

# 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  
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#### Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

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

Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

**Dyddiad/Date:** Wednesday, 18 September 2024

Dear Councillor,

#### **CABINET**

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Tuesday, 24 September 2024 at 14:30.**

#### **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 - 18  
To receive for approval the Minutes of 23/07/2024 and 10/09/2024
4. Replacement System for Caredirector (WCCIS) 19 - 26
5. Housing and Homelessness Position Statement 27 - 34
6. Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Capital Equipment 35 - 38
7. Self Assessment 2023/24 39 - 106
8. Amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions 107 - 108
9. Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report 2023-24 109 - 282
10. Elective Home Education Policy 2024-2027 283 - 298
11. Representation on Outside Bodies 299 - 302
12. Urgent Items  
To consider any items of business that by reason of special circumstances the chairperson

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is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with paragraph 2.4 (e) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules within the Constitution.

**Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / 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 would like to view this meeting live, please contact [cabinet\\_committee@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk) or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.**

Yours faithfully

**K Watson**

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

Councillors:

JC Spanswick  
N Farr  
J Gebbie

Councillors

HM Williams  
E L P Caparros  
P Davies

Councillors

M J Evans  
M Jones

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2024 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

N Farr	E L P Caparros	M Jones	M J Evans
P Davies			

Present Virtually

J Gebbie	M Jones	HM Williams
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Apologies for Absence  
None.

Officers:

Kelly Watson	Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Deborah Exton	Deputy Head of Finance
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Robin Davies	Group Manager (Strategy, Performance and Support)
Oscar Roberts	Business Administration Apprentice – Democratic Services

**Declarations of Interest**

Cllr M Evans declared a personal interest in item 5, as a governor of a school mentioned in the report.

Cllr E L P Caparros declared a prejudicial interest in item 6, as a spouse is involved in one of the firms involved.

Cllr M Evans declared a prejudicial interest in item 6, as they share a role with Cllr Caparros who has a prejudicial interest.

Cllr N Farr declared a prejudicial interest in item 6.

Cllr M Jones declared a prejudicial interest in item 8, as a ward member, a supporter of the club and as a supporter of the club's bid.

**340. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet approved the minutes of the 16/04/2024 and 14/05/2024 as true and accurate records.
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**341. Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2024**

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager (Strategy, Performance and Support) presented this report in order to seek approval for the new Health and Safety Policy following new government legislation.</p> <p>Members posed questions on the report on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of the policy on Council staff</li><li>• Communication to Council staff</li><li>• How effectiveness of the policy can be reported and tracked</li><li>• Staff and managerial engagement with the consultation and formation of the policy</li></ul> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet approved the new Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2024, noting the involvement of trade unions and the suggestion of a combined safety culture within the workplace.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**342. Outcomes of Estyn Inspections of schools in Bridgend during Spring Term 2024**



Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director - Education, Early Years &amp; Young People delivered this report summarizing Estyn inspections into Bridgend schools in the spring term, and thanked staff of all involved schools for their hard work working towards these results. Special note was made of a school asked to share their best practice as an example of other schools for Estyn purposes.</p> <p>Questions were posed to the Corporate Director on the subject of new Estyn inspection guidelines and formats, mitigation of potential stressors rising from potential negative outcomes and reports.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet noted the report, thanking the Corporate Director, the Education department and all the teachers and other staff working to meet these reports and any recommendations arising from the reports.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

### 343. Learner Travel Policy

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager (Strategy, Performance and Support) gave this report on updates being made to requirements to allow learners to travel to their assigned school, in light of continued budget pressures placed on the Council. It also includes new scrutiny on potential issues within the existing policy, and the possibility of safe walking routes to pupils to allow them to more easily utilise existing routes without needing to use transport.</p> <p>Council also took feedback from Cllr Elaine Winstanley representing the Scrutiny process done as a result of the policy proposals, and detailed twelve recommendations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exemptions for care-experienced children in light of the Council's commitment to supporting its care-experienced learners</li> <li>• Ensuring that the impact of any changes are fully understood for attendance implications.</li> <li>• Communicating with all stakeholders involved.</li> <li>• Monitoring and allowing feedback on established safe walking routes to ensure their continued accessibility.</li> <li>• How children may be treated in school as a result of walking</li> <li>• Addressing any capacity issues as a result of certain exemptions in the policy</li> <li>• Communicating with bus routes to ensure safe and easy public transport</li> <li>• Asking Bridgend and Pencoed Colleges whether they can help support learners' travel needs.</li> <li>• Ensuring the Council stays in line with recommendations from the Wellbeing of Future Generations</li> </ul>
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	<p>Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact on vulnerable pupils who may be more at risk of becoming NEET.</li> <li>• Any issues with potential mileage allowances for parents.</li> <li>• Ensuring proper monitoring of the scheme to allow for proper oversight.</li> </ul> <p>Members asked questions on the report on subjects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The details on the conditions surrounding learners currently in receipt of the Policy.</li> <li>• Any other mitigations for potential removal of benefits.</li> <li>• Potential edge-cases on any means-tested benefits.</li> <li>• Any potential climate change implications.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Cabinet determined to progress Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4 choosing to defer Proposal 5 - The offer to parents/carers of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) the option of a 'personal transport budget', pending further investigation, thanking the officers involved with creating the report and acknowledging the unfortunate need to alter this policy in light of the Council's financial situation, as well as concerns raised by residents on several of the recommendations of the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

#### **344. Waste Services - Rolling Fleet Replacement Scheme**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director - Education, Early Years &amp; Young People delivered this report following Cabinet's decision to approve a rolling replacement scheme for the Council's recycling fleet and investments made in the past and future under said guidelines. The report detailed a Delegated Power costing £980,000 spent in June prior to the meeting due to the requirements of the contract and the limitations of decision-making permitted in the pre-election period. The financial amounts involved a cost of £56,000 for cameras and livery and refurbishment cost of approximately £90,000, amounting to a total amount of £1,126,000.</p> <p>Members posed questions on subjects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further possible changes in cost.</li> <li>• Potential disagreement from Council in approving the budget.</li> <li>• Whether all possible avenues have been explored to ensure value for money.</li> <li>• Whether more vehicles could be refurbished rather than requiring replacement.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that should Council not approve the Capital Programme report, the amount available to</p>
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	<p>purchase and refurbish these vehicles would only cover four of the five vehicles due to cost limitations. This forms an existing part of the Capital Programme designated for Fleet Management.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Subject to Council approval on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 Cabinet approved the placement of two new orders with Plan B Management Solutions to include the purchase of five new recycling vehicles and three existing refurbishments.</p> <p>Cabinet also delegated authority to negotiate any amendments to the current Waste Services contract with Plan B to the Corporate Director – Communities in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**345. Community Asset Transfer - Llangeinor Pavilion & Playing Fields to Llangeinor FC**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director - Education, Early Years &amp; Young People gave this report detailing a proposed financial grant to Llangeinor FC to build a new pavilion as well as purchasing equipment to maintain their existing property. This goes alongside a 35-year lease. It was noted that the proposed Community Asset Transfer posed a significant cost to the Capital Programme's overall budget for this area and thus should be carefully considered.</p> <p>Members asked clarifying questions to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost to the Council to fully replace the Pavilion in house rather than involving other funding.</li> </ul> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet approved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The business and financial plans submitted by Llangeinor Football Ltd to support the leasing of the Pavilion, football pitch, other green spaces and car park at the Llangeinor Playing Fields;</li> <li>2. The funding request submitted under the CAT fund for purchasing Pitch Maintenance Equipment in the sum of £10,000; and</li> <li>3. The funding request submitted under the CAT fund for the cost of demolishing and replacement of the existing pavilion in the sum of £150,000 and which would take the full funding package for the transfer under the CAT Fund to £160,000.</li> </ol> <p>Cabinet noted the need to review Community Asset Transfer reports when they come back to Cabinet and having a robust application system for other interested organisations. They also noted the success of this</p>
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	CAT for using Council resources to attract further investment in Bridgend communities from other sources using such avenues as matched funding.
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**346. Children Looked After Specialist Support Service (CLASS)**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing delivered this report detailing the Council's intent to enter into a joint agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Merthyr Tydfil CBC to create a specialist support service for care-experienced children.</p> <p>Members enquired about the potential for matched funding in the future and when said funding may be required.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter into a regional collaboration agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Merthyr Tydfil CBC for the provision of CLASS;</li> <li>• Delegate authority for agreeing the terms of the regional collaboration agreement and any ancillary agreements and to arrange execution of those agreements on behalf of the Council to the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing.</li> <li>• Waves Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.12 for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC to procure CLASS, including entering into a contract on behalf of the Council. Cabinet also noted that approval to award any contract will be sought via the Council's Scheme of Delegation following the conclusion of the procurement and evaluation process;</li> <li>• Delegate authority for representation and decision making on the Regional Project Board to the Head Of Children's Social Care.</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet also noted the pleasing downward trend of moved placements among Bridgend looked-after children.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**347. Assisted Transport Policy**

Decision Made	The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing presented this report on the need for an Assisted
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	<p>Transport Policy in order to aid those in Bridgend with care and support needs. The policy will make use of an upcoming public consultation.</p> <p>The deputy leader welcomed the report and stated that it was important to ensure that all individuals received the support they needed to allow them to enjoy life to the full and this policy provided that support</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet approved the commencement of a public consultation on the Assisted Transport Policy to be reported back to cabinet for approval and implementation.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

#### **348. Supporting Individuals to Manage Money Policy**

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing presented this report detailing the requirement previously unfilled by BCBC in installing this policy to all direct care services.</p> <p>Members posed questions on the following subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whether individuals whose finances are managed have a robust Capacity Assessment.</li><li>• Whether any need to manage money falls under individuals' care plans.</li><li>• How funding will be utilised when looking to support individuals further, possibly involving hub working.</li></ul> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet approved the Supporting Individuals to Manage Money Policy, noting the importance to have plans in place to empower individuals to make decisions about their money in case of any loss of capacity. Cabinet also noted the agreement of future funding from Welsh Government to continue to support the housing sector and individuals at risk of homelessness in Bridgend.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

#### **349. Housing Support Grant Uplift**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change presented this report involving funding allocated to BCBC from Welsh Government to support providers to meet the real living wage and the sector in more general terms to continue their services.</p>
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	<p>Members asked questions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The allocation and spending of any unused funds.</li> <li>• How these decisions will be made in regard to extra spending.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> Cabinet noted the report, approving contract modification under Contract Procedure Rules 3.3.3 and 3.3.6 to ensure that commissioned providers can address any pay pressures and that no Housing Support Grant funded contracts are in a deficit.</p> <p>Authority was delegated to the Head of Partnerships and Housing in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy to negotiate terms and arrange execution of appropriate documentation for the modification of these contracts.</p> <p>Cabinet also noted that the remainder of the contract modifications would be approved in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**350. Revenue Budget Outturn 2023-24**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change presented this report which gave an update on the Council's budget outturn of £342,000,000, which resulted in a net overspend last year of £7,054,000 including a Directorate budget overspend of £13,800,000 and a net underspend of Council-wide budgets of £5,270,000. It also includes an overview of earmarked reserves which saw an overall drawdown of £12,100,000, and no new earmarked reserves have been able to be created for the first time in the Council's history.</p> <p>Members posed a question on what measures need to be considered to help improve this financial position going forward.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> Cabinet noted the revenue outturn position for 2023-24, also noting the age demographic change in the UK to an ageing population as well as declining birthrates and a noted rise in homelessness that has resulted in further Council commitments to residents, meaning the Revenue Support Grant received from Welsh Government is insufficient to meet certain needs.</p>
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Date Decision Made	23 July 2024
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**351. Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change presented this report which outlined the Council's current financial position as of the end of June 2024, from a budget of £360,600,000. The Council's projected overspend is £9,200,000 made up of a Directorate net overspend of £11,000,000 and a net underspend of £1,900,000 on council-wide budgets. Large pressure points include social services, home-to-school transport, housing &amp; homelessness and legal services.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Cabinet noted the projected year end revenue position for 2024-25.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**352. Capital Programme Outturn 2023-24 And Quarter 1 Update 2024-25**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change delivered this report on the Council's Capital Outturn position on the last financial year and the first quarter of this financial year. Last year's budget as approved by Cabinet was £49,900,000 from a wide range of different sources, totalling to £51,800,000, of which £38,000,000 was spent last year which plus slippage and other factors has resulted in a £35,000 underspend.</p> <p>Members posed questions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Details of a Capital investment in V2C.</li><li>• Further information on interest generated from funds.</li></ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Cabinet noted the Capital Programme Outturn for 2023-24 and the 2024-25 Quarter 1 update to 30 June 2024, as well as agreeing that the revised Capital Programme be submitted to Council for approval. The Committee also noted the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2024-25</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**353. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2023-24**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change presented this report which provided an overview of treasury management and cashflow over the last financial year. The officer also provided various pieces of context to outline the wider financial situation surrounding these numbers. The Council's total external borrowing over the last financial year was £104,600,000, of which £99,600,000 was long term borrowing at an average interest of 4.7%. Meanwhile, investments totalled £50,000,000 at an average interest rate of 5.02%.</p> <p>Members asked questions pertaining to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What measures are made to ensure investments are made appropriately and in line with wider objectives.</li></ul> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> Cabinet noted the treasury management activities for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, as well as the Treasury Management Indicators against those approved in the Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**354. Treasury Management Quarter 1 2024-25**

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer - Finance, Housing &amp; Change presented this report which outlined the treasury management's first quarter for this financial year, detailing a further reduction in inflation and a continuing stable interest rate as wider context. £99,580,000 of long term debt remains and the £5,000,000 of short term debt has been repaid. Meanwhile, the Council has £53,350,000 worth of investments, of which the average interest is 5.19%.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> Cabinet noted the treasury management activities for the quarter ending 30 June 2024, as well as the Treasury Management Indicators for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024 against those approved in the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25.</p>
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**355. Representation On Outside Bodies, Joint Committees And Cabinet Committees**



Decision Made	The Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate presented this report which outlined membership to other bodies that the Council is required to appoint members to.  <u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet appointed the requisite number of Members to the Joint Committees, Cabinet Committees and other outside bodies.
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**356. Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees Forward Work Programmes**

Decision Made	The Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate presented this report which reviewed the items to be included on the above Forward Work Programmes from the 1 <sup>st</sup> of July 2024 to the 31 <sup>st</sup> of October 2024.  <u>RESOLVED:</u> Cabinet approved the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 October 2024, and noted the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes for the same period.
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

**357. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	23 July 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 18:18.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 14:30**

Page 15

**Present**

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

N Farr  
M Jones

HM Williams

P Davies

M J Evans

**Present Virtually**

J Gebbie

**Officers:**

Carys Lord  
Janine Nightingale  
Kelly Watson  
Lindsay Harvey  
Michael Pitman  
Robin Davies

Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change  
Corporate Director - Communities  
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy  
Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People  
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services  
Group Manager - Business Strategy and Performance

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Hywel Williams - Personal - Grandchildren in receipt of home to school transport

Councillor Neelo Farr - Prejudicial - Grandchildren live with Councillor Farr and were in receipt of free transport

**360. Revised Home-To-School Transport Policy**

Decision Made	The Corporate Director Education, Early Years and Young People presented a report which sought
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	<p>Cabinet approval for the new Home-to-School Transport Policy.</p> <p>He explained that following the decision at Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024, significant changes were required to the Home to School Transport Policy. The Local Authority was required to publish its learner travel policy arrangements by October 2024 and therefore, a revised Home-to-School Transport Policy has been drafted and was included at Appendix 1 which incorporated proposals 1-4 as set out in the report.</p> <p>Cabinet Members asked for clarity in relation to the Equalities Act 2010. She stated that if approved, English medium schools may be at a detriment compared with Welsh Medium school's</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education, Early Years and Young People stated that a full EIA was undertaken at the last meeting of Cabinet where policy was considered and due consideration was given.</p> <p>The Group Manager – Business Strategy and Performance added to this stating that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to promote the Welsh Language and Welsh Medium education. The same applied to faith based schools. Due to the limited number of both these mediums, as well as the requirement to promote these and ensure they were not at a detriment, there is more emphasis on these.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cabinet having discussed the need for complying with statutory duty agreed to approved the revised Home-to-School Transport Policy at Appendix 1 for implementation from September 2025</p>
Date Decision Made	10 September 2024

### **361. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	10 September 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 14:55.

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<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT SYSTEM FOR CAREDIRECTOR (WCCIS)</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES &amp; WELLBEING &amp; CHIEF OFFICER FINANCE, HOUSING &amp; CHANGE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>DEBBIE MORGAN GROUP MANAGER, BUSINESS STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE &amp; IMPROVEMENT</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress to procure a case management system for social care and safeguarding in Bridgend and to seek approval from Cabinet to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing and the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change to approve the tender and award contract to the most economically advantageous tender.</p> <p>A report was presented to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 to outline options and seek approval to commence procurement of a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS), the current case management system used by social services, safeguarding and family support in Bridgend. The system is used to record key core data and service-related information in relation to people and families who contact services in relation to safeguarding, assessment of needs, care and supporting planning and service provision. The failure to secure and implement a fit for purpose replacement system within the requisite timescales represents a significant risk to the Council, reflected on the corporate risk register as we would be unable to safeguard and support individuals at risk of harm and to effectively support individuals with care and support needs.</p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide Cabinet with an update on the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- Inform Cabinet of the risks of failing to award a contract in line with procurement timescales.
- Seek approval from Cabinet to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services to accept the most economically advantageous tender received and to enter into a contract and any supplemental deeds and documents with the successful bidder.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 On the 16th April 2024, a report was presented to Cabinet to seek approval for the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate to enter into a regional agreement to work collaboratively with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) to support the procurement process of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- 2.2 As noted in the April Cabinet Report, the current the CareDirector system (WCCIS) becomes end of life as of January 2026. The report was presented to ensure that all social care users and services are migrated to new technology and will not be working on unsupported systems that pose a risk to people's safety and wellbeing.
- 2.3 A national programmed approach was established which proposed 2 options for procurement, a national or a regional approach, which would be evaluated to see which achieved best value. These alternatives were reflected in the April Cabinet report.
- 2.4 The Cabinet report of the 16th April 2024 also noted that a report would be brought back to Cabinet to update on the procurement process, the financial position and for approval to award a contract to the successful tenderer.
- 2.5 Whilst the directorate is in a position to update on the procurement process and request award to tender, they are not yet in a position to update on the implementation costs.

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

- 3.1 Following evaluation of the alternative options, the 18 local authorities who are procuring a new system agreed to work together in a national programme, but to procure through 6 clusters, ranging in size from 1 to 6 local authorities per cluster. BCBC is part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) cluster.
- 3.2 This is a cluster approach with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC acting as lead local authority. Aligned procurement is progressing in 5 other clusters. The CTM cluster



came with an offer for other organisations to join and a North Wales cluster of 6 local authorities accepted this offer.

- 3.3 The 10 local authorities which constitute this collaborative procurement arrangement are noted in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Cluster 1 (Cwm Taf Morgannwg)</b>	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
	Bridgend County Borough Council
	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
	Vale of Glamorgan Council
<b>Cluster 2 (North Wales)</b>	Conwy County Borough Council
	Ise of Anglesey County Council
	Gwynedd Council
	Wrexham County Borough Council
	Flintshire County Council
	Denbighshire County Council

- 3.4 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) cluster submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to the market. Following the EOI, the procurement process has progressed at pace and the indicative procurement timetable is noted in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed by Date</b>
Tender Submission Deadline	13:00 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Responses distributed to Clusters	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Cluster Evaluations	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Collaborative Evaluation Meeting (both Clusters)	16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Suppliers notified if Demonstrations required	19 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Potential Clarification Demonstrations	w/c 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024
Evaluation re-scores (if needed)	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Final Collaboration Meeting (both Clusters)	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Final evaluation scores and comments submitted	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Tender reports written	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Tender reports approved by each LA SRO	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024
Preferred Suppliers advised	24 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Voluntary 10-day standstill period completed	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Contract Award	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Formalisation of Contract completed	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Mobilisation Period Begins	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

- 3.5 During the mobilisation period there are likely to be costs associated with both systems that the Council will need to incur, however as the tender has yet to be completed the costs associated with the new system are not yet known.
- 3.6 The benefits of the 2 clusters procuring a system in partnership and in line with the timetable are that it:

- gives a greater share of the market enabling partners to combine purchasing power and negotiate better terms and prices with suppliers;
  - increases purchasing power, enabling partners to share risk thus reducing the likelihood of disruption and delays;
  - enables partners to build and strengthen relationships by sharing knowledge and resources;
  - provides a procurement timeline that fits with the current system end-of-life date.
- 3.7 It is important to note that the 2 clusters have different weightings for the procurement questions and therefore may not award a contract to the same supplier. Hence the collaborative arrangement is for procurement and not implementation.
- 3.8 As noted in the procurement timetable (Table 2), tender reports, which will identify the most economically advantageous tender received are scheduled to be approved by each local authorities' Senior Reporting Officers (SROs) on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, with preferred suppliers being informed the following day on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024. As noted in section 2.5 of this report, the Council is not yet in a position to provide a comprehensive financial update as the tender is still in progress. It is, however, important that delegated powers to approve the tender and award the contract are authorised in line with the procurement timetable to minimise the significant risk of being unable to award the contract in a timely way in order to mitigate the significant safeguarding risks to the Council of failing to secure and implement the new system in the requisite timescales. Any additional costs will have to be met from within current budgets or via the consideration of a cost pressure bid through the budget setting process for 2025-26.
- 3.9 Officers have been advised that our CTM regional partners have the appropriate authority in place to award a future contract to the most economically advantageous bidder. If Cabinet is not minded to approve the requested delegated authority, given the narrow timescales involved, there is a risk that the Council:
- will not be in a position to award a contract at the same time as regional partners;
  - may have to withdraw from the regional cluster thus losing the benefits associated with a greater market share and purchasing power;
  - will not be in a position to award a contract to the most economically advantageous supplier, following a regulated procurement process. In those circumstances, the Council would have to commence a new procurement process in accordance with the new Procurement Act which comes into force on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- 3.10 There is also a risk that other local authorities and clusters across Wales may award a contract earlier which could result in the Council having to procure from a smaller pool of providers and/or receiving no bids or bids that do not meet the Council's requirements. Decreased competition may also inflate tender pricing.
- 3.11 In addition, there are significant risks that the Council will be unable to safeguard children and adults at risk from harm if it does not secure and implement a fit for purpose safeguarding and case management system within the requisite timescale.
- 3.12 Failure to approve tender at the same time as our regional partners could also impact on future regional developments as, with a different system the Council would not be able to achieve best value by taking advantage of shared resources, regional

documentation and reporting. Most importantly, the Council might not be able to easily share key safeguarding information.

- 3.13 By delaying the approval of the tender the main risk is that the Council will not have an effective, support case management system in place after January 2026, which would mean a fundamental failure of safeguarding, child and adult protection, in Bridgend.

#### **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 A summary of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

- **Long Term / Prevention:** Social Services is demand led and, in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, is focused on sustainable prevention and well-being outcomes for the future. In order to continue to meet the needs of people longer term it is important the Council has a fully supported social care system to enable the monitoring of key activity to develop and target services accordingly.
- **Integration:** Procuring a system on a regional basis, provides further opportunity to implement an integrated system with regional partners. This would be dependent on Council's preferred supplier.
- **Collaboration:** The Council are working collaboratively with the Cwm Taf regional authorities, the VoG and the North Wales cluster to procure a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS).
- **Involvement:** The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing continues to be a member of the Regional Implementation Board and the local WCCIS Replacement Group which continues to meet with members of the Regional Team on a monthly basis. Key leads have been identified from Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care, Business Support, Education, Early Years & Young People, ICT and the Information and Performance Team who met on a regular basis and are already implementing key actions to prepare for migration to a future system.

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

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

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

- 7.1 The safeguarding and corporate implications of this report are significant. The failure to implement a replacement system is noted as a high-level risk on the Council's Corporate risk register.
- 7.2 As the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system comes to end of life by January 2026, failure to procure and implement a replacement system by this date will have serious implications on safeguarding arrangements to support vulnerable children, young people and adults.
- 7.3 It is absolutely imperative that the Council has a robust electronic case management system in place to ensure it can effectively monitor and record service delivery to ensure the right services are delivered at the right time to prevent risk.
- 7.4 Failure to replace the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system by January 2026 will result in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate having to revert to manual systems which will have highly significant safeguarding implications and would represent a major failing by the Council in respect of a significant statutory duty.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Welsh Government are reviewing the level of financial support that would be available to regions to support the transition to a new system and, to date, the Council is still awaiting confirmation of this support from Welsh Government. If funding is available this will be used to support the costs of additional resources identified by each region to support the implementation of the new system.
- 8.2 Whilst the recurring costs of a replacement system will not be known until the tender process has been completed, the 2023-24 costs for the current CareDirector (WCCIS) system were £84k, funded from the ICT software budget.
- 8.3 Whilst the procurement process has not yet concluded and the Council is still awaiting confirmation of financial support, at the time of writing this report the associated costs for replacement of the existing CareDirector (WCCIS) remain unknown. Costs will also be dependent on the term of the new contract. Any additional costs will have to be met from within current budgets or via the consideration of a cost pressure bid through the budget setting process for 2025-26.

## **9. Recommendation(s)**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - Note the update on the procurement of a replacement social care system for CareDirector (WCCIS);
  - Notes the risks of failing to award a contract in line with procurement timescales;
  - Delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance, Housing and Change and the Chief

Officer Legal and Regulatory Services to accept the most economically advantageous tender received and to enter into a contract and any supplemental deeds and documents with the successful bidder.

### **Background documents**

‘Proposals for Procurement of a Replacement System for Caredirector (WCCIS)’, Cabinet Report, April 2024

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<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS POSITION STATEMENT</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>MARTIN MORGANS HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS AND HOUSING</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no impact on the Policy Framework or the Procedure Rules</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p><b>This report sets out key pieces of work the Council is taking forward to address challenges with regards to housing and homelessness.</b></p> <p><b>The report seeks approval from Cabinet for the acquisition of properties to be utilised for temporary accommodation, with the intention of making medium term financial savings.</b></p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

### 1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Update Cabinet with regards to key pieces of work currently being taken forward to address pressures on housing and homelessness services;
- Seek approval from Cabinet for the acquisition of three properties which are within the Council's approved capital estimates for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation, subject to all reasonable due diligence and legal advice.

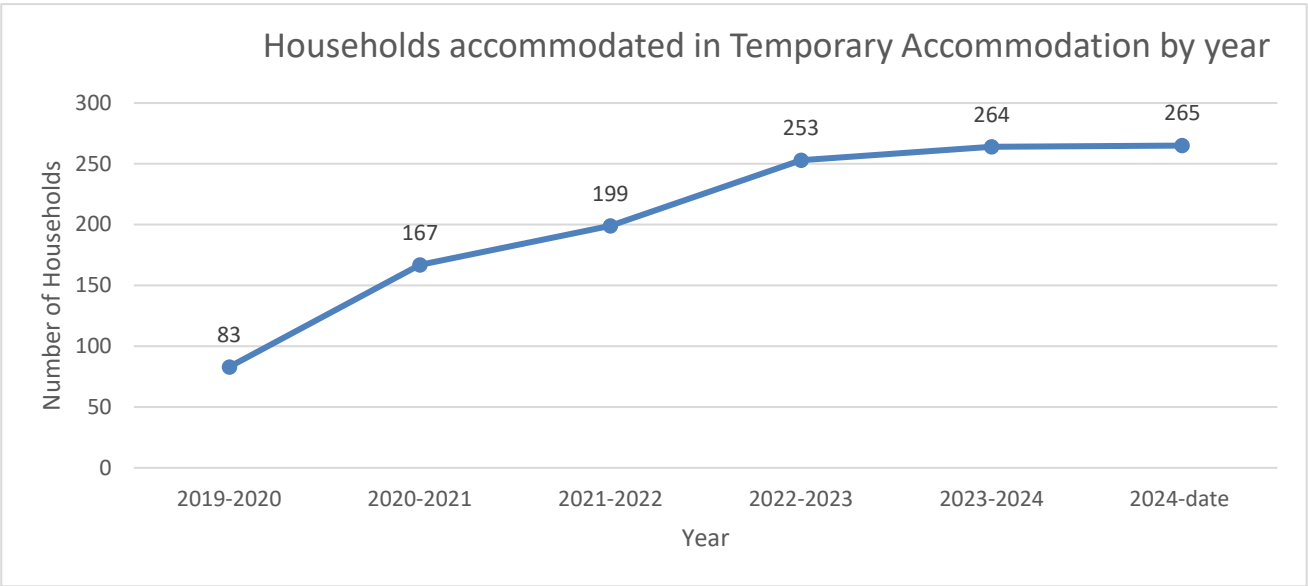
## 2. Background

2.1 In December 2023 Cabinet approved a final Housing Support Programme Strategy (Homelessness Strategy) and Action Plan for 2022-2026.

2.2 The Housing Support Programme Strategy outlines the challenges the Council faces in terms of increasing demands on homelessness services. The key challenge the Council faces is in terms of high levels of demand, with applications

consistently higher than in previous years. In 2023-24 1,006 homelessness applications were received. 67% of these applications were from single person households.

2.3 The use of temporary accommodation has grown exponentially. The chart below shows the increase in temporary accommodation numbers since 2019-20. At the end of August 2024, BCBC were providing temporary accommodation to 265 households. The relatively flat line in households in temporary accommodation since 2022-23 suggests that this level of demand is likely to be consistent for the foreseeable future.



- 2.4 The increase in demand for temporary accommodation is largely due to an ‘All In’ approach to homelessness, initially directed by Welsh Government at the start of the Covid19 pandemic. Welsh Government introduced a Guidance Note which extended the definition of ‘vulnerable’ with regards to the ‘priority need’ criteria set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In 2022 a new ‘priority need’ category was added, which in effect amended legislation to continue the principle of an ‘All In’ approach.
- 2.5 The demand for homelessness and temporary accommodation services has been compounded by a wider increase in demand for social housing. The total number of applicants on the Bridgend Common Housing Register at the end of each year has increased substantially. At the end of 2019/2020 there were 816 applicants. At the end of August 2024 there were 3254 applicants on the Common Housing Register. A combination of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and a challenging private rental sector are key drivers behind this demand.
- 2.6 The cost implications of the pressures on temporary accommodation are stark. The below table illustrates this, with a 3,665% increase in costs between 2019-20 and 2023-24.

Year	Gross Spend	Income (Grant, Rent, Service Charge)	Net Spend
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2019-20	£135,260	N/A	£135,260
2020-21	£2,291,745	£2,358,049	-£66,304
2021-22	£3,129,711	£3,125,077	£4,634
2022-23	£3,823,539	£4,106,191	-£282,652
2023-24	£5,092,919	£1,996,360	£3,096,559
2024-25 (Projected)	£4,750,000	£1,546,486	£3,203,514

- 2.7 BCBC receives rental and service charge income from households which have been accommodated, although income is limited to Local Housing Allowance Rates, which falls significantly short of costs. During the Covid-19 pandemic costs could be claimed from a Welsh Government Hardship Grant. This resulted in net costs to BCBC being relatively small.
- 2.8 Welsh Government has replaced the Hardship Grant with a 'No One Left Out' Grant. However, the income is significantly less than that previously received. As such the net costs to BCBC for 2023-24 and projected costs for 2024-25 are significant.
- 2.9 A report to Cabinet in March 2024 set out various pieces of work being taken forward to address the challenges highlighted above. Section 3 of this report will further update Cabinet in this respect.

### 3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 **BCBC purchase of accommodation.** In March 2024, Cabinet approved a proposal, authorising the acquisition of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) style properties for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation.
- 3.2 Since March 2024 work has taken place alongside the Corporate Landlord department to purchase two properties, with a third purchase currently in progress. All three properties are HMO style properties. The average purchase price is £300,000. Capital funding has been provided via Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 funding (S.106 funding), as contained in BCBC's capital programme. Once the third property is purchased the three properties will deliver 16 units of accommodation to single persons.
- 3.3 Purchase of these properties has enabled BCBC to deliver increased temporary accommodation units directly. An agent has been appointed to support with day-to-day management of the accommodation. Individuals are supported via housing related support services, where necessary, to support move on as soon as possible.
- 3.4 From a cost perspective delivery of these units' costs around 70% less than the average alternative in a tourism style property. BCBC also receives a rental income to offset capital investment over time.

- 3.5 Whilst this work is still new to BCBC the financial benefits to directly providing temporary accommodation are clear. Costs for properties owned by the Council are in the region of £25 per day per unit, whilst costs of alternatives are on average around 70% higher.
- 3.6 It is proposed that, to achieve further savings, this model could be scaled up and also considered for family type properties. As such, Cabinet are asked to approve the purchase of a further three properties, to be utilised for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation.
- 3.7 It is estimated that purchase costs will be in the region of £250,000 to £350,000 per property. The capital funding for these purchases will be provided via S106 funding. £1.44 million of S.106 funding is already included within the capital programme. Approximately £600,000 of this funding has been utilised for the first two HMO purchases, whilst approximately £300,000 is earmarked for the third HMO purchase, which is currently in progress. To ensure sufficient funding is in place to achieve the further three purchases, an additional £500,000 of S.106 funding will be added to the capital programme from currently uncommitted S.106 funding, and this will be reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the Quarter 2 capital monitoring report in October. Welsh Government funding will also be explored.
- 3.8 Cabinet should be aware that, as with all investment opportunities, the property market will be subject to fluctuations, which will result in either increases or decreases to the resultant capital value. Properties will also require management to safeguard the physical condition of the asset. Additionally, if the property needs to be sold to generate capital funds, the disposal process will take a number of months to complete.
- 3.9 Whilst providing suitable units of accommodation, this piece of work and potential further savings per bedroom are linked to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28, which sets out the spending priorities of the Council. The strategy includes a financial forecast for 2024-2028, and included in this is a 10% reduction of the Housing budget for 2024-2025 which equates to £397k.
- 3.10 **Maple Tree House.** In addition to the purchase of new accommodation, work has been taken forward in recent months to utilise an existing BCBC owned building, Maple Tree House.
- 3.11 Maple Tree House has a long-established use as a residential project for children accommodated through Childrens Services. With the opening of a new facility in Brynmenyn, Maple Tree House had been vacant since late 2023.
- 3.12 The building was re-opened in August 2024 to provide temporary accommodation. To support ongoing delivery, a housing related support provider has been commissioned to provide on-site support 24/7. Several improvements have also been made to the building, including CCTV, fob access, privacy windows and improved perimeter fencing. The building will provide 9 units of accommodation, again enabling less reliance on other types of accommodation and supporting cost reduction.

- 3.13 It should be noted that whilst the purchase of accommodation and the re-opening of Maple Tree House are projected to achieve financial savings, these are not yet fully reflected in the projection detailed in the table at 2.6. This projection for 2024-25 is based on information available at Quarter 1. It is envisaged that updated projections presented to Cabinet in quarterly budget monitoring reports during the financial year will show increased cost savings.
- 3.14 **Capital development to increase social housing units.** A number of capital funding opportunities have been available to Registered Social Landlords in recent years. The two primary capital funding streams are the Social Housing Grant (SHG), and Transitional Accommodation Capital Grant (TACP).
- 3.15 On 28 July 2022 the Welsh Government launched the £65 million TACP to support a wide range of projects by local authorities and registered social landlords to create extra housing capacity across Wales.
- 3.16 This funding seeks to deliver schemes more quickly by being flexible on things such as space standards, types of accommodation funded, acquisition of properties, and the acceptance of a 'meanwhile' use for refurbished buildings or undeveloped sites for a short/medium period of time. In 2023-24 £4.25 million of transitional capital funding was invested in Bridgend, creating an additional 41 units of accommodation. BCBC's TACP allocation for 2024-25 is £4.5 million, which will create an additional 30 units of accommodation.
- 3.17 Supported Housing Grant (SHG) is the main capital grant provided by Welsh Government to fund the provision of affordable housing in Wales. Housing associations and local authorities can access this funding for the provision of building new homes and the rehabilitation of existing buildings to provide homes at social and intermediate rent. This grant is provided for local housing development over a rolling 3 year programme called the Programme Delivery Plan (PDP).
- 3.18 Expenditure of the SHG is approved and decided by Welsh Government after a series of concept, financial and technical scrutiny processes. The development journey can cross over several years to deliver. In 2023-24 £11,803,167 of spend was allocated to RSLs. The current three-year PDP is set out in the table below.:

Year	SHG Budget	Allocated (to date)	Projected Spend
Year 1 2024-25	14,442,789	12,389,639	14,442,789
Year 2 2025-26	13,129,808	3,120,000	13,129,808
Year 3 2026-37	13,129,808	0	13,129,808

- 3.19 There are currently 139 homes in development with a proposal of a further 207 across the rolling three year PDP. A total of 326 new homes is estimated over the three year PDP period. The PDP is fluid and updated every quarter; it is estimated that the proposed number of new homes will increase beyond that currently committed in the programme. Cabinet should note the information above is a guide as to the current PDP and this is likely to change over time, for example we expect new schemes to be added and amendments to existing schemes.

- 3.20 **Partnership working.** A key theme running through our Housing Support Programme Strategy is an acknowledgment that to address the challenges we face, it is important that we work alongside our partners, to tackle issues together.
- 3.21 In recent months a 'Bridgend Housing Partnership' has been created, bringing together senior staff members of partner Registered Social Landlords, alongside senior BCBC staff. This has created a forum to ensure joint understanding of challenges, and to bring strategic oversight to pieces of work, such as capital developments.
- 3.22 We also continue to work closely with third sector partners, such as those commissioned via Housing Support Grant funding. Such services are key to not only the ongoing delivery of our temporary and supported accommodation projects, but in supporting households threatened with homelessness, to reduce the need for temporary accommodation further down the line.
- 3.23 In July 2024 Cabinet approved a proposal to uplift relevant Housing Support Grant funding contracts to ensure providers can address any pay pressures and to ensure that no contracts are in a deficit. This work has been taken forward, in conjunction with the Legal department.

#### **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 Tackling homelessness is a Welsh Government priority. The report contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- A prosperous Wales – Reducing homelessness supports a prosperous Wales by reducing cost to the public purse.
  - A resilient Wales – Our Housing Support Programme Strategy aims to prevent and relieve homelessness, increasing the resilience of both individuals supported and the general structures in place to support the goal of achieving a position where homelessness in Wales is rare, brief and non-recurrent.
  - A Wales of cohesive communities – Preventing individuals from becoming homeless will support cohesive communities.
  - A globally responsive Wales – Homelessness is an issue across the globe. These strategic documents set out the approach Bridgend will take to support Wales in its efforts around this agenda.
- 5.2 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 The prevention and relief of homelessness supports the agenda around climate change. A key priority is to increase BCBC's affordable housing supply to meet demand, with the intention of increasing affordable housing schemes to meet these needs. Any schemes developed through TACP or SHG will be developed in line with Welsh Government planning and standards requirements, which support moves to tackle climate change.

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

- 7.1 Homelessness and housing support services play a key role in supporting BCBC's safeguarding agenda, from an individual perspective with services often supporting vulnerable individuals, known to safeguarding agencies.
- 7.2 The priorities set out in the Housing Support Programme Strategy reference a need to improve collaboration with key stakeholders, with specific objectives around improving collaboration to implement the national care leavers and accommodation and support framework, a key part of Corporate Parenting implications.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The estimated cost of the purchase of properties for the purpose of temporary accommodation is highlighted at section 3.7. Costs for the existing two purchases and third purchase, current in progress will be met from S.106 funding which is included in the capital programme. To ensure sufficient funding is in place to achieve a further three purchases, an additional £500,000 of S.106 funding will be added to the capital programme from currently uncommitted S.106 funding. This funding is already earmarked to support housing objectives. This will be reported to Cabinet and Council as part of the Quarter 2 capital monitoring report in October, in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. Opportunities for Welsh Government funding will also be explored and utilised if possible.
- 8.2 For the initial three purchases, approved by Cabinet in March 2024 a business case in line with BCBC Capital Programme processes was submitted and the processes set out in BCBC's property Acquisition Protocol will also be followed. The same process will be followed for the proposed additional purchases.
- 8.3 The purchase of these properties will contribute to the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 by significantly reducing the ongoing revenue costs to the Council. The project aims for a 10% reduction of the Housing budget for 2024-2025 which equates to £397k.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Note the contents of this report;
  - Approves the acquisition of three properties which are within the Council's approved capital estimates for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation subject to all reasonable due diligence and legal advice.

## **Background documents**

Report to Cabinet December 2023  
Report to Cabinet March 2024  
Report to Cabinet July 2024

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>URBAN AND RURAL GRASS CUTTING CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>ZAK SHELL HEAD OF OPERATIONS, COMMUNITIES</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>	<b>This report provides an update in relation to the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service and seeks Council approval of an amendment to the Capital Programme.</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update in relation to the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service and seeks Cabinet approval for a report to be presented to Council, recommending a proposed amendment to the Capital Programme to incorporate a capital budget of £340,000, vired from the existing Raven's Court capital budget.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In February 2015 Cabinet approved the appointment of contractors to provide an urban and rural grass cutting service through a tendered contract, rather than the existing in-house provision, which provided a net saving of £132k of MTFS savings for the Authority.
- 2.2 In January 2024 Cabinet approved a report seeking approval for officers to work towards reintroducing the in-house delivery of urban and rural grass cutting.

## 3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Officers have reviewed a number of potential ways forward for the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Services.
- 3.2 Officers have provided regular updates to the Cabinet Member Communities and the Leader.

- 3.3 Work has already been undertaken with the Job Evaluation team and, subject to their review, recruitment of staff for the service could commence in the autumn. Recruitment would take place in two stages, the first stage being autumn 2024 and the second stage being spring 2025.
- 3.4 Work has been undertaken with the procurement team in relation to purchase of required equipment. It is currently considered that scope does not exist for equipment already owned by the Council to be used for the delivery of a new, additional in-house service as well as existing in-house service delivery.
- 3.5 It is currently understood that, for required equipment to be available from the 1 March 2025, orders via the agreed route will need to be placed by 30 September. It is proposed that the required procurement process commences with an intention of placing required orders by 30 September.
- 3.6 Alongside this, previously identified works required at Bryncethin Depot are to commence in autumn 2024.

#### **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 of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment Template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is outlined below in respect of the proposal:

- ☐ Long-Term: The provision of an in-house grass cutting provision enables flexibility in service provision and planning for the longer term.
- ☐ Prevention: In-house provision means that the level of service can be more flexibly adjusted which provides better control of delivered service.
- ☐ Integration: Improving control of the overall grass cutting provision will benefit communities in the effective management of green spaces.
- ☐ Collaboration: In-house provision of rural and urban grass cutting will take into account working with internal partners such as highways in delivery of the service and prioritisation of provision as required.
- ☐ Involvement: In terms of the project, internal stakeholders will be part of the process of assessing the management of rural and urban grass cutting and the outcomes being sought.

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



- 6.1 The delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service will deliver what is considered to be a balanced approach to health and safety, finances, biodiversity and aesthetics.

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

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding issues as a result of this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 In reviewing options, officers currently estimate the set-up capital requirements associated with the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service in-house to be £340,000.
- 8.2 No budget exists within the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services department for additional capital items associated with the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service in-house.
- 8.3 It has been identified that capital resources to the value of £446,000, currently allocated to Ravenscourt in the Capital Programme, are now no longer required for the purpose originally intended.
- 8.4 It is proposed that £340,000 of the £446,000 be vired to support the estimated costs associated with the delivery of the Urban and Rural Grass Cutting Service in-house.
- 8.5 A decision is required at this time due to the reported lead in time of the equipment required to deliver the service in-house.
- 8.6 It is therefore proposed that Cabinet approve the proposed amendment to the Capital Programme and agree that a report be presented to Council to consider the proposal to amend the capital programme.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agree the proposed virement of £340,000 in the Capital Programme for the delivery of Urban and Rural Grass Cutting in-house with funds being vired from the existing Ravenscourt Capital Programme budget and agree that a report be presented to Council recommending the proposed change to the capital programme.

## **Background documents**

None

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<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SELF-ASSESSMENT 2023/24</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>ALEX RAWLIN POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	The Performance Framework (of which self-assessment is part) forms part of the Policy Framework.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>This report seeks approval from Cabinet to recommend to Council the approval of the Council's self-assessment 2023/24. Key points are –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the first-year judging performance against the Council's new Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives (WBOs).</li> <li>• All WBO scores are yellow (good) and amber (adequate).</li> <li>• Use of resources score is amber (adequate).</li> <li>• Governance score is yellow (good).</li> <li>• The report summarises the views of others expressed throughout the year, rather than trying to consult on the self-assessment report itself.</li> <li>• The report has integrated the recommendations of the Governance and Audit Committee and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ul>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to recommend that Council approve the self-assessment for 2023/24.

## 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 -

- Is the council exercising its functions effectively;
  - Is the council using resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
  - Is the council's 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 the self-assessment was based on existing data, reports and meeting fora where possible. The Council published its second self-assessment in December 2023 based on performance in 2022/23. Reflecting on the first self-assessment some improvements were made. Many parts of the self-assessment process have been embedded into the Council's regular performance management process, for example the regulatory tracker, inclusion of consultation, engagement and involvement exercises in the quarterly dashboard, and reporting performance against wellbeing objectives rather than directorates.
- 2.3 The first performance requirement is about how council services are performing. Existing end of year performance processes and timelines have been used to capture Directorate performance information to satisfy the first performance requirement (as in 2022/23). Through end of year performance dashboards directorates were asked to provide realistic Blue, Red, Amber Yellow, Green (BRAYG) ratings for commitments and performance indicators and use plain English to outline their performance challenges and achievements. The performance team have used this information to develop clear judgements for each aim and each wellbeing objective and a short narrative for each aim.
- 2.4 The second performance requirement, on use of resources, also followed a similar process to previous years. 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 two to three years, and in many cases reviewed and discussed by the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC), or Scrutiny Committees, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These 7 were then collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.
- 2.5 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 This third self-assessment is the first that will review performance against the Council's new Corporate Plan 2023-28, so a new process for the performance element of self-assessment was required. The main changes made were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 18 April 2024 and are –
- Presenting a performance summary section which uses summary graphs to show performance against each wellbeing objective at a glance.

- Using a more objective methodology for scoring aims / wellbeing objectives based on progress on commitments and performance targets, then moderating these scores.
- Summarising the views of others that have been gathered and used throughout the year within the report, rather than trying to consult on the self-assessment report itself.

3.2 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements were pulled together into a single presentation where the narrative and judgements were tested, scrutinised and challenged at Heads of Service Board (26 June), Corporate Management Board (CMB) (3 July) and Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) (9 July). The report was then presented to the Governance and Audit Committee (19 July) and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) (25 July), and comments, changes and recommendations from these fora have been used to inform the self-assessment report included at **Appendix 1**. The main changes following GAC and COSC recommendations are –

- More detailed information has been included on the work done since the last self-assessment.
- A detailed performance report has been completed to sit alongside the self-assessment
- Case studies have been provided for each wellbeing objective
- The report now makes reference to the Performance Management Improvement Plan
- The report now makes reference to the different process and reporting mechanisms for managing social services complaints

3.3 The Council's proposed self-assessment judgements for 2023/24 are –

1	Protecting our most vulnerable.	<b>GOOD</b>
2	Fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns.	<b>GOOD</b>
3	Thriving valleys communities.	<b>GOOD</b>
4	Helping people to meet their potential.	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
5	Responding to the climate and nature emergency.	<b>GOOD</b>
6	Helping people feel valued, heard & part of their community.	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
7	Supporting people to be healthy and happy.	<b>GOOD</b>

3.4 The Use of Resources judgement remains at 'Adequate.'

3.5 The Governance judgement remains at 'Good'.

3.6 Cabinet may want to reflect on the main changes since the 2022/23 self-assessment which are -

- 7 separate judgements for individual wellbeing objectives (based on the BRAYG status of the commitments and performance indicators that support them).
- All 7 judgements being made are yellow (good) or amber (satisfactory). This reflects the cross-directorate range of commitments and Performance Indicators (PIs) being measured across the Council.
- Change to the financial management judgement (beneath the overall use of resources judgement) from good to adequate based on the Council's challenging financial position and the associated risk to financial sustainability. This does not affect the overall use of resources judgement of adequate.

3.7 Following its consideration at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council also discussed the draft document with –

- Trade unions through the Council's regular meeting programme.
- Town and Community Councils at the Town and Community Council Forum (TCCF).
- Partners / other local authorities at the Public Services Board (PSB).

3.8 Following approval by Council, the self-assessment will be translated and designed, reported to Regulators and Welsh Government and published on the Council's website.

#### **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 the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

#### **5. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives**

5.1 This report reviews the Council's progress against the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-

1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act have also contributed to the Council developing its own five ways of working. Progress on these 5 ways of working is also summarised in the draft self-assessment.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the self-assessment helps the Council to assess performance on areas including climate change.

## **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 help the Council assess performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet recommends that Council -

- Approve the draft self-assessment at **Appendix 1**
- Approve the performance summary at **Appendix 2**.

## **Background documents**

None

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## **Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Self-Assessment 2023/24**

### **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 2023 to 5 April 2024.

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 run more services e.g. distribute 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. Our progress against last year's areas for improvement**

In our 2022/23 Annual Self-Assessment we identified a series of areas that needed specific improvements in the 2023/24 year. Below is an update on the work we have undertaken in these areas. More detail is provided on actions to date, and those that are still planned in each detailed section of this report. In 2023/24 we have –

#### **Priority One**

- Using the Post-16 Improvement Plan (PIP), we've developed a consistent approach to post-16 education across our 9 secondary schools, with a hybrid approach to A-level subjects to improve subject choice.
- Developed an action plan with schools and an exclusions task and finish group to tackle the use of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Developed Welsh Medium webpages and improved communications to promote Welsh Language education.

- Increased Adult Community Learning (ACL) enrolment numbers through more promotion of the service, more face-to-face sessions, including accredited courses, one-off taster sessions and digital drop-ins. 53 face-to-face sessions were delivered to communities.
- The Bridgend Business Forum has delivered 6 large events, attended by a total of 293 people from the business community.
- We are procuring an Integrated Works Management System (IWMS) to improve the speed of work instructions and real time statutory compliance data. This will be in place in 2025, later than anticipated due to our requirements changing.

## **Priority Two**

- We hoped we could increase adult basic education provision by 50% in 2023/24. But the adult community learning service was cut as part of the council's medium term financial strategy savings, so this proposal was not achieved.
- We have been working to provide Welsh-medium childcare in Bettws and in the Ogmre Valley by September 2023, but a delay in receiving the lease documentation has slowed progress. Work continues into 2024/25.
- We are on track with all of the actions in the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Implementation Plan.
- We have worked with ALN coordinators and headteachers to give training on ALN reform.
- Developed Welsh-medium childcare in Bettws and in the Ogmre Valley, although timescales have slipped to November 2024 for opening.
- Made universal free school meals available for nursery, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.
- Completed the merger of the community safety partnerships.
- Developed and published a new homelessness strategy.
- Worked with Welsh Government and other authorities on our approach to housing refugees (including Ukrainian refugees)
- Improved our work with Registered Social Landlords to improve housing options.
- Improved learning and development for newly qualified social workers.
- Embedded the Signs of safety model in social care.
- Launched our Strength Based, Outcome-Focussed model of social work practice.
- Opened our new children's residential care service and brought in enhanced therapeutic support for all our residential care and inhouse fostering services.
- Published our new Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- We have worked with the NHS on admission avoidance and discharge services to reduce delays in people receiving care. Beds in Bryn y Cae Reablement Unit can now be booked by community services to avoid hospital admissions. We have got a new operating model for social workers in the hospital which will support more timely discharges.
- We have developed our community based services to increase our reablement services which has helped people where appropriate to retain or regain independent living skills.
- Coproduced the new Bridgend carer's wellbeing service with unpaid carers.
- Supported 237 people via community co-ordinators, 111 via community navigators.

- Developed a learning disability transformation programme.
- Raised awareness of the Bridgend Biodiversity Duty through newsletters.
- Completed 7 Community Asset Transfers.

### **Priority Three**

- A nine-year Sustainable Learning for Communities Programme has been established which includes projects to deliver five new schools.
- Developed and implemented a Strategic workforce Plan.
- Improved the way we manage performance.
- Embedded our new Corporate Plan, Delivery Plan and Performance Framework.
- Improved the way we manage our assets and reduced our maintenance backlog.
- Improved our Statutory Building Compliance, with Big-5 Compliance now at 94%.
- Embedded our updated Corporate Risk Management approach.
- Developed longer-term and multi-year savings options.
- Reviewed and updated the council's hybrid working policy.
- Made progress on building rationalisation with teams being transferred to the Civic Offices. Ravens Court will then become available for disposal or lease.
- Reviewed several HR protocols including on redundancy and redeployment.
- Made good progress on the action plan for communications following the LGA peer review, following difficulties recruiting to the group manager role. We are developing a corporate narrative, have agreed a new media protocol, and are developing a team restructure.
- We have been working with HMLR to migrate all local authority land charges data to a central register to streamline the homebuying process. Work in 2023/24 included extraction of data from current digital systems, data preparation, providing updates to the register and resolving any queries. Data extract problems has caused a delay but the project will go live in early 2025.
- The Regional Food Framework ( lead on by Caerphilly Council) was awarded with a start date of April 2024, slightly later than the December date planned.
- Put in place a further 59 electric vehicle charging sockets.
- We still need to develop a Corporate Fleet Transition Plan to accelerate move to ULEV. It will need to reflect the changed financial circumstances of the council.

#### **4. How is the council performing in 2023/24?**

Every 5 years the council publishes a new Corporate Plan. A new Corporate Plan was published in April 2023 to cover a 5-year period. It 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 citizens and our contribution to Wales's seven well-being goals –

	Your Council's Well-being Objectives						
National Well-being Goal	Protecting our most vulnerable	Fair work, skilled, jobs and thriving towns	Creating thriving Valleys communities	Helping people meet their potential	Responding to the climate and nature emergency	Making people feel valued, heard and connected	Supporting people to be healthy and happy
A prosperous Wales							
A resilient Wales							
A healthier Wales							
A more equal Wales							
A Wales of cohesive communities							
Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language							
A globally responsible Wales							

In line with the Future Generations Act, when we developed this corporate plan, we thought hard about how we could work differently to respond to short- and medium-term issues, like the financial crisis, while protecting our natural environment and helping young people meet their potential for the long-term. 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 2023-24 in June 2024. We use this information to make a judgement using this scale -

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

## Performance Overview

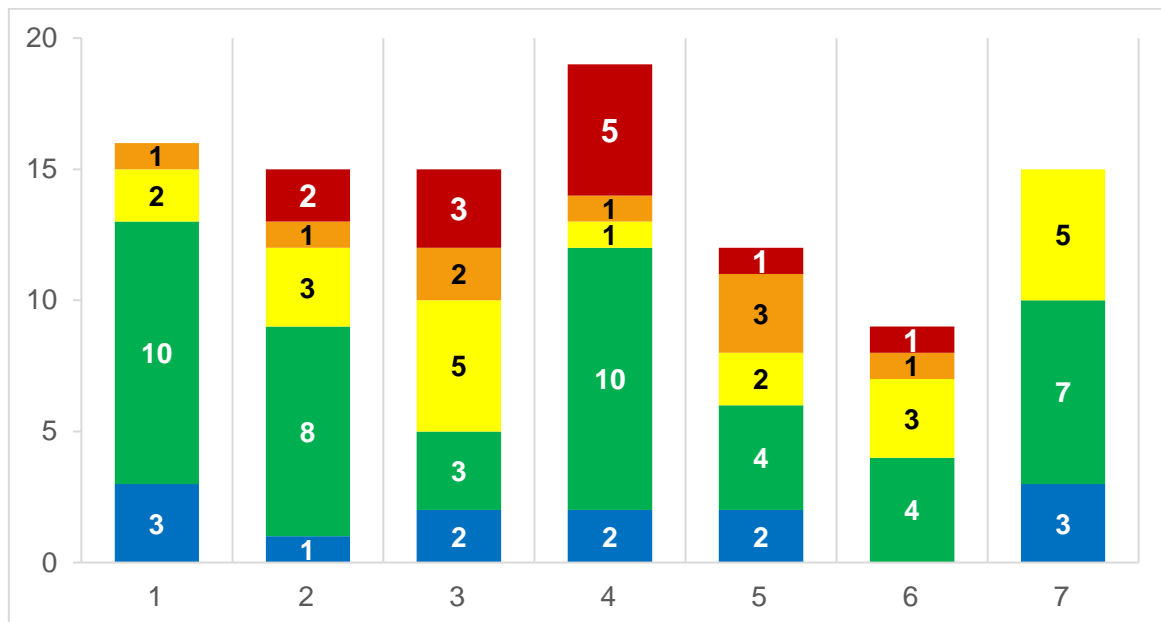
To support the new, 5-year Corporate Plan, we developed a 1-year delivery plan for 2023/24. The plan includes –

- 101 commitments (projects) the council will do to help us achieve our aims, for example, opening a new recycling centre at Pyle.
- a list of 99 performance indicators to measure our day to day activities, for example, collecting and recycling your household waste.

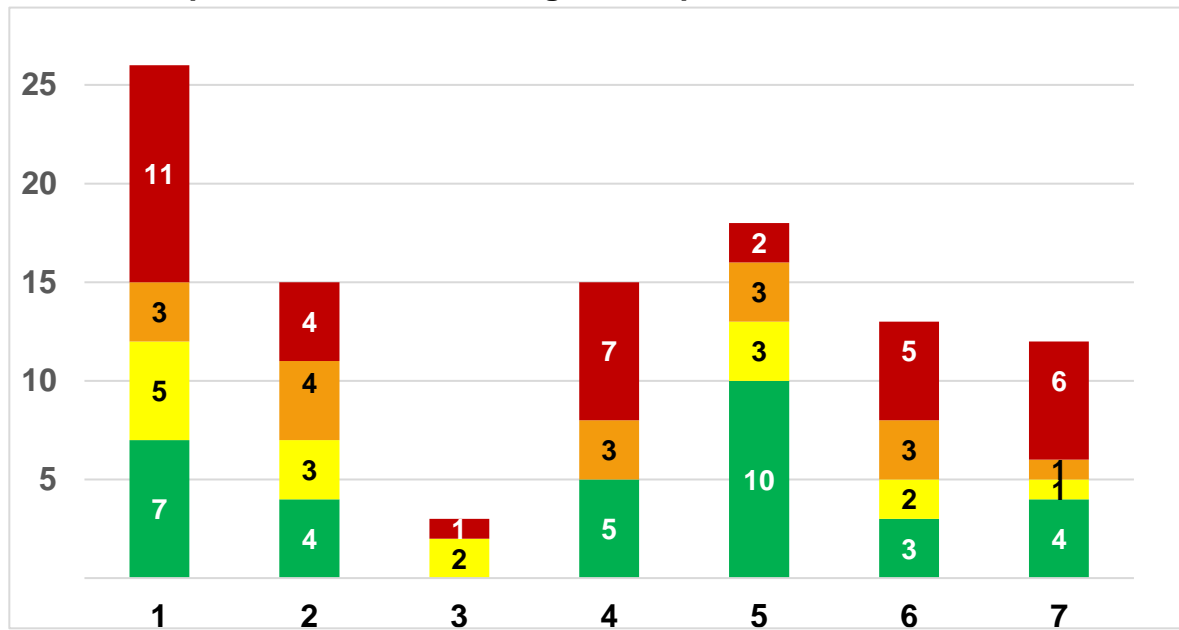
Each one of these has been given a blue, red, amber or green rating to show you whether they are completed, on target or if we are struggling to achieve them, and the two graphs below summarise these.

Alongside the self-assessment, we have published a separate, short performance document that details our progress against each PI and commitment.

