

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. Rhwch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Dyddiad/Date: Monday, 22 June 2026

Dear Councillor,

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 29 June 2026 at 10:00.**

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence from Members.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations).

3 Approval of Minutes

5 - 10

To receive for approval the minutes of 16/03/26.

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £04.12 in printing costs

4 Revenue Budget Outturn 2025-2026 11 - 52

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick - Leader
Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation
Councillor Martyn Jones - Cabinet Member for Education and Young People
Councillor Eugene Caparros - Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Job Share)
Councillor Gary Haines - Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Job Share)
Councillor Melanie Evans - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Councillor Colin Davies - Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

Jake Morgan - Chief Executive
Carys Lord - Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation
Lindsay Harvey - Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale - Corporate Director - Communities
Kelly Watson - Chief Officer - Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services

5 Age Friendly Baseline 53 - 78

Invitees:

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

Martin Morgans - Head of Service – Public Realm
Sophie Moore – Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing

6 Play Sufficiency 79 - 154

Invitees:

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

Sophie Moore – Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

8 Scrutiny Budget Working Group 155 - 166

9	<u>Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) Nomination</u>	167 - 170
10	<u>Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination</u>	171 - 174
11	<u>Forward Work Programme Update</u>	175 - 206
12	<u>Urgent Items</u>	

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

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 or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

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

Councillors:

F D Bletsoe
JPD Blundell
N Clarke
HJ David
H Griffiths
S J Griffiths
M L Hughes
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
RL Penhale-Thomas
T Thomas
A Ulberini-Williams
AJ Williams
MJ Williams
E D Winstanley

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor A Ulberini-Williams – Chairperson

JPD Blundell

HJ David

M L Hughes

E D Winstanley

Present Virtually

F D Bletsoe
RL Penhale-Thomas

N Clarke
T Thomas

H Griffiths
AJ Williams

J Llewellyn-Hopkins
MJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing due to prior other Council business
Claire Marchant - Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing

Invitees

Councillor John Spanswick
Councillor Hywel Williams
Councillor Martyn Jones
Councillor Eugene Caparros
Councillor Gary Haines
Councillor Melanie Evans
Councillor Neelo Farr

Leader
Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment (Job Share)
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment (Job Share)
Cabinet Member for Resources
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing

Jake Morgan
Carys Lord
Lindsay Harvey
Janine Nightingale
Kelly Watson

Chief Executive
Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation
Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People
Corporate Director - Communities
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

Kate Pask
David Wright

Corporate Performance Manager
Deputy Head of Children and Family Services

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026**Officers:**

Meryl Lawrence
Jessica Mclellan

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Scrutiny Officer

Declarations of Interest

Councillor AJ Williams – Item 4 – Personal – Chair of Governors at Coety Primary School

187. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 27 January 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

188. Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-2026-27

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following recommendations and requests for additional information: Recommendations 1. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to including more timescales in the narratives in the Performance Dashboards, in particular for the following: a. WBO 1.6.6 <i>Develop the Healthy Living Partnership Strategy</i> – timescale for securing feasibility funding; b. WBO 2.3.1 – timescale/milestones to <i>Approve and implement the new digital strategy</i> ; and c. WBO 3.4 – timescale for each of the projects under <i>Modernise School Buildings</i>
---------------	---

	2. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to amending the wording of WBO 2.1.4 from <i>‘Improve the way we handle and learn from corporate complaints and compliments’</i> to include improving the <u>process</u> relating to complaints. 3. In relation to homelessness, the Committee discussed that sometimes, although the Council meets its legal duty to people presenting as homeless, e.g. through providing temporary accommodation, their particular housing need is not always met and given the number of new homes being built in the County, the need for a percentage to be appropriate for people’s needs. The Committee therefore recommended that consideration be given to reviewing the effectiveness of the Council’s interventions in relation to homelessness are measured in a citizen focussed way and how the Council is working with Registered Social Landlords and the private sector to ensure a range of suitable accommodation to address homelessness in the short, medium and long term 4. The Committee expressed concern regarding the statement in WBO 4.5.2 that the Service’s three-year growth proposal <i>‘is still awaiting feedback from the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services’</i> and recommended that the narrative be updated as soon as possible in the Performance Dashboard. 5. The Committee discussed the <i>Sickness Absence by Reason</i> table in the Performance Dashboard and recommended that last year’s figures are also included in this table in order to demonstrate whether levels have improved and the overall direction of travel. 6. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to including Estyn Inspection Outcomes on the Regulatory Tracker. Additional Information Requested 7. The Committee discussed the measure, <i>‘higher/lower preferred’</i> and requested a note setting out its use and how it is used when commitments/Pis are on or above target. 8. With reference to WBO 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 relating to Ysgol Y Ferch O’r Sger, Afon Y Felin and Corneli Primary School, the Committee requested confirmation that the necessary paperwork for the land swap with Valleys to Coast had been signed and the likely timescales for the construction contract to be awarded. 9. The Committee discussed WBO 3.2 and requested details of the support for schools to address
--	---

	issues relating to behaviour and attendance, to aim to achieve the targets and that further detail is also included in the narrative on the Performance Dashboard. 10. The Committee requested that the upcoming briefing referred to by the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services regarding the school modernisation programme includes detailed updates on each school modernisation and upgrade project. 11. The Committee expressed concern regarding the statement in WBO 4.3 that '<i>more people are being made homeless from hospital requiring specially adapted accommodation</i>' and requested the number of cases falling into this category and what measures have been considered to address this issue, e.g. possible step-down care or use of existing residential or nursing homes on a temporary basis.
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

189. Budget Monitoring 2025-26 - Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following requests for additional information: Additional Information Requested 12. The Committee expressed concern regarding the significant projected year end underspend and requested an indication from Cabinet of their strategic priorities for use of any budget surplus after closure of the accounts and that any potential known significant under or overspends are reported to the Scrutiny Budget Working Group to improve transparency and to ensure that it adds further value to the budget setting process. 13. The Committee expressed concern regarding the underspend in 8 out of 11 Service Areas in Adult Social Care and requested confirmation that the efficiencies are not having an adverse effect on service users.
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

190. Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) Nomination

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Committee nominated Cllr Elaine Winstanley as the Labour Group Member and Cllr Martin Williams to replace the substitute Bridgend County Independents Group Member to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2025-26.
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

191. Forward Work Programme Update

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> The Committee approved its draft Forward Work Programme in Appendix A subject to the following request, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committees' Recommendations made at previous meetings in Appendix B and noted the Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Appendices C, D and E. 1. The Committee discussed the list of Reports to be scheduled and requested that these be scheduled as soon as possible.
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

192. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	16 March 2026

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

The meeting closed at 12:39.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2025-26
Report Owner/ Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION CORPORATE DIRECTOR – FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION
Responsible Officer:	JOANNE NORMAN ACTING DEPUTY HEAD OF FINANCE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	As required by section 3 (budgetary control) of the Financial Procedure Rules; Chief Officers in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member are expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control.
Executive Summary:	• The net revenue budget for 2025-26 was £383.226 million. The overall outturn at 31st March 2026 is a net under spend of £278,000 which has been transferred to the Council Fund. • This takes into account the establishment of a net £13.103 million of new earmarked reserves in 2025-26 to enable investment into services and facilities for residents and to mitigate future risks and expenditure commitments. • Total Directorate budgets provided a net under spend of £6.663 million and Council Wide budgets a net under spend of £5.944 million. • The outturn position also takes into account additional council tax income collected over budget of £774,000 during the financial year. • The overall under spend on the Council budget significantly masks underlying budget pressures in Additional Learning Needs services and Children's social care. • The main reasons for the overall under spend in 2025-26 are:-

	➤ Introduction of a UK Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) scheme relating to Waste Disposal costs (£3.922 million) ➤ Additional interest from current investments (£3.027 million) ➤ Maximisation of grant funding (£3.519 million) ➤ Savings on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges following the change in policy on the calculation of MRP (£943,000) ➤ Additional grant from Welsh Government towards the teachers' pay award 2025-26 (£521,736) and National Joint Council (NJC) employees (£665,984). ➤ Confirmed National Joint Council (NJC) pay awards being lower than provided for. • The budget approved for 2025-26 included budget reduction proposals totalling £8.379 million. At 31st March 2026 there was a shortfall on the savings target of £1.134 million, or 13.53% of the overall reduction target. • During 2025-26 Directorates drew down funding from specific earmarked reserves. The final revenue planned draw down from reserves was £2.186 million.
--	---

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Council's revenue financial position for the year ended 31st March 2026.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 26th February 2025, Council approved a net revenue budget of £383.338 million for 2025-26 based on the provisional local government settlement announced by Welsh Government on 11th December 2024. The Welsh Government announced its final settlement on the 20th February 2025. The Final Local Government Settlement for Bridgend was £112,234 less than provided in the Provisional Settlement mainly due to data changes in the Non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) element of Welsh Government's funding formula. This decreased the net revenue budget for 2025-26 to £383.226 million. The updated revenue budget was outlined in a report to Council on 12th March 2025, where it was also confirmed that no changes were made to the levels of council tax, or budget pressures and reductions approved by Council on 26th February 2025.
- 2.2 As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The delivery of agreed budget reductions is also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Summary financial position at 31st March 2026

- 3.1.1 The 2025-26 financial year has continued to be a complex year in managing the Council's budget.
- 3.1.2 A significant amount of external funding and grants were received and maximised in the last quarter of the financial year, the majority of which were unanticipated, resulting in a change in the financial position between quarter 3 and quarter 4.
- 3.1.3 The most significant changes between quarter 3 and quarter 4 were:-

Directorate budgets

- UK Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility funding for waste services - £3.922 million (see section 3.3.3 for further detail)
- An improved outturn on interest received - £1.428m
- Maximisation of the Children and Communities Grant - £846,000
- Maximisation of Pathways of Care Grant - £726,000
- Maximisation of the Housing Support Grant - £539,000
- Additional Connecting Care Grant - £336,000
- Maximisation of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) - £225,000
- Additional LAEG - £159,000
- Additional Housing Grants – Ukrainian (£85,000), Leasing Scheme Wales (£150,000) and Afghan Resettlement grant (£80,000)
- A £650,000 reduction in the overall Insurance fund liability following a number of claims being repudiated or discontinued.
- The improved position from the funding/grants noted above were partially offset by a bad debt provision of £3.281 million (see section 3.3.5 for further detail)

Schools delegated budgets

- Additional Welsh Government grant funding of £2.395 million, including LAEG (£724,000), LAEG Standards (£451,000), Demand Led (£205,000), Equity (£732,000) and Reform (£281,000).
- 3.1.4 Given the changes that have occurred which have resulted in a better financial position at the end of 2025-26, the Council is able to earmark some of this funding for initiatives that support residents. A more detailed review of Earmarked reserves is provided in section 4.4 of the report and **Appendix 4**.
- 3.1.5 The Council's net revenue budget and final outturn for 2025-26 is shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1- Comparison of budget against actual outturn at 31st March 2026

Directorate/Budget Area	Original Budget 2025-26 £'000	Current Budget 2025-26 £'000	Final Outturn Q4 2025-26 £'000	Final Over / (Under) Spend 2025-26 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend Qtr 3 2025-26 £'000
Directorate					
Education, Early Years and Young People	154,862	158,915	158,420	(495)	(505)
Social Services and Wellbeing Communities	115,909	119,599	117,352	(2,247)	(559)
Chief Executive's	33,754	35,299	31,669	(3,630)	119
	24,815	26,333	26,042	(291)	341
Total Directorate Budgets	329,340	340,146	333,483	(6,663)	(604)
Council Wide Budgets					
Capital Financing	5,958	5,861	3,612	(2,249)	(2,604)
Levies	10,209	10,209	10,195	(14)	0
Apprenticeship Levy	750	869	875	6	5
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	17,054	17,054	17,018	(36)	167
Insurance Premiums	1,363	1,363	857	(506)	144
Repairs & Maintenance	670	296	0	(296)	(70)
Pension Related Costs	430	430	458	28	32
Other Corporate Budgets	17,452	6,998	4,121	(2,877)	(6,326)
Total Council Wide Budgets	53,886	43,080	37,136	(5,944)	(8,652)
Net Council Tax Collection			(774)	(774)	0
Appropriations to Earmarked Reserves			13,103	13,103	0
Transfer to Council Fund			278	278	0
Total	383,226	383,226	383,226	0	(9,256)

3.1.6 The overall outturn at 31st March 2026 is a net under spend of £278,000 which has been transferred to the Council Fund, bringing the total Fund balance to £10.286 million. Total Directorate budgets provided a net under spend of £6.663 million and Council wide budgets a net under spend of £5.944 million. The outturn position also takes into account additional council tax income collected over budget totalling £774,000 during the financial year.

3.1.7 Further detail is provided on the more significant under and over spends and movements since quarter 3 in section 3.3.

3.1.8 The overall under spend on the Council budget significantly masks underlying budget pressures. The main financial pressures are in the Inclusion Services within the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate and Care Experienced Children Services in the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) Directorate.

3.1.9 There continues to be significant demand for additional learning needs (ALN) support at schools. The demand is high in particular for pupils requiring neurodevelopmental, behavioural, communication and complex medical support.

- 3.1.10 There is also significant pressure in children's residential placements. The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing a number of actions to address the pressures in line with the 3 year Plan for Children and Family services.

Budget virements/technical adjustments

- 3.1.11 There have been a number of budget virements and technical adjustments between budgets since the quarter 3 Revenue Forecast was presented to Cabinet in February 2026.
- 3.1.12 The main virements and technical adjustments since quarter 3 are outlined below:

Budget Virements

Service vired from / to	Amount
Transfer of funding from the Capital Financing budget to Communities Directorate to cover the cost of prudential borrowing for carriageway repairs and highways as agreed when the capital funding was approved.	£46,235
One off transfer of funding from Corporate Contingency to the Chief Executive's Directorate for a historic invoice received in relation to HWB ICT purchases for schools.	£65,276

Technical Adjustments

Service vired from / to	Amount
Transfer of inflationary uplifts not confirmed when the Medium Term Financial Strategy was agreed that are held centrally until evidence of the uplift is provided by the service areas.	£197,333
Allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) pay award for 2025-26 for Youth and Community Workers – confirmed in November 2025.	£29,060
Allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of the Employer National Insurance uplift for 2025-26 for Shared Regulatory Services	£32,518
Allocation of corporately held funding for Feasibility works in line with spend	£169,515
Allocation of corporately held funding for Revenue minor works in line with spend	£204,598

Budget Reduction Proposals

3.2 Monitoring of Budget Reduction Proposals

Prior Year Budget Reductions

- 3.2.1 As outlined in previous monitoring reports during the year, there were still £2.823 million of outstanding prior year budget reduction proposals that have not been met in full. Directors have been working to realise these savings

during the 2025-26 financial year. The position at year end is summarised in **Appendix 1** with a summary per directorate provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2 – Outstanding Prior Year Budget Reductions

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education, Early Years and Young People	291	149	142
Social Services and Wellbeing	501	206	295
Communities	464	300	164
Chief Executives	1,567	1,279	288
TOTAL	2,823	1,934	889

Note: The total budget reductions required in Table 2 represents the full original budget reduction targets.

3.2.2 **Table 2** shows that of the £2.823 million prior year proposals outstanding, £1.934 million have been realised, leaving a shortfall of £889,000. Proposals still not achieved include:

- EDFS19 – Communication and Relationships Team (£142,000 shortfall). Saving was not met in 2025-26 due to the delay in the consultation. The consultation will take place in 2026-27 and any shortfall against the savings target will be mitigated by holding staff vacancies until the restructure has been finalised.
- SSW13 – Reduction in investment into cultural services (£295,000 shortfall). A Cabinet report in May 2024 approved reductions of £65,000. The shortfall was covered by maximising grant funding opportunities in 2025-26 and will be covered by earmarked reserve funding in 2026-27. However, a long term plan to achieve the shortfall needs to be explored for the saving to be met in 2027-28.
- COM 2 2021-22 – Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle (£60,000 shortfall). The new site in Pyle opened in quarter 4 of 2023-24. As the exit terms of the lease in Tythegston were still being worked through in 2025-26 the saving was not achieved. The service area anticipate that this saving should be achieved in full in 2026-27.
- COM2 2023-24 – Charging Blue Badge Holders for parking (£40,000 shortfall). The Traffic and Transport Team are progressing with the order making process and have carried out an initial engagement on the proposal which is currently being evaluated prior to progressing during 2026-27.
- CEX22 – Review of ICT Services (£75,000 shortfall). Saving was not met in full following the re-procurement exercise on telephony budgets across the Council. The MTFs approved by Council in February 2026 includes a

budget pressure of £181,000 which includes the mitigation of the shortfall against this budget reduction proposal.

- CEX25 – Staff savings from Finance senior management team – (£70,000 shortfall). Shortfall in savings target was due to the failure to implement the proposed Finance Senior Management restructure. The MTFS approved by Council in February 2026 includes a budget pressure of £70,000 to reinstate this budget reduction proposal as the restructure was consulted on but it did not proceed.

Budget Reductions 2025-26

- 3.2.3 The budget approved for 2025-26 included budget reduction proposals totalling £8.379 million, which is broken down in **Appendix 2** and summarised in **Table 3** below. The year end position is that £7.245 million has been achieved, leading to an overall shortfall on the savings target of £1.134 million, or 13.53% of the overall reduction target.

Table 3 – Monitoring of Budget Reductions 2025-26

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education, Early Years and Young People	1,428	1,110	318
Schools	1,186	1,186	0
Social Services and Wellbeing	1,817	1,362	455
Communities	717	549	168
Chief Executives	688	495	193
Corporate/Council Wide	2,543	2,543	0
TOTAL	8,379	7,245	1,134

- 3.2.4 The most significant budget reduction proposals still not achieved in full are (> £100,000 shortfall):-

- EEYYP5 – Reduction in Strategy, Performance and Support Group (£109,000 shortfall). The consultation with staff on the restructure has now concluded with the new structure implemented from the 5th January 2026. Savings will be made in full in 2026-27.
- SCH1 – Efficiency saving against School Delegated Budgets – 1% in 2025-26 (£1.186 million). Whilst the saving is referenced as having been achieved due to the overall reduction in the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), as referenced in paragraph 3.3.1, the reduced budgets have resulted in an overall deficit balance for schools of £3.615 million. Officers continue to work with schools to bring this overall deficit down in 2026-27.
- SSW7 – Implementation of the Home remodelling programme across adult services (£198,000 shortfall). The saving has not been met in 2025-26 pending a review of the Support at Home service. The shortfall was met via one-off

efficiencies in 2025-26 from vacancies held across the service pending the review and the restructure being finalised in 2026-27.

- SSW8 – Reduction in the provision of number of Supported Living Accommodation units (£190,000 shortfall). It has been determined that this saving proposal is no longer deliverable and work is underway by the service to identify alternative budget savings to meet the shortfall. Updates will be provided to Cabinet in the 2026-27 revenue monitoring reports.

3.2.5 **Appendix 2** identifies the amount of savings achieved against these proposals in detail and action to be taken by the directorates to mitigate any shortfalls. Directors continue to work with their staff to deliver their proposals or alternatives and this is reflected in the outturn for the year.

3.2.6 As outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reports to Cabinet and Council, MTFS Principle 7 states that “Savings proposals are fully developed and include realistic delivery timescales prior to inclusion in the annual budget. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency Reserve will be maintained to mitigate against unforeseen delays”. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve was established in 2016-17. This reserve has been used to meet specific budget reduction proposals in previous years on a one-off basis pending alternative measures. It has not been used in 2025-26 to mitigate shortfalls as service areas were committed to identifying alternative one-off under spends in the service areas affected. This approach has also enabled the MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve to be maintained for 2026-27 where the level of savings required to be made is £2.348 million.

3.3 Commentary on the financial position at 31st March 2026

Financial position at 31st March 2026

A summary of the financial position for each main service area is attached in **Appendix 3** to this report and comments on the most significant variances are provided below.

3.3.1 Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate

The net budget for the Education, Early Years and Young People (EEYYP) Directorate for 2025-26, including school delegated budgets, was £158.915 million and the actual outturn was £158.420 million, following a planned draw down of £161,000 from earmarked reserves, resulting in an under spend of £495,000.

The main variances are:

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Actual Outturn	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Inclusion Group	8,824	9,647	823	9.3%
Home to School Transport	11,017	10,804	(213)	-1.9%
Catering	1,862	1,264	(598)	-32.1%
School Improvement	829	340	(489)	-59.0%

Schools' delegated budgets

Total funding delegated to schools in 2025-26 was £126.441 million (including Post-16 grant funding of £7.714 million)

The schools' delegated budget is reported as balanced in any one year as any under spend or over spend is automatically carried forward into the new financial year, in line with Welsh Government legislation, before being considered by the Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People in line with the requirements for managing surplus and deficit balances as set out in the Financial Scheme for Schools.

The year-end position for 2025-26 was:-

- Net overall school balances totalled a deficit balance of £619,000 at the start of the financial year. During 2025-26, school balances decreased by £2.996 million to a deficit balance of £3.615 million at the end of the financial year. This is an improved position from the projected deficit of £5.593 million reported at quarter 3. The position has improved due to additional grant funding of £2.395 million received from Welsh Government in the final quarter of 2025-26, including Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) (£724,000), LAEG Standards (£451,000), Demand Led (£205,000), Equity (£732,000) and Reform (£281,000).
- Out of a total of 59 schools, there are 36 schools with a deficit balance (30 primary, 6 secondary and no special schools) and 14 schools (10 primary, 3 secondary, and 1 special) that have balances in excess of the statutory limits (£50,000 primary and £100,000 for secondary and special schools) in line with the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010. These balances will be analysed in line with the Council's agreed 'Guidance and Procedures on Managing Surplus School Balances'.
- The Financial Scheme for Schools requires schools to obtain permission from both the Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People and the Section 151 Officer to set a deficit budget. Schools with deficits greater than £50,000 in a primary school or greater than £150,000 in a secondary or special school are requested to attend termly support and challenge meetings with senior Local Authority officers. In addition, any unplanned deficits that occur within the financial year due to unforeseen circumstances must be reported as soon as they become known to the schools.
- A summary of the position for each sector and overall for 2025-26 is provided below:-

	Balance brought forward	Funding allocated in 2025-26	Total Funding available	Actual Spend	Balance at year end
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Primary	(744)	58,084	57,341	60,123	(2,782)
Secondary	351	61,739	62,090	63,071	(981)
Special	(226)	14,333	14,106	13,958	148
Total	(619)	134,156	133,537	137,152	(3,615)

Central Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate budgets

The under spend for 2025-26 for the Central Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate was £495,000. This is compared to a projected under spend of £505,000 at quarter 3.

Inclusion Group

- There is a net over spend of £823,000 in Inclusion Group budgets, which has increased by £520,000 from the projected net over spend of £303,000 reported at quarter 3. The main reason for the increased over spend is the repayment of historic grant income for Adult Community Learning (£204,000), a service that ceased in 2024-25. In addition, £280,000 of the Welsh Government (WG) ALN grant was allocated to specific schools during quarter 4 due to the significant demand for ALN support at schools.
- The service area has benefitted from Local Authority Education Reform Grant funding for additional learning needs (ALN) (£1.157 million), without which the net over spend in Inclusion Group budgets would be £1.980 million. Welsh Government have confirmed the ALN grant for 2026-27 will be £1.100 million.
- The main reason for the underlying over spend is that there continues to be significant demand for ALN support in schools resulting in an over spend of £590,000. This is an increase from the £303,000 over spend projected at quarter 3 and is due to demand continuing to increase. The demand is high in particular for pupils requiring neurodevelopmental, behavioural, communication and complex medical support. The number of pupils supported during the spring term 2025 was 303, increasing to 345 during the summer term, 348 during the autumn term, and 357 in Spring 2026.
- Recoupment expenditure budgets over spent by £163,000. Whilst numbers have remained stable in inter-county recoupment placements, with 20 during summer term 2025, 18 during autumn term 2025 and 19 in spring 2026, there is an underlying pressure due to additional support being provided at Heronsbridge School and Ysgol Bryn Castell to mitigate further external placements. The costs for the support provided by the special schools alone were £603,000 in 2025-26 which has been partially offset by grant (£360,000). This approach prevents higher costs that would have been incurred with external providers.
- Recoupment income budgets under spent by £133,000. Numbers have remained fairly stable with 21 during summer term 2025, 20 during autumn term 2025 and 19 in spring 2026, however the complexity of the cases has increased requiring additional support.
- The net over spend has also been partly mitigated by staff vacancies held across Inclusion Group budgets (£131,000).
- The MTFS approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £250,000 budget pressure for ALN services, primarily for the additional support being provided at Heronsbridge School and Ysgol Bryn Castell to mitigate further external recoupment places. It also includes an ALN budget pressure of £800,000 which includes additional resource bases in schools, particularly for communication and autism, due to the significant increase in the number of pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs, and pupils with complex medical needs and physical disabilities.

