE</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects need improvement
<b>UNSATISFACTORY</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths. Needs urgent improvement.



## Priority One – Supporting a successful, sustainable economy

We want to build a place where people can have good jobs and careers and improve their family income. Prosperity boosts health and well-being and creates more resilient communities that need fewer services. Education is the most important part of improving the life chances of young people. Our main ways of achieving this objective are -

- **Improve learner outcomes** – Support children, adults and families to get better education outcomes;
- **Growth and prosperity** - Promote the conditions for growth and prosperity by helping people and business to succeed.

### What is our judgement?

Supporting a successful, sustainable economy	GOOD
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- **Learner outcomes** – There is no data available for the school year 2021-2022 for comparison with previous years. We continued to align monitoring and evaluation processes with Welsh Government's 'Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability'. Work continued with secondary schools to improve progress of Key Stage 4 learners and to retain Post-16 learners. A Post-16 Improvement Plan has been approved. Schools submitted 'Statements of Intent' for any changes to their curriculum, to share good practice, improve collaboration and avoid duplication. Unfortunately, young people in Bridgend who are engaging with support services are presenting with a wide range of social and mental health difficulties, and the majority have said the pandemic is the main contributor. We delivered the first phase of the universal primary free school meals for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- **School support** – We worked with Central South Consortium to support schools on self-evaluation and assessment, continuous improvement, and implementation of the new Curriculum. Estyn resumed school inspections in spring 2022. There are currently no schools in statutory categories in Bridgend, but six schools are receiving 'enhanced monitoring'. School self-evaluation work with their improvement partners continues to identify where additional support is needed for learners after the pandemic. Officers offered enhanced support and more frequent monitoring visits to any early years non-maintained setting if concerns were identified after inspections.
- **Welsh Language Education** – The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has been approved by Welsh Government covering 2022-2027 and we have appointed a full-time Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Co-ordinator. All actions in the WESP for 2022-2023 have been completed. Welsh language immersion provision continued to develop and numbers of Year 1 learners in Welsh-medium primary schools has increased. Our capital schemes are helping to grow Welsh-medium school places. Construction work for the Welsh-medium childcare scheme at Bettws was completed.
- **Attendance and exclusions**– The creation of an exclusion lead within the Education Engagement Team has assisted schools in ensuring the correct processes and procedures are being followed related to fixed-term and permanent exclusion. While the percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions in primary schools, in the 2021-2022 school year (reported in 2022-2023), was static when compared to pre-pandemic levels, the situation in secondary schools was double pre-pandemic levels.
- **Regeneration** - The Town Centre Masterplan for Bridgend, including redevelopment of the Railway station are progressing. The new site for the Bridgend College Campus in the town centre is being cleared and prepared and the planning application is in. The Placemaking agenda for Porthcawl is looking at infrastructure, public realm, and green

spaces. The Aldi store at Salt Lake opened 13 July. The £6m sea defences scheme is complete at the Eastern Promenade and open to the public. The Council got an £18m grant for the Grand Pavilion, to refurbish and extend the venue and provide a wider range of events and activities. We are working with housing providers to invest in housing in the Town Centres. Maesteg Town Hall is progressing, but its completion date is delayed. We are investing in town centres and working with partners to redevelop sites and buildings. The regeneration programme delivered over £600k of improvement grants for commercial premises after covid. There is £1.36m support available for a further 3 years. Vacant properties in all town centres have decreased.

- **Business support** - The Bridgend Elevate and Prosper Project (EAP) is supporting start-ups and micro-business. Business start-ups have increased to 770, that is by a further 28% since 2021-22. The socially responsible 3-year procurement strategy and delivery plan is ensuring our spending is more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector. There is significant demand for the new commercial units at the Cosy Corner development in Porthcawl and we are working with Agents to let these new premises which will open in August 2023.
- **Support for employment** - Employability Bridgend provides support to residents and council employees, including unemployed people, and those in work but struggling with low skills or in-work poverty. The number of people from the Employability Scheme who have gone into employment is 392 in 2022-23. We have also addressed work poverty by assisting some 107 people into higher paid jobs.
- **Tourism** – We have worked with partners to put on events to increase tourism in Porthcawl, including the Senior Open Golf tournament at Royal Porthcawl. Also giving advice on the Porthcawl Triathlon, Porthcawl Truck Gathering and the Porthcawl Elvis Festival. The Cosy Corner development will provide new community facilities following a £3m investment and will be complete in late summer 2023. More people are visiting Bridgend and Porthcawl, this is up by 3% from last year and has now reached pre-pandemic levels. Tourism expenditure data will tell us more at the end of the year.

### Regulators assurances

Our education services were last inspected by Estyn in [March 2019](#). Since the inspection, we have been working to address their recommendations, raising the standards of literacy in primary schools, improve outcomes for post-16 learners in sixth forms, increasing the pace of improvement in schools causing concern and strengthening the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum (WESF) to deliver the priorities in the WESP.

Estyn also carried out an inspection of Adult Community Learning in February 2023 and the Estyn report that was published on 7 June 2023 identified that many learners make suitable progress in their learning with the partnership offering a useful range of courses, based on the Welsh Government priorities of literacy, numeracy and digital skill, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) The partnership provides a range of impartial advice, guidance and support to help learners stay on track and progress in their learning and Estyn identified that the partnership worked effectively together providing advice, support and guidance to learners with honest evaluations.

### Consultations and engagement activities

Consultation	Dates	Findings and Impact
WESP 2022-2032 and 5 year WESP plan.	July 2022 to March 2023	WESP was approved by the Welsh Government and workshops held with Welsh in Education Forum to create the five-year WESP plan.

Healthcare needs policy	January to March 2023	Consultation and engagement sessions held with pupils, staff and parents. Pupils felt their health care needs were being met in school and that if they voiced an opinion then they would be listened to. Pupils felt confident that staff had the knowledge and awareness to take action where needed. Information was provided to schools and parents to explain the policy. Further awareness to staff and pupil provided in regard to assisting with their health care needs.
Planning for improvement	Ongoing	School support attend and support the engagement of all primary and secondary schools leads within the 'Planning for Improvement' network. Workshops take place, alongside guest speakers / opportunities to network / share information.
Seren activities	Ongoing	Activities organised by Seren hub co-ordinators aim to provide learners with increased resilience to dealing with exam stress, workload and everyday life. Learner voice is regularly requested, and feedback has informed us that their engagement in the events has been impactful.
Higher education programme	Ongoing	Aimed across all key stages has also promoted resilience and healthy mental well-being whilst dealing with school pressures.
Bridgend Forces Festival	June 2023	We worked with 'Forces Fitness', 'YourNorth' and 'SSCE Cymru' to create the 'Bridgend Forces Festival' for service children. 100 service children, who are categorised as vulnerable learners, came together for the first time to take part in activities to improve their well-being and resilience. The festival highlighted emotional challenges that service children face in their education through interviews and questionnaires.
Local Development Plan – Examination in Public	January to March 2023	The Planning Inspector is considering the evidence, but no significant changes have been requested to date. It is anticipated the outcome will be known in late Autumn 2023.
Consultation on the Hybont Project at Brynmenyn Industrial Estate	Dec 22 ongoing	Two public exhibitions held on the 13 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2022 these were followed up with a post consultation feedback public information event on the 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023. The formal planning application has now submitted and is being determined by the LPA.
Consultation on 2030 Strategy	Dec 2022 ongoing	The Strategy is now approved by the Council and an action plan was approved by Cabinet in December of 2022.
Placemaking strategy in Porthcawl	Completed May 2023	The overarching strategy was consulted on in March 2022, and provides a framework to shape future development within the regeneration area. Flowing from that a further consultation on Public Open Space has also been taken place between to May 2023, including meetings with all schools in Porthcawl, stakeholder workshops and public consultation at the Pavilion.