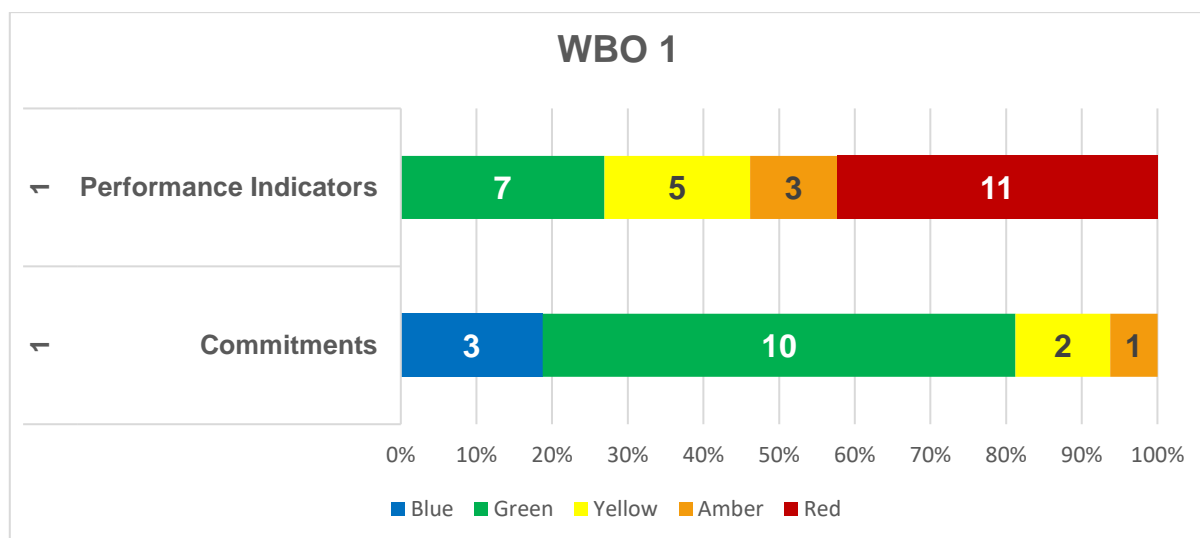
**Graph 1 – How we are doing on our commitments / projects**



**Graph 2 – How we are doing on our performance indicators.**



Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>1 - A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable</b>	<b>Good</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective

Aim	Status	Description
Providing high-quality children's and adults social services and early help services to people who need them	<b>Good</b>	<p>There have been some significant successes in social services this year. We are making good progress against the 3-year children's services strategic plan, including development of an engagement framework, workforce plan, commissioning strategy, signs of safety model of social work practice, corporate parenting board and improvements to data and information. The number of children on the child protection register has steadily reduced and is on target. We have achieved a safe reduction in the number of care experienced children. 100% of carers (in children's services) have been offered a carer's assessment. There have been improvements of the timeliness of visits to children who are care experienced and on the child protection register.</p> <p>We are making good progress in developing a 3-year plan for sustainable care and support for adults. We are embedding the new practice model. There have been several training sessions on strengths based, outcome focused practice. 377 reablement packages have been completed, supporting people to retain or regain their independence, although the percentage that mitigated the need for support has got slightly worse. Community coordinators have supported 395 people and</p>

		<p>community navigators supported 517 people to develop confidence and connect them to community-based support.</p> <p>The new carer's wellbeing service provides information, advice and assistance, and signpost to support services as well as specialist support for young carers.</p> <p>Numbers of people accessing independent advocacy both in children's and adult's social care is well below target and we are working to better promote and record interventions.</p> <p>We have completed more team around the family support plans and the percentage of plans closing with a successful outcome has increased to 83%.</p>
Supporting people in poverty to get the support they need / help they are entitled to	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>We are supporting some people with direct financial support, for example through the Energy Bill Support Scheme which ended earlier in the year, for which all payments have been made. Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) is efficient, with applications dealt with promptly. We also provide advice and support through our financial advice and assistance service (FASS). This service provides advice and support in managing or reducing household debt to 93% of the people who have contacted it. It is also helping people access benefits and allowances, and 92% of people using the service saw an increased income through claims for additional / increased benefits and allowances. We also work closely with citizens advice bureau (CAB) who have developed an outreach and drop in service, raising awareness of the support on offer.</p>
Supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<p>We have developed a new homelessness strategy, which outlines our priorities, objectives and what we will do with partners over the next 4 years to tackle homelessness. Changes to Welsh Government legislation means there is a crisis of housing supply and demand across Wales. Demand is very high for homelessness services and our supply of accommodation (particularly specific types of accommodation like large homes and accessible homes) is very low. This means we aren't able to help people as quickly as we should, and we are relying on temporary accommodation more than we would like.</p>
Supporting children with additional learning needs to get the best from	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>All schools have additional learning needs (ALN) practice embedded in their teaching and learning policies. Headteachers and ALN coordinators (ALNCoS) in all schools have had detailed training on ALN reform.</p> <p>Support and training are available from the Central South Consortium, with support material on Hwb.</p>



their education		<p>Training and information help make sure there is support available for children with additional learning needs.</p> <p>But significant cuts to service delivery, especially in respect of managing challenging pupil behaviour, have impacted on the level of support available. This has resulted in significant waiting lists for specialist provision across all areas. There has been a substantial increase in requests for support and specialist placements as a result of exclusions and behavioural challenges in mainstream settings. Early years settings are requiring a higher level of support for children with increasingly complex medical needs. Similarly, there are pressures on the availability of specialist home-to-school transport to meet the needs of learners.</p>
Safeguarding and protecting people who are at risk of harm	<b>Good</b>	<p>We have a regular, corporate safeguarding board. Our Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report was approved in January.</p> <p>Almost all children's safeguarding referrals decisions are made within the 24-hour target. 78% of child protection investigations are completed within required timescales.</p> <p>Average waiting time on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) waiting list has reduced to 16 days now we have got rid of the waiting list backlog. The percentage of adult safeguarding inquiries which receive initial response within 7 working days is slightly below target.</p> <p>Not all staff are using the safeguarding e-learning module, but we are changing the system to recognise prior learning.</p>
Help people to live safely at home through changes to their homes	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<p>We are still clearing a backlog of historical disabled facility grants, so the waiting times are still long. But the total number of jobs completed is high, we have spent all of our budget, streamlined the process for applying for a DFG and improved payment to contractors and budget management. A new DFG Caseworker will help coordinate progress and improve communication with the applicant. We now expect waiting times to start to reduce. All residents receiving a service were satisfied with the adaptations made to their homes and felt they helped them to remain in their own home independently and safely.</p>
Support partners to keep	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>Safer streets funding has been used to install new fixed CCTV cameras, re-deployable CCTV cameras and new signs, to deter bad behaviour, provide evidence and</p>

communities safe		<p>reassure communities The council's CCTV system and operatives have reported 944 incidents to South Wales Police to help them deal with incidents and keep the public safe.</p> <p>We are working with partners to identify children who need support to reduce offending behaviour in a multi-agency prevention panel. A new prevention assessment tool has been created by the Youth Justice Board to help us understand the needs of children at risk of entering criminal justice services.</p> <p>Women's self-defence classes have been delivered to individuals and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors. Around 75% of council staff have completed Violence Against Women training, but this is below target.</p>
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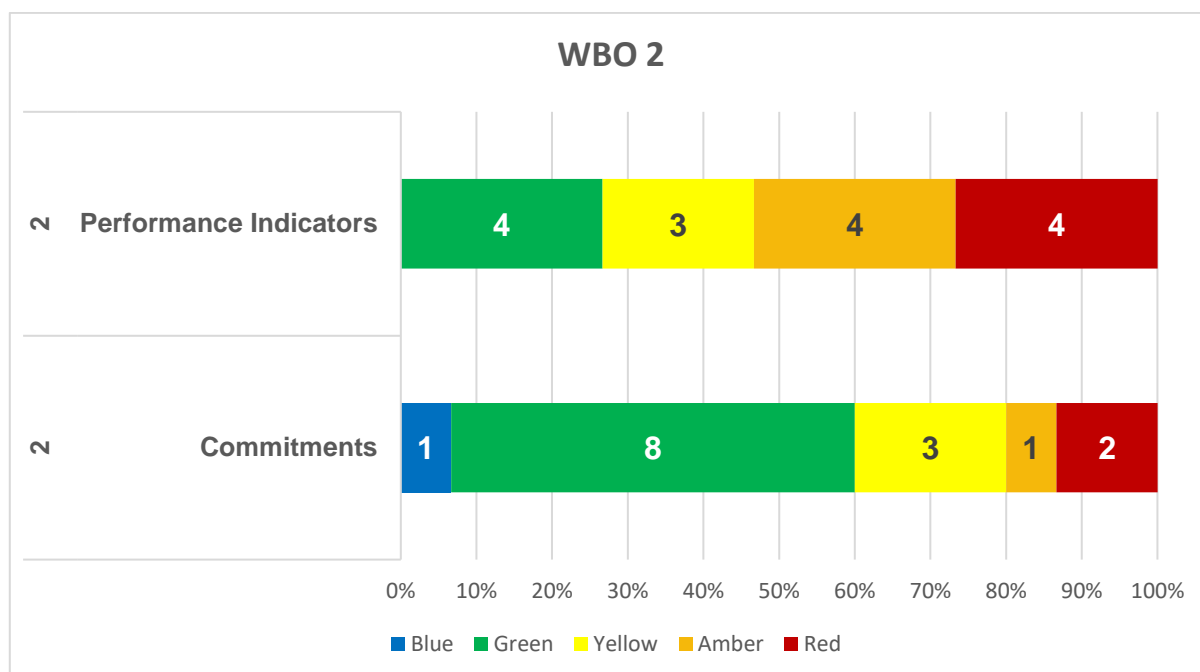
### What will we do to improve?

- Restructure the family support service
- Prevention and wellbeing service will work with an extra 380 young carers
- Bring in 'what matters' conversations and proportionate carers assessments
- Develop a young carers network group
- Review the children's services 3-year strategic plan and deliver the year 2 objectives
- Finalise and implement the adult services 3-year strategic plan
- Develop working groups on the future operating model for children's services
- Widen training for strength-based practice to front line social care staff.
- Work with corporate procurement to deliver the actions in the commissioning plans.
- Implement the action plan from the housing support programme strategy.
- Undertake directorate self-evaluations on safeguarding competencies.
- Additional signs of safety / safeguarding training for school governors.
- Review mandatory eLearning modules for staff.
- Work with partners to develop a regional model for safeguarding and exploitation.
- Reducing the backlog of historical disabled facilities grants.

### Case study - Financial Advice and Support Service (FASS)

This service helps people living in poverty, or at risk of living in poverty, with managing their money, budgeting, debt advice, claiming benefits and maximising their income. In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, we have supported 580 people, through one-to-one support, outreach and a drop-in service. 93% of the people contacting the services received support in managing or reducing household debt and 92% of people saw an increase in income through claims for additional or increased benefits and allowances. The drop-in service was increased from one day to two days per week out in the community, for people experiencing challenging circumstances with debt, after Christmas.

Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>2 - A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns</b>	<b>Good</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	RAYG	Performance this year
Helping our residents get the skills they need for work	<b>Good</b>	Employability Bridgend provides support to unemployed people, and those in work but struggling with low skills or in-work poverty. This year, 366 people (above the target of 350) from the Employability Bridgend programme went into employment and 93 people (just below the target of 100) improved their Labour market position. A number of grant schemes have been launched successfully, and we continue to work in partnership with public and third sector groups to deliver the employability programme, including Careers Wales, BAVO, DWP and Bridgend Employability Network. 213 people have been referred to the employment service in Assisting Recovery in the Community (ARC) for support with mental health issues.
Making sure our young people find jobs, or are in education or training	<b>Good</b>	76 young people on the Employability Bridgend programme have been supported into education or training (against a target of 727), as we are just starting new projects and funding eligibility criteria and dealing with staff capacity issues. A marketing campaign has been developed for young people, to raise awareness of employment and training opportunities.

		<p>The percentage of year 11 school leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) is better than the Wales average, 4<sup>th</sup> in Wales and better than last year at 1.4%.</p> <p>The Council's vacancy issues have been addressed through grow your own schemes, flexible working, and leadership development. We have got 8 social work trainees into posts.</p>
Improving town centres, making them safer and more attractive	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>We have developed two placemaking plans – for Maesteg and Porthcawl – engaging with local people and businesses to reflect their priorities.</p> <p>The £8m refurbishment project on Maesteg Town Hall is near completion, with this listed building being restored and extended to provide a community hub and arts and cultural centre for the Llynfi Valley.</p> <p>A number of grants from Welsh Governments Transforming Towns Schemes, have been awarded to businesses in Maesteg and Bridgend and have brought 8 properties back into use, including restaurants in Bridgend Town Centre.</p> <p>The £3m redevelopment of Cosy Corner in Porthcawl was completed, with a new glass and stone building providing a home to local shops and restaurants, new public toilet facilities and changing places space, improved harbour berth holders' facilities and a landscaped open space with canopy and picnic tables.</p> <p>Two commitments under this aim have not been able to progress due to lack of funding. This has had an impact on achievement against the aim as a whole. There is no progress on Penprysg Bridge as we did not receive funding from UK government. There is no progress on Bridgend Central Station improvements, but we will keep looking for sources of funding.</p>
Attracting investment and supporting new and existing local businesses	<b>Good</b>	<p>219 business startups (compared with a target of 52) have been supported through advice, grant bids, web material, face to face networking and event opportunities. 25 businesses have received support through the shared prosperity fund, which is a higher demand than we expected.</p> <p>The Council has done more of its purchasing and contracts under £100,000 through local businesses.</p> <p>Work continues on the Supplier Relation Management [SRM] project to help local businesses tender for public sector work. A new webpage has been developed but has not been promoted and supplier workshops have not yet taken place due to staffing issues.</p>

		There has been regional engagement with Cardiff Capital Region [CCR] to monitor developments, disseminate information and progress grant funding schemes including the Metrolink and Ewenny Road, Maesteg.
Making the council an attractive place to work	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>We have renewed staff policies, implemented the real living wage and continued to promote health, wellbeing and self-care.</p> <p>A new Employee Assistance Programme was launched in December 2023. Work continues on the menopause and carers protocol. Further positive progress continues with the "Grow your Own" programme. We continue to promote savings that come from Brivilege rewards to help with the Cost of Living.</p> <p>Our staff survey took place in Feb/March 2024 but had a poor response rate of only 24%. Responses were slightly less positive than in 2023 for most of the tracker questions. We will run focus groups to get underneath the headline figures and poor response rate.</p>
Ensuring employment is fair, equitable and pays the real living wage	<b>Excellent</b>	We have worked with our supply chain, encouraging employers to offer training and working with our suppliers to find out if they are real living wage employers. 250 employers in the Borough are Real Living Wage accredited.

### What will we do to improve?

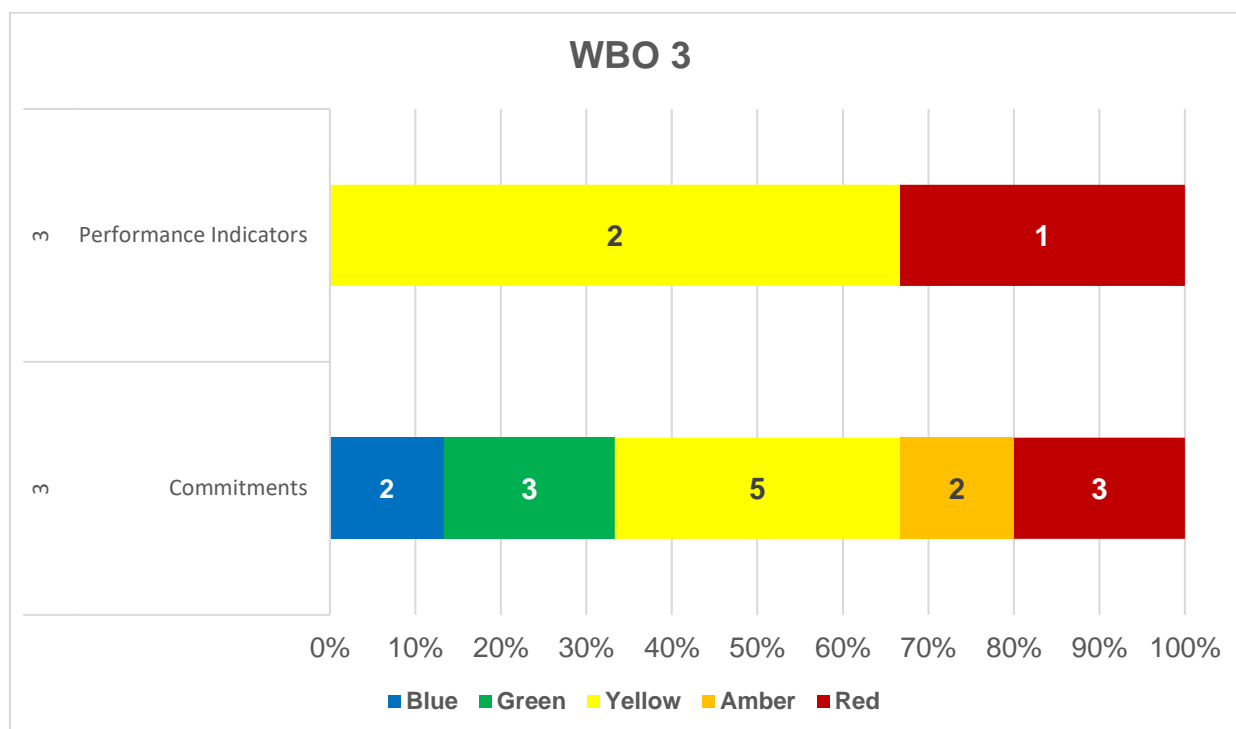
- Deliver the 2024/25 shared prosperity fund programme.
- Improve the employability offer to people with care and support needs.
- Develop a local and regional plan to help people with support needs overcome barriers to work.
- Learning and development training to support newly qualified social workers.
- Run the transforming town grant funding scheme.
- Work with Transport for Wales, Network Rail and Welsh Government to assess funding options for the Penprysg road bridge, Pencoed level crossing and Central Station redevelopment.
- Update our procurement strategy, action plan and CPRs based on the new UK government legislation.
- Run focus groups to better understand the results of the staff survey and develop an action plan to address them.
- Encourage our suppliers to become real living wage employers

### Case study - Employability

Employability Bridgend provides support to unemployed people, and those in work but struggling with low skills or in-work poverty. This year we helped 366 people into employment and helped 93 people get better jobs. We work in partnership with public

and third sector groups to deliver the employability programme, including Careers Wales, Bridgend Association of Volunteer Organisations (BAVO), Department for Work and Pensions and Bridgend Employability Network. We have also referred 213 people to the employment service in Assisting Recovery in the Community (ARC) for support with mental health issues.

Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>3 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities</b>	<b>Good</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	Status	Description
Investing in town centres, including Maesteg town centre	<b>Good</b>	A Placemaking Plan for Maesteg has been developed and consulted on. It will guide investment and policy decisions which will shape the town's future. The Commercial Property Enhancement Grant has been developed and marketed. 1 project is underway and we have already helped 4 commercial properties through the enhancement grant scheme.
Creating more jobs in the Valleys	<b>Adequate</b>	We have bid for a large grant from the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Northern Valley's Initiative. If successful we will be able to develop a range of industrial premises in the Valleys.  We are working with Awen to provide new facilities for supported training for people with learning disabilities at Wood B and B-Leaf in Bryngarw. The tender was awarded and design work is progressing.
Improving community facilities and making	<b>Good</b>	Only 3 Community Asset Transfers (CATs) of our target of 5 were finalised (Bettws, Llangynwyd & Garth Park, Maesteg). The number of transfers were impacted by property issues and staff capacity issues.

them more accessible		<p>£296,662 has been invested with Community Asset Transfers (CATs) in Valleys.</p> <p>There has been significant progress on the redevelopment of the Ewenny Road site, with planning permission granted for a mixed-use development, (including new and affordable homes, an enterprise hub, open space and green infrastructure) and the site being marketed for sale.</p> <p>There have been 353,782 visits to Maesteg Town Hall, Garw and Ogmore Valley Life Centre, Maesteg Swimming Pool and Maesteg Sports Centre. We are increasingly trying to focus on actions that build social connections / mental wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation. There is a digital development plan in 5 community venues, identifying how staff / volunteers can use digital approaches including streaming activities.</p>
Improving education and skills in the Valleys	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>Flying Start Nurseries at Pontcymmer, Nantymoel and Ogmore Vale are now operating morning and afternoon sessions with a total of 60 children.</p> <p>There is interest from childcare providers at the Bettws and Blaengarw settings, but the lease documentation is not complete, so neither can yet be opened to tender.</p>
Investing in our parks and green spaces and supporting tourism to the valleys	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>There has been good progress in developing the Valley Regeneration Strategy, with engagement throughout the 3 valley areas. A draft strategy is being prepared for consultation.</p> <p>The Cwm Taf Nature Network (CTNN) completed its delivery during 23/24 and the evaluation report demonstrates the project has been a success.</p>
Encourage the development of new affordable homes in the valleys	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<p>The Council meets Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Welsh Government regularly to promote and encourage the development of new social housing in the valleys. A funnel of opportunities is being developed.</p> <p>Only 2 (against a target of 20) additional affordable homes have been provided by Registered Social Landlords in the Valleys this year. There have been external factors affecting the delivery of new sites, including NRW objections which we haven't been able to resolve within the year.</p> <p>There has been no progress on encouraging the development of self-build homes on infill plots, to increase the range of housing, as there are no resources or funding available.</p>



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

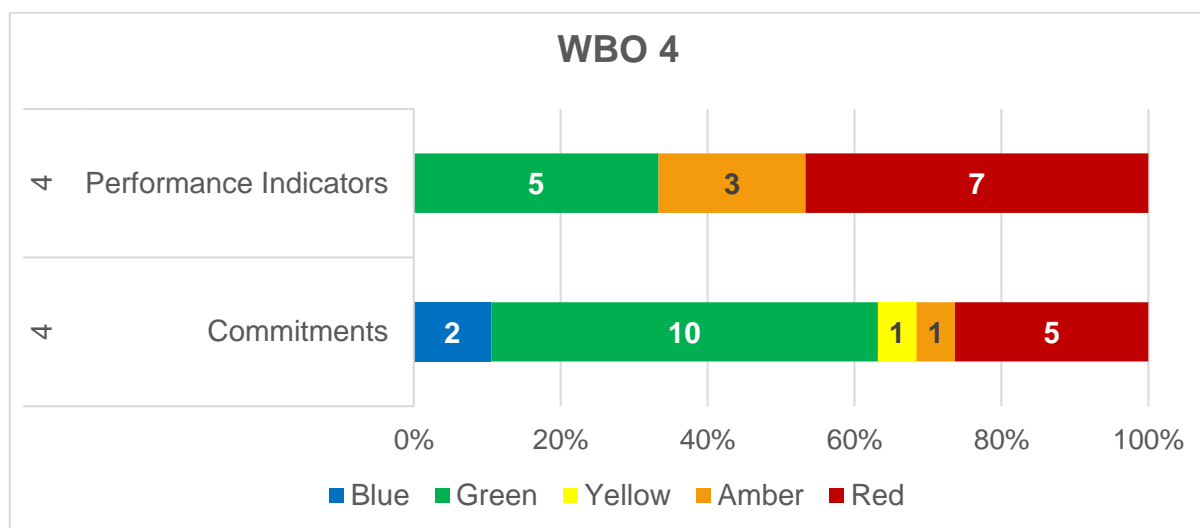
- Complete and publish the placemaking plan for Maesteg.
- Improve marketing for the commercial property enhancement grant.
- Bid for funding to bring premises and land forward for business growth in the Valleys
- Work with Awen to progress the new facilities for people with learning disabilities at wood-B and B-leaf.
- Increase investment in Community Asset Transfers in the Valleys.
- Sell the Ewenny Road site for a mixed-use development including new and affordable homes, an enterprise hub, open space and green infrastructure.
- Deliver additional activities in community venues in the Valleys.
- Develop and promote library use in Valleys communities.
- Implement the digital development project in 5 community venues.
- Invest in programmes that focus on social connections / mental wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation.
- Complete the lease document for Bettws and Blaengarw childcare facilities so they are operational in November 2022/4.
- Consult on a regeneration strategy for the Valleys in summer 2024.
- Implement the green spaces enhancement project.
- Work with RSLs, Welsh Government and other partners to resolve external factors affecting the delivery of new affordable housing sites in the Valleys.

## **Case study - Cwm Taf nature network**

The Cwm Taf Nature Network (CTNN) brought together different organisations to help reconnect people with nature. There were a range of activities in parks and green spaces, including litter picks, tree planting, bug hunting, guided walks and storytelling. There were also volunteering and training opportunities. Improvements were made to help people access green spaces, including new signs, steps, paths, and bins. The project also improved green spaces, producing landscape management plans, tree surveys, clearance, planting of wildflower meadows and storytelling areas and raised awareness about invasive species control through a balsam bashing silent disco. The project also included the Bridgend Green Gathering, at Bryngarw Country Park.



Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>4 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential</b>	<b>Adequate</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	Status	Description
Providing safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>Schools have been given tools to help improve Estyn inspection outcomes, including self-evaluation toolkits, reviewed school development plans, and support with post inspection actions.</p> <p>All schools have completed safeguarding audits, with 95% rated as “green”. Three schools rated amber with areas of improvement to address.</p> <p>Additional digital learning opportunities have been available to schools via Central South Consortium, including digital competency training, google classroom and digital platform training, Curriculum for Wales skills mapping, and online safety training (also provided to governors).</p> <p>The Young Editors Group have co-developed website content for an interactive youth-led website.</p> <p>Our social media channels have proved an excellent way to engage with young people. Engagement with young people has identified that “Tik Tok” is the preferred social media platform, which Bridgend Youth Support will trial in the coming months.</p>
Improving employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>We are doing a review of day opportunities to give young adults with learning disabilities a chance to try activities, gain new skills and fulfil their potential.</p> <p>Links with our Employability Team are in development, and there have been a small number of volunteering opportunities in the Day Service.</p>

		A regional working group has been established for Neuro Diversity and Learning Disability, with a stakeholder meeting held in February 2024 to identify current provision and networks between providers.
Expanding Welsh medium education opportunities	Unsatisfactory	<p>There are a variety of groups, projects and initiatives in place to increase opportunities for children to use the Welsh language, but targets we have set have not been achieved in all areas. The percentage of year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh is 8.56% and continues to show an improving trend, but the percentage of learners studying for assessed qualifications through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4 has fallen slightly to 6.62%, indicating a smaller proportion of children studying at a Welsh-medium secondary school. The number of students who were entered for an A level examination in Welsh second language remains the same as last year, although is almost double those that sat A level Welsh first language.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy is on target – we have developed Welsh-medium webpages and have been planning the promotion of Welsh-medium education.</p>
Modernising our school buildings	Unsatisfactory	<p>Each of the five schemes are in design / development phases and have experienced delays throughout 2023-2024, including significant increases in projected costs, with a big impact on project timescales, consideration of options and decision making.</p> <p>The replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr timescales have been impacted due to a review of the car park and school transport parking design layout (to ensure pupil/user safety) as well as ecological issues at the new, Ffordd Cadfan site. A strategy for undertaking the work is being developed with input from the ecologist.</p> <p>The replacement Heronsbridge School has seen significant cost increases and a delayed decision in terms of the preferred option, which has impacted on the timescale for delivery of the project.</p> <p>The replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School planning application is yet to be submitted, as the preferred option for the highway infrastructure needs to be confirmed.</p> <p>The PAC process for Bridgend West (the replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr and the new English-medium school) has concluded and a cost plan developed, reviewed in conjunction with Welsh Government / Welsh Education Partnership Company (WEPCo), and value engineering has been undertaken. Welsh Government reviews have impacted on timescales for delivery.</p>

Attract and retain young people into BCBC employment	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>We have engaged with schools through the termly Director Reports and have attended jobs fairs, options and careers events at comprehensive schools to promote the apprenticeship offer, delivering workshops on applying for apprenticeship jobs and improving interview skills.</p> <p>The number of apprentices employed by the council has increased from 36 in 22-23 to 46 in 23-24, with 90% of those concluding their apprenticeships in 23-24 going on to obtain a non-apprentice role.</p>
Offering youth services and school holiday programmes for our young people	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>130 children took part in the me, where children attended 12 sessions to support their physical health and emotional wellbeing and received a healthy breakfast and lunch.</p> <p>19,659 children in the County Borough took part in the national free-swimming initiative for 16 and under.</p> <p>Discovery programmes supported around 50 families with young people with higher levels of additional needs, with activities for the young people and respite for the families.</p> <p>22 families have been referred and 70 individuals supported in our “step up and step down” approach for low level social care.</p> <p>Programmes have been delivered with halo and community groups with youth activities for more vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Using funding from Town and Community Councils / Welsh Government there has been free holiday activity programmes for 8-11 year olds in 8 locations including leisure centres, secondary school sites and community settings.</p> <p>357 people with additional or diverse needs have taken part in targeted activities including Summer of Fun / Winter of Wellbeing.</p>
Work with people to design and develop services	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>The Feel Good for Life programme delivered by Halo Leisure has used peer review panels to engage with service users to plan for improvements. A dementia planning working group has been established to share insight and opportunities to collaborate between partner organisations.</p> <p>We work with Cwmpas and carers to make improvements to how they can access the information they need, and how use of a range of short breaks could improve their resilience to care.</p>
Supporting and encouraging lifelong learning	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>There were a number of promotional exercises to engage with residents about the Adult Community Learning (ACL) service. 53 face-to-face courses/sessions delivered, including accredited courses, one-off taster sessions and regular digital drop-ins. A successful partnership has developed with a</p>

		number of primary schools and effective recruitment campaigns were run. This year has seen increased enrolment numbers compared to previous years however we did not reach our target as active engagement campaigns ended due to the approved proposal to deprioritise ACL funding in February 2024.
Being the best parents we can to our care experienced children	<b>Good</b>	<p>Joint working in the 16+ team has led to a fall in the number of care leavers who experience homelessness. Social Services and Housing are working together to provide care leavers with the skills needed for independent living.</p> <p>The number of care leavers completing 12 months consecutive employment, education or training (EET) since leaving care is improved to 68.97%, but there is a slight decrease in those completing 13-24 months. There has been a notable decline since the Basic Income Pilot was introduced.</p> <p>We have published our new Corporate Parenting Strategy with board member agencies now asked to sign up to the Welsh Government Corporate Parenting Pledge.</p> <p>We have set up a fundraising page for an awards event for care experienced children, young people and care leavers aged 5-21.</p> <p>Care experience will now be recognised as a protected characteristic to make sure their needs are taken into account in all our decision making.</p>

### What will we do to improve?

- Support schools (working with Central South Consortium) to implement Curriculum for Wales and assessment, encouraging high-quality teaching and learning.
- Implement the Trauma-Recovery Model (TRM) of practice across the Youth Justice Service to better support children and their families.
- Ensure children are diverted from the criminal justice system through appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity (working with the police and courts).
- Streamline youth justice referrals, through Prevention and Diversion Panel, ensuring smooth handoffs to other agencies for cases where criminalisation can be avoided.
- Increase education, training and employment support to children not in education, employment, or training (NEET) or with reduced timetables.
- Develop and implement a digital platform to capture the voice of young people, especially those who have been in receipt of services.
- Complete a governor skills audit to inform their self-evaluation process.
- Organise additional safeguarding training for school staff and governors.
- Provide schools with additional digital learning training.
- Launch the new website and tiktok account to keep young people informed.
- Develop a local and regional plan for young people with learning disabilities.
- Enact the communications plan for Welsh-medium education.



- Complete the review of the car park and school transport parking design layout at the replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and develop a strategy for accessing the site and undertaking the work with input from the ecologist.
- Proceed with work on the replacement Heronsbridge School 'do maximum option (that is, school and the school's residential provision) plus a swimming pool' following Cabinet approval of the way forward in March 2024.
- Submit the planning application for the replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School.
- Await Welsh Government signoff for the Mutual Investment Model (that is, revenue funded) scheme for the PAC process for Bridgend West (that is, the replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr and the new English-medium school).
- Review the action plan on support for care experienced children through corporate safeguarding board.
- Education and Engagement team / Social Services will continue to work closely to provide care-experienced children with support and put personal education plans in place as soon as possible.

### **Case study - Food and Fun Programme**

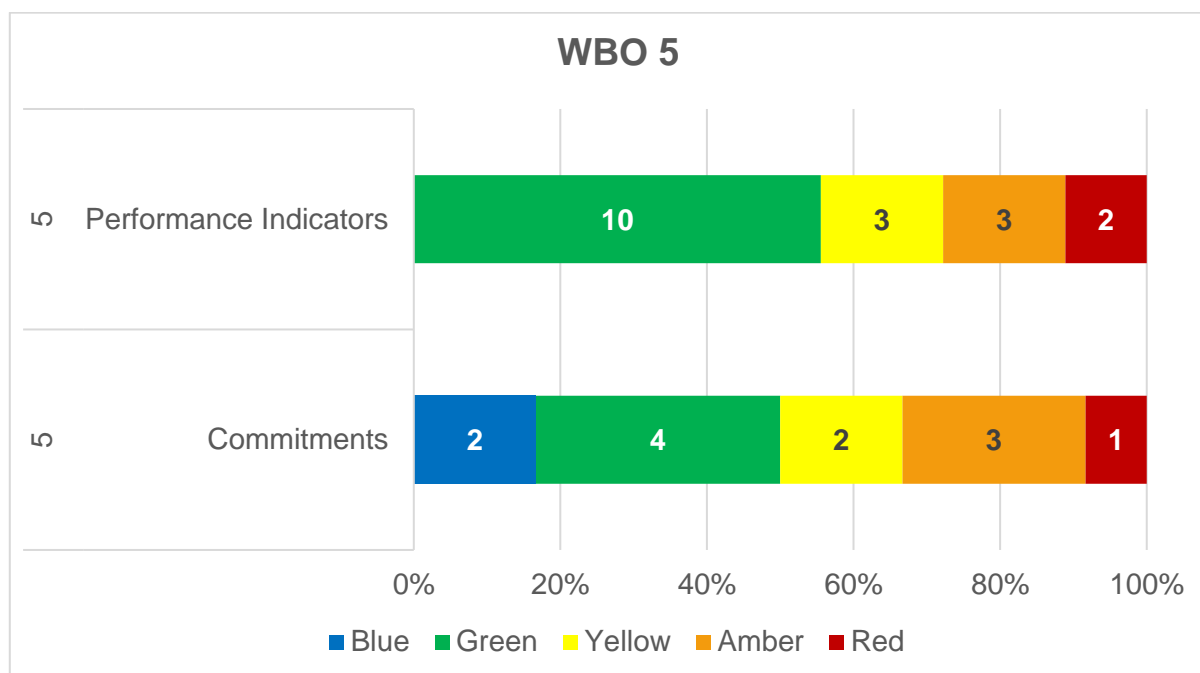
The Food and Fun Programme has been delivered since 2018, initially in one primary school. In 2023 it ran in four schools: three primaries and one secondary. The programme provides a healthy breakfast and lunch, physical activities, and nutritional education over 12 days of the summer holidays. Schools and the Early Years and Childcare Team have worked together to increase numbers of children accessing the schemes each year. In 2023, 131 children attended the scheme, which has consistently positive feedback from parents.

### **Care Experienced Youth Forum**

We have worked with the care experienced Youth Forum to organise a workshop for young people in care (ages 11+) to share their foster care experiences. With guidance from Connor Allen, the former Welsh Children's Poet Laureate, they created a poem to amplify their voices and challenge misconceptions. In Autumn 2023, the youth forum took part in workshops as part of a national campaign, with Foster Wales, to dispel misconceptions about young people in care and create a mural in Brackla.



Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>5 - A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency</b>	<b>Good</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	Status	Description
Moving towards net zero carbon, and improving our energy efficiency	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>Overall, a 4.3% reduction in emissions was achieved in 23-24, slightly less than our 5% target but a positive step in our 2030 obligations, with reductions in electricity and gas consumption and CO2 related energy consumption across our buildings.</p> <p>There are significant cost barriers to moving fleet vehicles from traditional petrol/diesel to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV), but we have used Welsh Government funding to procure 6 electric vehicles, used by the Social Services Support at Home Service.</p> <p>The average nitrogen dioxide level in Park Street, Bridgend has improved. Measures in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) have developed and refined, which will reduce levels further once implemented. Modelling now forecasts the likely year of compliance as 2026 with all measures in place.</p>
Protecting our landscapes and open spaces and planting more trees	<b>Good</b>	<p>The Local Places for Nature project successfully delivered its 23/24 work programme which included biodiversity enhancement schemes at Heol Y Cyw Playing Fields and land behind Pyle Swimming Pool and habitat connectivity schemes at Sarn, Brynmenyn, Newbridge Fields, Cefn Glas, Aberkenfig, Bryntirion and Newcastle.</p>

		<p>The Cwm Taf Nature Network (CTNN) project completed its delivery during 23-24 and the evaluation report demonstrated the project had been a success, improving access to green spaces for local people, improving the quality of the environment of those green spaces, and connecting up green spaces.</p> <p>Our commitment to plant a further 10,000 trees could not be achieved. Feasibility work for the schemes was completed, but further investigation of the preferred site option is needed and funding must be secured before this can progress further. 3 beaches at Rest Bay, Trecco Bay and Porthcawl Marina retained their blue flag status, and 3 parks at Bryn Garw Country Park, Coychurch Crematorium and Maesteg Welfare Park maintained their status as green flag parks / green spaces.</p>
Improve the quality of the public realm and built environment through good placemaking principles	<b>Good</b>	<p>The Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in March 2024 after an extensive examination in public in Spring 2023 by a Welsh Government Appointed Inspector. We will now progress work on the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which enhances the policies in the LDP.</p> <p>The Planning Department have implemented a restructure during this year resulting in new posts being created, and an improvement in the percentage of planning appeals dismissed from 64% to 87% and planning applications determined within 8 weeks from 64% to 68%, however this is still lower than target.</p>
Reducing, reusing or recycling as much of our waste as possible	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>Our high standards in recycling have continued, with the percentage of street cleansing waste being recycled increased to 41.12%, the percentage of municipal waste collected that is prepared for re-use, recycled, or biowaste that is composted increased to 71.94% and the amount of residual waste generated has decreased further to 119.8 kg per person.</p> <p>The percentage of highways land found to be of acceptable or high level of cleanliness also improved to 99.97%.</p> <p>Work has begun on our future waste services model, engaging an industry expert to outline our options based on analysis of data from our current model – potential future options.</p> <p>The new Community Recycling Centre (CRC) opened in Pyle on 14th March 2024.</p>
Improving flood defences and schemes to reduce flooding of our homes	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>New flood prevention and culvert schemes have been completed in Station Street, Nantymoel, and Queen street, Blaengarw and monitored for effectiveness over the winter period. Bids for Welsh Government funding have been approved for schemes identified for 2024/25. There was additional gully clearance work targeted at historical flooding locations, and ditch cleaning operations to improve flood risk in rural areas. More culverts have been added to monitoring</p>



and businesses		regime, with more frequent inspections of the high-risk culverts, and replacement/upgrading of warning sensors at some locations. Improvements have been made to the statutory sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) application process, with 100% of applications being processed within 7 weeks.
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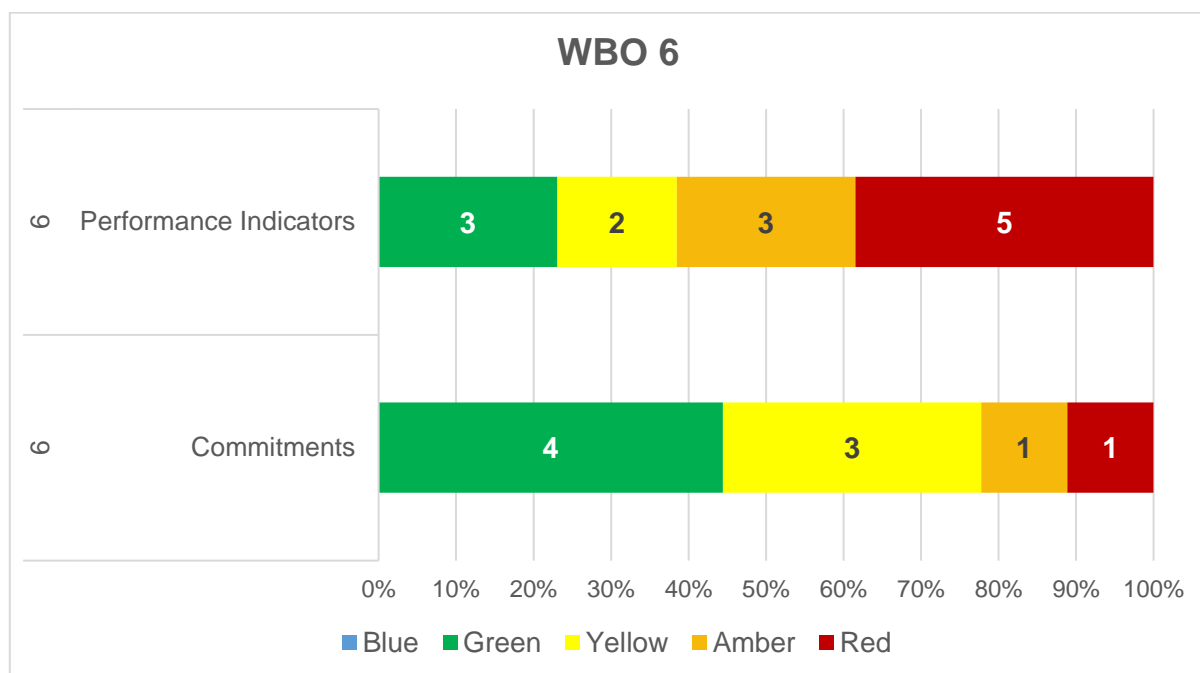
### What will we do to improve?

- Review our fleet transition strategy to meet the target of 2035 for net zero
- Agree and publish the final air quality action plan (AQAP).
- Install electric car charging points at the social services support at home base
- Develop and explore funding for energy efficiency improvements for council buildings.
- Develop supplementary planning guidance to support our new LDP
- Further improvements to our landscapes and green spaces through the new Green Spaces Enhancement project.
- Further work on the future waste model and a decision on new model will be made in 2024/25.
- Decommission the outdated CRC at Tythegston.

### Case study – Local Development Plan (LDP)

This year, the council adopted a new local development plan (LDP), which will shape development up to 2033. This includes having enough land available to support population increases, the creation of 7,500 new jobs and the construction of 7,575 homes. This will include 1,700 affordable homes, some of which have already been built. It will bring in approximately £116 million funding from major housing developments. Developments include five new primary schools, and improved transport facilities such as park and ride. Our LDP is the first new development plan adopted since the pandemic putting Bridgend at the forefront of planning in Wales.

Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>6 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community</b>	<b>Adequate</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	Status	Description
Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion and tackling discrimination	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>The new Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP) for 2024-28 has been consulted on and will be approved and published early in 2024/25.</p> <p>Only 48% of council staff have completed introduction to Equality and Diversity training, below the target of 100%.</p> <p>The staff survey has identified interest in staff groups focused on groups including LGBTQ+, mental health and ethnic minority. Groups will commence in 2024.</p>
Improving the way we engage with local people, including young people, listening to their views and acting on them.	<b>Good</b>	<p>The percentage of consultation participants who believe we have been effective at meeting our aim of being citizen-focused over the last 12 months has improved slightly to 49.7% against a target of 50%.</p> <p>The level of engagement with residents, using the digital communications platform and across corporate social media accounts has increased and the targets have been achieved. The level of engagement on corporate consultations has reduced and target has been missed.</p>

		We have not developed the Bridgend County Borough Council Climate Citizens Assembly, as this has been deprioritised.
Offering more information and advice online, and at local level, and making sure you can talk to us and hear from us in Welsh	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<p>We have not quite achieved our targets for first call resolutions or number of transactions using the digital platform and performance is down since last year. The number of online transactions decreased in comparison to previous years, due to the previous figures being inflated as they included the online forms that were temporarily made available to residents to apply for various cost of living schemes, especially the Winter Fuel payments. But the number of hits on the corporate website has increased and met the target, with awareness raising communications, new pages and people being directed to using the website for online transactions.</p> <p>Work continues with Awen to extend customer services in local community facilities. A pilot has been undertaken in Garw and Ogmere Valleys' libraries, but it showed that demand for the service was low.</p> <p>Staff with Welsh language speaking skills has increased to 27% but this is still below target. Only 48% of council staff have completed Welsh Language Awareness E-Learning, more than last year but still below target.</p>
Helping clubs and community groups take control of and improve their facilities and protect them for the future	<b>Good</b>	<p>Our progress with community asset transfers (CATs) is mixed. 7 CATs were completed against a target of 15 for the year, as a result of some complicated property issues and staff capacity. But the level of investment in CATs has exceeded our target as we have fully spent our own budget and brought in external funds.</p> <p>395 people have been supported to have their needs met in their communities by local community co-ordinators and community navigators. This is well above target for the new roles. Community network building approaches are being used to bring partners and stakeholders together who support people to understand services / gaps.</p>
Becoming an age friendly council	<b>Adequate</b>	Bridgend is participating in an all-Wales programme supported by Welsh Government. We are developing our baseline assessment and action plan, looking at transport, housing, community support and health services, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information.

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

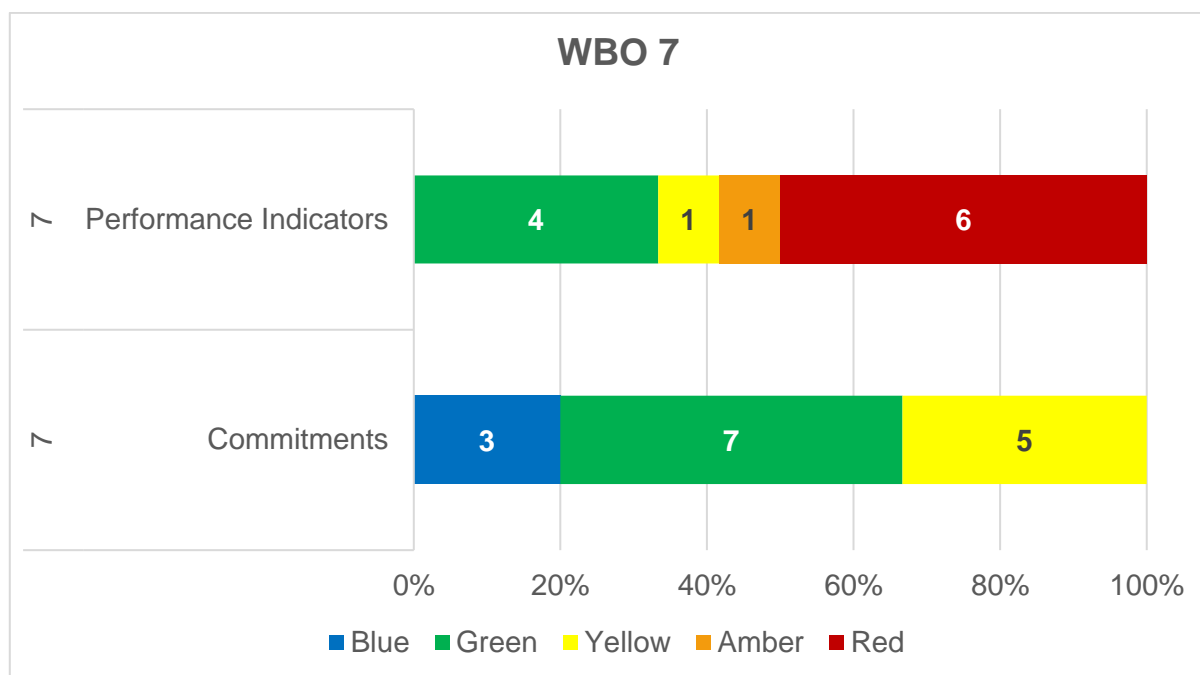
- Publish our new Strategic Equalities Plan
- With our partners, develop an action plan to deliver the Strategic Equalities Plan
- Arrange staff groups for people with protected characteristics.
- Develop a communications plan, corporate narrative and public engagement.
- Engage in the 2030 net carbon agenda.
- Find ways to progress with community support in Garw and Ogmore Valley libraries.
- Continue to build community networks and grow prevention and wellbeing network meetings in partnership with Bavo and the third sector.
- Continue to work with Welsh Government and the Older People's Commissioner network to inform planning and development around age friendly councils.

## **Case study - Specialist Dementia Unit**

A specialist dementia unit has been developed at Bridgend Resource Centre. It is an 'outreach' and community-based service that supports people living with dementia to access the services they need or are likely to need in the future. It helps people avoid admission to hospital or early care home admission. The team can also help support social inclusion; living well with dementia and carer resilience. They can also undertake home visits, working with the carer and the person they care for in their own homes. The Unit can support up to 12 people a day.



Wellbeing Objective	Score
<b>7 - A County Borough where we support people to be healthy and happy</b>	<b>Good</b>



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective.

Aim	Status	Description
Improving active travel routes and facilities so people can walk and cycle	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>Construction of the Metrolink bus facility has progressed well throughout the year but has not opened for commercial use within the year as planned.</p> <p>Welsh Government have significantly reduced the money available to implement additional Active Travel Routes, which has had a dramatic impact on schemes achieved, with only 0.4km of new route added.</p> <p>We have also been consulting on future active travel schemes including at Merlin Crescent in Cefn Glas.</p>
Offering attractive leisure and cultural activities	<b>Excellent</b>	<p>The Grand Pavilion refurbishment project is underway, with a specialist project management team and planning and listed building consent in place, and work on designs in progress. The tender process will commence in Summer 2024.</p> <p>Welsh Government and Sport Wales have supported improvements to the active leisure offer for older adults, to improve physical / mental wellbeing. We have promoted use of our leisure facilities and community settings, and activity programmes that benefit older adults.</p>

		<p>The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) operated beyond capacity with referrals totalling 1658 across 20,729 sessions. 416 people completed 16-week programmes.</p> <p>Refurbishment of Pencoed library was completed. During 23-24 there have been 26,620 library visits, 2,361 children participated in the summer reading challenge, (slightly below target), and almost 56,000 children participated in children's events in libraries - slightly below previous years.</p>
Improving children's play facilities and opportunities	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>The refurbishment of play areas has not progressed as far as planned, with slow progress during the complex procurement work. Contracts have now been awarded and work has commenced on refurbishing 22 play areas across the borough working with members and Disability Wales.</p> <p>Following successful pilots in Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen and Cynffig Comprehensive School, the "Dare2Explore" project has been rolled out to all secondary schools.</p> <p>Bridgend Music Service developed a new training brass ensemble, senior wind band, and string ensemble and will be recruiting new members.</p>
Providing free school meals and expanding free childcare provision	<b>Good</b>	<p>Universal primary free school meals (UPFSM) were implemented for Year 3, 4 and Nursery pupils.</p> <p>There has been a further increase in children accessing Flying Start funded childcare through the expansion programme, with 272 additional children accessing childcare between in 23-24 and a total of 530 children now registered.</p> <p>The percentage of non-maintained settings judged by Care Inspectorate Wales as at least 'good' was 76.5% which was below the target of 100% we have set.</p>
Integrating our social care services with health services so people are supported seamlessly	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>104 people were delayed on the national pathway of care, which exceeds our target. Implementation of 'Discharge to Recover and Assess' pathways has not led to the improvement anticipated.</p> <p>We have worked closely with the NHS on Dementia mapping and linking needs around the Complex Dementia Day Service and the new Memory Assessment Service. CIW have evaluated this service as 'excellent'.</p> <p>We have successfully mobilised the Age Connect Morgannwg contract with the new Dementia Connector role for Bridgend, and the Alzheimer's Disease contract for the Dementia Link Workers.</p>
Improving the supply of affordable housing	<b>Good</b>	<p>64 additional homes were delivered, over £11.8 million Welsh Government Social Housing Grant was committed and an additional £4 million Transitional Capital secured for the year.</p>

		<p>The Welsh Government Leasing Scheme has been adopted with a small number of units already in use. A housing and support needs assessment was undertaken during the development of the Housing Strategy, and we have engaged with all RSL's and Welsh Government to discuss general housing needs, temporary accommodation and supported housing schemes.</p> <p>The Empty Properties Loan Scheme is nearing completion. 6 empty properties have been brought back into use through local authority intervention. By targeting the Top 20 empty properties - 2 have been sold, 3 are being renovated, and 2 completing probate. Enforcement notices have been served on 2 properties, successful prosecutions on 3 with another prosecution pending, and 1 work in default completed.</p>
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### What will we do to improve?

- Open the new metrolink bus facility.
- Start the tender process for Porthcawl Grand Pavilion.
- Improve the active leisure offer in the Valleys for older adults.
- Develop a plan for the long-term active Bridgend plan and leisure strategy.
- Develop a new play sufficiency assessment.
- Deliver phase 3 and 4 of refurbishing 22 play areas across the borough.
- Roll out free school meals for Year 4 pupils (from April 2024) and Year 5 (in June 2024) and Year 6 (in September 2024).
- A delivery plan has been submitted and agreed for a small Welsh Government funded expansion (26 additional Flying Start childcare places) in 24-25.
- Continue to develop network multidisciplinary teams with the NHS
- As part of a much larger 5-year programme, the £11.8 million committed in Social Housing Grant will deliver approximately 119 new homes.
- The £4 million secured through Transitional Accommodation Capital Funding Programme (TACP) will add approximately 33 affordable homes.

### Case study - Universal Primary Free School Meals

We started planning the implementation of universal primary free school meals (UPFSM) in September 2021, following Welsh Government's commitment. A lot of work was needed to make sure that the right school kitchen and dining facilities were ready for the first phase from September 2022. Grant funding has been provided by Welsh Government which has been used to support physical upgrades to several schools. UPFSM was brought in for Reception pupils in September 2022 and the remaining year groups of Nursery to Year 6 were implemented gradually from April 2023 to September 2024. This now means that every primary school-age pupil can have a hot, nutritious meal at lunchtime, for free.

### Flying Start Programme



The core Flying Start programme involves the delivery of four key elements – enhanced health visiting, parenting support, early language development and a high-quality childcare offer. It has been successfully operating in specific areas since 2008. In line with Welsh Government policy, Flying Start Phase Two – an offer to expand access to childcare – has been extended to a further 19 areas across the county borough. This has created more than 200 extra Flying Start childcare places, taking the total number of places available in March 2024 to 530.





## 5. How is the council using its resources?

We have always had to report how well we are using our resources. For example, telling Audit Wales about our spending, workforce and buildings. Until recently, we did not have a process for reviewing how we are managing all our different resources. To help us write this report, we developed a process to look at:

- Finances and risk management,
- Commissioning and procurement,
- corporate planning and performance 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 regulators e.g. Audit Wales report on workforce planning

We asked 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?

We presented findings to councillors who scrutinised them, checked and asked questions, and used the same judgement scale from excellent to unsatisfactory.

### Overall judgement

<b>Use of resources</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<p>For the third year in a row, our use of resources is adequate. Some things have got better – we have implemented our performance management improvement plan, improved our statutory building compliance in asset management, and embedded and communicated the new Corporate Plan, Delivery Plan and Performance Framework.</p> <p>Other things have got worse – due to the increased demand, increased prices and significant financial situation we are facing. We have significantly overspent on our budget and used reserves to balance the budget. The worsening financial situation, and risk to our financial sustainability, has an impact on workforce across corporate teams and staff and managers across all of our directorates, with increasing vacancies and capacity issues. We have brought in a 5-point plan to try and help us save money.</p> <p>We have got strong frameworks and robust processes for the day-to-day management of resources, with clear and agreed working models and strong, working relationships between corporate teams and directorates. But longer-term planning, proactiveness and improvement will be challenging with the resource issues we are facing.</p>
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## Theme judgements

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.

<b>Finances</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	Financial Planning is adequate. Judgements from regulators are generally positive, we balance our budget every year, and have unqualified Statements of Accounts from the Auditor General. The council's financial framework is robust, with strong governance arrangements which drive the budget and spending decisions of the Council. The financial position is set out in detail in regular reports. We have a high level of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code, Principles and Standards. In recent years the Council's financial position has become more challenging, with higher than anticipated pay / price increases and service pressures. This year we have significantly overspent on our budget and used reserves to balance the budget putting the financial sustainability of the Council at risk.
<b>Corporate planning</b>	<b>Good</b>	Corporate planning is good. The new Corporate Plan is becoming more embedded, and forms part of induction and manager training, with communication activities on the plan and priorities taking place in autumn 2023. The Corporate Plan is supported by a 1-year Delivery Plan. It is also supported by Directorate Business Plans which are all accessible on the Council's intranet. An updated performance framework has also been developed. In the staff survey in February 2024, 70% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they are aware of BCBC's priorities, from 68% in 2022.
<b>Risk management</b>	<b>Good</b>	Risk management is good. Our updated Corporate Risk Management Policy has been embedded in the Authority. Reports and the reporting process for risk are straightforward and accessible, including for members. Through a review by internal audit of the Council's Corporate Risk Management, completed in March 2024, a Reasonable Assurance opinion has been given and the recommendations for improvement will be implemented in 2024/2025.
<b>Commissioning and Procurement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	Commissioning and procurement are adequate. Procurement is good. We have embedded the new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy, delivery plan and updated Contract Procedure Rules. We have run training sessions to help stakeholders understand responsibilities and requirements. We have embedded the real living wage into our tender process and have a database of accredited suppliers. We have also worked with Cwmpas and suppliers around carbon reduction planning. We have made some changes to our processes including a price cap and authorisations for purchasing card spending. Our judgement is adequate based on the need for an improved and more consistent approach to commissioning.

<b>Performance management</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	Our Performance management approach is adequate but we have made significant improvements in the last 18 months. We have developed a new 5-year corporate plan and 1-year delivery plan and performance framework to support them. We have appointed a new corporate performance manager. We have improved arrangements for data quality and accuracy. Performance reporting to scrutiny has been improved with summaries and graphs. Our overall judgement is adequate as improvements to our challenge culture, roles, responsibilities and timeliness of information, data accuracy and use of service user perspectives still needs improvement.
<b>Workforce planning</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	Workforce planning is adequate. Workforce management is good. Feedback from employees, managers, trade union representatives and internal audits is positive. Managers are assisted to deal effectively with people issues through support from the HR / Organisational Development service. We are developing an increased focus on longer-term workforce planning and engagement and retention activity as well as supporting services who have to identify staff reductions. The overall judgement is assessed as adequate based on the need for added capacity amongst managers and in the HR team, an increased focus on strategic workforce planning across the council which will consider longer range workforce needs and succession planning.
<b>Asset management</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	Asset management is adequate. Asset management policy is good with good engagement from directorates. The asset management strategy is dynamic and undergoes regular reviews with services / partners. The overall judgement is adequate, as we need to address the continued resource challenges that prevent us from planning strategically, and result in a reactive approach. Over the last year we have developed and completed 4 new Net Zero Carbon assets and continued to look at ways to reduce carbon and energy usage across the whole estate. Our management of Statutory Building Compliance has improved, with Big-5 Compliance now at 94%. We have also improved collaboration with public sector partners and continued our work on the Integrated Works Management System (IWMS).

### Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve wider understanding, internally and outside of the Council, of the Council's budget including how it is set, where the funding comes from and how the funding is spent.
- Improve processes for identifying future years savings proposals.
- Wider consultation, improving engagement, to contribute towards the budget setting process.
- Closer monitoring of budget, including deep dives, to target key overspend areas.

- Review working arrangements with, and Terms of Reference of, the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP).
- Develop an approach to better communicating information about our priorities in the Corporate Plan.
- Support Governance and Audit Committee to scrutinise the Corporate Risk Assessment.
- Standardise risk reporting across directorates and integrate risk reporting with performance and finance across all service areas.
- Consider whether we are overly risk-averse at a corporate level.
- Assess the impact of the procurement price cap and changed authorisations for purchasing card spending.
- Rollout additional procurement training sessions to help stakeholders understand responsibilities and requirements.
- Update our procurement strategy, action plan and CPRs based on the new UK government legislation.
- Develop an improved and more consistent approach to commissioning across directorates, in particular in analysis and review.
- Develop a stronger challenge culture for using performance information.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities around performance information and improve timeliness of reporting.
- Improve data accuracy of performance information through PI audits.
- Enhance our use of service user perspectives to inform decision making.
- Develop Strategic workforce planning supported by the introduction of planning guidance which will support longer term planning, in a consistent manner across the council, aligned to financial planning.
- Tackle capacity issues in senior management and elsewhere and inform national discussion.
- Further development of HR policies and procedures which are co-designed and focus on proactive HR services.
- Continuation of the automation and streamlining of HR processes.
- Introduction of Leadership and Resilience development.
- Support and inform the Welsh Government work on the social care progression framework to tackle divergence in terms and conditions.
- Adopt the new strategic asset management Plan.
- Continue to make improvements in the maintenance backlog and statutory building compliance.
- Procure and implement the IWMS to improve information, data and benchmarking around assets.
- Improve asset management workforce capacity. We will also work closely with the decarbonisation team to enhance our asset management approach.

## 6. 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' (AGS) that has existed for many years. The information below summarises the Council's AGS for 2023/24.

### What is our judgement?

<b>Governance</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Our governance arrangements are good, and work well.

### Decision making

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 with a simple guide to help members of the public understand it. 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 and included within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which is reviewed and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee.

We are committed to ensuring we have good governance principles and management practices. These are used right across the councils to make sure we have the public's trust. The arrangements the Council has for Corporate Governance are set out below.

1	Bridgend County Borough Council Code of Corporate Governance	The Council's Code of Governance provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the Council meets and demonstrates compliance with the CIPFA Governance principles.
2	The Governance Framework	The Council's Code is underpinned by a Governance Framework which comprises the policies, procedures, behaviours and values by which the Council is governed and controlled.
3	The Annual Governance Statement	The Annual Governance Statement provides assurances regarding the Council's Governance arrangements, together with identifying areas of future focus and improvement. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to

		report publicly on the extent to which the Council complies with its Code of Corporate Governance. It identifies those areas which have been identified as needing improvement following self-assessment.
4	Annual Governance Statement Action Plan	The Council continues to review the areas for improvement identified within the Annual Governance Statement which are monitored through the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

A number of significant issues were identified in the Council's 2022-23 AGS, to be taken forward during 2023-24, so in the past year we have made improvements including –

- Developing workforce planning activities, some that focus on specific challenge areas, for example social care and school catering. Others are more universal, like looking at new ways of working and developing a new employee assistance programme.
- Improvements to Asset management including work to improve the Council's statutory compliance in the "Big 5" areas of compliance.
- Improvements to the Disabled Facilities Grant service including new procedure guidelines, working with external surveyors to make progress with existing grant applications, the introduction of a new software system and improved tendering processes.
- Improvements to our medium to long-term financial management processes including providing Capital Strategy training for all members, training for schools on the closing of accounts process, regular reviews and reporting on the level of reserves, quarterly budget reporting and monitoring of budget reduction proposals.
- Providing additional training for Members to support their role in ensuring proper financial management of the Council including on Treasury Management and Earmarked Reserves.
- Implementing our performance management improvement plan and embedding the new Corporate Plan, Delivery Plan, Performance Framework and reporting mechanisms. Improvements to data quality and accuracy are ongoing.
- Started a review of the Decarbonisation 2030 strategy in line with Welsh Government changes.