Home-to-school transport (HtST)

- There is an under spend of £213,000 on HtST, an increase of £49,000 from the projected under spend of £164,000 reported at quarter 3.
- The underlying under spend is as a result of achieving efficiencies in contracts throughout 2025-26.
- The under spend reflects that the MTFS budget reduction proposal in this service area for 2025-26 of £675,000 will be met in full – EEYYP 2 – review of HtST. However, contracts will continue to be reviewed in order to meet the 2026-27 MTFS budget reduction proposal of £417,000.

Catering Services

- There is an under spend of £598,000 on Catering Services, compared to the projected under spend of £665,000 reported at quarter 3.
- The under spend continues to be based on the full implementation of the Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) by Welsh Government and the accompanying grant funding to support the initiative.
- The MTFS approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £300,000 budget reduction for efficiencies in the Catering Services budget.
- The under spend takes into account the delay in the implementation of MTFS budget reduction EEYYP1 – Cessation of the meals at home service which has a shortfall of £65,000. The service has now ceased so no further costs should be incurred with the saving being made in full from 2026-27.

School Improvement

- There is an under spend of £489,000 across School Improvement budgets compared to a break-even position reported at quarter 3.
- The MTFS for 2025-26 included a budget pressure (EEYYP6) of £225,000 to support the transition and delivery of school improvement services within the local authority. A one-off increase to the WG LAEG Demand Led grant was received in 2025-26 to support the transition, resulting in a one-off under spend on this budget.
- The LAEG Cymraeg 2025 grant was also maximised in 2025-26 (£81,502).
- Any residual Central South Consortium balances are available for distribution to constituent local authorities in accordance with the 2016 legal agreement. BCBC received £74,146 in 2025-26.
- Additional grant funding has also been received from WG in quarter 4 – LAEG Standards Admin (£15,000), Welsh Professional Learning (£53,000) and LAEG Reform grant (£91,000).

3.3.2 Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2025-26 was £119.599 million and the actual outturn was £117.352 million following a planned draw down of £393,000 from earmarked reserves, resulting in an under spend of £2.247 million. This is compared to a projected under spend of £559,000 at quarter 3. The main reasons for the increase in under spend include maximisation of existing grants across the service including Children and Communities Grant - CCG (£846,000), Housing Support Grant - HSG (£539,000) and Pathways of Care Grant (£726,000). Without this additional funding, the Directorate would have under spent by £136,000.

The most significant variances for the directorate are :

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Actual Outturn	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adult Social Care	79,075	77,830	(1,245)	(1.57%)
Prevention and Wellbeing	6,465	5,954	(511)	(7.90%)
Children and Family Services	34,059	33,568	(491)	(1.44%)

Adult Social Care

There is a net under spend of £1.245 million on the Adult Social Care budget, an improvement of £131,000 from the £1.114 million under spend projected at quarter 3.

The most significant variances contributing to the under spend are:

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget £'000
Homes for Older People	664
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Home Care	221
Older People Home Care	59
Learning Disabilities Residential Care	40
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Residential Care	34
Mental Health Homecare	4
Older People Direct Payments	(14)
Mental Health Residential Care	(101)
Learning Disabilities Direct Payment	(177)
Learning Disabilities Homecare	(190)
Mental Health Supported Accommodation	(252)
Assessment and Care Management	(948)

- Homes for Older People – there is an over spend of £664,000 which has increased from the projected under spend of £154,000 at quarter 3. This is mainly due to increases in the number of residential and nursing placements being supported (£820,000) offset against increases in income received (£173,000). All contributions towards residential care are financially assessed in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 but the average income received each year will vary in total depending on the financial position of the people needing care during the financial year – e.g. if there are a large number of people who have savings or assets and are therefore not reliant on the local authority paying their contribution in full, then this will increase the overall average income received per person.

- Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Home Care - there is an over spend of £221,000 which is comparable to the projected over spend of £216,000 at quarter 3. The over spend is based on the current demand for the service which is 100 packages of support (99 at quarter 3), and increased costs for existing placements, due to changing needs.
- Older People Home Care - there is an over spend of £59,000 which has increased from the projected under spend of £290,000 at quarter 3. The number of commissioned Independent Domiciliary care packages across the service area has increased from 628 at quarter 3 to 732 at quarter 4. For 2026-27 a budget pressure of £151,000 (SSW5 – Transition – Independent Domiciliary Care) has been approved by Council as part of the MTFS to address increasing demand.
- Learning Disabilities Residential Care – there is an over spend of £40,000 which has decreased from the £241,000 projected over spend at quarter 3. The main reason for the improved position is an additional £200,000 allocated from the Social Care Workforce grant, taking the overall allocation to £400,000. Without this grant funding the service area would have over spent by £440,000. For 2026-27 budget pressures of £250,000 (BBP2 – Adult Social Care pressures) and £800,000 (SSW4 – Transition – Learning Disabilities Residential) have been approved by Council which will contribute to mitigating the over spend and anticipated increases in demand.
- Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Residential Care – there is an over spend of £34,000 which has decreased from the projected over spend of £111,000 at quarter 3 due primarily to an increase in residential contributions. The underlying over spend is due to higher placement numbers than budget.
- Mental Health Home care - there is an over spend of £4,000 which has increased from the projected under spend of £111,000 at quarter 3. The number of supported living placements have increased from 42 at quarter 3 to 50 at quarter 4.
- Older People Direct Payments - there is an under spend of £14,000 which has decreased from the projected under spend of £141,000 at quarter 3. This is due to an increase in the number of current packages of care to 82 (76 at quarter 3).
- Mental Health Residential Care – there is a projected under spend of £101,000 which is comparable to the projected under spend of £106,000 reported at quarter 3. Placement numbers (50) have remained the same as at quarter 3.

The MTFS for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £250,000 budget pressure for adult social care pressures, including physical disabilities homecare, learning disabilities and physical disabilities residential care, as a result of increased placements and increased costs due to changing needs.

- Learning Disabilities Direct Payments – there is an under spend of £177,000 across the Direct Payments budgets in this area which has decreased from the projected under spend of £222,000 at quarter 3. This is based on the current demand for packages of support of 146 (138 at quarter 3). Council approved a Budget Reduction proposal of £250,000 for 2026-27 (SSW6) for Direct Payment services across all adult groups to which this under spend will contribute towards.

- Learning Disabilities Homecare – there is an under spend of £190,000, which has improved since the projected over spend of £8,000 at quarter 3. This is due to increased staffing and running costs (£183,000), offset by the maximisation of Housing Support Grant in quarter 4 of £326,000.
- Mental Health Supported Accommodation – there is an under spend of £252,000 which has increased slightly from the projected under spend of £242,000 at quarter 3. This continues to be as a result of staffing vacancies within the service. Close monitoring of this under spend will continue into 2026-27 due to uncertainties in grant funding in this service area going forward.
- Assessment & Care Management – there is an under spend on directorate wide assessment and care management budgets of £948,000 which has increased from the projected under spend of £320,000 at quarter 3. This is mainly due to this area benefitting in total from an additional £769,135 of Pathways of Care grant income to maximise the grant while recruitment is being undertaken to core posts.

Prevention and Wellbeing

- There is an overall under spend of £511,000 within Prevention and Wellbeing. The under spend increased by £319,000 from the projected under spend of £192,000 reported at quarter 3. This is primarily due to maximisation of the following grants – Children's and Communities Grant (£238,000) and Regional Integration Fund (£28,000).
- The underlying reason for the under spend is mainly due to maximisation of grant funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund (£643,000). This is also mitigating the following MTFS saving, £295,000 of which has not been achieved:-
 - SSW13 (2024-25) – £360,000 - Council to reduce its investment into cultural services. While £65,000 has been achieved the remainder will not be achieved unless there is a reduction in services.
- There is also a shortfall of £10,000 against the 2025-26 MTFS Saving Proposal SSW2 - redevelop the indoors bowls arena space.

Children and Family Services

There is a net under spend of £491,000 on the Children and Family Services budget which is an improvement on the projected net over spend of £747,000 at quarter 3. The changed position is due primarily to maximisation of grant funding : Housing Support Grant (£213,000), Childrens and Communities grant (£608,000) and Social Care Workforce Grant (£275,000).

The most significant variances contributing to this under spend are:-

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget £'000
Care Experienced Children	524
Commissioning & Social Work	(290)
Children and Families Support Service	(658)

- The over spend of £524,000 for Care Experienced Children is due to a combination of factors:-
 - The Independent Residential Care budget has an over spend of £603,000 which has decreased from the projected over spend of £936,000 at quarter 3. The quarter 3 projections were based on 27 care experienced children in independent residential care and this has remained the same at quarter 4. The reduction in the over spend is primarily due to additional Social Care Workforce Grant of £275,000 being allocated in quarter 4 due to continued pressures in this area due to the insufficiency of foster carer placements to meet children's needs. Work is progressing to enhance inhouse residential provision which is more cost effective than independent provision.
 - Children's Internal Residential Care has an over spend of £101,000 which is a decrease of £125,000 from the projected net over spend of £226,000 at quarter 3. While the over spend is mainly due to additional staffing to address the complexity of need of the children, the over spend has reduced since quarter 3 due primarily to the maximisation of the Eliminating Profit grant (£292,000).
 - Fostering - There is an under spend of £387,000 which is a decrease from the projected under spend in this area of £625,000 at quarter 3. This is primarily due to a reduction in the under spend on the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) budget of £230,000 as placements have increased to 38 from 34 at quarter 3. Placements are anticipated to continue to increase and the budget will continue to be closely monitored in 2026-27. It should be noted, however, that some of the children in costly independent residential provision would ideally be with foster carers who can manage complex needs. There is insufficient capacity in-house and in IFAs which means that some children's needs are being met in a higher, more expensive, tier of service.
 - Children's Supported Living – There is an over spend of £282,000 which has decreased from the projected over spend of £526,000 at quarter 3. The pressure is due to increases in the number of placements (21 in quarter 4 of 2024-25 compared to 28 currently). The improved position at year end is primarily due to maximisation of HSG (£213,000). The MTFs 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £250,000 budget pressure (BBP3) towards the over spend for children's supported accommodation.
- Commissioning and Social Work – There is a under spend of £290,000 which has improved since the quarter 3 projected under spend of £55,000. The improved outturn position is mainly due to an increase in staffing under spends as a result of ongoing vacancies across teams (£186,000). In addition, there has also been maximisation of the Childrens and Communities grant (£129,000). There remains an over spend in care and support and placement costs across the service area of £287,000 which has increased from the projected over spend of £203,000 at quarter 3. The majority of this over spend relates to Care Experienced Children/care support spend such as court mandated drug testing, assessments, reports, travel and therapy costs over which the service has no discretion but to secure against a very limited budget. The service area will look to re-align budgets in quarter 1 of 2026-27 to address this over spend.

- Children and Families Support Service – There is an under spend of £658,000 which has improved from the £234,000 projected under spend reported at quarter 3. The improved year end position is due to maximisation of CCG grant funding (£402,000). The underlying under spend is due to ongoing vacancies across the team, the service area are actively looking to recruit to the vacant posts in 2026-27, therefore the saving should not be recurring in 2026-27.

3.3.3 Communities Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2025-26 was £35.299 million and the actual outturn was £31.669 million following a planned draw down of £1.048 million from earmarked reserves, resulting in an under spend of £3.630 million. This is compared to a projected over spend of £119,000 at quarter 3.

The main reason for the improved position from quarter 3, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-30 report to Council on 25 February 2026, is due to the introduction of a UK Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) scheme as a means of shifting the full financial cost of managing household packaging waste from taxpayers (local authorities) to the businesses that place it on the UK market. Payments have been received, funded by producers of packaging, calculated based on the net efficient disposal costs for each material type and for Bridgend County Borough Council in 2025-26 equated to £3.922 million. As a result, the MTFS 2026-27 to 2029-30 approved by Council did not include many budget pressures for the Communities Directorate as the pEPR funding has enabled the directorate to support pressures in their service areas from the waste budget funding it releases. This has included mitigating pressures in respect of fleet management, planning, additional waste collection and disposal requirements, both capital and revenue, and in respect of the circular economy. However, it is worth noting that some of the recurrent pressures may need reviewing in future years if the pEPR funding reduces significantly.

The main variances are:

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Actual Outturn	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Fleet Services	597	597	0	0.00%
Highways Services	9,287	9,174	(113)	-1.22%
Waste Collection	7,119	4,026	(3,093)	-43.45%
Traffic & Transport	1,335	846	(489)	-36.63%
Parks, Playing Fields & Bereavement	2,805	3,127	322	11.48%
Corporate Landlord	3,842	3,423	(419)	-10.91%

Fleet Services

- There is a break even position on Fleet Services budgets compared to the projected over spend of £527,000 reported at quarter 3. The main reason for the improved position is due to a one off budget virement of £393,000 from core waste budgets as a result of their displacement by pEPR funding.
- The Fleet Services team operate on a break-even basis with re-charges for work undertaken on directorates', South Wales Police (SWP) and the general public's

vehicles, generating income to support staffing and overhead costs. The underlying over spend before the budget virement from waste budgets is due to productivity levels continuing to be impacted by long term sickness and ongoing issues with recruitment and retention difficulties. A market supplement has been introduced in line with the corporate Market Supplement Policy following comparisons with neighbouring authorities and remuneration of HGV technicians, which has seen some limited success in filling vacancies.

- A report outlining options for service operating models to mitigate the budget position of fleet services has been requested. An external review is now proceeding with the brief for the study having been finalised, with the detailed work to be completed over summer 2026.

Highway Services

- There is an under spend of £113,000 compared to the projected over spend of £339,000 at quarter 3. There is an under spend on street lighting energy of £101,000 as a result of the LED replacement scheme. The balance of the under spend is due to core funded staff being utilised to support work on capital schemes. In these cases, the salary costs can be capitalised, thus generating one-off income for the service area.

Waste Collection

- There is an under spend on waste collection of £3.093 million due primarily to the receipt of pEPR payments of £3.922 million in 2025-26.
- The receipt of the pEPR funding has enabled the directorate to support pressures in service areas from the waste budget funding it releases. As previously noted £393,000 has been utilised to mitigate pressures in Fleet Services. In addition, the funding has also been utilised to support specific staff working on the future of collection and recycling waste services.
- The underlying over spend on waste collection budgets was primarily due to a one off payment towards the increased National Insurance costs experienced by Plan B as a result of legislative change and £158,000 Prudential borrowing costs for the new waste collection vehicles.
- The balance of the pEPR funding has been set aside in an earmarked reserve (see 3.4.3) to mitigate pressures in respect of planning, additional waste collection and disposal requirements, both capital and revenue, and in respect of the circular economy.

Traffic and Transport

- There is an under spend of £489,000 which is a small increase from the projected under spend of £448,000 reported at quarter 3.
- Whilst the service area has benefitted from an MTFs budget pressure of £360,000 approved by Council for 2025-26 towards the shortfall in car park income and the staff car pass scheme which has been impacted by hybrid working, the Council continues to benefit from the temporary income raised from the Salt Lake Car Park in Porthcawl.
- The balance of the under spend is mainly due to maximisation of the Concessionary Fares grant funding (£30,000), staff vacancies (£30,000) and under spends on non-staffing budgets (£46,000).
- The MTFs approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £100,000 budget reduction for efficiencies in the Traffic and Transportation budget.

Parks, Playing Fields & Bereavement Services

- There is an over spend of £322,000 which has increased from the projected over spend of £17,000 at quarter 3.
- There was a budget reduction proposal in 2025-26 of £100,000 against Bereavement Services income (COM9). There has been an overall shortfall against this proposal of £70,000. This will have to be closely monitored in 2026-27.
- There has also been additional spend on grounds maintenance and repairs at cemeteries (£97,000). The MTFS 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £50,000 to support maintenance on cemeteries.
- The balance is primarily due to an over spend on maintenance budgets on Pavilions.

Corporate Landlord

- There is an under spend of £417,000 which is comparable to the projected under spend of £419,000 reported at quarter 3. This is primarily due to staff vacancies (£277,000) as the service continues to experience recruitment difficulties. Recruitment exercises continue to appoint to these posts and it is anticipated they will be filled in 2026-27.
- The balance of the under spend is primarily due to the productivity of the Major Projects team working on capital schemes and generating income for the service area (£83,000).

3.3.4 Chief Executive's

The net budget for the Directorate for 2025-26 was £26.333 million and the actual outturn was £26.042 million following a planned draw down of £584,000 from earmarked reserves, resulting in an under spend of £291,000. This is a reduction of £632,000 compared to the projected over spend of £341,000 reported at quarter 3. The main reason for the reduction in over spend is that additional grant has been confirmed since quarter 3 for ICT (Connecting Care grant - £336,000) and Housing and Homelessness (Ukrainian grant - £85,000, Leasing Scheme Wales - £150,000 and Afghan Resettlement grant - £80,000). Without this additional funding, the Directorate would have over spent by £360,000.

The main variances for the directorate are:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	Net Budget £'000	Actual outturn £'000	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Business Support	997	877	(120)	-12.04%
Finance	4,432	4,653	221	4.99%
Housing and Homelessness	4,851	4,204	(647)	-13.34%
ICT	4,819	4,753	(66)	-1.37%
Partnerships	2,299	2,549	(250)	-10.87%

Business Support

- There is an under spend of £120,000 across Business Support budgets which has increased since the £58,000 projected under spend reported at quarter 3.
- The main reasons for the improved position are the maximisation of the Childrens and Communities Grant (£25,000) and an increase in land charge registration fees (£24,000).

Finance

- There is an over spend on Finance budgets of £221,000 which has improved since the projected over spend of £350,000 reported at quarter 3.
- There was a shortfall of £100,000 on Department for Work and Pension (DWP) subsidy contributions towards housing benefit payments in Bridgend compared to the projected shortfall of £133,000 at quarter 3. As previously reported, any Housing Benefit award paid over the subsidy level is borne by the Council, as the DWP does not fully fund all Housing Benefit expenditure – for example, there are a number of tenancy arrangements whereby the subsidy is limited to historic local housing allowance rates or restricted by rent officer determinations. The MTFS approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £91,000 to mitigate this shortfall.
- There was also a shortfall of £67,000 on Court Cost income, a small improvement from the projected shortfall of £74,000 reported at quarter 3. The MTFS approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a £75,000 budget pressure to mitigate the shortfall in Court Cost Income collected from Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.
- As previously reported there was a failure to implement an historic MTFS proposal - (CEX25 (2024-25) – Staff savings from Finance senior management team - £70,000. The MTFS approved by Council for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes funding of £70,000 to reinstate this budget reduction following a full restructure being proposed and consulted on but which did not proceed.
- The other main reason for the improved position since quarter 3 is maximisation of the Connecting Care grant (£45,000).

Housing and Homelessness

- There is a net under spend of £647,000 on Housing and Homelessness which is an improvement of £307,000 compared with the projected net under spend of £340,000 reported at quarter 3.
- The overall budget for Housing and Homelessness was increased by £400,000 in 2025-26 due to Council approving a MTFS budget pressure to support pressures on the homelessness budget. In addition, there was also an increase of £970,000 due to transfers from Welsh Government into the settlement from previous grant funding.
- Actual spend on Homelessness accommodation in 2025-26 was £4.001 million which is comparable to the £4 million projected at quarter 3. As well as the core budget (£3.274 million) the service has also seen an increase in rental income relating to Housing Benefits claimed by tenants who have been supported with homelessness accommodation (£681,000 compared with £499,000 projected at quarter 3). The net impact is an over spend on accommodation of £104,000 (projected over spend of £227,000 at quarter 3).
- This has been offset by under spends on the Brynmenyn Homeless Centre (£162,000) and the four new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties (£116,000) due to increases in Housing Benefit income.

- The service area has also benefited from grant funding - Afghan Relocation Resettlement (£149,000), Ukraine (£132,000), Asylum Seeker grant (£93,000) and Leasing Scheme Wales (£150,000).

ICT

- There is an under spend of £66,000 across ICT budgets which has improved by £409,000 since the projected net over spend of £343,000 reported at quarter 3.
- The main reason for the improved position is the maximisation of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Connecting Care grant (£254,000). The grant is for the Connecting Care Social Care Programme and is being used by social care services across Wales to replace the current Social Services Client system with modern digital platforms. This grant allocation was only confirmed in quarter 4.
- There continues to be over spends due to MTFS saving proposals from 2024-25 and 2025-26 not being fully achieved. There is a shortfall of £75,000 against the 2024-25 proposal CEX 22 – Review of ICT services and a shortfall of £77,000 against the 2025-26 MTFS budget reduction proposal CEX 10 – Restructure of the ICT service.
- There is also an underlying over spend due to historic SLA income from schools no longer being realised as the Welsh Government School Hwb project now includes the services previously being re-charged (£135,000).
- The MTFS 2026-27 to 2029-30 approved by Council, includes £181,000 for this area to reinstate savings not achieved in respect of historic Budget Reduction Proposals and £177,000 for shortfalls in historic service level agreement income from schools which is no longer realised.

Partnerships

- There is a net over spend of £250,000 across the Partnership budgets which has increased by £161,000 since the projected over spend of £89,000 reported at quarter 3.
- The increase in over spend is mainly due to spend within Transformation budgets on the Robotic Process Automatic pilot. The MTFS 2026-27 to 2029-30 approved by Council includes a £500,000 budget pressure for the development of a multi-skilled transformation team to take forward transformation across the Council.
- There was an over spend against Pest Control services of £23,345 which is due to the shortfall in the 2024-25 MTFS budget reduction proposal CEX 8 - Charging for PEST control services. This service provision ceased from 31st October 2025 and the residual budget of £3,950 will be absorbed within other Partnership budgets for 2026-27.
- There was an over spend against the CCTV budget (£79,000) mainly due to a reduction in income as a result of the contract with the Vale of Glamorgan ending. Council also approved a £250,000 Budget Reduction Proposal for 2026-27 (CEX1 – Review provision of the CCTV Service). The service is currently exploring options for contributions from South Wales Police or the Community Safety Partnership, or reducing the specification of live coverage to achieve this saving.

3.3.5 Council Wide budgets

This section includes budgets, provisions and services which are council wide, and not managed by an individual directorate. The net budget for 2025-26 was £43.080 million and the actual outturn was £37.136 million, resulting in an under spend of £5.944 million.