### What will we do to improve?

Some of the main improvements we will make for this priority are –

- Using the Post-16 Improvement Plan, we will work with schools to improve outcomes for learners in sixth forms.
- The use of permanent exclusions will be reviewed, and we will increase opportunities for managed moves in schools in Bridgend.



- We will support the ambitions of the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) (2022-2032).
- We will deliver at least 20 more face-to-face Adult Community Learning sessions and increase learner engagement by 20%.
- That the Bridgend Business Forum delivers business support events in 2023.
- Introduce the Integrated Works Management System (IWMS) to improve the speed of work instructions and real time statutory compliance data.

## **Case study**

### **Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd**

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd is a Welsh-medium secondary school that received The Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) grant, to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic on learners. The funding provided an opportunity to recruit a teacher to focus on Years 11, 12 and 13, to provide support and increase retention of post-16 learners. The school has also appointed a classroom assistant to help learners with welfare issues, transition and develop the use of Welsh to build learners' confidence. The school encourages learners to have confidence in speaking Welsh, by providing tutor sessions and cross-cutting activities to practice oral language, in groups or through one-to-one sessions. The school also works with parents so that they also emphasise the importance of using the language. The school has focused on addressing the needs of different learner groups and aspects of the curriculum, by setting up groups to develop literacy, numeracy and digital competency skills, as well as providing transition to learners in years 5 and 6. Learners have been graded based on their support requirements so that targeted support can be provided, which includes one-to-one work with the pastoral team, mentoring sessions and additional help with their work. Through blended learning and collaboration with other schools, resources and expertise can be shared to enhance the support provided to learners. The school plans to work in partnership with universities to utilise cross-cutting skills to develop a balanced programme of learning.

### **Oldcastle Primary School**

Oldcastle is an English medium primary school in Bridgend with 445 learners. Well-being champions have worked with all year groups on key life skills. Learners have experienced how to cook, grow vegetables, basic sewing, and increased understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. A well-being dog is now part of the team, supporting more anxious learners arriving at school every morning, and working with target groups during 'Thrive' and well-being sessions. The 'Recruit Recover and Raise Standards' (RRRS) grant has also been utilised to employ a Family Engagement Officer trained in the Thrive approach to work with learners and their families. They address attendance issues using a mixture of approaches including one-to-one, nurture groups, attendance meetings, and linking with external agencies. A structured enrichment programme takes place every Friday afternoon delivered by the whole school staff. This offers a range of activities, skills, and experiences. Through this, all learners have access to the same opportunities. External professionals are often involved, and a network of community members now exists. As a result of the grant and the projects it has supported, there are closer relationships between the school, parents, and the community. Attendance has improved across the whole school, most notably amongst learners with anxieties around attending school. Behaviour has improved with Thrive and 1-to-1 sessions available to be booked or accessed instantly.

### **Corneli Primary School**

In 2015, Corneli Primary School opened a savings scheme, in partnership with Bridgend Lifesavers Credit Union. Since then, Corneli Primary has won a Credit Unions of Wales award for a video entry and has been nominated for a Credit Unions of Wales School Partnership. Nearly all pupils and families now understand the benefits of regular saving and financial management. Through pupil voice, older pupils have taken ownership working alongside staff and governors to successfully manage weekly savings provision. The majority of staff, as well as members of the community, save on a weekly basis as role models for pupils. The school has created a real-life context where pupils can save for a purpose. The school has enhanced its Enterprise initiative weeks and has had an integral role in developing the 'Four Purposes' of Curriculum for Wales. Standards of financial literacy have increased across the school impacting on problem solving and thinking skills. A more positive impact has developed on attitudes towards financial management within the community, as well as enhanced life skills and social skills needed to thrive in society, and enhanced life chances and quality of life and to enable future aspirations for employment and economic well-being.

### **Cosy Corner Development**



In October 2020 the planned regeneration of the Cosy Corner site, by CREDU, ended and the site returned to the Council as a partial commenced construction site. We wanted to develop this prominent and valuable site for a community facility. We have worked with Visit Wales to develop a design and secure funding and in May 2021, appointed architects to develop a single storey glass and stone

building containing community facilities, including accessible toilets and a changing place facility, new facilities for Marina Berth Holders and the Harbour Master, shops and restaurant. This building will be surrounded by landscaped grounds and have a children's play area and outdoor seating. Extra Welsh Government funding has been secured, planning permission granted and in May 2022 John Weaver Construction were awarded the construction contract. The site will be completed, opened and occupied by new businesses by August 2023 and will hugely enhance the tourism and community offer on the Porthcawl waterfront as well as providing business and employment opportunities.

## Priority Two – Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient

We want to provide support to help individuals and families thrive. A focus on prevention and well-being helps us support people to lead independent lives and reduces the likelihood of them becoming dependent on council services. Our main ways of achieving this objective are -

- **Community support and services** – Provide support and services to those who need our help and help them to stay independent for as long as possible.
- **Resilient communities** – Develop innovative ways to improve well-being and deliver services.
- **Health and well-being** – Improve the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and young people and vulnerable citizens.