### **Listening to the views of others**

The council provides services to all residents of Bridgend. Some of our services are universal – used by all residents – like roads and pavements, and waste and recycling. When we are developing, reviewing and changing these services, we need to try and talk to the whole population of Bridgend to help us decide what to do. We have a range of different methods for doing this, from formal consultations on major changes, public drop-in sessions and discussions, and the regular, day-to-day engagement from our social media.

Other services are more specialist – and used by smaller numbers of residents – like school transport and services for people with learning disabilities or young people leaving care. When we are developing, reviewing and changing these services, we need to try and talk to the people who rely on those services and their families to help us decide what to do. We have a range of methods for doing this, from consultation and engagement sessions, to coproducing those services directly with the users and their families.

In Spring 2023, Audit Wales reviewed the way we use service user perspectives to inform decision making. The review was published in April 2024 and concluded that, *'The Council's performance information does not enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and progress towards intended outcomes, restricting their ability to understand the impact of the Council's services and policies.'* We have a plan to improve this in the coming year working with, and reporting to the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Over the last year, we have completed a huge range of activities to understand and use service user perspectives, and the opinions of our regulators. The main ones are summarised below.

### **Consultation and engagement**

Corporate consultations are promoted bilingually to the council's social media channels, shared through weekly resident bulletins and weekly staff messages throughout the consultation period. Up to three consultations a year are shared with our citizen panel to raise awareness and encourage participation. Face to face engagement sessions are held where necessary and our Youth council are involved with relevant consultations.

We consulted on a number of our key strategies and reports, for example the Director of Social Services annual report, Self-assessment, 3 Year Strategic Plan - Childrens Social Care, Housing Strategy Policy, Engagement and Participation Strategy – included face to face engagement drop-in sessions (Citizen Panel included), Strategic Equality Objectives (including public drop-in sessions and focus group with a school) – (Citizen Panel included).

Other key strategies are coproduced with service users and their families. For example, the corporate parenting strategy was co-produced with care experienced children and young people, who also led the launch of the strategy in May 2023. We are now working with Cwmpas to co-produce the carers strategy.

We also consulted on some significant proposed changes to the way the council or our services work. Some of the main consultations in 2023/24 were –

- Our **20mph Scheme** was tested in April 2023, to look at which roads should be exempt from the reduced speed limit. As a result, a small number of roads were added to the speed limit exemptions and a similar number removed, based on the sound reasons given by residents of the Borough.
- **Dog fouling** was the subject of consultation in April 2024, proposing to renew our dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) where dog walkers can be fined

if they fail to pick up after their pets in public areas. There was wide support for the proposals from town councils, residents and groups including the Dogs Trust and the RSPCA, with over 379 survey responses and 77 comments on social media channels. As a result of this positive endorsement the PSPO is now progressing.

- Changes to **Community Recycling Centres** were tested July to September 2023, when the public were asked for their views on CRCs, their use of them and the potential one day a week closure of each site. Feedback from the public was mixed with 56% of the public that responded that they didn't agree that the CRC sites should be closed whilst 44% did agree. Ultimately Cabinet considered the public view alongside the need of the authority to generate the savings and approved the day closure that has since been implemented.
- **Maesteg Town Centre Placemaking Plan** was tested through consultation (including face to face engagement sessions) in September / October 2023, to assess whether the plan was robust enough to reach the town's full economic potential and encompass community well-being and cultural history. Residents and Businesses were positive about the plans and continuing support for business growth and retail improvements through the grant funding and advice. They were all positive about Maesteg Town Hall and welcomed the opening of this refurbished facility. Many asked that heritage information be more prominent to attract tourism to the Llynfi Valley. These comments and others are now being considered.
- The public were asked for their views on the **Valley Regeneration Strategy** and plans for future improvements in the Valleys (included face to face engagement sessions) in January / February 2024. Residents were keen to see improvements to the public realm, including parks, open spaces and car parking. There were conversations about transport links, including active travel and employment opportunities and training. All of this is being considered for inclusion in the Strategy, including how it will be delivered and over what timeframe.
- **Porthcawl Town Centre Placemaking Plan** was the subject of public consultation in March / April 2024 (including face to face engagement sessions). Residents and Businesses were positive about plans for the town centre and regeneration work in Porthcawl. There was some concern over parking, so we have committed to reviewing parking policies. Plans to promote the town centre offer across the waterfront and looking to increase footfall, with the development of the Dock Street Link were also well received.
- Our **Annual Budget consultation** included engagement with the Citizens Panel and face to face engagement sessions in January / February 2024. Respondents were asked about budget principles, reducing / closing services, new charges, asset review, external contracts for leisure services, council tax and citizen focus. Over 80% of respondents agreed with budget principles. Following this consultation and recommendations from scrutiny, a number of budget reduction proposals totalling £2.994 million were removed or amended, including a 3% reduction to schools delegated budgets (from 5%).



## Complaints and compliments

We have a clear and agreed two stage process for dealing with complaints -

- **Informal Complaint Stage**

Informal complaints should be dealt with quickly and where possible informally. It advises customers to contact the office responsible for the service to provide an opportunity to solve the problem. Informal complaints are logged in the Corporate Complaints office and we report on them every quarter to the Public Services Ombudsman. In 2023/24 we had the following informal complaints –

	Number	Resolved	Upheld	Discontinued / withdrawn	Ongoing
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	6	5	0	1	0
Children's Social Services	1	0	1	0	0
Community Facilities	15	13	0	2	0
Complaints handling	3	2	1	0	0
Education	23	20	0	3	0
Environment	0	0	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	33	29	4	0	0
Housing	22	22	0	0	0
Planning / Building Control	16	16	0	0	0
Roads & Transport	48	41	3	4	0
Various/Other	48	36	7	5	
Waste & Refuse	60	56	3	1	0

- **Formal Complaint Stage**

Formal complaints can be done by email, telephone, letter or online complaint form. All formal complaints with the exception of schools and social services (which have their own statutory procedures) are received, logged and acknowledged centrally by the Information Team within 5 working days. These complaints are sent to a Head of Service who appoints a senior officer e service to investigate the complaint and respond directly within 20 working days. The Information Team is provided with a copy of the response. We monitor numbers of complaints, time to respond, category of complaint, where in the Borough they come from, The Information Team has received, logged, acknowledged and referred a total of 67 formal complaints for the period for 2023/24 –

	Number	Resolved	Upheld	Discontinued / withdrawn	Ongoing
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	1	1	0	0	0
Children's Social Services	1	1	0	0	0
Community Facilities	4	2	2	0	0
Complaints Handling	0	0	0	0	0
Education	8	8	0	0	0
Environment	0	0	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	6	6	0	0	0
Housing	14	13	0	1	0
Planning & Building Control	12	12	0	0	0
Roads & Transport	8	8	0	0	0
Various/Other	10	6	3	0	1
Waste & Refuse	4	3	0	1	0

Social services complaints are monitored separately and reported to Cabinet each November / December. The latest report is [here](#).

We don't currently have a way of reviewing all of our corporate complaints to see what impact they have had on our services.

### Regulator views

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. We regularly test our progress against the views and recommendations of our regulators, through a regulatory tracker. This is reported to Governance and Audit Committee every January and July. The following new reviews were published in 2023/24.

Audit Wales' review of Service User Perspectives (SUPs), published in January 2024. Summarised above.

In June 2023, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn undertook a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend. The inspection noted a number of areas of **positive practice** and a number of **areas for improvement**. A **multi-agency action plan** was developed in September 2023. In the Council progress is overseen by the Social Services Improvement Board and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB).

Care Inspectorate Wales undertook 8 inspections of regulated services. In Adult Social Care, there were 5 inspections of regulated residential establishments and domiciliary support services. All inspections identified there is a good standard of care and support provided across the services, previous areas of improvement had been addressed and

no priority action notices for 2023/24 were noted. However, 1 area for improvement was identified, which is being addressed.

In Children's Social Care 3 regulatory inspections took place, 2 within residential establishments and 1 with Foster Wales Bridgend. For the residential establishments, key strengths were highlighted and no priority action notices were identified, with only 2 areas for improvement being identified which are being addressed.

In November 2023, Care Inspectorate Wales undertook an inspection of Foster Wales Bridgend. The inspection acknowledged the current context, *'the number of children who are referred to the service, outnumbers foster carers available'* but highlighted a number of key strengths. It noted 8 areas for improvement around the matching of children with complex needs, safe care arrangements, timeliness of responses to allegations and improvements to systems to ensure policies and procedures are evidenced in practice. Action plans are monitored via the fortnightly Children's Social Care Pressures meeting and quarterly performance management meetings.

### **Staff and Trade Union views**

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 February / March 2024 had 707 responses. This is lower than in recent years. 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 increased in recent years but reduced over the last two years, from 59% in 2018, 66% in 2020, 73% in 2021, 67% in 2022 and 49% in 2024. A detailed feedback report was developed, staff focus groups will be held to better understand the results and then an action plan will be developed to act on issues from the staff survey.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Implement the action plans developed to address areas for improvement in our regulator reviews.
- Develop a small suite of service user perspective performance indicators.
- Develop a new digital strategy for 2024/28
- Make improvements to the way we engage with people, including directing a new group of people to be involved with current consultations through a widget in MyAccount and developing links with organisations to reach protected groups.
- Focus better on schools / young people's voices by establishing links with schools and youth services.

- Improving the way we provide feedback to respondents (and others) following consultation and engagement.
- Respond to the internal audit review of the council's use of complaints information.
- Undertake a climate change risk assessment with the public service board.
- Working with shared regulatory service on an Empty Property Consultation.
- Work with WLGA / Data Cymru on the development and implementation of the National Residents Survey
- Develop a place narrative and communicate it widely.
- Development of staff forum for staff with protected characteristics
- Improvements to medium to long term financial management, reviewing the BREP process and starting budget setting earlier.
- Improvements to recruitment with targeted recruitment in key areas, and bespoke recruitment packages. We continue to work regionally and nationally to develop solutions that will not destabilise the job market.
- Review of the Decarbonisation 2030 strategy.
- Improvements to our use of service user perspectives information in our performance management process.
- Improved financial management including a review of financial procedures and policies, additional training for members and schools, developing budget reduction proposals and improving the reach of the budget consultation.

## **7. Our Strategic Equality Plan**

Our new Strategic Equality Plan has been developed and consulted on and outlines our six strategic equality objectives, which will shape how we plan, provide, and deliver our services to reflect the diversity of our communities. We are developing a Strategic Equality Action Plan which will detail the actions we will take to realise the equality objectives. Progress on the plans is regularly reported to the Corporate Equality Network, and responsibility for operational delivery lies with all service areas and teams. Our Cabinet Committee Equalities monitors and scrutinises delivery against the objectives.

### **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 the council's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information?**

Each year we try to improve the Equality Monitoring Data we hold for employees, revising the data capture to include more characteristics. We encourage employees to update information regularly through communications, appraisals and other methods.

### **What do our arrangements tell us regarding the equality of access to employment, training and pay?**

Every year, we report our 'equalities in the workforce' report to Cabinet Committee Equalities. This tells us about a range of things including the numbers of employees with protected characteristics where declared. 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 development are included in the strategic equality plan action Plan.

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## Appendix 2 – Performance against the Corporate Plan 2023-24

In March 2023 the Council published its new 5-year Corporate Plan 2023-28 and seven new wellbeing objectives. A 1 year Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2023-24 was agreed in July 2023 which defined 44 aims, with 101 commitments to deliver these objectives and 99 performance indicators (and sub indicators) to measure progress.

This document is intended to provide an overview of the Council's performance against the wellbeing objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan at quarter 4 of 2023-24, which is the final year-end position.

The wellbeing objectives are:

- 1 - A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
- 2 - A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
- 3 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
- 4 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
- 5 - A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
- 6 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, and part of their community
- 7 - A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

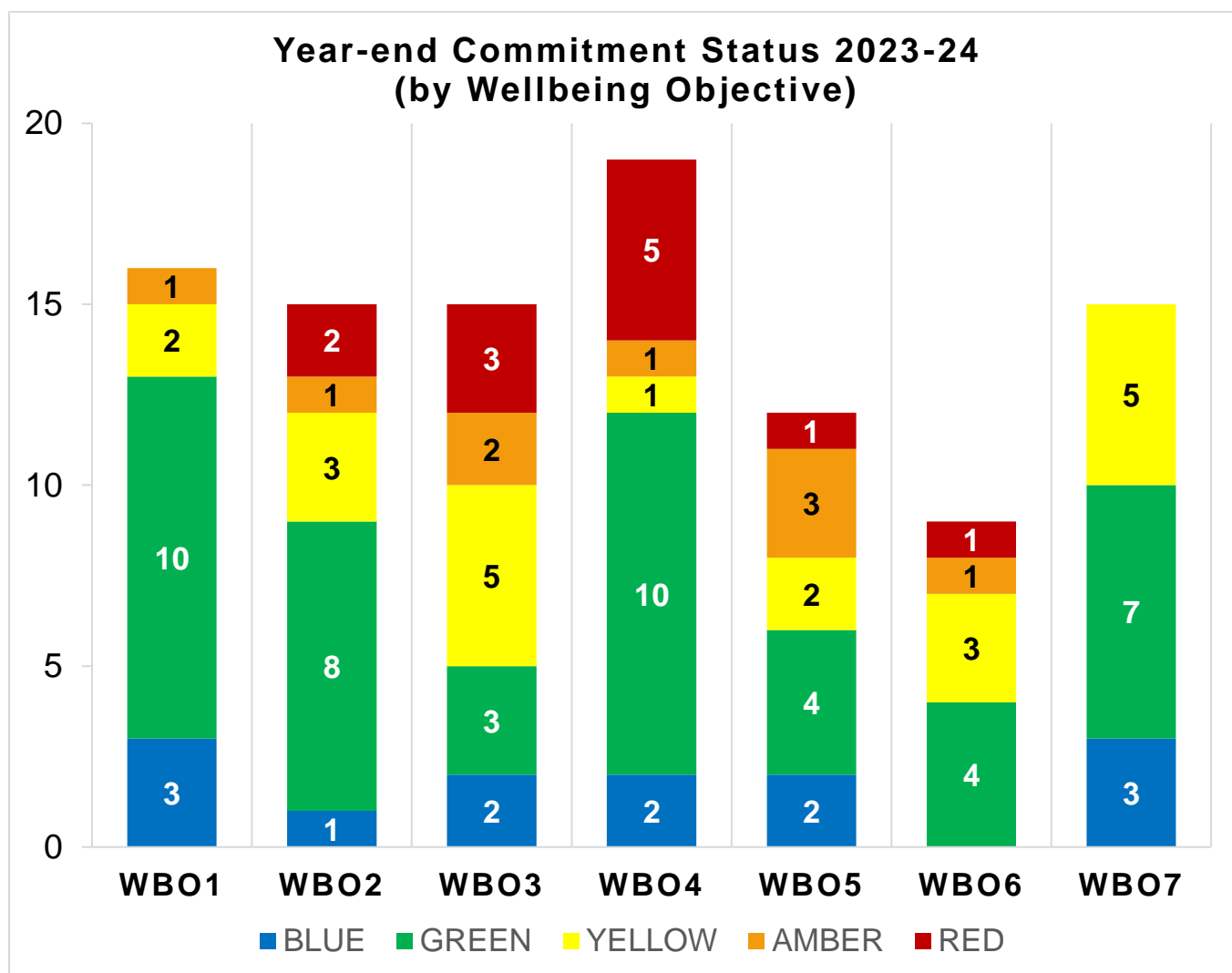
### Summary of progress on Corporate Commitments

Each of the commitments has been awarded an appropriate Blue, Red, Amber, Yellow or Green (BRAYG) status at the end of quarter 4. Table 1 below shows a summary of the overall status of the 101 commitments with Chart 1 demonstrating this for each of the well-being objectives.

**Table 1 – Commitments by BRAYG status**

Status	Meaning of this status	Performance at year end	
		Number	%
COMPLETE (BLUE)	Project is completed	13	12.9%
EXCELLENT (GREEN)	As planned (within timescales, on budget, achieving outcomes)	46	45.5%
GOOD (YELLOW)	Minor issues. One of the following applies - deadlines show slippage, project is going over budget or risk score increases	21	20.8%
ADEQUATE (AMBER)	Issues. More than one of the following applies - deadlines show slippage, project is going over budget or risk score increases	9	8.9%
UNSATISFACTORY (RED)	Significant issues – deadlines breached, project over budget, risk score up to critical or worse	12	11.9%
	<b>Total</b>	101	100%

**Chart 1 – Commitments by BRAYG status for each wellbeing objective**



## Summary of Performance Measures

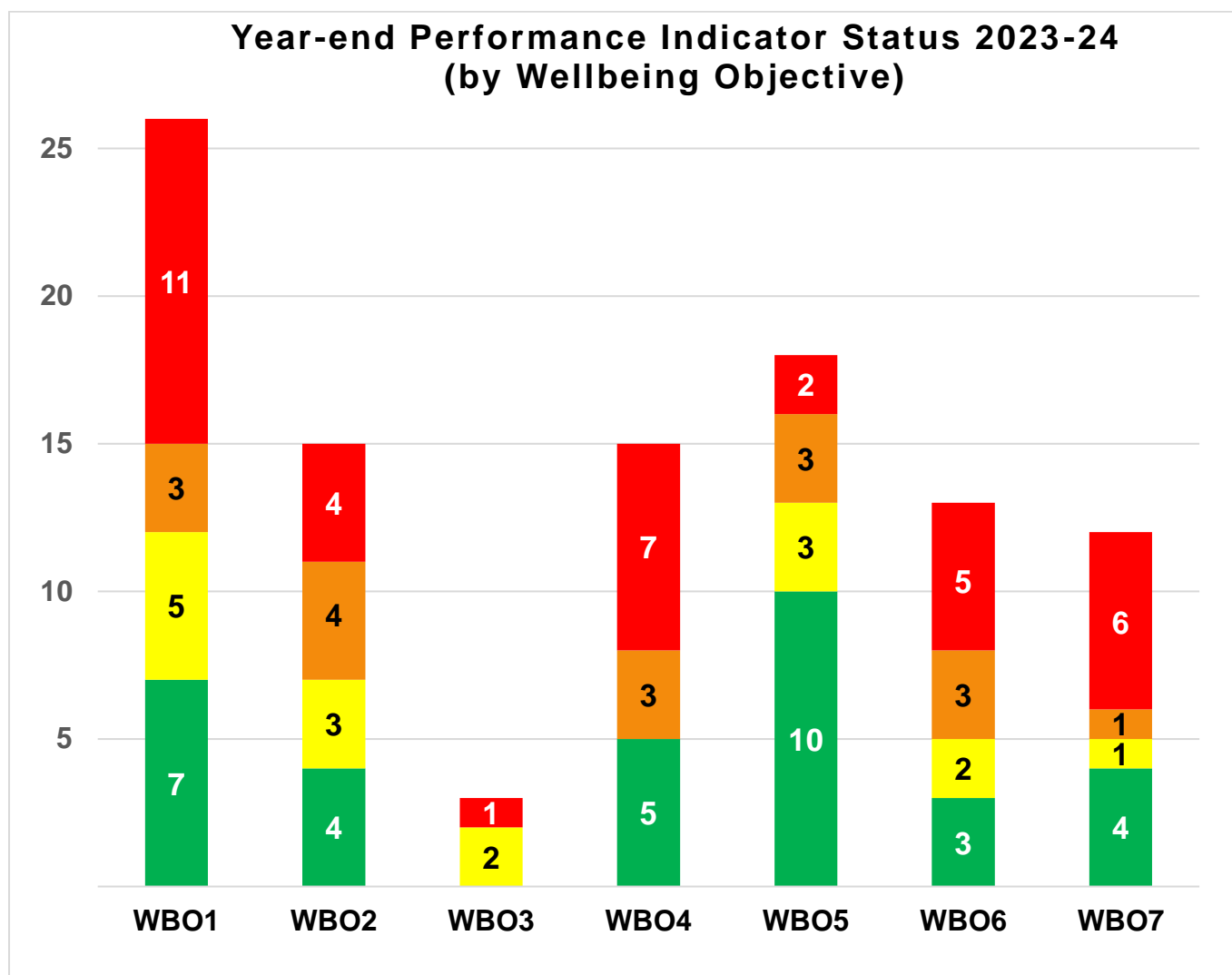
Performance is being judged against the revised performance indicator (PI) targets approved in October 2023. Of the 116 indicators (including all sub indicators), 102 could be compared against a target and awarded a Red, Amber, Yellow or Green (RAYG) status. Table 2 below shows a summary of performance by status, with Chart 2 providing this summary broken down by wellbeing objective.

**Table 2 - PIs by RAYG status**

Status	Meaning of this status	Performance at year end	
		Number	%
EXCELLENT (GREEN)	On target <u>and</u> improved or is at maximum	33	32.35%
GOOD (YELLOW)	On target	16	15.69%
ADEQUATE (AMBER)	Off target (within 10% of target)	17	16.67%
UNSATISFACTORY (RED)	Off target (target missed by 10%+)	36	35.29%
Total		102	100%



Chart 2 - Pls by RAYG status for each wellbeing objective



Set out below is our performance for each of these performance indicators, or measures of success which we set ourselves for each well-being objective. This also shows performance trend, so you can see how this outturn position compares with the same period last year, where appropriate to do so.

Performance Indicators Trend Definition	
↑	Performance has improved compared to last year
↔	Performance has been maintained (this includes those at maximum)
↙	Performance has declined BUT within 10% of the last year
↓	Performance has declined by 10% or more compared to previous year

## WBO 1 - A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable

### Aim 1.1 Providing high-quality children's and adults social services and early help services to people who need them

Page 4	Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
26	Percentage of eligible carers who were offered a carer's assessment in: a) Children Social Care (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	80%	<b>100% GREEN</b>	No trend
	Percentage of eligible carers who were offered a carer's assessment in: b) Adult Social Care (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	80%	Data not available	No trend
	Timeliness of visits to a) children who are care experienced. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	81.13%	85%	<b>85.31% GREEN</b>	↑
	Timeliness of visits to b) children on the child protection register. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	82.14%	85%	<b>86.77% GREEN</b>	↑
	Safe reduction in the number of care experienced children (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	398	374	<b>370 GREEN</b>	↑
	Safe reduction in the number of children on the child protection register. (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	270	270	<b>189 GREEN</b>	↑
	Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	70%	<b>74.88% YELLOW</b>	No trend
	Total number of packages of reablement completed during the year. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	377	370	<b>377 YELLOW</b>	↔
	Percentage of reablement packages completed that mitigated need for support. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	66.84%	68%	<b>66.58% AMBER</b>	↙
	Number of people who access independent advocacy to support their rights within: a) children's social care. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	185	<b>64 RED</b>	No trend
	Number of people who access independent advocacy to support their rights within: b) adult's social care. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	180	<b>87 RED</b>	No trend
	Percentage of completed Team Around the Family (TAF) plans closed with a successful outcome. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	75%	72%	<b>83% GREEN</b>	↑

## Aim 1.2 Supporting people in poverty to get the support they need / help they are entitled to

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of people supported through FASS (Financial Assistance and Support Service) where support has resulted in increased income through claims for additional/increased benefits and allowances. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	New for 2023-24	60%	<b>92% YELLOW</b>	No trend
Percentage of people supported through FASS who have received advice and support in managing or reducing household debt. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	New for 2023-24	60%	<b>93% YELLOW</b>	No trend

## Aim 1.3 Supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of households threatened with homelessness successfully prevented from becoming homeless. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	19%	20%	<b>11% RED</b>	↓
Percentage of people presenting as homeless or potentially homeless for whom the Local Authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	7.6%	10%	<b>29% RED</b>	↓

## Aim 1.4 Supporting children with additional learning needs to get the best from their education

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of schools that have an Additional Learning Needs (ALN) policy in place <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	New for 2023-24	100%	<b>100% GREEN</b>	No trend

## Aim 1.5 Safeguarding and protecting people who are at risk of harm

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of council staff completing safeguarding awareness training <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	77.33%	100%	<b>82.73% RED</b>	↑
Percentage of Adult safeguarding inquiries which receive initial response within 7 working days. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	84.19%	85%	<b>81.85% AMBER</b>	↙
Percentage of Childrens referrals where decision is made within 24 hours. <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	99.53%	100%	<b>99.69% AMBER</b>	↑

Percentage of child protection investigations completed within required-timescales. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline setting	<b>77.78%</b>	No trend
Average waiting time on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) waiting list. (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline setting	<b>16 days</b>	No trend

### 96 Aim 1.6 Help people to live safely at home through changes to their homes

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Average number of days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for: a) Low level access showers (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	210 days	<b>668 days RED</b>	No trend
Average number of days taken to deliver a DFG for: b) Stair lifts (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	210 days	<b>346 days RED</b>	No trend
Average number of days taken to deliver a DFG for: c) Ramps (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	210 days	<b>694 days RED</b>	No trend
Average number of days taken to deliver a DFG for: d) Extensions (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	210 days	<b>917 days RED</b>	No trend
Percentage of people who feel they can live more independently as a result of receiving a DFG in their home (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	Data not available	98%	<b>98% YELLOW</b>	No trend

### Aim 1.7 Support partners to keep communities safe

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of council staff completing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) training (Level 1) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	73.45%	100%	<b>75.54% RED</b>	<b>↑</b>
Number of instances where CCTV supports South Wales Police in monitoring incidents (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline setting	<b>944</b>	No trend
Percentage of children being released from custody who attend a suitable education, training and employment arrangement (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	DATA REDACTED		No trend

## WBO 2 - County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns

### Aim 2.1 Helping our residents get the skills they need for work

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme going into employment (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	392	350	<b>366</b> <b>YELLOW</b>	Trend not applicable
Number of under-employed participants leaving Employability Bridgend with an improved labour market position. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	107	100	<b>93</b> <b>AMBER</b>	Trend not applicable
Number of referrals to the employment service in ARC (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline setting	<b>213</b>	No trend

### Aim 2.2 Making sure our young people find jobs, or are in education or training

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme supported into education or training. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	387	727	<b>76</b> <b>RED</b>	Trend not applicable
Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training, or employment (NEET) in the careers Wales annual destination statistics. (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	1.6%	1.5%	<b>1.4%</b> <b>GREEN</b>	↑

### Aim 2.4 Attracting investment and supporting new and existing local businesses

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of businesses receiving support through Shared Prosperity Funding (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	20	<b>25</b> <b>YELLOW</b>	No trend
Number of business start-ups assisted. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	52	<b>219</b> <b>YELLOW</b>	No trend
Number of local businesses attending procurement workshops (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline Setting	<b>0</b>	No trend
Local spend on low value BCBC procurement and contracts under £100,000. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	2.93%	4%	<b>45.22%</b> <b>GREEN</b>	↑

## Aim 2.5 Making the council an attractive place to work

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: a) I feel every department is working towards the same common goal. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	41%	42%	<b>35% RED</b>	↓
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: b) I am satisfied with BCBC as an employer. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	67%	74%	<b>66% RED</b>	↙
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: c) Working here makes me want to perform to the best of my ability. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	77%	79%	<b>73% AMBER</b>	↙
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: d) I feel that BCBC values its employees' ideas and opinions. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	40%	48%	<b>39% RED</b>	↙
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: e) Do you think there are opportunities for two-way communication to discuss and raise ideas and issues? <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	84%	85%	<b>85% GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: a) I feel supported to manage my personal wellbeing whilst in work: <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	70%	71%	<b>67% AMBER</b>	↙
Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: b) The council is dedicated to taking positive action to support employees achieve a positive sense of wellbeing in their working lives. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	53%	54%	<b>50% AMBER</b>	↙
Number of sign up of new subscribers to the staff extranet <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	New for 2023-24	Baseline Setting	<b>0</b>	No trend

## Aim 2.6 Ensuring employment is fair, equitable and pays at least the real living wage

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of real living wage employers identified. <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	235	249	<b>250 GREEN</b>	↑

## WBO 3 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities

### Aim 3.1 Investing in town centres, including Maesteg town centre

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of commercial properties assisted through the enhancement grant scheme (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	2	<b>4 YELLOW</b>	No trend

### Aim 3.3 Improving community facilities and making them more accessible


Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Value of investment with Community Asset Transfers (CATs) in Valleys (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	£200,000	<b>£296,662 YELLOW</b>	No trend
Number of visits to venues for all purposes in the valleys (visits across 4 venues - Maesteg Pool, Maesteg Sports Centre, Ogmore Valley Centre and Garw Valley Centre) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline setting	<b>353,782</b>	No trend

### Aim 3.6 Encourage the development of new affordable homes in the valleys

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the valleys. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	20	<b>2 RED</b>	No trend

## WBO 4 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential

### Aim 4.1 Providing safe, supportive schools, with high quality teaching

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of schools judged by Estyn to be in 'significant improvement' or 'special measures'. (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	0	0	<b>1 RED</b>	
Average 'Capped 9' score for pupils in Year 11 (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	No data available	Baseline Setting	<b>361.5</b>	No trend



Percentage pupil attendance in primary schools (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	90.1%	90%	<b>91.5% GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage pupil attendance in secondary schools (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	86.5%	90%	<b>87.9% AMBER</b>	↑
Percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the school year in primary schools. (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	0.02%	0.02%	<b>0.024% RED</b>	↓
Percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the school year in secondary schools. (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	0.164%	0.12%	<b>0.165% RED</b>	↙
Percentage of schools that have self-evaluated themselves as 'green' as part of their annual safeguarding audit. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	90%	100%	<b>95% AMBER</b>	↑

#### Aim 4.3 Expanding Welsh medium education opportunities

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	8.1%	8.7%	<b>8.56% AMBER</b>	↑
Percentage of learners studying for assessed qualifications through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	6.89%	7.16%	<b>6.62% RED</b>	↙
Number of learners studying for Welsh as a second language (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	11	1437	<b>11 RED</b>	↔

#### Aim 4.5 Attract and retain young people into BCBC employment

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of apprentices employed across the organisation (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	36	39	<b>46 GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of those concluding apprenticeships and obtaining a non-apprentice role (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	70.8%	75%	<b>90% GREEN</b>	↑



#### Aim 4.6 Offering youth services and school holiday programmes for our young people

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Participation in targeted activities for people with additional or diverse needs (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline Setting	357	No trend
Participation in the national free swimming initiative for 16 and under (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	16,691	Baseline Setting	19,659	↑
Participation in active for life and holiday playworks programmes (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline Setting	8	No trend

#### Aim 4.8 Supporting and encouraging lifelong learning

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of learners enrolled in local authority community learning per 1,000 adult population. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	0.002%	1%	0.66% RED	↑

#### Aim 4.9 Being the best parents we can to our care experienced children

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the a)12 months since leaving care. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	54.17%	60%	68.97% GREEN	↑
Percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the b)13- 24 months since leaving care. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	62.07%	65%	57.69% RED	↙
Percentage care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	10.27%	10%	7.17% GREEN	↑

## WBO 5 - A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency

### Aim 5.1 Moving towards net zero carbon, and improving our energy efficiency

Page 100	Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
	Reduction in emissions (across our buildings, fleet & equipment, streetlighting, business travel, commuting, homeworking, waste, procured goods and services) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	5%	<b>4.3% RED</b>	No trend
	Annual Gas Consumption across the Authority (kWh) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	24,362,648 kWh	23,144,515 kWh	<b>21,966,783 kWh GREEN</b>	↑
	Annual Electricity Consumption across the Authority (kWh) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	15,927,161 kWh	15,130,803 kWh	<b>15,210,536 kWh AMBER</b>	↑
	Annual CO2 related to gas consumption across the Authority (tonnes) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	4,458 tonnes	4,235 tonnes	<b>4,018 tonnes GREEN</b>	↑
	Annual CO2 related to electricity consumption across the Authority (tonnes) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	3,080 tonnes	2,925 tonnes	<b>3,150 tonnes AMBER</b>	↙
	Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air (micrograms per m3) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	47	40	<b>40.80 AMBER</b>	↑

### Aim 5.2 Protecting our landscapes and open spaces and planting more trees

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of green flag parks and green spaces (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	2	<b>2 YELLOW</b>	No trend
Number of blue flag beaches (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	3	<b>3 YELLOW</b>	No trend

### Aim 5.3 Improve the quality of the public realm and built environment through good placemaking principles

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of all planning applications determined within 8 weeks. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	64%	80%	68% <b>RED</b>	↑
Percentage of planning appeals dismissed. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	64%	66%	87% <b>GREEN</b>	↑

### Aim 5.4 Reducing, reusing or recycling as much of our waste as possible

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of street cleansing waste prepared for recycling. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	40.47%	40%	41.12% <b>GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted (Overall) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	71.38%	70%	71.94% <b>GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of waste a) reused (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	0.68%	1%	1.39% <b>GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of waste b) recycled. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	51.01%	49%	50.42% <b>YELLOW</b>	↙
Percentage of waste c) composted (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	19.69%	20%	20.14% <b>GREEN</b>	↑
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person. (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	120.2kg	131kg	119.80 kg <b>GREEN</b>	↑
Percentage of highways land inspected and found to be of a high / acceptable standard of cleanliness. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	98.05%	98%	99.97% <b>GREEN</b>	↑

### Aim 5.5 Improving flood defences and schemes to reduce flooding of our homes and businesses

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of statutory sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) applications processed within 7 weeks from receipt of appropriate scheme drawings. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	95%	100% <b>GREEN</b>	No trend

## WBO 6 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, and part of their community

### Aim 6.1 Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion and tackling discrimination


Page	Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
100	Percentage of council staff completing Introduction to Equality and Diversity E-Learning. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	12.07%	100%	47.61% RED	↑

### Aim 6.2 Improving the way we engage with local people, including young people, listening to their views and acting on them


Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of consultation participants who answered positively: How effective do you think we have been in meeting our aim of being citizen-focused over the last 12 months? (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	46%	50%	49.4% AMBER	↑
Level of engagement (Welsh / English) a) across consultations (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	8,267	8,268	7,946 AMBER	↙
Level of engagement (Welsh / English) b) with corporate communications to residents using the digital communications platform. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	795,335	795,336	972,384 GREEN	↑
Level of engagement (Welsh / English) c) across all corporate social media accounts (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	1,230,698	1,230,699	1,715,802 GREEN	↑

### Aim 6.3 Offering more information and advice online, and at local level, and making sure you can talk to us and hear from us in Welsh

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage first call resolutions (via Customer Contact Centre) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	75.91%	75.92%	69.17% AMBER	↙
Number of online transactions using the digital platform (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	103,347	103,348	72,500 RED	↓
Number of hits on the corporate website (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	1,398,559	1,398,560	3,415,000 GREEN	↑
Percentage of staff with Welsh language speaking skills (including schools) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	25.5%	52%	26.82% RED	↑

Percentage of council staff completing Welsh Language Awareness E-Learning (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	12.4%	100%	<b>47.61% RED</b>	
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## Aim 6.4 Helping clubs and community groups take control of and improve their facilities and protect them for the future



Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of council owned assets transferred to the community for running (CATs) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	10	15	<b>7 RED</b>	
Value of investment with CATs across Bridgend County Borough (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	£400,000	<b>£624,900 YELLOW</b>	Trend not applicable
Number of people supported to have their needs met in their communities by local community co-ordinators. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	200	<b>395 YELLOW</b>	No trend

## WBO 7 - A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

### Aim 7.1 Improving active travel routes and facilities so people can walk and cycle

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
New active travel routes (length in KM) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	4 km	<b>0.40 km RED</b>	No trend

### Aim 7.2 Offering attractive leisure and cultural activities

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of visits by older adults to physical activity opportunities supported (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	Baseline Setting	<b>23,308</b>	No trend
Number of individuals who commence programmes and complete 16 weeks of activity (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	350	350	<b>416 GREEN</b>	
Percentage of pupils who participate in three or more occasions of activity per week (Sport Wales School Sport Survey data) (Bi-annual Indicator, higher preferred)	44.6%	46%	Data not available	No trend
Participation in the summer reading challenge in libraries (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	2378	<b>2,361 AMBER</b>	No trend
Participation in Childrens events in libraries (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	61,855	48,176	<b>55,975 YELLOW</b>	

### Aim 7.3 Improving children's play facilities and opportunities

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Value of investment in play areas. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	£1 million	<b>£54,443 RED</b>	No trend
Number of play areas that have been refurbished. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	20	<b>0 RED</b>	No trend

### Aim 7.4 Providing free school meals and expanding free childcare provision

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Percentage of eligible learners offered a free school meal. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	100%	<b>100% GREEN</b>	No trend
Percentage of non-maintained settings that are judged by Care Inspectorate Wales as at least 'good'. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New for 2023-24	100%	<b>76.5% RED</b>	No trend
Number of two-year-olds accessing childcare through the Flying Start programme. (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	321	500	<b>530 GREEN</b>	<b>↑</b>

### Aim 7.5 Integrating our social care services with health services so people are supported seamlessly

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of people recorded as delayed on the national pathway of care. (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	New for 2023-24	71	<b>104 RED</b>	No trend

### Aim 7.6 Improving the supply of affordable housing

Performance Indicator Description	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target	Actual 2023-24 & RAYG	Trend
Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) across the County Borough. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	110	110	<b>64 RED</b>	<b>↓</b>
Number of empty properties returned to use with local authority intervention. (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	5	5	<b>6 GREEN</b>	<b>↑</b>

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>To seek approval for amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions in relation to Cabinet Member portfolios</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for amendments to the Schemes of Delegation of Functions.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Scheme of Delegation of Functions provides the authority for Cabinet Members and Officers to undertake their respective duties. The Scheme therefore directly affects the ability of the Authority to process the Corporate Plan and all Corporate Priorities.

## 3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The titles and portfolios of the Cabinet Members have recently been revised following the Annual General Meeting in May 2024. The functions allocated to each Cabinet Member require amendments to be made to Scheme A to reflect the changes to their responsibilities accordingly.
- 3.2 Cabinet is requested to note that amendments will also be made to the Delegated Power form to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Once the approval process and call-in is completed, the Scheme will be updated, published and Corporate Directors will be requested to update their Register of Delegations to reflect these changes.

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

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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 the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## **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.
- 5.2 The amendment of the Scheme of Delegation of Functions will support effective decision making and the achievement of all the Corporate Priorities.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

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

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 9.1 Approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions in relation to Cabinet Member titles and portfolios as referenced at 3.1;
- 9.2 Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make minor textual changes and amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to take account of changes in legislation and changes to Officer and Member titles and responsibilities.

### **Background documents:**

None



<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES AND CORPORATE POLICY</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>HELEN PICTON HEAD OF SHARED REGULATORY SERVICES</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>This report content has no direct effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Annual Report for 2023-24. It provides an overview of the creation of the Shared Regulatory Service for the purpose of providing the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions for Bridgend County Borough Council and two other partner authorities.</p> <p>The Annual Report and the SRS Business Plan are presented to the Joint Committee at its annual general meeting in June of each year, and the Joint Working Agreement between the partner authorities makes provision for the Cabinet of each of the three authorities to receive these reports for information purposes.</p> <p>A number of achievements and challenges during the year are highlighted in the body of this report, and a summary of key performance and budgetary data is provided. The report concludes with an overview of some significant areas of work for the Service in the current financial year, as set out in the SRS Business Plan for 2023-24.</p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report for 2023-24 for noting.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In April 2015 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council signed a Joint Working Agreement (JWA) for the provision of regulatory services across the three Council areas. The JWA underpins the work of the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) and the SRS Joint Committee.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance and the Chair of the Licensing Committee are the two Bridgend County Borough Council representatives on the SRS Joint Committee and they have oversight of the Service alongside their counterparts from the other two partner Councils.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Joint Working Agreement the Shared Service is required to produce an Annual Report that covers the operational and financial performance of the service for the preceding year. In March 2017 the Council ratified the insertion of a new clause into the Agreement to enable each partner authority's Cabinet to receive the SRS Annual Report, for information purposes.
- 2.4 A copy of the report considered and approved by the SRS Joint Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024, which incorporates the SRS Annual Report 2023-24, is attached as **Annex 1**. The SRS Annual Report itself includes three appendices.
- 2.5 The SRS Annual Report 2023-24 reflects upon the ninth year of operation of the Shared Service. It outlines performance over the course of the 2023-24 financial year, the progress made in achieving the objectives set out in the SRS Business Plan, and the summary revenue account and financial outturn position.
- 2.6 The management of key operational performance for Shared Regulatory Services in BCBC sits with the Chief Officer - Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy. The Client lead works closely with finance, legal and other service areas to ensure that the delivery of services is to the required level and, where required, improvements are implemented.

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

- 3.1 The key aspects of operational performance across the region from the Annual Report are as follows:
  - Overall sickness absence levels for 2023-24 were **6.93 days per FTE person**. This represents a marked improvement on the same measure for 2022-23 when the overall sickness absence rate stood at **10.47 days per FTE person**. It is particularly pleasing to see a near halving of the long-term sickness absence rate for the year, albeit there was a slight increase in short term absence compared to the previous year (3.22 days per FTE compared with 2.78). The figures for 2023-24 are on a par with the record low rates of sickness seen during the 'COVID year' of 2020-21, and compare favourably when viewed in the wider context of the average sickness rates across the partner Councils.

- The shortage of suitably qualified Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff across Wales and England continues to focus the mind on effective recruitment and, crucially, also the retention of staff. Added to this an ageing workforce has brought into sharp relief the urgency needed in finding solutions for the medium and long term.

Over the course of the year the Shared Service has continued its '*growing our own*' approach through, for example:

- Fast tracking two members of staff to gain the Higher Certificate qualification in Food Premises Inspection
- Supporting a further four members of staff to attain additional qualifications, three of whom are studying towards the MSc in Environmental Health
- Further enhancing relationships with academic institutions
- Continuing to lead on the establishment of the Level 4 Regulatory Apprenticeship for Wales

- 2023-24 was also a challenging year financially. When the SRS budget was set in February 2023 it included an assumed pay award of 5% less the 3% savings agreed by the three partner Councils. Inflationary pressures over the year, together with additional expenditure, for example that incurred in boarding animals seized during animal welfare investigations, resulted in the Shared Service achieving an unaudited outturn deficit of £171k against the 2023-24 budget of £8.645m.
- The Annual Report advises on the draft financial outturn position of the Service, and the resulting impact this has for each of the Partner Authorities. Full details are provided in **Appendix 3** to the 2023-24 Annual Report. This position is due to be confirmed by Audit Wales through its annual audit of the SRS statement of accounts.
- Operational performance throughout 2023-24 has been reported both to the Joint Committee and to each partner Council through the legacy systems. The detail of performance against all the agreed performance indicators is set out in **Appendix 1** to the Annual Report.
- Specifically in relation to the Food inspection programme, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 the Service moved on from the Food Standards Agency's COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan, towards resumption of the full programme. Working with the Food Standards Agency, a risk-based, bespoke solution was agreed to bridge the gap between the Recovery Plan and resumption of the full SRS Food programmes. It is pleasing to see the year-end position for the Food Hygiene programme achieving 100% of the inspections due for category A and category B rated premises, as well as 100% of the due Category C rated premises. This really is a tribute to the hard work of officers during the year, supplemented, it must be said, by a significant spend on contractors.

- The Shared Service may, through the relevant participative Council, prosecute breaches of legislation, particularly in respect of those who flout the law or who act irresponsibly, or where there is an immediate risk to health and safety. In the period, the service has been successful in challenging a range of unfair practices, many of which attracted media attention. The time and work required investigating these matters, and the impact on officers' ability to carry out day to day work whilst these matters are ongoing, is significant.
- **Appendix 2** to the Annual Report sets out the successful prosecutions that concluded in court during the 2023-24 financial year.

3.2 The Shared Regulatory Service continues to report the following to the three partner Councils as useful indicators of performance (i.e. the former public accountability measures in respect of food establishments and empty homes).

***Percentage of food establishments broadly compliant (former PAM 023)***

This indicator continues to provide a measure of how well a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. The food industry is responsible for producing and distributing safe food. The Shared Regulatory Service, as the enforcement agency, conducts inspections, ensuring that standards are met through a robust enforcement programme to deal with those who do not comply with standards. Additionally, the business support and advice regimes introduced into the SRS structure play a part in promoting an increase in hygiene standards. Premises are deemed to be broadly compliant if specified risk scores are achieved for cleanliness, structural issues, and confidence in the management of the business.

In Bridgend County Borough the proportion of premises that are broadly compliant with food hygiene requirements, i.e., scoring a 3\* food hygiene rating or above, exceeds the UK average of 95%, and is consistent with that seen in previous years, i.e.

***Percentage of food establishments in the County Borough 'broadly compliant'***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Percentage 'broadly compliant'</b>
2023-24	98.03%
2022-23	98.00%
2021-22	97.38%
2020-21	97.24%
2019-20	97.49%

### ***Empty Homes performance indicators (formerly PAM 013 and PAM 045)***

The Service continues to report on the *percentage of empty private properties brought back into use*, and the *number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use*. These indicators have as their core purpose the aim of quantifying the reduction in the number of empty properties as a consequence of intervention by Councils. Among the categories of direct action local authorities can take to bring a property back into use are the following

- Grants, loans or other financial assistance
- Enforcement action including statutory notices, and
- Dialogue between the owner and the local authority where progress to restore the use of the property is evident.

Officers from the Shared Regulatory Service contribute a dedicated resource to bringing empty properties back into beneficial use within the County Borough. During 2023-24 officers continued to target resources towards the top 20 worst cases, and, of these, 2 properties have been sold, 3 are under renovation and 2 have completed on probate.

Three successful prosecutions have concluded in respect of empty properties with a further prosecution pending, and one work in default has been completed. Three applications have been submitted to Welsh Government to access the Transforming Towns Empty Property Management Fund (two of these have been approved and one is pending). The remaining properties are subject to informal action. Meanwhile, work continues towards the Compulsory Purchase of the Authority's worst residential empty property and steps are being taken to enforce the sale of a commercial premises. Efforts also continue on properties outside the 'Top 20', utilising the 5-stage escalation letter process and enforcement provisions.

3.3 The SRS Business Plan is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan enabling the Service to support corporate priorities and challenges. The SRS activities below summarise just a few examples in this regard delivered over the course of 2023-24:

- *Working with landlords to return empty properties back into use helping to increase the availability of affordable housing for sale or rent in Bridgend County Borough*

Officers from SRS in conjunction with Bridgend CBC aim to identify long-term vacant properties and encourage owners and landlords to bring their properties back into use through the provision of advice, support and encouragement. The process entails sending a series of letters to the owners to encourage them to take positive steps to bring the property back into occupation. Owners are provided with '*A property owners guide to empty homes*' brochure which outlines the options available and the services on offer. Where there is a threat to public health and/ or a lack of cooperation from the owners, consideration will be given to the use of enforcement action to improve

the condition of the empty property and secure its occupation. The Service offers empty property owners the opportunity to access the following services:

- Financial assistance in the form of grants and loans
  - The provision of information to access a VAT reduction on renovation costs
  - The provision of information and advice on how to sell or rent the property including legal requirements
  - Access to potential developers in the area seeking to purchase empty properties to renovate or re-develop
  - Access to housing associations who have the potential to acquire or assist with leasing long term vacant properties.
- 
- *Air Quality*

During the year, SRS ensured that Bridgend County Borough Council met its statutory obligation under the Environment Act by producing the 2023 Air Quality Annual Progress Report (APR) which was considered by Cabinet in September 2023. The 2023 APR demonstrated that only two sites, both located within Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) exceeded the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide NO<sub>2</sub> as prescribed in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002.

All other locations within the County Borough continued to meet all other relevant air quality objectives. Both locations recorded annual average figures in 2022 of 47.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> & 45.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> respectively. This represented a reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations of 12% and 17% at these locations since 2019.

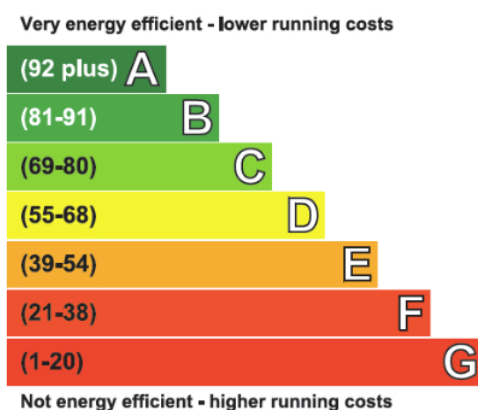
The 2023 APR also provided an update to BCBC Cabinet on the progression of the Air Quality Action Plan for the AQMA on Park Street. Having been consulted upon, and following technical feedback from Welsh Government, the Action Plan was subsequently approved at a further meeting of the Cabinet. It provides a full implementation timeline of any additional measures, and also a projected year of compliance. The Air Quality Action Plan for the Park Street AQMA has since been submitted, as required, to Welsh Government.

- *Climate change agenda*

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations introduced minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) for domestic private rented properties. The regulations are designed to increase the energy efficiency of the worst performing dwellings, reduce fuel poverty, and improve housing standards.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) has been a legal requirement for all UK homes being rented for over a decade. Certificates are valid for 10 years and, through calculation of the energy efficiency score for a given property, they provide a rating from A (most efficient) to G (inefficient), as shown below.

### Energy Performance Certificate Rating of Properties



The Regulations require that domestic property let out under all new *and existing* tenancies must have an EPC rating of E or above. F or G rated properties cannot be let unless there is a bona fide, properly registered, exemption.

Having developed the necessary infrastructure to take this area of work forward during 2022-23, the Service was able to build upon these foundations in 2023-24, to good effect. Over the course of the year, owners, agents, and landlords of private rented properties were contacted to remind them of their duties under the legislation and to signpost to opportunities for funding streams that may be available to assist in improving the rating of their property. Officer interventions have been focussed on those properties appearing to fall into the forbidden F and G energy efficiency ratings, together with those for which there is no published rating.

By the end of the year, a total of 48 properties were sufficiently improved to take them out of the F and G energy efficiency rating to become E rated or better. Also as a result of SRS interventions during the year, previously unrated private rented properties now hold Energy Performance Certificates, having achieved ratings ranging from B to E.

The impact of this work, in terms of both the climate change and the cost of living agendas, translates into tangible figures submitted to the partner Councils on a quarterly basis. For Bridgend County Borough the improvements achieved during 2023-24 amount to:

- **Reduction in carbon tonnage**

A reduction of **188.2 tonnes** in the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced at the improved properties

- ***Reduction in energy use at improved properties in kWh***

A reduction of **167,768 kWh** in the energy needed to heat the improved properties.

- ***Ensuring Animal Health and Welfare***

In 2023, SRS was recognised in the annual RSPCA PawPrints awards in three categories. The hard work of our Animal Wardens and Animal Health and Welfare Officers throughout the year resulted in the following being awarded:

- **Animal-related Licensing: Gold Award**
- **Stray Dog provision: Gold Award**
- **Kennelling: Gold Award**

The aim of the RSPCA in giving these annual PawPrint awards is to shine a light on organisations that have 'gone the extra mile' for animals, often in difficult conditions. It is wonderful to see that not only did the Service maintain its 2022 Gold standard in the first two of these categories, but for the first time it also achieved the Gold standard for Kenneling.

The decision of the external panel of animal welfare experts means that, in 2023, SRS is the *only service in the UK* to achieve the Gold standard in all three categories.

- ***Prosecutions***

Officers will always seek to advise and guide businesses to achieve compliance, however there are occasions where unfortunately, the only appropriate outcome to an investigation is prosecution. The summaries below provide examples of prosecution cases arising in the county borough and which concluded in court during the 2023-24 financial year. Full details are provided in **Appendix 2** to the SRS Annual Report.

**Case 1 – Food hygiene failings**

In May 2022, a complaint was received by Shared Regulatory Services from a member of the public reporting rats being seen inside a Kenfig Hill restaurant. When officers visited the premises, they discovered an active pest infestation, with notable lack of effective pest control procedures in place. Rat droppings were found in the front dining room of the premises, and in the back storerooms where food equipment



and open food items such as potatoes and onions were stored, posing a high risk of direct contamination. Pest access points were found that should have been identified through routine pest control checks.

The general hygiene and cleanliness throughout the premises were also poor, with visible food debris and dirt under equipment at wall to floor junctions and dirty hand contact surfaces. Food equipment was found to be unclean with some equipment being badly worn and damaged, such as chopping boards which were still in use by the business.

Another aspect of particular concern was the lack of controls in place for personal hygiene even though the business handled raw food such as chicken and lamb together with ready to eat food items such as fresh salads. There was no hand soap in the main kitchen or staff WC, only hand sanitiser, demonstrating a lack of understanding by staff of the risk posed to food safety. After the inspection, the business voluntarily closed to undertake a deep clean, fix all pest access points, and eradicate the infestation.

The investigation was complicated by the fact that two different companies were running the business. In sentencing, the District Judge accepted that neither company was trading, and the restaurant had closed. That left the two company Directors to be dealt with. Both defendants pleaded guilty to eight offences under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006.

The District Judge fined the first of the two defendants a total of £380 and ordered him to pay costs of £250 together with a victim surcharge of £152.

The second defendant was fined a total of £235 and ordered him to pay costs of £125 and a victim surcharge of £95.

*In addition, the first defendant was permanently prohibited from participating in the management of any food business in future.*

### Case 2 – Enforcement action in respect of empty properties

This involved two separate prosecutions in respect of longstanding empty properties in the County Borough, all owned by the same individual.

The **first of these prosecutions** arose as a result of the repeated failure to provide documentation when requested by Officers as part of their work on empty homes. The defendant was charged with one offence under the Housing Act 2004, but failed to attend to court. He was therefore found guilty in his absence, and fined £220. He was also ordered to pay legal costs of £200, investigation costs of £200 and a court surcharge of £88.

The **second prosecution** arose as a result of a rat infestation at one of the defendant's empty properties, and a failure to comply with notices issued under both the Building Act 1984 and the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976.

Once again, the defendant failed to attend court and the matter was proved in his absence.

The Magistrates found the case proved in respect of all charges (under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, the Building Act 1984 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The defendant was fined £660 for the damage by pests offences, £660 for the building act offence, £660 for the local government miscellaneous provisions offence and £220 for failing to comply with the order under the Building Act. This gave a total fine of £2,200. He was also ordered to pay costs of £3,250 together with a victim surcharge of £880.

### Case 3 - Rogue Builder investigation

In 2021 officers from Shared Regulatory Services received complaints from 22 victims concerning the defendant's failure to complete works at their properties and for making a number of false representations during the conduct of the work. The defendant was the director of a company that supplied and fitted UPVC products.

Victims had generally been cold called via a knock at the door by a representative of the company and, in some instances where work had actually been carried out, it was very poor and even dangerous. In other cases, the company had taken money for works and materials and simply never returned. Multiple excuses were given to the residents, including such things as the weather, Covid-19, staffing issues, failed deliveries and incorrect measurements being taken.

The defendant had previous convictions for similar offences in 2018, and pleaded guilty in the Crown Court to one offence under the Companies Act 2006 for carrying on a fraudulent business and to one offence under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 for engaging in a misleading commercial practice by failing to complete building work. He had also previously pleaded guilty to 13 similar offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 at Cardiff Magistrates Court.

Victim impact statements detailed how the defendant had abused the confidence and trust of his victims; how some residents had needed to borrow money to rectify the works he had carried out; how he had caused depression and anxiety in a number of cases and how he had no respect for the victims or their property. He and his staff left property in a dangerous state and whilst carrying out works their language was vulgar and disrespectful.

The defendant was sentenced to a total of 32 months imprisonment. The judge also granted a Criminal Behaviour Order preventing him from

- canvassing for business or work door to door;
- instructing others to do so on his behalf;
- being a director or owner of a company which had anything to do with home improvements;

- being involved in the estimating, quoting or negotiating of contracts or collecting payments from customers in connection with any home improvements, and
- being involved in the professional fitting of any UPVC products.

The Criminal Behaviour Order will remain in effect for 10 years.

3.4 Following approval of the 2023-24 Annual Report by the Joint Committee in June 2024, it was shared with the Chief Executives of the three partner Councils, along with the SRS Business Plan for 2024-25. The Business Plan, attached as **Annex 2** to this report, was also approved by the Joint Committee at its Annual General Meeting in June. As well as highlighting the successes of the Service in 2023-24, the Business Plan sets out the actions planned for the Service during the course of 2024-25. These reflect how the Service will improve health and wellbeing, safeguard the vulnerable, support the local economy, protect the environment and make best use of resources across the SRS region. The following summarises just a few of the challenges and emerging themes for the Service, detailed in the 2024-25 Business Plan:

- Addressing difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff in certain roles and the need to develop a workforce strategy embracing new ideas, including regulatory apprenticeships.
- The need to stay one step ahead of rogue traders, doorstep criminals and illegal money lenders (loan sharks) as they exploit the difficulties many residents will continue to find themselves in as a result of the cost of living crisis.
- The rapid expansion of the 'vapes' market leading to concerns around underage sales, marketing and presentation, illegal vapes and product safety, and environmental concerns in terms of disposal.
- The demand for puppies continues to drive complaints about illegal, unlicensed dog breeding. Unfortunately, this is an industry that has attracted a rogue element, keen to make quick profits, often with little thought for animal welfare, and in an environment where they perceive there to be a low risk of being caught and punished. The Service is determined to take a firm line against illegal breeding to protect not only unsuspecting purchasers, but to safeguard the welfare of dogs and their puppies, and at the same time create a 'level playing field' for legitimate, properly licensed breeders.
- The need for further improvement in the energy efficiency of the private rented sector, thereby contributing to the net zero visions of the partner authorities
- Maximising options for cost recovery and income generation to ensure this approach underpins sustainable service delivery.

- A range of new legislation / enforcement regimes for which the Service will be responsible, and for which no additional funding is being made available. Examples include:
  - The *Special Procedures* regime for the effective licensing of practitioners in tattooing, piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis.
  - *Food promotion and placement*
  - *Building safety*
  - *Workplace recycling requirements*

#### **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 the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

- 5.1 This report assists in the achievement of the corporate well-being objectives, in particular:
- **A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to protect the vulnerable in our communities through, for example, swift action being against rogue traders and doorstep criminals, ensuring safe taxi provision and preventing the supply of age restricted goods to the under 18s.
  - **A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high quality jobs and thriving towns** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to ensure a fair and safe market place where legitimate businesses are supported and action is taken against rogue traders and others who undermine the local economy.
  - **A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency** – the Shared Service enforces a range of environmental legislation covering areas of work such as air quality, private water supplies, animal health and welfare, and minimum energy efficiency standards.

- **A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives** – the work of the Shared Service seeks to improve health and wellbeing by ensuring the safety of food and other consumer goods and services, through enforcing health and safety requirements in the workplace, and through the provision of safe housing. In addition, work to tackle rogue traders and doorstep criminals as well as loan sharks can contribute positively to the mental health of residents.

- 5.2 The SRS Annual report illustrates how the Council's regulatory function contributes to the national Well-being Goals through the delivery of the well-being objectives contained in the SRS Business Plan (see **Annex 2**). The SRS operates in accordance with the five ways of working which are also reflected in the content of the Plan. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration as the SRS recognises the need to work with partners to deliver services and improve local well-being.
- 5.3 The Annual report reflects the importance of prevention, and this has been a strong theme in much of the activities to date, but also recognises that many of the issues are longer term matters, e.g. deprivation, climate change, an ageing population and physical and mental well-being. The involvement of partners and stakeholders in the development and delivery of the SRS functions is critical to its success as is the need to work in a more integrated way, recognising the connections across Council services and with other partners.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 One of the key strategic themes for the Shared Regulatory Service is *Protecting the Local Environment*.
- 6.2 The SRS Business Plan articulates the work carried out under this theme to deliver on the corporate priorities for the participant Councils, including their ambitions to minimise climate change and impacts on the natural environment.
- 6.3 In this context the Joint Committee is regularly updated on the contribution of SRS to this agenda, for example through its work in the areas of animal health and welfare, air quality, contaminated land, energy efficiency in the private rented sector and investigating greenwashing claims or environmental fraud.

## **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 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

## **9. Recommendation**

Cabinet is requested to:

9.1 Note the Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report for 2023-24.

## **Background documents**

None

Meeting of:	<b>Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Wednesday, 19 June 2024</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Shared Regulatory Services Annual Report
Purpose of Report:	To advise members on the performance and financial position of the Shared Regulatory Service for the 2023-24 financial year.
Report Owner:	Head of Shared Regulatory Services Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Responsible Officer:	Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Advice has been sought from the partner Councils
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is a collaboration between Bridgend County Borough Council, the County Council of the City and County of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Council that commenced on 1st May 2015, and is charged with the provision of Regulatory Services across the three Authorities.</li> <li>• The Joint Working Agreement requires the Head of SRS and the Head of Finance to produce an Annual Report which, once approved by the Committee, is forwarded to the partner Councils.</li> <li>• The report provides assurance that during 2023-24, the Shared Service has largely recovered performance across its traditional metrics after the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still some way to go however in finally clearing the inevitable backlogs in some areas of programmed work.</li> <li>• The report also reflects on additional demands being placed upon the Service, through for example, Government expectation that new areas of legislation will be enforced despite there being no new funding. This at a time when the Service had implemented a core services budget saving of 3% going into the 2023-24 financial year.</li> </ul>	

- The £8.645m 2023-24 Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) Budget was agreed by the Joint Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The net budget increase of £314k included an assumed 5% pay award of plus an adjustment in respect of the previous year's pay shortfall, less agreed savings.
- As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the SRS has achieved an unaudited outturn deficit of £171k against the 2023/24 £8.645m budget. The outturn position is illustrated on the following table;

	<b>Gross Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>Outturn Variance</b>
<b>Authority</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>
Bridgend	1,914	1,855	59
Cardiff	5,009	5,241	(232)
Vale	1,722	1,720	2
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>8,645</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>(171)</b>

- The reported position includes mitigation of £161k being down in two separate reserves movements (£83k and £78k) to partially offset the forecast overspends within both Animal Services and Housing Services within the Core budget.
- The adverse variances at year end shown against Cardiff and the Vale can be associated with both the Authority Specific and Core elements of the SRS budget and is further detailed in this report.
- This position is subject to the completion of the external audit of these accounts by Audit Wales.