The most significant variances were:-

COUNCIL WIDE BUDGETS	Net Budget £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Capital Financing	5,861	3,612	(2,249)	-38.37%
Insurance Premiums	1,363	857	(506)	-37.12%
Other Corporate budgets	6,998	4,121	(2,877)	-41.11%

Capital Financing

- The under spend of £2.249 million relates to additional interest from current investments. Interest rates started to fall from the high of 5% in November 2024, with further reductions to the current rate of 3.75%. Further interest rate reductions are expected, however the timing of these are uncertain and are subject to economic factors and in particular the position of inflation against the Bank of England's 2% target.
- It should be noted that this will not be a recurring under spend. As noted in the Treasury Management Quarter 3 Report 2025-26 to Cabinet in March 2026, the Council has loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) maturing within the next 3 financial years that it will need to repay and, given the anticipated level of expenditure within the capital programme over the current and coming financial years, including the new rolling fleet replacement programme for waste service vehicles, it is highly likely that new borrowing will be required to replace these maturing loans as well as a need to take out new borrowing to support the Capital Programme over the next few years. It is therefore expected that interest received will reduce, and interest paid will increase.

Insurance Premiums

- There is an under spend of £506,000 on the insurance budget. This primarily relates to a reduction in the overall fund liability following a number of claims being repudiated or discontinued, particularly in relation to Japanese Knotweed, as well as those settled at a lower amount of claims won. The outturn for 2025-26 is considered to be a one-off under spend, as it is an adjustment to the fund liability provision required and has not impacted on the annual premiums, however the budget will continue to be reviewed going forward to determine if there are any permanent budget reduction opportunities.

Other Corporate budgets

- The under spend of £2.877 million has reduced from the £6.326 million projected under spend reported at quarter 3. The main reason for the movement is the technical adjustment to the bad debt provision of £3.281 million. The bad debt provision adjustment is to offset non-payment risks across services like Council Tax and Sundry Debtors, both of which can be impacted by the cost of living crisis. For example, Council Tax arrears have increased by 12.5% since 2024-25, and 29.4% cumulatively since 2023-24. Close monitoring of debt levels will continue into 2026-27 given the ongoing cost of living crisis and the changes made by Welsh Government to the Council Tax collection framework from the 1st April 2026 to establish what it says will be a more equitable, transparent and effective approach to enforcing unpaid Council Tax.

The main areas contributing to the underlying under spend are:-

- Welsh Government provided a grant of £521,736 towards the teachers' pay award 2025-26 and £665,984 towards the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award 2025-26 which were not anticipated at budget setting.
- The confirmed pay award in 2025-26 for NJC workers was lower than provided for. The ongoing uncertainty over future pay awards means that it is likely that the provision set aside in the MTFS for 2026-27 will need to be supplemented by any funding not committed from the central pay budget this financial year.
- Inflation rates have fluctuated since the budget was set – CPI was 2.8% when the budget was set in February 2025, increasing to 3.8% in September 2025, falling to 3.2% in November 2025 with a further fall to 2.8% in April 2026. The majority of the budget estimated for price inflation is retained centrally within council wide budgets and allocated to directorates/schools as further information is known about specific contractual price increases – CPI allocations during quarter 4 can be found in 3.1.12. There is ongoing uncertainty on cost increases in 2026-27 due to the tensions in the Middle East and the general trajectory of CPI, therefore it is likely that the provision set aside in the MTFS for 2026-27 will need to be supplemented by any funding not committed from the price inflation budget this year.

3.3.6 Council Tax Collection

- The outturn for 2025-26 shows additional income of £773,814 has been collected compared to the budget (+0.59%). In respect of income collected from the levying of premiums on long term empty properties and second homes, £781,529 was collected from the premium charge for long-term empty properties and £160,937 was collected from premiums on second homes. Without this additional funding, the core Council tax collected in 2025-26 fell short of the budgeted income by £168,652.

3.4 Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 3.4.1 The Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation. The MTFS includes the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol which sets out how the Council will determine and review the level of its Council Fund balance and earmarked reserves. During 2025-26 Directorates drew down funding from specific earmarked reserves. The final draw down from revenue reserves was £2.186 million and is summarised in **Table 4** below. A more detailed breakdown of the movement on all reserves is outlined in **Appendix 4**.

Table 4 – Revenue draw down from Earmarked Reserves during 2025-26

	Draw down from Earmarked Reserves 2025-26 £'000
Education, Early Years and Young People	161
Social Services & Wellbeing	393
Communities	1,048
Chief Executives	584
Total	2,186

- 3.4.2 The net under spend position of £13.381 million for 2025-26, as set out in Table 1 has enabled new net earmarked reserves of £13.103 million to be created at year end along with a transfer of £278,000 to the Council Fund (see paragraph 3.4.5).
- 3.4.3 The most significant new earmarked reserves were:- £7.250 million to fund new capital projects and £3.200 million relating to the balance of the pEPR funding to mitigate pressures in respect of planning, additional waste collection and disposal requirements, both capital and revenue, and in respect of the circular economy.
- 3.4.4 **Table 5** below summarises the final position on all revenue useable reserves for the year, including the Council Fund. In addition there are currently £51.214 million of other earmarked reserves funding schemes within the capital programme.

Table 5 – Summary of Movement on Revenue Earmarked Reserves 2025-26

Opening Balance 01-Apr-25 £'000	Reserve	Movement at Quarter 4			Closing Balance 31 March 2026 £'000
		Additions £'000	Reclassification £'000	Drawdown/Unwound £'000	
10,008	Council Fund Balance	278	0	0	10,286
11,986	Corporate Reserves	2,000	(264)	(1,982)	11,740
7,577	Directorate Reserves	5,947	(37)	(1,774)	11,713
2,888	Equalisation & Grant Reserves	935	(45)	(273)	3,505
(619)	School Balances	0	0	(2,996)	(3,615)
21,832	Total Earmarked Reserve	8,882	(346)	(7,025)	23,343
31,840	Total Useable Reserves	9,160	(346)	(7,025)	33,629

- 3.4.5 In terms of financial reserves, the Council Fund balance has been increased by £278,000 and now represents 2.68% of the net revenue budget for 2025-26, or 4.0% of the net revenue budget excluding schools. As budgets incrementally increase annually, it is challenging to keep the Council Fund balance in line with MTFS Principle 9 which states that:-

The Council Fund balance should be set at a prudent but not excessive level. This will normally be maintained at a level of 5% of the Council's net budget, excluding schools.

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 Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The well-being objectives are designed to complement each other and are part of an integrated way of working to improve well-being for the people of Bridgend. The allocation of budget determines the extent to which the Council's well-being objectives can be delivered. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the well-being goals or objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 These are reflected in the body of the report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the revenue outturn position for 2025-26.

Background documents: Individual Directorate Monitoring Reports

PRIOR YEAR BUDGET REDUCTIONS CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Original Reduction and RAG £000	Revised RAG £000	Total amount of saving achieved in 2025-26 £000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed Action in 2026-27 to achieve
------	---------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------	---	-------------------------	---------------------------------------

RAG STATUS KEY	
RED	Not likely to be achieved at all in this financial year or less than 25%.
AMBER	Reduction not likely to be achieved in full in financial year but greater than 25%
GREEN	Reduction likely to be achieved in full

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

EDFS9 (2024-25)	Cessation of Adult Community Learning (ACL) provision	149		149	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
EDFS19	Communication and Relationships Team - Referrals only accepted for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and placement breaking down. No longer completing observations for the ND Pathway	142		0	Saving not met in 2025-26 due to the delay in the consultation.	Consultation due to take place in 2026-27. Any shortfall against the savings target will be mitigated by staff vacancies held until the restructure is completed.
Total Education, Early Years and Young People		291		149		

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

SSW7 (2024-25)	Review opportunities to amend the current energy payment arrangements for the leisure contract	45		45	Alternative saving identified and has been achieved in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
SSW13 (2024-25)	Council to reduce its investment into cultural services including the availability of buildings, services or resources relating to its libraries, supported employment, community venues and arts programmes	360		65	Cabinet report in May 2024 approved reductions of £65K, along with public engagement over how future savings can be achieved. Further reports will be presented to Cabinet to enable the outcome of consultation exercises to be taken into account when finalising any proposed changes.	The saving of the remaining £295,000 will be covered by earmarked reserve funding for 2026-27. However a long term plan to achieve the shortfall needs to be explored for the saving to be met in 2027-28. Public engagement will be undertaken with a view of what does long term sustainable cultural services look like.
SSW17 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - bereavement services	5		5	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
SSW18 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - dementia services	57		57	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
SSW22 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - substance misuse services	34		34	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
Total Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate		501		206		

COMMUNITIES

COM2 (2021-22)	Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle resulting in cessation of lease payments at existing site	60		0	The new site opened during quarter 4 of 2023-24. As the exit terms of the lease were still being worked through in 2025-26 the saving was not achieved.	The service area anticipate that this saving should be achieved in full in 2026-27. If there are any shortfalls against the savings target, the service area will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate this.
COM4 (2022-23)	Remove Business in Focus from running Enterprise Centres in Bridgend	20		0	Review of Business in Focus operating model has been explored to identify operating efficiencies with a view to restructuring the management agreement with Business in Focus to deliver this saving.	The service area anticipate that this saving should be achieved in full in 2026-27. If the management agreement is not restructured, the service area will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfalls.
COM5 (2022-23)	Commercially let a wing of Ravens court to a partner organisation or business	50		50	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM2 (2023-24)	Charging Blue Badge Holders for parking	40		0	The Traffic and Transport Team are progressing with the order making process and have carried out an initial engagement on the proposal which is currently being evaluated prior to progressing.	The Traffic and Transport Team will progress with the process to determine the proposal during 2026-27. If the proposal is not progressed, the service area will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfall.
COM3 (2023-24)	Commercially let two wings of Ravens court to a partner organisation or business	120		120	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM1 (2024-25)	Reduction in staff mileage budgets	34		34	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM10 (2024-25)	Review of Porthcawl Marina berthing fees with a view to it operating on a full cost recovery basis	32		23	The shortfall against the savings target is due to one-off costs incurred to cover sickness within the service.	Feasibility work underway to examine current berthing fees, investigate possibilities for maximising income and to timeline any future increase to berthing fees. If the proposal is not met in full, the service area will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfall.
COM14 (2024-25)	Office Rationalisation to include closing Raven's Court and the Innovation Centre and sharing accommodation in Civic Offices with the MASH and SWP.	73		73	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM28 (2024-25)	Letting of former Woodmat Property, Brynmenyn Estate	35		0	Opportunities were sought to achieve this budget reduction proposal, but let not agreed by end of 2025-26. Other Council services may use it so cannot be marketed until this has been resolved.	The service area anticipate that this saving should be achieved in full in 2026-27. If the site is not let, the service area will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfalls.
Total Communities Directorate		464		300		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Original Reduction and RAG £000	Revised RAG £000	Total amount of saving achieved in 2025-26 £000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed Action in 2026-27 to achieve
------	---------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------	---	-------------------------	---------------------------------------

Chief Executives

CEX8 (2024-25)	Charging the public for Pest Control Services	67		43	Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was only partly achieved in 2024-25. Due to the continued reduced uptake of the domestic pest control service, the decision was taken to cease the provision of this service by BCBC from 31st October 2025 therefore this saving was not achieved in full in 2025-26.	Partnership budgets have identified alternative budgets to mitigate the underlying net budget of £3,950 for the service in 2026-27.
CEX12 (2024-25)	Increased income from Registrars' Ceremonies	43		14	Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was only partly achieved in 2024-25. Due to continued reduced uptake of the service, partly linked to the closure of the Princess Of Wales maternity ward resulting in birth registrations taking place in other Local	This income budget will be closely monitored going forward as it is anticipated that it will be achieved in full in 2026-27.
CEX13 (2024-25)	Restructure of Legal Services	154		154	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
CEX14 (2024-25)	Reconfiguration of Business Support	160		160	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
CEX15 (2024-25)	Increase income generated from legal fees for property transactions, S106 Agreements and Highway Agreements	20		0	Legal Services are reliant on the instructions that come through from Directorates. Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was still not achieved in 2025-26	The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £58,000 to mitigate the shortfall in income generated from legal fees from property transactions, S106 Agreements and Highway Agreements.
CEX16 (2024-25)	Restructure of HR Service	289		289	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
CEX17 (2024-25)	Household Canvas - Reduction / Limited Canvass Door Knocking	9		0	Saving not achieved due to increased costs associated with canvassing.	The Service is currently reviewing potential efficiencies for 2026-27 so that alternative budgets can mitigate the shortfall on this budget reduction proposal. Further updates on this will be provided in future revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet.
CEX19 (2024-25)	Restructure of Democratic Services	96		96	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
CEX20 (2024-25)	Restructure of Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Team	45		45	Saving was made in full in 2025-26	No action required - saving made in full in 2025-26.
CEX22 (2024-25)	Review of ICT Services	398		323	Following the re-procurement exercise on telephony budgets across the Council, the savings target was not met in full.	The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £181,000 which includes the mitigation of the shortfall of £75,000 following the review of ICT services.
CEX23 (2024-25)	Review the provision of Partnerships and Customer Services	216		155	Delays in confirmation of funding with the Public Services Board have resulted in a shortfall in the saving target for 2025-26.	It is anticipated that the full saving will be made in 2026-27 and further updates will be provided in future revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet.
CEX25 (2024-25)	Staff savings from Finance senior management team	70		0	Shortfall in savings target due to failure to implement proposed Finance senior management restructure.	The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £70,000 to reinstate this budget reduction proposal as the restructure was consulted on but it did not proceed.
Total Chief Executives Directorate		1,567		1,279		

GRAND TOTAL OUTSTANDING REDUCTIONS	2,823		1,934		
REDUCTIONS SHORTFALL			889		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
------	---------------------------	---	---------------------------------	--	-------------------------	---------------------------------------

RAG STATUS KEY	
RED	Not likely to be achieved at all in this financial year or less than 25%.
AMBER	Reduction not likely to be achieved in full in financial year but greater than 25%
GREEN	Reduction likely to be achieved in full

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
CENTRAL EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

EEYYP1	Cessation of the Meals-at-Home Service	While there could be a significant redundancy cost, redeployment options could be explored to mitigate this risk. A public consultation would be required prior to determination by Cabinet.	56	0	The service has now terminated. There were some residual costs in 2025-26 in relation to termination costs for vehicles and staffing costs for the first part of the year. Full saving will be achieved in 2026-27.	The service has now terminated. Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.
EEYYP2	Review of Home to School Transport	While transport for Nursery children is non-statutory, if this were to be removed, there could be negative impact on pupils attending Welsh-medium and faith school nursery settings in particular although numbers are relatively low (<100). Home-to-school transport for Post-16 students is non-statutory. This could result in an increased number of young people not in education, employment or training. These cuts could impact on school attendance.	675	675	The new Home-to-School Transport Policy was implemented on 1 September 2025. The efficiency savings are ongoing and contracts have been adjusted to take into account the change of eligibility for pupils.	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
EEYYP3	Reduction in Counselling services	Should a decision be made to reduce counselling services this would have a negative impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. A reduction in this area would limit the access to support for children and young people.	50	50	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
EEYYP4	Reduction in Early Years and Childcare	Some functions would need to be removed from the team, for example, the ability to • quality assure childcare providers in the community (with associated safeguarding risks); • complete the statutory childcare sufficiency assessments and associated statutory work; and • support and develop childcare within the community.	90	90	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
EEYYP5	Reduction in Strategy, Performance and Support Group	This proposed reduction relates to a number of posts in the Strategy, Performance and Support Group. The reduction will present a significant impact (and associated serious risk) in the implementation of the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate's main management information systems. This reduction will limit the way in which the directorate is able to record, manage and report on sensitive data relating to vulnerable children. This reduction would also impact on the local authority's ability to dispense its statutory home-to-school transport duties. This reduction will mean that our capacity to maintain procurement and contract procedure responsibilities will be diminished and that the School Transport Team's ability to respond to complaints and issues will be more limited.	146	37	The consultation with staff on the restructure of the Strategy, Performance and Support Group has now concluded and the new structure was implemented from 5 January 2026.	Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
Page 38 EEYYP6	Reduction in Pupil Services	There would be a significant risk to the local authority being able to ensure school admission arrangements are in place and school places are offered in line with national legislation and local policy arrangements. The child employment function would likely need to cease, to compensate for the reduced capacity within the team. Furthermore, the team would not be able to have oversight and administer applications for discretionary transport which would likely leave the local authority open to legal challenge.	35	9	The consultation with staff on the restructure of the Pupil Services has now concluded and the new structure was implemented from 5 January 2026.	Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.
EEYYP7	Reduction in the Corporate Health and Safety Unit	The local authority has, within the last few years, provided significant additional revenue budget to expand the number of Health and Safety advisors to support the local authority in delivering its functions safely. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) ensures that both staff and the public are kept safe where they are affected by the local authority's undertakings. •The team's ability to promote a positive health and safety culture would likely be compromised. •Significant reduction in proactive work and active monitoring, mentoring and coaching for the "responsible person" •Significant increased pressure on managers at all levels with more limited advice available and less time from the CHSU to support •Significant increased reactive work. •Inability to offer training without support from the private sector (at cost) •Potential increase in insurance cost, and the cost to services to address failings in general, or which has been identified by the HSE (for example, fees for intervention) •Increased in costs to cover work would normally be completed by the CHSU but will likely require contractors to provide •Potential serious failings under the current health and safety legislation, potentially leading to prosecution (corporate and personal liability for senior officers, in particular Corporate Management Board) •A poorer health and safety culture across the organisation in general •Poorer health and safety systems •Increase level of criticism from services users, members of public and elected members There are significant health and safety risks that the current team has limited capacity to address that could potentially mean regulatory interventions by the HSE. There have been several HSE interventions within the last two years. A reduction in the human resources would add exponentially to the risk of the local authority failing its health and safety duties, where the potential for intervention by the HSE, prosecutions and fines would significantly outweigh any MTFS efficiency.	76	19	The consultation with staff on the restructure of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit has now concluded and the new structure was implemented from 5 January 2026.	Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.

Budget Reduction Proposals 2025-26 to 2028-29

APPENDIX 2

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
EEYYP8	Reduction in Business Support	The directorate's centralised support function is responsible for providing business support to teams and to the central EDSU function that is responsible for all complaints, reports (for example Cabinet), statutory meeting support such as SACRE, member referrals, FOI requests, subject access requests, managing referral and inputting information into the directorate's central management information systems. A reduction of staff would mean there would likely be delays in input of referrals which would increase waiting times for children and families to receive support from family support services. Delayed communication with schools following receipt of Police Protection Notifications (PPNs) involving pupils within Bridgend schools. There would be an impact on the Youth Justice Service's (JYS) statutory requirements, for example notification of overnight arrests / custody, invites to Bureau and capturing data in relation to education provision for children open to YJS. This could also affect statutory Youth Justice Board key performance indicators. Freedom of information and subject access requests would likely not meet statutory timelines and there would be delays in Cabinet and scrutiny reports being progressed, as EDSU support the approvals process. Delegated power administration support could be delayed and could miss call-in timescales. There would likely be poor customer service to complainants who raise complaints via EDSU. This could escalate to more complaints and member referrals. There would likely be poorer customer service to children, young people and families who access any service within the Education, Early Years and Young People portfolio, including Learner Support, School Support, Pupil Services, Early Years and Young People and School Admissions. Inaccurate or missing data could contribute to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) breaches, for example, if an address change has not been updated in a timely manner. Lastly, there will be significantly increased pressure on practitioners, senior practitioners and team managers.	93	23	The consultation with staff on the restructure of the Business Support has now concluded and the new structure was implemented from 5 January 2026.	Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.
EEYYP9	Reduction of staff in Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Statutory Team	Failure to meet the Welsh Government deadline for ALN Implementation Plan 2023-2025. The risk of failure to determine, capture, and disseminate processes relating to the ALN Code and the Education Tribunal in Wales and comply with statutory duties of the local authority. This includes individual development plans (IDP) requirements of the ALNET Act 2018.	44	44	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
EEYYP10	Reduction in Education Other Than At Schools (EOTAS) support	Increasing demand and waiting list for specialist support at The Bridge Alternative Provision has resulted in a higher need for bespoke timetables. If there is no lead post overseeing this area the risk appropriate education not provided to those pupils who cannot attend mainstream or special school the local authority would not be fulfilling its statutory duty. Capacity of staff to identify appropriate accredited, vocational packages to meet individual need will be reduced resulting in an increase in number of pupils who are on a waiting list for suitable education. Delays in meeting the needs of learners and significant placement breakdowns will lead to an increase in out of authority specialist placements requested at significant additional cost. Further challenge placed on mainstream schools to identify and agree alternative packages on a case by case basis at significant additional cost. Pupils would not receive the support they require resulting in lower exam outcomes and an increase in those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) post statutory school age. Possible increase in number of permanent exclusions from mainstream schools.	75	75	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

Page 40

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
EEYYP11	Reduction in contribution to Central South Consortium	Depending on where this funding is cut (either from the grant received by the local authority and immediately passported to Central South Consortium) or from the funding allocated for Principal / Improvement Partners it will either: •Reduce curriculum reform support and professional learning and leadership support at a time when the new curriculum is being extended to examination classes; or •Result in a decrease in the number of improvement partners (IP) to work in partnership with school leaders, staff and governing bodies. Each IP would be required to work with more schools with less time in each school. This would mean a reduction in the support available to schools to support pre-inspection and post inspection planning and a reduction in the time available to support senior leader recruitment processes. It will also coincide with anticipated changes as a result of the Middle Tier Review which may create additional work / responsibility for headteachers and senior leaders in relation to school improvement functions without the expected funds to support any such transition.	88	88	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
Total Education, Early Years and Young People			1,428	1,110		