### What is our judgement?

Help people & communities be healthy & resilient	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
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- **Social services** - Increases in demand in children's social care continue, there are challenges across the health and social care system and difficulties recruiting and keeping social care staff. We have focused on improving quality and performance. Our plans to improve workforce recruitment and retention, include using agency workers to make sure we meet our statutory duties, bringing in social worker support officers to case management teams, introducing market supplements to salaries in some teams, development of a social worker charter and recruitment of an officer to promote the opportunities in social care roles. We are making progress on international recruitment. Social worker trainees and secondees are being supported to help us develop a professional social worker workforce in the long term. We are also making sure that specialist well-being support can be provided.
- **Children's services** - Delivering children's social care services is still very difficult but we are making progress on our top priorities of practice improvement, workforce, provision of services, hearing and acting on the voice of people and effective partnership working. We have worked with partners to prepare, understand and act on learning from the child practice review and our own internal reviews, including 6 week and 6 month plans for all parts of children's social care. We have retained our gold, silver and bronze governance structures to deal with continuing high levels of contacts to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and information advice and assistance services (IAA). These services have been reviewed and a future model for the service agreed. We have appointed a lead for Social Worker Transformation who has started implementing 'Signs of Safety' model of practice to drive practice improvement. We are embedding focused learning from audits and reviews and enhanced performance data to ensure continued management oversight of the service. We have done a review of our residential provision and strengthened leadership by appointing a dedicated Responsible Individual. We have improved our Quality Assurance framework in residential children's services. The solo residential provision which was registered in November 2022 will build capacity into our residential services.
- **Adult services** - There have been challenges in meeting care and support needs in a timely way in adult services. We are improving our customer services and response times to initial inquiries through the Social Work Review Project and Corporate Front



Door project and the introduction of the new telephone systems. We are focused on strength based social work practice and quality assurance and management oversight is being strengthened. A new 'Outcome Focused, Strength Based' model of practice has been launched which will strengthen further how we understand and act on what matters to individuals. Pressures in meeting the needs of older people is a high priority. We are putting in new pathways to improve the hospital discharge processes, although capacity in community care services is still a big challenge. We are modernising in-house domiciliary care services, getting rid of 'split shifts' and recruiting to vacant posts in care and support roles. Deep dives are being done in every adult social work team and a new operating model will be approved in 2023. Where changes have been needed more quickly, they have been made. We are transferring the Council's telecare service from analogue to digital and improving the use of assistive technology to improve outcomes for people. We are reviewing our learning disability direct services to make sure we have a sustainable day opportunities and supported living model.

- **Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform** – Our ALN implementation Plan 2022-2023 was completed and Early Years ALN processes were established and embedded. We continued the quality assurance monitoring of local authority individual development plans (IDPs) for learners and the use of Early Years ALN toolkits by Early Years settings. We held events for school staff and partners to support those involved with ALN Reform. We extended our provisions for primary-aged learners with ALN, opening two new learning resource centres in autumn term 2022 - one at Tremains Primary School for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, one at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- **Safeguarding** – We are accountable to the Regional Safeguarding Board for making sure we are safeguarding children and adults at risk. They are responsible for publishing child / adult practice reviews. One child and one adult practice review were published in 2022/23 about Bridgend. Four more child practice reviews will be published in the coming year. We host a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where Council officers and partner agencies work together to respond to safeguarding concerns. In the last year we have strengthened the leadership and governance of social care services by employing dedicated Responsible Individuals who oversee the safety and effectiveness of these services. We hold Corporate Safeguarding Group meetings monthly where safeguarding data is reviewed. Silver group meetings take place fortnightly / weekly chaired by the Corporate Director to consider performance data and areas of pressure so that the whole council understands what's going on. These meetings report up to a fortnightly gold command meeting chaired by the chief executive and attended by the Leader/ Deputy Leader. We have improved the way we safeguard children at risk of harm from criminal or sexual exploitation. Two officers have been appointed and an exploitation panel established bringing together partners to address the risks. We also have an Education Safeguarding Board which meets termly and examines safeguarding data and practice across the directorate. Information is about policies and procedures is shared. All schools in Bridgend have adopted the Safeguarding Board policy. Schools do audits on their safeguarding approach and 90% of schools are rated as green, 10% as amber and none are red.
- **Housing** - The Council's housing duties changed during the pandemic and we must provide accommodation for all homeless people. People presenting as homeless and numbers of people on the register for social housing have increased. We have had to rely on different options including hotels and Airbnb's to provide temporary

accommodation as the supply of suitable accommodation can't be met through our usual supply of accommodation. During 2022/2023 we have also needed to provide housing for Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war in their country. At the end of March 2023 198 Ukrainian individuals had arrived in the local authority, of which 100 individuals have found housing in the area. The Council has also worked with one of our Registered Social Landlords to bring 35 long term voids back into use.

- **Community Safety** – We have dealt with 1219 anti-social behaviour referrals and 88% were successfully addressed at stage 1. We have worked with partners to improve CCTV coverage, brighten up spaces with Street Art and employ taxi marshals so that no-one is left waiting alone after a night out. The review of regional Community Safety arrangements has been completed. Assia domestic abuse service has completed needs assessments on 2,010 referrals. We have delivered exploitation workshops for college students and tutors and training on domestic abuse awareness and coercive control. All Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) representatives across the region have been fully trained in the process and understand their role. A SafeLives review resulted in us recruiting a dedicated Older Persons IDVA alongside our Male Victim IDVA. We chair and contribute to the local joint agency Events Safety and Advisory Group which advises event holders on risk assessments and general safety and good practice planning for public events.
- **Recreation, green and open spaces** – In November 2022, Council approved the Biodiversity Plan 2022-25, setting our plans to protect and enhance biodiversity. It includes new projects at the disused coal washery site at the Ogmere Washeries and the “Dune 2 Dune” Project, bringing together nature reserve managers, volunteers and landowners to sustainably manage habitats along the coastline of Bridgend. A comprehensive programme of improvements to children’s play areas is continuing with 9 playgrounds completed in 2022. There is £2.9m further investment in playgrounds throughout the Borough targeted for the next two years, including accessible play facilities, such as wheelchair friendly roundabouts. We have transferred a further 10 assets in 2022-23 through the community asset transfers programme (CAT’s). This is below target, but is reflective of the cost price inflation everyone is experiencing.
- **Youth Justice** - There was a reduction in the number of first-time entrants to the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (YJS) and a reduction of re-offending behaviour among children and young people. In line with the ‘Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021’, a robust system was developed to monitor the education, training and employment (ETE) of young people engaged with the YJS and ensure education needs are met. The service continued to collect and present the views of service users to education provisions. An in-house accreditation scheme enabled ETE work undertaken by service users to be recognised and awarded accordingly.
- **Family Support** - Edge of Care services supported 527 children and prevented over 90% of them from becoming care experienced. Funding was secured to continue development of a trauma-informed approach. The ‘Rise Service’ was successfully implemented, providing practical, emotional and therapeutic support to families. Despite the increasing complexity of cases supported by the Early Help staff, 75% of Team Around the Family support plans were closed with a successful outcome, 2% higher than in 2021-2022. Inspectorate Wales categorised all of our Flying Start settings as ‘good’ or better.
- **Prevention and Well-being** – These services are steadily recovering from the pandemic with a focus on supporting the most vulnerable and preventing escalation of need. We are including working with BAVO to develop community representative

networks that support prevention and well-being, operating our National Exercise Referral scheme and developing Disability Sport, supporting the development of Age Friendly Communities and running programmes of family support including the Family Active Zone, Made for Mams and Early Years opportunities. Services for carers have been reviewed and improved including developing a carers ID card. Like other services with high energy consumption, leisure venues have significant cost pressures.