## Recommendation

1. That the Joint Committee approves the report, and authorises the Chief Executive, Vale of Glamorgan Council, to forward a copy of the report to the Heads of Paid Service for the other partner Councils.
2. That the 2023-24 unaudited outturn position is noted

## Reason for Recommendations

1. To meet the requirements set out in Clause 5.1 of the Joint Working Agreement.
2. That Members are aware of the 2023-24 unaudited outturn position

## Background

- 1.1 Under the Joint Working Agreement, the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) is required to produce an annual report that covers the operational and financial performance of the service for the preceding year. Clause 5 of the Joint Working Agreement states:

'The Joint Committee shall receive in each year at its annual meeting which shall be held no later than 30th June the report of the Head of Regulatory Services and the



Lead Financial Officer in respect of the functions delegated to the Joint Committee relating to the twelve months ending 31st March of that year and a copy thereof shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive of each Participant.'

**1.2** The report shall include:-

- (i) *A statement showing the performance of the Regulatory Service Functions and progress in achieving the Objectives and delivering the Business Plan.*
- (ii) *a summary revenue account and statement of capital spending including the distribution or use of any revenue surpluses and the financing of any capital expenditure"*

**1.3** This is the ninth report produced under this requirement and covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. If the content of this report is agreed, a copy of the report must be sent to the Head of Paid Service of each of the three Councils along with the SRS Business Plan for 2024-25. This annual report outlines many of the actions undertaken at each partner Council to deliver the wide range of statutory functions assigned to the Service. The report provides a review of operations across the service, a summary of the financial position, and outlines performance against the 2023-24 service objectives.

**Operating the Shared Regulatory Service**

**1.4** The Shared Regulatory Service (SRS) operates across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Through a collaborative model, it delivers a range of statutory services, that are critical to maintaining the health, safety and economic wellbeing of local communities. The operating model delivers an integrated service for the Trading Standards, Environmental Health, and Licensing functions, which has three service delivery sectors focusing upon the customer rather than the traditional professional delivery model.

- Neighbourhood Services: activities relating to residential premises or having an impact on the local community.
- Commercial Services: activities relating to business premises (generally where national standards apply).
- Enterprise and Specialist Services: specialist areas of work and income generating services.

**1.5** As a regional organisation, providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, the SRS seeks to place the corporate priorities and stated outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all its activities. Using them as a focus, the strategic priorities for the Shared Regulatory Service of

- Safeguarding the Vulnerable
- Improving Health and wellbeing

- Protecting the Environment
- Supporting the local economy
- Maximising the use of resources

provide a robust base for achieving the outcomes identified in previous Business Plans and the partner Councils' corporate aspirations.

**1.6** The Joint Working Agreement (JWA), executed in April 2015, and updated in July 2017, underpins the entire service provision. The JWA contains a number of 'milestones and requirements'. In accordance with those requirements:

- The Wales Audit Office completed an independent financial audit of the service in 2023; there were no recommendations for improvement.
- The Business Plan for 2024-25 is presented for political approval in papers to the June 2024 Joint Committee meeting.
- The Joint Committee will receive an audited statement of accounts for 2023-24 at its December 2024 meeting.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

**2.1** The 2022-23 Annual Report illustrated that the Shared Service had delivered the necessary financial savings and delivered the majority of the business plan actions for that year. The Key Milestones set for 2023-24 were:

- *Delivery of the SRS Business Plan 2023-2024 and the associated corporate priorities assigned to the SRS by the partner Councils*
- *To monitor the implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation upon the Service, for example the Welsh Government requirements around special procedures.*
- *To contribute to the climate change goals in each of the partner authorities through effective enforcement of environmental controls such as those regulating energy efficiency in the private rented housing sector.*
- *To consult with staff and develop a recruitment and retention strategy comprising actions for the short, medium and longer term in order to attract, develop and retain skilled staff.*
- *To review the agile working arrangements for the service to ensure that technology is being exploited fully to improve service delivery.*

**2.2** The 2023-24 SRS Business Plan marked a further return to 'business as usual' for the Service after the demands of the COVID response.

## Human Resources

- 2.3** Overall sickness absence levels for 2023-24 were **6.93 days per FTE person** overall. This represents a marked improvement on the same measure for 2022-23 when the overall sickness absence rate stood at **10.47 days per FTE person**. It is particularly pleasing to see a near halving of the long-term sickness absence rate for the year which stands at 3.7 days per FTE, albeit there was a slight increase in short term absence compared to the previous year. As shown in **Figure 1** below, the figures for 2023-24 are on a par with the record low rates of sickness absence seen during the 'COVID year' of 2020-21.

*Figure 1: 2023-24 sickness absence figures compared to those for previous years*

Year	Short term days lost per FTE	Long term days lost per FTE	Total days lost per FTE
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>6.93</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	2.78	7.69	10.47
<b>2021-22</b>	1.95	8.16	10.11
<b>2020-21</b>	1.68	4.64	6.32
<b>2019-20</b>	3.04	7.19	10.23

- 2.4** The shortage of suitably qualified Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff across Wales and England continues to focus the mind on effective recruitment, and crucially, also the retention of staff. Added to this, an ageing workforce has brought into sharp relief the urgency needed in finding solutions for the medium and long term.
- 2.5** Concerns have been identified that a number of job titles across the Service could be hindering recruitment as they do not reflect the professional disciplines of Environmental Health and Trading Standards. This could well mean that online job searches for Environmental Health and Trading Standards roles are not resulting in hits on SRS posts that are based on different nomenclature such as 'Commercial Services Officer' and 'Neighbourhood Services Officer'. A further layer to the job title debate is the fact that despite years of study in gaining their professional qualifications, these simply aren't recognised in the current SRS job titles. Finally, job titles such as Commercial Services Officer, rather than 'Environmental Health Officer' or 'Trading Standards Officer' can cause confusion for residents and businesses.

In a March 2023 survey, SRS staff were asked for their views on changing job titles to reflect professional disciplines. An overwhelming 97% confirmed that they would welcome this change. As a result, work is now underway to effect this change, as well as some associated changes to service sector and Operational Manager titles.

**2.6** During 2023-24, the Service has continued its commitment to 'growing our own' staff, and it is pleasing to see the successful fast-tracking of two members of staff by supporting them to undertake the Higher Certificate qualification in Food Premises Inspection. Both are due to complete the required two years of study in the summer of 2024, equipping them to be able to inspect a range of food premises.

**2.7** In the autumn of 2023, a further 4 members of SRS staff received match funding support to begin further qualifications. 3 of them are studying towards the *MSc in Environmental Health*, and the other towards the *HNC in the Built Environment*. This is in addition to the 12 members of staff who have successfully achieved additional qualifications through match funded study. The qualifications attained since match funding applications were first considered in 2017 are as follows:

- Eight achieved the MSc in Environmental Health
- One achieved the MSc in Health and Public Services Management
- One achieved the MSc in Leadership and Management
- One achieved the MSc in Public Sector Leadership
- One achieved the Masters in Public Health qualification

The success of the initiative is evident, not only in demonstrating how SRS values its staff and supports their development, but in equipping the Service with the necessary skills and behaviours to shape future leaders. All but two of the sixteen colleagues supported to date in further study remain with the Service.

In the run up to the new academic year, expressions of interest will again be sought for opportunities for further match funded study. Given the financial pressures facing the Service, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the Performance Review process.

**2.8** Also looking to the longer term, the Service continued to work closely with Cardiff Metropolitan University, offering a number of work placements for Environmental Health degree students during the year. This relationship has been further enhanced by the establishment of two academic awards, in memory of the SRS Environmental Health professionals who sadly passed away in service, in 2022. Awarded for the first time in June 2023:

- The Zoe Pieris Award recognises the highest achieving final year degree student, by exam grade.
- The Rachel Stickler Award recognises the student who best exemplifies the values of the Environmental Health profession through their commitment, drive and positive attitude.

- 2.9** SRS has continued to lead on the establishment of a Level 4 Regulatory Apprenticeship for Wales. This has been a long journey, but one that has seen significant progress over the course of 2023-24. As each apprenticeship in Wales has a recognised qualification at its heart, the development of the Level 4 Diploma in Regulatory Compliance (and its subsequent designation by Qualifications Wales) has been a significant step forward. Thought now turns to the development of Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships to sustain the Environmental Health and Trading Standards professional qualification pathways, way into the future.
- 2.10** Once again, staff of the Shared Service have gone above and beyond to assist residents and reputable businesses alike, and they never fail to amaze in all that they do. This has been recognised throughout the year in the positive feedback received about individuals and the services they provide and, in the recognition / awards received by the Service.

## **Operational Performance**

- 2.11** Operational performance throughout 2023-24 has been reported both to the Joint Committee and to each partner Council through the legacy systems. The 2023-24 SRS Business Plan was written as we closed a year impacted by amongst other things the cost of living crisis and the supply chain turmoil evident in the early part of the war in Ukraine. Faced with these factors, the 2023-24 Business Plan was sufficiently realistic in setting out the SRS priorities for the year. As a result, performance against the 2023-24 Business Plan is very positive, with all statutory documents published on time and the targets and actions identified in the plan were in the main achieved. Those actions that weren't attained (through lack of resource or for reasons outside the control of the Service) are being rolled over into the 2024-25 Business Plan. The following paragraphs reference the key performance criteria.
- 2.12** The Shared Regulatory Service continues to report the following to the three partner Councils as useful indicators of performance (i.e., the former Public Accountability Measures in respect of food establishments, and for empty homes)

- **Percentage of food establishments broadly compliant (former PAM 023)**

This indicator continues to provide a measure of how well a food business complies with food hygiene legislation. The food industry is responsible for producing and distributing safe food. The Shared Regulatory Service, as the enforcement agency, conducts inspections, ensuring that standards are met through a robust enforcement programme to deal with those who do not comply with standards. Additionally, the business support and advice regimes introduced into the SRS structure play a part in promoting an increase in hygiene standards, examples of that are set out under the priority heading 'supporting the local economy' later in this report. Premises are deemed to be broadly compliant if specified risk scores are achieved for cleanliness, structural issues, and confidence in the management of the business.

The proportion of premises that are broadly compliant with food hygiene requirements, i.e., scoring a 3\* food hygiene rating or above, exceeds the UK average of 95%, and is consistent with that seen in previous years for each of the local authority areas, as shown in **Figure 2** below i.e.

*Figure 2: Percentage of food establishments 'broadly compliant'*

Year	Bridgend	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan
<b>2023-24</b>	98.03%	95.64%	96.63%
<b>2022-23</b>	98.00%	95.67%	97.01%
<b>2021-22</b>	97.38%	95.74%	97.25%
<b>2020-21</b>	97.24%	95.41%	97.53%
<b>2019-20</b>	97.49%	94.84%	97.37%

The significant turnover of food businesses has continued, and during 2023-24, some 889 new food businesses were due for inspection across the region. All new food businesses are required to be inspected and the Food Law Code of Practice requires that where possible, they are inspected within 28 days of opening. This requirement places a significant impact on the resources of the Shared Service as these visits are in addition to the existing programme of inspections. The problem is further exacerbated when new businesses are found to have poor levels of compliance, requiring further intervention.

- **Empty Homes performance indicators (formerly PAM 013 and PAM 045)**

The Service continues to report on the *percentage of empty private properties brought back into use*, and the *number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use*. These indicators have as their core purpose the aim of quantifying the reduction in the number of empty properties as a consequence of intervention by Councils. The current performance measure guidance sets out the categories of direct action that local authorities can take to bring a property back into use, including

- Grants, loans or other financial assistance
- Enforcement action including statutory notices, and
- Dialogue between the owner and the local authority where progress to restore the use of the property is evident.

Funding secured from the Vale of Glamorgan Council from the start of 2023-24, means that for the first time the Shared Regulatory Service contributes a dedicated resource to bringing properties back into beneficial use through intervention and enforcement in all three partner Council areas.

Over the course of 2023-24:

In **Bridgend**, SRS continues to target resources towards the top 20 worst empty homes cases. Of these:

- 2 properties have been sold
- 3 are under renovation
- 2 have completed on probate

Three successful prosecutions have concluded in respect of empty properties with a further prosecution pending, and one work in default has been completed. Three applications have been submitted to Welsh Government to access the Transforming Towns Enforcement Fund (two of these have been approved and one is pending). The remaining properties are subject to informal action. Meanwhile, work continues towards the Compulsory Purchase of the Authority's worst residential empty property and steps are being taken to enforce the sale of a commercial premises. Efforts also continue on properties outside the 'Top 20', utilising the 5-stage escalation letter process and enforcement provisions. Work to develop the Empty Property Loan Scheme is nearing completion.

In **Cardiff**, through a combination of dialogue, incentives and enforcement action, 113 empty properties were returned to use in 2023-24. This far exceeds the figures achieved in previous years and is attributable to the dedication of SRS Officers in tackling empty homes across the city, together with the corporate focus achieved through the cross-departmental Empty Homes Working Group, chaired by the Cabinet member for Housing & Communities. An action plan submitted to, and agreed by, Welsh Government identified our most problematic empty properties and prioritised associated actions. Targeted enforcement of these most problematic properties is yielding positive results with several properties now occupied, and cases progressing with the service of enforcement notices and works.

Works in default are also being completed at properties with the aim of enforcing their sale if the debt is not paid. In addition to this proactive work, the team also works reactively, responding to complaints and enquiries specifically relating empty properties. The team continues to make strong progress to address long term empty properties within Cardiff, an area of important work during a cost-of-living crisis and the shortage of affordable, available housing.

In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, the mid-year appointment of an Environmental Health professional as an Empty Property Officer within SRS has brought the much-needed capacity to carry out enforcement work in this regard.

The Vale of Glamorgan Empty Property Action Plan identifies long term derelict problematic empty properties as key targets and progress is being made on these. SRS is currently working on 13 active residential cases and 6 commercial cases of empty properties. Of these, there are 7 residential properties subject to planned enforcement action and notices with one works in default completed and further work pending. A property previously subject to an enforced sale is currently being

converted into 2 self-contained flats and will be ready for occupation later this year. Another property has progressed through probate and will be marketed for sale imminently. Meanwhile, 4 commercial properties are subject to planning & conservation/building control engagement, 1 of which has enforcement action pending.

Work also continues on the remaining key properties, again utilising the 5-stage escalation letter process to engage with owners. SRS has been instrumental in re-establishing the Vale of Glamorgan Empty Property Working Group to coordinate council wide disciplines in reaching objectives. Links have also been established with registered social landlords to explore opportunities to work more closely together in bringing properties back into use.

- 2.13** The detail of performance against all the agreed performance indicators is set out in **Appendix 1** to this report. Specifically in relation to the Food inspection programme, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, the Service moved on from the FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan, towards resumption of the full programme. Working with the Food Standards Agency, a risk-based, bespoke solution was agreed to bridge the gap between the Recovery Plan and resumption of the full SRS Food programmes. It is particularly pleasing to see the year-end position for the Food Hygiene programme achieving 100% of the inspections due category A and category B rated premises, as well as 100% of the due Category C rated premises. This really is a tribute to the hard work of Officers during the year, supplemented, it must be said, by a significant spend on contractors. Further detail on food hygiene and food standards interventions is provided at 2.19 below.
- 2.14** The SRS may, through the relevant participant Council, prosecute breaches of legislation, particularly in respect of those who flout the law or who act irresponsibly, or where there is an immediate risk to health and safety. In the period, the service has been successful in challenging a range of unfair practices, many of which attracted media attention. The time and work required to investigate these matters, and the consequences this has on Officers' ability to carry out day to day work whilst these matters are ongoing, is significant. The details of all 46 prosecutions that concluded in the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 are set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.15** SRS has continued to tailor its efforts to support the particular challenges facing each of the partner Councils, including those arising from the cost of living crisis, dealing with anti-social behaviour and in supporting air quality compliance.
- 2.16** Turning to licensing, SRS presented Cabinet reports over the course of 2023-24 in respect of a number of policy areas including cumulative impact policy under alcohol licensing. The results of the consultation exercise on introducing card payment facilities in Cardiff taxis were presented to Cardiff Council's Public Protection Committee during the year.



## **Significant Service achievements**

- 2.17** Paragraph 1.5 above highlights the priority themes for Shared Regulatory Services, and a range of achievements over the course of 2023-24 demonstrate progress toward delivering the outcomes associated with these priorities. The 2024-25 SRS Business Plan reviews these achievements in some detail, while the sections below provide just some examples of the work carried out in the last financial year.

## **Improving Health and Wellbeing**

- 2.18** Improving health and wellbeing is a key priority for Shared Regulatory Services. Work undertaken to ensure that food is safe, that infectious disease, noise, and air emissions are controlled, that risks in the workplace are managed properly, allows people to live in healthy environments. Add to this our activities to ensure the quality of private rented property, the promotion of a safe trading environment and our regulation of licensed premises to ensure they operate responsibly, and it is evident that the work undertaken by SRS is hugely important to the health and wellbeing of the region.

### ***Food Hygiene and Food Standards interventions***

- 2.19** There are certain unique challenges facing SRS in delivering on the full food hygiene and food standards programmes. These are well established and result from the sheer number of food businesses within our footprint (around 20% of all those in Wales), the diverse and vibrant nature of the food scene locally, and the very frequent churn of new business start-ups. A number of other factors have emerged, post pandemic which add to the challenges faced, namely
- The significant increase in enforcement action necessary at food premises post COVID, and the increase in the incidence of pests, all of which impacts on Officers' ability to carry out inspections and programmed work
  - Many cases where previously high scoring premises under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme are scoring lower, post pandemic
  - The Service has also seen a significant increase in new and different cuisines being offered at food businesses. This requires Officers to research and understand these new approaches so that through their interaction with the businesses concerned, appropriate advice can be given, and action taken as required.
- 2.20** Reflecting the significant increase in enforcement action required at food premises, post pandemic, a total of eight food prosecution cases, involving thirteen defendants, concluded during 2023-24. The combined impact of these eight concluded cases was:
- A total of 9 months in suspended prison sentences (2 cases)
  - Fines of £29,070

- Costs of £11,533
- 60 hours community service and
- The issuing of three Food Hygiene Prohibition Orders, preventing individuals from having a role in the running of a Food business in the future.

### ***Special Procedures***

- 2.21** The Service responded to the Welsh Government consultation on draft regulations and statutory guidance that will see the mandatory licensing scheme for acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis and tattooing become a reality. The draft statutory guidance sets out the matters local authorities are to take into account in deciding whether and to what extent an applicant practitioner's fitness to perform a special procedure has been called into question.
- 2.22** It is understood that the anticipated effective date for the Special Procedures regime has been put back further to November 2024, and work continues across the Service to manage the transition of practitioners and premises onto the new mandatory licensing framework. This is a significant task with unfortunately no additional funding to assist in resourcing it. In addition, Welsh Government awareness raising has begun to take place with Licensing Committees, members of which will consider representations and certain applications under the new regime.

### ***The Vapes Market***

- 2.23** When the first electronic cigarettes came onto the market more than 15 years ago, they had the appearance of a 'real' cigarette, usually with an illuminated tip and vapour reminiscent of cigarette smoke. Over the years, these devices have proved helpful for those trying to give up smoking and their use has been encouraged as an effective smoking cessation aid for adults.
- 2.24** More recently there has been a marked change in the appearance and presentation of electronic cigarettes. The product line has quickly evolved into the devices we now know as vapes, which look nothing like cigarettes, and which are marketed under various brand names in attractive packaging and in a range of appealing flavours.
- 2.25** With the rapid expansion in the market for vapes come concerns that they are being used not just by smokers, but by non-smokers and by youngsters, leading to calls for stronger regulation of the market. Exacerbating the problem, the last few years has seen a huge influx of illegal vapes into UK supply chains. These are products that have not been registered with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), do not comply with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 in respect of their tank liquid capacity exceeding the 2ml permitted (equivalent to approximately 600 puffs), and the nicotine strength of the liquid exceeding 20mg / ml. As a snapshot of the scale of the illegal vapes problem, during 2023-24 SRS Officers

carried out several operations to identify the sale of such products. As a result, 141 test purchases were attempted and 53 premises found to be selling illegal vapes. In addition, 50 inspections were conducted, 32 of which resulted in seizures of 7105 illegal e-cigarettes with an estimated retail value of over £75,000. Retailers identified as selling these products received a written warning and advice and were subject to follow-up inspection. Six investigations are currently on-going.

**2.26** In the autumn of 2023, SRS responded to the *Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping* Westminster Government consultation which was supported by the devolved administrations as part of a four-nation approach to the issue. Approaches around the following themes were explored in the consultation, all of which would fall to Regulatory Services to regulate:

- Restricting vape flavours
- Regulating vape packaging and product presentation
- Regulating point of sale displays
- Banning the supply and sale of disposable vapes
- Exploring further restrictions for non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine consumer products such as nicotine pouches
- The affordability of vapes, including a new duty on vapes

### ***Building Safety***

**2.27** Welsh Government has repeated its commitment to introduce a new Building Safety Bill in the current Senedd term. SRS represents the Directors of Public Protection Wales group on the Building Safety Stakeholder Group which acts as a strategic, independent advisory group for Welsh Government on matters relating to the Welsh Building Safety Programme.

**2.28** The final members of the Joint Inspection Team (JIT) have now been appointed and the intention is for the Team to be operational within the next two months. The JIT is already engaging with local authorities and the Fire and Rescue Services to design and implement an inspection programme of high-rise buildings in Wales which will augment the existing inspection programme and audit undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Services.

**2.29** Welsh Government has made it clear that it does not expect leaseholders to bear the cost of repairing fire safety issues that are not of their making and eleven of the major developers have made a public commitment to address fire safety issues in buildings of 11 metres and over which they have developed over the last 30 years. Welsh Government continues to develop the Leaseholder support fund for those leaseholders who face financial hardship as a result of fire safety issues in their homes

and are also planning further resident engagement on the various measures being developed.

- 2.30** There remains a great deal of work to be done in this area and SRS continues to represent the three partner authorities in the various stakeholder groups helping to inform Welsh Government and shaping the legislative programme as it moves forward.

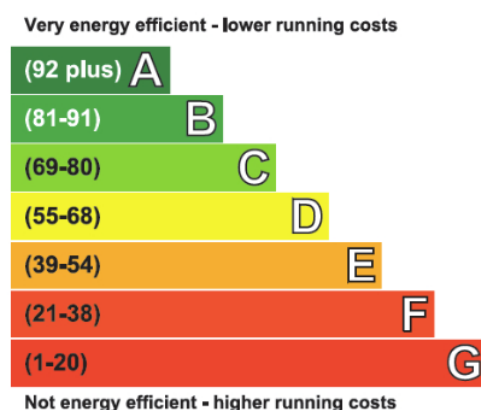
## Protecting the Environment

- 2.31** Protecting the environment is a core strategic priority of SRS. Many of the activities such as water sampling, monitoring air quality, and remediating contaminated land contribute toward promoting a better environment. This in turn means better long term prospects for the health and wellbeing of our communities. The SRS has a key role to play in ensuring society makes best use of existing resources and bringing back redundant/derelict properties into use is an important contributor to local communities as well as the wider environment. In respect of the climate change and future generations agendas SRS is able to contribute through its enforcement role on energy efficiency controls in respect of properties and consumer products. In the short term, SRS ensures that communities are protected from nuisance and are safer, by investigating noise complaints, and dealing with straying dogs and other animals.

### *Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards*

- 2.32** In 2018, the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 introduced minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) for domestic private rented properties. The regulations were designed to increase the energy efficiency of the worst performing dwellings, reduce fuel poverty, and improve housing standards.
- 2.33** An Energy Performance Certificate has been a legal requirement for all UK homes being rented for over a decade. Certificates are valid for 10 years and through calculation of the energy efficiency score for a given property, they provide a rating from A (most efficient) to G (inefficient), as shown in Figure 3, below.

**Figure 3: Energy Performance Score Rating of Properties**



- 2.34** The Regulations require that domestic property let out under all new *and existing* tenancies must have an EPC rating of E or above. F or G rated properties cannot be let unless there is a bona fide, properly registered, exemption.
- 2.35** Having developed the necessary infrastructure to take this area of work forward during 2022-23, the Service was able to build upon these foundations in 2023-24, to good effect. Over the course of the year, owners, agents and landlords of private rented properties were contacted to remind them of their duties under the legislation and to signpost to opportunities for funding streams that may be available to assist in improving the rating of their property. Officer interventions have been focussed on those properties appearing to fall into the forbidden F and G energy efficiency ratings, together with those for which there is no published rating.
- 2.36** By the end of the year, a total of 138 properties were sufficiently improved to take them out of the F and G energy efficiency rating to become E rated or better. Also as a result of SRS interventions during the year, some 127 previously unrated private rented properties now hold Energy Performance Certificates, having achieved ratings ranging from B to E.
- 2.37** The impact of this work, both in terms of the climate change and also the cost of living agendas, translates into tangible figures submitted to the partner Councils on a quarterly basis. The combined improvement figures across the SRS region during 2023-24 are as follows:
- ***Reduction in carbon tonnage***  
A reduction of **406 tonnes** in the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced at the improved properties
  - ***Reduction in energy use at improved properties in kWh***  
A reduction of **424,620 kWh** in the energy needed to heat the improved properties.

### ***Animal Welfare***

- 2.38** During the year, Officers have been involved in a number of animal welfare investigations, almost exclusively, these cases are linked to unlicensed, **illegal dog breeding**. A number of cases are pending in the court system, and it would appear that this unlicensed activity continues to operate across sophisticated criminal networks, presumably attracted to dog breeding as a profitable business model, and one that is perceived to carry a lower risk of punishment than other illegal supply chains. Ongoing intelligence and complaints received suggest that this position isn't going to change anytime soon.
- 2.39** Faced with the appalling conditions in which breeding dogs and puppies are being found, Officers have no choice but to act on Veterinary advice and seize animals to

remove them from further harm. While cases are dealt with as quickly as possible, seizures unfortunately result in significant costs for the Service in boarding and caring for the dogs pending the courts granting ownership to the Council. It is only at this point in proceedings that the rehoming process can begin. The reality is that at the conclusion of a case, costs may not be awarded in full, if at all.

**2.40** In 2023-24, a successful prosecution against two individuals from the Vale of Glamorgan, highlighted the significant welfare issues that illegal breeders can subject animals to in pursuit of profit. As part of this one case, 11 dogs including 9 puppies were seized, with 5 of the dogs having to be euthanised. All of the dogs in this case were suffering from serious medical conditions, ranging from eye infections, moderate to severe corkscrew tails, respiratory problems, spinal issues, fractured teeth, and one dog was suffering from a rectal prolapse that was so severe the tissue was necrotic.

**2.41** When this case was prosecuted, the defendants received suspended prison sentences of 22 and 14 weeks, and one of the defendant was disqualified from keeping animals for a period of 8 years. Each defendant was ordered to pay £4000 in costs and ordered to complete 180 hrs and 120 hrs unpaid work respectively.

**2.42** Another case that concluded during the year involved an individual previously prosecuted for illegal dog breeding in the SRS region. At the time of his original 2021 conviction, the illegal breeder was given an 8-year Disqualification Order under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, preventing him from

*‘keeping any animals, dealing in them, owning them, keeping them, participating in keeping them and from being party to an arrangement under which he is entitled to control or influence the way in which they are kept, transporting them and arranging for the transport of them’.*

Nevertheless, in June 2022, the individual was found to have breached the disqualification by dealing in animals, which included the sale of puppies for £12,000. He was fined £1000 and ordered to pay costs of £590.

**2.43** In 2023, SRS was recognised in the annual RSPCA PawPrints awards in three categories. The hard work of our Animal Wardens and Animal Health and Welfare Officers throughout the year resulted in the following being awarded:

- **Animal-related Licensing: Gold Award**
- **Stray Dog provision: Gold Award**
- **Kennelling: Gold Award**

It is wonderful to see that not only did the Service maintain its 2022 Gold standard in the first two of these categories, but for the first time it also achieved the Gold standard for Kennelling. This means that in 2023, SRS was the *only service in the UK* to achieve the Gold standard in all three categories.

- 2.44** The aim of the RSPCA in giving these annual awards is to shine a light on the organisations that have 'gone the extra mile' for animals, and entries are judged by an external panel of animal welfare experts.

### ***Air Quality***

- 2.45** During 2023-24, SRS ensured that Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils met their statutory duties under part 4 of the Environment Act 1995 by producing the 2023 Annual Progress Report (APR) for each area. These reports detailed their quality monitoring data for 2022 and were reported to the three respective Cabinets.
- 2.46** In **Bridgend** the 2023 APR demonstrated that only two sites, both located within Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) exceeded the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide NO<sub>2</sub> as prescribed in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002. All other locations within Bridgend County Borough continued to meet all other relevant air quality objectives. Both locations recorded annual average figures in 2022 of 47.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> & 45.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> respectively. This represented a reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations of 12% and 17% at these locations since 2019.
- 2.47** The 2023 APR also provided an update to BCBC Cabinet on the progression of the Air Quality Action Plan for the AQMA on Park Street. The Action Plan was subsequently approved at a further meeting of the Cabinet; it provides a full implementation timeline of any additional measures, and also a projected year of compliance. The Air Quality Action Plan for the Park Street AQMA has since been submitted, as required, to Welsh Government.
- 2.48** In **Cardiff**, the 2023 APR demonstrated that out of the 135 non automatic monitoring locations across the entire City, no monitoring sites recorded exceedances of the annual average objective set. for NO<sub>2</sub> of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.49** The APR provided an overview of the concentrations within each of the 4 AQMAs in Cardiff. Monitoring in the AQMAs demonstrated compliance was being achieved in each of the 4 AQMAs, although one location in the Llandaff AQMA, was close to exceeding the annual mean for NO<sub>2</sub> (39 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and there has been a slight increasing trend in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations since 2020 at this location.
- 2.50** The report detailed that owing to the continued increase of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at this location it will be necessary for the Council to consider additional specific actions for the Llandaff AQMA. That said results for 2023 show an improved picture at this monitoring location with a provisional result of 34 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.51** The APR also gave a further update on the ongoing work on Castle Street in relation to the Welsh Government Air Quality Direction. At the time of the Cabinet Report, the Council had submitted an updated Final Plan, which was being reviewed by Welsh

Government's Expert Panel, and a final decision on funding for the Castle Street Scheme is anticipated by the end of March 2024.

- 2.52** In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, the 2023 APR demonstrated that there were 50 specifically allocated non-automatic monitoring sites across the Vale of Glamorgan which monitored levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). From the 50 locations monitored throughout the Vale with the use of passive diffusion tubes, no sites breached the national NO<sub>2</sub> annual objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> or the NO<sub>2</sub> 1-hour objective (200 µg/m<sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year). Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan has seen a downward trend in NO<sub>2</sub> levels since before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.53** The report also provided an update on a successful application to the Local Air Quality Management support fund from Welsh Government, for funding to upgrade and enhance the current real time air quality monitoring capabilities within the Vale. The bid enables the Vale to install an additional 5 monitors and the locations will be decided using a risk-based approach in line with relevant technical guidance.

### **Safeguarding the Vulnerable**

- 2.54** SRS contributes toward the safeguarding agendas of the partner Councils by seeking to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, that older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous individuals and traders, that illegal money lending activities across Wales are challenged robustly, and that the public feel safe when using taxis as public transport.
- 2.55** During 2023-24, SRS received 111 complaints or intelligence logs regarding **underage sales** of alcohol, e-cigarettes, tobacco and knives. With the assistance of young volunteers, Officers responded by staging a total of 53 attempts to purchase a range of age restricted products during the year. 10 of these attempts to purchase resulted in a sale (19%) of either alcohol or e-cigarettes / vapes. The circumstances of each case were fully investigated, and appropriate enforcement action taken. While the Service will always recommend a stepped approach to enforcement, during 2023-24, two cases concluding in court saw the successful prosecution of two businesses for underage sales of alcohol and vapes respectively.
- 2.56** Once again, Officers have investigated a number of significant **rogue builder** or **doorstep crime** cases. Sitting behind each of these cases is a story of residents, often vulnerable, being defrauded of large sums of money, sometimes their life savings. The cases show a pattern of little, or no, work being done, and where work has been carried out, it will have been to a very poor standard. During the year, some eight cases in this category (with a total of nine defendants) concluded in court. The outcome of these eight cases is significant, and is set out in detail in the broader case summaries provided at **Appendix 2**. In summary the following were achieved:



- A total of 96 months (8 years) in custodial sentences
- A total of 24 months (2 years) in suspended prison sentences
- 1 Criminal Behaviour Order, lasting 10 years
- 5 Community Orders, together requiring 820 hours unpaid work
- A fine of £215
- Costs of £300, and
- Compensation of £6720 for some of those affected.

**2.57** Hosted by SRS, the **Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit (WIMLU)** has as its public-facing identity Stop Loan Sharks Wales. With the full effects of the cost of living crisis being felt over the course of the year, it will come as no surprise that illegal money lenders or loan sharks have been poised to exploit the vulnerable in times of crisis, right across Wales. Reporting rates to the Unit are often low however, with victims unwilling to come forward let alone name a lender for fear of reprisal. Over the course of 2023-24, twenty pieces of intelligence were received about illegal lending and eleven lenders were investigated as a result. Linked to these investigations, 25 victims have been supported, with six having had their debts written off.

**2.58** Two prosecutions against loan sharks concluded during the year, with each receiving prison sentences. Interestingly, both of the loan sharks prosecuted were advancing in age, the first being a 73-year-old male and the second an 83-year-old female. While neither fitted the description of a 'typical' loan shark, they nevertheless deployed classic loan shark tactics to instil fear in their victims. In the case of the 83-year-old female, dubbed by the press as the UK's oldest loan shark, she was ordered to pay back over £173,000 of her ill-gotten gains, with more than £35,000 returned to her victims in compensation.

**2.59** The WIMLU works closely with other public agencies, including housing providers and third sector organisations whose position on the 'front line' means that they encounter the victims of loan sharks through their daily activities. These relationships provide the Unit with crucial intelligence of illegal lending. To exploit this and to encourage reporting, WIMLU proactively seeks opportunities to present to these organisations on the work of the team and receives frequent requests for information and training of frontline staff and community-based public facing support services. In 2023-24 training was delivered to 21 different organisations from all over Wales drawn from different aspects of local government, credit unions, and the housing, advice and charitable sectors. These training sessions were attended by colleagues from within local government and credit unions as well as from the housing, advice, and charitable sectors, and some 516 participants were reached in this way.

## Supporting the Local economy

**2.60** The work of SRS has a significant impact upon the local economy in a number of different ways. The provision of timely advice and guidance on regulation can enable businesses to maximise the benefit they derive from the marketplace, and the taking

of firm enforcement action against rogue traders and those undermining the *bona fide* trade maintains an environment in which legitimate businesses are able to flourish. At the same time, effective market surveillance ensures 'visibility' of trading practices that would otherwise be hidden, and this is particularly so in regard to the huge increase in online trading, including through social media, in recent years. The SRS role as regulator also extends to providing a fair trading environment for consumers, supporting them to become better informed and confident in their purchasing decisions.

- 2.61** The **Primary Authority scheme** enables a business to enter into a statutory partnership with a local authority through which it can receive assured advice. Provided this advice is followed, the Primary Authority (PA) is able to challenge intended enforcement action by other local authorities. Over the course of 2023-24, SRS increased its Primary Authority portfolio to a total of 36 partnerships with a range of local and national businesses. The Service is able to charge for work done under these arrangements on the basis of full cost recovery. In addition, arrangements with one of the Service's high-profile partners changed during the year, meaning that SRS is now responsible not just for food hygiene matters in Wales, but for the co-ordination of all referrals about that business, from other local authorities in England and Wales.
- 2.62** **Illegal tobacco** (i.e., counterfeit, or non-duty paid) continues to present a very real problem in our communities. Research has shown that at least 15% of all tobacco and cigarettes supplied in Wales are illegal, and smokers are quite comfortable in purchasing it, presumably under the misapprehension that the only impact of its widespread use is the loss of revenue to HM Treasury. This thinking ignores the most serious harms caused by illegal tobacco. At around half the cost of legitimate product, illegal tobacco removes the price incentive for smokers to quit the otherwise expensive habit. In addition, the way in which illegal tobacco is supplied means that mainstream tobacco control measures such as minimum age of purchase and the tobacco display ban are undermined. It is also important to remember that widespread availability of illegal tobacco undermines the viability of legitimate retailers selling genuine product, for it is not just the revenue from tobacco products that they are losing. Customers purchasing (illegal) tobacco elsewhere will also tend to purchase other goods elsewhere, for example the bread, milk and other essentials they pick up at the same time as their cigarettes.
- 2.63** SRS officers carry out regular exercises with partner agencies and the assistance of tobacco detection dogs to locate illegal product (which will usually be concealed) whilst on site. During 2023-24, **1,078 packets of cigarettes** and **673 pouches of hand rolling tobacco** were seized during SRS operations. Supply chains for illegal tobacco are invariably linked to wider criminality, and such is their sophistication that retail premises are able to restock almost immediately after the seizure of illegal product.
- 2.64** While seizures of this kind remain a useful disruption tool, tackling the widespread availability of illegal tobacco requires a more targeted approach along the supply chain. With this alternative approach in mind, some years ago Officers began a major

investigation into the supply of illegal tobacco. While originating in Cardiff, the case also involved outlets in both the Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan Council areas. When the case was brought to court, its complexities, multiple defendants and sheer size meant that it had to be divided into two separate Crown Court trials. With the conclusion of the second of these trials in the last financial year, eleven defendants had either been found guilty or elected to change their pleas to guilty. Sentencing in the case is yet to take place and significant press interest is anticipated, given its status as the largest case of its kind in Wales (and quite likely in the UK). A Proceeds of Crime hearing will follow.

- 2.65** In another first, the Service was successful in its application to **close a retail outlet** under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for the harm caused in the community arising from the supply of illegal tobacco (and also nitrous oxide). The Magistrates Court hearing resulted in a 3-month closure order being imposed in March 2024, and a further application is being progressed to extend the closure of this particular outlet. Moving forward, this approach is seen as a highly compelling and impactful enforcement tool and applications are being considered in respect of a number of other problematic premises.

### Maximising the use of resources

- 2.66** Maximising the use of resources was the original catalyst for creating SRS, and work in this area continues. By reducing repetition of effort, introducing better processes, making systems work without constant intervention and improving access into the service, our business improves and customer satisfaction increases. Income generating activities like marketing our metrology laboratory, offering paid for advice services, building Primary Authority partnerships and extending our training provision to business are examples of our income generation and cost recovery culture.
- 2.67** Further improvements to the **SRS website** have taken place over the last year in order to ensure the best possible customer journey. During 2023-24, the SRS website had 61,724 users and 168,894 page views. Our noise and air pollution web pages continue to receive the most page views of all areas.
- 2.68** The SRS website is supplemented by our **social media** offerings, namely [X](#) and the SRS [LinkedIn](#) account. These channels have proved to be a highly effective way of getting information to a large number of businesses and residents.
- 2.69** The Service encourages use of the **noise app** in cases where residents wish to make a complaint about noise. It can be downloaded simply from the App Store enabling to short bursts of the disturbance to be recorded and submitted to the case Officer to determine if a nuisance has occurred. This approach has enabled complaints to be triaged effectively, thereby ensuring that officers' site visits are prioritised where and when they are most needed.

- 2.70** In making the best use of its resources, SRS looks for opportunities to streamline how things are done in all areas of the Service. With this in mind, work continues to pilot the use of **handheld tablet devices** to replace the paper system currently being used to record the results of food inspections. It is hoped that this approach can be mainstreamed across the Food Service early in 2024-25 to bring the following benefits:
- Direct uploading of information on to the database without the need for Officer time in scanning multiple documents
  - Reduction in the consumption of paper and lower printing costs
  - Less travel time for Officers in having to pick up and drop off paperwork.
- 2.71** In March, the Service produced the latest version of its popular [Food and Safety News \(srs.wales\)](https://www.srs.wales) publication which was circulated to nearly 7000 businesses across the region. In a departure from the approach taken previously with *Food and Safety News*, the new edition has been put together in-house, meaning that its production is cost-neutral, other than Officer time and a small investment in relevant and re-usable stock images. In the case of all previous editions of the publication, costs have been occurred for Graphic Design, Welsh translation, printing, and postage.
- 2.72** Since the inception of SRS, officers have been provided with access to the systems of the 3 legacy authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This enables officers to access the essential IT systems they need to fulfil their duties for the relevant authorities. While this has worked well, more recent updates to systems and software have impacted on the continuity of current arrangements affecting connectivity and access. SRS maintains good relationships with the ICT departments of the legacy authorities to deal with issues as they arise in the short term. It has become apparent however, that there is a need to consolidate the long-term access requirements to ensure continued access and smooth running of systems and crucially to provide seamless delivery of essential services.
- 2.73** Looking ahead to 2024-25, there will be an expectation on the Shared Service to deliver on several new areas of regulatory law without the benefit of Welsh Government funding to provide any additional resource. Chief amongst these will be the new Special Procedures regime, changes in the law relating to vapes (including the ban on single-use products), and new food disposal requirements for businesses.
- 2.74** It is pleasing to note that income levels across our paid-for services (through training for businesses, Primary Authority / other business advice, the UKAS accredited metrology laboratory and specialist environmental monitoring services) have recovered since the dip experienced during the COVID pandemic. With the continued pressures on public sector finances, now more than ever, the establishment of new income streams and cost recovery will play a crucial role in protecting and sustaining the Service. Building on the Digital Forensics initiative of 2023-24, no stone will be left unturned in 2024-25 as we innovate to maximise income generation and cost recovery.

## Financial Performance

- 2.75** The 2023/24 Shared Regulatory Services Gross Revenue Budget was approved on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- 2.76** The revenue position for 2023/24 continues to be challenging for the SRS both operationally and financially due to the ongoing implications of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The impact of rising prices continues to intensify pressure on existing budgets.
- 2.77** The previous impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the ability of the Service to generate income has gradually receded and the Service continues to recover and make up for this lost income.
- 2.78** Two members of staff remained on secondments out of the Service. The associated cost of these secondments has been recovered from Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council. This has enables staff to act up into more senior roles.
- 2.79** A small group of officers from across the Service continue to be seconded to the SRS Health Protection team supporting Cardiff and Vale Health Board and the wider Health Protection Partnership.
- 2.80** The Gross Revenue Budget and forecast outturn position for 2023/24 are shown in the tables below, with the position in respect of each of the partners detailed to include both Authority Specific (overspend £117k) and Core expenditure positions. The service achieved an unaudited £171k overspend against a gross revenue budget of £8.645m, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1

	<b>Gross Budget</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>Outturn Variance</b>
<b>Authority</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>
Bridgend	1,914	1,855	59
Cardiff	5,009	5,241	(232)
Vale	1,722	1,720	2
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>8,645</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>(171)</b>

- 2.81** Over the last few quarters, the ability of the Service to recruit into key roles has improved and retention levels have been more encouraging than in recent years. Given the difficult recruitment landscapes for regulatory services across the country however, there is no room for complacency. The 'growing our own' approach is now firmly embedded with staff being developed both in their roles and in the gaining of professional qualifications, enabling them to progress within the Service as future vacancies arise.

**2.82** The landscape in which this overspend arose includes factors such as the greater than budgeted pay award for 2023-24, costs related to animal welfare seizures and an element of contractor costs linked to very positive progress against the Food inspection programme. In addition, the adverse outturn for Authority Specific services reflects a historic budgetary issue in respect of the Cardiff Licensing service.

**2.83** A full breakdown of the outturn position is shown in **Appendix 3**

## **Authority Specific Services**

**2.84** The approved gross budget of £2.567m in respect of Authority Specific (AS) Services has an unaudited overspend of £117k, as detailed in the following table:

Table 2

	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Authority</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>	<b>£'000's</b>
Bridgend	461	389	72
Cardiff	1,562	1,764	(202)
Vale	544	532	12
<b>Total AS Services</b>	<b>2,567</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>(118)</b>

### **Bridgend**

**2.85** The unaudited outturn position in Bridgend is a total underspend of £72k, this culminates from a closing underspend within each of Bridgend's authority specific services. The licensing function was underspent by £38k; due to movement seen within the team during the year which left some roles vacant for a period of the year. Additionally Empty Homes has an underspend of £2k and Kennelling and Vets has an underspend of £32k both of which are very much consistent with activity levels noted in previous years.

### **Cardiff**

**2.86** The £202k overspend at Cardiff predominantly relates to the £121k overspend within the Licensing Section which is consistent with performance in previous years.

**2.87** The combined £16k underspend within HMO Cathays and HMO Plasnewydd teams relates to smaller variances within these teams.

**2.88** The £7k overspend within Night-Time Noise relates to a marginal uplift in demand due to an increase in service usage along with the salary award being in excess of budget.

## Vale

- 2.89** Overall, the Vale has an aggregate £12k underspend.
- 2.90** Taxi Licensing, Burials and Pest Control are all close to reporting an on-budget position with a total underspend of £1k.
- 2.91** Kennelling and Vets are forecasting a £11k underspend, which is consistent with performance in previous years.

## **Core Services**

- 2.92** The approved Core Services Budget for 2023/24 is £6.078m, which as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 has an outturn overspend of £54k. The Core Services budget is allocated in line with the information included in the Revenue Support grant published by Welsh Government across the participating authorities, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 3

		Gross	Forecast	Outturn
		Budget	Outturn	Variance
Authority	%	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Bridgend	23.90%	1,453	1,466	(13)
Cardiff	56.72%	3,447	3,477	(30)
Vale	19.38%	1,178	1,188	(10)
<b>Total Core</b>		<b>6,078</b>	<b>6,132</b>	<b>(53)</b>

- 2.93** The £21k overspend within Animal Services is due to the increased costs resulting from a number of dog seizures. Significant expenditure has been incurred in the support of these seizures. This position includes a drawdown of £83k from the SRS Trading Standards Reserve, as established in the Q2 report.
- 2.94** Environmental Services is reporting an underspend of £22k, which is made up of smaller variances forecasted within this heading.
- 2.95** The Food Services current outturn position is a £165k overspend, which is due to agency costs being incurred to enable the teams to meet the Food inspection programme and clear the backlog of outstanding food safety visits. Mindful of this overspend unfolding during the year, a drawdown of £100k was envisaged from the SRS General Reserve to reduce the overspend position in this area. At year end, given the overall performance of the Service as a whole, this proved to be unnecessary.
- 2.96** Housing Services outturn position is an overspend of £78k. This overspend has been mitigated by the usage of a historic reserve fund usage plan by the previous Head of Service which reduced the overspend from £156k to £78k. The remainder of the overspend is attributable to additional salary expenditure which is the result of the impact of the agreed 2023/24 pay award against the available budget along with additional staffing needed to meet service area demands.

- 2.97** The Health & Safety and Communicable Disease budget heading comprises three cost centres spread across two SRS teams. A £31k overspend is reported at year end, this being driven by a temporary increase in staff costs and the provision of business support within certain elements of the service.
- 2.98** Pollution Services are currently reporting a balanced budget.
- 2.99** The 'Trading Standards' budget comprises a number of cost centres spread across three different SRS teams and also includes an element of the Food service (separate to that outlined in 2.52 above). This area of the budget saw a £220k underspend overall which was partially due to a post remaining vacant for a significant part of the year. The Service has also made use of funds held on the balance sheet which were generated from successful court cases undertaken in previous periods totalling £60k. These funds have now been released in the year to offset some of the costs incurred elsewhere on the budget. In addition, £31k of external funding was received very late in the year and has contributed to the underspend.

## Reserves

- 2.100** The Shared Regulatory Service has built up some reserves which can be utilised to fund planned investment in service expenditure but also emerging pressures within the service.
- 2.101** There are 2 drawdowns from Reserves referred to in this report which are further detailed in Table 4 below. In addition to the overspend detailed in the report, these drawdowns have been used to reduce the overspend from the initial figure of £332k to the overspend detailed in Table 1 of £171k.

Table 4

	Opening Balance 01/04/23	Drawdown in the year	Transfer from Reserves	Transfer to Reserves	Forecast Balance 31/03/24
Reserve	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
SRS General Fund Reserve	613	(78)	(171)	63	427
Specific Funding Reserve	71	(71)	0	0	0
POCA Reserve	83	(83)	0	24	24
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>(232)</b>	<b>(171)</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>451</b>



## Challenges moving forward

**2.102** Since its inception, SRS has consolidated service delivery in accord with the agreed standards. The over-riding challenges during 2024-25 will be around recruitment and retention, tackling the remaining backlogs in programmed work, the need to address emerging global, national, regional, and local events, and all the while working within a reduced resource. Consequently, the Key Milestones for 2024-25 include:

- *Delivery of the SRS Business Plan 2024-25 and the associated corporate priorities assigned to the SRS by the partner Councils*
- *To support the partner Councils and other agencies as an integral part of the health protection system in Wales*
- *To monitor the implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation upon the Service, for example the Welsh Government requirements around Special Procedures and Single Use Plastics*
- *To contribute to the climate change goals in each of the partner authorities through effective enforcement of environmental controls such as those regulating energy efficiency in the private rented housing sector.*
- *To further develop the 'growing our own' approach (including through regulatory apprenticeships when available), as part of the wider recruitment and retention strategy.*
- *In light of the continued pressures on public sector budgets, further explore, implement and maximise opportunities for income generation and cost recovery.*
- *Review the agile working arrangements for the service to ensure that technology is being exploited fully to improve service delivery.*

## **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

**3.1** The Annual report demonstrates the partner Councils' commitment to improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being and promoting sustainable development in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Equalities, Sustainability and safeguarding issues have all been taken into account when drafting this plan. Our work with stakeholders seeking to ensure that our early intervention and prevention activities maintain wellbeing in the SRS region is a crucial element of our approach to protect local people and the environment.

**3.2** The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires the SRS to underpin decision making by contributing to the seven well-being goals of the Act, following the five ways of

working, and consequently undertaking actions that will have a positive impact on people living in the future as well as those living today. The SRS Business Plan contains a number of initiatives that contribute to the wellbeing objectives. Section 6 of the Business Plan illustrates how the SRS priorities interface with the wellbeing goals on matters such as safeguarding the vulnerable and protecting the environment and forms the basis for the Annual report.

- 3.3** Aligning the Wellbeing Goals of the Act enables us to evidence our contribution to the National Wellbeing Goals. Promoting the five ways of working is reflected in our approach to integrated business planning. Setting consistently challenging yet realistic steps and performance improvement targets, the SRS is able to clearly demonstrate progress towards achieving the national goals by the production of the Annual report.

## **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** One of the key strategic themes for the Shared Regulatory Service is *Protecting the Local Environment*.
- 4.2** The SRS Business Plan articulates the work carried out under this theme to deliver on the corporate priorities for the participant Councils, including their ambitions to minimise climate change and impacts on the natural environment.
- 4.3** In this context, the Joint Committee is regularly updated on the contribution of the Shared Service to this agenda, for example through its work in the areas of animal health and welfare, air quality, contaminated land, energy efficiency in the private rented sector and investigating greenwashing claims or environmental fraud.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 5.1** The implications are set out in the body of the report.

### **Employment**

- 5.2** The implications are set out in the body of the report.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.3** The partner Councils have a duty to improve under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The report outlines achievements in 2022-23 for the matters assigned to the Shared Regulatory Service. The Joint Working Agreement executed on 10 April 2015 and amended July 2017 sets out the obligations placed upon the partner Councils in delivery of the Shared Regulatory Service.

## **6. Background Papers**

None

### ***Appendices***

- Appendix 1 – SRS Performance Measures 2023- 2024
- Appendix 2 – SRS Prosecution Statistics 2023-2024
- Appendix 3 – 2023-2024 SRS Provisional Outturn Position

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# Shared Regulatory Services

## Quarterly Performance Report 2023/24

### Quarter 4



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**Rheoliadol**  
a Rennir



# High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	29	29	100.00%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 4 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	155	155	100.00%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 4 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	61	61	100.00%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 4 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	245	245	100.00%	Green	All high risk businesses rated A and B due an inspection by the end of Qtr 4 were completed at premises that were operating and available for inspection.	100%

# High Risk Food Hygiene Inspections

Page 155

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a pro-grammed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	390	390	100.00%	Green	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that not only the programmed inspections for 23/24 have been completed but also the significant backlog of overdue inspections of C rated inspections at businesses that were operating and available for inspection. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers and enable SRS to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a pro-grammed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	804	804	100.00%	Green	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that not only the programmed inspections for 23/24 have been completed but also the significant backlog of overdue inspections of C rated inspections at businesses that were operating and available for inspection. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers and enable SRS to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a pro-grammed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	322	322	100.00%	Green	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that not only the programmed inspections for 23/24 have been completed but also the significant backlog of overdue inspections of C rated inspections at businesses that were operating and available for inspection. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers and enable SRS to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses (Cat C) that were liable to a pro-grammed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.	1516	1516	100.00%	Green	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that not only the programmed inspections for 23/24 have been completed but also the significant backlog of overdue inspections of C rated inspections at businesses that were operating and available for inspection. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers and enable SRS to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%

# New Businesses—Food Hygiene

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	228	259	88.03%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	649	737	88.06%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	212	247	85.83%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/FH/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment during the year for food hygiene.	1089	1243	87.61%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. This has only been achieved through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	90%



# Broadly Compliant Food Premises

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	PAM/23	Qtr 4	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1293	1319	98.03%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	Cardiff	PAM/23	Qtr 4	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	3134	3277	95.64%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	PAM/23	Qtr 4	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	1205	1247	96.63%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%
2023-24	SRS	PAM/23	Qtr 4	Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards.	5632	5843	96.39%	Green	Target exceeded.	94%

# High Risk Trading Standards Inspections

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	12	12	100.00%	Green	All planned inspections due by the end of Qtr 4 have been completed at open and operational businesses.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	12	12	100.00%	Green	All planned inspections due by the end of Qtr 4 have been completed at open and operational businesses.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	8	8	100.00%	Green	All planned inspections due by the end of Qtr 4 have been completed at open and operational businesses.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/TS/001	Qtr 4	The percentage of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected, for trading standards.	32	32	100.00%	Green	All planned inspections due by the end of Qtr 4 have been completed at open and operational businesses.	100%

# New business—Trading Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	240	315	76.19%	Amber	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. The food standards element of this work has been achieved through the diversification of food officer roles to enable them to undertake these inspections at the same time as a food hygiene inspection, and through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	80%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	723	1082	66.82%	Red	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. The food standards element of this work has been achieved through the diversification of food officer roles to enable them to undertake these inspections at the same time as a food hygiene inspection, and through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	80%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	272	407	66.83%	Red	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. The food standards element of this work has been achieved through the diversification of food officer roles to enable them to undertake these inspections at the same time as a food hygiene inspection, and through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	80%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/TS/003	Qtr 4	The percentage of new businesses identified which were subject to a risk assessment visit during the year, for food standards and animal feed.	1235	1804	68.46%	Red	Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that new business registration inspections received during the year have been completed, together with the significant backlog of overdue inspections at new businesses that were operating and available for inspection compared to the same period last year. The food standards element of this work has been achieved through the diversification of food officer roles to enable them to undertake these inspections at the same time as a food hygiene inspection, and through the appointment of contractors during the year as an additional resource to support the work of our food officers which has assisted efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.	80%

# Significant breaches

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. carried out	No. due	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/TS/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for: Trading Standards	42	44	95.45%	N/A	This measure relates to premises/businesses that are subject to ongoing investigations. The conclusion of such investigations may not always be possible within the financial year, however all cases are in within time for legal processing.	N/A
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/TS/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for: Trading Standards	191	220	86.82%	N/A	This measure relates to premises/businesses that are subject to ongoing investigations. The conclusion of such investigations may not always be possible within the financial year, however all cases are in within time for legal processing.	N/A
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/TS/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for: Trading Standards	82	85	96.47%	N/A	This measure relates to premises/businesses that are subject to ongoing investigations. The conclusion of such investigations may not always be possible within the financial year, however all cases are in within time for legal processing.	N/A
2023-24	SRS	SRS/TS/002	Qtr 4	The percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention during the year for: Trading Standards	315	349	90.26%	N/A	This measure relates to premises/businesses that are subject to ongoing investigations. The conclusion of such investigations may not always be possible within the financial year, however all cases are in within time for legal processing.	N/A

# Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 4	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	94	111	84.68%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 6 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service.	90%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/008	Annual Result	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	475	543	87.48%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 14 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to demands on the service.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 4	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	332	340	97.65%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/008	Annual Result	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	1573	1669	94.25%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 4	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	62	65	95.38%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/008	Annual Result	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	379	393	96.44%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/008	Qtr 4	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	488	516	94.57%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/008	Annual Result	Percentage of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days.	2427	2605	93.17%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%

# Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 4	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	19	25	76.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	75%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/009	Annual Result	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	162	195	83.08%	Green	Target exceeded.	75%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 4	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	61	84	72.62%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 2 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/009	Annual Result	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	418	609	68.64%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 39 complaints that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 4	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	15	21	71.43%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 1 complaint that failed to reach target. This is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/009	Annual Result	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	158	210	75.24%	Green	Target exceeded.	75%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/009	Qtr 4	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	95	130	73.08%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 3 complaints that failed to reach target and this is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/009	Annual Result	Percentage of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day.	738	1014	72.78%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents 23 complaints that failed to reach target during the year and this is largely due to current demands on the service and the lack of resource available, further exacerbated by delays in the logging of complaints.	75%

# Noise and Air Pollution

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. re- sponded to within tar- get	No. re- ceived	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 4	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	1	1	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/010	Annual Result	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	7	8	87.50%	Amber	The shortfall against target represents only 1 complaint that failed to reach target. This is largely due to the volume of general workload.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 4	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	25	25	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/010	Annual Result	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	89	90	98.89%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 4	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	4	4	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/010	Annual Result	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	10	11	90.91%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/010	Qtr 4	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	30	30	100.00%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/010	Annual Result	Percentage of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	106	109	97.25%	Green	Target exceeded.	90%

# Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	48	48	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/004	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	146	146	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	132	132	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/004	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	549	555	98.92%	Amber	The shortfall against target is as a result of a small number of applications being deferred due to industrial action which prevented the applications being determined within the required timescales.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	45	45	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/004	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	147	147	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/004	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	225	225	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/004	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	842	848	99.29%	Amber	The shortfall against target is as a result of a small number of applications in Cardiff being deferred due to industrial action which prevented the applications being determined within the required timescales.	100%



# Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	22	22	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/005	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	94	94	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	66	66	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/005	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	279	279	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	18	18	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/005	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	81	81	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/005	Qtr 4	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	106	106	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/005	Annual Result	Percentage of licensed personal applications received and determined within 2 months.	454	454	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

Licensing

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No deter- mined	No. received	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 4	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received.	100%
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/LC/006	Annual Result	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 4	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received.	100%
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/LC/006	Annual Result	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	3	3	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 4	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received.	100%
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/LC/006	Annual Result	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	1	1	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/006	Qtr 4	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	0	0	0.00%	Green	No applications received.	100%
2023-24	SRS	SRS/LC/006	Annual Result	Percentage of Gambling Premises applications received and determined within 2 months.	4	4	100.00%	Green	Target achieved.	100%

# Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. im- proved to E or above EPC	No of proper- ties engaged with	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	48	84	57.14%	N/A	A further 6 improved EPCs were received during Qtr 4 in respect of rental properties identified as having F and G rated EPCs that SRS has engaged with. As a result a total of 48 improved certificates have been received this year, which equates to an estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties of approx. 188.2 tonnes together with a reduction of 167768 KWh in energy needed for heating. These figures are based on information provided in certificates however there are occasions where this information is not available. For this reason, the actual improvements generated as a result of improved EPCs is thought to be much greater. In addition, a further 12 certificates have been received from properties that were previously unrated who now hold certificates rated C to E increasing the overall total of unrated properties now holding certificates to 23.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	46	78	58.97%	N/A	A further 7 improved EPCs were received during Qtr 4 in respect of rental properties identified as having F and G rated EPCs that SRS has engaged with. As a result, a total of 46 improved certificates have been received this year, which equates to an estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties of approx. 90.7 tonnes together with a reduction of 105293 KWh in energy needed for heating. These figures are based on information provided in certificates however there are occasions where this information is not available. For this reason, the actual improvements generated as a result of improved EPCs is thought to be much greater. In addition, a further 5 certificates have been received from properties that were previously unrated who now hold certificates rated B to E increasing the overall total of unrated properties now holding certificates to 78 equating to 39% of those contact-	Baseline being set
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	44	102	43.14%	N/A	A further 7 improved EPCs were received during Qtr 4 in respect of rental properties identified as having F and G rated EPCs that SRS has engaged with. As a result , a total of 44 improved certificates have been received this year, which equates to an estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties of approx. 127.1 tonnes together with a reduction of 151559 KWh in energy needed for heating. These figures are based on information provided in certificates however there are occasions where this information is not available. For this reason, the actual improvements generated as a result of improved EPCs is thought to be much greater. In addition, a further 10 certificates have been received from properties that were previously unrated who now hold certificates rated C to E increasing the overall total of unrated properties now holding certificates to 26.	Baseline being set
2023-24	SRS	SRS/MEES/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of private rented sector properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	138	264	52.27%	N/A	A further 20 improved EPCs were received during Qtr 4 in respect of rental properties identified as having F and G rated EPCs that SRS engaged with. As a result , a total of 138 improved certificates have been received this year, which equates to an estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from these properties of approx. 406 tonnes together with a reduction of 424620 KWh in energy needed for heating. These figures are based on information provided in certificates however there are occasions where this information is not available. For this reason, the actual improvements generated as a result of improved EPCs is thought to be much greater. In addition, a further 27 certificates have been received from properties that were previously unrated who now hold certificates rated B to E increasing the overall total of unrated properties now holding certificates to 127.	Baseline being set