SCHOOLS

SCH1	Efficiency savings against School Delegated Budgets - 1% for 2025-26 and 1% thereafter.	It is important to note that some of this impact may be mitigated by the financial support provided to schools from the local authority in assisting schools to meet cost pressures in relation to pay and pensions, and energy. Further to discussion with headteachers, the following potential impacts have been identified: 1. Risk of increased school deficit positions; 2. Potential to result in some teacher and other staff redundancies; 3. Increase in class sizes; 4. Loss of interventions; 5. Increase in staff absence; 6. Low staff morale; 7. Increased workload; 8. Reduced curriculum offer; 9. Reduced leadership / strategic thinking time; 10. Potential inability to meet statutory requirements; 11. Decrease in adult support in classrooms; 12. Increase in pupil exclusions; 13. Decline in standards; 14. Reduction in ability maintain school buildings; 15. Limited extra-curricular activity; 16. Increase in referrals for behaviour support; 17. Reduced support for learners with additional needs; 18. Reduction in professional learning opportunities; 19. Loss of expertise due to teachers and senior leaders leaving the profession.	1,186	1,186	Savings achieved due to overall reduction in Individual Schools Budget (ISB). However, reduced budgets have resulted in an overall deficit balance for schools at year end of £3.615 million.	Close monitoring of school budgets will continue going into 2026-27 and officers continue to work with schools to bring this overall deficit down.
Total Schools			1,186	1,186		
Total Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate			2,614	2,296		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
SSW2	Redevelop the indoor bowls arena space and explore redevelopment for other purposes that offer increased income generation	The operation of the indoor bowls hall at Bridgend Life Centre generates operating costs that are difficult to cover based on the seasonal usage by the indoor bowls club. Any changes to indoor bowling would not be popular and may have a negative impact on the Council's wellbeing goals. The development of the wellbeing hub inside the bowls hall has improved usage by downsizing the number of bowling rinks already. With investment there may be possibilities for seasonal increased income generation. Potential need for alternative community venue for indoor bowls. Feasibility study would be required during 2024-25.	10	0	The feasibility study and capital works linked to external funding are in their final stages. The savings were therefore not delivered in 2025-26.	Updates will be provided in the 2026-27 revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet.
SSW4	Consider the transition of currently shared facilities at five school sites (Dual Use Assets), to whole school operation in line with many primary and secondary schools across BCBC	BCBC supports community access of school assets including Pencoed sports centre, Brackla sports centre, Ysgol Bryn Castell, Porthcawl sports hall and Parc Dderwen 3G pitch. The sites are busy with 110 organisations utilising the different spaces available. These are partnership arrangements with schools including cost sharing and often have linked to external funding support. The proposal has been to increase prices for hirers to offset increases in staffing and premises costs / school contributions whilst also creating a saving from increased income generation. There are considerable numbers of junior groups and activities within the usage data for the sites and targeted population groups also. If achieved the proposal will support sustainability via maximising value for existing assets beyond the school day for community benefit. In particular the model links to 21st century schools and Welsh government aspiration for community use and connection beyond the school day. The school benefit during the day and community beyond, the main risks would be the school not having the opportunity to use the asset outside school hours, having a negative impact on community opportunities.	71	71	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW5	Staffing restructure within Prevention and Wellbeing Services	The Prevention and Wellbeing service would be reliant on external grant funding to support its service. If grant funding ceases there will be no meaningful prevention and wellbeing offer in Bridgend significantly increasing pressure on statutory services. There will be a reduction in the number of staff by 3, redundancy costs will need to be funded. In order to achieve this the service is in the process of redesigning to ensure that it is fit for purpose with clear functions and objectives established which will mitigate any significant impact and risks.	147	147	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW6	Increase in income charges by increasing standard charges by 10 % across all non residential services	Review of the service pricing model and increasing unit costs for all non residential services with a view to generating additional income. Based on unit cost increase of 10%. Services are provided to vulnerable adults following an assessment of need. There is risk that individuals will cancel care packages and not have their needs met which could result in higher packages of care required in the future cost and / or an increase in debt recovery. In terms of flat rate charges such as Transport and Meals, no additional income can be generated under the current regulations.	100	100	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
SSW7	Implementation of the Home remodelling programme across adult services	The support at home remodelling programme across whole of adult services has determined that the service will move to a locality based delivery model which will result in non care staffing savings of £198k. This will result in 5 staff members being made redundant •The model aims to maximise reablement and short-term capacity to support hospital discharge and avoiding hospital admission. The service has been working towards increasing those individuals who go through the short-term services to ensure we maximise independence before we commission long term care packages our current performance is that 53.98% of individuals who completed a package of reablement during quarter 1 2024-25 had no ongoing service need. In 2023-24 38.6% of people had a short term service prior to have a long term package, the service has been working towards increasing this number to 80% of people, in July the figure had increased to 60% of people who had a short term service prior to have a long term package people. To be able to achieve this target the service will no longer be providing long term packages of care in the main to older people, so all future long term packages would be commissioned via independent providers. This should reduce the overall support at home spending levels by £300k.	198	0	Saving not met pending a review of the Support at Home Service.	The shortfall in this saving target was met via one-off efficiencies in 2025-26 from vacancies across the service pending the review and restructure being completed in 2026-27.
SSW8	Reduction in provision of number of Supported Living Accommodation units	Close one supported living accommodation. Suitable alternative provision would need to be identified. Achieving these savings is dependent on tenant with rights being agreeable to moving to an alternative provision. Review the waking nights expenditure.	190	0	It has been determined that this saving proposal is no longer deliverable	Work is underway by the service to identify alternative budgets for this proposal to be offset against with updates provided to Cabinet in future revenue monitoring reports.
SSW9	Review of Caswell Clinic social work budget (clinic based at Glanrhyd Hospital)	BCBC host the regional social work team based in the Caswell clinic. All costs are reimbursed so no impact on this small budget reduction	3	3	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW10	Apply 4% vacancy factor to social work teams and increase the vacancy factor on non frontline staff from 3% to 4%	In 2024-25 a vacancy factor of 3% was applied to non frontline teams in Social Services and Wellbeing. Care worker and social work posts were excluded due to an assessment of risk that all posts need. There is now greater stability in social work teams which means an assessment of risk means that the vacancy factor can be applied in these teams in adults and children's social care. This will require the step down of agency by the end of the financial year, and it is highly improbable there will be no vacant posts covered by agency due to safeguarding reasons meaning achievement of the full 3% represents a significant risk.	697	697	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW11	Reduction of Social Care Workforce Development Partnership (SCWDP) spend.	External training courses / conferences to be supported only where there is an identified need that cannot be met by in-house resources. Use of internal staff to facilitate training workshops. External trainers bring specialist knowledge and skills that internal trainers could not replicate so the impact on statutory training essential to regulatory requirements will need to be closely monitored.	50	50	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

Budget Reduction Proposals 2025-26 to 2028-29

APPENDIX 2

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
SSW12	Business efficiencies in support services through reviewing structures in business support, performance and commissioning.	The commissioning team is at full capacity with all colleagues on permanent contracts, so any MTFS saving / restructure will result in redundancy costs. The team are also driving forward key transformational change linked to MTFS savings, so any reduction on capacity will impact our ability to deliver targeted savings elsewhere in the MTFS. There is also a risk that we will not be able to meet essential requirements of the newly implemented WG Code of Practice for commissioning care and support, nor our own internal Contract Procedure Rules, where there is a risk that tenders cannot be undertaken within required timescales. Business support has been restructured to provide a support office model which ensures that statutory minutes linked to safeguarding are completed and distributed in a timely manner and to ensure social work tasks are carried out by support officers, thus maximising the amount of time that social workers spend with children, adults, families and carers. Reduction in this resource will increase the administrative burden on social work staff. Any reduction in the performance team will impact on the ability to complete statutory performance returns. There is a high probability reductions in these teams will result in compulsory redundancies.	129	129	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW13	Removal of Safeguarding capacity	Would result in a compulsory redundancy situation. Corporate safeguarding is a statutory duty having no dedicated resource, there is risk of criticism that people will come to harm through no one being available to drive the implementation of safeguarding across the Council. There is also a significant risk of criticism from regulators.	57	0	Whilst it was considered during 2025-26 that this saving would be made in full, recent reviews across Wales have demonstrated the need to strengthen corporate safeguarding responsibilities rather than reducing them.	The shortfall in this savings target was met from one-off grant income in 2025-26 while alternative savings are being identified and made elsewhere within the service. Further updates on this will be provided in the 2026-27 revenue budget monitoring reports to Cabinet.
SSW14	Reduction in staff within Children's Services	This proposal is to reduce Independent Reviewing Officer numbers by 1 linked to the reduction in the child protection register. This is currently achievable whilst maintaining reasonable caseloads but there is a risk there will be insufficient workforce if the numbers of children subject to registration increase again. It is also proposed that social work assistants in IAA undertake young carers assessments meaning that the Young Carers Worker would be redundant. Finally a review of senior management arrangements can result in some savings. This will need to be monitored closely given the CIW serious concerns in August 2022 which included concerns at management oversight arrangements.	50	50	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW15	Reduction in family group conferencing service contract value. Due to the continued implementation of signs of safety (including family network meetings) and new ways of working less families will need to be referred to the family group conferencing service.	The risks are minimal as we have already begun to lower our usage with the full implementation of Signs of Safety. We have set an expectation that family meetings will be run by Social Workers until it is felt independence from the LA is required. We currently have the criteria: children who have been subject to Child Protection Register (CPR) for longer than three months or subject to Public Law Outline (PLO). We could reduce this to only include those children who become subject to pre-proceedings PLO or are in court.	60	60	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
SSW16	Removal of Corporate Parenting Events budget	Low impact as utilising "Just Giving" to raise funds to support the Corporate Parent responsibilities of this Council and partners.	5	5	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

Page 44

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
SW17	Management efficiencies	A review of senior management in adult and children's social care will be undertaken to identify efficiencies whilst ensuring there continues to be effective leadership and management capacity which is key to delivering the changes and transformation required to deliver the rest of the MTFS savings and to retain the confidence of regulators who in 2022 had serious concerns regarding management oversight in children's social care and regulated care services	50	50	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
Total Social Services and Wellbeing			1,817	1,362		

COMMUNITIES

COM1	Reduction in staff mileage budgets	During the pandemic most meetings were arranged virtually, instead of in person. This arrangement has continued in the main since then with hybrid working, although there are clear cases where in-person meetings are essential, with the result that spend on mileage is less than pre-pandemic levels, and budgets can be reduced accordingly with no impact on service provision, but positive benefits for achieving net carbon zero.	32	6	There was a similar budget reduction proposal in 2024-25 which was not met in full and has been carried forward into 2025-26 (see COM 1 - Appendix 1). This historic target has been met in full, however there is shortfall against the in-year proposal.	The Directorate will, continue to review expenditure associated with travel and subsistence, alongside evolving working practices, with a view to maximising opportunities to achieve the proposed saving where possible, whilst ensuring service delivery is maintained.
COM2	Review of cleaning specifications and frequencies on BCBC Operational assets.	Will impact cleaning standards and visibility of cleaning frequencies but change is considered feasible. Will need to review cleaning staff numbers and potential for redundancies however aim will be to implement changes through staff redeployment and recruitment changes across the wider cleaning contract thus avoiding redundancy issues.	35	35	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM3	Further review of cyclical servicing and maintenance contracts dialling back maintenance items to safety critical and statutory compliance only.	Reduction of cyclical maintenance activity counter productive for long term asset operation. Potential for reduction in Business Support staff as a result of the reduction in cyclical orders although savings to Business Support already form part of current MTFS.	45	30	Due to ongoing pressures on the property revenue maintenance budgets the budget reduction proposal has not been achieved in full in 2025-26. However, savings from staff vacancies in Corporate Landlord have supported the shortfall against this specific proposal.	The Directorate will continue to review these arrangements and associated expenditure, with a view to identifying and maximising achievable savings whilst ensuring compliance obligations and essential service standards are maintained.
COM4	Increase income across the commercial property portfolio	Change will take time to implement and require additional surveyor resource over time.	15	15	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM5	Review Legionella and Asbestos officer structure.	Savings identify the option of creating a newly combined legionella and asbestos team reducing the overall staffing budget	10	10	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM6	Removal of funding from Southern Wales Tourism Group	Removal of BCBC contribution of funding from external tourism group. Will impact on reduction in marketing activities for BCBC.	9	9	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM7	Further reduction in Porthcawl Programme budget	Further reduction in Porthcawl Programme budget - reduction excluding post and minimal development spend.	35	35	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
COM8	Increase bulky waste charges from £30 for 3 items to £35	Potential increase in fly tipping. Increase would not result in full cost recovery under the current contract, but recyclable tonnages contribute to an improved recycling level against Welsh Government targets to reduce the likelihood of penalties.	10	10	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
COM9	Increase fees on Bereavement services, i.e. burial charges by 20%	Income target has been based on historic income levels achieved and the application of a 20% increase to current charges. This will be the second year that bereavement charges have increased. There is a risk to achieving the income target if there is a reduction in burials compared with the last two years if they return to pre-pandemic levels, or if relatives seek alternative services from neighbouring authorities. This has been reflected in the target income.	100	30	The failure to achieve the anticipated fee income is primarily due to a continued reduction in the number of full burials. There was a reduction of 35 full burials in 2024–25 compared with 2023–24, followed by a further reduction of 39 full burials in 2025–26.	The service area will continue to closely monitor the income for Bereavement Services in 2026-27. If the reduction in the number of full burials continues, the service aera will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfalls.
COM10	Reduction in the size of the waste enforcement team.	Reduction in staff who undertake enforcement activities relating to waste. There is a risk that the ability to react to issues will be reduced.	156	149	Shortfall in savings due to the timing of the restructure. Saving will be made in full in 2026-27.	None required - saving will be made in full in 2026-27.
COM11	Commercially let Pandy Depot	Would require existing BCBC archive storage to be condensed or relocated to other location and take time to ready for commercial letting. Reduce the amount of depot facilities for BCBC operations. Will require capital to ready for letting. Full savings unlikely until 2025-26, but partial savings are a possibility in 2024-25.	50	0	Ongoing opportunities were sought to achieve this budget reduction proposal, but let not agreed by end of 2025-26 Savings on staff vacancies across Corporate Landlord have mitigated the shortfall on this proposal.	The service area anticipate that this saving should be achieved in full in 2026-27. If the let is not confirmed in 2026-27, the service aera will have to identify alternative budget reduction proposals to mitigate any permanent shortfalls.
COM12	Stop bi-annual supply of blue refuse sacks to all residents.	This saving is agreed & will be implemented from April 2025. This would mean residents would have to provide their own bags for containment of refuse. Likely to be an unpopular change for residents who currently have these delivered with food waste liners. The amount of the saving is now slightly reduced in 2025-26 because of the contactors expenditure on the bags already ordered but will be realised in full from 2026-27.	220	220	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
Total Communities Directorate			717	549		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
CHIEF EXECUTIVES						
CEX1	Remove vacant grade 6 post (0.5) - Democratic Services	Will result in increased demand on other staff members. Statutory work will need to be prioritised. Service will be operating at minimum provision.	20	20	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX2	Reduction in payment to Shared Regulatory Services (SRS)	SRS have been asked to make a reduction to their budget. This will need to be agreed by the Joint Committee in February. This will impact on core service provision and authority specific services.	153	153	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX3	Review of the current Learning and Development provision	Reduces the available training support for employees and may impact on learning and development opportunities.	84	0	Shortfall against this savings target mitigated with vacancies across the service in 2025-26.	The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £57,000 (CEX6) to mitigate this saving as the vacancies now need to be filled to ensure operational payroll deadlines are met.
CEX4	Reduction in Corporate Apprenticeship budget - 15%	The budget has been underspent due to the turnover of apprentices. The reduction in budget will lead to approx. one less corporate apprentice per annum and periods of inactivity between recruitment rounds.	58	58	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX5	Review support capacity across finance	The service will be unable to respond in a timely manner to requests for information or support with budget information	31	0	Shortfall in savings target due to timing of implementation of restructure.	Options being considered with further updates to be provided to Cabinet in future revenue monitoring reports.
CEX7	Review the capacity within the customer services team.	This is a non statutory service. This proposal is to review the work in the team which will increase response times to callers who contact the Authority either by phone or in person, will reduce capacity to deal with emails from the public and blue car badge applications.	67	67	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX8	Extend further the use of Houses in Multiple Occupation to provide temporary accommodation for single homeless individuals	This will reduce the Council's reliance on more expensive accommodation options such as tourism style properties.	120	120	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX9	Management restructure across the Chief Executive's Directorate	This will result in reduced capacity across the directorate and reduced responsiveness	77	77	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
CEX10	Restructure the ICT service	This will reduce the capacity within the team to deal with business as usual and to support service configurations in other service areas	78	0	Shortfall against this savings target mitigated with vacancies across the service in 2025-26.	The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026-27 to 2029-30 includes a budget pressure of £181,000 for ICT services to mitigate shortfalls against MTFS savings following the completion of the review.
Total Chief Executive's Directorate			688	495		
CORPORATE / COUNCIL WIDE						
CW1	Change the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy from a straight line to annuity method. The MRP is the charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme	The change in policy will improve the Council's ability to make prudent provision as it helps to distribute the MRP more fairly when factoring that the value of money decreases with time due to its earning potential. The annuity method provides a fairer charge than equal instalments as it takes account of the time value of money.	1,000	1,000	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2025-26 £'000	Value of saving achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not achieved	Proposed action in 2026-27 to achieve
Page 47 CW2	Removal of uncommitted funding set aside in the MTFS 2024-28 towards emerging budget pressures and as a contingency against non-deliverability of budget reduction proposals. The original allocations were £550k and £1.08 million respectively. Only £87k has been allocated during the year resulting in a balance of £1.543 million as a contribution to continuing budget pressures	There will be no negative impact on service delivery, these budgets were set aside in 2024-25 to meet new and continuing budget pressures. A number of these are recurring and this funding will help to reduce overspends in future years. It does mean, however, that there is less headroom corporately to deal with unexpected financial pressures going forward.	1,543	1,543	Full saving achieved in 2025-26	None required - saving made in full in 2025-26
	Total Corporate / Council Wide		2,543	2,543		

GRAND TOTAL REDUCTIONS		8,379	7,245		
REDUCTION SHORTFALL					

3,722	5,656
2,167	783
2,490	1,940
8,379	8,379

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	Budget 2025-26			Actual Outturn	Actual Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	Expenditure Budget	Income Budget	Net Budget			
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE						
School Delegated Budgets	149,888	(23,447)	126,441	126,441	-	0.0%
Inclusion Group	9,971	(1,147)	8,824	9,647	823	9.3%
Early Years and Young People	3,476	(545)	2,931	2,842	(89)	-3.0%
Strategic Performance and Support	18,142	(4,265)	13,877	13,213	(664)	-4.8%
Schools Support	1,723	(830)	893	404	(489)	-54.8%
Sustainable Communities For Learning	4,038	(3)	4,035	3,954	(81)	-2.0%
Other Education, Early Years and Young People	1,978	(64)	1,914	1,919	5	0.3%
TOTAL EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE	189,216	(30,301)	158,915	158,420	(495)	-0.3%
SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING						
Adult Social Care	105,686	(26,611)	79,075	77,830	(1,245)	-1.57%
Prevention and Wellbeing	7,582	(1,117)	6,465	5,954	(511)	-7.90%
Children and Family Services	35,306	(1,247)	34,059	33,568	(491)	-1.44%
TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING	148,574	(28,975)	119,599	117,352	(2,247)	-1.9%
COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE						
Planning & Development Services	3,355	(2,489)	866	866	-	0.0%
Strategic Regeneration	1,907	(969)	938	957	19	2.0%
Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability	7,842	(6,231)	1,611	1,569	(42)	-2.6%
Cleaner Streets and Waste Management	15,982	(2,430)	13,552	10,666	(2,886)	-21.3%
Highways and Green Spaces	27,082	(12,887)	14,195	13,874	(321)	-2.3%
Director and Head of Operations - Communities	299	(4)	295	314	19	6.4%
Corporate Landlord	15,025	(11,183)	3,842	3,423	(419)	-10.9%
TOTAL COMMUNITIES	71,492	(36,193)	35,299	31,669	(3,630)	-10.3%
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S						
Chief Executive Unit	524	(2)	522	530	8	1.5%
Finance	39,849	(35,417)	4,432	4,653	221	5.0%
HR/OD	2,351	(441)	1,910	1,958	48	2.5%
Partnerships	3,887	(1,588)	2,299	2,549	250	10.9%
Legal, Democratic & Regulatory	7,432	(1,116)	6,316	6,278	(38)	-0.6%
Elections	190	(3)	187	240	53	28.3%
ICT	5,941	(1,122)	4,819	4,753	(66)	-1.4%
Housing & Homelessness	12,678	(7,827)	4,851	4,204	(647)	-13.3%
Business Support	1,134	(137)	997	877	(120)	-12.0%
TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	73,986	(47,653)	26,333	26,042	(291)	-1.1%
TOTAL DIRECTORATE BUDGETS						
	483,268	(143,122)	340,146	333,483	(6,663)	-2.0%
Council Wide Budgets	44,481	(1,401)	43,080	37,136	(5,944)	-13.8%
Net Council Tax Collection				(774)	(774)	0.0%
Appropriations to Earmarked Reserves				13,103	13,103	0.0%
Transfer to Council Fund				278	278	0.0%
NET BRIDGEND CBC	527,749	(144,523)	383,226	383,226	-	0.0%

NB: Differences due to rounding of £000's

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 4

TOTAL MOVEMENT ON REVENUE AND CAPITAL EARMARKED RESERVES AS AT 31ST MARCH
2026

Opening Balance 01 Apr 25 £'000	Reserve	Movement as at 31 March 2026		Closing Balance 31 Mar 26 £'000
		Net Additions/ Reclassification £'000	Draw-down/ unwound £'000	
	Corporate Reserves:			
303	Asset Management Plan	-	(107)	196
1,206	Building Maintenance Reserve	-	(183)	1,023
781	Capital Feasibility Fund	-	(89)	692
1,827	Change Management	1,736	(1,384)	2,179
467	Digital Transformation, ICT & Finance Systems	-	(219)	248
500	Economic and Future Resilience Fund	-	-	500
830	Insurance Reserve	-	-	830
1,000	Major Claims Reserve	-	-	1,000
3,179	MTFS Budget Contingency	-	-	3,179
1,893	Service Reconfiguration	-	-	1,893
11,986	Total Corporate Reserves	1,736	(1,982)	11,740
	Directorate Reserves:			
7,554	Directorate Issues	5,910	(1,774)	11,690
23	Wellbeing Projects	-	-	23
7,577	Total Directorate Reserves	5,910	(1,744)	11,713
	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:			
-	Building Control Reserve	24	-	24
197	Civil Parking Enforcement	5	-	202
1,772	IFRS Grants	713	(250)	2,235
174	Local Development Plan	55	-	229
-	Planning & Development	74	-	74
682	Special Regeneration Fund	-	(23)	659
63	Rest Bay	19	-	82
2,888	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:	890	(273)	3,505
(619)	School Balances	-	(2,996)	(3,615)
46,038	Capital Programme Contribution	8,010	(2,834)	51,214
10,008	Council Fund Balance	278	-	10,286
77,878	TOTAL RESERVES	16,824	(9,859)	84,843

NB: Differences due to rounding of £000's

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	AGE FRIENDLY BASELINE
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SOPHIE MOORE GROUP MANAGER PREVENTION & WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	This report presents the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment (Appendix 1) and seeks Scrutiny consideration of the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The baseline assessment has been developed through extensive engagement with over 200 older residents, alongside partners and stakeholders across the public, third and community sectors. The assessment identifies both the strengths and challenges currently experienced by older people across the county borough and establishes priorities for future development. The report highlights strong partnership working, community engagement, preventative approaches and existing support services across Bridgend. It also identifies key challenges relating to transport, digital exclusion, communication, access to health services, social isolation and accessibility. The proposed application to join the WHO Global Network would formalise BCBC's commitment to becoming an age-friendly county borough and support the future development of a long-term Age Friendly Action Plan aligned to the WHO framework and local priorities identified through engagement.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment (**Appendix 1**) and outline the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The report also seeks Scrutiny comments and recommendations prior to Cabinet approval and formal submission.

2. Background

- 2.1 To support the development of Age-Friendly Communities as part of the *Age Friendly Wales: Strategy for an Ageing Society*, Welsh Government has provided funding to all local authorities in Wales. Bridgend County Borough Council has used this funding to maintain a dedicated Age Friendly Co-ordinator post, strengthen partnership working, undertake extensive engagement with older residents and stakeholders, and complete a local baseline assessment aligned to the WHO Age-Friendly Framework.
- 2.2 The WHO framework is structured around eight domains covering transport, housing, outdoor spaces, social participation, inclusion, civic participation, communication, and community support and health services. The baseline assessment has been informed through engagement with over 200 older residents alongside community groups, partners and stakeholders.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council has completed a comprehensive baseline assessment to support its ambition of becoming part of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (**Appendix 1**). The assessment establishes a detailed overview of the county borough's current position across the eight WHO Age-Friendly domains and identifies future priorities based on engagement with older residents and stakeholders.
- 3.2 The assessment identified a number of existing strengths across Bridgend, including strong partnership working, established community networks, preventative approaches, and a range of existing services and initiatives supporting older residents. These include the SHOUT Older Persons Forum, Community Navigators, Local Community Co-ordinators, Bridgelink Telecare, dementia support services and a wide range of community-based social participation opportunities.
- 3.3 Engagement also identified several key challenges affecting older residents. These include transport limitations in rural and valley communities, digital exclusion, barriers to accessing information and services, social isolation, accessibility concerns, and increasing pressure on health and care services.
- 3.4 The proposal within this report is for Bridgend County Borough Council to formally progress its application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Membership of the network would provide:

- International recognition of Bridgend's commitment to becoming age-friendly
- Access to international learning and best practice
- Opportunities for collaboration through the WHO network
- A framework for continuous improvement and long-term planning

3.5 Following acceptance into the network, the Council will develop a detailed Age Friendly Action Plan aligned to the priorities identified within the baseline assessment and future engagement activity.

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

5.1 This project aligns strongly with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, embedding the five ways of working throughout the development of Age Friendly Bridgend. The approach is underpinned by co-production, partnership working and a long-term commitment to improving quality of life for older residents.