### Regulators assurances

An inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons in 2022 found significant improvement in our Youth Justice Service. Since then, the Bridgend Youth Justice Service has further strengthened its management structure, partnership relationships, preventative service offer and first-time entrant system, to give good, timely services to children who need support. The service is no longer under special measures and the Youth Justice Board has removed any formal monitoring of the service.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out a Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI) of children’s social care, published in May 2022. They identified a number of areas requiring improvement where they had significant concerns. The Improving Outcomes for Children Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and informed by an independent advisor, focused on delivering actions in the 3-year strategic plan to address these concerns and make improvements.

CIW undertook a follow up improvement check in November 2022 which found that improvements had been made but further actions are needed, so it remains that the Authority’s Childrens Services require improvement. Evidence from other councils who have been in similar positions tells us that 3 years is a realistic timescale to progress from being a service where there are serious concerns to one that requires improvement (at the end of year 1) to adequate and then good performance. And it requires understanding and action across the council to improve. We will test progress against our 3 year plan in coming months and present an updated plan to Cabinet in September 2023. This will be a sustainability plan, financial strategy, workforce plan and action plan.

There have also been a number of inspections of regulated care services. Where priority action notices or improvements have been identified there has been good progress made in follow up inspections in the vast majority of cases.

### Consultations and engagement activities

Consultation / engagement	Dates	Impact
Engagement on the play sufficiency assessment	March 2022- Nov 2022	Diverse range of engagement exercises on play opportunities and facilities with children and young people including those with diverse needs.
Care experienced and care leavers’ Youth Forum	Ongoing	Meet regularly to inform a range of work – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Director’s Annual Reports.</li> <li>• recruitment and selection for a variety of Children Services posts.</li> <li>• media clips for Member training</li> <li>• The Corporate Parenting brand / strategy</li> <li>• name of a new Childrens Residential home</li> <li>• consultation on the Saving Policy and evaluation of Foster Carer Reviews</li> </ul>



Care reform	Ongoing	Two young people represent Bridgend CEC Forum as Ambassadors for Voices from Care Cymru. They have been involved in a summit meeting with Ministers to discuss reform of the care system in Wales. The result has been a declaration on radical reform to the care system and the production of a Welsh Parliament report 'If not now, when?'
Promoting advocacy	Regular Meetings	Engagement including the local advocacy attending Bridgend Locality Safeguarding & Community Safety Group, promotion of advocacy as part of routine contract monitoring with providers, Learning Disability Advocacy Service, People First Bridgend, being embedded in local stakeholder groups.
Community meetings in domiciliary care services	Quarterly	Feedback on areas including health and well-being, Health and Safety, community and 'at home' activities
People's First Bridgend, an independent advocacy group for people with learning disabilities and autism	Regular meetings	Contributions on the development of services. Including advocacy, self advocacy, easy read documentation, support for representation in planning groups and assistance with service developments.
Group for people with experience of substance misuse	Regular meetings	Link to similar regional groups. Involvement in appointments / service developments.
The young carers network	Quarterly - engaged over 280 young carers	Well-being workshops were co-produced and ran, in partnership with young carers, "You are Valued" days. Young adult carer ambassadors are leading the network group. Young Carers Network Group created and co-produced opportunities to support physical and mental well-being.
Feel good for life	August 2022	The National Lottery has provided 5 years investment to further progress the work and develop learning and insight into the Feel Good for Life programme
What Matters conversations by the carer well-being service	410 conversations	581 people received information, advice or assistance including signposting.
Consultation on service user experiences	May 2023	4 online questionnaires to inform the annual director of social services report and how to improve our services. Analysis of findings will be included in the 2022/23 annual report
Homelessness strategy	Throughout the year	Stakeholders have been engaged during the year in the development of the new homelessness strategy. This included interviews with officers and elected members, service users and partners and an online survey. The findings have been included in the homelessness strategy and action plan.

## **What will we do to improve?**

Some of the main improvements we will make for this priority are –

- We will increase adult basic education provision by 50%.
- Working with our partners, we will take the actions within the ALN Implementation Plan for 2023-2024.
- We will develop an effective cluster working model involving ALN co-ordinators and we will train individual development plan (IDP) champions within ALN clusters.
- In partnership with Mudiad Meithrin, we aim to provide Welsh-medium childcare in Bettws and in the Ogmere Valley by September 2023.
- We will make UPFSM available for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils from April 2023 and Nursery pupils from September 2023.
- Complete the merger of the community safety partnerships to create one Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership and continue to ensure local issues are considered in a timely manner
- Consult on our new draft homelessness strategy and get it agreed by members
- Work with Welsh Government and other authorities on our approach to housing refugees (including Ukrainian refugees)
- Improve our work with Registered Social Landlords to improve housing options.
- Address workforce issues in social worker and social care worker including international recruitment and 'growing our own' workforce of the future
- Improve the consistency of social work practice in children's social care, which supports improved outcomes, allows families to stay together (wherever possible) and safeguards people from harm through implementing our Signs of Safety model of social work practice.
- Improve outcomes for adults with care and support needs through implementing our 'Strength Based, Outcome-Focussed' model of social work practice
- Open our new children's residential care service and implement enhanced therapeutic support for all our residential care and inhouse fostering services
- Deliver year one of a sustainability plan for children and families
- Work with partners to deliver our Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Work on admission avoidance and discharge services with the NHS to reduce delays in people receiving care
- Develop capacity in reablement services so more people are able to be supported to retain or regain independent living skills
- Provide enhanced support for adult and young carers through carer's networks
- Enhance well-being and preventative support in all parts of the County through appointment of local community co-ordinators
- Modernise learning disability services to ensure people are supported to live as independently as possible and enjoy meaningful day time occupation
- Awareness Raising of the Bridgend Biodiversity Duty 22-25
- Continuing to progress Community Asset Transfers

## **Case studies**

### **Telecare**

Telecare supports people in their own homes when they need support to remain independent. It offers the security of knowing someone can help 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Telecare packages are tailored to individual's needs, and adapt as peoples' needs

change. In 2017, BT announced plans to switch off their analogue telephone network and replace it with a digital solution. This meant we had to switch over to digital technology, and we decided to become one of the first Welsh authorities to do this. £1.4 million funding for the project was agreed as part of the budget setting process and the project team manage this budget. The project team are working with the installers - Care and Repair. At the moment, the remaining replacement installations are taking place by post code area. The next phase of the project will see new installations taking place.