Prosecutions

Year	Authority	Ref	Quarter	Title	No. of prosecutions cases in court	No. concluded successfully	Percentage achieved	RAG Status	Comment	Target
2023-24	Bridgend	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	11	11	100.00%	Green	Eleven cases were concluded in Bridgend throughout the year, 5 of which were concluded during Qtr 4 relating to housing, health and safety and rogue trader offences. In one rogue trader case the defendant pleaded guilty to 12 counts of fraud and 3 counts under the Consumer Protection from unfair trading practices regulations. The charges related to misleading commercial practices in the course of carrying out UPVC installations and home improvements involving 15 victims, a number of which were elderly with a total loss to consumers of £22,487. In some instances work had begun but was very poor and the defendant failed to return or simply never started the work.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Cardiff	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	30	30	100.00%	Green	30 cases were concluded in Cardiff throughout the year, 11 of which were concluded during Qtr 4 relating to housing, food hygiene, animal welfare, trading standards and rogue trader offences. One business was successfully prosecuted for both food hygiene offences and for the sale of illegal vapes and underage sales with fines amounting to over £12,000 being awarded. In another high profile case, a Cardiff landlord was fined a total of £37,000 for serious non compliances in relation to the licensing and management of a house in multiple occupation.	Baseline being set
2023-24	Vale of Glam	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	5	5	100.00%	Green	5 cases were concluded in the Vale of Glamorgan throughout the year, one of which was concluded during Qtr 4 relating to a rogue trader offence. In this case, 2 residents contracted with the defendant for new roofs and other roof related work. The homeowners paid more than £16,000 up front but no work began or materials delivered with the residents being met with excuse after excuse. The defendant was sentenced to 3 x 12 month imprisonment sentences suspended for 18 months, all concurrent and required to do 200 hours unpaid work.	Baseline being set
2023-24	SRS	SRS/PRO/001	Qtr 4	Percentage of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	46	46	100.00%	Green	45 cases were successfully concluded across the SRS region during the last year, 17 of which were concluded during Qtr 4. Offences during the last quarter related to animal welfare, food hygiene and standards, health and safety, housing, trading standards and rogue trading and included a illegal money lending case in Newport.	Baseline being set

## Appendix 2 - SRS prosecution cases concluding during 2023-24

Case	Court date	Offence(s)	Outcome
1	13.4.23	<p>A wholesale company and its sole Director each pleaded guilty to five food hygiene offences following an SRS inspection of the premises. Officers found rodent droppings behind pallets of food products and holes to the structure of the building which would allow pest access to the food store. As a result of these issues a Remedial Action Notice was served.</p> <p>Further visits over a period of months found further evidence of a pest infestation. Then in June 2022, one of the company's vehicles was subject to a multi-agency routine stop and check in Somerset, while enroute to delivering to various food businesses across the South West of England. Inspection of the vehicle discovered that products of animal origin were being supplied to other businesses more than 30 miles/50km from the Cardiff County boundary without the necessary approval from the authorising authority.</p> <p>In mitigation the defence argued that there had been co-operation with the Council, standards had improved in the premises, a new shutter door had been fitted and the level of cleanliness had significantly improved. With regards to the cutting plant, the defence accepted that there had been a clear error of judgement. They had tried to apply for a licence which was refused and so they had withdrawn from the whole thing.</p>	<p>In sentencing, the District Judge told the Director that the offences were serious, that he ran a big business which supplied a lot of people and so food safety laws should be paramount in his mind.</p> <p>The company was fined a total fine of £7,335 and order to pay costs of £1,327 together with a surcharge £190.</p> <p>The Director was fined a total of £1,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,327 together with a surcharge £190</p>

2	21.4.23	<p>This case concerned a number of serious failings in a House in Multiple Occupation. The HMO licence holder, the property management company and its Director were each charged with a number of offences, and all three pleaded guilty.</p> <p>When the property was visited, SRS Officers found that the conditions of the licence had not been complied with as required by the Housing Act 2004 and there were also failures to comply with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Wales) Regulations 2006. These related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to install the appropriate fire alarm system,</li> <li>• Failure to provide complete and functional fire doors</li> <li>• Failure to adequately fire protect the gas and electricity meters.</li> <li>• Missing smoke detectors,</li> <li>• Failure to maintain fire extinguishers,</li> <li>• Failure to maintain fire doors,</li> <li>• Inaccessible fire blanket,</li> <li>• Defective gutters to the annex side extension</li> <li>• Defective kitchen work surface</li> </ul>	<p>The licence holder was fined a total of £1,830 and ordered to pay costs of £1,000 together with a surcharge of £183.</p> <p>The property management company and its Director were both fined a total of £1,080 and ordered to both pay costs of £1,250 as well as surcharges of £108.</p>
3.	3.5.23	In August 2021, SRS Officers visited the premises of a wholesale fruit supplier, and found evidence of rodents	The business owner entered a total of 16 guilty pleas on behalf of her two companies (4 each) and herself (8

	<p>where foods were stored, including a pallet of rice contaminated with rodent urine and faeces. In addition, there were gaps to the exterior of the premises allowing access into the premises by pests, the premises were not maintained in a clean condition, there was no water supply to the premises for cleaning or for the maintenance of personal hygiene, and the business was not following their own food safety management procedures.</p> <p>During a further visit in September 2021, it was established that there had been a change in the legal ownership and management of the business. On this occasion, the following issues were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to advise the authority of a change of business ownership at an approved premises</li> <li>• Failure to obtain approval for the supply of products of animal origin</li> <li>• Areas of the premises were in a dirty condition</li> <li>• Crabs were out of temperature control</li> </ul> <p>A Remedial Action Notice was served but on further visit in the September 2021 the following issues were found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of the Premises were in a dirty condition</li> <li>• Food equipment was in a dirty condition</li> <li>• Large amounts of mouldy foods were found in the chiller</li> </ul>	<p>offences)</p> <p>The Director was fined £250 per offence for each of her 8 offences to give a total of £2,000. She was ordered to pay costs and a surcharge of £800.</p> <p>The companies were each fined £250 per offence giving a total fine of £1,000</p>
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4.	3.5.23	<p>In March 2022, SRS received a notification from Portsmouth City Council that the defendant had supplied foodstuffs which bore no labelling in English, and which upon translation were found to be konjac jelly mini cups. The issues here were two-fold, firstly konjac in jelly cups was prohibited decades ago as it can cause a choking hazard for children. In addition, the lack of food information in English meant that consumers would be unaware of the presence of any allergens.</p> <p>On visiting the local wholesaler, SRS officers identified the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The defendant had failed to put in place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure or procedures based on the HACCP principles</li> <li>He placed on the market food, namely durian cake and chongqing huogo hot pot, with no clear reference to the name of the substance or product</li> <li>He placed on the market food, namely jelly mini-cup confectionary containing konjac</li> </ul> <p>Prior to the conclusion of this case, the limited company was dissolved, meaning that proceedings could only be brought against the Director. He pleaded guilty to four offences.</p>	<p>The Director was fined £125 for each of 4 offences, giving a total fine of £500. He was ordered to pay costs of £400, and also a surcharge of £200. Payable at the rate of £10 per week.</p>



5.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver who transported passengers inside the Cardiff District without using the fitted taximeter. He also charged and obtained more than the legal Tariff Fare for journeys inside the Cardiff District.	The defendant was fined £264 and ordered to pay costs of £300 together with a victim surcharge of £106
6.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver using a private hire vehicle to pick up passengers in a controlled district without first having them pre-book the journey (i.e. acting as a Hackney Carriage). The driver's insurance for the vehicle had an exclusion clause in the policy stating that there was no cover for use as a Hackney Carriage. This meant that the vehicle was uninsured for the journey.	The defendant was fined £333 and ordered to pay costs of £300 together with a victim surcharge of £133.  He was also given 8 penalty points on his driver's licence
7.	11.5.23	This case involved a taxi driver using a private hire vehicle to pick up passengers in a controlled district without first having them pre-book the journey (i.e. acting as a Hackney Carriage). The driver's insurance for the vehicle did not include cover for Public Hire transportation only Private Hire transportation. This meant that the vehicle was uninsured for the journey. does not have cover for Public Hire transportation only Private Hire transportation.	The defendant was fined £500 and ordered to pay costs of £300, together with a victim surcharge of £140  He was also given 6 penalty points on his driver's licence
8.	18.5.23	The defendant had previously entered guilty pleas under the Fraud Act 2006 and the and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations. The investigation followed	The defendant was given a 12 month community order consisting of 20 hours of rehabilitation to address his offending and 132 hours of unpaid work. He was also

		a consumer complaint about the purchase of a vehicle, and established that the defendant had told the consumer that he would register an extended warranty with WarrantyWise. However, after the defendant took £364 for the extended warranty from the purchaser, it was never registered, resulting in financial detriment.	ordered to pay £1,500 costs and a £96.00 court surcharge.
9.	8.6.23	The defendant in this case is the food business operator of a sandwich bar. A visit by an officer from the Shared Regulatory Services in September 2022 found that the business had not displayed a food hygiene rating sticker of 1 which had been awarded to it following a hygiene inspection in July 2022. The defendant advised officers that he had been away on holiday and had not seen the letter and sticker. The Officer supplied another letter and sticker but a subsequent visit the following day found that the sticker was still not displayed, and the defendant refused to place the sticker in the window. Further visits in October 2022 and November 2022 highlighted further failures to display the rating.	The defendant was fined £440 for each of the three offences making a total fine of £1320. He was ordered to pay costs of £410 and also a court surcharge of £528.
10.	9.6.23	In May 2021 an Officer posing as a member of the public was sold two packs of Amber Leaf tobacco for £5 each. In June 2021 officers conducted an inspection and search of the premises, along with HMRC, and identified an area behind cladding in the back room that was secured with an electromagnetic lock. Inside was a store of counterfeit and illicit hand rolling tobacco and cigarettes. There were 9440 cigarettes and 2.05kg of tobacco. The business owner attended the store when notified of the Officers' findings	The Director was given a 12 month community order with a 20 day rehabilitation requirement. He was also fined £100 and ordered to pay costs of £750 together with a court surcharge of £95.

		<p>and said that he knew nothing about it.</p> <p>In sentencing, the district Judge stated that he took into account that the defendant had pleaded guilty albeit not on the first occasion, and that these were sophisticated offences as there had been structural adaptations to the premises and culpability was considered to be in the medium category of the sentencing guidelines.</p> <p>Charges were laid against the company running the business and its sole Director.to in respect of 4 offences under the Trade Marks Act 1994, 1 offence under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and 1 offence under The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015.</p>	
11.	19.6.22	<p>During March 2017, Shared Regulatory Services received an initial complaint prior to the opening of a new indoor trampoline park. Concerns were raised about the standard of equipment being installed at the venue and its compliance with relevant health and safety legislation. Officers provided guidance and assistance to the business but subsequent visits to monitor the implementation of improvements identified a continued failure to undertake a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment for the foam pit, airbag and overall supervision of the trampoline arena together with a lack of manufacturer information about some of the equipment; including the airbag. Further complaints were received from parents between August 2017 and August 2019 which included injuries to six children including five leg fractures and one spiral fracture.</p>	<p>The Judge sentenced the Director to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. He will also be required to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work requirement. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.</p>

		<p>The recurring themes throughout the incidents where injuries took place were the lack of supervision by staff, lack of training of staff, lack of safety briefing for all users of equipment, and during this time officers had made a number of visits serving improvement notices to secure improvements to the training of court monitors and provision of supervision throughout the trampoline park. Charges were brought under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 against the company and its Director.</p> <p>In sentencing, the Judge told the Director that he had a cavalier attitude towards safety and there had been an absence of basic safety provisions. The risks were obvious, there had been inadequate protective equipment and there was no desire to listen or investigate any person's report following an incident. Basic safety standards were missing. The problems should have been anticipated and people should have been able to trust that, in a premises such as this, that all precautions had been taken. The defendant had intentionally or flagrantly disregarded the law. The local authority had provided him with advice and guidance and advised him what he was doing wrong. The same accidents continued to happen as there were the same fundamental issues.</p>	
12.	6.7.23	<p>The defendant in this case was a licensed taxi driver who, on a Friday night in September 2022, parked up his licensed Private Hire vehicle in Cardiff City centre, close to a number of hospitality premises. When approached, he agreed to take two passengers on a journey outside of the city centre for a fare of £10, without prior booking. In acting</p>	<p>The Magistrates imposed a fine of £83 for the plying for hire offence, and £250 plus 8 penalty points for the no insurance offence. The defendant was also ordered to pay £150 Prosecution costs and £133 Victim Surcharge.</p>

		in this way, he used the Private Hire vehicle as Hackney Carriage and plying for hire. As a consequence of this unlicensed activity and in the context of section 143 of the Road Traffic Act, the vehicle was not insured to be used in this way.	
13.	20.7.23	<p>The defendants in this case were a property management company and its sole Director. The prosecution demonstrated that two Cardiff properties were rented to tenants without the necessary HMO licences being in place. Both properties had previously been licensed for multiple occupation, however the most recent licences were issued in 2015 and expired in 2020.</p> <p>At the time of the HMO licences being issued in 2015, each included as a condition the requirement to complete certain works at the properties within a period of 4 months. These were in respect of fire safety, also kitchen and bathroom arrangements. Nevertheless, when the Investigating Officer visited the properties in October 2022, it was clear that these crucial improvements hadn't been complied with some seven years later, and indeed further problems were also identified. In addition, the properties remained unlicensed until the matter was finally rectified in February 2023.</p> <p>Despite every attempt by the Service to remind the defendants of the need to have a HMO licence in place for each of the properties, they failed to take the necessary steps to comply. All the while, the health and safety of the residents living at the properties was compromised by the</p>	<p>Guilty pleas were finally entered by each of the defendants in respect of the 11 charges.</p> <p>The Magistrates stated that they were really shocked by what was presented by the prosecution, that the tenants (all students) had been left at risk and considered that the failure to complete the works for 7 years was an aggravating factor. They also stated that they were pleased that this matter had come before the court.</p> <p>The company was fined a total of £31,995 and ordered to pay costs of £251 together with a victim surcharge of £2000.</p> <p>The company's sole Director was fined a total of £34,246, and ordered to pay costs of £251.86 together with a victim surcharge of £2000.</p>

		<p>failure to act.</p> <p>The company and its Director were each prosecuted for offences under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004 (two counts each for failure to licence the properties as HMOs) and under section 234 of the same legislation for the properties' failure to comply with the management regulations (nine counts each).</p>	
14.	24.8.23	<p>The defendant in this case allowed his garden to become completely overgrown and neglected to the point that it was providing harbourage for rodents. Neighbours complained of accumulations of dead wood from trees, plastic ready meal trays, plastic milk bottles, metal food cans, broken chairs, old kitchen appliances and many black and green refuse/recycling sacks.</p> <p>SRS Officers attempted to work with the defendant to resolve the problem over a protracted period of time but to no avail.</p> <p>A notice under Section 4, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 was served June 2022 requiring him to clear his garden by the end of July 2022.</p> <p>The defendant failed to comply with this notice within the timescale and advised that he was planning on reusing most of the accumulations and was trying to clear the garden himself. He later agreed for the garden to be cleared in default on a particular date in November 2002,</p>	<p>The defendant was found guilty of both offences in a Magistrates Court hearing. The District Judge fined him £250 and ordered him to pay a £100 victim surcharge and £150 towards costs.</p>

		<p>and it was explained to him that when the work was done, he would receive an invoice from Cardiff Council to recover the cost of the clearance.</p> <p>When the crew arrived however, the defendant refused to allow them onto his property. Having tried all other means available to resolve, the Service was left with no other choice than to deal with the matter formally and the defendant was charged for failing to comply with the notice and for obstruction.</p>	
15.	24.8.23	<p>The defendant in this case, a plumber, agreed to install a new bathroom for an elderly Vale of Glamorgan couple. He took payment in full for the work and materials, but the bathroom was never installed and to this day the couple has been left £4500 out of pocket.</p> <p>The plumber had been a childhood friend of the couple's children and remembering him as being a polite boy, the couple decided to give him the work. The defendant betrayed their trust however and after the money was paid, his behaviour changed. Thus, he claimed to have ordered the from a Cardiff supplier goods when that wasn't the case and he failed to turn up to work at the property, citing any number of excuses as to why he couldn't attend, including bereavement, vehicle breakdown and needing to give priority to a vulnerable resident with boiler problems.</p> <p>The defendant did nothing to assist the couple but left them having to pay another plumber to carry out the work.</p>	<p>The District Judge sentenced the defendant to an 18 month Community Order to include 10 days of a Thinking Skills Program and 240 hours of unpaid work.</p> <p>The judge commented on the fact that the defendant had not made any payments towards the Civil Order and as a result of his being out of work, ordered that the Victim surcharge of £114 be paid, but made no order as to costs.</p>

16.	25.8.23	<p>This case against an 83-year-old illegal money lender followed concerns brought to the attention of the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit. The investigation showed how the defendant had previously been a licensed lender, but this had lapsed in 2003. When lending money, she charged £40% interest on every £100, and it was calculated that Officers were able to calculate that in total she had lent approximately £126,000 in loans. In some cases, the lending was particularly irresponsible resulting in one low-income couple paying her £120 <i>more than their total monthly income</i> just to service their debt to her, and this left them penniless every month.</p> <p>The illegal lending was accompanied by a pattern of threatening text messages, and the Recorder hearing the case pointed out how, as a previously licensed lender, she clearly knew that what she was doing was wrong. Her interest charges kept her victims trapped in a cycle of debt.</p> <p>The defendant appeared at Cardiff Crown Court for sentencing in respect of two offences of illegal money lending under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, and also for one offence for money laundering under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.</p> <p>In mitigation, the defendant accepted that the text messages, which she had not intended to be threatening, must have caused stress to the victims. She expressed remorse for what she had done and wanted to apologise to the victims for the stress she had caused them.</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for the money laundering offence and to 18 months imprisonment for each of the illegal money lending offences to run concurrently but suspended for 2 years.</p> <p>The prosecution would be making a Proceeds of Crime Application and directions were given for that timetable.</p>
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17.	31.8.23	<p>This case involved a repeated failure to provide documentation when requested by Officers as part of their work on empty homes. The defendant was charged with one offence under the Housing Act 2004, but failed to attend to court. He was therefore found guilty in his absence.</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £220, ordered to pay legal costs of £200, investigation costs of £200 and a court surcharge of £88.</p>
18	11.9.23	<p>In this rogue builder case, the defendant began but failed to complete works to the properties of two residents, leaving one of the homes uninhabitable. The offences date back to 2019 / 2020, and the defendant initially pleaded not guilty to charges under the Fraud Act 2006 and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.</p> <p>A week before the trial was finally due to go ahead in July 2023, the defendant pleaded guilty to a number of the charges and subsequently appeared in Cardiff Crown Court for sentencing in September 2023. Victim impact statements were provided to the court. One victim detailed how a small pension had been cashed in to pay for the new kitchen diner and when the defendant failed to complete the works it felt like their world had fallen apart. The stress they felt was unbelievable. The other victim explained the mental and financial distress that had been caused to both her and her family. The cost of getting her home habitable again will be in the order of £30,000 to £40,000.</p> <p>In sentencing, the District Judge stated that he found the victim impact statements particularly powerful and it was clear the emotional pain that both families had suffered. He</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to a total of 9 months imprisonment which was suspended for two years. He was also ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work. A Proceeds of Crime timetable has been set which should include consideration of compensation for the two victims.</p>

		told the defendant that he had a moral and legal responsibility to those that employed him but accepted that he had not acted fraudulently from the start. He accepted that the defendant had no previous convictions; had entered a guilty plea, albeit late; had shown remorse and that he was now studying for an alternative career.	
19	21.9.23	<p>The defendant in this case entered guilty pleas in the Crown Court to one offence under the Companies Act 2006 for carrying on a fraudulent business and to one offence under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 for engaging in a misleading commercial practice by failing to complete building work. He had also previously pleaded guilty to 13 similar offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 in Cardiff Magistrates Court.</p> <p>The defendant was the director of a company that supplied and fitted UPVC products. In 2021 officers from the Shared Regulatory Services received complaints from 22 victims concerning the defendant's failure to complete works at their premises and for making a number of false representations during the conduct of the work. Victims had generally been cold called via a knock at the door by a representative of the company and, in some instances where work had actually been carried out, it was very poor and even dangerous. In other cases the company had taken money for works and materials and simply never returned. Multiple excuses were provided such as the weather, Covid-19, staffing issues, failed deliveries,</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to a total of 32 months imprisonment. The judge also granted a Criminal Behaviour Order preventing him from canvassing for business or work door to door; from instructing others to do so on his behalf; from being a director or owner of a company which had anything to do with home improvements; from being involved in the estimating, quoting or negotiating of contracts or collecting payments from customers in connection with any home improvements and from being involved in the professional fitting of any UPVC products. The Criminal Behaviour Order will remain in effect for 10 years. An application has been made under the Proceeds of Crime Act and a timetable for this set. It is hoped that in time, this will enable compensation to be awarded.</p>

		<p>incorrect measurements being taken and so on. The court was told that the defendant has previous convictions for similar offences in 2018.</p> <p>Victim impact statements detailed how the defendant had abused the confidence and trust of his victims; how some had needed to borrow money to rectify the works he had carried out; how he had caused depression and anxiety in a number of cases and how he had no respect for the victims or their property. He and his staff left property in a dangerous state and whilst carrying out works their language was vulgar and disrespectful.</p>	
20	17.10.23	<p>The defendant in this case pleaded guilty to two charges of illegal money lending. The court heard how the 73-year- old had never been authorised to lend money but nevertheless had repeatedly lent money to more than thirty people. Three of the loan shark's victims gave witness statements to the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit, with one describing how they had repaid £1,060.00 in interest alone for loans totalling just £380.00. Another borrower described how they had borrowed small amounts for which she had to repay double that amount.</p> <p>All three victims were vulnerable and were frightened of the defendant as he had made threats when they encountered difficulties in paying him back the money he was owed including threatening one victim that he 'smash his house up' if he didn't pay. A warrant exercised at the defendant's home address discovered diaries and paperwork which</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years and he was ordered to carry out 15 days of rehabilitation activities. He was also ordered to pay a total of £1760 compensation to the victims. He must also pay a court surcharge of £156 but no order for costs was made as the defendant did not have the money to pay it as he is only in receipt of state pension.</p>

		<p>showed details of the illegal money lending.</p> <p>The District Judge referred to loan sharking as a pernicious social evil that focuses on the most vulnerable in society. Here, threats of enforcement made it more serious, and the offence was so serious that only a prison sentence would suffice. However, in arriving at the appropriate sentence, he took into account the testimonials the defence had submitted, his guilty plea, his age and his caring responsibilities which allowed him to suspend the sentence.</p>	
21	10.11.23	<p>The defendants in this case had been in a previous relationship with each other and continued to breed dogs. The female had responsibility for the care of the puppies and their mother, while the male defendant was responsible for the care of the remaining adult dogs. However, when the male went away on holiday, the female left the puppies unattended at a property. A complaint was received, and SRS officers attended with South Wales Police to find the dogs in filthy conditions and without food and water. A number of the dogs had serious health issues including cherry eye, genetic conditions and a rectal prolapse. Such was the suffering that four dogs had to be euthanised.</p> <p>In sentencing, the Recorder told the defendants that it beggared belief that helpless animals should be kept in such disgusting conditions and that it was all for financial gain. He did accept that they were both of previous good character, that they had pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity and their remorse for the suffering caused to the animals. Nevertheless, the offences were so serious</p>	<p>The male defendant was sentenced to 22 weeks imprisonment suspended for 12 months with a 180 hours of unpaid work requirement and a 10 day rehabilitation requirement. He was also disqualified from keeping dogs for a period of 8 years.</p> <p>The female defendant was sentenced to 14 weeks imprisonment suspended for 12 months, with 120 hours unpaid work requirement and an 8 day rehabilitation requirement. Both defendants were ordered to pay costs of £4000 each.</p>

		that they crossed the custody threshold.	
22	16.11.23	<p>The defendant in this case ran a shisha bar in Cardiff. When SRS Officers visited the premises in February 2023, they found non-compliance with the smoke-free requirements of the Public Health (Wales) Act, as a result of the building being substantially enclosed while shisha pipes were in use. When Officers visited again in May 2023, offences were again being committed and it was clear that nothing had changed despite the detailed advice the business had been given.</p> <p>The defendant entered guilty pleas to the charges laid, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to take all reasonable steps to stop people from smoking on the premises there, contrary to s.6 Public Health (Wales) Act 2017</li> <li>• Encouraging persons to commit an offence by allowing them to smoke lit charcoal shisha pipes in a smoke-free place, contrary to s.44(1) of the Serious Crime Act 2007</li> </ul> <p>The court heard that the defendant's company had since gone into liquidation and the business premises had been repossessed.</p>	The Magistrates imposed fines totalling £240 and ordered that costs of £219 be paid, together with a victim surcharge of £96
23	23.11.23	<p>The defendants in this case, a limited company and its sole director, were responsible for the running of a shisha bar in Cardiff. When SRS Officers visited the premises in February 2023, they found non-compliance with the smoke-free requirements of the Public Health (Wales) Act, as a result of the building being substantially enclosed while shisha pipes were in use. Officers were told that the shutter doors to the walls were stuck closed and a repair was</p>	<p>The company was fined £1320 and ordered to pay costs of £353 together with a victim surcharge of £528.</p> <p>The Director was also fined £1320 and ordered to pay costs of £354 together with a victim surcharge of £528.</p>

		<p>required to get them to open again.</p> <p>Nevertheless, when Offices returned in May 2023, offences were again being committed and it was clear that nothing had changed despite detailed advice being given.</p> <p>The company and its Director were charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to take all reasonable steps to stop people from smoking on the premises there, contrary to s.6 Public Health (Wales) Act 2017</li> <li>• Encouraging persons to commit an offence by allowing them to smoke lit charcoal shisha pipes in a smoke-free place, contrary to s.44(1) of the Serious Crime Act 2007</li> </ul> <p>Neither defendant attended court and the matter was heard in their absence. The Magistrates found both defendants guilty in their absence.</p>	
24	23.11.23	<p>The defendants in this case, a limited company and its sole director, were responsible for the running of a shisha bar in Cardiff. When SRS Officers visited the premises in February 2023, they found non-compliance with the smoke-free requirements of the Public Health (Wales) Act, as a result of the building being substantially enclosed while shisha pipes were in use. When Officers visited again in May 2023, offences were again being committed and it was clear that nothing had changed despite detailed advice being given.</p> <p>The company and its Director were charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to take all reasonable steps to stop people from smoking on the premises there, contrary to s.6 Public Health (Wales) Act 2017</li> <li>• Encouraging persons to commit an offence by allowing</li> </ul>	<p>The company was fined £1320 and ordered to pay costs of £377 together with a victim surcharge of £528.</p> <p>Likewise, the Director was also fined £1320 and ordered to pay costs of £377 together with a victim surcharge of £528.</p>

		<p>them to smoke lit charcoal shisha pipes in a smoke-free place, contrary to s.44(1) of the Serious Crime Act 2007</p> <p>Neither defendant attended court and the matter was heard in their absence. The Magistrates found both defendants guilty in their absence.</p>	
25	16.11.23	<p>The defendant in this case ran a shisha bar in Cardiff. When SRS Officers visited the premises in February 2023, they found non-compliance with the smoke-free requirements of the Public Health (Wales) Act, as a result of the building being substantially enclosed while shisha pipes were in use. When Officers visited again in May 2023, offences were again being committed and it was clear that nothing had changed despite the detailed advice the business had been given.</p> <p>The defendant entered guilty pleas to the charges laid, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to take all reasonable steps to stop people from smoking on the premises there, contrary to s.6 Public Health (Wales) Act 2017</li> <li>• Encouraging persons to commit an offence by allowing them to smoke lit charcoal shisha pipes in a smoke-free place, contrary to s.44(1) of the Serious Crime Act 2007</li> </ul> <p>The court heard that the defendant's company had since gone into liquidation and the business premises had been repossessed.</p>	The Magistrates imposed fines totalling £240 and ordered that costs of £219 be paid, together with a victim surcharge of £96
26	27.11.23	<p>The defendants in this case ran a restaurant in Kenfig Hill and had previously pleaded guilty to 8 offences under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In May 2022, a complaint was received by Shared Regulatory Services from a member of the public reporting</p>	<p>The District Judge fined the first of the two defendants a total of £380 and ordered him to pay costs of £250 together with a victim surcharge of £152.</p> <p>The second defendant was fined a total of £235 and</p>

	<p>rats being seen inside the restaurant. When officers visited the premises, they discovered an active pest infestation, with notable lack of effective pest control procedures in place. Rat droppings were found in the front dining room of the premises, in the back storerooms where food equipment and open food items such as potatoes and onions were stored posing a high risk of direct contamination. Pest access points were found that should have been identified through routine pest control checks.</p> <p>The general hygiene and cleanliness throughout the premises were also poor, with visible food debris and dirt under equipment at wall to floor junctions and dirty hand contact surfaces. Food equipment was found to be unclean with some equipment being badly worn and damaged, such as chopping boards which were still in use by the business.</p> <p>Another aspect of particular concern was the lack of controls in place for personal hygiene even though the business handled raw food such as chicken and lamb together with ready to eat food items such as fresh salads. There was no hand soap in the main kitchen or staff WC, only hand sanitiser, demonstrating a lack of understanding by staff of the risk posed to food safety.</p> <p>After the inspection, the business voluntarily closed to undertake a deep clean, fix all pest access points, and eradicate the infestation. On the revisit it was found the business had made significant improvements and the rat infestation had been eradicated, however there was still no soap for hand washing. Soap supplies were replenished before the business was allowed to reopen.</p> <p>The investigation was complicated by the fact that two different companies were running the business. In sentencing, the District Judge accepted that neither</p>	<p>ordered him to pay costs of £125 and a victim surcharge of £95.</p> <p><i>In addition, the first defendant was permanently prohibited from participating in the management of any food business in future.</i></p>
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		company was trading, and the restaurant had long closed. That left the two individuals (company Directors) to be dealt with.	
27	1.12.23	<p>When stopped by South Wales Police in the early hours of the morning, the defendant was found to be carrying four female passengers in the vehicle he was driving. It was soon established that he was an unlicensed taxi driver and the vehicle, while having the appearance of Hackney Carriage (black and white in colour and with an orange illuminated 'TAXI' sign on the roof) was not a licensed Hackney Carriage. The statements of two of the passengers give an insight into lengths the defendant went to in order to pick up passengers, i.e., waiting with other taxis outside a Cardiff Bay nightclub, and purporting, when asked, to have a card machine to take payment for the fare. His behaviour demonstrated his clear intent to trick unsuspecting passengers into believing both he and the vehicle were properly licensed.</p> <p>When the blue flashing lights were seen and the driver was being pulled over by the Police, he asked the passengers to lie to the Police so that he didn't get into trouble.</p>	<p>The defendant was found guilty of one offence of plying for hire without a licence under the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847.</p> <p>He was fined £440 and ordered to pay £150 in prosecution costs together with £176 for a court surcharge.</p>
28	1.12.23	<p>The defendant was charged with one offence of failing to use his taxi meter in breach of Cardiff Council byelaws, and one offence of charging more than the legal fare under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. He entered guilty pleas.</p> <p>Using the Hackney Carriage fare tariff for Cardiff, the Investigating Officer calculated that the maximum fare that should have been charged for half mile journey (Curran Embankment to the end of St Mary's Street in Cardiff city</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £120 in respect of each offence giving a total fine of £240. He was also ordered to pay £150 in prosecution costs and a £96 court surcharge.</p>

		<p>centre) was £5.77. Comparison of the permitted fare of £5.77 with the £10 fare actually charged by the defendant equates to a 73% overcharge.</p> <p>In mitigation, the defendant told the Court that the customers offered him £10 to take them and he accepted this without using the meter. He stated that he is no longer working as a taxi driver and is currently unemployed.</p>	
29	4.1.24	<p>The defendant did not attend court, and the case was proved in his absence.</p> <p>In January 2023, Shared Regulatory Services received a complaint about the lack of rainwater goods to the front elevation of one of the defendant's empty properties. Following a site visit, an enforcement notice was served under the Building Act 1984, requiring the installation of suitable rainwater goods to the front elevation of the property, within 6 weeks. A site visit was undertaken in April 2023, some weeks after the deadline had expired to check if work to the rainwater goods had been completed. There was no evidence of work having commenced and the notice had not been complied with.</p> <p>To confirm ownership of the empty property, a Requisition for Information notice had been served under s. 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which the defendant also failed to comply with.</p> <p>Around the same time, complaints were received about the presence of rats at another of the defendant's empty</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £660 for the damage by pests offences, £660 for the building act offence, £660 for the local government miscellaneous provisions offence and £220 for failing to comply with the order under the Building Act. This gave a total fine of £2200. He was also ordered to pay costs of £3250 together with a victim surcharge of £880.</p>

		<p>properties. This property had been unoccupied for more than 20 years was in a very poor state of repair. Officers served a Notice on the defendant requiring him to cut back the overgrowth to the garden areas and to dispose of the waste in an appropriate manner. A subsequent visit in May 2023 showed that the notice had not been complied with.</p> <p>The Magistrates found the case proved in respect of all charges (under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, the Building Act 1984 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.</p>	
30	4.1.24	<p>Two residents contracted with the defendant for new roofs as well as in one case chimney removal, and in the other case guttering and fascia replacement. Between them, the two homeowners paid more than £16,000 up front in the expectation that work would start on the dates agreed. Text messages exhibited by the complainants demonstrate how they have tried to get the defendant to start the work, but excuse after excuse followed and no work was done at either property. Likewise, no materials were delivered. In short, the residents were each defrauded of a significant amount of money.</p> <p>This case is unlike many of the rogue builder cases investigated by the Service, in that the residents were not cold called. Rather, the defendant was recommended to them by friends that he'd done work for previously while employed by another firm. Once money had changed hands however, the defendant failed to turn up at the</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 3 x12 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months, all concurrent. He was also required to do 200 hours unpaid work.</p> <p>A contribution to costs of £215 was required, together with a victim surcharge.</p>

		<p>properties, citing a range of excuses as if straight out of the rogue trader playbook.</p> <p>In sentencing him for offences under the Fraud Act 2006, the Recorder told the defendant 'you buried your head in the sand and you had to be tracked down. You have spun a tissue of lies, I have considered the texts and letters...it is quite clear you were playing the victims off at the same time and I can see how the messages interlink. You were unable to manage your business affairs and held yourself out asking people to place trust in you'.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the defendant had insufficient means to pay back his victims and pay costs and this was recognised in the penalties imposed.</p>	
31	5.1.24	<p>The defendant failed to appear in court and the matter was proven in his absence. The case concerned failings at two different properties owned by the defendant which resulted in offences being committed under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, the Building Act 1984 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.</p> <p>In January 2023 SRS received a complaint about the lack of rainwater goods to the front elevation of one of the properties. Following a site visit, an enforcement notice was served under s.59 of the Building Act 1984, requiring the defendant to provide and fix suitable rainwater goods to include all necessary fittings on adequate brackets, set to proper falls and connected to a suitable outlet; and to carry</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £660 for the damage by pests offences, £660 for the building act offence, £660 for the local government miscellaneous provisions offence and £220 for failing to comply with the Court order under the Building Act . This gave a total fine of £2200. He was also ordered to pay costs of £3250 together with a victim surcharge of £880.</p>

		<p>out any other work necessary to facilitate the installation of suitable rainwater goods. The notice required the owner to undertake the necessary work within 6 weeks from the date of the notice.</p> <p>In April 2023 it was established that the notice hadn't been complied with as the work hadn't even been commenced. A notice under s.16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Requisition of Information) was also served on the defendant, and again, this wasn't complied with.</p> <p>Around the same time, SRS received complaints about another property in the defendant's ownership, and specifically the overgrown garden and presence of rats there. This property had been empty for more than 20 years, and in a very poor state of repair. A notice was served requiring the defendant to cut back the overgrowth to the garden areas and dispose of the waste in an appropriate manner. A subsequent visit in May 2023 showed that this notice had not been complied with.</p> <p>The Magistrates found the case proved in respect of all charges.</p>	
32	9.1.24	<p>The defendant in this case was the manager of a Cardiff kebab house selling traditional cooked meat, chips, salad and bread. He was convicted in the Magistrates Court, following a three day trial under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>The premises was initially inspected in May 2021 when the</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. The Recorder ordered a <b>Hygiene Prohibition Order</b> preventing him from being involved in the running of a food business and this will remain in force until further order. The Recorder felt that the prohibition order would manage the risk that the defendant posed to the public. He was</p>

		<p>Officer identified numerous food hygiene failings, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No documented food safety management system was provided, and a few pages of temperature monitoring sheets were provided with some with dates and some without.</li> <li>• Lack of a functioning food safety management system</li> <li>• Rodent droppings found albeit a pest control contract was in place.</li> <li>• Major structural issues with the flooring throughout the premise.</li> <li>• Sub-standard cleaning throughout the premise.</li> <li>• Inadequate temperature controls</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that a 3 day deep clean was necessary at the premises and the officer monitored progress with a number of revisits. On one of these occasions, the officer noted poor food hygiene practices whereby staff were washing their hands in the sink and not the dedicated wash hand basin. In addition, food was stored in a refrigerator that was not working properly the day before.</p> <p>On 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021, during a further revisit, the Officer observed a mouse running in the kitchen area. The business was asked to close and chose to do this on a voluntary basis to carry out all work necessary to eradicate the pest issue, pest proofing and cleaning the premises.</p> <p>The Voluntary Closure was lifted on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The</p>	<p>also ordered to carry out 40 days of rehabilitation activity requirement, fined £1000 and ordered to make a contribution to the prosecution costs of £2000.</p>
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		<p>defendant applied for a subsequent re-rating of the food hygiene rating which was zero. Further visits by Officers to assess the re-rating application in September 2021 and December 2021 revealed further food hygiene offences, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate implementation of the food safety management system</li> <li>• Temperature control issues.</li> <li>• A lack of food hygiene awareness amongst staff.</li> <li>• Out of date food.</li> <li>• Cleaning issues.</li> <li>• Partial completion of a food safety management system</li> <li>• Hand washing in general purpose sink instead of the dedicated wash basin.</li> <li>• Poor cleanliness to equipment such as the raw meat mincer.</li> <li>• Poor waste disposal (cardboard accumulations).</li> </ul>	
33	11.1.24	<p>In April 2023, Officers of SRS carried out a compliance check on the premises of a Bridgend sunbed operator. The visit followed the provision of detailed guidance on what was expected of the business under the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 and the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011. The Director of the company acknowledged receipt of this information.</p>	<p>The defendant pleaded guilty and was fined £300 and ordered to pay costs of £400 and a victim surcharge of £120.</p>

		<p>When the Officers visited the premises, they observed a number of non-compliances which caused concern for customers paying to use the sunbed equipment and following an investigation into the circumstances, the company and its Director were charged with offences in respect of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that a competent supervisor was present,</li> <li>• failing to ensure that customers are provided with the prescribed health information which is at least A4 in size and printed in black letters on a yellow background</li> </ul> <p>failing to ensure that customers had the appropriate protective eyewear.</p>	
34	8.2.24	<p>The defendant had previously pleaded guilty to 24 offences under The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (Wales) Regulations 2007. The offences were discovered by officers when they visited the defendant's House in Multiple Occupation in Grangetown, Cardiff, this being a four storey, Victorian terraced property converted into 4 self-contained flats.</p> <p>Inspections on 9<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 revealed that the concerns extended to all the flats and included a defective fire alarm system that remained defective, items being stored on the escape route, dangerous electrics throughout, electricity meters that had not been fire protected and the</p>	<p>The defendant was fined a total of £7000 and ordered to pay costs of £367.80 together with a court surcharge of £2000.</p>



		<p>kitchens were found to be in poor condition and inadequate. The most serious offences included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to keep the means of escape free from obstructions</li> <li>• Failure to ensure the means of escape is maintained and in good order</li> <li>• Failure to maintain the Fire Alarm System</li> <li>• Failure to adequately fire protect the electrical meters.</li> </ul> <p>The court was advised that the defendant had been prosecuted in 2018 for offences under the Housing Act 2004 at another of his properties. In mitigation, the 82-year-old defendant explained that he was trying to help the Probation Service by taking certain tenants but this meant that he didn't know who was going to move in, and tenants can endanger themselves by doing things to the property.</p>	
35	8.2.24	<p>This was the first of two matters heard by the Magistrates Court which arose as a result of two SRS investigations. This case concerned food hygiene failings at a Clifton Street, Cardiff convenience store, and the defendants were the company running the business, and the company's sole Director.</p> <p>The court heard how there was no food safety management system in place, how the property was in a poor state of repair and there was a significant infestation of mice. When</p>	<p>The company was fined a total of £8000, ordered to pay costs of £1456.65 and a court surcharge of £2000.</p> <p>The company's sole Director was fined a total of £2900, ordered to pay costs of £1456.65 and a court surcharge of £1160.</p>

	<p>Officers visited on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022, mouse droppings were found in storerooms and around and under packets of foods on the shelves of the shop. They also found gnawed packets of crisps and chocolates. It was deemed that there existed an imminent risk to health and the company Director agreed to voluntarily close the premises to allow effective cleaning to take place and a voluntary closure agreement was signed. However, on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2022 officers discovered the premises open with customers inside. This necessitated a formal court order being obtained to require the premises to remain closed while the infestation was dealt with, and the store thoroughly cleaned.</p> <p>While guilty pleas were subsequently entered for the majority of the 16 food hygiene offences, the defendants maintained that they were not trading on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2022, but simply taking in a delivery. This necessitated a Newton hearing in which the District Judge found the evidence presented persuasive and the prosecution case proved.</p> <p>In passing sentence on the food hygiene offences the District Judge stated that she was satisfied that the offences were committed with high culpability and posed a serious and imminent risk to the public. There was a significant infestation of mice, and the property was in a poor condition with numerous access points for pests. She also accepted that the company Director was of clean character, had only just taken over the business before the offences and had pleaded guilty to the majority of offences</p>	
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		at an early stage.	
36	8.2.24	<p>Officers had visited the Cardiff store (as in 8 above) in February 2022 and seized a quantity of non-compliant vapes. The business signed a voluntary surrender for the goods and received a warning letter and guidance. In February 2023, Officers made a test purchase of an ENE Legend 3500 puffs blueberry pomegranate disposable e-cigarette. A number of e-cigarettes were on display which appeared to be compliant, however the salesperson reached underneath the counter to get the ENE Legend vape requested by the test purchaser. This was non-compliant, and Officers seized a total of 142 non-compliant e-cigarettes, which were all located beneath the counter.</p> <p>In June 2023 officers sent a fifteen year old female volunteer into the store with instructions to attempt to buy an e-cigarette. The volunteer went to the cash desk and was sold a pink grapefruit Elfbar. She was not asked any questions to verify her age.</p> <p>In court, the company pleaded guilty to 2 offences of supplying a disposable electronic cigarette with a tank capacity greater than 2ml, contrary to Regulation 36(2) of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and to one offence of supplying a nicotine inhaling product to a person under the age of 18 years contrary to Regulation 3 of The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 and Section 92 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The company Director also pleaded guilty to the one offence concerning the underage</p>	<p>The company was fined a total of £1800 and ordered to pay costs of £620 together with a court surcharge of £720.</p> <p>The company Director was fined £153 for the underage sale offence and ordered to pay costs of £620 together with a court surcharge of £61.</p>

		<p>sale.</p> <p>In passing sentence on the vape offences, the District Judge concluded that there had been a large number of non-compliant e-cigarettes, and a risk to the public from large capacity vapes. The defendant had not put in place an adequate system to avoid underage sales and staff hadn't been trained.</p>	
37	9.2.24	<p>Following a complaint by a tenant, SRS Officers carried out an inspection at a 2 storey, Victorian end of terrace Cardiff property that has been converted into four self-contained flats. The inspection confirmed that the property had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no fire alarm system</li> <li>• defective fire doors</li> <li>• inner rooms with no escape route</li> <li>• unsafe kitchens,</li> <li>• penetrating damp</li> <li>• filthy stair carpet</li> <li>• unprotected electricity meters</li> <li>• unsafe windows, and</li> <li>• unsafe electrical installations</li> </ul> <p>Five Improvement Notices under Part 1, Housing Act 2004 were served on the landlord, detailing works to be completed by March 2022. As the works were not carried</p>	<p>The defendant was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £1,000 towards the Council's costs together with a victim surcharge of £2,000.</p>

		<p>out, proceedings were taken against her back in 2022, resulting in a £10,400 fine after pleading guilty in the Magistrates Court.</p> <p>Following that initial prosecution for failure to comply with the improvement notices, further visits to this property were subsequently carried out and it was established that the works had still not been completed.</p> <p>In the most recent proceedings for the ongoing failure to comply, the landlord pleaded guilty to the five offences but claimed that two of the tenants had been hostile and abusive towards her husband.</p>	
38	9.2.24	<p>The defendant, a rogue builder, appeared at Cardiff Crown Court after previously pleading guilty to one count under section 9 of the Fraud Act 2006. The particulars of the offence were that between 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 the defendant was knowingly a party to the carrying on of a home improvement/building business, which was carried on for a fraudulent purpose, namely the dishonest obtaining and conducting of work by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting as a competent and professional builder when he was not</li> <li>• Claiming he was in a position to undertake contractual work at various addresses when he was not,</li> <li>• Grossly overcharging for work</li> <li>• Claiming work was required when it was not</li> </ul>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment which was reduced for credit to 3 years and 9 months' imprisonment for the fraud offence. and 8 months' imprisonment for the firearm offence to run consecutively so giving a total of 4 years and 5 months. The judge was not able to award compensation to the victims as there were no funds.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out poor quality work</li> <li>• Claiming he would use money paid for a specific purpose but failing to do so</li> <li>• Failing to complete work despite being paid to do so</li> <li>• Refusing to provide refunds when customers were entitled to and requesting them</li> <li>• Making unwarranted demands from customers for payment to which he was not entitled</li> <li>• Sending threatening/inappropriate communications to consumers</li> </ul> <p>The defendant had taken £113,000 from 4 victims and left them at a significant financial detriment. A building surveyor provided a detailed assessment of the properties worst affected, with two of these being deemed unsafe as a result of the actions of the defendant. The only work of value that had been carried out on one property was rendering to the second elevation.</p> <p>Victim impact statements were read out to the court, detailing how the defendant had used pressure tactics by threatening to stop work if further monies were not paid, not doing work because he claimed to be unwell, taking monies for kitchens which he never ordered or provided and even threatening to instigate legal action against his victims when they challenged him on work not done or goods not provided.</p> <p>Victims were caused enormous stress and anxiety, suffered from insomnia, and they were left out of pocket and in poor</p>	
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		<p>health due to the poor living conditions they were left in. Victims were 'ranted at' for more money by the defendant and were forced to borrow money to get the remedial works completed. Victims were left devastated and stated that hiring the defendant was the worst decision they had ever made. Compensation requests were applied for in relation to each victim.</p> <p>The defendant was also present in court for sentencing in relation to a police matter in relation to one count for possession of an imitation firearm. This offence had taken place whilst the defendant was on bail for the SRS fraud offence.</p> <p>In mitigation the court was told how the defendant had been a hard-working builder who had become overwhelmed by personal problems and had taken on too much work. He was overstretching himself and had strayed into criminal activity. He has long standing problems with gambling and alcohol, and this is where all the money had gone.</p> <p>In sentencing, the Judge stated that whilst it is accepted that he became overstretched and overcome by personal problems, that was of little comfort to his victims. He had failed to deliver what he had promised to do and had left chaos behind. He has caused considerable detrimental impact on the victims who were left with significant financial difficulties as a result of his shoddy and dangerous work.</p>	
39	14.2.24	<p>The court heard how the defendant engaged in misleading and fraudulent trading practices in his dealings with his customers. They had been left out of pocket as a result of</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 22 weeks imprisonment, suspended for two years. He was also required to attend an alcohol treatment programme for 6</p>

		<p>work not being carried and also the materials that they had paid for not having been purchased.</p> <p>As well as the financial pressure inflicted on the customers by his practices, the defendant did nothing to assist with the investigation or provide any resolution for those affected. Although all the victims were known to the defendant, he treated them as a rogue trader would treat any of their victims, giving them excuse after excuse for why work was yet to commence and how he would repay what he owed. None of his promises came to fruition.</p>	<p>months and was subjected to a Community Order requiring 100 hours unpaid work.</p> <p>Compensation orders were awarded to the three victims in the sums of</p> <p>Victim 1: £2,850</p> <p>Victim 2: £1,260</p> <p>Victim 3: £2,610</p> <p>He was also ordered to pay costs of £300</p>
40	15.2.24	<p>At a previous hearing, both the defendants had been found guilty in their absence in respect of an offence under the Animal Health Act for failing to retain Animal Transit Certificates (ATCs).</p> <p>The defendants, a married couple, had run an animal transport service from their home in Bridgend and carried pet animals across Ireland, the UK and Europe. SRS Officers had reason to attend the couple's property in connection with an application they had made to become approved pet boarders. During the inspection, they were asked to produce to the authorised Officer all Animal Transit Certificates (ATCs) for the previous twelve months but they were unable to do so.</p> <p>In mitigation, the court was told that the couple had brought animals over from Ireland and had been informed by officials in Ireland that they didn't need the certificates once</p>	<p>The magistrates fined the husband £507 and ordered him to pay costs of £250 together with a court surcharge of £203.</p> <p>In addition, his wife was fined £120 and ordered to pay costs of £250 together with a court surcharge of £48.</p>



		they had crossed the border. The trauma and stress of the business had affected their marriage and they had split up for a while but are now reunited.	
41	23.2.24	<p>As a result of an earlier SRS investigation into illegal dog breeding in Cardiff, the defendant was disqualified under the Animal Welfare Act from keeping any animals, dealing in them, owning them, keeping them, participating in keeping them and from being party to an arrangement under which he was entitled to control or influence the way in which they are kept, transporting them and arranging for the transport of them. That disqualification order was imposed by the court in July 2021 for a period of 8 years.</p> <p>The court heard that while investigating another illegal dog breeder, SRS Officers established that the defendant had breached the court order in June 2022. Mobile phones had been seized from the home of the other alleged illegal dog breeder and messages from these mobile phones were downloaded. Those messages involved the defendant in the current case, and indicated that he had been dealing with animals including being involved in the sale of puppies for £12,000.</p> <p>The defendant pleaded guilty to one charge of breaching his disqualification and the defence asserted in mitigation that this had been an isolated incident, as the defendant now earns his income from buying and selling cars as he is no longer involved in dog breeding.</p> <p>In sentencing, the District Judge told the defendant that he knows what he used to get up to and he won't be given a</p>	The defendant was fined £1000 and ordered to pay costs of £590 together with a victim surcharge of £400

		chance like this again if any further evidence comes to light that he is involved with animals.	
42	27.2.24	<p>The defendant had previously pleaded guilty to one offence under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 in that he had between the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 knowingly or recklessly engaged in an unfair commercial practice when undertaking building/repair work at the home of customers which contravened the requirements of professional diligence by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Falsely claiming that he and persons he would use on building work at their homes were competent and professional builders, and/or</li> <li>(b) Falsely claiming that the work would be undertaken in a timely fashion, and/or</li> <li>(c) Carrying out poor quality work, and/or</li> <li>(d) Failing to complete work despite being paid to do so, and/or</li> <li>(e) Refusing/failing to provide all customers with refunds, and/or</li> <li>(f) Making unwarranted demands for payment to which he was not entitled, and/or</li> <li>(g) Sending threatening/inappropriate communications to the consumer, and/or</li> <li>(h) Falsely creating the impression he was qualified in relation to gas and electrical work, and/or</li> <li>(i) Undertaking work for which he was not qualified, and/or</li> <li>(j) Leaving the premises in an unsafe condition</li> </ul> <p>The case involved 3 residents and the defendant kept</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment suspended for 1 year and was also ordered to carry out 80 hours of unpaid work.</p> <p>The judge wanted to award full compensation and costs but this was unrealistic based on the defendant's means. He said the most he could afford was £3,600 payable at £150 per month over 2 years. This will be divided between the 3 consumers on a percentage basis. He ordered the defendant to pay a court surcharge of £128 but no prosecution costs were ordered on the basis that the defendant couldn't afford them.</p>

		asking for more and more money and was aggressive with at least one consumer. He had caused two of the victims to move out of their homes and left gas installations in dangerous and defective states.	
43	28.2.24	<p>As a result of a complaint, SRS Officers found tenants living in dreadful conditions at a Cardiff 3 storey mid terrace Victorian property which had been converted into 3 self-contained flats. Numerous hazards were identified, and these included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• damage to the front door allowing entry by intruders</li> <li>• intumescent strips and smoke seals were either missing or had been painted over</li> <li>• gaps between the doors and frames to all the flat doors</li> <li>• the detector head was missing from the second floor flat lobby area which contributed to a Fire Safety hazard</li> <li>• damp was also affecting the rear of all the flats due to defective external quoins</li> <li>• in two of the flats the cooking facilities were inadequate as a result of cooker control knobs being missing and a broken ignition to the gas hob</li> <li>• when turned on, the electric oven in the first floor flat tripped out the electricity supply to the property</li> <li>• hazards such as falls on stairs, falls on level surfaces, electrical safety, collision and entrapment were also identified.</li> </ul>	The defendant was fined £5,950 and ordered to pay costs of £3180 and a victim surcharge of £2000

		<p>In February 2022, the landlord of the property was served with a formal improvement notice under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. The notice required the necessary works to be carried out no later than 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.</p> <p>However, when Officers returned to the property on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022, it was clear that the vast majority of the hazards remained, and as a result, an investigation followed, leading to the defendant being charged with failure to comply with the improvement notice.</p> <p>The Judge acknowledged the aggravating factors in the case and took this into consideration in sentencing.</p>	
44	29.2.24	<p>The defendant in this case is the landlord of a 2 storey, end of terrace Victorian property in Cardiff, which has been subdivided into four self-contained flats. It was later established that this conversion was carried out without planning permission or the involvement of Building Control.</p> <p>In April 2023 South Wales Police contacted South Wales Fire and Rescue Service as a result of concerns about the property. The Fire Service was advised that the fire alarm was not working, fire doors were defective and there were flammable materials in the common escape route.</p> <p>An initial inspection was undertaken between officers of the Fire Service and of the Housing Enforcement service area. This visit revealed that the property entrance door was insecure and accessible by intruders, and the electricity supply to the entire building had been disconnected by the</p>	The defendant was fined a total of £37,000 and ordered to pay costs of £461.84, together with a victim surcharge of £2,000.

		<p>electricity supplier due to attempts to bypass the meters.</p> <p>As a consequence of this, the property had no functional fire alarm, none of the flats had any heating, lighting or power for fridge freezers, cooking, etc.</p> <p>Further inspections of the property identified that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the fire doors to the flat entrances were defective and/or incomplete</li> <li>• the electricity meter cupboard was not properly protected from fire</li> <li>• there were flammable materials in the hallway</li> <li>• kitchen facilities were unacceptable and unsafe, and</li> <li>• there was a rodent infestation.</li> </ul> <p>As a result of category 1 hazards being identified in the property and all four flats, Emergency Prohibition Orders were then made under Part 1, Housing Act 2004. The effect of these Emergency Prohibition Orders was that <i>the tenants of the flats were required to move out immediately.</i></p> <p>Notices under Section 16, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Section 235, Housing Act 2004 were also served on the defendant requiring him to provide information regarding persons having an interest in the property and documents relating to the electrical installation, fire alarm, etc. However, these notices were not complied with.</p> <p>The defendant was prosecuted for failure to comply with the</p>	
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		<p>Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (Wales) Regulations 2007, and for failure to comply with the Section 16 and Section 235 notices served upon him.</p> <p>He did not attend court and was found guilty in his absence.</p>	
45	19.3.24	<p>The defendant had pleaded guilty on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to 12 counts of fraud under the Fraud Act 2006 and 3 counts under Regulation 9 of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. The charges related to misleading commercial practices in the course of his carrying out UPVC installations and home improvements. The defendant had been in custody since January 2024 for other matters.</p> <p>The guilty plea was entered on the basis that the defendant accepted that in the majority of cases he had failed to carry out works for customers or refunds their deposits.</p> <p>The offences took place over a period of 10 months between November 2020 and September 2021 and involved 15 victims. There were a number of elderly complainants including a 90 year old woman and the total loss to consumers was £22,487. The complaints received were all similar in nature. The victims had been cold called via a knock at the door. In some instances work had been started but was very poor and the defendant had failed to return. Money for works and materials had been taken but the contract was simply never started. The defendant provided multiple excuses such as the weather, incorrect measurements being taken, supplier fault and personal and</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 19 months imprisonment for each offence to run concurrently. He was ordered to pay a court surcharge of £156 within 3 months of leaving prison. The Recorder did not make a compensation order for the victims as a result of the defendant's imprisonment and his inability to pay. He stated that they were free to seek redress through the civil courts.</p>

		<p>health problems.</p> <p>Victim impact statements were read out to the court. One complainant stated that she felt like a fool. Another stated that as an elderly widow living alone, she couldn't afford to lose the money and she had made herself ill with worry. The incident had shaken her self-confidence. Another couple stated that having been defrauded in their own home it had made a deep impact on their mental health. Another stated that the financial burden he was left with had caused him sleeplessness and affected his mental well-being. His family felt unsafe in their own home as the defendant knew where they lived. Another stated that they felt ashamed that they had trusted the defendant, he had left them in debt, and it had caused family arguments.</p> <p>The court was informed that the defendant had a number of previous convictions including convictions for fraud, robbery and assault. Prosecution submitted that in sentencing the offences were aggravated by the number of offences, the age of the victims and his previous convictions. The prosecution asked for a compensation order in total of £22,487.</p> <p>In sentencing, the Recorder stated that while the defendant had not set out to use his business as a vehicle for fraud, he had become dishonest. He had used deposits to fund other projects to try to soldier on through but had made no effort to cease trading and return those deposits. The victims were mainly elderly people who could ill afford to lose the money that they did.</p>	
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		<p>He had heard from the victim impact statements the real effects of these offences on the wellbeing of these customers. They felt devastated. He did not consider that there was a realistic prospect of the defendant paying back the customers. His previous convictions highlighted a period of dishonesty where he served 7 years for robbery. He had continued to offend and had not co-operated when sentences were suspended. On two occasions he had failed to attend court for trial in this matter, a vast amount of public money had been wasted and the victims were left with the anguish of worrying about giving evidence. These offences were so serious that only imprisonment was appropriate.</p>	
46	20.3.24	<p>The defendant had previously pleaded guilty in September 2023 to 16 offences under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006 in respect of his Cardiff based food business.</p> <p>On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022 officers from Shared Regulatory Services visited the premises to identify if the business needed approval for the supply of processed products of animal origin to other businesses.</p> <p>As the business had not acquired the necessary approval a Remedial Action Notice was served to prevent the handling and cooking of raw or unprocessed products of animal origin at the premises.</p> <p>It was also noted that other hygiene procedures were unsatisfactory giving rise to cross contamination issues and inadequate training of staff, and as a result a Hygiene</p>	<p>The defendant was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment for each of the offences to run concurrently suspended for 18 months.</p> <p>He was also fined £2400 (with 45 days imprisonment in default of payment) and was ordered to carry out 8 days of rehabilitation requirement and unpaid work of 60 hours.</p> <p>The defendant was ordered to pay costs of £2000 together with a court surcharge of £128, and the Recorder, in order to protect the public, issued a <b>Prohibition Order preventing the defendant participating in the management of any food business</b> until further order.</p>



		<p>Improvement Notice was served.</p> <p>On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022 officers returned to the premises in order to carry out a revisit of the business. It was immediately apparent that finished sandwiches were being labelled incorrectly as a 'best before' date was being applied with a date extending the usual safe durability date that would be expected for that product. Officers found rodent droppings along the rear wall of the kitchen and further investigation showed numerous droppings in the cleaning cupboard, rear store areas and storerooms, and also the area under the stairs. The defendant agreed to voluntarily close the business to allow time to pest proof, clean and remove excess equipment and to eradicate the pest infestation. This was subsequently done but when officers returned to the premises at the end of the month to carry out a rescore food hygiene inspection, they found various foods in the fridge and freezer past their use-by dates and finished sandwiches were still being given extending durability dates with no scientific basis for this. Ready to eat foods were being stored next to raw foods in the fridge. Some rodent droppings were still noted around the premises and washed salad items were being prepared in the same area and on the same board as raw, unwashed items.</p> <p>In September 2022 officers returned to the premises and found that the in-house durability dates given by the business to the opened fillings stored in the fridge had passed the safe shelf life as allocated by the manufacturer. Then in October 2022 officers revisited the premises to</p>	
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	<p>check that the extended Notice for Food Safety Management had been complied with. Despite advice having been given, use by dates were not being calculated properly according to the manufacturer's labelling instructions for sandwich fillings. In addition, unprepared, dirty root vegetables were also being stored on the same shelf alongside ready to eat cheese.</p> <p>In mitigation, the court heard that the business had begun when the defendant and his business partner sold hand-made fudge at festivals before securing a pop-up shop. During covid they used taxi drivers to deliver goods and obtained an industrial unit in Cardiff. They had quickly moved from a turnover of £13,000 to £380,000 but their skill sets had not kept pace. The partner had always dealt with food hygiene matters and when she left the business 'things started to fall apart'. The defendant had gone on a food hygiene level 3 training course and had engaged the services of a chartered Environmental Health Officer.</p> <p>The Recorder stated that the defendant did not have adequate knowledge to know what to be keeping an eye on. He did not take constructive steps when he needed to and it went downhill rapidly after that. He had already shown that when given some knowledge he didn't actually do anything with it. The Recorder told the defendant it was clear he was out of his depth, and he was not skilled enough nor did he have the necessary knowledge for someone running a food production business. The business was not geared to operate safely, and he had paid lip service to gaining the relevant knowledge. It was too little</p>	
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		too late and the risk to consumers was significant and enduring.	
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## Appendix 3

### Gross Expenditure Breakdown as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

	Bridgend			Cardiff			Vale			Total		
	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Budget	Outturn	Variance
<b><u>Authority Specific</u></b>												
Bridgend Licensing	373	335	38							373	335	38
Bridgend Empty Homes	41	39	2							41	39	2
Vets & Kennelling Fees (Vale)	47	15	32							47	15	32
Cardiff Licensing				756	968	(212)				756	968	(212)
HMO Cathays				217	196	21				217	196	21
HMO Plasnewydd				297	302	(5)				297	302	(5)
Student Liason				70	67	3				70	67	3
Night Time Noise				67	74	(7)				67	74	(7)
Cardiff Port Health				155	156	(1)				155	156	(1)
Vale Licensing							409	407	2	409	407	2
Burials							1	5	(4)	1	5	(4)
Pest Control							113	111	2	113	111	2
Kennelling & Vets							20	9	11	20	9	11
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1,562</b>	<b>1,764</b>	<b>(202)</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,567</b>	<b>2,685</b>	<b>(118)</b>
<b><u>Core Services</u></b>												
Animal Services	102	106	(4)	238	251	(13)	82	86	(4)	422	443	(21)
Environmental	57	52	5	136	124	12	47	42	5	240	218	22
Food Services	373	412	(39)	884	978	(94)	302	334	(32)	1,559	1,724	(165)
Housing Services	149	168	(19)	355	399	(44)	121	136	(15)	625	703	(78)
HS & CD	159	167	(8)	378	395	(17)	129	135	(6)	666	698	(31)
Pollution Services	223	223	0	530	530	0	181	181	0	934	934	0
Trading Stds	390	338	52	926	800	126	316	274	42	1,632	1,412	220
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>1,453</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>3,477</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>6,078</b>	<b>6,131</b>	<b>(53)</b>
<b>Gross Expenditure Budget</b>	<b>1,914</b>	<b>1,855</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>5,009</b>	<b>5,241</b>	<b>(232)</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8,645</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>(171)</b>

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# Shared Regulatory Services

## Business Plan

### 2024/25



Gwasanaethau  
**Rheoliadol**  
a Rennir



# Foreword

The launch of this 2024-25 Business Plan represents a significant milestone as the Shared Regulatory Service enters its 10th year of delivering the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions across the Bridgend, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Council areas.