Long Term

The Age Friendly Bridgend initiative is explicitly focused on responding to long-term demographic change, including the growth in the older population and associated pressures on health and social care services.

The project balances short-term improvements (such as enhancements to transport access, community activities and communication) with longer-term strategic planning, including:

- Development of an Age-Friendly Action Plan with clear priorities and phased implementation
- Investment in preventative services such as telecare, falls prevention and housing adaptations
- Planning for future service demand linked to an ageing population and increasing complexity of need

This ensures that immediate needs are addressed whilst building sustainable, age-friendly communities for the future.

Prevention

Prevention is a core principle of the project, with significant focus on early intervention and reducing escalation of need.

The project directs resources toward:

- Falls prevention programmes and active ageing initiatives (e.g. National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), community-based activities)
- Housing adaptations and telecare services that reduce hospital admissions and support independence
- Social participation, befriending and community navigation to reduce loneliness and isolation
- Improved access to information and early support through Community Navigators and Local Community Coordinators

By addressing determinants of poor health and wellbeing early, the project reduces demand on acute services and supports residents to live independently for longer.

Integration

The project adopts a holistic, whole-system approach, integrating economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing outcomes.

This is demonstrated through:

- Alignment with the WHO eight domains, covering transport, housing, health, social participation, inclusion and more
- Linking improvements across services (e.g. transport enabling access to health services, social activities and employment opportunities)
- Promoting cultural engagement through libraries, arts programmes and heritage assets
- Supporting economic contribution through volunteering, employment pathways and active ageing

The approach ensures that improvements in one area reinforce outcomes across all wellbeing goals.

Collaboration

Collaboration is central to delivery, with strong partnership working across public, private and third sectors.

Key examples include:

- Joint working with organisations such as Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, Age Cymru, South Wales Police and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Integration through the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board structures including a section 33 agreement for person centred community health and social care services
- Multi-agency service delivery in areas such as transport, social care and health, housing and community support

This collaborative model maximises resources, reduces duplication and strengthens collective impact in achieving shared wellbeing objectives.

Involvement

The project demonstrates a strong commitment to involvement, with extensive engagement shaping both the baseline assessment and future priorities.

This includes:

- Direct engagement with over 200 residents aged 50+
- Ongoing involvement through the SHOUT Older Persons Forum and planned Age-Friendly Working Group
- Inclusive engagement with diverse groups including LGBTQ+ communities, Welsh speakers and those experiencing disadvantage
- Use of co-production principles to ensure residents are actively involved in design, delivery and review

This ensures that the voices of local people reflect the diversity of the area and directly influence decision-making.

5.2 Contribution to Corporate Well-being Objectives

The project contributes clearly and directly to the Council's four Wellbeing Objectives:

Wellbeing Objective One – A prosperous place with thriving communities

- Strengthens community cohesion through social participation, volunteering and intergenerational activity
- Supports local economies by enabling older people to remain active contributors
- Enhances local environments, public spaces and community infrastructure

Wellbeing Objective Two – Creating modern, seamless public services

- Promotes integrated, person-centred services across council departments, health and third sector partners
- Improves access to services through better communication, navigation and coordinated delivery
- Utilises digital innovation (e.g. telecare) alongside accessible non-digital options

Wellbeing Objective Three – Enabling people to meet their potential

- Supports lifelong learning, employability and volunteering opportunities for older people
- Encourages active ageing, social participation and skills development
- Empowers residents through co-production and civic engagement

Wellbeing Objective Four – Supporting our most vulnerable

- Targets inequalities linked to deprivation, rurality and health outcomes
- Provides tailored support through community navigation, health services and housing adaptations
- Focuses on prevention, early intervention and inclusive access to services

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct climate change and nature implications arising from this report. However, future Age Friendly priorities relating to transport, accessible communities and local service provision may contribute positively towards sustainable and connected communities.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising from this report. However, the programme of work supports the wellbeing, independence and inclusion of older residents across the county borough through improved community support and partnership working.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Welsh Government Age Friendly funding currently supports the dedicated Age Friendly Co-ordinator role alongside engagement, partnership activity and development of the baseline assessment and future action planning.
- 8.2 Future delivery of the Age Friendly Action Plan will continue to require partnership working and identification of sustainable funding opportunities to support longer-term implementation.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- a) Considers the findings of the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment as set out in **Appendix 1** and the priorities identified through engagement with older residents and stakeholders;
 - b) Notes the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities;
 - c) Provides comments and recommendations to inform the development of the future Age Friendly Action Plan and associated delivery priorities prior to Cabinet approval and formal submission.

Background documents

None



Pen-y-Bont ar Ogwr
Oed-Gyfeillgar
Age-Friendly Bridgend



Age Friendly Bridgend Baseline Assessment

This document is designed to capture and present an overview of Bridgend County Borough at the inception of the Age Friendly Communities project so that we can map our journey and progress in becoming age friendly.

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



Baseline Assessment

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Older People's Involvement in Bridgend	5
1.2 Population and Demographics	8
1.3 Social Deprivation and Determinants of Health	10
.....	
2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	11
.....	
3. Transport and Mobility	13
.....	
4. Housing	16
.....	
5. Social Participation	18
.....	
6. Social Inclusion and Non-Discrimination	21
.....	
7. Civic Engagement and Employment	23
.....	
8. Communication and Information	25
.....	
9. Community Support and Health Services	28
.....	
10. Vision and Priorities	31
10.1 Vision	
10.2 Priorities	
.....	
11. Concluding Remarks	34
.....	
12. References	35
.....	

2026

1. Introduction

This document presents the comprehensive baseline assessment for Age-Friendly Communities Bridgend, a pivotal step toward achieving membership in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. The core purpose of this assessment is to capture a precise snapshot of the County Borough at the inception of this project, enabling us to effectively map our progress and journey in becoming an environment where all residents can live longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.



The WHO Framework and Our Approach

The World Health Organisation established the Global Network in 2010 with the shared vision of connecting communities worldwide in a common mission: to make every locality a great place to grow older. By aspiring to membership, Bridgend commits to being inspired by, and inspiring, others in implementing evidence-based solutions that foster fairer and more sustainable societies. The network facilitates the vital exchange of information, knowledge, and unique lived experiences from across the globe.

This assessment utilises the established and internationally recognised WHO eight-domain structure as its guiding framework. These domains cover all aspects of community life that impact the health and quality of life of older residents:



OUTDOOR SPACES
AND PUBLIC
BUILDINGS



TRANSPORT
AND MOBILITY



HOUSING



COMMUNITY SUPPORT
AND HEALTHCARE
SERVICES



CIVIC
PARTICIPATION
AND EMPLOYMENT



SOCIAL
PARTICIPATION



RESPECT
AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION



COMMUNICATION
AND
INFORMATION

The document provides an overview of the age-friendly communities concept, its aims, and objectives, while also illustrating the extensive existing engagement processes, services, activities, and best practices already in place within the county borough.



A Foundation of Partnership and Regional Collaboration

Bridgend sits within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board footprint. Our approach is fundamentally rooted in strong, cross-sector working, particularly with the third sector. We work in close partnership with public, third sector, and community organisations to deliver integrated services that consistently improve wellbeing across the entire life-course.

Bridgend's local wellbeing assessment has been conducted on a regional basis, recognising the long-standing tradition of collaboration in planning to improve population wellbeing within the newly formed Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. This regional approach now fully includes Bridgend, ensuring a cohesive strategy across the health board footprint. The assessment provides a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing within Bridgend County Borough, identifying both key challenges and inherent strengths as the community evolves.

An Asset-Based Approach to Community Development

A defining feature of our strategy is the strong ethos of developing community ownership approaches to support meaningful and sustainable development.

A "golden thread" in our approach is the use of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) methodologies. This philosophy focuses on identifying and building upon the inherent strengths, skills, and assets that already exist within our people and communities, rather than focusing solely on deficits.

Regarding the development of Age Friendly Communities, Bridgend recognises its crucial leadership role. This leadership involves connecting deeply with our local populations and communities, as well as fostering broader partnerships including the Public Service Board.



Our Aspiration for Membership

This document serves as the foundational baseline measurement for the development of age-friendly communities in Bridgend. It is designed to capture and present an overview of where we stand today so that we can effectively map our journey and progress in the future.

Bridgend County Borough Council, our communities, and our partners aspire to full membership of the WHO network for specific, impactful reasons:

- **Empowerment and Inspiration:** We aim to inspire and be inspired by the global network, enabling meaningful changes in the lives of our residents and empowering individuals to take agency over their own health and wellbeing.
- **Evidence-Based Solutions:** We seek to create and access evidence-based solutions, leveraging the unique strengths present within our own community to implement real, lasting change.
- **Global Contribution:** We commit to contributing to the global community by facilitating the exchange of information, knowledge, and the unique lived experiences of people within Bridgend County Borough.

By establishing this baseline and leveraging the principles outlined in the WHO domains, Bridgend is committed to building a county borough that is inclusive, supportive, and a truly great place to grow older for all its residents.



1.1 Older People's Involvement in Bridgend

APPENDIX 1'

Bridgend's Age Friendly strategy for integrating the voices and needs of its older population into community planning is a genuinely collaborative, long-standing effort rooted in principles of co-production and citizen-driven change. The community and its partners have fostered a bottom-up philosophy, which aims to ensure sustainable change through shared ownership, moving away from a top-down framework.

Engagement and Voice

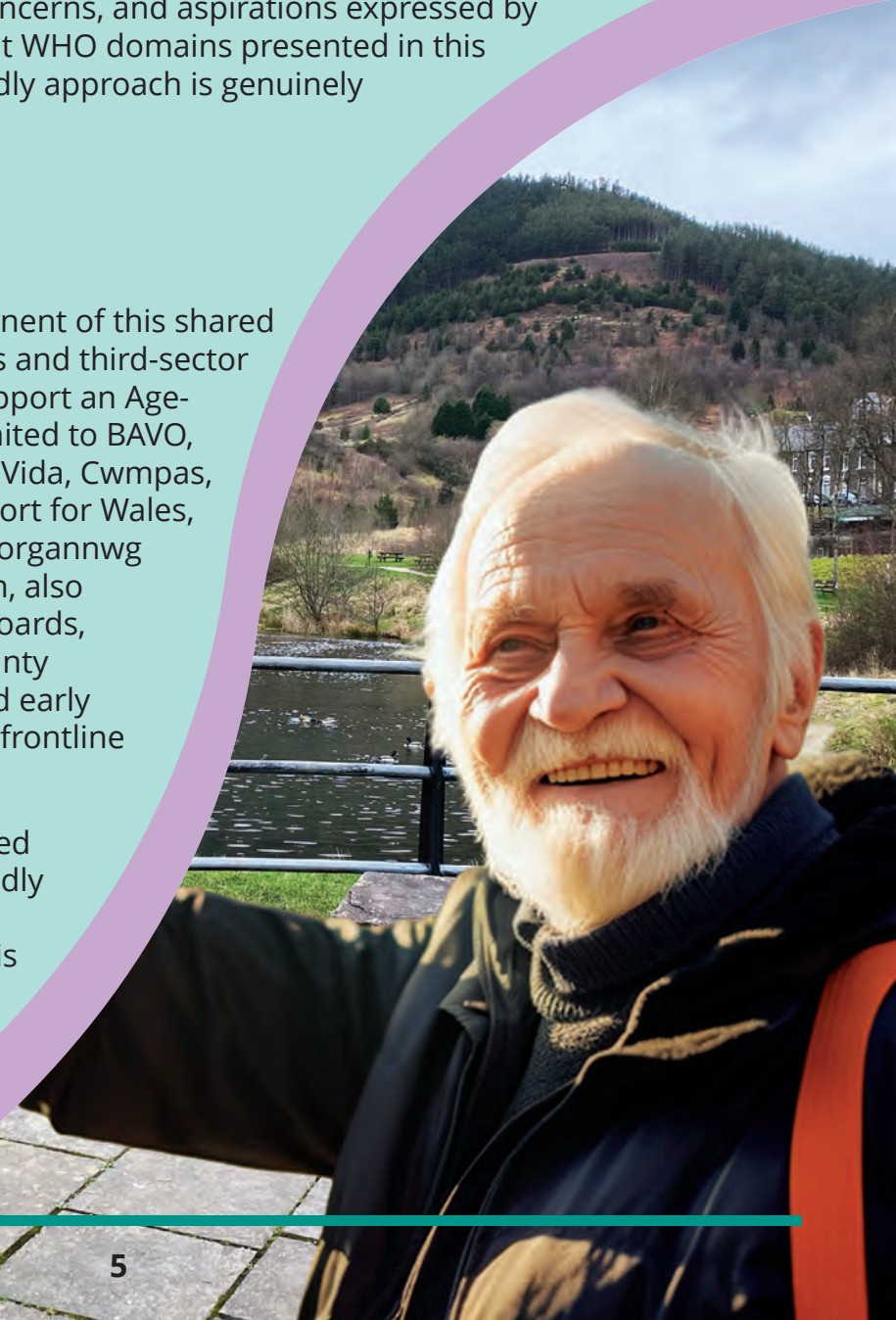
To gather a broad range of perspectives, partners, facilitated by the Prevention and Wellbeing team, have conducted community consultations in 2024, reaching over 200 residents aged 50 and over. These consultations have provided valuable insights into key areas such as transport, personal safety, outdoor spaces, and access to services, forming the foundation for the community and its partners to co-produce solutions to identified issues. The voice of the older adult community has also been gathered during partnership working sessions and through established forums.

The extensive engagement undertaken has been instrumental in shaping this baseline assessment. The feedback, concerns, and aspirations expressed by older residents inform each of the eight WHO domains presented in this document, ensuring that our age-friendly approach is genuinely grounded in lived experience.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is a crucial component of this shared strategy. A wide array of public services and third-sector organisations collaborate closely to support an Age-friendly Bridgend, including but not limited to BAVO, Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, Tu Vida, Cwmpas, Age Cymru, South Wales Police, Transport for Wales, Hafod, Valleys 2 Coast, and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board. This integrated approach, also facilitated through the Public Service Boards, ensures a unified vision across the County Borough, with effective signposting and early detection practitioners working across frontline services.

The entire initiative is guided by a shared aspiration to become a more Age Friendly Community. The goal of this extensive engagement and partnership working is to empower local residents, deepen community relations, and ensure Bridgend is a great place to grow older together.



Inclusion

A core tenet of our vision has been the inclusion of often overlooked groups and reflecting the diversity of our older population in our fora. There are a range of community organisations that specifically support the needs and lives of older adults whilst there are many other opportunities where older adults fully engage in community life on an inter-generational and more socially integrated basis.

Our work with SHOUT, our older persons forum, provides a solid foundation and a model that can help us to connect with larger and more diverse numbers of older adults across our County Borough. More recent work and engagement has identified the diversity amongst older adults and highlighted the importance of both bespoke and integrated opportunities and services. One example would be the formation of subgroups including the LGBTQ+ group who help ensure that no voice from our community will be ignored or missed. Reflecting the diversity of our community is also an essential asset, enabling us to share a broad range of views, lived experience and expertise on a variety of subjects.

Citizen-Driven Change

In Bridgend, we are striving to ensure that citizen-driven change is at the core of everything we do in relation to Age Friendly Communities. We recognise that the local authority exists to empower its local residents to have more agency over their own lives, and to form a bedrock from which communities can build a future that they envision.

The Council, within its 2023 - 2028 corporate plan "Delivering Together" has identified seven wellbeing objectives that can connect into our Age Friendly Communities planning and include supporting our more vulnerable, ensuring people have a voice and are listened to and are healthy and happy. There is a specific focus in the Corporate Plan on our aspiration to become a more Age Friendly Community. We will do this externally with our communities and partners but also internally as part of a "One Council" approach to connecting the domains for maximum impact.

For many of our older adults we have recorded that the pandemic has been a particularly challenging time and Age Friendly Communities are more important than ever. Our philosophy of having a bottom-up approach, rather than a prescribed top-down framework, has created a "buy in" effect from the local community who have tangible ownership across the project. As well as creating a sense of community, inclusion and buy in, this de-centralised approach also allows for sustainable change and the constant evolution of approach, adapting and re-orienting to meet the latest challenges that arise.



Co-Production in Practice

The Age-friendly Bridgend initiative is driven by the shared vision of all stakeholders, facilitated by the Prevention and Wellbeing Service team within the Council's Social Services and Wellbeing directorate. From the outset, the focus has been on cultivating strong, co-productive relationships across the community, ensuring this remains a community-centred, rather than council-focused, programme. Initial engagement efforts have provided both a generic overview of Bridgend as an Age-Friendly Community and specific insights into existing services and opportunities.

To embed this co-production permanently, a dedicated Age-Friendly Working Group is being established. This group will serve as the core mechanism for ongoing dialogue and collective action, providing all key stakeholders with an equal share in decision-making and implementation.

The "SHOUT" Older Persons Forum in Bridgend has been a vital part of the initial engagement. Going forward, existing networks such as U3A Bridgend and Porthcawl, alongside smaller older adult community groups, including Elderly Residents Associations and social groups, will be invited to nominate representatives to join the Working Group. This structure empowers older adults to move beyond consultation and actively contribute to the Age Friendly planning and implementation process.

Throughout all documentation, 'we' refers to all participating stakeholders: older adults, local government, and public, private, and voluntary organisations. The Age-Friendly lead's primary role is to coordinate this diverse group, ensuring every voice holds equal weight and that older adults remain at the centre of planning, design, development, and delivery of services.

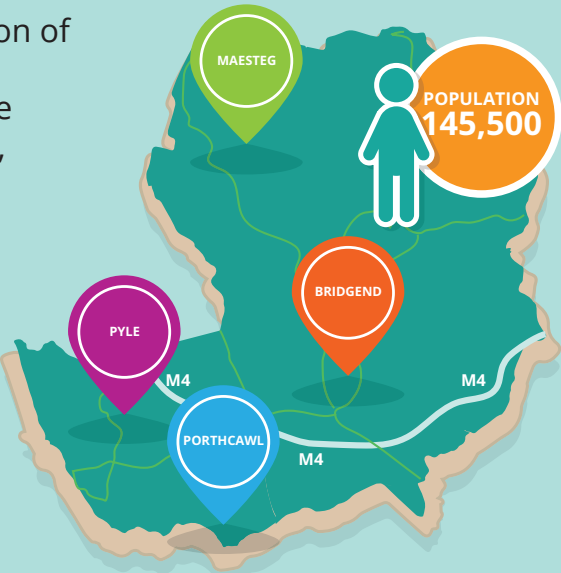
This Age-Friendly Bridgend baseline assessment outlines progress made, and details future work based on shared priorities identified through this collaborative engagement process. The initiative is designed to maximize opportunities for true co-production, ensuring older adults are partners in the planning, design, delivery, and review of all services and opportunities, while also improving access to information about activities and events that enhance wellbeing and independence.

The established network of older people's groups now functions as the foundational membership for the Working Group. This mechanism allows for direct participation, moving beyond traditional surveys and consultations to include active representation on local policy and planning groups, and the immediate escalation and resolution of common issues identified at a local level. A priority moving forward will be to update and improve the web and social media-based information available for Age Friendly Bridgend and the older persons forum to support the Working Group's communication needs.



1.2 Population and Demographics

According to the 2021 Census Bridgend had a population of 145,500, making it the 8th largest of Wales's 22 unitary authorities (UA) and home to approximately 4.7% of the Welsh total. The area includes urban centres (Bridgend, Porthcawl, Pyle, Maesteg) and rural valleys which pose access challenges.



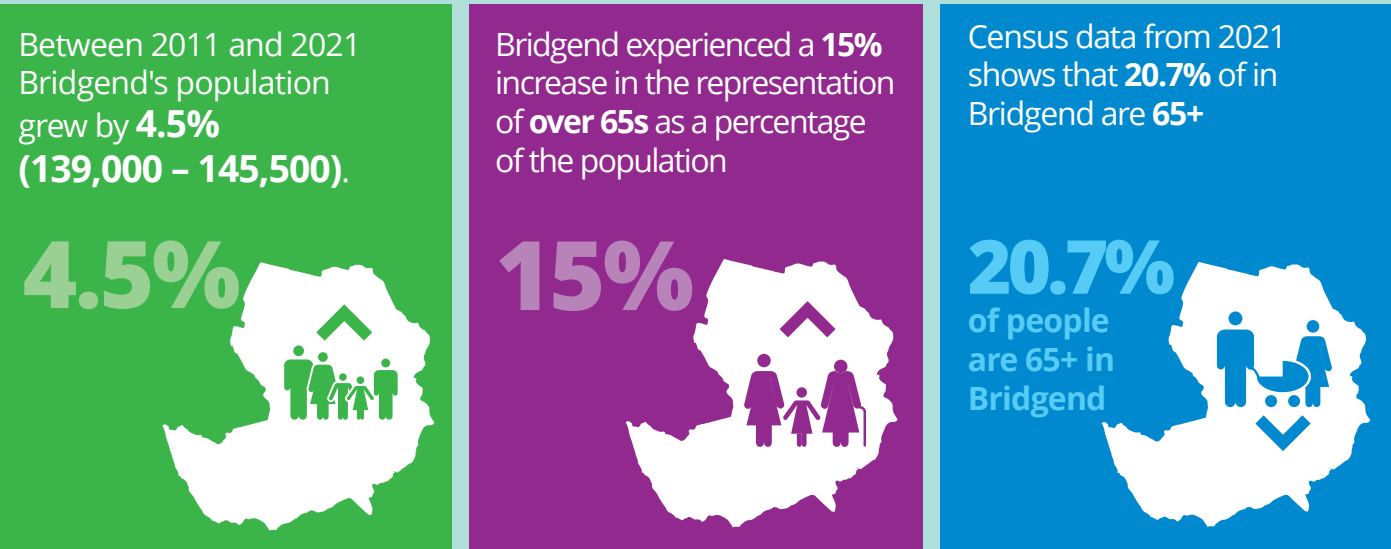
Bridgend borders Neath Port Talbot to the North-West, Rhondda Cynon Taff to the North-East and Vale of Glamorgan to the South-East. The M4 runs through Bridgend, connecting the UA to Cardiff and Newport to the east and Swansea to the west. The Bridgend UA has four large settlements (Bridgend, Porthcawl, Pyle and Maesteg) with the central and north-eastern areas having relatively low population density, in comparison.

Population Growth and Age Distribution

Between 2011 and 2021 Bridgend's population grew by 4.5% (139,000 – 145,500). This is above the national population increase of 1.4% over the same time period. Whilst Bridgend's population is experiencing a shift towards an older demographic, Bridgend has a lower percentage of its population over 65 (20.7%) when compared to Wales as a whole (21.3%).

However, Bridgend experienced a 15% increase in the representation of over 65s as a percentage of the population from 2011 to 2021, in-line with a national increase of 15.8%. This has resulted in the median age of Bridgend increasing to 43, higher than the national average (42). This is due, in part, to an increase in the 50-64 age group of 13%, whilst the 35-49 age group population fell by 11.6%.

The reduction in the 35-49 age group is of primary concern, as it is this age group which produces the greatest economic output in the population as well as performing the majority of essential roles such as emergency service roles. The service industry also relies heavily on people in this age bracket.