### **Super -Agers**



BCBC has led a regional project called Super-Agers, to support older adults to have healthy and active lives and to be connected to support in their community. The programme has included community based exercise and activity sessions and also the training of older adults to lead and run their own activities. The Super-Agers programme has included events such as the Olympage games including inter-generational

approaches with young people from Bridgend College and local secondary schools. £3.80 of social value has been delivered for every pound invested. People who have done the activities have valued the support provided, opportunities to have social interaction and build bonds in their communities and opportunities to gain information and advice in less formal settings.

### **Corporate Parenting**



We have recently launched a new Corporate Parenting Strategy. The Corporate Parenting Board, chaired by the Deputy Leader, worked with care experienced children, young people, care leavers and Bridgend Youth Voice Forum to co-produce the document, working with council officers, partner agencies and elected members. The strategy focuses on addressing the needs, views and wants of our care experienced children and

young people to help them live happy, fulfilling lives. It includes a list of promises made by over forty professionals, carers and councillors, stating their own commitment to children and young people. The strategy has been welcomed by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Deputy Minister for Social Services, both of whom visited Bridgend for the launch of the Strategy. The launch event itself was facilitated by eight representatives of Bridgend Youth Voice Forum



## Signs of Safety



Children Social Care is working with Wales' only Licensed Signs of Safety Consultant, to implement the Signs of Safety framework. It is a child protection framework using a questioning approach, and focusing on the strengths in families to ensure safety and good care. The framework uses assessment, danger statements and safety goals to help professionals and families through the child protection process. Children's Social Care introduced Signs of Safety to their workforce and partner agencies during two

Launch days in March and through two multi agency workshops in April. The Leadership Team also presented their Leadership Promise, which highlighted their commitment to staff and the families they work with. Staff have been attended training and practice days to help them use the signs of safety approach. There are also workstreams that focus on meaningful measures, system alignment, leadership and management, learning and development and partner agencies. Social Workers and Social Work Assistants have provided lots of examples of where they have used a number of creative direct work tools with children to help achieve positive outcomes. Families who have been involved in using this framework, report that they feel more positive about intervention, felt more included and able to understand the process.

## Community Asset Transfers (CAT)

To date the Council have spent or committed £1.38 million in improving community assets including, sports pavilions, bowling greens, children's play areas and community centers through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) programme. This has been an investment in assets that have been or are to be handed over to community groups, sports clubs or town and community councils for future management and operation. The CAT program secures the long-term viability of assets and makes sure that future generations continue to be able to enjoy the benefits these assets bring to the community. 10 further assets were transferred in the 2022/23 financial year.

### Priority Three – Smarter use of resources

We want to make the best possible use of public money. We want to make smarter use of our resources while minimising reductions in services. Over the period 2018-19 to 2022-23, the council made budget reductions of over £18.5 million. As austerity continues, it becomes harder each year to make further cuts. Our main ways of achieving this objective are -

- **Transforming our estate** – Using our land and buildings to improve service delivery, reduce running costs, minimise our impact on the environment and meet the needs of service users.
- **Corporate change** - Embracing innovation and technology, developing the skills and approaches of staff and new ways of working.
- **Environmental sustainability** - Protecting and safeguarding the environment by lowering the council's carbon footprint, looking at waste reduction, re-use and recycling and promoting environmental responsibility in communities.

#### What is our judgement?

Smarter use of resources	<b>GOOD</b>
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- **Budget reductions** - The budget for 2022-23 was agreed in February 2022, before major increases in inflation, energy costs and the cost of living. This means our service budgets have been under sever pressure during the year. We have had to pay for increases in staff pay, energy costs across all our properties, and increased cost of food in the school catering service. There also been a significant pressure on the capital budget due to inflation, supply chain issues and lack of staff.
- **Digital transformation** - Bridgend County Borough Council's Digital Strategy outlines how we aim to achieve being a Digital Council. It aligns with the ambition of the Welsh Government 'Digital First' strategy focusing on; getting smarter by understanding challenges; using resources more effectively, developing integrated solutions and planning future developments based on better evidence. End-to-end integrated digital services will be built around the people who use them, meeting our priorities to help people and their communities. The successful implementation of the digital strategy will lead to improved services, embedded community benefits, integration with well-being goals, citizen satisfaction and reduced service costs.
- **Estates** – We are looking at how our buildings will be improved / remodelled through the Future Service Delivery Model. Digital transformation will help us find ways to remodel, reduce or use our office spaces in a smarter digitally enabled way. Our capital receipts have achieved their targets, as the sale of the land at Salt Lake in Porthcawl to Aldi was completed at £3.5m. Although our buildings are classed as safe, some compliance targets have not been met, but they are significantly improved, with gas, electricity, fire safety and asbestos compliance being above 90%. We have appointed a legionella officer and have commission a new legionella contract and expect to see compliance in this area significantly improve over the next twelve months.
- **School modernisation** - Construction was completed of the Bettws Welsh-medium childcare setting, and we commenced a process to source a service provider. The statutory consultation processes concluded for the replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School, replacement Heronsbridge School and the replacement Ysgol

Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and we commenced the design stage for all three schools. We concluded the first stage of the design process for the Bridgend West scheme, which will provide a new English-medium primary school (that is, to replace Afon y Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School), and replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr. We commenced consultation processes in respect of a proposed enlargement to Coety Primary School and a proposal to establish a Welsh-medium seedling school and childcare provision in Porthcawl. We completed a scoping exercise and commenced the tender process for kitchen pod schemes, which will form a critical element of the next implementation phase for the delivery of UPFSM.

- **Corporate change** – We developed a plan for future working with our staff and trade unions, improved staff well-being activities, and continued work on our 'grow your own' schemes to develop apprentices and graduates. The Future Services Delivery project continues to look at the hybrid working model which offers a blended approach that takes account of the wide range of services delivered. We have some new regional frameworks where we procure goods and services jointly with other authorities, for example grounds maintenance and civil engineering.
- **Waste** – Our recycling rates are 70.49%, making us one of the top recyclers in Wales. Waste generated per person has reduced by 9% over the last year. 76% of people rate waste services as very or fairly good. The new community recycling centre at Pyle is complete although the site is yet to gain its operators licence from Natural Resources Wales. We recycle 40% of Street litter. Public campaigns are ongoing around food waste recycling, reminders on what to place in recycling containers, nappies and garden waste. Anti-dog fouling messages, including on our enforcement policy have been promoted. We are out to tender for an interim waste contract for 2024 to 2026. This will use the same vehicles and waste collection methodology. Options for future waste services are being prepared for post-2026.
- **Sustainability** – We are part of the Welsh Government's net zero carbon plan for the public sector and now have an approved Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy. We are the first council in Wales to use new Welsh Government Greenhouse Gas Reporting Protocol. We have successfully implemented the £1.3m Ref-fit programme on 19 school buildings which is already savings energy and reducing utility bills. Phase 2 of the re-fit scheme is being designed. £3m of Active Travel routes have been implemented we have an additional £1.5m to continue routes throughout the borough. We have invested £1.3 million to install energy and cost saving technologies to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions. Including replacing all our 16,000-street lighting in the Borough with LED bulbs. We have installed a network of electric vehicle charging points across the Borough, 27 chargers are in use, 20 are awaiting power connection. We are trying to speed up our fleet transition. We have implemented a Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy to make sure our suppliers also focus on climate change and circular economy.