Over that time, the Service has demonstrated how it is able to embrace change with ease and remain ever responsive to the needs of the partner Councils. Nothing demonstrates this better than the adaptability of the Service during its Covid response and more recently in dealing with the ongoing cost of living crisis and its impact on the public.

During 2023-24, service outcomes recovered on a number of fronts, particularly against our traditional performance metrics, in clearing longstanding inspection backlogs, and in restoring our various income streams many of which were impacted by the upheaval of the last few years.

Of course, 2024-25 comes with its own challenges, such as the ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties experienced by Regulatory Services across Wales and beyond. I very much hope that the long-awaited Regulatory apprenticeship for Wales becomes a reality in the near future, allowing the Service to further develop its 'growing our own' approach to staff development. With this in mind, we continue to forge excellent links with academic institutions and the relevant professional bodies.

The biggest challenge however will be in dealing with the continuing squeeze on public sector finances and the resultant need to deliver additional savings. This at a time of the Service taking on a number of new areas of Government legislation and enforcement, but with no dedicated funding associated with it. Now more than ever, the establishment of new income streams and cost recovery, building on our impressive track record to date, will play a crucial role in protecting and sustaining the Service.

I couldn't be prouder of our staff in all that they do to deliver first class services for the residents and businesses of the SRS three-authority region. The achievements and planned outcomes in the pages that follow are all thanks to their talent, dedication and hard work, and I very much look forward to seeing the fruits of the actions set out in the chapters of this Business Plan.



**Helen Picton**  
**Head of Shared Regulatory Services**



# 1. Shared Regulatory Services

**Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) is a collaborative service formed between Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. SRS delivers a fully integrated service under a single management structure for trading standards, environmental health and licensing functions with shared governance arrangements ensuring full elected member involvement.**

SRS operates under a Joint Working Agreement (JWA) whereby the Head of SRS reports on service provision to a Joint Committee of elected members drawn from across the three parent Councils. An officer management board has oversight of the operation of the service and provides support to the Head of Shared Regulatory Services to ensure the development and delivery of a shared vision and strategy for Regulatory Services.

The detailed delegations of policy and functions from partners to the Joint Committee and Head of Service are set out in the Joint Working Agreement which includes:

- The functions to be carried out by the joint service.
- The terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board etc.
- The terms of the proposed joint service such as staffing, the services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing and other functional issues.
- Financial Operating Model.

Consequently, the SRS works across the three Councils supporting a range of Committees and where needed, the three Cabinets, to deliver the Regulatory function. The workflow involves quarterly meetings with the officer Management Board followed by meetings of the SRS Joint Committee, details of which are then communicated to all three Cabinets. Officers meet members of the Joint Committee on a regular basis to ensure both regional and local issues are considered and managed appropriately.

Details of the SRS Joint Committee meetings are held on the websites of each Council. The Joint Committee reports depict the development and future direction of the Service.

## Key services offered

The service delivers a diverse and comprehensive range of functions that safeguard the health, safety and economic wellbeing of consumers, businesses and residents covering the main areas of environmental health, trading standards and licensing. These broad areas encompass a wide spectrum of services that deal with issues that can have a huge impact upon people when things go wrong or when there is poor compliance.



Food Hygiene and Standards

**Food Hygiene and Standards** protect public health by ensuring that the food we eat is without risk to the health and safety of consumers and is correctly described throughout the food chain. This is achieved through regular food and feed safety and standards inspections of food business and guest caterers, operating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, providing practical advice, investigating food safety and standards complaints, carrying out food and water sampling and undertaking checks on imported food.



Fair Trading

**Fair Trading** protects consumers and businesses by maintaining and promoting a fair and safe trading environment. This area of work ensures that businesses comply with a host of consumer protection statutes including those relating to:

- Product safety;
- Age restricted sales;
- Counterfeiting;
- Environmental safety;
- Weights and measures
- False claims about goods and services;

The Service investigates complaints, participates in criminal investigations and enforcement exercises, conducts inspections of businesses, undertakes a sampling programme, and helping businesses improve their trading practices.



Safeguarding

**Our safeguarding** work ensures we investigate cases of malpractice including rogue traders, scams and doorstep crime. We provide consumer advice to vulnerable residents and help them obtain redress.



Metrology

SRS has the only UKAS accredited **Metrology** laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity.



Housing Safety

**Housing Safety** protects public health by working with private landlords and owners to provide warm, safe and healthy homes for tenants. Officers ensure that Houses in Multiple Occupation are licensed through Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes, inspect HMO's and improve physical and management standards of privately rented accommodation. Complaints from tenants about their rented accommodation are investigated. These can include complaints about damp, mould, heating disrepair, nuisance, and student housing issues. Amenity issues associated with empty homes that have fallen into disrepair are also addressed and we lead and co-ordinate across the 3 Councils the corporate strategies in place which aim to bring vacant homes back into beneficial use.



Noise Pollution

**Pollution** also protects public health by controlling noise and air emissions into the environment. The service investigates noise complaints about issues such as amplified music, DIY activities, house and car alarms, barking dogs, and construction sites. It investigates air pollution complaints involving smoke, dust and odour and illegal burning, undertakes environmental monitoring, local Air Quality Management and regulates emissions from industrial processes.



Air Pollution



Port Health

**Port Health** prevents the import of infectious and animal disease into the UK, ensuring ships comply with international agreed public health sanitation standards and improves the safety and quality of the food chain.



Contaminated Land

**Contaminated Land** protects public health by reviewing and implementing the Contaminated Land Strategy which ensures the identification, inspection and remediation of historically contaminated sites. Private water supplies used for both domestic and commercial purposes (such as drinking, cooking, and washing) are regulated and Environmental Information Requests and Planning application consultations are responded to.



Health and Safety at Work

**Health and Safety** protects the health, safety and welfare of staff, contractors and any member of the public affected by workplace activities by working with others to ensure risks in the workplace are managed properly. This is achieved by undertaking planned inspections and targeted initiatives, investigating reported accidents, diseases, dangerous occurrences and complaints, providing advice and guidance to employers and employees and securing safety standards at outdoor events.



Communicable Disease

**Communicable Disease** protects public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease by investigating confirmed sporadic and outbreak cases of communicable disease. The service provides and reviews advice and guidance on infection control, cleaning and disinfection, case and contact exclusions, provides training on food hygiene, nutritional and infection control, enforces health protection legislation to minimise the spread of communicable disease and contamination from radiation and chemicals that threaten health and leads on local and national communicable disease surveillance programmes.



Animal Health and Welfare

**Animal Health and Warden Services** ensure the wellbeing of animals generally. This includes ensuring feeding stuffs provided to animals are safe and that animals are transferred humanely and animal movements are monitored to prevent the spread of diseases such as Rabies, Anthrax and Foot and Mouth. Our Wardens respond to complaints about straying animals such as dogs and horses.



Licensing

**Licensing** determines applications for the grant, renewal, variation and transfer of many different authorisations which are the responsibility of the Councils. Applications for licences, certificates, registrations and permits are processed and enforcement undertaken in respect of statutory requirements such as alcohol, public entertainment, gambling, street trading, taxi licences, charitable collections and animal related licensing.



Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit

The **Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** is one of only 4 units operating across the UK. The Unit covers all 22 Local Authority areas in Wales with the key aim of tackling the problem of illegal money lending. The Unit is both proactive and reactive in its work providing education and promotion across Wales to various social groups and highlighting the dangers of illegal lending. The Team also carries out detailed investigations with a view to prosecuting offenders and has the capabilities to act swiftly where necessary to deal with victims of loan sharks.



Working with Business

Shared Regulatory Services has adopted a more commercial approach by developing paid for services and marketing them to businesses. These commercial activities enhance and complement existing statutory services and provide income generation for the service. They include:-

- Bespoke and accredited training solutions to businesses to assist in achieving legal compliance;
- Paid for business advice visits and 'health' checks from our highly skilled and experienced officers to help and support businesses to comply with legislation;
- Developing Primary Authority partnerships for businesses that trade across council boundaries where they can enter into a legally recognised partnership with the Service, receiving an agreed package of advice and support;
- Marketing the only UKAS Metrology Laboratory in Wales providing calibration of weights and measures of length and capacity;
- Extending and reviewing training offerings to meet business needs;
- Identifying new funding sources;
- Exploring potential income generating services and developing paid for services.

**Pest Control** offers services to the Vale area for the treatment of pests and infestations. This could include, rats, wasps, mice, fleas, cockroaches etc.

**Health Protection** - The unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 outbreak saw SRS adapt and work in partnership to reduce the transmission of the virus across the region. This continues to be achieved through our Health Protection Team who work with the Health Boards and partner agencies to continue to provide support to care homes and other high risk settings in respect of Covid-19 and the wider health protection agenda.

The SRS delivers a range of statutory duties for the partner Councils and also functions where the Council has been given powers in legislation to safeguard and protect local communities. Determining the relative importance and value of council services when deciding on where to make savings or service reductions is not easy. Often the debate starts with a focus on determining whether a service is 'statutory' or 'discretionary'. Defining services as 'statutory' or 'discretionary' is perhaps unhelpful. Services that keep people healthy, well and safe; support businesses to flourish and thrive; protect and enhance our environment are essential. In this plan we have sought to clarify the legal basis for a service or how it contributes to wider council responsibilities, but many SRS functions cannot be easily defined in this way; some are extensions of 'statutory' activity whilst other services have developed over time to become longstanding, highly valued and central to the work of each council.



## Area Profile

**Shared Regulatory Services covers the Council areas of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and serves around 650,000 residents.** Extending from St Mellons in the east to Maesteg in the west, the area encompasses Cardiff, the capital City of Wales with its array of cultural, financial and commercial organisations and the rural areas of Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan with their vibrant tourist and agricultural economies.



**Bridgend is situated on the south coast straddling the M4 corridor.** It comprises an area of 28,500 hectares and a population of over 140,000 residents. To the north of the M4, the area consists of mainly ex-coal mining valley communities with Maesteg as the main centre of population. To the south of the M4, the ex-market town of Bridgend is the largest town, the hub of the economy and its employment base. To the south west on the coast lies Porthcawl, a traditional seaside resort, with a high proportion of elderly residents, which is subject to a major influx of tourists during the summer period.

**Cardiff is the capital city of Wales.** In population terms, it is the largest city in Wales with a population of nearly 370,000. Population alone however, does not fully represent Cardiff's significance as a regional trading and business centre as the population swells by approximately 70,000 daily with commuters and visitors. Cardiff is the seat of government and the commercial, financial and administrative centre of Wales. Cardiff boasts one of the most vibrant city centres in the UK and on a typical weekend, Cardiff's night time economy can attract over 40,000 people and sometimes more than 100,000 when the City's Principality Stadium hosts international events.



**The Vale of Glamorgan is bounded to the north by the M4 motorway and to the south by the Severn Estuary.** It covers 33,097 hectares with 53 kilometres of coastline, and a population of over 130,000 residents. The area is predominantly rural in character, but contains several urban areas of note such as Barry, Penarth, Dinas Powys and the historic towns of Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. Barry is the largest town, a key employment area and popular seaside resort. The rural parts of the Vale provide a strong agricultural base together with a quality environment, which is a key part of the area's attraction. The area includes Barry Docks and Cardiff International Airport.



## Staff resources

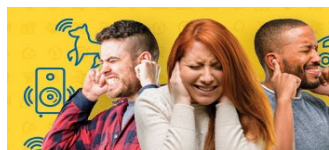
Our organisational structure focuses upon generic working and multi-disciplinary officers, while retaining capacity to develop specialist professionals. The structure allows the deployment of people in different ways enabling the service to offer income-generating services that complement the more traditional services. The Service currently employs 175 FTE operating across 3 distinct sectors populated largely by professionally qualified Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers who focus on more complex issues, supported by Technical Officers that fulfil a monitoring and triage role. In addition, discrete specialist roles exist to support the service in fulfilling its duties.

## Our teams

**Commercial Services** ensure that businesses comply with a host of consumer and public protection requirements. The team ensure that the food we eat is safe through food safety and standards work; that health and safety risks in the workplace are managed properly; that a fair and safe trading environment exists for consumers; and that public health is protected by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease and providing support to care homes and other high risk settings in respect of Covid-19 and the wider health protection agenda.



**Neighbourhood Services** deals mainly with activities relating to residential premises or those that have an impact on the local community. The team protects public health by working with private landlords and owners to provide warm, safe and healthy homes for tenants; controlling noise and air emissions into the environment and determining and enforcing a wide range of licensable activities.



**Enterprise and Specialist Services** deals with a diverse range of activities including air quality, contaminated land, pest control (Vale), animal welfare, major investigations and safeguarding and some elements of food safety, trading standards and health and safety. The team also has a role in generating income through the delivery of training, Primary Authority partnerships and paid for advice services and managing the UKAS Metrology Laboratory. Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit also operates on behalf of other Welsh Councils and the Business Support function provides centralised administrative support to the whole service.

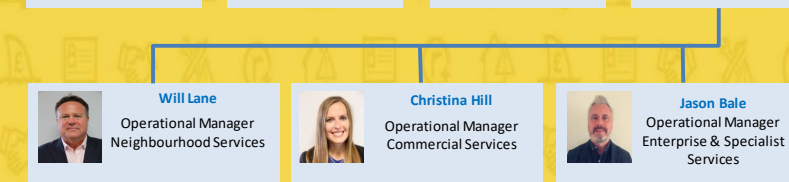
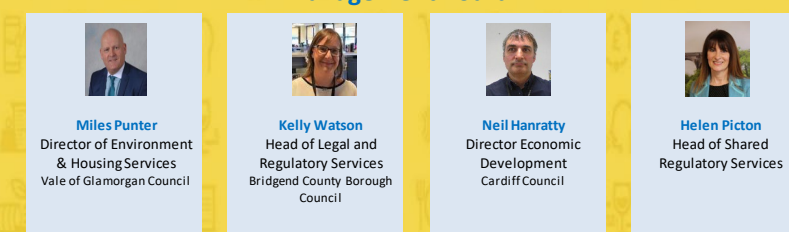


## SRS Management and Governance Arrangements

### Joint Committee



### Management Board



### Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services deal mainly with activities related to residential premises or have an impact on the local community and include:-

- Noise & Air Pollution
- Environmental Permitting
- Housing safety in private rented properties
- Licensing

### Commercial Services

The main function of Commercial Services is to ensure that businesses comply with a host of consumer and public protection requirements in areas such as:-

- Food Safety & standards (retail)
- Health and Safety
- Trading Standards (retail)
- Communicable Disease
- Port Health
- Public Health & Health Protection

### Enterprise & Specialist Services

Enterprise & Specialist Services incorporates existing or potential income generating services with a commercial approach to marketing council services together with discrete specialisms including:-

- Contaminated Land & Air Quality
- Animal health & welfare
- Major investigations & safeguarding
- Stop Loan Sharks Wales
- Paid for advice and training
- Primary Authority Partnerships
- Health & Safety, Food Safety & Trading Standards (non retail & events)
- Metrology Laboratory
- Pest Control (Vale only)
- SRS Business Support

## 2. Service aims and strategic priorities

Shared Regulatory Services plays a key role in delivering the aspirations and priorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils through the delivery of a wide range of services. We have developed a vision, supported by a suite of strategic priorities, that sets out our ambition of being a progressive and innovative organisation. This allows us to deliver high quality, customer focussed services that safeguard the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of our citizens.

Our vision is

***To be the leading provider of regulatory services that safeguard the health, safety and economic wellbeing of the region***

As a regional organisation providing regulatory services across three local authority areas, we place the corporate priorities and outcomes of the three councils at the heart of all that we do. In developing our own strategic priorities for Shared Regulatory Services, we have considered the priorities and desired outcomes of all the three authorities, together with the needs and aspirations of our partners and customers so they translate into priorities that meet local needs.



Supporting these strategic priorities, are a number of outcomes that the Service aims to deliver and which are evidenced throughout this Business Plan. Our vision and outcomes will be achieved through the following primary aims:

- Understanding the needs of our customers and placing their needs at the heart of the services we deliver;
- Developing and maintaining a flexible and agile workforce that is responsive to change and that have the right skills to deliver quality services meeting the needs of our customers and local communities;
- Maximising internal efficiencies to enhance service quality;
- Exploring opportunities to innovate and develop, and
- Working together to future proof the service to meet financial challenges and future demands

Corporate priorities and outcomes of partner Councils		
Bridgend County Borough Council	Priorities	Outcomes/Aims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable</li> <li>• A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns</li> <li>• A County Borough with thriving valleys communities</li> <li>• A County Borough where we help people meet their potential</li> <li>• A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community</li> <li>• A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community</li> <li>• A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect our most vulnerable</li> <li>• Fair work, skilled, jobs and thriving towns</li> <li>• Creating thriving valleys communities</li> <li>• Helping people meet their potential</li> <li>• Responding to the climate and nature emergency</li> <li>• Making people feel valued, heard and part of their community</li> <li>• Supporting people to be healthy and happy.</li> </ul>
City of Cardiff Council	Priorities	Outcomes/Aims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardiff is a great place to grow up</li> <li>• Cardiff is a great place to grow older</li> <li>• Supporting people out of poverty</li> <li>• Safe, confident and empowered communities</li> <li>• A Capital City that works for Wales</li> <li>• One Planet Cardiff</li> <li>• Modernising and integrating our public services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardiff is a great place to grow up</li> <li>• Cardiff is a great place to grow older</li> <li>• Supporting people out of poverty</li> <li>• Safe, confident and empowered communities</li> <li>• A Capital City that works for Wales</li> <li>• One Planet Cardiff</li> <li>• Modernising and integrating our public services</li> </ul>
Vale of Glamorgan Council	Priorities	Outcomes/Aims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work with and for our communities</li> <li>• To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth</li> <li>• To support people at home and in their community</li> <li>• To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment</li> </ul>	<p>A Vale that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive and Safe</li> <li>• Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous</li> <li>• Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant</li> <li>• Active and Healthy</li> </ul>



Nationally the service also contributes to the National Enforcement Priorities for Wales for local regulatory delivery which highlight the positive contribution that regulatory services, together with local and national partners, can make in delivering better outcomes, i.e.

- Protecting individuals from harm and promoting health improvement;
- Ensuring the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health;
- Promoting a fair and just environment for citizens and business;
- Improving the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability.

Furthermore, the **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015** sets out seven wellbeing goals to which public bodies, including local authorities, are expected to maximise their contributions. The goals provide a framework for focussing work on outcomes and delivery for the long term wellbeing of Wales. Shared Regulatory Services' core business activities, outcomes and strategic priorities are inter-related and make a significant contribution to these wellbeing goals. How Shared Regulatory Services contribute to these goals through its priorities is demonstrated below.



## Delivering our vision, aims and priorities



### 3. Challenges

Delivering a service across three local authority areas is an exciting but challenging role. In this context, we define challenges as new or demanding events that will require additional effort and determination to manage successfully; something that goes beyond our existing norms. Understanding the challenges ahead is therefore crucial to delivering the vision set out in section 2. Even after nine years, the Service continues to balance the development of a new and innovative operating model along with the expectation of delivering “business as usual”. There are many factors crucial to our success and the following information demonstrates the actions for the Service in 2024/25 and our risk management approach (Appendix 1).

**Delivering the SRS in the future** – The creation of SRS reflected the Welsh Government collaboration agenda, with one of the main drivers being to realise significant cost savings. These, and subsequent savings have been made by SRS over the years and we continue to deliver the SRS with a reducing resource. The 2023-24 SRS budget stood at £8.645 million with a full time equivalent staffing in the region of 180 working across 3 local authority areas. When compared to the 2013-14 stand-alone positions of the partner authorities, this means that the essential statutory services that we provide are being delivered for around £1.7 million (20%) less budget and by 82 (32%) less staff. *This is despite the impacts of inflation, pay awards and similar pressures over that time.* Furthermore over that time SRS has taken on additional responsibilities under new legislation and areas of regulation. Our move toward the Intelligence Operating Model facilitates the delivering of some services using a risk based approach to our activities, where appropriate. However, any further reductions will require the need to further examine and introduce new ways of prioritising our services, or the charging for some services and difficult decisions about the level of service provision. Simply put, SRS has no assets, with the service being made up of staff, so any budget savings inevitably mean cuts to staffing which the service cannot sustain without significantly impacting on service delivery. (RR1)

**Managing complex financial processes** – Managing resource in the Service is complex, but critical. Understanding the cost of providing a service funded through three local authorities is fundamental. Crucial to this is reflecting the provision of ‘core’ services that are consistently applied across all three areas and ‘authority specific’ services that are those that are specific to one or two authorities so that finances are understood. (RR3)

**ICT** – The success of Shared Regulatory Services is in part due to embracing the opportunities presented by technical and mobile working solutions. Agile

working has become the norm for the service yet we know that better facilities now exist to support officers carrying out their duties and the SRS will work with officers and ICT to understand the benefits of exploiting these newer technologies to ensure that our officers can continue to operate as efficiently as possible within financial constraints. Similarly as systems across the 3 authorities are upgraded it has become vitally important to ensure continued access to the systems of the partner authorities to safeguard the effective delivery of services. (RR4)

**Recruitment and retention** – We have always committed to the resourcing of training to develop people within the organisation to ensure competency within their roles. Our focus however has been more toward the immediate needs of officers to enable delivery of our five strategic priorities. It is clear that a longer term strategy for recruitment and retention is needed as SRS, in common with regulatory services across Wales, experiences difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. The cause of the problem appears to be multi-faceted, with factors such as a limited pool of qualified staff, accessibility of the professional qualifications and an ageing workforce all contributing to something of a perfect storm. SRS has been at the forefront of taking forward the Directors of Public Protection Wales ‘*Building for the Future*’ strategy, and in making the case to Welsh Government for a regulatory apprenticeship in Wales to create a route into regulatory services for young people. Further refinement of our approach to recruitment and retention will be a key target for the SRS management team during 2024-25. Our goal must be to retain our officers and ensure they achieve the job satisfaction that underpins service excellence. (RR2 and RR5).

**Remaining relevant to the three Councils** – The creation of SRS delivering services across three local authority areas resulted in the transfer of the administration of services and staff to the Vale of Glamorgan Council who act as the host authority for the Service. The Service, although jointly funded by the participant authorities, also has a single consistent identity and branding which is not associated with any one Council. The Covid-19 pandemic and the key involvement of SRS in Test Trace Protect and the enforcement of Coronavirus Regulations has put the service very much in the spotlight during the last few years, and this area of work continues through our role in the wider health Protection Partnership. More recently our work on the minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) demonstrates how we contribute to the climate change agenda of the partner authorities. Notwithstanding this, we recognise there is still a need to actively promote the Shared Regulatory Service and the important services we provide across the three Councils to ensure their continuing support for the venture. (RR8)

**New legislation** – The implementation of new legislation and any requirements imposed by such legislation can place additional burdens on the Service. It requires new processes to be developed, awareness raising to be undertaken with stakeholders, staff training and additional inspections etc.

Generally new requirements can be planned for and effectively resourced, for example the Public Health (Wales) Act and the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Minimum Unit Price) (Wales) Regulations, however, it is not always easy to predict the impact that new legislation may have on resources, as the last few years has shown. We are prepared to adapt the Service accordingly to ensure businesses can continue to function and consumers are not disadvantaged. The great uncertainty is the quantum of change and the unknown time scales within which that change must take place. (RR6)

**Out of Hours** - SRS operates an “out of hours” duty rota to enable the service to respond to incidents that arise outside normal office hours. These responses include responding to nuisance calls relating to burglar alarms, food incidents, etc. To date, officers have operated the rota on a voluntary basis across the service. However, the number of officers willing to participate in the rota is reducing to the extent that the service delivery is becoming uncertain. The SRS management team needs to understand the consequences of that success and review this position and put forward options for these aspects of the service. (RR7)

**The cost of living crisis** – The harms of the cost of living crisis continues to be felt, and without doubt will continue to impact SRS in two broad respects. Firstly, in our role as regulator, at a time when residents are struggling to make ends meet and rogue traders will waste no time in exploiting the situation. When times are hard financially, even normally legitimate traders may feel under pressure to cut corners, for example through the passing-off of inferior products or ingredients for the genuine article. Likewise, this is a time when already struggling residents are at risk of falling into the hands of loan sharks and all the misery that illegal money lending can bring. The other respect in which the cost of living crisis could have a devastating effect is on the wellbeing of our staff, and there is a real continued need for managers and colleagues to spot warning signs among team members so that all available support can be provided. (RR1).

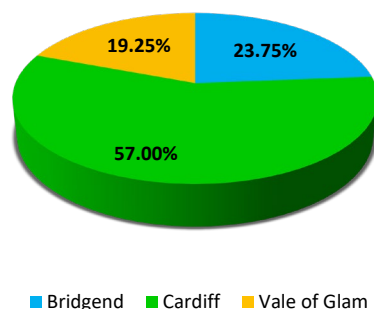


## 4. Budget

### Financial allocation

Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils fund Shared Regulatory Services jointly through an agreed formula. 2024-25 represents Year 10 of the SRS. The Joint Committee approved the proposed Shared Regulatory Services budget for 2024-25 at its January 2024 meeting. The aggregate budget for the service has increased to £8,813 which is a net increase of £168k. This is as a result of £182k of savings made through the deletion of vacant posts, reduction of budgets attributed to goods and services expenditure and the identification of 3 new income streams, which is offset by £30k salary costs to fund the shortfall in the 2023/24 pay award plus the anticipated 2024/25 national pay award. The methods of apportionment for operating the core service and the cost contribution percentages are set out in the Joint Working Agreement and based upon the population of each Council. This will not revise the bottom line position of the budget. There are also arrangements in place to deliver “authority specific” services to individual partner Councils.

**Financial apportionment of Shared Regulatory Services 2024/25**



### Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

The following table summarises the gross expenditure budget for the Service.

SRS Gross expenditure budget 2024/25			
Area	Core £'000	AS £'000	Total £'000
Bridgend	1,454	463	1,917
Cardiff	3,488	1,664	5,152
Vale of Glam	1,178	566	1,744
Total	6,120	2,693	8,813

The budgets detailed above summarise the overall budget contribution agreed by each of the partner authorities. Each contribution consists of two elements – core and authority specific services.

Core services are those functions common to the partner authorities as they share statutory responsibility for the activity, such as trading standards. Core service costs are then pooled and recharged to the partner authorities based on the relative population split within the three authorities.

Authority specific budgets such as Licensing are unique to each partner authority and it is the sole responsibility of each authority to fund its own provision.

The approved authority specific services are as follows:-

Bridgend	Licensing Kennelling & Vets Costs Empty Homes Public health burials
Cardiff	Licensing Additional HMO Licensing at Cathays & Plasnewydd Empty Homes Night time Noise Port Health Student Liaison
Vale	Licensing Kennelling & Vets Pest Control Public health burials Port Health Empty Homes

Both core and authority specific services are recharged to partner authorities inclusive of a management charge, which incorporates management, admin and hosting costs. These include the provision of a multifunctional admin team, professional support in the form of finance, IT and HR, together with the senior management within the Shared Regulatory Service.

The budget is monitored quarterly via the Management Board and Joint Committee and the details of such monitoring form part of the quarterly update reports, available at the websites of each partner Council.

## Maximising resources

The creation of SRS reflected the Welsh Government collaboration agenda, with one of the main drivers being to realise significant cost savings. The reshaped SRS continues to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and simplify processes.

Our goals of supporting the local economy and maximising resources now challenge us to operate in a more commercial and entrepreneurial way. For our business customers, we aim to deliver high quality technical services. We have created an environment that allows us to focus upon supporting local enterprises enabling them to operate successfully in an increasingly competitive business environment.

Our agile working practices allow our specialist officers to use technology to deliver improved productivity, efficiency savings and better customer service. Furthermore, these practices provide opportunities to reduce the accommodation footprint of the Service across the region, reducing operational costs.

We pride ourselves on our partnership working and the opportunities this provides to further maximise the use of resources to improve service delivery.

As we generate additional income through our paid for services, such as advice visits, training and primary authority partnerships, we are able to enhance service delivery and support to business by ensuring resilience in the SRS moving forward. With the continued pressures on public sector finances, now more than ever, the establishment of new income streams and cost recovery will play a crucial role in protecting and sustaining the service.

Understanding the costs involved in providing services is crucial. We review regularly SRS fees and charges across the three authorities to ensure we know

what it costs to provide services and ensure that we recover those costs wherever possible.

We listen to our customers and stakeholders to identify their needs and expectations. We seek to develop our services so they are easier for customers to access and are more effective and cheaper. We believe that better engagement will help us make better decisions and consequently deliver better outcomes.

We recognise the need to understand, measure and manage our performance across the Service. We continue to refine our measures to ensure performance is managed effectively and in a meaningful way, and that we are having a positive impact on those customers that interact with us.

## 5. Workforce Development

Operating a Shared Regulatory Service across three distinct areas presents many challenges for the Service and its workforce. We aim to use our Workforce Development Plan to ensure our officers have the right mix of experience, knowledge and skills required to fulfil our goals. Our plan illustrates how we want to encourage and support our officers to develop new skills and work in different ways. Investing in people is a fundamental element of our maximising resources priority.

The Workforce Development Plan provides a framework to blend:-

- Organisational culture
- Leadership and management
- Core skills
- Recruitment, retention and progression
- Communication and employee engagement
- Employee performance management

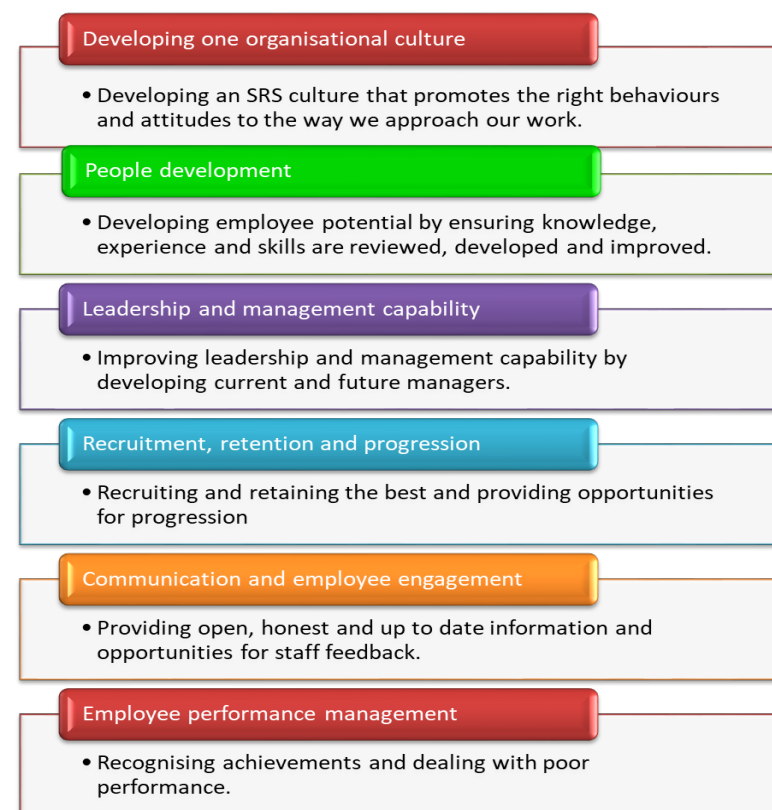
Continued Professional Development (CPD) is actively encouraged and officers are offered opportunities to attend a wide range of training courses, seminars, meetings and briefings to help maintain competency and improve technical, legal and administrative knowledge. A number of employees have been supported to undertake post graduate training gaining Masters degrees in areas such as environmental health and leadership and management. In addition, 'in house' technical training days support cross discipline training and increase awareness of related enforcement activities. The service has continued to provide legal competence training for officers along with a number of professional development courses. While this is a cost effective way of increasing the skills base of our workforce, perhaps the greater consequence is the potential to forge a stronger team

The SRS Staff Survey undertaken in 2022 sought the views of employees on the themes of wellbeing and recruitment and retention. Results were generally positive with 56% of the results falling into the very good to excellent range. Positive themes emerging from the survey were around flexibility and working from home, management and colleagues and work/roles, while improvement themes included workload and resources, pay and benefits and communication and engagement. It will be important during the forthcoming year, to ensure that

improvement themes are explored and an action plan developed as part of the wider review of the SRS Workforce Plan.

In terms of recruitment and retention, SRS has led on the introduction of a Regulatory Compliance Officer type apprenticeship within Wales and promoted the DPPW 'Building for the future' report seeking increased investment in terms of funded public protection workforce development programmes to address capacity and resilience issues in the environmental health and trading standards professions. SRS looks forward to benefitting from these approaches in the future.

We intend our workforce plan to drive our organisational development, both through preparing us for the future by being able to forecast likely challenges and by a more effective process of talent identification, identifying skill gaps, and retaining our officers within the organisation.



## 6. Emerging themes

Section 3 of this Business Plan highlighted the key challenges that face SRS as a collaborative service working across 3 local authority areas. Sitting behind these challenges are a range of issues and additional pressures that influence the ability of SRS to deliver services. These emerging issues are detailed below and encompass themes such as new legislation, national and world affairs, changes to the regulatory landscape, cost of living, climate change, recruitment and retention and ICT and infrastructure. Linking all of these is a crosscutting theme of resources and capacity, which can be severely impacted at a time when services are facing significant budgetary pressures.

### New legislation

**Public Health (Wales) Act – Special procedures** - The all-Wales licensing regime for special procedures (tattooing, cosmetic piercing, acupuncture and electrolysis) in accordance with the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 is due to be introduced in November 2024. This licensing regime will replace the existing registration scheme with a more robust regulatory system that will require a personal licence and premises approval to be renewed at 3 yearly intervals (or 7 days for temporary events), and the completion of a level 2 infection control training course before a licence can be issued.

The full impact of this new regulatory regime on resources has yet to be determined, and whilst the costs associated with administering the scheme will be recoverable to some extent through agreed, all-Wales Licensing fees, no additional Welsh Government funding will be made available for Local Authorities to fully deliver this piece of work alongside existing statutory functions. Since SRS has the largest number of registered skin piercing practitioners and premises throughout all of the Welsh Authorities, it will likely experience the greatest impact from this new legislative regime.

**Tobacco and Vapes Bill** – Welsh Government have announced plans to introduce legislation to ban the supply of single-use vapes with the intention of such legislation coming into force in Wales on 1 April 2025. This follows similar steps taken by England and Scotland. It is estimated that 360 million vapes are bought each year in the UK with valuable and critical materials such as lithium and copper being disposed of that could power nearly 5000 electric vehicles. The proposal to ban single use vapes recognises the significant environmental impact these products have. SRS Trading Standards Officers currently tackle the sale of illegal vapes, and this legislation if introduced will place a significant burden on trading standards teams within SRS.

**Review of Technical Advice Note 11 (TAN 11)** – In October 22, Welsh Government commenced a consultation on the review of TAN 11 seeking views on draft revised planning guidance in respect of air quality, noise and soundscape. The proposed guidance provides a more joined up approach between planning and air and noise pollution issues recognising the need to take an integrated approach and give early consideration to air quality, noise and soundscape issues in the planning process. While little progress has been made during the last year, the proposals include updating and replacing existing advice on noise currently contained in TAN 11:Noise 1997, adding advice relating to air quality and soundscape and providing a supporting document on the subject of soundscape design.

**The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act** received Royal Assent on 14 February 2024. The Act will implement measures that contribute to improvements in the quality of the air environment in Wales and will look to reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health, biodiversity, the natural environment and the economy. A key aspect of the Act, is how Local Air Quality Management( LAQM) is due to be amended, and it will become a duty for local authorities to review the current and future air quality in their area on an annual basis.

**Workplace Recycling Regulations** – New recycling laws came into force on 6 April 2024 applying to all workplaces in Wales. The new law means all workplaces such as businesses, public sector and charities need to separate their recyclable materials in the same way households already do. Another aspect of this legislation is the ban it introduces in relation to sending food waste to sewers, and applies to any premises that produces over 5kg of food waste per week, such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, takeaways, catering businesses etc. This means that any food waste produced will not be allowed to be put down the sink or drain into a public drain or sewer. This includes the use of macerators (or similar technologies such as enzyme digestors or de-waterers). While enforcement of the waste separation requirements is a responsibility of Natural Resources Wales, enforcement of the ban on food waste going into the sewer has fallen on local authorities. As a consequence, there is an expectation that this enforcement will be carried out by SRS Officers in the course of their duties when inspecting food businesses without any additional funding.

### Regulatory landscape

**Meeting the required frequency of food inspections** – The Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice sets out the criteria that local authority food law regulatory services need to follow and stipulates the required frequency of food business inspections according to risk, with those of a higher risk requiring more frequent inspections. For example those rated as Category A, require

inspections every 6 months, Category B annually and Category C every 18 months etc. While SRS successfully inspected those businesses with the highest ratings (A, B and C) during the last year, this was only made possible through the appointment of contractors to support existing Food Officers in completing these inspections which also consisted of a significant backlog of C rated inspections. There are certain unique challenges facing SRS in delivering the full food hygiene and standards programmes which result from the sheer number of food businesses within our footprint (around 20% of all those in Wales), the diverse and vibrant nature of the food scene locally, and the very frequent churn of new business start ups. A number of other factors have also emerged post pandemic which add to the challenges faced, including the significant increase in enforcement action necessary at food premises and the increase in pests, which impact Officers' ability to carry out inspections and programmed work. In addition, officers are dealing with many cases where standards have deteriorated; while an increase in new and different cuisines being offered at food businesses requires officers to research and understand these new approaches so that appropriate advice can be given and action taken if required. Given that the Food service within SRS is not adequately resourced to undertake current programmes of inspection without the aid of contractors, this presents a significant risk for SRS in balancing current budgetary pressures with the need to meet specific requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice, the failure of which could lead to the service being placed in 'special measures.

**Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Appeals and Re-ratings** – The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) for Wales was introduced in 2013 with the purpose of allowing consumers to make informed decisions about the places they eat or shop for food, and through these decisions encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. SRS officers inspect the hygiene standards found in food businesses providing a Food Hygiene Rating from 0-5 together with a sticker that must be displayed in a conspicuous place where it can be easily read by consumers before they enter the establishment. Under the Scheme, food businesses have the right to appeal against their food hygiene rating if they consider it unjust, and also request a re-rating inspection if improvements have been made following the inspection. Appeal inspections and re-rating inspections represent a significant amount of work for SRS as they sit outside the food hygiene programme of inspections and officers are required to undertake these inspections within defined timescales. A recent report by the Food Standards Agency indicated that during the period 28 November 22 to 27 November 2023, 75 appeal applications were received across Wales. Given the sheer number of food businesses in the SRS region, it is perhaps not surprising that the Service received 22 of these appeal applications representing 29% of all those received across Wales. Furthermore, in terms of re-rating applications, SRS received 54 applications during the same period.

**New Food Businesses** – Food businesses are required to register with the service if a new business is planned, the nature of an existing business changes

or if there is a change of ownership following the creation of new legal entities such as a new limited company, sole trader and partnership. All new businesses are required to be inspected and the Food Law Code of Practice requires that where possible, they be inspected within 28 days of opening. This requirement places a significant impact on the resources of the Food Safety and Trading Standards functions due to the large number of applications received. During 2023/24 889 food business registration inspections were planned following receipt of applications, 519 in Cardiff, 189 in Bridgend and a further 181 in the Vale of Glamorgan all of which are required to be inspected alongside the planned programme of inspections. This is further exacerbated if businesses have poor compliance on initial inspection, requiring the need for further intervention.

**Smoke free compliance in hospital grounds** – The Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) Regulations 2007 were introduced to protect employees and the public from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. This legislation prevented smoking in 'enclosed' or 'substantially enclosed' public places, including workplaces and vehicles. In March 2021 further changes were made to the legislation which extended the smoke-free requirements to more places such as hospital grounds, schools grounds and public playgrounds, as well as outdoor day care and child-minding settings to be smoke-free. SRS is responsible for enforcing these regulations and in doing so recognises that the requirement for all hospital sites to be smoke-free promotes healthier care environments and supports smokers using hospital services, or visiting or working in hospitals, to quit. The service is currently engaging with Cardiff and Vale Health Board and the Vale Enforcement Team to explore the feasibility of introducing an innovative approach to the enforcement of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds to optimise staff efficiency.

**Major events** - SRS plays an important role in the successful staging of major events across the three local authority areas. In addition to dealing with any licensing matters and noise monitoring associated with a particular event, SRS plays an essential role in ensuring that food sold at these events is safely prepared, stored and labelled correctly. In the case of stadium concerts and sporting events, input may be required to assist brand holders to protect trademarked goods and safeguard against the supply of counterfeits. Major events staged through the participant Councils go through a detailed planning process via the respective Events Safety Advisory Group in Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan, and in Cardiff via the Events Liaison Panel. SRS plays a role throughout the planning stages with respect to noise pollution, food safety, health and safety and brand protection. While summer is traditionally the busiest time for events, we are seeing a pattern of exceptionally busy periods where events are being held back to back putting a great deal of pressure on SRS officers. This is due in part to the success of the City of Cardiff Council in promoting itself on the world stage as the home of successful events. This has an impact on



the service in terms of meeting demand from other areas of responsibility, at a time of diminishing staff resource, and in covering weekend and evening work.

**On-line retailing** - The internet is undeniably driving change, and large retailers have responded by embracing multi-channel sales strategies. While the high street has not, as yet, been put out of business, there is a danger that traditional, physical stores will increasingly become secondary outlets to this strong online presence. It would seem inevitable that, in the longer term, the size and composition of the high street will be significantly impacted, as on-line shopping becomes a far more mainstream activity. Information technology and the fast developing digital environment are also causing a change in the way people interact, including in the way they interact commercially. Modern consumers increasingly access goods and services across the world through the tap of a phone screen or the click of a mouse. The internet presents an enormous opportunity for consumers and this became even more evident during the covid pandemic, as shops were required to close, and customers relied heavily upon the ability to shop online, whether it be to order groceries, or other consumer products. The Office of National Statistics reported that the proportion spent online soared to 37.8% in January 2021, and though this has decreased since, in March 2024, 25.4% of total retail sales were internet sales. The internet expands the size of the market and therefore gives access to more providers and more choice. It also makes it possible to compare products, suppliers and prices on an unprecedented scale. The internet is the most empowering tool consumers have ever had. A consequence of this for the law enforcement agencies like the SRS is that the “visible” high street has moved to an activity undertaken behind closed doors. Monitoring the market place through traditional market surveillance methods thus needs to change else the SRS will only be able react to incidents and not prevent them.

**Ageing population** - On a national level, we are living in an ageing population with increasing levels of loneliness and cognitive impairments such as dementia. Nearly half of all people over 75 live alone. In addition, the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2015 creates a duty of care to protect persons at risk from financial abuse; with partnership working and cooperation at the heart of this approach.

Preventing crime, and supporting safe, confident, resilient communities, is a key aspiration that SRS shares with the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. Shared areas of work might include scams and cyber crime, night time economy and licensing, victim support and safeguarding, general intelligence sharing and substance misuse together with underage sales, including knife crime. This is putting further strain on already stretched resources as the potential number of victims to scams and doorstep crime increases and expectations of successful interventions rise.

Awareness raising activities are crucial to crime prevention, but they invariably increase the demand for the service. We will support South Wales Police as it delivers the Police and Crime Plan and will endeavour to enhance the protection available to the most vulnerable in our communities.

**Increase in Illegal dog breeding** – As demonstrated by the successful prosecutions carried out by SRS, the high value of certain dog breeds together with the increase in consumer demand for puppies has led to an increase in complaints to the service. On-going investigations show that a number of these cases are complex, with multi agency involvement and links to organised crime. The largest illegal dog breeding case uncovered evidence of unlicensed breeding, the over-breeding of dogs, illegal importation and mutilation. We are also now seeing incidences of cuckoo breeding where breeding bitches are left with other people, then if puppies are not up to standard, the breeders refuse to take the puppies leaving them with the person looking after them. Investigations into illegal dog breeding have highlighted a hidden industry with a particular area of concern being that of ‘backyard’ breeding. As a result, there appears to be an increasing incidence of unlicensed breeding and sick puppies. Officers will continue to work with partner agencies to investigate such reports and take appropriate enforcement action.

**Seeking effective controls on animal related licensing** – SRS is responsible for a range of animal related licensing and continues to engage with Welsh Government consultations on the legislative framework for the licensing of animal related activities. Such feedback has enabled SRS to highlight shortfalls of the legislation and opportunities for improvement that could be made based on officers’ experience during the course of investigations into illegal dog breeding where a number of practices allied to breeding could legitimately take place without the need for a dog breeding licence. For example, no licence is needed for the supply of stud services or the sale of semen, nor for the advertisement of puppies produced as a result of those stud services. Similarly, no licence is needed where bitches are acquired when already pregnant. It is clear that these ‘linked’ practices can be hugely lucrative, serve to fuel the illegal dog breeding market and associated animal welfare concerns, and yet they are completely unregulated.

**Changes to the Food Regulation Landscape** - Through the Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) programme the Food Standards Agency are looking to modernise the way food businesses are regulated in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Within the programme there are three key workstreams;

1. Modernising the delivery of food regulation-through which the risk rating and interventions completed by local authorities are looking to be changed to enable resources to be targeted at areas posing the highest risk to food safety.

2. Testing new approaches to Regulation-Projects within this workstream include Enterprise Level Regulatory Approaches which will test new regulatory models for some large businesses that are compliant with regulation by the business being regulated as a whole, rather than as multiple small premises.
3. Designing the blueprint for the future regulatory assurance system-to identify where different approaches could be tested or opportunities for future legislative changes made.

It is important that the Service continues to engage with the Food Standards Agency on any proposals to ensure the views and experience of the service are reflected.

**Brexit Developments** – There are significant implications for SRS as a result of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill which provides ministers with powers to amend, retain or revoke any pieces of retained EU law (REUL), of which there are thousands. Originally, a sunset clause meant that any piece of REUL would be revoked at the end of December 2023 if ministers hadn't actively saved it by that point, however an announcement from UK Government made last year has overturned this position. There will now be no fixed 'sunset clause' deadline and instead it would appear that officials will continue to work through each piece of legislation in turn until this task is complete. While this announcement is welcome, the issue continues to be a cause for concern for regulatory services, particularly in legislative areas such as food safety, health and safety and product safety which rely heavily on EU law. The service will continue to lobby alongside environmental health and trading standards professional bodies to raise awareness of the associated risks stemming from the Bill, in terms of business certainty, compliance and enforcement.

**Building Safety** – Welsh Government has repeated its commitment to introduce a new Building Safety Bill in the current Senedd term. SRS represents the Directors of Public Protection Wales group on the Building Safety Stakeholder Group which acts as a strategic, independent advisory group for Welsh Government on matters relating to the Welsh Building Safety Programme.

The final members of the Joint Inspection Team (JIT) have recently been appointed and are planning to be operational within the next two months. The JIT are beginning to engage with local authorities and the Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS) to design and implement an inspection programme of high-rise buildings in Wales which will augment the existing inspection programme and audit undertaken by the F&RS.

Welsh Government has made it clear that it does not expect leaseholders to bear the cost of repairing fire safety issues that are not of their making and eleven of the major developers have made a public commitment to address fire safety

issues in buildings of 11 metres and over which they have developed over the last 30 years. Welsh Government continues to develop the Leaseholder support fund for those leaseholders who face financial hardship as a result of fire safety issues in their homes and are also planning further resident engagement on the various measures being developed.

There remains a great deal of work to be undertaken in this area and SRS continue to represent the three local authorities we serve (as well as Directors of Public Protection Wales) in the various stakeholder groups helping inform Welsh Government and shape the legislative programme as it moves forward.

**Guidance on air source heat pumps** – Currently installation of one air source heat pump used solely for heating purposes is normally permitted, under permitted development rights. This is subject to it complying with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MSC) planning standards (or equivalent) which stipulate the noise levels of a pump and is subject to a number of conditions. They must be sited to have a minimal effect on the external appearance of a property and the wider amenity of the area. As more properties move over to this type of heating, SRS is beginning to receive complaints about noise levels of the air pumps from neighbouring properties. Heat pumps are known to be greener than traditional boilers as they don't release carbon emissions into the atmosphere running entirely on electricity and grants are available to encourage property owners to move over to this type of heating. It is therefore likely that the number of properties with air source heat pumps will increase together with the possibility of increased noise complaints. This does suggest that there may be a need to review permitted development rights, however due to the planning consultation responses required of SRS, this would significantly increase the work of the service in responding to planning applications and would require adequate resourcing.

## Cost of living

The cost of living crisis continues in the UK and across the world. We have seen food and energy prices rise markedly together with price increases of consumer goods and services. The financial pressures this puts on both businesses and individuals impacts many of the services delivered by SRS. Businesses may seek to cut corners resulting in a drop in standards, while consumers may be tempted to purchase cheaper alternatives which could negatively impact the health and safety of our communities. This inevitably places greater demands on SRS at a time when the service itself is facing budgetary pressures. The following examples highlight some of these emerging issues.

**Drop in standards in businesses** - Food businesses, for example, already struggling following the pandemic, faced with rising prices may be tempted to substitute food items for cheaper alternatives and cut corners in their food

hygiene processes to save money. We are finding that many businesses are having to reconsider their trading patterns and operations with a view to cutting costs and attracting more trade. Fewer staff employed at the businesses means less ability to keep on top of cleaning and compliance procedures to meet food safety standards and we are seeing an increase in pests at food premises which has resulted in a rise in enforcement action taken.

**Increase in food banks** – The cost of living crisis has seen a significant increase in the number of food banks available to support people who struggle to afford to buy enough food to eat. These food banks are usually operated by volunteers relying heavily on donations from supermarkets, schools, churches and businesses. Like any food business, these food banks are regulated and inspected to ensure compliance with food safety requirements. Often the food donations come from supermarkets where food supplied is close to expiry of the use by date which gives food banks only a limited time to distribute the food. Food with best before date can be legally sold, redistributed, and consumed after the date if judged to be of sufficient quality to be donated and made available to be eaten. There has been recent incidences of food past its use by date being supplied by a food bank and this emerging issue suggests that greater engagement with these charitable organisations may be needed.

**Consumers** on the other hand, finding themselves with less disposable income may be tempted to take on cheaper rogue traders to undertake work in their homes, purchase illicit tobacco, and fall prey to unregulated forms of credit, loan sharks and scammers. All of which could negatively impact the health and safety of our communities.

**Deterioration of private rental properties** – The landscape of private sector rental housing in terms of property condition appears to be deteriorating and the service is seeing an increase in complaints. While this is believed to be, in part as a result of the covid pandemic and the decline in routine maintenance due to the lack of availability of contractors, the cost of living crisis is also contributing to the issues being experienced. Tenants struggling to pay for heating, may use it less, which in turn can cause damp and mould in a property about which they complain to SRS. This becomes difficult for officers in requiring landlords to improve the heating in properties when tenants can't actually afford to put the heating on and there is a need to be mindful of both the needs of tenants and landlords.

**Economic impact on lending** - The harsh economic consequences of the Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis have underlined concerns about the type of borrowing undertaken by individuals. People who are struggling to pay the bills can easily fall prey to loan sharks and scammers. Research commissioned by Stop Loan Shark Wales revealed a number of key findings that indicate how the crisis is driving people to borrow money. Of particular concern is that nearly half of the respondents who borrowed money did so informally

through friends, family or co-workers, increasing the risk of these financially vulnerable people falling victim to illegal money lenders. In addition the research showed that people aged between 18-34 are most susceptible to being targeted by illegal money lenders. The results suggest that this age group are most likely to consider borrowing money to pay for essentials and are also most likely to have engaged in borrowing in the last 12 months. Research also shows that 18–24-year-olds are most likely to have already used an unlicensed money lender but are less likely to know that this type of lending is illegal, so may unknowingly borrow from a loan shark. Furthermore the research revealed that illegal lending hotspots, including Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, and Swansea, saw the highest proportions of respondents aware of potentially illegal lending in their area.

**Buy now pay later** deals have increased dramatically during recent years. This unregulated form of credit allows consumers to delay payment for goods, without interest and has gained a foothold among the under 30s and those with tight finances. Companies such as Clearpay and industry leader Klarna give online shoppers options to pay for products via instalments at the checkout and there are concerns that people are signing up for credit without fully understanding that this is the case and that it is being made easier for consumers to buy more than they can afford.

**Dog ownership** –During the covid pandemic the UK saw a significant rise in dog ownership as individuals and families who found themselves spending more time at home, sought the companionship of a dog. There were concerns during this time, that as people returned to work, this could lead to issues with separation anxiety, and that the economic fallout from the pandemic would result in a spike of straying and abandoned dogs which owners are no longer able to look after. Currently, the cost of living crisis is giving further cause for concern and we are seeing a rise in the number of dogs being housed in rescue centres, some finding their way there as 'fake strays'. The ban on XL Bully breeds has the potential to add an extra layer of complexity in this regard.

## National and World Events

**Refugees and re-settlers** - Whilst recent international humanitarian emergencies have enabled SRS to welcome, and support, refugees and re-settlers into the region, it has necessitated the introduction of measures to ensure that diseases endemic in other countries are not introduced in the UK. This is particularly poignant for the importation of pets by refugees from countries where Rabies, tick and tapeworm infections, and conditions such as Brucella canis are prevalent.

Many re-settlers and refugees are also re-locating from conditions with limited sanitation; poor access to clean food and water; and over-crowded conditions. This could result in an increase of reported cases of Giardiasis; Tuberculosis and



Shigella across the region that will require the service to formally exclude cases from school or work until medical clearance has been achieved; support the funding of cases to remain off work if they are required to undergo prolonged and complex medical treatment; and potentially ensure risks to public health are mitigated through the 'request to co-operate' and Part 2A Order mechanisms.

**Public health and adapting to world events** – SRS played a vital role in ensuring public health and public safety through the way in which we responded to the Covid-19 crisis and demonstrated how SRS is central to the public health agenda. It highlighted how, as a service our ability to adapt quickly and respond to emerging world events is key to delivering public health and safety, and how important it is to be able to respond in the same way going forward as issues emerge. This was also demonstrated in our response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees into the region, which saw the Service undertake hundreds of property checks for the partner Councils under the Homes for Ukraine initiative. The Service continues to work with health boards and partner agencies providing support to care homes and other high risk settings in respect of Covid-19 and the wider health protection agenda through our Health Protection team. These rising demand pressures, together with ongoing pandemic management support will require effective prioritisation to ensure that the capability of the service is effectively deployed and managed.

**Health Protection** - Building upon the success of the co-production approach of partner agencies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and recognising the huge importance of local authorities continuing to play a central role in the health protection system moving forward, SRS continues to work with the Health Boards and partner agencies to support care homes and other high-risk settings in respect of COVID-19 infections. However, in the context of the wider health protection agenda and its funding, the work of the service in this regard is much broader than simply dealing with COVID. The service continues to benefit from the additional resource enabling initiatives to protect public health to remain within the service but it will be important to ensure that long term sustainable funding is made available for this work to continue.

**Animal Disease** – Avian influenza is an infectious disease of birds caused by the influenza A virus. Birds are the hosts for most avian influenza viruses and domestic poultry are especially vulnerable and the virus can rapidly cause epidemics in flocks. Human infections with avian influenza are rare, however, some viruses have been associated with human disease. While the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone that was in place across the UK was lifted last year, keepers are expected to remain vigilant, practising stringent biosecurity to protect the health and welfare of their birds. A more recent concern in terms of animal disease is Bluetongue Virus which is an infectious vector borne viral disease affecting wild and domestic ruminants such as sheep, goats, cattle, deer and camelids such as llamas and alpacas. The disease was confirmed for the

first time in November 2023 in England with farmers being urged to be vigilant for signs of the virus in animals. Bluetongue does not affect people or food safety and is transmitted by midge bites.

**South Wales Metro Construction** – During 2023-24 SRS worked closely with Transport for Wales on controlling noise from works associated with the South Wales Metro Construction. The work includes the installing of cabling for the electrification, removal/replacement of footbridges, platform alterations and the construction of the new stations and will continue during the year. As most of the work needs to be undertaken when there are no trains running, works tend to occur at night and on weekends/public holidays which are outside usual construction hours Mon-Fri 08:00-18:00, Sat 08:00-13:00, no noisy works on Sundays/Public Holidays. As a result, this requires Transport for Wales to apply for permission to conduct the work outside these hours and SRS needs to ensure that they are using the best practicable means to reduce disturbance to residents as much as possible and to ensure they are effectively communicating with residents. Transport for Wales are providing some funding towards an officer to support this work.

## Climate change

The **Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations** set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties requiring properties that need an energy performance certificate (EPC) to have a minimum 'E' rating on their EPC assessment, or have a valid exemption registered. If a property has an F or G rating, owners are required to improve the property's rating to E or better, or register an exemption. The cost of making improvements is capped at £3500 (including VAT), so if owners cannot improve their property to an EPC E for this amount or less, they are required to make all the improvements they can make up to that amount, then register an 'all improvements made' exemption. Although these regulations have been in place for some time, they now apply to all private rental contracts, not just those that are new. Delivering on this area of work began last year and will continue during 2024/25. It is particularly important given the need to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, but also as a result of the reduction in energy required by tenants to heat their properties at a time of such high energy price rises.

## ICT and Infrastructure

**ICT Interface with Legacy Authorities** – Since the inception of SRS, officers have been provided with access to the systems of the 3 legacy authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This enables officers to access the essential IT systems they need to fulfil their duties for the relevant authorities. While this has worked well, more recent updates to systems and software have

impacted on the continuity of current arrangements affecting connectivity and access. SRS maintains good relationships with the ICT departments of the legacy authorities to deal with issues as they arise, however it has become evident that there is a need to consolidate the long term access requirements of SRS, particularly in Cardiff, to ensure continued access and smooth running of systems in order to provide seamless delivery of essential services.

**Review of ICT and mobile working solutions** – An essential component of the operating model for SRS was the introduction of technical and mobile working solutions that enable employees to work remotely. This has contributed to the success of the service, but as agile working becomes the norm for many within the service, we are finding that the technology deployed is becoming outdated. It is clear that as technology improves, better facilities now exist which could further enhance the work of SRS and its remote working capabilities as we move forward. SRS will continue working with staff and ICT to explore options for improving equipment with a view to introducing tablet devices for officers to conduct inspections to ensure that we deliver services to our customers both efficiently and effectively.