Implications for Service Planning

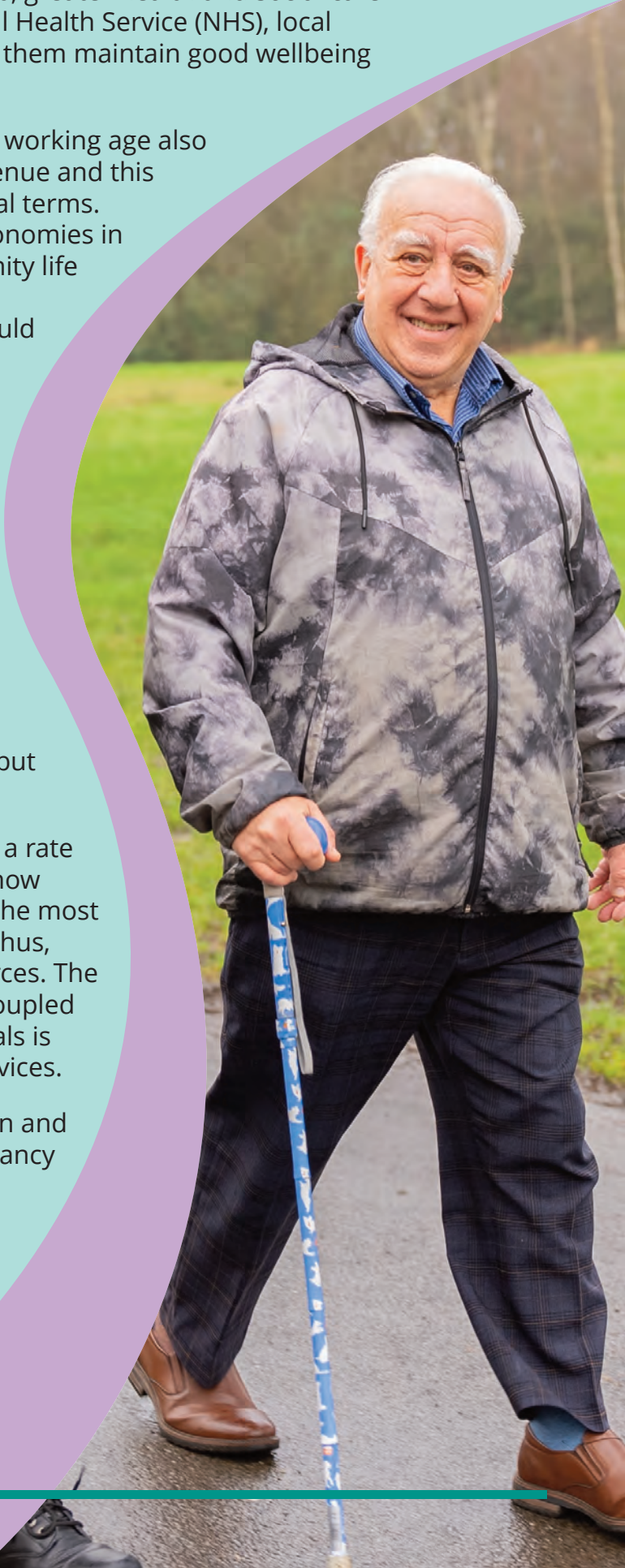
This uneven distribution of population growth could present numerous multi-faceted challenges to the health service in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB). It is known that older generations are at greater risk of experiencing adverse health and thus requiring, when taken as a population group, greater health and social care interventions capacity on the part of the National Health Service (NHS), local authorities and 3rd sector organisations, to help them maintain good wellbeing and to retain independent lives.

The lower percentage of the population being of working age also means a relative decrease in taxation-based revenue and this could lead to reductions in public spending in real terms. However, older adults can contribute to local economies in a broad range of ways and add value to community life also beyond their working lives and their opportunities to engage in active citizenship should be supported. This may help to reduce overall impact of reductions in economic growth and help to see older adults viewed as a valuable community resource.

In a local context, some areas of Bridgend County Borough are experiencing more rapid increases in aging than others. Bridgend West cluster contains Rest Bay Ward which has 56% of its population over the age of 55. This highlights the additional challenge of uneven pressures on public services in different areas although examples of healthy and active ageing populations should not be viewed as a problem but rather a success story.

The population of Bridgend has been growing at a rate of 8,588 people per decade. The 75+ age group now forms 9.5% of the population. This age group is the most likely to experience negative health events, and thus, require the disproportionate allocation of resources. The increasing number of people in this age group coupled with a relative reduction in working age individuals is sure to have a significant impact on frontline services.

Because of the acceleration of medical innovation and ever improving public health systems, life expectancy is at its highest in history and supporting older adults to have a good quality of life is important within our Age Friendly Communities.



1.3 Social Deprivation and Determinants of Health

Deprivation is unevenly distributed across Bridgend, with higher concentrations in northern and valley areas. These areas face transport and accessibility barriers, lower economic opportunity and higher health needs. Bridgend's approach focuses on health equity, community co-ordination, and resourceful and resilient communities to mitigate these determinants.

Understanding Local Deprivation

Here in Bridgend, we recognise the impact that social deprivation and the determinants of health can have on the health and wellbeing of our communities. Many sections of our communities do experience social deprivation and therefore, experience additional barriers to accessing services and opportunities and this can lead to poorer health outcomes. We are committed to ensuring health equity in our communities; therefore, we are working with our communities to hear their lived experience and to co-produce strategies to help address the main barriers present.

As displayed in deprivation mapping, the highest concentration of deprivation is in the north of the county. These areas are mountainous in nature and have additional challenges relating to transport and accessing services. These areas are predominantly occupied by small communities built in a linear fashion along valley floors. This makes them difficult to access for businesses, resulting in lack of economic opportunity for residents. The steep hillsides also pose additional challenges for older populations, as many of the streets are uneven and on slopes which can become challenging

Strategic Response

Our age-friendly approach recognises that addressing health inequalities requires targeted interventions that acknowledge the specific challenges faced by different communities within Bridgend. The eight WHO domains provide a framework for addressing these determinants holistically, ensuring that improvements in transport, housing, outdoor spaces, and other areas work together to reduce health inequalities and improve quality of life for all older residents, particularly those in more deprived areas.

2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

APPENDIX 1'

Bridgend County Borough offers a diverse mix of green and blue spaces that align strongly with the Age-Friendly Communities vision of creating accessible, safe, and inclusive environments for people of all ages. Natural assets such as the Merthyr Mawr Warren National Nature Reserve-with Europe's second-highest sand dune-and the Kenfig National Nature Reserve provide opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and wellbeing. Managed parklands like Bryngarw Country Park support the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain through well-maintained walking routes, woodland areas, and recreation spaces that encourage active lifestyles.

Coastal access points, including Porthcawl Promenade and surrounding beaches, offer additional routes for walking, socialising, and enjoying nature-key contributors to mental and physical wellbeing for older adults. The county also benefits from a rich heritage environment, including medieval sites such as Newcastle Castle and Coity Castle, which enhance place identity and community pride.

Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure-such as Awen Community Libraries, Halo Life Centres, and cultural venues including the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl and the recently redeveloped Maesteg Town Hall-play an important role in supporting wider age-friendly domains. These facilities foster social participation, lifelong learning, arts and culture engagement, and intergenerational community activity. Awen Cultural Trust's mission to enhance wellbeing through arts, cultural and heritage venues align closely with age-friendly recommended approaches for strengthening community connection and accessibility.



Access and Experience of Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The Ageing Well in Bridgend consultation responses indicate that a large majority-82% (182 respondents)-agree or strongly agree that they have good access to nearby parks, libraries, community centres, and buildings. However, 18% (40 respondents) disagree, highlighting persistent inequalities in access that need to be addressed through targeted age-friendly planning.

Themes from engagement include:

- **Lack of public toilets, which limits the ability of older people to spend longer periods outside and can discourage participation in community activities.**
- **Uneven pavements and poorly maintained footpaths, posing safety risks and inhibiting mobility-especially for those using mobility aids or living with long-term conditions.**
- **Limited seating and rest points, which reduce walkability and access to green spaces for older adults.**
- **Poor lighting, impacting perceptions of safety and preventing people from using outdoor areas at certain times.**
- **Concerns about derelict premises in Bridgend town centre, which affect safety, attractiveness, and civic pride-factors central to age-friendly urban design.**
- **Issues related to pedestrianisation, where changes to road layouts or access routes can unintentionally disadvantage some older people if not supported by clear signage, transport integration, and accessible crossing points.**

Age-Friendly Recommendations

In line with age-friendly best practice across the domains, the following improvements were identified:

- **Targeted investment in accessible seating and rest areas, ensuring benches are frequent, comfortable, well-positioned, and include armrests-supporting mobility and confidence outdoors.**
- **Clear, consistent signage to public facilities, including toilets, accessible entrances, and transport links, supporting both the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Communication & Information domains.**
- **Maintenance and resurfacing of pavements and footpaths, reducing trip hazards and ensuring age-friendly walkability.**
- **Improved lighting, increasing feelings of safety and enabling residents to use outdoor spaces more flexibly.**
- **Town centre regeneration, addressing derelict buildings to create a more welcoming, safer, and vibrant environment that supports civic participation and social engagement.**
- **Integration with the Transport domain-ensuring that any pedestrianisation or redesign is supported by accessible bus stops, drop-off points, and seating to maintain independence and ease of movement.**
- **Consultation with older people in design processes, ensuring that outdoor spaces genuinely meet their needs and preferences.**

3. Transport and Mobility

Transport is a core enabler of independence and social participation within an Age-Friendly Community. In Bridgend County Borough, transport provision includes mainstream public transport, concessionary travel schemes, community transport services, and informal volunteer-led options. Together, these form an essential network that supports mobility, access to services, and quality of life-particularly for older people and those with mobility impairments.

Current Transport Provision

Bridgend Community Transport plays a critical role within this system. Operating fourteen accessible vehicles, services such as the Town Rider and Community Car Scheme provide flexible, door-to-door transport for older adults and residents with reduced mobility. These services complement statutory transport provision and offer an essential alternative for residents who are unable to drive or access conventional bus routes, supporting the Transport and Community Support and Health Services domains.

Concessionary travel for people aged 60+ and eligible disabled residents is delivered through the national scheme administered by Transport for Wales. Applications are supported locally through Bridgend County Borough Council, with community staff-including staff within Awen Libraries-assisting residents to navigate the digital and administrative process. This reflects the importance of the Communication & Information domain, ensuring people can understand and access transport entitlements.



Access and Experience of Local Transport

The Ageing Well in Bridgend consultation responses suggests that a majority of respondents can reach the places they need to go:

Page 67

46%

(103 respondents) agree that they can access the locations they want in their local area.



29%

(66 respondents) strongly agree that they can access the locations they want in their local area.



However, a significant minority-20% (44 respondents) disagree and 5% (12 respondents) strongly disagree-report unmet mobility needs. This highlights the importance of addressing persistent barriers within transport planning.

Car access remains a key factor shaping mobility:

50%

(114 respondents) strongly agree that they have access to or own a car.



39%

(87 respondents) agree that they have access to or own a car.



Yet 8% (18 respondents) strongly disagree and 3% (7 respondents) disagree. These findings underline the importance of developing age-friendly transport systems that do not rely solely on private car use, particularly for older adults who may reduce their driving as they age.

Themes from engagement include:

- Irregular or insufficient bus routes in rural areas, particularly affecting valleys communities, reducing access to shops, services, social activities, and health appointments.
- Reduced availability of community transport during school drop-off and pick-up times, limiting options during peak periods.
- Lower transport coverage in more remote areas, contributing to inequalities in mobility and social participation.
- Difficulty booking transport services, particularly for those without internet access or digital confidence.
- Lack of clear information about available transport options, timetables, and eligibility criteria.
- Affordability concerns for some residents who rely on taxis or community transport for essential journeys.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- Supporting and expanding volunteer driver schemes, reducing reliance on private cars and offering flexible, people-centred transport-particularly effective for health appointments, shopping trips, and social visits.
- Weighting transport funding to better support rural and valleys communities, recognising the higher need and lower provision in these areas.
- Improving coordination between school transport and wider community transport services, avoiding conflicts that limit availability at peak times.
- Enhancing communication and information, including clearer timetables, accessible formats, better promotion of concessionary schemes, and support for digital applications-aligning with the Communication & Information domain.
- Strengthening integration with other age-friendly domains, such as ensuring transport connects effectively to community centres, outdoor spaces, cultural venues, and health facilities.
- Training for transport staff to ensure they are sympathetic to and understanding of the needs of older passengers.
- Improved waiting facilities including sheltered seating at bus stops, particularly in areas with high numbers of older residents.
- Accessible booking systems that don't rely solely on online platforms and include telephone options with real people available to assist.

4. Housing

Housing is a fundamental component of an Age-Friendly Community, enabling people to live safely, comfortably, and independently as they age. Bridgend County Borough offers a wide range of housing options, from mainstream owner-occupied homes to supported and specialist accommodation. Across the borough, there are approximately 849 care home places, including sheltered housing, extra-care apartments, and residential and nursing care homes. Local housing associations such as Hafod, Valleys to Coast (V2C), and Linc Cymru play an important role in providing and managing accessible and specialist accommodation that aligns with the needs of older residents.

Supporting Independent Living

In line with the Age-Friendly Housing domain, the county also offers services that support older residents to remain living independently at home for as long as possible. Bridgelink Telecare delivers 24/7 monitored telecare, personal alarms and a mobile response team-enabling residents to feel safe, confident, and connected. As an early adopter of the digital telecare switchover, Bridgend has taken proactive steps to ensure that technology-enabled care continues to support greater independence, reduce unnecessary hospital admissions, and increase wellbeing.

Bridgend County Care & Repair provides another essential layer of support. Their services help older people maintain safe, warm, and accessible homes, offering minor and major adaptations such as grab rails, ramps, stairlifts, level-access showers, and other home improvements. They also provide free home assessments, advice on grants and funding, and technical support to manage building work. This aligns strongly with the Age-Friendly principles of adaptability, accessibility, and ageing in place.



Themes from engagement include:

- **Timely and affordable home adaptations, including grab rails, bathroom modifications, stairlifts, and ramps.**
- **Accessible housing options located near family, amenities, and key services, reducing reliance on transport and enabling community connection.**
- **Energy-efficient, warm homes, which support health and reduce the financial burden of heating.**
- **Clear information and advice about available support, grants, and housing pathways-connecting to the Communication & Information domain.**
- **Support with property maintenance, particularly for owner-occupiers who may struggle to identify trustworthy tradespeople or manage building work.**
- **Housing adaptability, ensuring that properties can be modified as residents' needs change over time.**

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- **Enabling older people to live independently in their own homes wherever safe and possible.**
- **Developing additional accessible and specialist housing in partnership with Hafod, V2C, and other partners.**
- **Strengthening support services such as Care & Repair, telecare, and preventative home adaptations.**
- **Ensuring housing is closely connected with other Age-Friendly domains such as Transport, Health Services, and Social Participation.**
- **Better planning for future housing needs, considering factors such as local infrastructure, parking, and pressure on services.**
- **Improving access to advice and advocacy for older tenants and homeowners facing housing challenges.**



5. Social Participation

Social participation is central to an Age-Friendly Community, supporting wellbeing, reducing isolation, and enabling people to remain active and connected as they age. Bridgend County Borough has a wide and growing range of programmes, community groups and third-sector initiatives that encourage older adults to participate in social, cultural, and physical activities.

Local Programmes and Initiatives

Local initiatives such as Super Agers, 60+ Active Leisure, Free Swimming, and Feel Good for Life contribute directly to active ageing by offering group activities, social events, and online sessions that promote both physical movement and social interaction. These programmes help build confidence, sustain friendships, and create new opportunities for participation-key features of the Age-Friendly Social Participation domain.

Bridgend also benefits from a rich local cultural and creative sector. Third-sector organisations such as Breathing Space, run by Tanio arts charity, offer creative workshops in welcoming spaces where people can meet, chat, enjoy warm drinks, and try new art activities. Awen Libraries play an important role, providing accessible social spaces and regular activities including craft groups, "knit and natter," Welsh lessons, and other community events. Some libraries also host dementia hubs delivered by Mental Health Matters (MHM), helping create dementia-inclusive environments that align with Age-Friendly principles of accessibility and belonging.

In addition, Mental Health Matters run regular wellbeing and dementia hubs across the borough, offering emotional support, peer activity, and connection to wider community resources.

Community Navigation and Local Coordination

Supporting participation also requires good information, signposting, and personal support. BAVO's Community Navigators and Bridgend Council Local Community Coordinators play a vital role in connecting older residents to activities, social groups, volunteering opportunities, and wellbeing services. These roles-aligned with the Communication & Information and Community Support & Health Services domains-ensure that people can find the right support at the right time and overcome barriers such as lack of confidence, transport, or awareness of local opportunities.



Befriending, Outreach and Inclusive Activities

A strong network of third-sector partners offers befriending and outreach services to reduce loneliness and ensure residents feel part of their community. Organisations including Age Connects Cymru, BAVO, and the Samaritans provide telephone befriending and welfare check-ins, while leisure providers and community hubs run dementia-friendly activities and other inclusive programmes. These services ensure that people who may be less able to attend group sessions still have opportunities for social contact and support. Together, these initiatives reflect Age-Friendly priorities around inclusion, accessibility, and meaningful participation in community life.

Community Friendliness and Safety

The Ageing Well in Bridgend consultation responses provide insight into residents' perceptions of their local communities:

58%

(129 respondents agree) their community is a friendly and safe place for all ages



13%

(29 respondents strongly agree) their community is a friendly and safe place for all ages



that their community is a friendly, safe place for people of all ages. However:

25%

(56 respondents disagree) their community is a friendly and safe place for all ages



4%

(9 respondents strongly disagree) their community is a friendly and safe place for all ages



indicating that some residents still feel disconnected or do not perceive their community as welcoming. These findings highlight the continued need for age-friendly initiatives that strengthen community cohesion, intergenerational interaction, and neighbourhood safety.

Themes from engagement include:

- Transport limitations preventing access to social activities, particularly in rural and valleys areas.
- Lack of awareness about available activities and opportunities for social participation.
- Timing of activities that may not suit older people's preferences or transport availability.
- Cost of participation for some activities, creating barriers for those on limited incomes.
- Limited intergenerational activities to connect different age groups within communities.
- Concerns about safety or accessibility of venues, particularly in the evening or winter months.
- Digital exclusion limiting awareness of and access to online social opportunities.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- Expand community-based activities across all areas of the borough, with particular focus on underserved communities.
- Improve publicity and information about social opportunities through diverse channels, ensuring older people are reached effectively.
- Develop more intergenerational programmes that bring together people of different ages for mutual benefit.
- Address cost barriers through subsidised or free activities where possible.
- Coordinate transport to enable access to social activities, particularly for those in rural areas or with mobility limitations.
- Create local community hubs that serve as accessible meeting points with regular activities and information services.
- Support volunteer networks that enable neighbourly connections and informal social support.
- Ensure activities are scheduled at appropriate times, considering daylight hours and transport availability.



6. Social Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

Bridgend County Borough Council, together with its third-sector partners, is deeply committed to building a community in which every person-regardless of age, ability, background, or identity-is respected, welcomed and supported to fully participate. At the heart of this commitment is the principle that older adults should not merely be passive recipients of services, but active, valued participants in creating a fair and inclusive society.

Promoting Inclusion Through Partnership

One of the key mechanisms for promoting this inclusive agenda is the Bridgend Inclusive Network Group (BING), which brings together a range of organisations and stakeholders to share best practice, deliver training, and create opportunities for inclusive social engagement. Through BING, people with different abilities and their families connect with local groups, take part in activity days, and receive support to build community capacity. This reflects the Age-Friendly aim of enabling social inclusion, removing barriers, and creating shared spaces for diverse participants.

Bridgend also encourages civic engagement through the SHOUT forum, which includes sub-networks such as LGBTQ+ groups. These structures ensure that planning and policymaking reflect the needs and voices of different community segments, strengthening trust, representation and belonging in local decision-making. This engagement aligns directly with the Civic Participation & Employment domain.

Community Navigation and Support

A network of Community Navigators and Local Community Coordinators (LCCs) plays a vital role in bridging gaps between services and people. These workers help older adults-especially those with complex needs-to navigate community resources, understand their rights, access support, and feel included in civic life. In doing so, they support not only Community Support & Health Services, but also Communication & Information, by acting as human signposts, interpreters, and advocates.

Welsh Language and Cultural Inclusion

Language inclusion is a further priority. Bridgend strongly supports the Welsh language through its Active Offer policy in social services and bilingual provision across public-facing materials. This ensures that Welsh-speaking older residents, as well as those who wish to use or learn the language, feel culturally respected and included. The Council ensures its core documents, community programmes, and engagement materials are bilingual, and continually seeks feedback from Welsh speakers to refine its strategy. As well as inclusion, the promotion of the Welsh language is supported by Menter Bro Owgr, who run regular Welsh language coffee mornings across the borough. As well as by Awen cultural trust, who facilitate a number Welsh lessons and conversational groups within local libraries.

Themes from engagement include:

- Limited awareness among some older residents of BING, SHOUT or navigator services, limiting their participation in inclusion initiatives.
- Physical or logistical barriers that may restrict access to inclusive community events and training (e.g., venue inaccessibility, limited transport, insufficient volunteer capacity).
- Digital exclusion reducing reach of inclusion-oriented information for those without internet access.
- Recognising diversity within the older population, including people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, ethnic minorities, and Welsh speakers.
- Using inclusive language and imagery in communications and public materials.
- Lack of confidence among some Welsh speakers in requesting or using Welsh-medium services.
- Persistent stereotypes about older people being vulnerable or unable to contribute, rather than being valued for their experience and skills.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- Strengthen outreach by working with community hubs, libraries, and navigators to raise awareness of BING, SHOUT, and coordination services among older residents.
- Expand and make more accessible venues for inclusive events, ensuring they are physically accessible, well-signposted, and distributed across the borough.
- Provide multiple channels for information (print, telephone, in-person, digital) so that messaging about inclusion, rights, and opportunities reaches digitally excluded populations.
- Promote and support age- and identity-friendly civic forums and consultation processes, ensuring under-represented groups have a voice in decision-making.
- Increase capacity for Community Navigators and LCCs so they can sustain engagement with complex cases, providing consistent support for inclusion and connection.
- Continue to strengthen the Welsh-language offer by making it visible, accessible, and easy to request, ensuring older Welsh speakers feel confident and supported in using services in their preferred language.
- Implement training programmes for service providers and businesses to increase awareness of older people's diverse needs and promote age-friendly practices.
- Develop an Older People's Champion programme or accreditation scheme to recognise and encourage inclusive practices across organisations.
- Ensure true accessibility by verifying that facilities claiming to be accessible genuinely meet the needs of wheelchair users and people with sensory impairments.

7. Civic Engagement and Employment

Older people in Bridgend make a significant contribution to their communities through volunteering, mentoring, civic involvement and part-time employment. Local organisations such as BAVO, Baobab Food Pantries and a wide range of community groups benefit from the skills, time and experience of older volunteers, with BAVO's Volunteer Centre providing guidance, matching services and structured opportunities-including befriending, community development roles and social support visits. For many, volunteering offers a meaningful way to stay connected, maintain purpose and build confidence.

Supporting Civic Participation

Civic participation is also strengthened through the Council's Delivering Together corporate plan, which emphasises wellbeing, co-production and age-friendly principles. Older adults regularly contribute to consultation activity, community forums and partnership groups, ensuring their voices shape local policy and service design.

The SHOUT Older Persons Forum provides a crucial platform for older residents to engage with decision-makers, share their perspectives, and influence service development. The forum has been established for several years and provides leadership in representing the voice of older people across the county, working in partnership with the Council, health board, and other public service providers.

Employment and Skills Development

Employment support is a key part of Bridgend's age-friendly approach. Employability Bridgend provides tailored mentoring, skills development, job-search support, and access to training for residents aged 16+, including those aged 50+ seeking to return to work or change careers. These services address barriers ranging from socioeconomic factors to health and wellbeing conditions such as disabilities, mental or physical health conditions, or low confidence. For individuals aged 50+, specific offerings include a dedicated 50+ Job Club with four sessions that promote shared learning and include employer attendance for interview preparation, as well as a dedicated 50+ Health Journey work preparation programme, a four-session programme designed to build confidence for health customers around volunteering and work. The local sessions are being delivered in partnership with JCP and LCC colleagues.