### **Regulators assurances**

In August 2022, Audit Wales completed a review of the council's performance management arrangements. The review sought to answer the question: Do the Council's performance management arrangements support robust and effective decision-making and improvement? Overall, it found that: The Council's performance management arrangements do not consistently enable it to effectively evaluate and manage its performance. Following the review, we have made improvements in various areas but there is a lot more to do. A plan has been developed so that these improvements can be



agreed, communicated and monitored, including recruiting to the remaining vacant post, developing and publishing a new performance framework, improving our data quality and accuracy and improving our performance culture.

The Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a peer review of our Communications and Marketing functions during February 2023 which involved assessors spending a number of days talking to the key individuals involved in providing this service, seeking feedback from relevant stakeholders and observing how the Council communicates both within the organisation and externally with residents. As a result, we received a series of recommendations from the review and an action plan has been developed for the next year, that will help our communications to be more effective and more aligned to our priorities.

### Consultations and engagement activities

Consultation	Dates	Impact
Héronsbridge School	April 2022 to May 2022	Consultation processes concluded in respect of a 300-place replacement Heronsbridge School on the Island Farm site. Engagement with staff and pupils regarding the school relocation and Cabinet approval gathered for relocation.
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	March 2023	Consultation processes concluded in respect of regulated alteration to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr in the form of an enlargement of the school to 2.5 form-entry, a 90-place full-time-equivalent nursery and an 8-place observation and assessment class. The replacement school will be located on land off Ffordd Cadfan, Brackla. Consultation session held around the design of the school.
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School	July 2022 and October 2022	Consultation processes concluded in respect of regulated alteration to Mynydd Cynffig Primary School in the form of an enlargement to 2 form-entry plus a 75 full-time-equivalent nursery. Engagement sessions held with staff, pupils and governors around the design of the site.
Budget Survey	December 2022	The findings informed the final budget proposals and Corporate Plan objectives which were approved by Cabinet at the end of February and Council on March 1st. They have also informed this self-assessment.
Staff survey	December 2022	Responses are feeding into the ongoing development of the strategic workforce plan as well as informing corporate plan objectives.

### What will we do to improve?

Some of the main improvements we will make for this priority are –

- A new nine-year investment programme for school modernisation will be established during this year in preparation to commence in April 2024.
- We will complete the creation and integration of key information into the new management information system and develop data reporting mechanisms to ensure

services have access to good quality data, which can be used to inform service improvements.

- Continue to address the recommendations of the Audit Wales reports on workforce planning, asset management and performance management
- Continuing to develop our Future Service Delivery approach
- Develop our budget, savings plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Implement the provisions of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes)(Wales) Bill once these are known and understood. Following completion of the public consultation, Cabinet will decide on the content of the Air Quality Action Plan for the Park Street Air Quality Management Area and implement improvement measures.
- Implement the action plan for communications following the LGA peer review
- Complete, consult on and publish a new workforce strategy
- Work with HMLR to migrate all local authority land charges data to a central register to streamline the homebuying process
- Agree a regional framework for food procurement by December 2023
- Refreshed Corporate Fleet Transition Plan to accelerate move to ULEV.
- Develop options for our future waste service model for post 2026
- Open the new community recycling facility in Pyle and realise the savings this creates.
- Design & Implement Phase 2 of the Re-fit Scheme to reduce our building energy costs
- Put in place a further 43 electric vehicle charging points by August 23

## **Case studies**

### **Grow Our Own**

We want to invest in people to develop future skills and secure employment. Staff development is promoted to enhance skills and our human resources teams have been encouraging the use of grow your own approaches to help with recruitment challenges. These include an apprenticeship programme which started in 2013, and focused on ICT, Procurement and Building Control. Following appointment, regular support is also in place for the learners and their managers, whilst a programme of planned workshops is established for all apprentices. With Corporate investment and coordination, there has been an increase in the number and range of apprenticeships, including in social care, highways and planning. We have now appointed 151 apprentices, with 85 securing permanent roles. This has increased capacity; helped us overcome skill shortages and helped with staff retention. The council launched the introduction of a corporately coordinated in-house graduate scheme in 2021, recognising that such roles can make an important contribution towards building capacity, skills development, and workforce planning, at a higher level. We have appointed 7 graduates across a range of services, such as planning, digital transformation, policy performance and public affairs, commissioning and civil engineering. The aim is to provide graduates with a programme where they will be exposed to genuine challenges early on in their development. They will be equipped with a base of skills to meet and manage these challenges effectively and ensure that each experience provides opportunity for personal growth.

### **Valleys 2 Coast**

A digital platform was launched in March 2021 to allow elected members and the public to report issues with V2C homes or in their local area. Since then, 45,605 users have created an online account. There are 105 forms available via the digital platform. From May 2022

to February 2023 there were 82,343 transactions. Using this digital platform has enabled the Council to review some of its operational models of work, for example, the waste and recycling team introduced tablets for operatives to receive all fly-tipping, litter, abandoned vehicles and other waste issue reports. This has led to the team working more efficiently, as well as reducing the need to produce paper work tickets and unnecessary administrative tasks.

### **Empty Properties**

Bridgend Council worked in partnership with Valleys to Coast to bring 35 long term empty properties back into use. This was done using over half a million pounds from Council resources. Our contribution allowed Valleys to Coast to secure an extra £2 million of funding from Welsh Government towards the refurbishment and improvement of the properties. Investment was not only focused on bringing the properties back into use but also improving the energy efficiency of the homes, reducing running costs for the future tenants.

### **Welsh Government Fuel Support Scheme**

Welsh Government made funds available for a 2022-23 Fuel Support Scheme to help people with their living costs. Eligible households claimed a one-off £200 cash payment to provide support towards paying their winter fuel bills. The scheme was open to households where an applicant was in receipt of specific benefits between 1 September 2022 and 31 January 2023. To administer the scheme, the Council developed an on-line system that maximised automated technology to process applications quickly and accurately, with minimum data input. In just the first week of the scheme, 9,500 applications were completed (out of 10,500 applications received), with around 9,000 of these approved for payment. At the end of the scheme, 17,854 Bridgend households had received a payment – a total of over £3.57 million of support during the cost of living crisis.