**Office footprint** – The changes to working practices brought about as a result of the covid pandemic saw organisations adapt to facilitating employees working away from the office. Whilst the majority of SRS staff were already accustomed to these arrangements due to our agile/remote working culture, others quickly adjusted. Hybrid working is a relatively new concept that is being seen by many as a way of preserving pre-pandemic office work cultures and office space investments while meeting employee expectations for greater flexibility, striking a balance between employee and employer preferences. Local government is no different and SRS are already seeing the office space provided by the partner authorities reducing as they move over to hybrid working. SRS occupies office space in Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and it will be necessary to continue to work with these authorities to adjust to new arrangements while ensuring adequate office space is maintained and fit for purpose.

**Customer engagement** – Customer engagement is key to understanding the needs and expectations of our customers. It helps us know what we are doing well and what we could do better and informs policy development and procedural changes within the service. Within SRS we engage with customers in a number of ways via public consultations, customer satisfaction surveys, citizens panels and the monitoring of complaints and compliments. While response levels via these various mechanisms has traditionally been low, more recently we have seen a huge reduction, particularly via customer satisfaction surveys which is of concern. It is likely that this reduction is as a result of moving surveys online, as opposed to the sending out of hard copy questionnaires which whilst more cost effective for the service, requires a level of effort by customers to navigate their way to the relevant questionnaire. SRS recognises the need to improve

customer engagement in this area during the coming year to maximise the important feedback we receive and will take steps to address this.

**Business Support** – The demands of providing a collaborative service over 3 local authority areas are significant, and crucial to the delivery of services is the need for an effective business support function to provide administrative support to officers and teams in undertaking their important duties. As processes and procedures have evolved, together with customer expectations, it has become apparent that there is a need to review the Business Support function within SRS to ensure that it operates more efficiently and effectively and has greater resilience.

## Recruitment and retention

**Recruitment and retention** – Recruiting to vacancies continues to be challenging and SRS has struggled to recruit suitable individuals into certain areas of the service. The shortage of applicants with the right skills, abilities and experience in the different professions has created a more competitive market. These shortages, attributable to an aging professional demographic, increasing turnover as people secure positions elsewhere, and lack of a recognised regulatory apprenticeship, have to be addressed if we are to deliver effective regulatory services. Across Wales, the Directors of Public Protection Wales has identified immediate issues of capacity and resilience along with challenges for the future as the demands and expectations on regulatory services continue to grow. The *Building for the Future* report details the key issues confronting local government regulatory services; the challenges faced in terms of workforce pressures, the need for better coordination and oversight. It presents a case to Welsh Government for increased investment over the medium term, in terms of budget, funded public protection workforce development programmes and the introduction of a Regulatory Compliance Officer type apprenticeship in Wales. SRS fully supports these recommendations, and continues to take the lead on development of the regulatory apprenticeship for Wales. We do however recognise that it will take some time for the effects of such proposals to come into fruition. Given the pressures the service currently faces, it will be essential for SRS to consider other short to long terms solutions that make working for SRS as attractive as possible.

## 7. Turning actions into outcomes

We continue to work to integrate our vision, priorities, outcomes and our performance to provide a comprehensive picture of the work the service undertakes and the positive impact it makes.

The following section of this Business Plan brings all these different elements together in order to highlight our achievements and performance during the last year together with the actions we aim to take forward in 2024/25 to deliver on the strategic priorities. This framework will be continually reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and meaningful to stakeholders.

## Priority

### Improving health and wellbeing

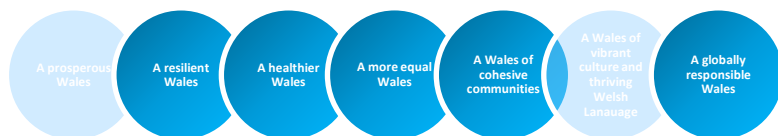
#### Outcomes



#### Outputs



In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-

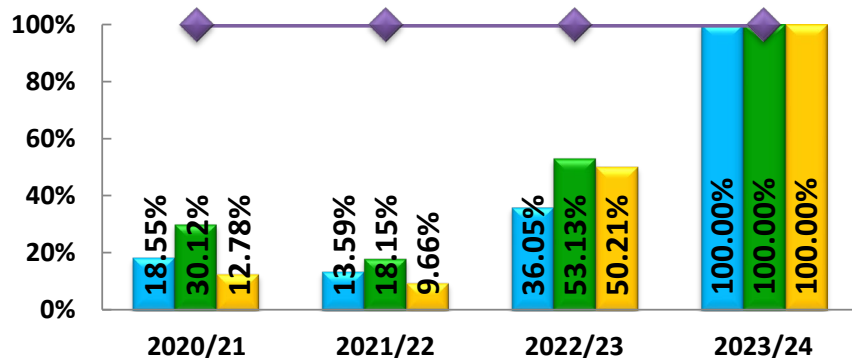


**Improving health and wellbeing** is a key priority for SRS. The Service delivers a diverse range of services to businesses, consumers and residents many of which are “taken for granted”. Their contribution toward our stated outcomes, and their impact upon communities, should not be overlooked. Work undertaken to ensure that food, from farm to fork, is safe, that infectious disease, noise and air emissions are controlled, that risks in the workplace are managed properly, allows people to live in healthy environments. Add to this our activities to ensure the quality of private rented property, the promotion of a safe trading environment and our regulation of licensed premises to ensure they operate responsibly and it is evident that the work undertaken by the SRS is hugely important to the health and wellbeing of the region.

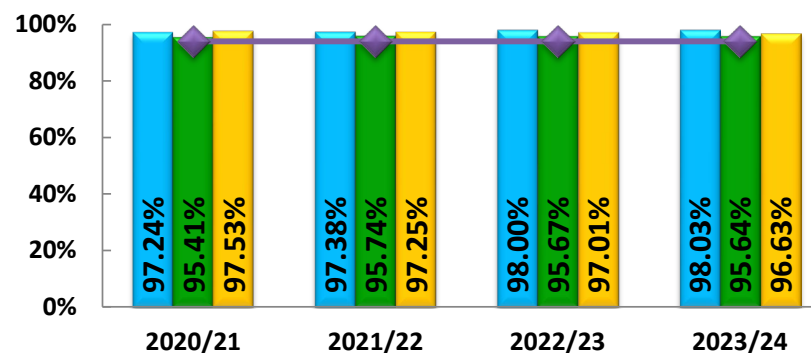
## How we performed

■ Bridgend
 ■ Cardiff
 ■ Vale of Glamorgan

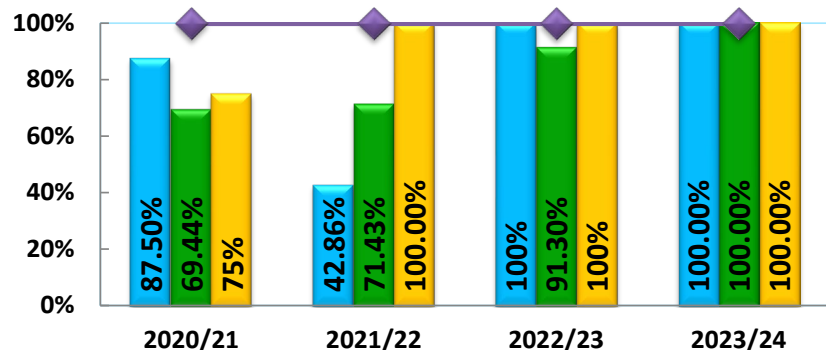
**% of high risk inspections  
Food Hygiene (A, B & C rated premises)**



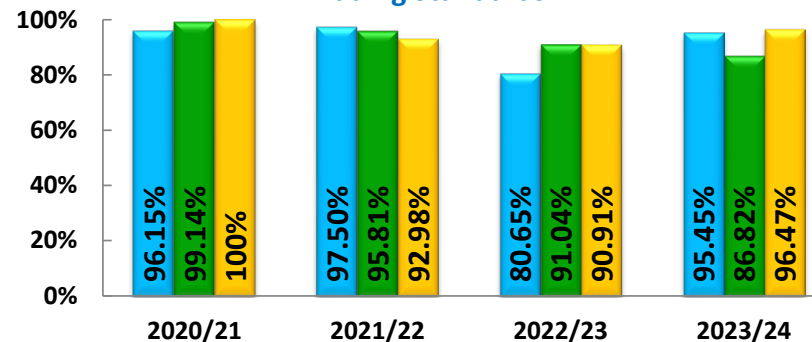
**PAM 023 - % of food establishments that meet  
food hygiene standards**



**% of high risk inspections  
Trading Standards**



**% of significant breaches that were rectified for  
Trading Standards**



% of private rented properties and HMOs improved through the removal of category 1 and 2 hazards 2023/24			
	Bridgend	Cardiff	Vale of Glam
Total no. of assessments which contain category 1 & 2 hazards	78	1376	37
No. of HMOs and non HMOs where hazards have been resolved as a result of local authority action.	51	324	30
% Total resolved	65.38%%	23.55%	81.08%



## What we have achieved

### The Food chain is safe and free from risks

**Recovering lost ground of the food hygiene inspection programme** - The Food Standards Agency stipulate the required frequency of food business inspections according to risk, with those of a higher risk requiring more frequent inspections. There has however been a significant backlog of these inspections as a result of the unique challenges that have faced SRS over the last few years, most notably the sheer number of food businesses within our footprint (around 20% of all those in Wales), the diverse and vibrant nature of the food scene locally, the very frequent churn of new business start ups coupled with recruitment and retention pressures. It is pleasing to report however that during 2023/24 excellent progress was made in ensuring that not only the programmed high risk inspections for the year were completed but the backlog of C rated inspections was cleared, together with substantial progress being made with new business inspections. This was achieved through the appointment of contractors to provide an additional resource to support the work of our food officers in our efforts to meet the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice.

**Businesses that are broadly compliant** - The number of food businesses with a food hygiene rating of more than 3 continues to remain at a high level with 98% in Bridgend, 96% in Cardiff and 97% in the Vale of food businesses being broadly compliant. The results have shown a positive upward trend, year on year, consistently exceeding targets and highlighting the growing number of businesses that are improving their standards, which can be attributed to the success of the intervention programme for food businesses. The programme ensures that any food safety issues identified are followed up by either enforcement, advice or training and subsequently revisits to ensure compliance with food safety law.

**Prosecutions** – SRS is committed to enforcing the laws we regulate, instigating legal proceedings against those businesses or individuals that flout the law. During 2023/24, the service concluded a number of successful prosecutions against individuals/businesses in relation to food safety and standards offences. In total 8 cases against 13 defendants were concluded which resulted in 9 months of suspended sentences, 60 hours community order and 3 hygiene prohibition orders. Furthermore fines totalling £29,070 and costs of £11,553 were awarded. The following examples showcase the impact and value of this work.

8  
Successful  
prosecutions of food  
businesses  
concluded

**Cardiff Convenience Store and company director fined over £10,000 for food hygiene offences** – On visiting the store in July 2022, officers found mouse droppings in storerooms and around packets of foods on the shelves of the shop together with gnawed packets of

crisps and chocolates. As a result, officers deemed there to be an imminent risk to health and the company director agreed to voluntary close the premises to allow effective cleaning to take place, signing a voluntary closure agreement to this effect. However, a few days later officers discovered the premises open with customers inside, which necessitated a formal court order being obtained to require the premises to remain closed while the infestation was dealt with and thoroughly cleaned.

While guilty pleas were subsequently entered for the majority of the 16 food hygiene offences, the defendants maintained that they were not trading when visited, but simply taking in a delivery. This necessitated a Newton hearing in which the District Judge found the evidence presented persuasive and the prosecution case approved.

In passing sentence the District Judge was satisfied that the offences were committed with high culpability and posed a serious and imminent risk to the public. The company was subsequently fined a total of £8000, ordered to pay costs of £1456.65 and a court surcharge of £2000. The company's sole director was fined a total of £2900, ordered to pay costs of £1456.65 and a court surcharge of £1160.

**Bridgend restaurant involved in food hygiene prosecution** - Following an investigation by SRS officers, two directors involved in the operation of a Bridgend restaurant pleaded guilty to 8 offences under the Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006.

On receipt of a complaint from the public reporting that rats had been seen inside the restaurant, officers visited the premises and discovered an active pest infestation, together with a range of other issues. These included a lack of effective pest control procedures in place, poor general hygiene and cleanliness throughout the premises and lack of personal hygiene and no food management safety system in place. As a result of the inspection findings, the restaurant's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score was downgraded to zero, indicating that urgent improvement was required.

In light of the inspection findings, the business voluntarily closed to undertake a deep clean of the premises, fix all pest access points, and eradicate the infestation. When visited 6 days later it was found that the business had made significant improvements and the rat infestation had been eradicated. There was however still an absence of hand soap but once this was replenished the voluntary closure notice was revoked.

The District Judge fined the first of the two defendants a total of £380 and ordered him to pay costs of £250 together with a victim surcharge of £152. The second defendant was fined a total of £235 and ordered him to pay costs of £125 and a victim surcharge of £95. In addition, the first defendant was permanently prohibited from participating in the management of any food business in future.

**Port Health and infectious disease** – Climate change presents the opportunity for new species of mosquito that are vectors of disease to be introduced via the ports and pose a public health risk. This emerging risk is illustrated by Paris fumigating areas of the French capital for the first time to kill disease-carrying tiger mosquitoes in August 2023. Mosquito surveillance was undertaken at Cardiff Airport between June and October at 4 locations. Thankfully no mosquitoes were caught at any of the locations. It is hoped to extend this surveillance to the seaports next year so that we continue to contribute to this important national data which is vital for forward planning of identifying control measures to protect public health.

Potable water supplies are regularly bunkered onto vessels from shoreside hydrants at the seaports. Sampling of these shoreside waters is in progress and being completed with the assistance of Welsh Water to check for compliance with drinking water standards. No unsatisfactory results have been received to date and the remaining hydrants will be sampled.

Water sampling was also completed to verify that the water management procedures were adequate to meet water quality standards for the supply of aircraft with water for personal hygiene via water bowzers. Out of the three water bowzers failed to meet the required standards despite the procedures being adequate and it was eventually identified that the internal surface had degraded to such an extent that it is was required to be taken out of use.

## Risks in the workplace are managed properly

**Sunbed safety** – The use of tanning equipment has been linked to an elevated risk of developing melanoma and is thought to be in the order of a 20% increased likelihood. A study undertaken in 2005 cites a 75% increase in the risk of melanoma when sunbeds are used during adolescence or young adulthood (under 25 years of age). Less obvious negative impacts include sunbed rash which can be a reaction to skin products such as tanning accelerators or cleaning products or transmission of infections from a previous customer. Eye damage can also be considerable, particularly if customers elect not to wear appropriate eye protection.

Following an undercover investigation of tanning salons by the BBC Wales consumer programme “X ray”, it was revealed that businesses in Cardiff had permitted 2 minors to pay for tanning sessions without identification checks to verify their age. The findings of this programme provided SRS with the necessary evidence to engage with the sector, by sending formal warning letters to businesses reminding them of their legal duties and enforcement expectations. This exercise was later followed up by unannounced visits during 23-24.

A total of 22 premises containing sunbeds were inspected across Bridgend, Cardiff and Vale where a range of non-conformities were identified. These included not having adequate

management arrangements in place to verify the age of clients; operating with supervisors that were not considered to be adequately competent; failing to display the prescribed health information; failing to provide clients with the prescribed information; displaying a health benefits poster which is prohibited; failing to adequately assist customers with their skin assessments and providing an inadequate level of advice to clients once their skin type had been determined. While all premises visited had either their single-use eye protection and/or reusable goggles, 4 failed to activity check if clients had eye protection with them prior to using the UV tanning equipment.

Appropriate enforcement action was taken where failings were observed, which in the majority of cases resulted in verbal advice or confirmation of minor issues requiring attention. Where several contraventions were observed, a formal warning letter was sent to the duty holder. One premises was served with a Health and Safety Improvement Notice, one a departmental warning and another is subject to escalated enforcement action.

**Cardiff Trampoline Park owner prosecuted for health and safety failings** – During March 2017, concerns were raised about the standard of equipment being installed in a new indoor trampoline park and its compliance with health and safety legislation. Despite providing guidance to the business at the time, subsequent visits identified a continued failure to undertake a ‘suitable and sufficient’ risk assessment for the foam pit, airbag and overall supervision of the trampoline area together with a lack of manufacturer information about some of the equipment, including the airbag. Further complaints were received from parents which included injuries to 6 children including 5 leg fractures and one spinal fracture. The recurring themes throughout the incidents was the lack of supervision by staff, lack of training, and lack of safety briefing for users of equipment. Officers made a number of visits serving improvement notices to secure improvements until eventually charges were brought under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 against the company and its Director.

In sentencing the Judge told the Director that he had a cavalier attitude towards safety and there had been an absence of basic safety provisions. The risks were obvious, there had been inadequate protective equipment and no desire to listen or investigate incidents. Basic safety standards were missing. The problems should have been anticipated and people should have been able to trust that all precautions had been taken. The defendant had intentionally or flagrantly disregarded the law. The local authority had provided him with advice and guidance and advised him what he was doing wrong. The same accidents continued to happen as there were the same fundamental issues. The Judge sentenced the Director to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. He will also be required to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work requirement. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

## Infectious Disease is controlled and prevented

**Infection Control Training for Special Procedures** – Under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, a licensing regime will be introduced that requires special procedures such as acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis and tattooing (including semi permanent make-up) to be licensed and practitioners to obtain qualifications in Infection Control and Prevention. In readiness for this, SRS has become one of a small number of accredited training centres in Wales for the delivery of the qualification. Officers have now run the day long course a number of times training 54 individuals. Sessions have been well-attended with positive feedback received. Work is now in hand to broaden the delivery models available for the course so that as many practitioners as possible can be trained ahead of the new licensing regime anticipated to be going live in November 2024.

1939

Communicable  
disease cases  
notified to SRS.

**Communicable Disease** – The Communicable Disease Team is responsible for protecting public health by controlling and preventing cases and outbreaks of infectious disease. The team were at the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic, acting as the Regional Response team, which saw the focus of the team almost entirely shift to tackling Covid 19 during that time. Recent years, however, has seen the team return to 'business as usual'. During 2023/24 the team dealt with 1939 confirmed and suspected communicable disease cases reported to them. These included instances of campylobacter, salmonella, E.coli 0157, legionella, hepatitis and other diseases. Furthermore the team dealt with 129 outbreaks in care homes, schools, nurseries, domiciliary care establishments and hotels across the 3 areas that had to be effectively managed to avoid further transmission.

## Noise and Air Emissions are controlled

3700+

Noise and air  
complaints received

**Noise Pollution** - Noise nuisance can have a negative effect on people's quality of life, affecting their health and wellbeing, and our officers deal with thousands of complaints each year. In 2023/24 over 3700 complaints were received in relation to noise and air across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Analysis of the SRS website reveals that advice on noise complaints consistently receives the most 'hits' of all the services that we deliver. Where serious nuisance is identified SRS will take appropriate enforcement action and the last year saw the enforcement tools available to officers being improved in Cardiff via the introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices for certain noise offences occurring after 11pm. While there were no occasions to use these notices during the year they remain a valuable tool to be utilised under appropriate circumstances.

## A safe trading environment is maintained

**Disposable vapes**– Nicotine inhaling products such as vapes are a regulated product that should comply with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. These restrictions include a limit on the capacity of the refillable tank of the device which must not be more than 2 ml; that there is a nicotine limit of 20 mg per ml in nicotine containing liquids or containers; that products should contain prominent health warnings; and that all vapes and e-liquids are required to be notified to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency before they can be sold. In response to continued high levels of intelligence and complaints received concerning such products, SRS officers undertook several exercises to identify the sale of such products. As a result, 141 test purchases were attempted and 53 premises found to be selling them. In addition, 50 inspections were conducted, 32 of which resulted in seizures of 7105 illegal vapes equating to an estimated retail value of £75,305. Retailers identified as selling these products received a written warning and advice and were subject to further inspection to check for non-compliance. Six investigations are currently ongoing as a result of repeated offences.

## Licensed premises operate responsibly



**Firework storage Inspections** - Retailers of fireworks are required to register with the local authority in order to ensure safe storage. All premises registered for the storage of fireworks are inspected by officers of the service to ensure that the conditions imposed by the registration are complied with, that the storage is safe and the business operates in a safe manner. In the run up to 'bonfire night' in 2023, 31 registered premises were inspected by SRS officers to ensure the safety of firework sale and storage. Only minor non-compliances were identified as a result of these visits, which were subsequently reported to the respective primary authorities.



## The quality of private rented property is improved

**HMO Licensing** - HMOs often present the worst physical and management standards, as well as having a detrimental impact on the neighbourhoods in which they are situated particularly in relation to street scene. During 2023/24 SRS successfully prosecuted 5 defendants resulting in £133,151 in fines

In terms of general housing prosecutions, 11 defendants (9 cases) were successfully concluded across Bridgend and Cardiff. These consisted of poor management practices and failure to comply with improvement notices.

**Cardiff landlord fined £20,000** – Following a complaint by a tenant, officers carried out an inspection of a 2 storey Victorian end of terrace Cardiff property that had been converted into 4 self-contained flats. The inspection revealed significant defects which were deemed to be a danger to tenants living at the property including no fire alarms, defective fire doors, no escape route for the inner rooms of the building, unsafe kitchens, dirty carpets, penetrative damp, unprotected electricity meters, unsafe electrical installations and unsafe windows. The case was first brought to court in December 2022 where the defendant was fined £10,000. It was made clear at the time that the improvement works identified through the inspection had to be completed by March 2022, but these were never carried out. As a consequence a further summons was issued and a further fine of £20,000 was handed down along with a charge of £1,000 in costs and a further £2,000 surcharge.



**Illegal Evictions and pre-occupancy checks** - In Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan SRS investigated and gave advice regarding 9 cases of illegal eviction which allowed us to prevent the households from becoming homeless in the majority of cases.

**Homes for Ukraine** - As part of the response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, the UK and Welsh Governments developed a number of schemes to assist refugees displaced by the conflict. The Homes for Ukraine scheme relies on individuals in the UK, with at least six months leave to remain, acting as a sponsor and matching with Ukrainian individuals and groups. Local authorities have played a critical role in the support for people from the Ukraine arriving in Wales. They are seen as best placed to provide a 'wrap around service' to ensure refugees are provided with access to a full range of public services.

The SRS have played a central role in assisting the three host Authorities to discharge their responsibilities by working with the teams set up to manage the crisis across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale. This has predominantly been through providing property checks to

ensure that accommodation that has been offered meets basic standards of safety and suitability. SRS carried out 105 inspections during 2023/24.

# What we plan to do next

\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan

## Improving health and wellbeing

Lead  
Responsibility

### The food chain is safe and free from risks

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2024/25\ \*\*\*

C Hill

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Port Health Plan 2024/25.

C Hill

### Risks in the workplace are managed properly

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out in the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2024/25. \*\*\*

C Hill

Explore the feasibility of introducing an innovative approach to the enforcement of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds to optimise staff efficiency.

C Hill

### Noise and air emissions are controlled

Review and explore options for future proofing the Duty Officer Rota.

W Lane

Continue to work with Transport for Wales in minimising noise disturbance to residents from works associated with the South Wales Metro Construction.

W Lane

### A safe trading environment is maintained

Undertake seasonal product safety projects encompassing products such as contact lenses and fancy dress costumes.

C Hill

Conduct firework inspections of licensed premises to ensure those holding a licence sell fireworks that meet the relevant safety standards, have adequate policies in relation to age restricted sales and stored safety in retail premises.

C Hill

### Licensed premises operate responsibly

Review the Statement of Gambling Act Policies in Bridgend and Vale.

W Lane

### The quality of private rented property is improved

Drive up standards in the private rented housing sector by undertaking robust enforcement action to deal with rogue agents and landlords letting and managing properties. \*\*

W Lane

Continuing to work with Welsh Government and stakeholder organisations in the development of their Building Safety Programme for medium and high-rise buildings in the private sector. \*\*

W Lane

Review and harmonise the annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy in relation to Housing Enforcement.

W Lane

### Infectious disease is controlled and prevented

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan..\*\*\*

C Hill

Prepare businesses and internal procedures in readiness for the implementation of the new special procedures licensing regime and through the delivery of RSPH Level 2 Infection Control Training course for Special Procedures.

C Hill/J Bale/W Lane

## What we will measure

### Performance Measures 2024/25

### Target

% of food businesses meeting food hygiene standards (broadly compliant).

94%

% of high risk businesses (category A & B) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.

100%

% of high risk businesses (category C) that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for food hygiene.

90%

% of high risk businesses that were liable to a programmed inspection that were inspected for trading standards.

100%

% of significant breaches rectified by intervention during the year for trading standards.

N/A

The number of private rented sector properties where significant hazards (Category 1 and 2) have been removed following intervention by SRS.

Varies depending on authority

## Priority

### Safeguarding the vulnerable

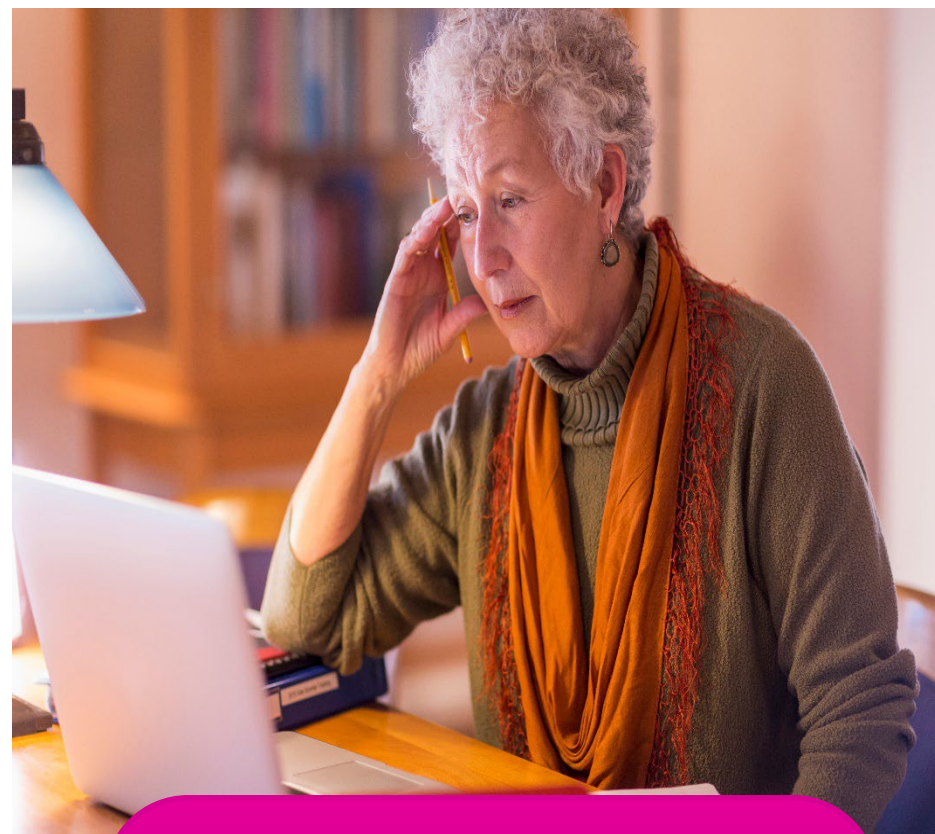
#### Outcomes



#### Outputs

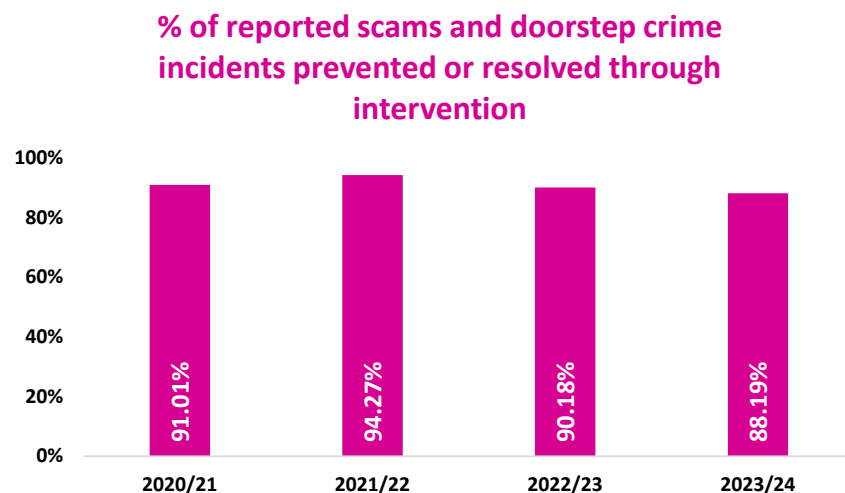


In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-



Our safeguarding work seeks to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, that older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous individual and traders, that illegal money lending activities across Wales, are challenged robustly and that the public feel safe when using taxis as public transport. We will do this in partnership with our Council colleagues and other agencies to help people who need our support. Safeguarding the vulnerable is a central theme to many of the activities undertaken by SRS.

## How we performed



**444**

Cases, enquiries, and referrals received or dealt with by SRS Safeguarding Team.



**16**

Victims of doorstep crime and scams identified. This work included 28 visits to customers and 3 rapid responses.

## What we achieved

### Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

**Bridgend Rogue Trader sentenced to imprisonment** – In this case a number of offences took place over a period of 10 months and involved 15 victims, a number of whom were elderly complainants, including a 90 year old woman. Charges related to the carrying out of UPVC installations and home improvements with a total loss to consumers amounting to £22,487. Complaints received were all similar in nature. Victims had been cold called via a knock on the door. In some instances work had been started but was of a very poor standard and the defendant had failed to return. Money for works and materials had been taken but the contract was never started. The defendant provided multiple excuses such as the weather, incorrect measurements being taken, supplier fault and personal and health problems. It was clear from victim impact statements that the offences had deeply affected them and their mental wellbeing. The court was informed that the defendant had a number of previous convictions for fraud, robbery and assault, and in sentencing, that the offences were aggravated by the number of offences, the age of the victims and his previous convictions. The defendant was sentenced to 19 months imprisonment for each offence to run concurrently, ordered to pay a court surcharge of £156 within 3 months of leaving prison. A compensation order was not made by the recorder due to the defendant's imprisonment.

**Safeguarding Week** - The 2023 National Safeguarding Week for Wales took place in November with the purpose of raising awareness around the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and ensuring that they are protected from neglect, harm and other forms of abuse. To coincide with Safeguarding Week, SRS presented at the Money and Pension Services Wales Consumer Protection Forum focussing on scams and doorstep crime. During the week officers provided training to 50+ Forum volunteers in Cardiff focussing on how to spot scams and doorstep crime and how potential victims can report it. In addition to this training, the team also visited GP surgeries in the Vale of Glamorgan, raising awareness and requesting that the surgeries display SRS Scams/Doorstep advice to ensure further awareness be raised.

**Doorstep crime and Scams** – SRS respond to instances of doorstep crime and scams, supporting the victims and families where possible. Often individuals are elderly and vulnerable and these crimes can have a devastating effect on the emotional as well as the financial wellbeing of residents. The following examples given an indication of the types of interventions undertaken over the course of the year.

During 2023-24 the service dealt with over 151 doorstep crime cases, 185 scams and 20 vulnerable civil cases. A total of 16 residents were identified through the year as having suffered a doorstep crime incident or as having been on the receiving end of a scam.

A number of significant cases against rogue traders and doorstep criminals concluded in court. Sitting behind each of these cases is a story of residents being defrauded of large sums of money, often life savings, for little or no work; or where work has been carried out it will have been to a very poor standard.

**Call blockers** can put an end to nuisance or malicious calls. They can be installed at the homes of residents being repeatedly targeted by scams and once fitted, prevent all calls coming through other than those from recognised friends and family numbers. SRS installed further call blockers during the last year in residents' homes helping to reduce nuisance and scam calls, which make up 35% of all calls received. Since 2014 SRS has installed a total of 70 call blockers to protect older and vulnerable people and each of these is estimated to block up to 5 nuisance or scam calls a day. So far 50,765 calls have been blocked and an estimated 82 scams prevented. Comments received include *"This made a huge difference and enables my mother to live in her own home for longer"*, *"My mother no longer gets anxious and agitated. I cannot impress on you the positive impact this has made"*, and *"Thanks for making my phone my friend again"*.

## Vulnerable people are not subject to exploitation, slavery and trafficking

**Raising awareness** - Safeguarding is a key issue for all three Councils. SRS will continue to play a key role in raising awareness across the partner Councils of the SRS role and how it can integrate with the wider Council agendas. The WAO report for the safeguarding of children recognised the excellent work undertaken by the SRS highlighting that the Council could consider ways in which it could extend its safeguarding training offer, for example building on the Child Sexual Exploitation awareness training given to taxi drivers and the safeguarding training for those working in the night time economy. Each Council is now developing safeguarding plans and SRS will support those initiatives as they progress.

**Hoarding and self neglect** – In Bridgend and Vale Officers have dealt with a number of cases involving vulnerable people working alongside other departments and agencies to bring about improvements in living conditions for the householders and for their neighbours. In Bridgend officers attend the Cwm Taff Morgannwg (CTM) self-neglect panel to discuss cases so that a multi-agency approach can be pursued. Guidance received from the self-neglect panel was used to develop an assessment tool to record information in relation to hoarding cases. In all these cases the officers involved worked to build up a relationship with the vulnerable persons to persuade them to accept help from appropriate support agencies. This has resulted in home improvements being undertaken following referrals to the Care and Repair Agency, and working with Social Services to ensure that a tenant of a private rented property was supported in relation to issues with hoarding to improve their living conditions and enable works of repair to be completed by the Landlord. A further case was referred to voluntary agencies which resulted in a vulnerable person being assisted with debt and probate issues. As their home was in a condition which posed a threat to their health and safety and they were rehoused, and have now been found employment. Works in default will now be undertaken at their property and an enforced sale is then proposed to effect a change in ownership to bring the property back into beneficial use.

In Cardiff, the issues of hoarding and self-neglect continue to represent a significant demand upon the service, but the team is working alongside Cardiff Council's Home Space project in order to assist persons affected without recourse to enforcement solutions. Where hoarders feel unable to engage, regrettably an enforcement solution is required to deal with statutory nuisance and public health concerns. The team has carried out several clean and clear cases in default and has also carried out some works of repair so that persons can remain safely in their home. In one case, unfortunately the clearance of the significant hoarded materials revealed the full extent of the disrepair, and a prohibition order was served, preventing occupation. The owner appealed that decision to the Residential Property Tribunal but the decision to serve an order has been upheld with the owner and their family being rehoused in the public sector. The team is arranging a presentation to the Housing Expert Panel in Wales on the issue of hoarding, in order to explore best practice and develop innovative treatments and solutions.

## Children are protected from harmful substances and products

**Underage sales operations** – During 2023-24, SRS received 111 complaints/intelligence logs regarding the underage sale of alcohol, vapes, tobacco and knives across the 3 areas. In response to these, with the assistance of a young volunteers, 53 attempts were made to purchase a range of age restricted products during



the year. 10 of these attempts to purchase resulted in a sale of either alcohol or vapes (4 Bridgend, 5 Cardiff and 1 in the Vale) and the circumstances of each was fully investigated and appropriate enforcement action taken.

During 2023-24 SRS successfully prosecuted 2 businesses for the sale of age restricted products, including alcohol and vapes. Details of one of these cases can be found below.

**Cardiff Convenience Store fined for underage sales and non-compliant vapes** - In this case officers had previously visited the Cardiff store and seized a quantity of non-compliant vapes and issued a warning letter and guidance. However, on a subsequent visit some time later in order to undertake a test purchase, officers discovered that while compliant vapes were on display, non-compliant vapes were available on request underneath the counter. As a consequence 142 non-vapes were seized. In a further visit in June 2023, a 15 year old female volunteer was sent into the store with instructions to attempt to buy a vape and was sold a pink grapefruit Elfbar and not asked any questions to verify her age. In court the company pleaded guilty to 2 offences of supplying a disposable vape with a tank capacity greater than 2ml and one offence of supplying a nicotine inhaling product to a person under the age of 18 years of age. The company was fined a total of £1800 and ordered to pay costs of £620 and a court surcharge of £720. The company director was fined £153 for the underage sale offence and ordered to pay costs of £620 and a court surcharge of £61.

## Taxi provision is safe and fair

**Cardiff taxis - moratorium on new licences lifted** – Following a significant number of complaints from passengers about the availability of taxis and a resulting online survey with the public and trade in early 2023, Cardiff's Licensing Committee lifted the moratorium on the issue of new hackney carriage licences. Cardiff was one of the few remaining local authorities in the UK with a moratorium requiring those wishing to enter the taxi trade to either rent or purchase an existing licensed vehicle and this decision sought to improve not only the availability of taxis but improve emissions from these vehicles. To this end the moratorium was lifted but conditional on any new licences being issued in respect of full electric vehicles or wheelchair accessible vehicles under 5 years old that meet the Euro 6 emission standard.

**Unlicensed Cardiff taxi driver fined** – In this case South Wales Police stopped a vehicle in the early hours of the morning where the defendant was found to be carrying 4 female passengers. It was soon established that the driver was unlicensed and that the vehicle while appearing to be a Hackney Carriage (black and white with an illuminated taxi sign) was not licensed either. Statements from passengers gave an insight into the lengths the defendant went to in order to pick up passengers such as waiting with other taxis outside a nightclub, purporting to have a card machine when asked, and asking the

passengers to lie to the Police so that he didn't get into trouble. His behaviour demonstrated clear intent to trick unsuspecting passengers into believing both he and the vehicle were properly licensed and as a consequence he was fined £440, ordered to pay £150 in prosecution costs together with a £176 court surcharge.

## Illegal money lending activities are prevented

**Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** – The increasing cost of living fills most people with fear, and we know from bitter experience that illegal lenders, more commonly known as loan sharks, will be looking to exploit people in their moments of crisis. Dealing with the personal and 'social' fallout linked to the criminality of illegal money lending is difficult to quantify. Reporting rates are often low, and victims are sometimes unwilling to name the lender for fear of repercussion. During 2023/24 20 pieces of intelligence were received, resulting in 8 operations being carried out, and 11 illegal lenders being identified. The total value of all loans given out by these illegal lenders was £25,000. A total of 25 victims have been identified and supported as part of the team's investigations; 6 of whom had their debts written off at point of intervention. Two prosecutions were successfully concluded during the year and details of one of these cases can be found below.

**Oldest loan shark in the UK ordered to pay £173,000 by Cardiff Court** – This case against an 83 year old illegal money lender followed concerns brought to the attention of the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit. Investigations showed how the defendant had previously been a licensed lender but this had lapsed way back in 2003. When lending money the defendant charged 40% interest on every £100 and officers were able to determine that she had lent approximately £126,000 in loans. In some cases the lending was particularly irresponsible resulting in one low income couple paying her £120 more than their total monthly income just to service their debt to her which left them penniless every month. The illegal lending was accompanied by a pattern of threatening text messages and her interest charges kept her victims in a cycle of debt. The defendant was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for the money laundering offence and 18 months imprisonment for each of the illegal money lending offences to run concurrently but suspended for 2 years. In a later Proceeds of Crime hearing the defendant was ordered to pay back over £173,000 of her ill-gotten gains, with more than £35,000 returned to her victims in compensation.

**Illegal Money Lending Education and Training** – Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit is a small team covering the whole of Wales. As a result, it is reliant on other public agencies, housing providers and third sector organisations to be its eyes and ears. These are the 'front line' people who will encounter the victims of loan sharks through their daily activities and provide the richest vein of intelligence available. To exploit this and encourage reporting, WIMLU proactively seeks opportunities to present to these organisations on our work and the team receives frequent requests for information and

training of frontline staff and community-based public facing support services. During 2023/24 training was delivered to 21 different organisations from all over Wales, reaching 516 participants. These training sessions were attended by colleagues from within local government and credit unions as well as from the housing, advice, and charitable sectors.

**Illegal Money Lending raising awareness** – In addition to education and training, Stop Loan Shark Wales attend a number of events throughout the year to raise awareness of illegal money lending and promote the assistance available from the team. During 2023/24 officers have attended 13 public events, many of which are associated with cost of living support.

**POCA Community Based initiatives** - Monies obtained from loan sharks under the Proceeds of Crime Act is used by WIMLU to develop initiatives that raise awareness of the problems caused by illegal lending in our communities, and how those affected, and the wider public, can report concerns. During the year SLSW continued to monitor 3 small scale pilots run by Credit Unions of Wales relating to express loans, digital

marketing and a prize draw and funded a 6 months digital marketing campaign to promote alternatives to illegal money lending. In addition a scheme through Money Works Cymru (a payroll salary and loan scheme) where low income employees, who would normally just miss out on being eligible for a loan, would be passed. The loan would then be guaranteed by the WIMLU POCA Fund. 21 loans were issued to the value of £7,773 with no defaults. In order to further promote Money works across Wales, SLSW also sponsored a monthly prize draw where all new members were eligible to win £150. This incentive saw an increase in members of 3.4%, an increase in savers of 1.92% and the number of borrowers increasing by 8.9%.

## What we plan to do next

**\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan**

### Safeguarding the vulnerable

Lead  
Responsibility

#### Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

Consider how SRS could engage more with Elected Members regarding areas of concern and safeguarding for the public, such as rogue traders, scams, illegal money lending and doorstep crime.

H Picton

#### Children are protected from harmful substances and products

Work in partnership to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, older people are protected from rogue traders and scams and vulnerable people are not subject to exploitation. \*\*\*

All OMs

Conduct intelligence led underage sales exercises in relation to the sale of tobacco, alcohol, nicotine inhaling products, knives and other age restricted products.

C Hill

#### Illegal money lending activities are prevented



Raise awareness of illegal money lending and support individuals to access responsible lenders and debt advice, rebuild their finances and make a sustainable transition to legal credit. \*\* & \*\*\*

J Bale

## Taxi provision is safe and fair

Engage and respond to Welsh Government on the modernisation of taxi and private hire services in Wales.

W Lane

Undertake enforcement exercises with the taxi trade including mystery shopper exercises to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act, vehicle and licensing standards and fare refusals for short journeys .

W Lane

Review taxi vehicle testing regime in Bridgend.

W Lane

Ensure the decision by the Council to introduce mandatory card payment facilities in hackney carriages licensed by Cardiff Council is implemented.

W Lane

## What we will measure

### Performance Measures 2024/25

### Target

- % of reported scams/doorstep crime incidents prevented /resolved through intervention.
- No. of people reached through education or training on scams and doorstep crime.

80%

500

## Priority

# Protecting the environment

## Outcomes



The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air & water



People will use energy efficient buildings and products



Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer



Animals are treated humanely

## Outputs

Remediate contaminated land and undertake water sampling

Monitor air quality

Regulate industrial processes through environmental permitting

Operate market surveillance programmes on energy efficiency

Bring empty homes back into use

Respond to noise and air complaints

Work with partners to improve student safety & their impact on the community

Enforce taxi licence conditions

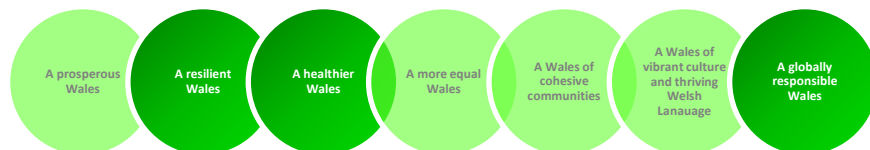
Control stray dogs and horses

Inspect overloaded vehicles

Contribute to the planning process

Respond to environmental information requests

In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-

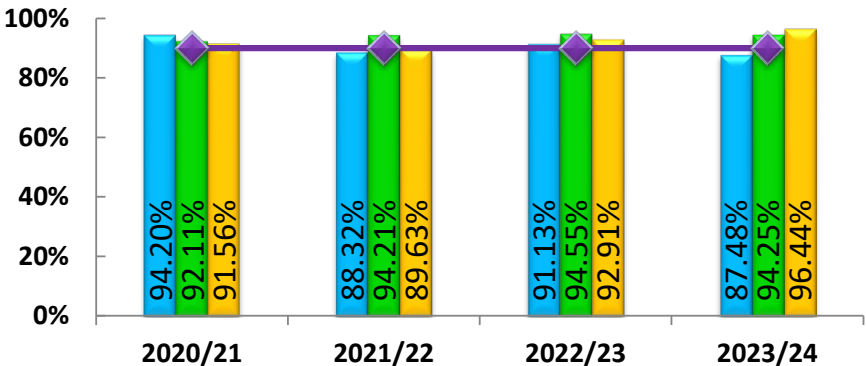


**Protecting the environment** is a core strategic priority of SRS. Many of the activities listed here such as water sampling, monitoring air quality, and remediating contaminated land contribute toward promoting a better environment which in turn means better long term prospects for the health and wellbeing of our communities. However, the work in protecting the environment goes further, we ensure communities are protected from nuisance and are safer by investigating noise complaints, dealing with stray dogs and horses. We have a key role to play in the wider climate change and future generations agendas through our enforcement role on energy efficiency controls on properties and products. The impact of these activities is less apparent in the short term for communities, but has an important role for future generations.

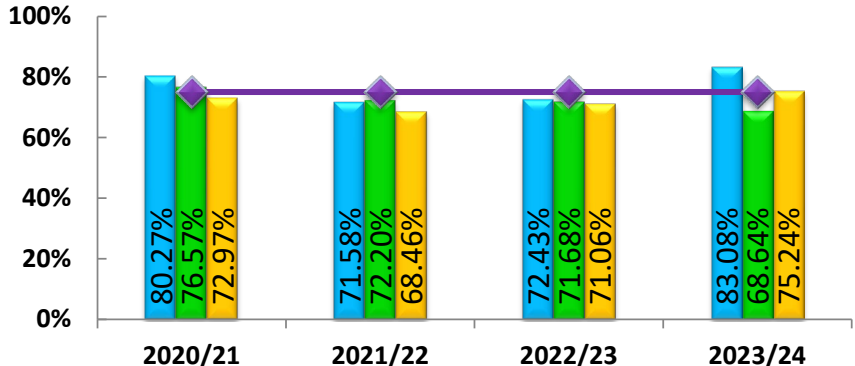
# How we performed

Bridgend Cardiff Vale of Glamorgan

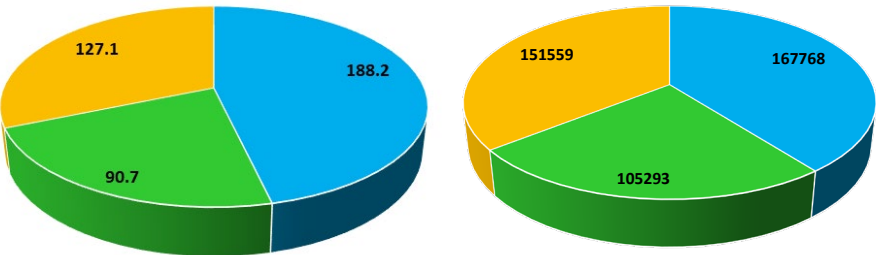
% domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days



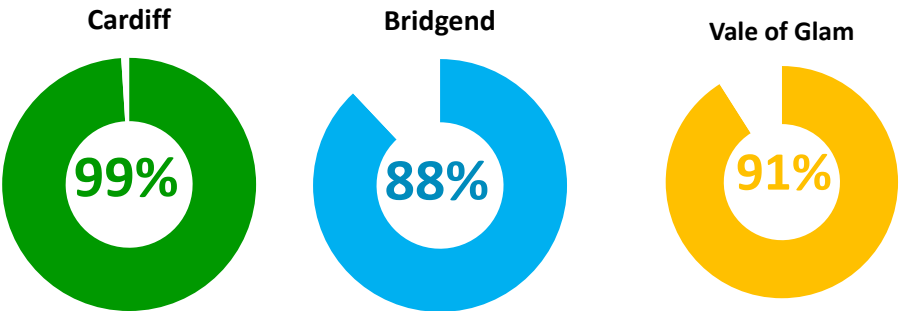
% commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day



Reduction of carbon dioxide produced and KWh in energy used for heating at rental properties as a result of improved EPCs



% of alarm complaints responded to within one day 2023/24



# What we have achieved

## The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

**Air Quality** - The issue of Air Quality is never far from the headlines and the impact of poor air quality on health is well documented. Indeed air pollution continues to be the largest environmental risk linked to deaths in the population with long term exposure (over several years) contributing to a reduction in life-expectancy primarily due to an increased risk of mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory causes. On the 14th February 2024, the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act received Royal Assent. The Act will implement measures that contribute to improvements in the quality of the air environment in Wales and will look to reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health, biodiversity, the natural environment and the economy. A key aspect of the Act, is how Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) is due to be amended, and it will become a duty for local authorities to review the current and future air quality in their area on an annual basis.

In **Bridgend** the 2023 APR demonstrated that only two sites, both located within Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) exceeded the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide NO<sub>2</sub> as prescribed in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002. All other locations within Bridgend County Borough continued to meet all other relevant air quality objectives. Both locations recorded annual average figures in 2022 of 47.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> & 45.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> respectively. Whilst these results are still seen to be elevated and in exceedance of the objective it is worth noting that this represented a reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations of 12% and 17% at these locations since 2019. Furthermore, provisional results for 2023 show a further reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at these locations. Further assurance and data ratification is required, and the results will be confirmed in the 2024 APR.

During the course of 2023/24 work was progressed to further develop and refine measures of the AQAP for Park Street. This resulted in an additional modelling work being undertaken which assessed the impact of further measures including electrification of buses using Park Street and also banning HGVs on using Park St. The modelling showed that these additional measures had minimal impact in terms of reducing future NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations on Park Street and therefore were not taken forward for implementation, but retained as future options in the AQAP. Further work was also undertaken to forecast a likely year of compliance, as requested by Welsh Government as part of their review of the draft AQAP. The assessment demonstrated that compliance will be achieved by 2026 with all measures in place. The assessment also identified that

the implementation of Measure 18, would not bring forward compliance owing to the timescales for further consultation on any Traffic Regulation Order and potential objections etc. On this basis the Final AQAP plan to be approved by Cabinet has suggested to retain this measure. Cabinet approval was due to take place in April 2024.

In **Cardiff** the 2023 APR demonstrated that out of the 135 non automatic monitoring locations across the entire City, no monitoring sites recorded exceedances of the annual average objective set for NO<sub>2</sub> of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The APR provided an overview of the concentrations within each of the 4 AQMAs in Cardiff. Monitoring in the AQMAs demonstrated compliance was being achieved in each of the 4 AQMAs, although one location in the Llandaff AQMA, was close to exceeding the annual mean for NO<sub>2</sub> (39 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and there has been a slight increasing trend in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations since 2020 at this location.

The report detailed that owing to the continued increase of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at this location it will be necessary for the Council to consider additional specific actions for the Llandaff AQMA. That said results for 2023 show an improved picture at this monitoring location with a provisional result of 34 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The APR also gave a further update on the ongoing work on Castle Street in relation to the Welsh Government Air Quality Direction. At the time of the Cabinet Report, the Council had submitted an updated Final Plan, which was being reviewed by Welsh Government's Expert Panel, and a final decision on funding for the Castle Street Scheme is anticipated in quarter 1 of 2024/25.

In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, the 2023 APR demonstrated that there were 50 specifically allocated non-automatic monitoring sites across the Vale of Glamorgan which monitored levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). From the 50 locations monitored throughout the Vale with the use of passive diffusion tubes, no sites breached the national NO<sub>2</sub> annual objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> or the NO<sub>2</sub> 1-hour objective (200 µg/m<sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year). Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan has seen a downward trend in NO<sub>2</sub> levels since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report also provided an update on a successful application to the Local Air Quality Management support fund from Welsh Government, for funding to upgrade and enhance the current real time air quality monitoring capabilities within the Vale. The bid enables the Vale to install an additional 5 monitors and the locations will be decided using a risk-based approach in line with relevant technical guidance.

**South Wales Metro Project** – The South Wales Metro Project will lead to huge improvements to the railway infrastructure in South Wales. The project will increase services on many lines as well as introducing new stations in areas such as Cathays, Cardiff Bay and East Cardiff. There is however a significant amount of construction work needed to be undertaken, including the electrification of the railway lines, upgrading of station access, and replacing footbridges. In order to keep essential public transport

operating, much of these works needs to be completed outside usual working hours, at night and on weekends which requires consent from SRS.

During the past year, Transport for Wales have made 71 applications to SRS under Section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to undertake noisy out of hours construction works. These works are often carried out in close proximity to residents and officers review the applications to ensure that works to be carried out are being undertaken by 'best practicable means' to ensure any disturbance to residents is minimised. Frequent contact (fortnightly meetings) are held with Transport for Wales and Amey acoustics to discuss applications before they are submitted and ensure that appropriate communication is being provided to local residents and respond to complaints. This engagement with TFW also extends to de-vegetation works which requires no consent, but officers still worked closely with TFW to ensure 'best practicable means'. Given the amount of works being undertaken and the nature of those works, SRS have received relatively low numbers of complaints, with 12 in total, the majority of which related to the use of access points or compounds.

**Environmental Sampling** – SRS completed the assessment and sampling of all statutory private water supplies across the region and ensured statutory returns were supplied to the Drinking Water Inspectorate as required. This involved 56 visits across the region to take water samples at private water supplies. 5 Compliance Notices were served for private water supplies improvements. Water samples were taken at 8 events across the region.

## Animals are treated humanely

**Cardiff illegal dog breeder breached disqualification** – This case centred around a defendant who had been previously disqualified under the Animal Welfare Act from keeping any animals, dealing in them, owning them, participating in keeping them and from being party to any arrangements under which he was entitled to control or influence the way in which they are kept, transporting them and arranging for the transport of them for a period of 8 years. On investigating another illegal dog breeder, SRS officers established that the defendant had breached the court order imposed in July 2021. Mobile phones had been seized from the home of the other alleged illegal dog breeder and messages from these mobile phones were downloaded. Those messages indicated that he had been dealing with animals including being involved in the sale of puppies for £12,000. The defendant pleaded guilty to one charge of breaching the disqualification and was fined £1000, ordered to pay £590 together with a victim surcharge of £400.

**Illegal dog breeding** – The service continues to receive complaints about illegal dog breeding and a number of investigations are ongoing. During the year there have been

involved in several seizures of dogs and puppies from private properties where the environment they were being kept in was unsuitable and dogs were found to be suffering. Prosecutions are pending.

**SRS achieves gold standard in the RSPCA PawPrints Award** – 2023 saw our Animal Health and Welfare Team recognised via the RSPCA PawPrint Awards Scheme for their work in animal related licensing, stray dog provision and kennelling. It was particularly pleasing to see that not only did the service maintain its 2022 gold standard in animal related licensing and stray dog provision, but for the first time achieved the gold standard in kennelling for the first time. SRS is the only service in the UK to achieve the gold standard in 3 categories.

## People will use energy efficient buildings and products

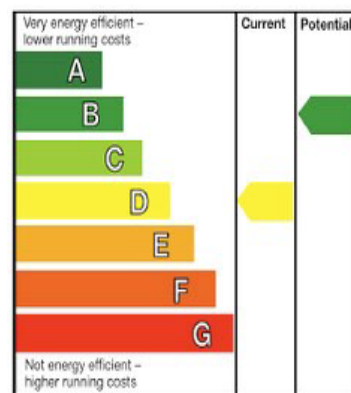
**Empty Homes** – In **Bridgend** SRS have collaborated with Bridgend Council to ensure progress in relation to enforcement against properties that have been identified in the Empty Property Action Plan. This has resulted in the demolition of dangerous properties with the site being cleared for redevelopment. Works in default are ongoing at a number of other properties, the costs of which will be supported via successful bids made to the Welsh Government Empty Property Enforcement Fund and considered for enforced sale. A further property has been identified as being suitable for Compulsory Purchase. In terms of enforcement work, SRS successfully prosecuted a property owner on 2 occasions for failing to provide documentation and comply with enforcement notices.

In **Cardiff**, SRS has continued to focus on tackling private sector empty homes across the city. This has included responding to complaints and enquiries and working proactively to engage with property owners providing assistance via site meetings, advice regarding property standards and rental requirements, referrals and signposting to other departments and avenues of financial assistance. This work has been further assisted with a corporate focus achieved through an empty homes working group. Good progress is being made with long term vacants identified in the action plan agreed with Welsh Government and discussions are currently ongoing to draw down funding from Welsh Government to support enforcement activities against the most challenging long term vacant properties. As a consequence of this work the number of properties brought back into use continues to increase year on year, with a total of 113 properties or dwellings brought back into occupation during the last year.

In the **Vale of Glamorgan**, following the appointment of an Empty Property Enforcement Officer as a result of additional funding received via the Council Tax Premiums work has begun to assess what actions SRS can assist with in relation to the Vale's Empty Property

Action Plan. A number of property owners of long term empty commercial buildings have been engaged with to encourage development and conversion to create residential units.

The **Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations** set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties requiring properties that need an energy performance certificate (EPC) to have a minimum 'E' rating, or have a valid exemption registered. At the beginning of the year SRS began engaging with property owners of rental properties identified as having EPCs rated F and G requiring them to submit improved certificates rated A to E. As a result of this work, 138 improved certificates have been received which equates to an estimated reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of 406 tonnes together with a reduction of 424620 kWh in energy needed for heating across the SRS region.



## Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

**Straying horses and dogs** - Our Animal Health and Welfare team has continued to work proactively across the area to reduce the instances of straying horses and associated welfare issues. Regular patrols have been carried out and stray dogs and other animals picked up, while at the same time, officers have taken every opportunity to work with residents across the region to improve responsible ownership.

**Student Liaison** – Student Liaison – The Student Liaison Officer (SLO) is a role that sits in the Cardiff Student Community Partnership (CSCP) and is jointly funded by the universities in Cardiff and Cardiff Council. The role focuses on facilitating work between Higher Education Institutions, the Local Authority, Police and Health Board including initiatives to address student-community issues and to collaborate with elected Members on strategic ambitions for the city.

Work continues to strengthen the new governance structure of the partnership, which was established in 2021, and embed a work programme that reflects the partnership's four priority areas: 1) Community Life, 2) Student Health and Wellbeing, 3) Economic Development and 4) Net Zero. Student housing has been a key focus of the partnership since it was established.

In 2023/24 the SLO completed a comprehensive report reviewing student accommodation provision and trends in Cardiff. The report provides an assessment of the spread and density of student accommodation; the supply and occupancy of purpose-built accommodation; as well as the regulation of student accommodation including HMO licensing. The report found that the spread of student accommodation now covers all wards in Cardiff, in addition to the traditional student areas of Cathays and Plasnewydd. Grangetown and Riverside are seeing a particular increase in properties claiming student council tax exemptions. Recommendations of the report include that the report should be repeated annually, further data sets should be identified to provide insight into student accommodation, a panel should be established with partners to review housing related cases, and discussions between partners should take place to assess accommodation strategies and how housing demand can be met. These recommendations will be actioned by the SLO this year and an updated report produced.

The SLO has also focused on improving communications and increasing engagement with students and local communities. In the past year, this has included officers engaging with over 77800 students through in-person events and initiatives, which is an increase of 1000 more in-person engagements on the previous year. A further 8000 student households received information and advice during the student arrival and move-out periods regarding noise awareness, waste management, community safety, parking and transport. Over 2000 landlords and 150 property management companies were supported with information to help manage student properties, and the Cardiff Digs social media channels received over 14,000 impressions on the student arrival and housing information campaigns. The SLO is working with university partners to increase the reach of the partnership's campaigns further.

As part of the student move-out work, in addition to existing charities, the SLO has also worked with the British Heart Foundation and Cardiff Foodbank, to accept donations of unwanted goods/foods to reduce waste and support local communities during the move out period.

The Council has successfully bid for UK Shared Prosperity Funding in partnership with Cardiff University. This funding allows for the creation of a temporary Student Recycling Outreach and Communication Officer for a year, to be managed by the SLO. One of the main purposes of the role will be to assist in the development, implementation and delivery of waste minimisation, recycling campaigns and initiatives targeted at Cardiff students.

The SLO continues to contribute strategic input into a range of groups, meetings, plans and consultations including the Cathays and Plasnewydd Operations Board, the U.K. Town and Gown Association, WRAP Cymru, Keep Wales Tidy/Caru Cymru and help to facilitate links between the University/Students' Unions and Local Authority Teams on specific case work.



## What we plan to do next

**\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan**

### Protecting the environment

**Lead  
Responsibility**

#### The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

Undertake local air quality assessments and review the data to ensure that national air quality objectives continue to be achieved. \*\*\*

**J Bale**

Use feedback from the public consultation to report back to Bridgend Cabinet to agree a finalised Air Quality Action Plan for Park Street and start work on the measure to improve air quality.

**J Bale**

Ensure good air quality by : reviewing real time air quality data to assess and identify trends in pollution to assess further interventions that will further reduce air pollution. \*\*

**J Bale**

#### People will use energy efficient buildings and products

Work with home owners and landlords to return empty properties back into use through engagement, support, consideration of varying the Council Tax premium scheme, and where necessary taking appropriate enforcement action to deal with the worst long term derelict empty homes. \*\*

**W Lane**

Engage with landlords and lettings agents to improve the energy performance ratings of private rented properties under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations. \*\* & \*\*\*

**C Hill**

#### Animals are treated humanely

Engage with Welsh Government regarding the welfare of stud and imported dogs and wider animal welfare issues related to dog breeding and sales.

**J Bale**

#### Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

Engage with students and residents during Freshers Week in Cardiff providing community advice on housing, environmental and social issues.