The B.E.S.T. (Bridgend Employment Support Training) programme offers work trials, in-work mentoring, and pathways into roles suited to individual needs, including phased return options. National support through the DWP 50+ offer provides additional help for mid-life jobseekers, including tailored coaching from Work Coaches, access to specialist programmes, and financial guidance. This complements local provision by ensuring older adults have consistent support whether engaging through Employability Bridgend, Jobcentre Plus or community partners.

Volunteering as a Pathway

Volunteering continues to provide accessible pathways into purposeful activity for those not seeking formal employment. AWEN, HALO and BAVO hosts a broad range of regular opportunities suitable for older adults, from public-facing roles to behind-the-scenes community support. For some individuals, volunteering also serves as a stepping stone into paid employment, helping people rebuild confidence and develop skills in a safe and supported environment.

Themes from engagement include:

- Limited awareness among older adults of available employability and volunteering opportunities.
- Confidence barriers, especially for those who have been out of the workforce for long periods or who worry about age discrimination.
- Digital exclusion, making job-search, online training and virtual recruitment processes difficult for some older residents.
- Transport challenges, particularly for rural and valleys communities, restricting access to employment, volunteering placements and training opportunities.
- Lack of flexible or age-friendly job roles, including phased hours, shorter shifts, or light-duty options.
- Transition gaps for older volunteers who wish to move into paid work but face limited structured pathways or accredited training routes.
- Timing of volunteer opportunities and civic events that may not align with transport availability or personal preferences.
- Insufficient recognition of the value and contributions older people make through civic engagement and volunteering.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- Enhanced communication and outreach to ensure older adults are fully aware of Employability Bridgend, DWP 50+ support, volunteering pathways and community-based learning.
- Strengthened confidence-building and wellbeing programmes tailored to the needs of people aged 50+, expanding on the successes of the 50+ Health Journey model.
- Increased digital inclusion support, including drop-in digital help sessions, practical training and access to devices.
- Improved transport links and travel support so that employment and volunteering opportunities are accessible to rural and valleys communities.
- Partnership work with local employers to promote age-friendly employment practices, flexible roles and recognition of the strengths of older workers.
- Clearer pathways from volunteering into employment, including accredited training, mentoring and supported placements for older adults seeking to progress.
- Better coordination of civic forum timing and locations to maximise participation from older residents.
- Development of mentoring programmes that enable older people to share their expertise with younger community members and new employees.
- Information about pensions and working to help older people understand how part-time or full-time work affects their income and benefits.

8. Communication and Information

Clear, accessible and timely communication is essential to an age-friendly community. For many older people in Bridgend, printed materials, telephone contact and face-to-face conversations remain vital alongside digital channels. The Council and local partners continue to strengthen communication through multiple formats, including improvements to online information, such as the Ageing Well in Bridgend website, enhanced social media content and updated service webpages. Alongside this, traditional communication remains a priority. Printed bulletins, leaflets, letters, posters and community noticeboards help ensure information reaches residents who prefer or rely on non-digital communication, including people who are digitally excluded or have limited internet access.

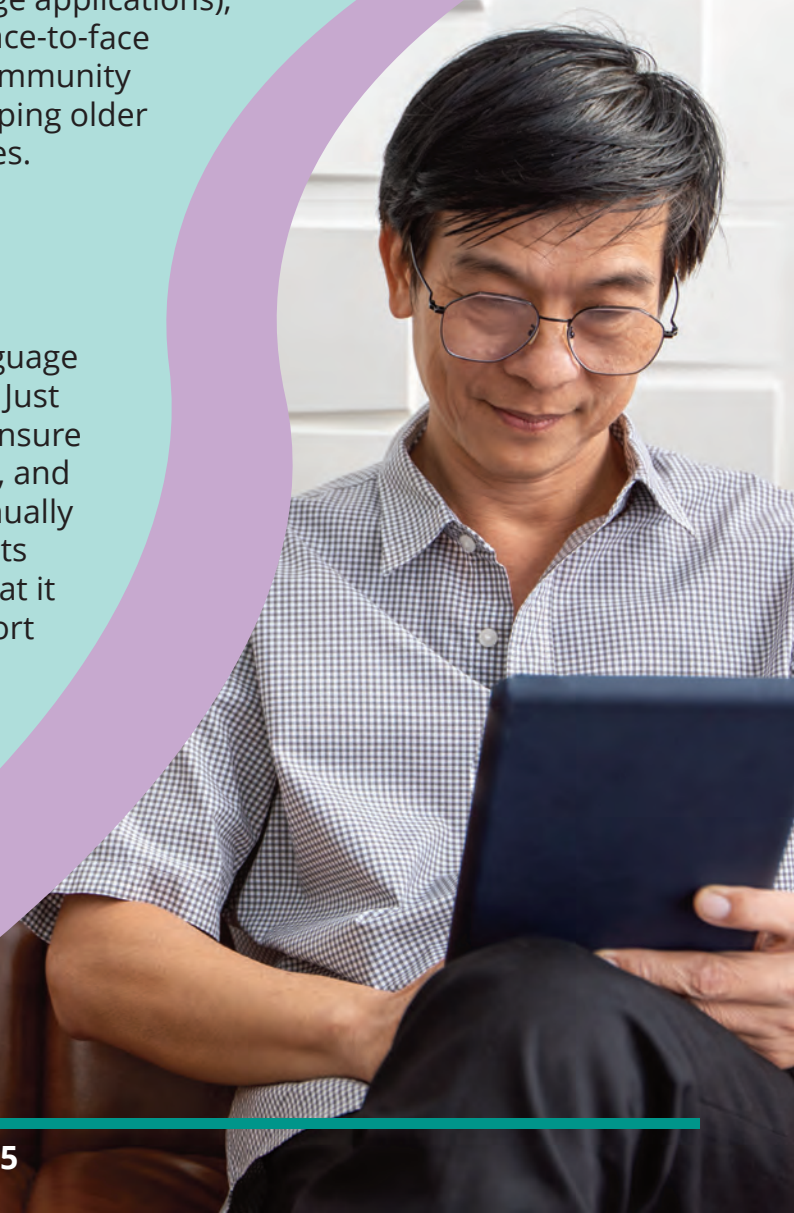
Digital and Non-Digital Channels

Bridgend recognises that while digital technology offers many benefits, it also creates barriers for some older residents. The Council is committed to ensuring that essential information and services remain accessible through multiple channels, respecting the diverse communication preferences and capabilities within the older population.

Community venues such as Awen Libraries, Halo Life Centres, and community centres play an important role in supporting both digital and non-digital communication. Library staff assist residents with online applications (such as bus passes and Blue Badge applications), while also providing printed information and face-to-face guidance. Community Navigators and Local Community Coordinators act as trusted intermediaries, helping older people access information and navigate services.

Welsh Language Provision

All services in Bridgend comply with Welsh language legislation and the Mwy na Geiriau (More Than Just Words) framework. The Council and partners ensure that core documents, community programmes, and engagement materials are bilingual, and continually seeks feedback from Welsh speakers to refine its approach. Older residents have emphasised that it is particularly important they can receive support in their mother tongue, and therefore service providers ensure bilingual provision is available and accessible.



Barriers Identified Through Engagement

Engagement findings highlight that many older adults feel overwhelmed by the increasing shift towards online-only communication, service access and consultation processes. Some residents reported that major developments-such as the new bus station and regeneration proposals in Porthcawl-did not feel accessible to older people due to consultations being predominantly hosted online. This created a perception that older residents were less informed or less able to participate in decisions affecting their communities.

Themes from engagement include:

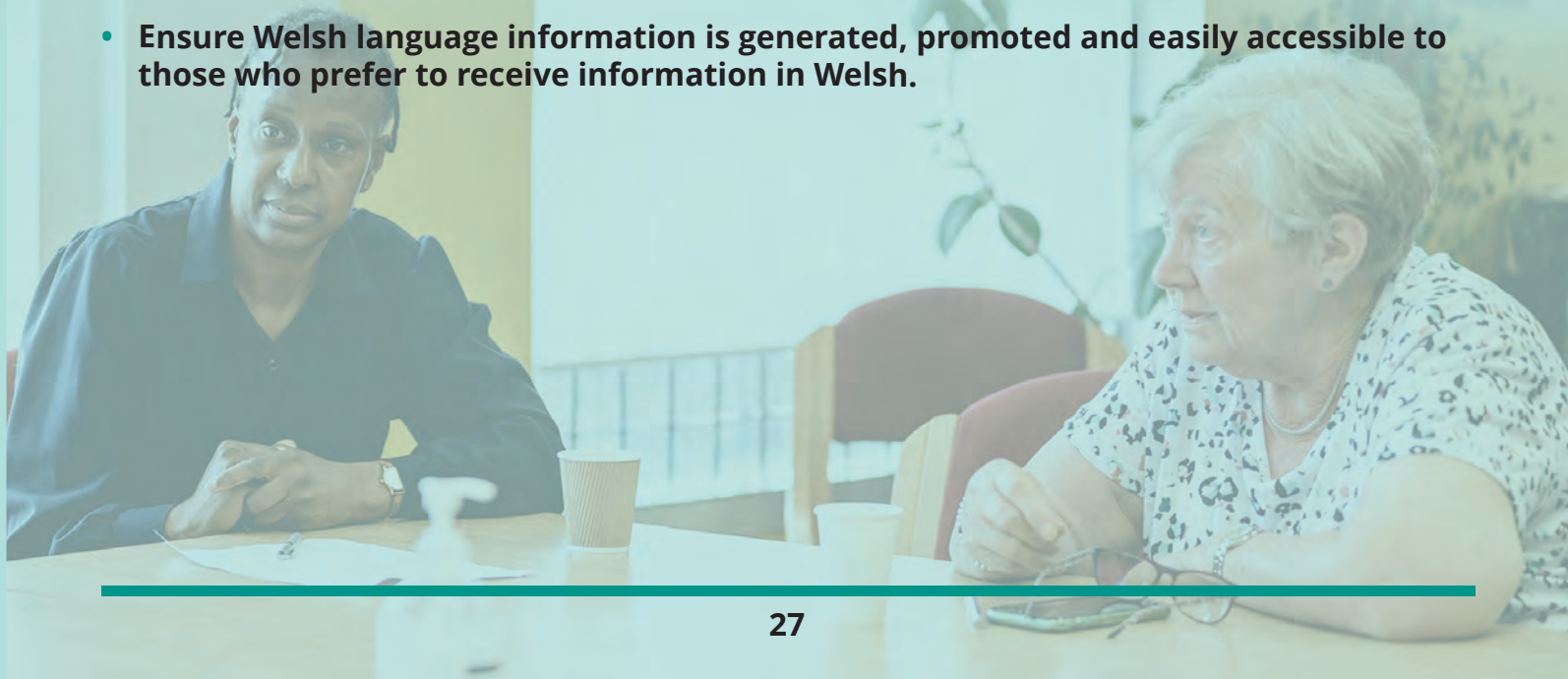
- Over-reliance on online information and consultation, making it difficult for digitally excluded residents to participate.
- Inconsistent awareness of where to access up-to-date information on services, developments or local events.
- Digital exclusion, including limited confidence, skills, devices or internet access for some older adults.
- Large-scale consultations delivered mainly online, reducing opportunities for older adults to contribute their views in accessible ways.
- Complex or unclear information formats, making it harder for some residents to understand service changes or engagement processes.
- Phone systems that rely on automated menus or recorded messages rather than connecting callers to real people.
- Lack of targeted communication to older people about matters that specifically affect them.
- Financial information concerns, including confusing energy bills, reliance on card or direct debit payments, and online-only financial services.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

Older people emphasised the importance of information being available in multiple formats, delivered consistently across digital and non-digital channels, and supported by clear signposting. Word-of-mouth communication, trusted community intermediaries, and local groups also play a crucial role in ensuring that information is understood, shared and acted upon.

Specific improvements recommended include:

- Provide all key information in multiple formats, including printed materials, telephone options, community noticeboards, radio and in-person briefings.
- Increase in-person and paper-based consultation opportunities, ensuring older people can meaningfully contribute to community planning and regeneration projects.
- Strengthen digital inclusion programmes, offering practical skills support, device access and confidence-building sessions for older adults.
- Improve signposting across community venues, working with libraries, Navigators, LCCs and local groups to disseminate information through trusted networks.
- Ensure plain-language communication, with clear explanations of changes, timelines and how residents can get involved.
- Expand outreach channels, such as pop-up information stands, local events, or information workshops in community centres and sheltered housing complexes.
- Develop targeted newsletters for older residents that can be printed and distributed through community networks.
- Provide phone numbers with real people available to answer inquiries, not just automated systems or voicemail.
- Promote local communication channels including town council noticeboards (electronic or physical) and local radio for community updates.
- Improve awareness of the Ageing Well in Bridgend website and ensure it remains up-to-date and accessible.
- Ensure Welsh language information is generated, promoted and easily accessible to those who prefer to receive information in Welsh.



9. Community Support and Health Services

Bridgend County Borough provides a comprehensive health and community support infrastructure that enables older adults to maintain independence, wellbeing and quality of life. Services include primary care, community nursing, mental health support, social care and a broad network of voluntary sector organisations. These services are delivered in partnership, creating integrated pathways that respond to both routine and complex needs.

Dementia Support

Dementia support forms a central component of Bridgend's age-friendly approach. Statutory and third-sector partners-including Dementia Connect (Alzheimer's Society), Dementia Support Bridgend (BAVO), and local Dementia Hubs run by Mental Health Matters-provide information, practical support and social engagement opportunities for people living with dementia and their carers.

Ty Pen Y Bont is the integrated dementia service in Bridgend, providing specialist day opportunities for people with complex symptoms of dementia. Integrated with health the service is a multidisciplinary hub, including day care, therapy and specialist interventions. With dementia prevalence projected to rise by up to 70% by 2040, these services form a critical part of the borough's proactive planning, supported by community hubs, carer pathways and public awareness programmes.

Mental Health Matters (MHM) host pop up dementia hubs across the borough as well as a permanent hub in the centre of town, providing accessible, welcoming environments for people affected by dementia and their families. These hubs offer activities, information, and peer support in familiar community settings.

Falls Prevention and Frailty Management

Falls prevention and frailty management are also key priorities. Programmes such as NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme), Bridgestart, and mobile falls-prevention services aim to maintain mobility, reduce the risk of hospitalisation, and support older adults to live safely at home. Information, referral pathways and guidance for falls prevention and rehabilitation are provided via the Ageing Well in Bridgend website and local service networks.

These programmes recognise that maintaining strength, balance, and confidence is essential for independent living and that early intervention can prevent more serious health events.

Telecare and Technology-Enabled Care

Telecare and mobile response services further enhance safety and independence. Bridgelink Telecare delivers personal alarms, sensors, and 24/7 monitoring, supported by mobile response teams that can provide immediate assistance. Bridgend was an early adopter of the digital telecare switchover in Wales, modernising monitoring and improving response times. These services exemplify how technology can support independent living, particularly for those with health vulnerabilities or living alone.

Integrated Health and Social Care

Bridgend's approach to health and social care emphasises integration, with close working between the Council's Social Services and Wellbeing directorate, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, and third-sector partners. The Prevention and Wellbeing team plays a coordinating role, connecting people to the right services and supporting them to maintain independence for as long as possible.

Community Navigators and Local Community Coordinators provide crucial support in helping older people navigate health and social care systems, access information, and connect with appropriate services. This personalised approach helps address the complexity that many older people experience when trying to access multiple services.

Themes from engagement include:

- **Awareness and accessibility:** Some older adults are unsure which services are available or how to access them, particularly around dementia support and falls-prevention programmes.
- **Capacity pressures:** Increasing prevalence of dementia and frailty is placing pressure on existing services and voluntary sector support.
- **Digital exclusion:** While telecare and online referral systems are effective for many, residents without digital access or confidence may not fully benefit.
- **Coordination challenges:** Multiple providers and pathways can create complexity, making it difficult for residents to navigate care and support.
- **Transport and mobility constraints:** Attendance at community hubs, day services or exercise programmes may be limited for those with mobility challenges or limited local transport options.
- **GP appointment systems:** Residents report frustration with early-morning phone call systems, difficulty getting timely appointments, and concerns about explaining personal medical conditions to non-clinical staff.
- **Hospital experiences:** Long waits, difficulty hearing names being called, poor parking, and stressful environments create anxiety for older patients.
- **Prescription management:** Multiple medications requiring separate collections and repeat prescription processes create unnecessary complexity.
- **Discharge planning:** Hospital discharge procedures don't always adequately consider patients' home circumstances, support needs, or transport requirements.
- **Primary care access in rural areas:** Some communities face significant travel distances to access GP surgeries, pharmacies, and other primary care services.

Age-Friendly Recommendations

- Enhanced communication and outreach to ensure older adults and carers are aware of available health and support services, referral pathways, and eligibility criteria.
- Strengthen capacity and resourcing for dementia care, falls prevention, and frailty programmes to meet projected demand.
- Digital inclusion initiatives alongside telecare services, including training, device access, and support for those who struggle with technology.
- Integrated service navigation through Community Navigators, Local Community Coordinators and linked health/social care teams to simplify access and reduce fragmentation.
- Flexible and localised service delivery such as mobile clinics, home-based interventions, and community hubs in accessible locations to reduce barriers of transport and mobility.
- Support for carers through respite, training, peer networks and information provision to sustain informal care arrangements and wellbeing.
- Improve GP appointment systems to reduce stress and ensure accessibility, including options beyond early-morning phone calls and better coordination for those needing multiple appointments.
- Development of "super surgeries" or integrated health centres combining multiple services (GP consultations, physiotherapy, blood tests, etc.) in accessible locations.
- Better hospital experience including improved communication systems for calling patients, clearer signposting, better parking, and more supportive waiting environments.
- Simplified prescription management with better coordination between pharmacies and GP surgeries, alignment of renewal dates, and oversight to prevent medication interactions.
- Enhanced discharge planning ensuring patients can return home safely with appropriate support, equipment, and follow-up care arranged.
- Preventative health education delivered through accessible channels, helping older people maintain health and understand when to seek support.
- Expanded NHS dentistry access to address barriers to maintaining oral and dental health among older people.

10. Vision and Priorities

10.1 Vision

Bridgend's vision is to be an inclusive, age-friendly borough where older people are valued, connected and supported to live healthy and independent lives. This vision is citizen-driven and rooted in co-production, recognising that older people are not passive recipients of services but active partners in shaping their communities.

Our aspiration is to create a Bridgend where:

- All older residents can participate fully in community life, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances.
- Services and environments are designed with older people, drawing on their expertise and lived experience.
- Age is celebrated and older people are recognised for the valuable contributions they make to economic, social, and cultural life.
- Communities are connected and supportive, with strong intergenerational relationships and reduced social isolation.
- Health and wellbeing are prioritised, with accessible services and opportunities for active, healthy aging.
- Bridgend is recognised globally as an exemplar age-friendly community within the WHO network, sharing learning and inspiring others.

10.2 Priorities

Based on the findings of this baseline assessment and extensive community engagement, Bridgend's age-friendly priorities are:

Transport and Mobility

- Improve transport accessibility, coverage and affordability, particularly for rural and valley communities
- Expand community and volunteer transport options
- Enhance integration between transport services and key destinations
- Ensure transport information is available in accessible formats

Housing and Living Environments

- Expand housing adaptations and reduce waiting times for assessments and installations
- Increase supply of accessible and specialist housing near amenities and family support
- Strengthen Care & Repair and other support services for independent living
- Improve energy efficiency in homes to support health and reduce fuel poverty

Outdoor Spaces and Built Environment

- Invest in accessible seating, rest areas, and public toilets
- Improve pavement maintenance and lighting for safety and walkability
- Regenerate town centres, addressing derelict buildings and creating welcoming environments
- Ensure pedestrianisation and urban design changes support rather than disadvantage older people

Health and Social Care

- Strengthen dementia and frailty support to meet growing demand
- Improve GP appointment systems and primary care accessibility
- Enhance hospital experiences, discharge planning, and prescription management
- Expand community-based health services closer to where people live
- Support carers through respite, training, and information

Social Participation and Connection

- Reduce loneliness through expanded befriending and social activities
- Develop more intergenerational programmes and opportunities
- Create accessible community hubs across all areas of the borough
- Address transport and cost barriers to participation
- Expand cultural and creative opportunities for older people

Communication and Information

- Ensure all key information is available in multiple formats (digital and non-digital)
- Strengthen digital inclusion support while maintaining non-digital options
- Improve consultation processes to enable meaningful participation by older people
- Enhance signposting and awareness of available services and opportunities
- Maintain strong Welsh language provision

Inclusion and Respect

- Challenge ageist stereotypes and promote recognition of older people's contributions
- Ensure services and spaces are genuinely accessible to people of all abilities
- Strengthen support for diverse groups within the older population
- Expand capacity of Community Navigators and inclusion networks
- Develop age-friendly training and accreditation for organisations

Civic Engagement and Employment

- Expand volunteering opportunities and pathways into employment
- Promote age-friendly employment practices with local employers
- Strengthen 50+ employment support programmes
- Enhance civic forums and ensure older people's voices shape policy
- Recognise and value the expertise older people contribute through civic roles

Implementation Approach

These priorities will be progressed through:

- Partnership working across council services, health, third sector, and community organisations
- Co-production with older people, ensuring they lead and shape developments
- Asset-based community development, building on existing strengths and resources
- Phased implementation, with clear actions, timelines, and accountability
- Regular monitoring and review, tracking progress against this baseline
- Learning and sharing, both locally and through the global WHO network

The detailed Age-Friendly Bridgend Action Plan will set out specific actions, responsibilities, timescales, and measures of success for each priority area.



11. Concluding Remarks

This baseline assessment represents Bridgend County Borough's commitment to becoming a truly age-friendly community and joining the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. It provides a comprehensive snapshot of where we are now-our strengths, our challenges, and the aspirations of our older residents-establishing a foundation from which we can measure our progress.

The assessment has been developed through extensive engagement with over 200 older residents, drawing on their lived experiences, concerns, and ideas. It reflects genuine co-production, with older people not just consulted but actively involved in shaping our age-friendly vision and priorities.

Bridgend has significant strengths to build upon: strong partnership working across sectors, dedicated community organisations, innovative services like Bridgelink Telecare, rich cultural and natural assets, and most importantly, engaged and active older residents committed to improving their communities. The SHOUT Older Persons Forum, Community Navigators, Local Community Coordinators, and the extensive network of third-sector partners provide solid foundations for our age-friendly journey.

However, the assessment also identifies clear areas for improvement. Transport accessibility in rural and valley areas, GP appointment systems, digital exclusion, housing adaptations, outdoor space maintenance, and information accessibility all require sustained attention and action. The barriers identified by older residents are real and impact their daily lives, independence, and wellbeing.

As our population ages-with projections suggesting nearly one-third of residents will be aged 65+ in coming decades-the importance of this work only increases. But we do not see this demographic shift as simply a challenge to be managed. Rather, it represents an opportunity to build a more inclusive, connected, and resilient community that works for people of all ages.

Our Commitment

Bridgend County Borough Council and its partners commit to:

- **Implementing the Age-Friendly Action Plan with clear accountability and regular progress review**
- **Continuing to engage meaningfully with older residents, ensuring their voices remain central to all developments**
- **Working collaboratively across all sectors to deliver integrated, person-centred approaches**
- **Monitoring and evaluating our progress against this baseline, celebrating successes and addressing gaps**
- **Sharing our learning locally, nationally, and internationally through the WHO network**
- **Maintaining momentum through sustained leadership, adequate resourcing, and genuine prioritisation of age-friendly principles**

Looking Forward

This baseline assessment is not an end point but a beginning. It establishes where we are so we can chart our journey forward. The Age-Friendly Bridgend Action Plan will translate the priorities identified here into concrete actions with timescales, responsibilities, and measures of success.