### **Street Lighting**

Between 2018 and 2023 the authority has been replacing our traditional street lights with energy efficient LED lamps. We have changed around 20,000 streetlamps. The work was funded using £2.242 million from the Salix loan programme, (Salix is a non-departmental public body, owned wholly by Government. Salix administers funds on behalf of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.) As well as reducing the carbon impact of the authority and contributing to the net zero 2030 ambitions, the programme is delivering annual energy cost savings of around £420,000 every year.



## How is the council using its resources?

We have always had to report how well we are using our resources. For example, we must tell Audit Wales about our spending, our workforce and our buildings. Until recently, we didn't have a common process for reviewing how we are managing all of our different resources. This year, to help us judge our use of resources and write this report, we developed a new process. We held a workshop with managers and staff to look at –

- finances,
- procurement,
- corporate planning,
- performance management,
- risk management,
- workforce planning, and
- asset management.

To come to our judgements, we used

- performance indicators e.g. staff vacancy levels and building maintenance,
- evidence on delivery of our projects and improvement plans,
- feedback from customers, staff and trade unions, and
- the views of our regulators e.g. Audit Wales report on workforce planning

We asked each other questions based on the well-being of future generations act, including

- Do we focus on prevention, not just putting things right when they go wrong?
- Are we making strong long-term plans?
- Do we share ideas, plans and resources with partner organisations?
- Are we making links and doing things consistently across the council?
- Are we involving the community and customers in key plans and decisions?

Like the performance information, we presented our findings to councillors who scrutinised the information, checked it and asked questions. We used the same scale from excellent to unsatisfactory as the one used for performance. This was done in June 2023.

## What are our judgements?

Use of resources	Adequate	<p>Day-to-day management of our resources is good. There are clear and agreed working models and strong, working relationships between corporate teams and directorates.</p> <p>Use of resources overall is judged as adequate again this year. Significant improvements are underway, particularly around workforce planning, asset management and performance management – with detailed improvement plans agreed following poor judgements in regulatory reviews last year. We are keen to implement these plans but to become 'good' will require additional investment in support services.</p> <p>There are still some vacancies and capacity issues both in corporate teams, and the senior managers who work alongside them. In some areas, we need to improve member engagement / challenge and develop modern, joined-up IT systems that help us with decision-making. Some directorates are better resourced than others to be able to respond and</p>
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		work with corporate teams. Those with well-resourced business teams were seen as more successful.
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Our overall judgement looks at use of resources of all types. We also have a specific judgement for each resource type, to help us with our improvement planning.

Finances	Good	Financial management is good. We successfully balance our budget and keep within budget during the year. Feedback from our regulators is positive. We have a healthy financial position, and respond quickly to new pressures, through effective management of budgets and reserves and member challenge. The cost of living crisis has impacted on our funding, with much higher than anticipated pay awards and unprecedented levels of price inflation. Our budget has faced unavoidable pressures from all services and any previous flexibility within the budget has been eroded.
Corporate planning	Good	This year we have developed a new corporate plan to reflect the ambitions of elected members, staff and partners. It also reflects the challenges we face including covid recovery and the cost-of-living crisis. It is a different, more accessible document than ones produced in the past. The development process has been more inclusive, working closely with elected members, staff, trade unions, and partners at three stages of its development. The corporate plan was agreed by council on 2 March 2023.
Risk management	Good	Risk management is good. Further improvements have been made to the identification and management of risk, through an updated Corporate Risk Management Policy. Reporting of risk is simple and accessible. The Corporate Risk Assessment is reported to Governance and Audit Committee and up to two risks are looked at in more detail, with the relevant Chief Officer, so members of the Committee can probe in more depth. A review by internal audit of our Risk Management, in March 2023, gave us a 'Substantial Assurance' opinion, and raised no findings or recommendations.
Procurement	Adequate	Commissioning is adequate. Procurement remains good. The Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy, delivery plan and updated Contract Procedure Rules have been embedded and extra training has been provided. We have some new regional frameworks, for example grounds maintenance and civil engineering. We need to work to develop a culture of forward planning and early engagement between commissioners and the corporate procurement team. This will lead to opportunities to identify and address problems and better consider things like Decarbonisation and Community Benefits. A working group will be set up with commissioners and the corporate procurement team, to help us collaborate better to meet the objectives of the Strategy.
Performance management	Adequate	Performance management is adequate. We have had an internal audit of performance indicators and an Audit Wales review of performance management which found that the Council's performance management arrangements do not consistently enable it to effectively evaluate and manage performance. Since then, we have made improvements, but there is more to do. Performance management arrangements are patchy but are good in some areas. A plan has been developed so that these improvements can be agreed, communicated and monitored, including recruiting to the

		remaining vacant post, developing a new performance framework, clarifying roles and responsibilities, improving our performance culture, data quality and accuracy.
Workforce planning	Adequate	Workforce management is good. Feedback from employees, managers, trade union representatives and internal audits is generally positive. Managers are assisted to deal effectively with people issues through appropriate and timely support from HR. The HR operating model, aims to give managers an improved service based on an increasing focus on proactive and preventative HR services and an incremental reduction in the need for and provision of reactive support services. The overall judgement is assessed as adequate as we need to improve capacity amongst managers and in the HR team, and focus on strategic workforce planning, long term workforce needs and succession planning. Following an Audit Wales review of Workforce Planning, we are developing a Strategic Workforce Plan 2023-2028, developing HR policies and procedures, co-designed and to focus on proactive HR services. We need to continue to streamline HR processes, including using automation.
Asset management	Adequate	Asset management policy is good with strong engagement from directorates. The asset management strategy for our property is dynamic and reviewed regularly. The overall judgement is adequate, based on the need to address workforce and resource challenges that result in a continued reactive approach. In response to last year's Audit Wales review we have; reviewed the 2030 Strategic Asset Management Plan, reduced our maintenance backlog, improved our management of Statutory Building Compliance, and made progress on the Integrated Works Management System (IWMS) to improve our data / benchmarking. More improvements are needed, including adopting the strategic asset management plan, continuing improvements in the maintenance backlog and statutory building compliance, implementing the IWMS and focusing on our workforce capacity. Separate reviews are in place for management of other assets including highways / streetlighting.

### What will we do to improve?

Some of the main improvements we will make in our management of resources are –

- Developing and implementing a Strategic workforce plan
- Communicating and implementing the Performance Management Improvement Plan (PMIP) including developing a Corporate Delivery Plan and Performance Framework
- Asset management improvements, including adopting the strategic asset management plan, continuing improvements in the maintenance backlog and statutory building compliance, implementing the IWMS and focusing on our workforce capacity
- Making Corporate planning and updates earlier in the year
- The system we use to monitor and report risk will be improved
- We will work to identify more longer term savings options, based on agreed priorities
- A working group will be established with relevant commissioners in the authority and the corporate procurement team
- Streamline HR processes, including using automation.