**W Lane**

## What we will measure

### Performance Measures 2024/25

**Target**

- % of domestic noise and air complaints responded to within 3 working days

**90%**

• % of commercial and industrial noise and air complaints responded to within one working day	75%
• % of alarm complaints responded to within one day.	90%
• % of empty private sector properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the local authority .(Cardiff only)	5%
• Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use. (Cardiff only)	20
• The number of private rented properties where energy efficiency has been improved through direct action from SRS.	Varies between authorities



## Priority

### Supporting the local economy

#### Outcomes



A fair trading environment is maintained



Informed and confident consumers



Improved business practices and operation



Accessible services responsive to business needs

#### Outputs

Disrupt the supply of illegal and unlawful products and services

Undertake inspection programmes

Take enforcement action against those that flout the law

Offer training and advice to businesses and consumers

Work with businesses to improve standards

License business activities

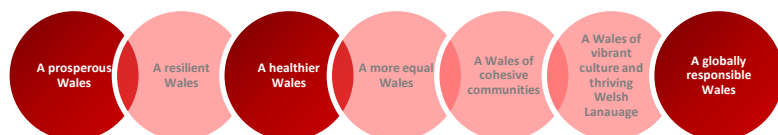
Offer primary authority partnerships

Contribute to business events

Major events liaison

Provide advice & information on licensing & planning applications

In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:

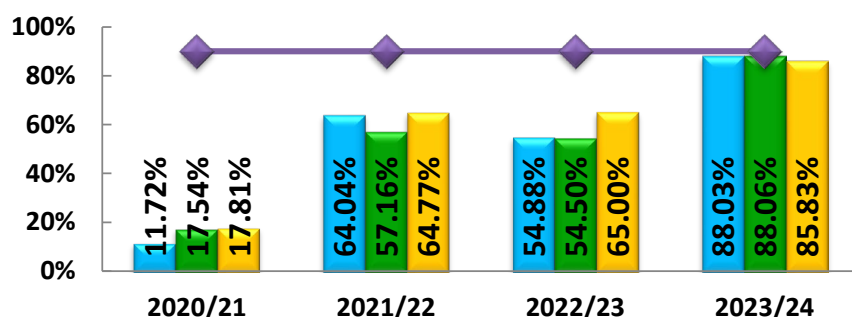


**A strong local economy** is a key component in the quality of life experienced by local people. The work of SRS has a significant, but often unseen, impact upon the local economy. The provision of timely advice and guidance on regulation can benefit the economic viability of businesses resulting in improved business practices; our growing role in the field of Primary Authority is testament to this assertion. Much of our market surveillance activity focuses upon maintaining balance in the “marketplace”; the equitable enforcement of regulations helps businesses to compete on equal terms ensuring a fairer trading environment. Our role as regulator also extends to information and education to support consumers to enable them to become better informed and confident. In an age where people can purchase goods and services without leaving home, the importance of the principle of “*caveat emptor*” has never been more relevant.

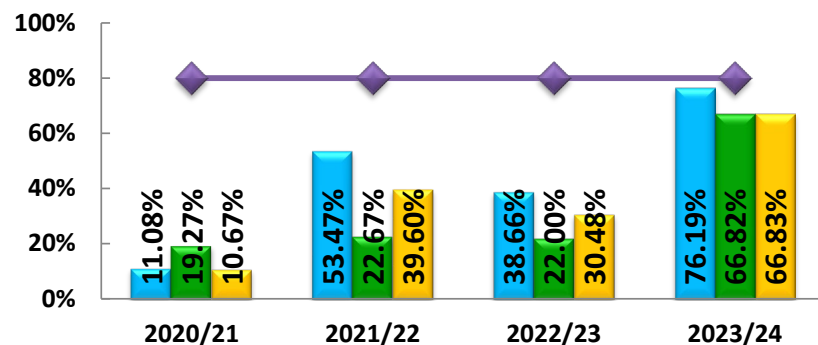
## How we performed

■ Bridgen
 ■ Cardiff
 ■ Vale of Glamorgan

**% of new Food Hygiene businesses identified and visited**



**% of new Trading Standards businesses identified and visited**



## What we have achieved

### A fair trading environment is maintained

**Trading Standards Impacts and Outputs** - Since the launch of the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) Impacts and Outcomes framework back in 2018, the impacts and outputs of Trading Standards work is reported annually as a means of demonstrating the vital contribution of these services in England and Wales in tackling detriment and preventing harm, supporting the local economy and promoting health and wellbeing. The latest report highlights the work of local authorities in Wales during 2022-23 demonstrates the significant contribution made by SRS. Across Wales, 228 months (19 years) worth of prison (or suspended) sentences were handed down as a result of trading standards prosecutions. Of these 48 months (3 years), equating to 16% of the Wales total were cases arising from SRS. Similarly SRS cases led to the convictions of 19% of defendants convicted across Wales, 5% of the fines imposed and 14% of all costs imposed by the Courts and 10% of compensation awarded to victims by the courts.

During 2023/24, the prosecution outcomes for trading standards have been significantly higher, with 165 months (over 13 years) of prison sentences handed down including both immediate and suspended sentences. Fines totalling £1,727, costs of £12,855 and compensation of £10,320 being awarded together with community orders totalling 1292 hours, a criminal behaviour order of 10 years duration and a 60 month disqualification under the Animal Welfare Act from keeping animals. Some examples of these prosecutions follow.

**Cardiff Rogue Trader jailed** – In this case the defendant took £113,000 from 4 victims to undertake building work leaving them in significant financial detriment. The work was of a very poor standard with 2 properties deemed unsafe. The defendant used pressure tactics by threatening to stop work if further monies were not paid, not doing work because he claimed to be unwell, taking monies for kitchens which he never ordered or provided and even threatened legal action against his victims when they challenged him on work not done, or goods not provided. Victims were 'ranted at' for more money and were forced to borrow money to get the remedial works completed. Victims were caused enormous stress and anxiety, suffered from insomnia and left out of pocket and in poor health due to the poor living conditions. The defendant was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment which was reduced for credit to 3 years and 9 months for the fraud offence and 8 months imprisonment for a firearm offence to run consecutively, giving a total of 3 years and 5 months. The judge was not able to award compensation to the victims as there were no funds.

**Bridgend car trader prosecuted under the Fraud Act 2006** – In this case the defendant sold a vehicle claiming he would register an extended warranty with Warranty Wise. However, despite taking £364 from the purchaser, he never registered the warranty resulting in financial detriment to the consumer. The defendant was given a 12 month community order consisting of 20 hours of rehabilitation to address his offending and 132 hours of unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £1,500 costs and a £96 court surcharge.

**Illicit tobacco** – Illegal tobacco continues to present a problem in our communities, and the most recent market research available indicates that at least 15% of all tobacco and tobacco products supplied are illegal (either counterfeit or non-duty paid). Many smokers appear to be comfortable in purchasing illegal tobacco, presumably under the misapprehension that the only impact of its widespread use is the loss of revenue to HM Treasury. This thinking ignores the most serious harms caused by illegal tobacco. At around half the cost of legitimate product, illegal tobacco removes the price incentive for smokers to quit the otherwise expensive habit. In addition, the way in which illegal tobacco is supplied means that mainstream tobacco control measures such as minimum age of purchase and the tobacco display ban are undermined. Finally, supply chains for illegal tobacco are sufficiently profitable to appeal to organised crime groups (OCGs). Part of this attraction has been the much lower penalty associated with the selling of illegal tobacco when compared to other supply chains such as those for drugs, weapons, etc. During 2023/24 the assistance of officers from Operation CeCe has allowed SRS resources to be deployed investigating intelligence primarily around illegal nicotine inhaling products/vapes and under age sales vapes. As a result most of the seizures of illegal tobacco have been at the same premises. In total 1078 packets of illegal cigarettes and 673 pouches of illegal hand rolling tobacco have been seized.

**Premises Closure Order** – The Service was successful in its first application to close a retail outlet under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, this being in response to the harm caused in the community arising from the supply of illegal tobacco (and also in this particular case, nitrous oxide). The Magistrates Court hearing resulted in a 3-month closure order being imposed in March 2024, and a further application is being progressed to extend the closure of this outlet. Moving forward, this approach is seen as a highly compelling and impactful enforcement tool and applications are being considered in respect of a number of other problematic premises.

**Counterfeiting** - Counterfeit products are fake replicas of the real product and are often produced with the intent to take advantage of the superior value of the imitated product. The word counterfeit frequently describes the imitations of goods such as clothing, handbags, shoes, pharmaceutical, watches, electronics, software, toys and films. Counterfeit products tend to have fake company logos and brands, and have a reputation for being low quality, unsafe and may even include toxic chemicals. The supply of counterfeit goods is often considered a 'victimless' crime, but this is far from the truth as

fake products can endanger the local economy and can potentially cause injury. Furthermore, the huge profits can be used to fund other serious organised crimes such as people smuggling, drugs, guns, child pornography and even terrorism.

In 2023 the trading standards team participated in an exercise with the police on an investigation into the sale of high-end branded clothing and footwear that were believed to be counterfeit. These were being sold online through websites and social media accounts. 808 items of branded clothing were seized by the police much of which has been confirmed as counterfeit. The police investigation is ongoing.

In another exercise SRS officers carried out a series of high profile operations with Cardiff Council's city centre management team and South Wales Police to disrupt itinerant traders in Queen Street selling counterfeit goods including perfume, tobacco products and apple ear pods. This action followed complaints from members of the public that they were being pressured into buying goods from street sellers and were unable to get a refund when they realised the products they had purchased were not genuine. Several items were seized during the city centre operations and vital intelligence shared as it would appear the group was targeting cities across South Wales. As a result of this action there have been no further sightings of this group of sellers in Cardiff.



## Improved business practices and operation

**Training provision** - The Service has continued to consolidate its excellent reputation as a training provider, training over 670 delegates during the year. Courses covered a wide range of themes including Levels 1-3 Food Safety in Catering and food safety refresher training, allergens, weights and Measures, and the newly introduced Level 2 Award in Infection Prevention and Control in Special Procedures. Four consumer law webinars for over 200 Access Training students across the UK studying plumbing, gas and electrical engineering, etc. were also provided.

**96%**  
Of delegates felt  
training will help  
them improve  
standards of  
compliance

The feedback from the delegates on the training received has been extremely positive, with 96% indicating they feel the training they receive will help them improve standards of compliance in their business, 94% indicating the training will benefit their business. Similarly 97% indicated that would recommend the training to a colleague, employee or friend. 96% rated the training as good to excellent.

## Accessible services responsive to business needs

**Primary Authority** - The Primary Authority scheme enables a business to enter into a statutory partnership with a local authority through which it can receive assured advice. Provided this advice is followed, the Primary Authority (PA) is able to challenge intended enforcement action by other local authorities. SRS now has some 36 Primary Authority partnerships in place with both local and national businesses and is able to charge for the work done as part of these arrangements on the basis of full cost recovery.

**36**  
Primary  
Authority  
partnerships

**'Ask the regulator' podcasts** – In order to make information and advice on regulatory matters as easy as possible to access, SRS launched a new podcast service in August 2021. The aim of these podcasts is to hold dialogues and discussions between regulators, businesses and members of the public on matters concerning environmental health, trading standards and licensing with a view to providing useful advice and guidance on things that matter to businesses across the SRS region. Produced by Bro Radio, the local community radio station focussed on the Vale of Glamorgan, SRS have so far produced 22 podcasts 3 during 2023/24) on a range of topics. During this year

these included a podcast with our Student Liaison Officer providing advice to students, another featuring the British Retail Consortium focussing on how and why businesses are regulated, and another introducing Trading Standards week. These podcasts can be accessed via the SRS website and are also available on Spotify.

## Informed and confident consumers

As part of its Safeguarding role, the Service provides assistance to residents identified as being vulnerable in resolving difficulties encountered as a result of marketing scams and also more straightforward 'shopping' problems. In providing this service, the aim is not only to resolve the immediate difficulty facing a resident but to equip them as well as their families and carers with the knowledge and awareness to avoid similar issues arising in the future. This Plan has highlighted several prosecutions undertaken by SRS against rogue traders that have scammed individuals of money for work not completed and these examples demonstrate where SRS has been able to make a real difference to the lives of residents needing assistance to resolve problems of this type. With the investment of officer time to provide tips on avoiding similar problems in the future, the legacy of these interventions is one where even our more vulnerable residents and their families are far better equipped to make informed decisions.

## What we plan to do next

\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan

### Supporting the local economy

Lead  
Responsibility

#### A fair trading environment is maintained

Conduct intelligence led operations to investigate and disrupt businesses selling illegal vapes and tobacco products and raise public awareness of how to report it.

C Hill

#### Informed and confident consumers

Continue to promote the 'Buy with Confidence' (responsible trader) scheme and take forward a business case to lead on the centralised administration of new applications to support other LAs.

J Bale

#### Improved business practices and operation

Explore options for extending training provision including the provision of specific training to support people who commit offences.

J Bale

#### Accessible services responsive to business needs

Continue to review the primary authority framework to ensure the advice and support requirements for our current Primary Authority partners are appropriate.

J Bale

## What we will measure

### Performance Measures 2024/25

Target

- % of new businesses identified which were subject to risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year for food hygiene.
- % of new businesses identified which were subject to risk assessment visit or returned a self-assessment questionnaire during the year for Trading Standards
- % of businesses who felt that interaction with SRS has helped them improve standards of compliance in their business.
- % of individuals who feel that the training they received through SRS will benefit their business.

90%

80%

85%

95%



## Priority

### Maximising the use of resources

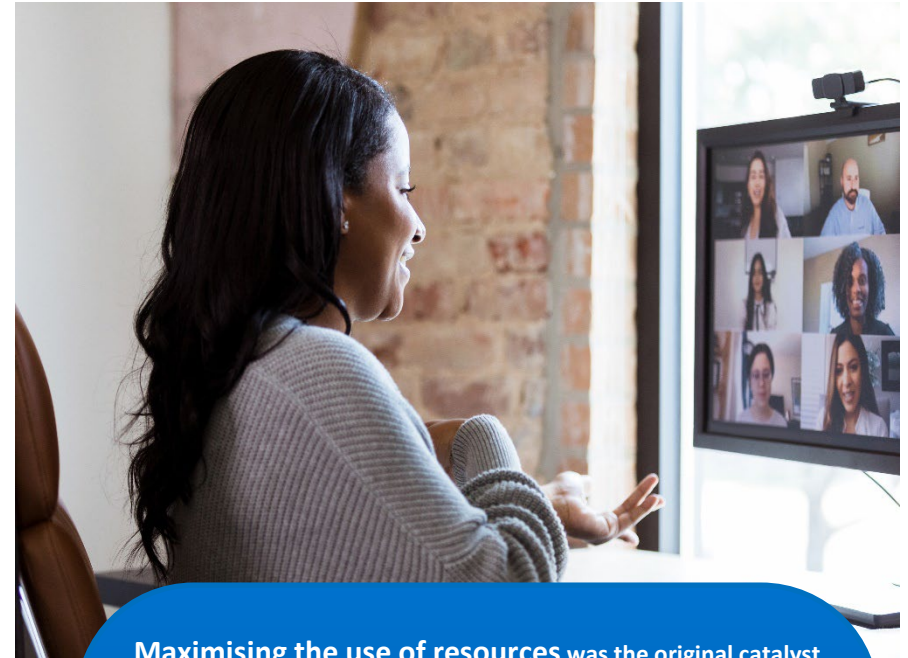
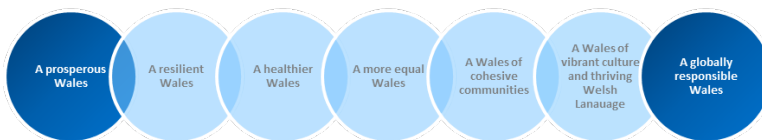
#### Outcomes



#### Outputs



In addition, our outcomes also contribute to the following wellbeing goals:-

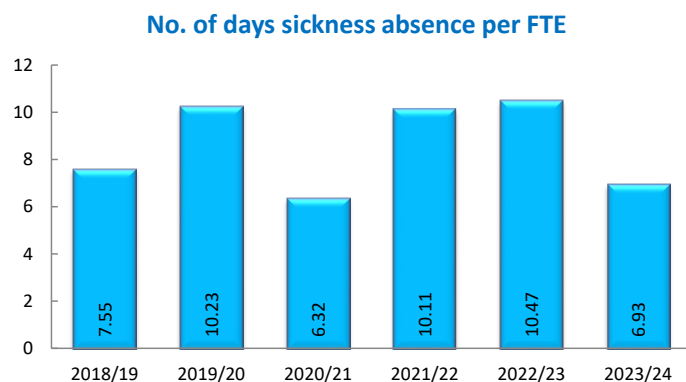


**Maximising the use of resources** was the original catalyst for creating SRS, and our work in this area continues. Reducing “triplication” of effort, introducing better processes, making our systems work without constant intervention, improving access into the service will all benefit our business and increase customer satisfaction.

We are generating income, where possible, to underpin service delivery; activities like marketing our metrology laboratory, offering paid for advice services, building Primary Authority partnerships and extending our training provision to business are examples of our more “commercial” culture.

Above all, we recognise that crucial to the success of SRS are the people who work within the service. We will ensure that our officers are effective in their roles by investing in learning and development opportunities, by engaging them fully in the development of the service, and by fostering an environment where people are encouraged to think, lead and innovate.

## How we performed



quality of life, my son felt very apprehensive and fearful leaving the flat and this caused me a great deal of distress and worry as his parent. Since your visit to the neighbour, we have not experienced another incident so I know your intervention has worked and this has had a huge impact on my son and I, he now feels safe to leave home and go to school independently and I am more at ease knowing this. I think the awareness raising was also needed to prevent such re-occurrences which, in my view, had the potential to cause lasting damage and injury to both my son and the dog in question. Thank you also for your professional, proactive and empathetic approach and for taking the time to check in. It is clear to see that you take great pride and effort in what you do - it has not gone unnoticed.". Service user of Animal Warden service.

"...When I said that we had rats in our communal bin area he said whilst he was here he'd go down and put traps in there. He came back up and said he's found out where they were coming from. He went above and beyond what he was supposed to do, when many employees wouldn't have. The worker is absolutely fantastic". Service user of our pest control service.

**Tablet devices** - In making the best use of its resources, SRS looks for opportunities to streamline how things are done in all areas of the Service. With this in mind, work continues to pilot the use of handheld tablet devices to replace the paper system currently being used to record the results of food inspections. It is hoped that this approach can be mainstreamed across the Food Service in 2024/25 to bring benefits such as the direct uploading of information onto the database avoiding the need for officers to spend time scanning multiple documents and the resulting delays in the uploading of information; reduction in the consumption of paper and lower printing costs; and less travel time for officers in having to pick up and drop off paperwork.

**In house Food and Safety Newsletter** - In March, the Service produced the latest version of its popular Food and Safety News (srs.wales) publication which was circulated to nearly 7000 businesses across the region. In a departure from the approach taken previously, the new edition has been put together in-house, meaning that its production is cost-neutral, other than officer time and a small investment in relevant and re-usable stock images. In the case of all previous editions of the publication, costs have been occurred for graphic design, Welsh translation, printing, and postage.

## What we have achieved

### SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

**Customer Satisfaction** – SRS delivers a diverse range of regulatory services on behalf of Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils and we place great importance on receiving customer feedback which enables us to understand what we are doing well and what can be improved. As well as monitoring customer satisfaction through surveys, the results of which can be found throughout this plan, we also receive specific feedback from individuals or groups that we have helped expressing their gratitude for our intervention. During the last year, we received a number of such compliments, a selection of which can be found below-

*"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all your support and time spent dealing with this matter. I am extremely grateful. As you know the incident was really affecting our*

## Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

**Access to SRS services** – The ease with which the public and stakeholders are able to access SRS services is extremely important for SRS and the use of technology to highlight and promote our services is utilised wherever possible.

The following examples show how SRS ensures access to services.

- **SRS website** – The improvement of the SRS website is an ongoing process which sees web pages being added or updated to provide valuable up to date information for SRS customers. During the last year, the website had 61,761 users, many of which were repeat visitors and 168,894 page views. Our Noise and Air Pollution web pages consistently receive the most page views.
- **Twitter account** – Since launching our own Twitter account @SRS\_Wales in 2017, the SRS continues to increase the number of followers which stood at 777 in March 2024. This means of communicating with our customers enables the service to share with the legacy authorities (to retweet to their followers) promoting the service and conveying key messages to residents and businesses alike.
- **Noise app** – This app can be downloaded by customers making a complaint about noise enabling them to record short bursts of the disturbance and submit to the service to determine if a nuisance has occurred. This app enables complaints to be triaged, reducing the need for officers to visit homes to monitor disturbances.

## Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

**UKAS Accredited Metrology Laboratory** - The Metrology laboratory based in Cardiff undergoes regular audits by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to maintain its accreditation. The metrology laboratory was first established in 1995, but since the creation of SRS there has been a drive to enhance the income generating capacity of the laboratory. Calibration work has been undertaken for a significant number of businesses, the majority of whom are regular and returning customers. These businesses represent a broad range of sectors including avionics, food, pharmaceutical and medical where accuracy and confidence in their weighing equipment is fundamental to their operations. In July, UKAS undertook an audit of the Lab and found the management system to be effective.

The provision of calibration services to business clients is well established, and has been expanded over time as new markets have been identified. One recent development is the provision of paid-for metrology courses for officers working towards their statutory weights and measures qualification and for qualified officers seeking refresher training. As the lab is the only UKAS accredited local authority metrology lab in Wales, the formal 2 day course is proving popular. Additional 'lab days' will also be offered to provide students the opportunity to practise what they have learnt in advance of their statutory Metrology practical and oral examinations.

**Income generation** – A key priority for SRS, is the further development of our commercial approach by increasing our 'paid for' services and marketing them to business. These commercial activities are aimed at complementing existing services whilst also providing income generation. We do this by developing Primary Authority partnerships with businesses of which we currently have 36 in place. Furthermore, the Service provides accredited training in areas such as food safety, health and safety and allergens and officers within the Industry Team have recommenced delivery of these courses through a mixture of online and face to face opportunities. SRS was the first training centre in Wales to deliver the RSPH Level Two Award in Infection Prevention and Control for Special Procedures Practitioners. Income is also generated via our UKAS accredited Metrology Lab services and we are expanding our environmental services with an increase in Air Quality Monitoring Services/Local Site Operator Licences. As a result during 2023/24 the income generated by SRS was £122,437.

**£122,000+**

**Income generated**

## Staff are effective in their roles

**Investing in Staff Learning and Development** – SRS is committed to developing staff to ensure they are effective in their roles. Learning and development can take many forms from traditional study to the taking up of secondments. During the last year, the service has invested in a number of learning and development activities to support the business including the following examples:-

- SRS continues to encourage SRS officers to engage in further study leading to recognised, higher level qualifications. For the past few years, support has been offered to a small number of staff by way of match funding, who have successfully demonstrated the benefits their desired qualification would bring to the service and to them personally. In the autumn of 2023, 4 members of staff received match funding support to begin further qualifications, 3 of whom are studying towards the MSc in Environmental Health and the other towards the HNC in the Built Environment. This is in addition to the 12 members of staff



who have successfully achieved additional qualification through match funded study. The qualifications attained since 2017 include:-

- Eight achieved the MSc in Environmental Health
- One achieved the MSc in Health and Public Services Management
- One achieved the MSc in Leadership and Management
- One achieved the MSc in Public Sector Leadership
- One achieved the MSc in Public Health.

The success of the initiative is evident, not only in demonstrating how SRS values its staff and supports their development, but in equipping the service with the necessary skills and behaviours to shape future leaders. All but two of the sixteen staff supported to date remain with the service. In the run up to the new academic year, expressions of interest will again be sought for opportunities for further match funded study. Of necessity, opportunities will be scaled back moving forward given the continued financial pressures facing the Service, with applications considered on a case by case basis in line with the performance review process.

- Secondments provide development opportunities for both the employee who is seconded and the employee who fills the empty position. Within SRS we now have one team manager seconded to a different stakeholder which has enabled their role to be filled on a temporary basis by an existing employee. Furthermore two officers were seconded to the Health Protection Partnership performing a co-ordinating role across the wider public health network. The ability to 'act up' provides valuable development opportunities and experience for officers, whilst also contributing to the effective management and resilience of the service.
- Training in food standards work continued amongst our food safety officers to enable them to undertake low risk food standards interventions at the same time as a food hygiene inspection. This training and the concept of generic working not only provides team members with learning and career development opportunities but benefits the service by building a more cohesive and resilient approach to inspections.
- Looking to the longer term, the Service continued to work closely with Cardiff Metropolitan University offering a number of work placements for Environmental Health degree students during the year. This relationship has been further enhanced by the establishment of two academic awards in

memory of the SRS Environmental Health professionals who very sadly passed away in service in 2022. Awarded for the first time in June 2023, the Zoe Pieris Award recognised the highest achieving final year degree student by exam grade, and the Rachel Stickler Award recognised the student who best exemplifies the values of the Environmental Health profession through their commitment, drive and positive attitude.

- SRS fully supports and continues to take the lead on the development of the regulatory apprenticeship for Wales, recognising the benefits that such an approach will bring in addressing recruitment pressures in the regulatory field. While we wait for its implementation, SRS have successfully adapted the approach to 'grow our own' officers by recruiting 2 students into Technical Officer roles while they study for Higher Certificates in Food.

# What we plan to do next

\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan

## Maximising the use of resources

Lead  
Responsibility

### SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

Explore options for introducing newer technologies that ensure officers can operate more efficiently and where possible reduce operating costs, for example strengthening the ICT interface between the partner authorities and introduction of mobile devices for inspections. \*\*\*

J Bale

Review all future service delivery options in light of the ongoing year on year financial pressures. \*\*\*

H Picton

Explore options to improve electronic payment options for SRS customers.

J Bale

Extend the scope of the Intelligence Operating Model across further SRS services, for example private sector housing complaints.

J Bale

Explore opportunities to provide digital forensic services to external organisations and assess feasibility of obtaining full accreditation.

J Bale

Engage with partner authorities on accommodation requirements as a result of hybrid working arrangements.

C Hill

Identify a clear process through which any significant reprioritisation of SRS services would be decided by partner Councils including how such an exercise would be communicated and consulted upon, as part of the process through which a final decision is made.

H Picton

Undertake a review of the Business Support function.

J Bale

### Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

Improve engagement and consultation with stakeholders including service users and residents and review the effectiveness of current mechanisms used to access Shared Regulatory Services. \*\*\*

All OMs

### Staff are effective in their roles

Complete the PDR process with all SRS employees.

All OMs /TMs

Produce a workforce development plan for the service that addresses recruitment and retention pressures, incorporates the identification of staff learning and development needs and other HR approaches. \*\*\*

H Picton

Review mechanisms for engagement with staff to seek their ideas about the future delivery of services and opportunities to further improve staff wellbeing. \*\*\*

All OMs

Improve internal communication mechanisms to ensure staff are kept up to date on developments

H Picton

### Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

Maximise options for cost recovery and income generation to ensure this approach underpins sustainable service delivery.***	J Bale
Undertake a marketing campaign for Metrology Laboratory Services including training provision to increase income generation opportunities.	J Bale

## What we will measure

Performance Measures 2024/25	Target
Average days sickness per FTE.	8.00
% of Staff Performance Development Reviews completed.	100%
% of staff who feel they are able to achieve the right balance between work and home life.	100%
% of staff working in SRS who are satisfied with their job in SRS.	100%
% of customers satisfied with their ability to access the facilities and services they need from SRS.	90%
% of SRS investigations resulting in prosecution that were successfully concluded.	90%

# Appendix 1 – Risk Register

Possible Impact or Magnitude of Risk	Catastrophic	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH	16 VERY HIGH
	High	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	9 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH
	Medium	2 LOW	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH
	Low	1 VERY LOW	2 LOW	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>
Low 1-2 Low/Medium 3 Medium 4-6 Medium/High 8-10 High 12-16		Very Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Almost Certain
Likelihood/Probability of Risk Occurring					

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
RR1: Insufficient resources, and capacity to deliver planned services will result in loss of service provision and reduction in performance.	4	3	High 12	The creation of SRS generated significant cost savings at its inception and the service continues to deliver services with a reducing budget across 3 local authority areas. These, and the latest budget savings together with other factors, such as new and emerging legislation, the cost of living crisis, the rise in infringements and recruitment and retention pressures are all severely impacting our	4	3	High 12

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
				ability to deliver planned services. To mitigate this, the Service is examining new ways of prioritising some services and using risk based approaches to activities in line with reduced resources, and through the recruitment of temporary staff and graduates. Serious concerns, however do remain in relation to the delivery of planned services as we enter the new financial year.			
RR2: Inability to recruit professional officers to vacant posts.	4	3	High 12	Recruiting to vacancies, particularly to those roles that require professionally qualified officers continues to be challenging. The shortage of applicants with the right skills, abilities and experience in the different professions has created a more competitive market due to the traditional supply of professional officers from universities being greatly reduced, and it now taking longer to qualify. The demands of working across 3 local authority areas, and job titles that do not reflect the professional disciplines and standing of roles are also thought to be contributory factors to recruitment and retention pressures. SRS has made a commitment to 'grow our own' practitioners and to this end has been forging excellent links with academic institutions and professional bodies. and continues to take the lead on development of the regulatory apprenticeship for Wales. Furthermore we are working with staff to make appropriate changes to job titles that better reflect the relevant disciplines.	3	3	Medium/ High 9

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
RR3: The complexities of resource allocation may result in a lack of understanding and misalignment of resources.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	Dedicated accountant appointed for the Service. Governance arrangements in place to address lack of understanding. Review and standardisation of financial processes ongoing.	2	2	Medium 4
RR4: The loss of critical ICT systems and appropriate support will be detrimental to working as a single service unit and the ability to work smarter and more efficiently.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	The service utilises a web based database that facilitates remote working and all staff have been issued with laptops and mobile devices which enables more agile working. There is however a need to improve our remote working capabilities together with the IT interface between the SRS and the partner authorities. Progress is being made in Cardiff to migrate across to a new way of accessing Cardiff systems and a pilot has commenced within the Food Team to utilise tablets to undertake food business inspections which will enable the service to deliver services more efficiently and effectively across all 3 areas.	2	2	Medium 4
RR5: Failure to identify and resource staff learning and development to address changes in roles together with the immediate needs and long term goals of the service, could result in staff capability issues amongst which would affect the SRS ability to deliver services.	3	3	Medium/ High 9	SRS is committed to the resourcing of training to develop people to ensure competency and the corporate appraisal process <i>#it'saboutme</i> ensures performance reviews are undertaken annually and learning and development opportunities identified. A match funding offer to staff for personal development has resulted in a number of officers being supported in further development studies however this is likely to be unsustainable given the latest budget savings.	1	3	Medium/ Low 3
RR6: Implementation of new legislation may create				Whilst workloads are reviewed and monitored and processes are in place to regularly report to			

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
additional demands on service delivery.	4	3	High 12	partner authorities, it is not always easy to predict the impact that new legislation may have on resources. An example of this was during the Covid 19 pandemic when SRS became responsible for enforcing the Coronavirus Regulations across the 3 partner authorities which required a change of focus and placed additional demands on the service. While our commitment to this has reduced the pressure continues with the new special procedures legislation which is expected to be implemented this year increasing demand on the service at a time when budgets are being cut and recruitment and retention pressures exist.	4	3	High 12
RR7: An inability to recruit officers to the Duty Officer regime may result in inadequate cover and failure to deal with emergencies out of hours.	3	2	Medium 6	The Duty Officer regime operates on a 24/7 basis over 365 days a year providing a single point of contact out of office hours dealing with SRS emergencies. Cover is provided by officers on a paid voluntary basis however there can be periods where it is difficult to recruit officers resulting in shortage of cover. This has required managers to step in at short notice. While the policies and procedures have been reviewed and training provided for new officers to the rota there is still a lack of resilience with no further action that can be taken.	2	2	Medium 4
RR8: The positioning of Shared Regulatory Services under a host authority, together with unique branding may result in the Service becoming divorced	2	2	Medium 4	The Service remains relevant to all 3 authorities through links into the Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and maintaining strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote	1	2	Low 2

Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
from its constituent Councils or marginalised.				successes taken where possible. The Covid-19 pandemic saw the critical involvement of SRS in the Test, Trace and Protect and the enforcement of Coronavirus regulations bring about greater attention and recognition from the 3 authorities we serve. We continue this approach with our work on minimum energy efficiency standards which contributes to the climate change agendas of the partner authorities.			
RR9: Failure to sustain the shared regulatory services partnership.	2	3	Medium 6	As a collaborative service SRS provides a diverse range of services to Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan under a single management structure with shared governance arrangements. The partnership generated significant cost savings at its inception while providing greater resilience to the important services SRS provides across all 3 areas. To break up the partnership would therefore be hugely detrimental to the delivery of these services and have significant financial implications for the partners. In terms of mitigating measures, SRS maintains links into Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and has strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote successes taken where possible.	1	3	Medium/Low
RR10: Failure to align agendas and objectives with key partners and remain relevant to all.	2	3	Medium 6	SRS operates under a Joint Working Agreement (JWA) which sets out the functions to be carried out by the joint service, the terms of reference and constitution of the Joint Committee, the Management Board etc., the terms of staffing and	1	3	Medium/Low



Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score (April 2024)		Risk	Comments What SRS are doing to mitigate risks	Residual Risk Score		Risk
	Likelihood	Impact			Likelihood	Impact	
				services to be provided by the host and other partners, financing and other functional issues and the financial operating model. Furthermore the service aligns its objectives with those of the partner authorities. Recent budget cuts however requested of SRS from the partners suggest possible disparities emerging which will make the delivery of services across SRS difficult to balance. The service however will continue to remain relevant to all 3 authorities through links into Corporate Plans of 3 authorities, attendance at the various Council/Executive meetings and maintaining strong links with members and senior officers within each legacy authority with opportunities to promote successes taken where possible.			

# Appendix 2 – Action Plan

**\*\* - Cardiff Corporate Plan \*\*\* Vale Service Plan**

## Improving health and wellbeing

Lead  
Responsibility

### The food chain is safe and free from risks

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2024/25\ \*\*\*

C Hill

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Port Health Plan 2024/25.

C Hill

### Risks in the workplace are managed properly

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out in the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2024/25. \*\*\*

C Hill

Explore the feasibility of introducing an innovative approach to the enforcement of smoke-free requirements on hospital grounds to optimise staff efficiency.

C Hill

### Noise and air emissions are controlled

Review and explore options for future proofing the Duty Officer Rota.

W Lane

Continue to work with Transport for Wales in minimising noise disturbance to residents from works associated with the South Wales Metro Construction.

W Lane

### A safe trading environment is maintained

Undertake seasonal product safety projects encompassing products such as contact lenses and fancy dress costumes.

C Hill

Conduct firework inspections of licensed premises to ensure those holding a licence sell fireworks that meet the relevant safety standards, have adequate policies in relation to age restricted sales and stored safety in retail premises.

C Hill

### Licensed premises operate responsibly

Review the Statement of Gambling Act Policies in Bridgend and Vale.

W Lane

### The quality of private rented property is improved

Drive up standards in the private rented housing sector by undertaking robust enforcement action to deal with rogue agents and landlords letting and managing properties. \*\*

W Lane

Continuing to work with Welsh Government and stakeholder organisations in the development of their Building Safety Programme for medium and high-rise buildings in the private sector. \*\*

W Lane

Review and harmonise the annex to the SRS Compliance and Enforcement Policy in relation to Housing Enforcement.

W Lane

## Infectious disease is controlled and prevented

Protect public health through the delivery of actions set out within the Communicable Disease and Health Service Plan..\*\*\*

C Hill

Prepare businesses and internal procedures in readiness for the implementation of the new special procedures licensing regime and through the delivery of RSPH Level 2 Infection Control Training course for Special Procedures.

C Hill/J Bale/W Lane

## Safeguarding the vulnerable

Lead  
Responsibility

### Older and vulnerable people are protected from unscrupulous traders and scams

Consider how SRS could engage more with Elected Members regarding areas of concern and safeguarding for the public, such as rogue traders, scams, illegal money lending and doorstep crime.

H Picton

### Children are protected from harmful substances and products

Work in partnership to safeguard the vulnerable to ensure that children are protected from harmful substances and products, older people are protected from rogue traders and scams and vulnerable people are not subject to exploitation. \*\*\*

All OMs

Conduct intelligence led underage sales exercises in relation to the sale of tobacco, alcohol, nicotine inhaling products, knives and other age restricted products.

C Hill

### Illegal money lending activities are prevented

Raise awareness of illegal money lending and support individuals to access responsible lenders and debt advice, rebuild their finances and make a sustainable transition to legal credit. \*\* & \*\*\*

J Bale

### Taxi provision is safe and fair

Engage and respond to Welsh Government on the modernisation of taxi and private hire services in Wales.

W Lane

Undertake enforcement exercises with the taxi trade including mystery shopper exercises to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act, vehicle and licensing standards and fare refusals for short journeys .

W Lane

Review taxi vehicle testing regime in Bridgend.

W Lane

Ensure the decision by the Council to introduce mandatory card payment facilities in hackney carriages licensed by Cardiff Council is implemented.

W Lane

## Protecting the environment

Lead  
Responsibility

### The environment is protected from harmful emissions to land, air and water

Undertake local air quality assessments and review the data to ensure that national air quality objectives continue to be achieved.\*\*\*

J Bale

Use feedback from the public consultation to report back to Bridgend Cabinet to agree a finalised Air Quality Action Plan for Park Street and start work on the measure to improve air quality.

J Bale

Ensure good air quality by : reviewing real time air quality data to assess and identify trends in pollution to assess further interventions that will further reduce air pollution. \*\*

J Bale

## People will use energy efficient buildings and products

Work with home owners and landlords to return empty properties back into use through engagement, support, consideration of varying the Council Tax premium scheme, and where necessary taking appropriate enforcement action to deal with the worst long term derelict empty homes. \*\*

W Lane

Engage with landlords and lettings agents to improve the energy performance ratings of private rented properties under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations. \*\* & \*\*\*

C Hill

## Animals are treated humanely

Engage with Welsh Government regarding the welfare of stud and imported dogs and wider animal welfare issues related to dog breeding and sales.

J Bale

## Communities are protected from nuisance and are safer

Engage with students and residents during Freshers Week in Cardiff providing community advice on housing, environmental and social issues.

W Lane

## Supporting the local economy

Lead  
Responsibility

### A fair trading environment is maintained

Conduct intelligence led operations to investigate and disrupt businesses selling illegal vapes and tobacco products and raise public awareness of how to report it.

C Hill

### Informed and confident consumers

Continue to promote the 'Buy with Confidence' (responsible trader) scheme and take forward a business case to lead on the centralised administration of new applications to support other LAs.

J Bale

### Improved business practices and operation

Explore options for extending training provision including the provision of specific training to support people who commit offences.

J Bale

### Accessible services responsive to business needs

Continue to review the primary authority framework to ensure the advice and support requirements for our current Primary Authority partners are appropriate.

J Bale

## Maximising the use of resources

Lead  
Responsibility

### SRS operates effectively and efficiently across all 3 areas

Explore options for introducing newer technologies that ensure officers can operate more efficiently and where possible reduce operating costs, for example strengthening the ICT interface between the partner authorities and introduction of mobile devices for inspections. \*\*\*

J Bale

Review all future service delivery options in light of the ongoing year on year financial pressures. \*\*\*

H Picton

Explore options to improve electronic payment options for SRS customers.

J Bale

Extend the scope of the Intelligence Operating Model across further SRS services, for example private sector housing complaints.

J Bale

Explore opportunities to provide digital forensic services to external organisations and assess feasibility of obtaining full accreditation.

J Bale

Engage with partner authorities on accommodation requirements as a result of hybrid working arrangements.

C Hill

Identify a clear process through which any significant reprioritisation of SRS services would be decided by partner Councils including how such an exercise would be communicated and consulted upon, as part of the process through which a final decision is made.

H Picton

Undertake a review of the Business Support function.

J Bale

### Public and stakeholders are able to access our services

Improve engagement and consultation with stakeholders including service users and residents and review the effectiveness of current mechanisms used to access Shared Regulatory Services. \*\*\*

All OMs

### Staff are effective in their roles

Complete the PDR process with all SRS employees.

All OMs /TMs

Produce a workforce development plan for the service that addresses recruitment and retention pressures, incorporates the identification of staff learning and development needs and other HR approaches. \*\*\*

H Picton

Review mechanisms for engagement with staff to seek their ideas about the future delivery of services and opportunities to further improve staff wellbeing. \*\*\*

All OMs

Improve internal communication mechanisms to ensure staff are kept up to date on developments

H Picton

### Income generation underpins sustainable service delivery

Maximise options for cost recovery and income generation to ensure this approach underpins sustainable service delivery.\*\*\*

J Bale

Undertake a marketing campaign for Metrology Laboratory Services including training provision to increase income generation opportunities.

J Bale



<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION POLICY</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>MARK LEWIS GROUP MANAGER – EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>The current guidance document in relation to elective home education (EHE) was last updated in 2007. There have been a number of legislative changes since this date which are now reflected in the policy document attached at Appendix 1. The local authority is required to have a policy document in relation to EHE to implement its legal duty.</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of an Elective Home Education Policy.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The current guidance document in relation to elective home education (EHE) was last updated in 2007. There have been a number of legislative changes since this date which are now reflected in the policy document attached at **Appendix 1**. The policy if approved by Cabinet will replace all previous guidance.
- 2.2 The local authority is required to have a policy document in relation to EHE to implement its legal duty.

## 3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 An EHE policy is essential and contributes to the wellbeing and educational rights of children and young people. The local authority is required to comply with a variety of legislative frameworks that enables it to implement its legal duty under the Education Act 1996.

- 3.2 Every child has a right to education. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 indicates that it is the duty of parents/carers of every child of compulsory school age to “receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”. Most parents/carers fulfil this duty by school enrolment. The EHE policy enables the local authority to collect data on the number of home-educated children, the demographics of these families and the educational approaches being used.
- 3.3 The local authority supports the rights of parents/carers to educate their child at home under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. An EHE policy authorises the local authority to certify that the parental provision provided at home is meeting the required acceptable standards. The EHE policy supports a proactive approach and can help prevent educational neglect and ensure children are receiving a quality education. An EHE policy allows the local authority to issue School Attendance Orders (SAO) in line with Section 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996, if they are not satisfied with the evidence of elective home education provided. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides a right for children to express their views, the local authority will meaningfully consider the view of the child when making judgement as to the suitability of education.
- 3.4 The EHE policy enables the local authority to uphold its duty under section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The EHE policy supports the local authority to monitor and safeguard vulnerable children, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect their welfare.
- 3.5 The EHE policy identifies that a child missing their right to an education is a potential safeguarding concern due to the potential for their development to be impaired, therefore a child appearing to be missing education is something that all professionals have a duty to report. When such concerns are raised, the local authority will then adhere to its children missing education (CME) process to ascertain if the learner is on roll at a school, is effectively being EHE or is indeed CME. The local authority has an obligation to ensure that all children of statutory school age living in the Bridgend area are in receipt of a suitable education either at school or otherwise.
- 3.6 An EHE policy encourages the local authority to work with parents/carers of electively home educated learners and additionally collaborate with various agencies including schools, social services, health and police if there is an identified need. A multi-agency approach is crucial for information sharing and allowing a more comprehensive support system for children and families.
- 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 Summary on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

<b>Long-term</b>	Children and families are enabled to take control and responsibility for the care and protection without intervention from the local authority.
<b>Prevention</b>	Schools having robust, effective and graduated responses that are understood across the school will ensure children and staff are protected from harm.
<b>Integration</b>	The service is a multi-agency partnership where integration is key to good service delivery arrangements.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Collaboration is a key approach to supporting children and families through the sharing of information and resources.
<b>Involvement</b>	Participation and engagement arrangements will be strengthened to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities linked to safeguarding.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change implication as a result of this report.

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

7.1 The EHE policy enables the local authority to uphold its duty under section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The EHE policy supports the local authority to monitor and safeguard vulnerable children, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect their welfare.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications related to this report.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the policy attached at **Appendix 1**.

## **Background documents**

None

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# **Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate**

## **Elective Home Education Policy**

**2024**



<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Purpose	3
Introduction and context page	3
Electing to home educate a child	4
Reasons for elective home education	6
Deregistering from school and becoming EHE	6
Children's rights and the voice of the child	7
School's responsibility	8
Local authority responsibility	8
Pupils with additional learning needs	9
EHE that does not meet the required level	10
Information management system	10
Monitoring and review	10
Flexi-schooling	11
Seeking return to school	11
Toolkit	13



## **Purpose**

This policy provides guidance to schools, parents/carers and electively home educated learners regarding parents/carers who choose to educate their children at home.

It clarifies the law that relates to the right of parents/carers to choose to home educate their child rather than for them to be educated at school.

It sets out:

- the role and responsibilities of Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) regarding supporting and monitoring the education of home educated learners;
- how the local authority will ensure learners who deregister from school will become known to the local authority and how they will comply with its duty to ensure that all learners of statutory school age receive a suitable and efficient full-time education; and
- how learners who have been electively home educated but are seeking to return to school settings will be supported to do so.

## **Introduction and context**

In March 2017, Welsh Government issued statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 indicates that it is the duty of parents/carers of every child of compulsory school age to 'receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'. Most parents/carers fulfil this duty by school enrolment.

Some parents/carers decide that elective home education (EHE) is a more suitable option for their child, and they have the legal right to do this.

The local authority supports the right of parents/carers to educate their child at home but also has a legal obligation to ensure that the parental provision is meeting the required level. If, despite attempts to engage with parents/carers to ascertain and support the EHE provision, the local authority is not able to obtain any or sufficient information to be satisfied that the EHE provision is suitable, then the local authority will issue a School Attendance Order (SAO). This is in line with section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

This process is then followed until and unless the EHE threshold is evidenced, or unless the child enrolls in a school. The local authority seeks to ascertain this at least annually. In most cases this will be by way of a mutually agreed visit in the home setting but can also be, by way of face-to-face meeting at a variety of venues, by video link meeting or by parent/carer submitting a written report. We will always endeavour to gain the view of the child or young person - the 'voice of the child' - about their education when discussing or making decisions that affect them.

Home education is a key aspect of parental and learner choice, alongside the option to send a child to school, subject to the parents/carers providing an education suitable to the age, ability, and aptitude of the child.

The local authority wants to work for and with parents/carers of electively home educated learners, to enable the children and young people who are educated by their parents/carers to fulfil their potential, access suitable qualification, resources, support in the wider community and where appropriate signposting to services.

### **Electing to home educate a child**

Home educators are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to provide 'efficient full-time suitable education'. There is no definition of 'efficient full-time suitable education'. However, as a guide and based on established case law it should prepare the child for life in a modern society and allow them to reach their full potential. As a good practice guide it should include:

- consistent involvement of parents/carers or other significant carers;
- respond to the needs and the best interests of the child, considering areas of learning that interest the child, and should enhance the child's potential;
- ensure the child has opportunities to engage in a reasonably broad range of learning experiences;
- provide opportunities to develop personal and social skills to help prepare them for later life and become engaged citizens;
- ensure the child has opportunities to develop basic skills (taking into consideration any additional learning needs (ALN) they have);
- presence of a philosophy or ethos with parents/carers showing commitment, enthusiasm, and recognition of the child's needs, attitudes and aspirations;
- opportunities for the child to be stimulated by their learning experiences;
- involvement in a broad spectrum of learning opportunities and activities appropriate to the child's stage of development;

- access to appropriate resources and materials;
- the opportunity to develop digital literacy;
- the opportunity for an appropriate level of physical activity and play; and
- the opportunity to interact with other children and adults.

The term 'efficient' has been described in case law as an education that 'achieves that which it sets out to achieve'. When considering if the education is efficient the local authority will also look to see if there is evidence of progression over time. This will often be tailored to the needs of the learner and the nature of the EHE provision but may include a range of formats including externally recognised qualifications, awards and certificated grades.

It is recognised that home educators and home educated learners come from all social, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Home educators are not required to have any formal qualification or training to home educate their child, nor is there any obligation to seek or recruit tutors to support their child's learning at home. Parents/carers may delegate some of their responsibility to deliver EHE provision to others but should ensure they are satisfied that the other providers are suitably qualified, insured and safeguarded at these times. Tuition centres and alternative providers are not regulated in the same way as registered schools and there are rules about the limits of what such provisions can offer, both in terms of the proportion of the learning and in terms of numbers, they make provision for.

Parents/home educators are not required to teach the National Curriculum as it only applies to state schools. As a home educator, it is the parent's/carer's choice as to what areas of work are completed. There is no requirement to observe the school hours, days, or terms or to follow a fixed timetable. The phrase 'full-time' can be interpreted differently since a child's education at home is often formulated on an individual basis. There is also no requirement for parents/carers to assess their children nor to enter them for examinations. It is especially important that consideration is given to the nature of the education intended to be provided before deciding to educate at home.

The law requires a child to be educated from the start of the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they reach sixteen years.

Parents/carers will be responsible for all financial implications of home education, including books, resources, equipment, and examination costs.

### **Reasons for elective home education**

Elective home education (EHE) is a term used to describe when parents/carers choose to take a direct responsibility for educating their children instead of enrolling them in a school. This education may take place within a variety of community settings, as well as at home. The home educating community in Wales is a diverse population with families choosing to home educate for a variety of reasons. These may include:

- ideological or philosophical;
- health (including emotional health, well-being and bullying);
- cultural;
- religious;
- additional education provision;
- language choice;
- length of school journey;
- awaiting a place in the school of their choice; and
- flexibility and tailoring of teaching approach.

A school or local authority should never encourage a parent/carer to remove a child from the school register to avoid a child from being excluded or a parent/carers from being prosecuted.

### **Deregistering from school and becoming EHE**

Parents/carers electing to home educate their child need to do the following:

- Submit written confirmation of their intention to home educate advising the headteacher of the reason for the decision, date from which the changes take effect and that they take full responsibility for their child's education and wish their child to be removed from the school roll. The school must then notify the local authority of this as soon as possible and within ten days at the latest. Notice should be emailed to [electivehomeeducation@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:electivehomeeducation@bridgend.gov.uk)
- If the child has never attended a school, the parent/carer should inform the local authority of their decision.
- If the child is registered at a special school, then the written consent of the headteacher and the local authority must be sought prior to deregistration.
- Children who have never entered the formal schooling system and who are electively home educated may not be registered on the local authority record of individuals being electively home educated. If, and when, the local authority becomes aware of children who are electively home educated the child will be added to the local authority register. This will enable them to access the support of the local authority and any potential entitlement to any grant offers.
- Some parents/carers choose not to inform the local authority if they are home educating their children and there is no legal obligation upon parents/carers to notify the local authority of this. However, they may become known to the local authority by way of a concern from a member of the public or a professional that the child appears to be truanting or is potentially a child missing education (CME). A child missing their right to an education is a potential safeguarding concern due to the potential for their development to be impaired. Therefore, a child appearing to be missing education is something that all professionals have a duty to report. When such concerns



are raised, the local authority will then adhere to its CME process to ascertain if the learner is on roll at a school, is effectively being EHE or is indeed CME. The local authority has an obligation to ensure that all children of statutory school age living in the Bridgend area are in receipt of a suitable education either at school or otherwise.

## **Children's rights and the voice of the child**

Welsh Government has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) as the basis for all its work for children and young people. Article 12 of the UNCRC provides a right for children to be able to express their views and for due weight to be given to those views, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This does not, however, give children authority over parents/carers.

Wherever possible, when parents/carers have chosen to electively home educate, the views of the child should be obtained. All children have a right to participate in decision making that affects their lives and their views relating to the suitability of their education should be given due weight in accordance with their capacity as per Article 12 of the UNCRC. This will help the local authority to meaningfully consider the views of the child when making a judgment as to the suitability of education. Person centred approaches will underpin discussions with parents/carers and children, but individual circumstances will be discussed on initial contact with the family.

Article 28 of the UNCRC states that all children have a right to an education and that primary education should be compulsory and free. Article 29 states that education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. However, one of the underlying principles of the UNCRC is the best interests of a child, and Article 3 of the UNCRC requires all adults to think about how their decisions will affect children and to do what is best for the child.

## **School's responsibility**

On receipt of written confirmation from a parent/carer indicating their intention to home educate, the head teacher at the registered school, on behalf of the governing body, is required as soon as possible and within 10 working days to:

- advise the local authority of parental intentions completing notification of pupils withdrawn from school to be educated at home appendix 6 ([electivehomeeducation@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:electivehomeeducation@bridgend.gov.uk));
- headteachers are required to advise the local authority of any concerns regarding the decision by the parents/carers to electively home educate;
- remove the child's name from the school register; and
- update the 'School 2 School' website with their common transfer file (CTF).

Schools are asked to ensure that the decision to home educate is a fully informed parental decision and does not relate to issues that could be resolved by way of discussion or a mediated meeting. The Education Engagement Team will assist and attend such meetings if made aware of the concerns.

## **Local authority responsibility**

The local authority will acknowledge the parental intention to home educate the child within ten school days of receipt of the letter. In the case of learners at a special school the local authority will consider requests to deregister from the school through the Additional Learning Needs Panel.

In accordance with sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996, the authority can intervene if it appears that the child is not receiving an efficient, suitable full-time education.

Information provided from relevant organisations will be sent to electively home educated learners via the local authority to ensure they receive the support, advice and services to which they are entitled.

The local authority has a duty under section 175 (1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This section states: 'a local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred upon them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.'

Local authorities should approach all cases where the suitability of home education is in doubt using their powers in the Education Act 1996. They should also be ready, if a lack of suitable education appears likely to impair a child's development, to fully exercise their safeguarding powers and duties to protect the child's wellbeing. The safety and wellbeing of all children in Bridgend is a priority. The local authority identifies that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the rights of the child should be central to our approaches with their best interests being paramount. Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out what must and should be done to safeguard children and adults. This applies to all children regardless of where and how they receive their education. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and agencies should ensure that practitioners coming into contact with children are aware of the arrangements set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/working-together-to-safeguard-people-volume-5-handling-individual-cases-to-protect-children-at-risk.pdf>

The Children Act 2004 provides the legislative framework for developing children's services. Section 25 of the Children Act 2004 sets out a statutory framework for cooperation arrangements to be made by local authorities with a view to improving the well-being of children in their area.

The All-Wales Safeguarding Procedures, published in autumn 2019, is supported through several all-Wales practice guides on safeguarding children in specific circumstances. These multi-agency practice guides provide information about responding to safeguarding issues. This includes an all-Wales practice guide with a section on safeguarding children who are home educated.

A parent's/carer's decision to home educate is not in itself grounds for concern about the welfare of children. However, as with school-educated children, child welfare

issues may arise in relation to home-educated children. If any safeguarding issues come to light during engagement with children and families, these concerns will be immediately notified and acted upon appropriately. The All-Wales Safeguarding procedures will be followed: [www.safeguarding.wales/en/](http://www.safeguarding.wales/en/)

### **Pupils with additional learning needs**

Parents/carers seeking home education for a child registered at a special school must obtain written consent from the local authority prior to withdrawing them from school.

Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) can be withdrawn from school to be home educated. However, to ensure the needs of the child are met, parents/carers will be advised to seek further information from the headteacher and/or additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCo) of the registered school. The ongoing EHE will need to support the ALN of the child in a suitable manner which considers the ALN but also the unique context of home learning. Where a child has a statement or an individual development plan (IDP) and is EHE, the statement or IDP does not automatically cease. While the statement/IDP is maintained it must be reviewed annually.

### **EHE that does not meet the required level**

In the case of all EHE learners the local authority will seek to support parental preference to home educate. If after a reasonable period of support, it becomes apparent that in the opinion of the local authority the EHE provision does not and is not likely to meet the legal threshold; then the local authority is obliged to consider the issue of a SAO. The local authority will seek to engage with, support both parent/carers and learner and will liaise with other agencies and teams where necessary for the best interests of the child.

### **Management information system**

The authority will maintain a record of all pupils they are advised of as being home educated and will store this data securely. Information about EHE learners will be shared only when obliged to do so in line with court orders, parental consent, legal obligations under safeguarding and working together and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

### **Monitoring and review**

The local authority has a responsibility to ensure that parents/carers are providing an “efficient, suitable full-time education.” Although, there is no legal requirement for parents/carers to engage with the local authority it would be in the child’s best interest to keep communication links open since in the absence of information the local authority may need to consider that the child is or may be CME and thus is obligated to consider a SAO.

The local authority will make contact within ten days initially by phone, email or letter offering an introductory visit or discussion. This is then usually followed up with a

review visit once the EHE has had a chance to become established no later than twelve weeks.

EHE visits are thereafter usually made annually. The local authority will make a professional judgement about the EHE provision as reported by the parent/carer and learner and will share any concern to parents/carers and seek to work together to resolve these. If the EHE concerns remain, then discussion will be held to explore possible solutions to this such as a supported school admission, wider professional support and input.

If parents/carers do not wish to accept a home visit, we will look at other possibilities such as alternate venues, remote virtual meetings or the submission of written reports.

The local authority will follow up attempts to contact parents/carers by phone, emails and written letters. If these efforts have not led to an agreed way to support and assess the EHE, then we will consider issuing a SAO.

In accordance with sections 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 local authority can intervene if it appears that the child is not receiving an efficient, suitable full-time education. In extreme circumstances, a SAO can be served. This allows parents/carers fifteen days to provide information as requested to evidence the work completed to ensure the suitability of their education. Extreme circumstances would include:

- where education is in the opinion of the local authority not efficient or not suitable to the age, ability and aptitude and to ALN needs and this situation is unlikely to be resolved through further on-going dialogue; or
- when the authority has made every effort to secure information to comply with its duty to satisfy that an efficient and full-time education is being provided and no response or an insufficient response has been provided.

If, following a period of no less than 15 days beginning with the date the notice has been served, a parent/carer fails to satisfy the local authority that a child is receiving suitable education the parent/carer could be prosecuted or given a fine.

Please see Bridgend County Borough Council School Attendance Enforcement Policy for further information:

<https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/documents/s30813/20230919%20Cabinet%20Appendix%201%20School%20Attendance%20Enforcement%20Policy%20September%202023%20v1.0.pdf>

### **Flexi-schooling**

This is a term that can be confusing as it is not EHE. This is not an EHE learner but where the child is a pupil at a school in the normal way however the child is only expected to attend school part time. Schools should only agree to this if this is a short-term arrangement and is clearly in the learner's best interests and is clearly aimed at increasing to a full-time education at school as soon as possible. Requests for flexi-schooling is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

## **Seeking return to school**







Should a decision by parent/carer to re-register their child on a school roll they can do so by linking with the Education Engagement Team or via Pupil Services (admissions) Team. Please see admissions code below:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/school-admissions-code.pdf>

For further information:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/all-wales-attendance-framework.pdf>

## Toolkit

Appendix 1 Local authority guidance	 Appendix 1 elective-home-educat
Appendix 2 Parents/carers easy read	 Appendix 2 -elective-home-educa
Appendix 3 Handbook for home educators	 Appendix 3 home-education-hanc
Appendix 4 Welsh Government model letter notification	 Appendix 4 Welsh Government model d
Appendix 5 Flowchart	 Appendix 5 EHE flowchart.docx
Appendix 6 Notification of pupils withdrawn from school to be educated at home	 Appendix 6 Notifcation of pupils v

### Local authority contacts:

electivehomeeducation@bridgend.gov.uk

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>RUTH RONAN, SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There will be no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>To appoint a replacement Member to sit as a representative on Bridgend County Care and Repair.</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the appointment of a replacement Member to sit as a representative on Bridgend County Care and Repair.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 A vacancy has arisen for one Elected Member representative to sit on Bridgend County Care and Repair.
- 2.2 Outside bodies are external organisations and partnerships which have requested that the Council appoint a representative to them. Outside bodies have separate governance structures to the Council. Appointments to outside bodies can be an important mechanism within the County Borough for: community leadership, partnership and joint working and knowledge and information sharing. The appointment of County Borough Councillors to serve on outside bodies is intended to be a mutually beneficial act for both the Council and the bodies listed. The implications associated with the appointments are considered to be positive.
- 2.3 With regard to making appointments the Cabinet should first consider whether it is appropriate for an appointment to be of a specific office holder either by reference to the constitution of the outside body concerned or in the light of any other circumstances as Cabinet may determine.

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

- 3.1 It is proposed that Members be appointed for a term of one year except where earlier revocation of appointment is appropriate.
- 3.2 It is proposed that where Cabinet nominates on the basis of a Member's role within the Authority the appointment be attached to the role and not to the individual Member, e.g. Scrutiny Chair, Cabinet Member.
- 3.3 All appointments are made with the assumption that appointees represent Bridgend County Borough Council. Should any appointee cease to be a Bridgend County Borough Councillor, they will cease to represent this Authority and are expected to relinquish their appointments as necessary.
- 3.4 Bridgend County Borough Council is entitled to nominate two Elected Members to sit on Bridgend County Care and Repair. One vacancy has arisen on this outside body and it is proposed that Councillor Jane Gebbie will fill this vacancy. Councillor Amanda Williams will remain as our other representative.

### **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 following is a summary of the implications to show how the 5 ways of working have been used to formulate the recommendation:
  - Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the long term planning of the business of the Council by the continuation of effective relationships with other organisations.
  - Prevention - Continued and relevant representation supports the Council by enhancing its current and future relationships.
  - Integration - The report supports all the well-being objectives.
  - Collaboration - This report supports partnership working with other organisations both locally and regionally.
  - Involvement - This report will maintain a relationship with other organisations through effective partnership working.

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



6.1 There are no climate change implications associated with these appointments.

**7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no safeguarding implications associated with these appointments.

**8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with these appointments.

**9. Recommendation**

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to: -

Appoint Councillor Jane Gebbie as one of our two Elected Member representatives on Bridgend County Care and Repair.

**Background documents**

None.

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