#### 4. How good is the council's governance?

Organisations that have good governance use clear decision-making processes and communicate openly about what they are doing. They work well with their stakeholders, manage the risks they face, and take responsibility for their assets.

We have always had to report on our governance, to Audit Wales. There is a clear process for developing an 'Annual Governance Statement' that has existed for many years. This year, to help us judge our governance and write this report, we have added more thinking about our consultation, engagement and involvement. We have well established and effective political governance, with Cabinet as part of regular Cabinet/Corporate Management Board meetings and formal Cabinet meetings, and with full Council when necessary. With scheduled Overview and Scrutiny meetings and an enhanced and important role for the Governance and Audit Committee. Additionally, when required separate member panels are set up to improve the governance process and make better evidenced based, informed decisions. For example, the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) which is used to share emerging budget issues on a confidential cross party basis and the Social Care Member Panel which allows risks and issues in that service to be discussed and better understood at an earlier stage.

#### What is our judgement?

Governance	Good
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Organisations that have good governance use clear decision-making processes and communicate openly about what they are doing. They work well with their stakeholders, manage the risks they face, and take responsibility for their assets.

#### Decision making

Our governance arrangements are good, and work well. Our [Governance Framework, Code of Corporate Governance](#) explain how we work, how we are accountable and how decisions are made. In 2022 we developed a new constitution to take into account the new legislative requirements placed on local authorities under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It was approved by Council on 19 October 2022 and implemented from 1 December 2022. A [guide to the Constitution](#) has also been produced and published, to help members of the public understand our constitution. Through these documents (along with the Member's Code of Conduct, Standards Committee and role of Internal Audit) the Council operates with integrity, ethical values and within its legal powers. Governance arrangements are reviewed each year to update the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). It is considered and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee. A number of significant issues were identified in the Council's 2021-22 AGS, so in the past year we have made improvements including –

- Publishing our first Corporate Self Assessment in October 2022
- Developing a transition plan for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- Updated our Medium Term Financial Strategy to reflect the current position and started a review of our earmarked reserves
- Done work to assess and address issues with increased costs in existing contracts and tenders for new contracts, including a specific piece of work for the social care sector.
- Completed a member induction programme, events, training and drop-in sessions.
- Raised awareness of roles and responsibilities for GDPR when working from home.
- Developed a multi-locations meetings policy, approved by Council on 15 June 2022.



## **Consultation, engagement and involvement**

Consultation with our local residents and businesses is good. The corporate consultation team have a programme of future consultations and support directorates to consult in a timely and effective way. We have a range of consultation channels, mechanisms and groups, but these could be broadened. Engagement and involvement is adequate. Engagement activities take place in directorates, some using industry best practice. But engagement is patchy and the corporate team is not always involved or informed. Engagement is usually reactive rather than proactive. The pandemic has had a big impact on our capacity and ability to engage. There is not yet much activity focused on trust or relationship building between the community and BCBC and we are in the process developing our new engagement platform which offers various methods of communication tools which are being utilised for enhancing our abilities to connect with residents.

We have positive and constructive social partnership arrangements. We work with recognised Trade Unions (TU's), with clear and regular arrangements for consultation and engagement. Local and regional TU representatives meet HR officers monthly. Other officers are brought in as needed, for example the Chief Executive on future service delivery and the Section 151 Officer on the budget. Two Cabinet members attend bi-monthly so TU representatives can talk to them directly. There are separate meetings for schools. TU representatives play an important role in decision making and organisational change. They contribute different ideas and perspectives and support their members at meetings which focus on the workforce impacts of any changes. All HR policy reviews are done with full consultation with TU's.

As well as regular staff and trade union engagement, we run an annual staff survey. The last one, in December 2022 had over 1000 responses. The survey contained many questions which repeated previous surveys so we can see how we are doing over time. Overall satisfaction with BCBC as an employer has increased in recent years but reduced slightly in the last year, from 59% in 2018, 66% in 2020, 73% in 2021 and 67% in 2022. A detailed feedback report was developed, and an internal action plan is being developed to act on issues from the staff survey.

Engagement with regulators is strong and systematic. Regular meetings take place between regulators and senior officers in the Council to discuss regulators' work and the council's improvement plans.

### **What will we do to improve?**

Some of the main improvements we will make in our governance are -

- Development of the council's strategic workforce plan
- Making improvements to strategic asset management
- Develop a contractors' framework for Disabled Facilities Grants to provide the Council with end-to-end ownership of the process from referral to completion
- Implement our Decarbonisation 2030 plans
- Improve long term financial management
- Providing training on Capital Strategy, Earmarked Reserves and Statement of Accounts for all members.
- Implementing our performance management improvement plan.
- Improving our approach to regular and ongoing engagement and involvement

- Implementing our new participation and engagement strategy for the council

## **5. Our Strategic Equality Plan**

In developing the equality objectives, we have talked to our residents, stakeholders and employees and used relevant information, including EHRC reports, Welsh Government reports and internal strategies. In addition to this we have:

- Developed a [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24](#) and associated action plan
- Reviewed our old Strategic Equality Plan and action plan to see how we have done;
- Developed a consultation toolkit to improve the way we engage with our communities;
- Given further consideration to each of the nine protected characteristics covered by the three main aims of the general duty and the requirement to eliminate discrimination, harassment and other actions prohibited in the Equality Act 2010;
- Looked at regional approaches to meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller families and people who have experienced domestic abuse and hate crime.
- Started the process for developing a new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

### **How do we identify and collect relevant information?**

We are committed to collecting and using data to identify where some protected characteristic groups experience a disproportionate impact or where we could deliver services in a different way. We collect data on customers and residents via our consultation and engagement activities and on our employees via our own internal systems. We will collect and use the following equality data:

- Employment profile data for all protected characteristics;
- Service user data to understand the characteristics of our service users;
- Job applicants for all protected characteristics.

This data will be published annually as part of our Strategic Equality Plan annual reporting process. In addition we will publish annually:

- The Full Equality Impact Assessments undertaken;
- The Strategic Equality Plan action plan review;
- The Strategic Equality Plan annual report.
- Welsh language standards annual report

### **How effective are arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information?**

Each year we try to improve the Equality Monitoring Data we hold for employees. We encourage employees to update information through communications / appraisals.

### **What does this tell us about equality of access to employment, training and pay?**

Every year, we report our 'equalities in the workforce' report to councillors. This tells us about our numbers of employees with protected characteristics. It also tells us about pay, recruitment and training of employees with protected characteristics. This is all put together and included in the strategic equality plan. Areas for improvement are included in the [strategic equality plan action plan](#).