We recognise that becoming truly age-friendly is an ongoing process, not a destination. As our communities evolve, as new challenges emerge, and as we learn from experience and from others in the global network, our approach will adapt and develop. What will remain constant is our commitment to co-production, to valuing older people, and to ensuring Bridgend is a great place to grow older for all residents.

We thank all the older residents who have contributed their time, experiences, and ideas to this assessment. We thank our partners across the public, third, and community sectors who work tirelessly to support older people. And we thank the WHO Global Network for providing the framework and inspiration for this work.

Bridgend is ready to join the global community of age-friendly cities and communities, to learn from others, and to contribute our own experiences and innovations. Together, we will make Bridgend a place where everyone can age well, remain connected, and continue to contribute to community life.

12. References

Key Local Documents:

- Bridgend County Borough Council, Delivering Together Corporate Plan
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment
- Bridgend Local Well-being Assessment
- Bridgend Housing Strategy
- Building Resilient Communities Plan
- Ageing Well in Bridgend Strategic Plans

WHO Framework Documents:

- World Health Organisation (2007). Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide. WHO, Geneva.
- World Health Organisation (2015). World Report on Ageing and Health. WHO, Geneva.
- World Health Organisation. Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities: www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world

National Policy Framework:

- Welsh Government. A Strategy for an Ageing Society: Age-friendly Wales
- Welsh Government. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Government. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Welsh Government. More Than Just Words: Welsh Language Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care

Population and Demographic Data:

- Office for National Statistics (2021). Census 2021
- Stats Wales (2022). Population Estimates
- Welsh Government (2020). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUNTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	PLAY SUFFICIENCY
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SOPHIE MOORE GROUP MANAGER PREVENTION AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The Play Sufficiency Duty, established under Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, requires local authorities to assess and secure sufficient opportunities for children to play. The 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) attached as Appendix 1 has provided Bridgend County Borough Council with an opportunity to review current provision, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and establish priorities for the next three years. The assessment identified significant strengths including strong strategic alignment with wellbeing, planning, education and active travel agendas, continued investment in designated play areas, and effective partnership working across leisure, culture, youth and community services. The assessment also identified opportunities to strengthen governance arrangements, improve engagement with children and families, enhance understanding of children's lived experiences of play, and embed play sufficiency more consistently across Council services. An accompanying Action Plan attached as Appendix 2 has been developed to address identified priorities and support delivery of the Play Sufficiency Duty between 2025 and 2028. Members are requested to note the findings of the assessment and proposed actions.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025 and accompanying Play Sufficiency Action Plan submitted to Welsh Government.
- 1.2 The report seeks to update Members on the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the actions being undertaken to improve opportunities for children and young people to play across Bridgend County Borough.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area.
- 2.2 Welsh Government requires local authorities to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years and prepare an Action Plan identifying how shortcomings will be addressed.
- 2.3 The 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment was completed in June 2025 and submitted to Welsh Government. The assessment was undertaken as a strategic review of policies, services, partnerships and delivery arrangements that contribute to children's opportunities for play.
- 2.4 The assessment considered the statutory matters relating to population, diverse needs, spaces for play, supervised provision, access, workforce development, community engagement and the integration of play within wider policy and strategic planning

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The Play Sufficiency Assessment attached as **Appendix 1** identified a number of strengths across Bridgend County Borough including:
 - Strong alignment between play sufficiency and wider wellbeing, planning, education and active travel agendas.
 - Significant investment in designated play areas through local authority capital investment and external funding.
 - Targeted provision supporting disabled children, young carers, care experienced children and children living in areas of deprivation.
 - Strong partnership working with Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, schools, community organisations and third sector partners.
 - Delivery of programmes such as Active 4 Life, Discovery Days, We our Valued Days, Youth Hub provision and holiday activities.
- 3.2 The assessment also identified a number of challenges and opportunities for improvement including:
 - Limited direct engagement with children and families during the assessment period.
 - A lack of a shared performance and monitoring framework for play sufficiency.

- Limited understanding of the lived experiences of some groups of children including ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ children, Gypsy Roma Traveller communities and children living in temporary accommodation.
- Delays in implementing governance arrangements including the Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions.
- Limited dedicated capacity to coordinate and oversee delivery of the Play Sufficiency Duty across the Council.

3.3 The assessment identified a number of strategic priorities for the next three years including:

- Strengthening evidence and engagement with children and families.
- Developing neighbourhood-based approaches to planning for play.
- Continuing investment in inclusive play infrastructure.
- Supporting schools to improve children's play experiences.
- Embedding play sufficiency within commissioning and service planning.
- Strengthening governance, accountability and cross-departmental ownership.
- Raising awareness of the importance of play amongst professionals and communities

3.4 A Play Sufficiency Action Plan attached as **Appendix 2** has been developed to address the priorities identified through the assessment. Key actions include:

- Continued investment in inclusive and targeted provision.
- Ongoing capital investment in play areas.
- Promotion of Play Wales good practice guidance.
- Development of Play Streets initiatives.
- Embedding play sufficiency objectives across commissioned services.
- Establishment of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions.
- Workforce development and awareness raising activities

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

5.1 The Play Sufficiency Assessment and associated Action Plan support the Council's obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and demonstrate the application of the five ways of working.

Long Term

The Play Sufficiency Assessment takes a strategic, long-term approach to improving children's opportunities for play across Bridgend County Borough. By identifying strengths, gaps and future priorities, the assessment provides a framework for embedding play within planning, education, community development, active travel, leisure and wellbeing agendas. The actions identified seek to create sustainable improvements that will positively impact future generations of children and young people, whilst ensuring play opportunities continue to evolve in response to changing communities, population growth and emerging needs. Future investment in play spaces, community infrastructure and neighbourhood-based approaches to play will contribute to healthier, more resilient communities over the long term.

Prevention

Play is widely recognised as a preventative intervention that contributes to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, social development, resilience and independence. The assessment highlights the role of play in helping to reduce health inequalities, improve mental wellbeing, strengthen social connections and encourage active lifestyles. Through targeted provision for children who may experience barriers to play, including disabled children, young carers, care experienced children and children living in areas of deprivation, the Action Plan supports early intervention and helps prevent the escalation of social, health and wellbeing issues later in life.

Integration

The assessment demonstrates how play contributes to a wide range of strategic priorities across the Council and partner organisations. Play sufficiency aligns with objectives relating to health and wellbeing, education, active travel, climate resilience, community safety, poverty reduction, inclusion and placemaking. The Action Plan promotes a whole-system approach by embedding play considerations within policy development, commissioning arrangements, service planning and capital investment programmes. This integrated approach ensures that opportunities for play are considered as part of wider decisions affecting children, families and communities.

Collaboration

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has been developed through engagement with a broad range of internal departments and external partners, including Education, Communities, Social Services and Wellbeing, Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, schools, health partners, third sector organisations and community groups. Delivery of the Action Plan will continue to rely on strong partnership working to maximise resources, share expertise and improve outcomes for children and young people. The proposed Play Sufficiency Steering Group will further strengthen cross-departmental collaboration and support a coordinated approach to meeting the Play Sufficiency Duty.

Involvement

Whilst the 2025 assessment primarily focused on a strategic review of current arrangements, it identified the need to strengthen direct engagement with children, young people, families and communities. A key priority within the Action Plan is the development of more robust mechanisms to capture children's lived experiences of play, including borough-wide surveys, targeted engagement with underrepresented groups and neighbourhood-level participation activities. This will ensure that future planning and decision-making is increasingly informed by the voices of children and those communities most affected by play sufficiency.

5.2 The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute directly to the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Well-being Objective One – A Prosperous Place with Thriving Communities

The assessment supports the development of vibrant, resilient and connected communities by ensuring children and young people have access to safe, inclusive and welcoming opportunities for play. Investment in play spaces, community assets and neighbourhood-based provision helps create attractive places where people want to live, work and spend time. By supporting community cohesion, social interaction and active lifestyles, the Play Sufficiency Action Plan contributes to stronger and more sustainable communities across the county borough.

Well-being Objective Two – Creating Modern, Seamless Public Services

The Action Plan promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to planning for play across Council services and partner organisations. The establishment of improved governance arrangements, cross-departmental working and stronger partnership structures will help ensure play sufficiency is embedded within wider service planning and delivery. By aligning resources and priorities across education, wellbeing, leisure, planning and community services, the Council can deliver more effective and responsive services for children and families.

Well-being Objective Three – Enabling People to Meet Their Potential

Play is fundamental to children's development, learning, creativity, confidence and wellbeing. Providing sufficient opportunities for play supports children and young people to develop essential life skills, build relationships, improve physical and emotional health and achieve positive outcomes throughout childhood and adolescence. The assessment identifies opportunities to improve access to play for all children, enabling them to reach their full potential regardless of background or circumstance.

Well-being Objective Four – Supporting Our Most Vulnerable

The assessment places significant emphasis on understanding and addressing the barriers faced by children who may experience inequality or disadvantage. Through targeted provision, inclusive design, improved engagement and partnership working, the Action Plan seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children, children with additional learning needs, young carers, care experienced children, children living in poverty and other vulnerable groups. This approach supports the Council's commitment to reducing inequalities and ensuring that those who need

the greatest support have access to meaningful opportunities for play, recreation and social connection.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 The assessment recognises the importance of accessible green space, active travel routes and outdoor environments in supporting children's opportunities to play.
- 6.2 Future investment in play spaces will continue to promote sustainable, inclusive and environmentally responsible approaches to design and development.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 Play opportunities contribute significantly to children's wellbeing, resilience and social development.
- 7.2 The assessment recognises the importance of ensuring care experienced children, young carers and vulnerable children have access to appropriate play and recreational opportunities.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Delivery of the Action Plan will be supported through existing resources, partnership arrangements and external funding opportunities.
- 8.2 Continued investment in play infrastructure will be considered through the existing allocations in the Council's capital programme, Section 106

9. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the findings of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025;
- 2. Note the Play Sufficiency Action Plan 2025-2028 and the actions being undertaken to address identified areas for improvement;
- 3. Support the development of strengthened governance arrangements, including the establishment of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions;
- 4. Note that a progress update on delivery of the Action Plan will be provided to the Committee within 12 months.

Background Documents

None



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Play Sufficiency Assessment Form

Local Authority: Bridgend County Borough Council

Responsible Officer: Sophie Moore

Job title: Group Manager Prevention and Wellbeing

Date of completion: 30th June 2025

Revised February 2025

Play Sufficiency Assessment Form

As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) will enable the following:

- Identification of gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation
- Support the establishment of evidence to give an indication of distance travelled in relation to play sufficiency
- Highlight potential ways of addressing issues relating to partnership working
- The input and involvement of all partners increasing levels of knowledge and understanding
- A monitoring system which will involve and improve communication between professionals
- The identification of good practice examples
- Increased levels of partnerships in assessing sufficient play opportunities
- The identification of actions for the Securing Play Sufficiency Action Plan, which accompanies the Play Sufficiency Assessment

This template is a technical tool to support a corporate appraisal of the matters that need to be considered as set out in the [Statutory Guidance](#). It is set out in themes which allow the local authority to assess the matters set out in The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and [Statutory Guidance](#):

- Matter A: Population
- Matter B: Providing for diverse needs
- Matter C: Space available for children to play
 - Open spaces
 - Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces
 - Playing fields
- Matter D: Supervised provision
 - Playwork provision
 - Structured recreational activities
- Matter E: Charges for play provision
- Matter F: Access
 - to space/provision
 - to information; publicity; events
- Matter G: Securing and developing the playwork and the play workforce
- Matter H: Community engagement and participation
- Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

A guide to completing the template is included in the PSA Toolkit. The template informs a *State of Play* report to the Welsh Government, which will include:

- The local authority's statement: Aims, vision for play in the area
- The methodology for undertaking the PSA
- How resources are maximised for play sufficiency
- How the PSA is monitored
- How the views of children have shaped the PSA
- An analysis of each theme, which identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

The *State of Play* reports can include examples of actions taken locally to support children's play that the local authority wishes to highlight. A report card template, inspired by play sufficiency research, is included in the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit.

Criteria

This section contains the “matters that need to be taken into account” as set out within the [Statutory Guidance](#).

The criteria column: sets out the data that needs to be available and the extent to which local authorities meet the stated criteria.

The RAG status columns (Previous PSA RAG status and Current PSA RAG status)

Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status is a tool to communicate status quickly and effectively.

Criteria fully met.	Green - Fully met
Criteria partially met.	Amber -Partially met
Criteria not met.	Red - Not met

The evidence to support strengths column: To be used to provide the reason for the chosen criteria status and how the evidence is held.

The shortfall column: To be used to explain the areas in which the local authority does not fully meet the criteria.

What would address the shortfalls? Use this column to highlight potential solutions and/or facilitators.

Additional comments: Use this section to add in anything of relevance that is not covered elsewhere.

Theme: Population

This theme relates to:

Matter A: The number of children in respect of each age range within its area

Matter B: The needs of children from different cultures and backgrounds within its area

Matter E: Whether there is a charge for play provision and where there is a charge

To what extent does the local authority meet the criteria?

Criteria	Previous PSA RAG Status*	Current PSA RAG Status*	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	What would address the shortfalls?
The play needs of children of all ages are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	Data held on demographics including numbers and ages of children, statistics relating to protected characteristics and trends in children's health and wellbeing. A range of services provide for different ages of children.	Lack of data relating to children's voices and lived experiences of play makes it difficult to evaluate play sufficiency.	Establish consistent systems for evaluating play sufficiency and generating insights into children's lived experiences.
The play needs of children living in areas of deprivation and low income families are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	Targeted programmes in deprived areas (e.g., Active 4 Life, Food and Fun, Flying Start); inclusive capital investment in play areas; doorstep initiatives like the Caerau project.	Provision is often reliant on short-term funding; little is known about the reality of children's play lives in areas of deprivation.	Secure long-term funding, improve local quality and safety of provision, and link play into wider anti-poverty strategies.
The play needs of children living in isolated rural areas are understood and provided for.	Amber	Amber	Active 4 Life operates in rural areas; CAT programme enables community improvements; community groups like Noddfa deliver outreach play.	Little is known about the reality of children's play lives in more rural areas; rural inequality identified as a persistent issue.	Mobile/outreach play schemes, improved active travel infrastructure, and more rural community provision.
The play needs of Welsh language speaking children are understood and provided for.	Green	Green	The Urdd provides Welsh-medium and bilingual sports-based recreational opportunities.	No evidence on whether language has an influence on perceptions of play sufficiency	Bilingual play sufficiency satisfaction surveys.

APPENDIX 1

The play needs of ethnic minority children are understood and provided for.	Amber	Amber	Schools report growing ethnic diversity; inclusive general provision; some cultural sensitivity in communication and delivery.	No dedicated outreach or engagement with ethnic minority communities in play planning.	Targeted engagement and representation; inclusive design and communication strategies in diverse neighbourhoods.
The play needs of Gypsy Traveller children are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	School diversity data shows presence of GRT pupils; commitment to inclusion within education and wellbeing policies.	No play-specific engagement or consultation with GRT children or families identified.	Develop outreach initiatives in partnership with community groups to engage GRT children in play planning.
The play needs and support needs of disabled children are understood and provided for.	Amber	Amber	Discovery Days, youth hub , leisure access cards, capital investment in accessible play features, general positive approach to inclusion.	Limited established way of evaluating whether disabled children and their families are satisfied with opportunities to play.	Play sufficiency satisfaction surveys and targeted engagement of disabled children in play research.
The play needs and support needs of children with Additional Learning Needs are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	ALN learners supported through education; inclusive approaches in Discovery Days, Youth Hub and community projects.	Limited established way of evaluating whether children with ALN and their families are satisfied with opportunities to play.	Play sufficiency satisfaction surveys and targeted engagement of children with ALN in play research.
The play needs of girls are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	Focus groups acknowledged gendered experiences; some youth projects promote inclusive and safe spaces.	Girls often report feeling less safe in public spaces and disengaged from physical play areas.	Facilitate research into the play experiences of girls; Co-design localised plans for play with girls.
The play needs of children in emergency or temporary accommodation are understood and provided for.	N/a	Red	Housing and wellbeing services support children in temporary accommodation; some access to universal provision via schools.	Limited play provision or engagement with these children so little know about their experiences of play.	Facilitate research into the play experiences of children in emergency or temporary accommodation.
The play needs of LGBTQ+ children are understood and provided for.	Amber	Amber	Youth services promote inclusive values; safe spaces acknowledged in wellbeing work; staff trained to be welcoming.	Limited engagement with LGBTQ+ children regarding play; lack of visibility in provision design.	Consult LGBTQ+ young people and ensure public play spaces reflect their needs and safety concerns.

APPENDIX 1

The play needs of asylum seekers and refugees are understood and provided for.	N/a	Red	Asylum seeker and refugee children included in schools and some community services.	No targeted play provision or engagement with these children so little know about their experiences of play.	Partner with local support networks to engage children and families in research.
The play needs of care experienced children are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	Care-experienced children benefit from co-designed holiday provision and targeted support via social care, leisure and youth services.	Limited research undertaken or mechanism in place to evaluate these children's lived experiences of play.	Facilitate research into the play experiences of care experienced children to inform play planning.
The play needs of disabled children and children with additional learning needs are understood and provided for.	N/a	Amber	As above. Discovery days, Youth Hub capital investment in accessible equipment, leisure access cards, general community inclusive approach.	As above. Limited established way of evaluating whether these children and their families are satisfied with opportunities to play. Children not known to social services less well provided for.	As above, Play sufficiency satisfaction surveys and targeted engagement of disabled children in play research.
The play needs of young carers are understood and provided for.	Green	Green	Young carers supported via group sessions, respite, and school holiday clubs delivered by family support teams.	Limited research undertaken or mechanism in place to evaluate these children's lived experiences of play.	Facilitate research into the play experiences of care experienced children to inform play planning.
Play projects and providers have access to a range of resources which support inclusion.	Green	Green	General positive approach to inclusion, targeted provision, close collaboration with social services, routine service user feedback is positive	No borough wide system in place to evaluate the inclusivity of provision or the experiences of those not accessing provision.	Establish consistent systems for evaluating play sufficiency including the experiences of children with protected characteristics.
There is a well-known and agreed mechanism which is used to identify the need for separate provision for children with Additional Learning Needs.	N/a	Green	ALN assessment framework exists in education; social care referral processes, social care teams provide advice on individual needs; All About Me forms.		
There is a well-known and agreed mechanism which is used to identify the need for separate provision for	Green	Green	Disability needs assessed in education and social care settings; social care referral processes, social care teams		

disabled children and those with additional support needs.			provide advice on individual needs; All About Me forms.		
Premises and spaces used for play provision are provided at no cost or low cost to providers.	Amber	Green	Dual use school sites provide no / low-cost venues for activities. Examples of partnership working providing access to other no / low-cost facilities.		
The local authority provides grants or subsidies for providers offering opportunities to play.	N/a	Green	Short-term grants and social services funded access to Halo Leisure are in place.	No long-term or cross-sector funding framework for play providers.	Design multi-year grant schemes supporting targeted, inclusive, and community-led play provision.
Subsidised transport for children travelling to provision, which offers opportunities to play, is provided for.	Amber	Amber	Transport challenges acknowledged in rural areas; transport included in provision for disabled children.	Limited borough-wide scheme for subsidised or coordinated transport to play provision.	Pilot travel support schemes and integrate transport into future play sufficiency planning.

Additional comments

Numbers and ages of children

Bridgend County Borough has an estimated population of around 147,000 people, including approximately 27,500 children and young people aged 0–17. This represents around 19% of the total population, reflecting a relatively typical age profile for Wales.

The child and young people population in Bridgend has remained broadly stable over the past decade, with gradual changes reflecting wider demographic, social, and economic patterns. According to the Wellbeing Assessment 2022, the population is projected to increase by approximately 7.5% by 2042/43. This anticipated growth is linked to planned housing developments, particularly in urban expansion areas, which will have important implications for future play sufficiency planning. Meanwhile some valley communities have seen population decline.

Children live across a diverse range of communities, including urban centres (e.g., Bridgend town, Porthcawl), suburban areas (e.g., Pencoed, Brackla), and rural valley communities (e.g., Maesteg, Nantymoel, Bettws). Population mapping shows particularly high densities of children in Bridgend North (9,603), Bridgend East (9,246), and Bridgend West (7,336), as recorded in the Wellbeing Assessment 2022.

Bridgend County Borough has a balanced age distribution across its child population, reflecting both stable birth rates and consistent school enrolment patterns over recent years. According to the January 2024 school population data, the breakdown by age and school year is as follows:

- Ages 2–3 (Nursery): 214 children
- Ages 3–4 (Nursery): 1,365 children
- Ages 4–5 (Reception): 1,453 children
- Ages 5–6 (Year 1): 1,518 children
- Ages 6–7 (Year 2): 1,570 children
- Ages 7–8 (Year 3): 1,606 children
- Ages 8–9 (Year 4): 1,626 children
- Ages 9–10 (Year 5): 1,604 children
- Ages 10–11 (Year 6): 1,699 children
- Ages 11–12 (Year 7): 1,741 children
- Ages 12–13 (Year 8): 1,796 children
- Ages 13–14 (Year 9): 1,730 children
- Ages 14–15 (Year 10): 1,655 children
- Ages 15–16 (Year 11): 1,692 children
- Ages 16–17 (Year 12): 841 young people
- Ages 17–18 (Year 13): 610 young people

School census data from 2022, 2023, and 2024 confirms steady enrolment figures, with the overall school population consistently around 22,700 to 23,200 pupils. This includes children enrolled in nursery, primary, secondary, special schools, and alternative provision, with the primary school cohort being the largest.

In addition to mainstream schooling, the local authority supports 439 pupils in special schools and 62 in alternative provision settings such as The Bridge. These settings serve a wide age range and highlight the need for inclusive play offers tailored to children with more complex support requirements.

Across all age groups easy and safe access to a variety of inviting playable public spaces is essential for their experiences of play sufficiency. In addition, maintained nurseries, Flying Start settings and early years play groups have a key role in play provision for under-fives. For primary-aged children play provision includes initiatives like the school-based activity pods aimed at improving the quality of school play times, and holiday programmes such as Active 4 Life. For older children aged 12 to 17, the offer includes universal youth service offer, youth hubs, sports activities, and access to informal gathering spaces.

Pilot projects like the Maesteg School breaktime improvement initiative demonstrate an emerging focus on teenagers' play needs, helping schools rethink how they support adolescents' social and recreational experiences. Local health surveys have also noted that emotional wellbeing and mental health challenges increase with age, with older pupils reporting lower life satisfaction and higher rates of sedentary behaviour. This further emphasises the importance of protecting time and space for playful social connection throughout childhood and adolescence.

Trends in children's health and wellbeing

Recent data from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Children and Young People's Health Report (2025) and the Student Health and Wellbeing Surveys (2021–2023) provide important insights into the health and wellbeing of children in Bridgend. Whilst there are many positive aspects there are also some concerning trends that have implications for play sufficiency planning.

Physical health and activity

The Child Measurement Programme reports that 12.9% of children in Bridgend are living with obesity, the highest prevalence among Welsh health boards, and 26.9% are classified as overweight or obese combined. Rates are particularly high among children living in the most deprived areas. Local participation data shows that while sport and physical activity are popular across age groups, activity levels drop significantly as children get older, especially among girls. According to the School Sport Survey 2022, participation in organised sport three or more times a week falls from 54% among 10–11-year-olds to lower rates in older adolescents. There is no such data about the prevalence of children's outdoor play.

Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health is an increasing concern across both primary and secondary age groups. Primary school data from 2022–23 identified that 12% of children met the threshold for elevated emotional difficulties scores, with some schools reporting levels as high as 42%. Among secondary students, surveys from 2021–22 show a steady decline in life satisfaction with age, with 86% of Year 7 students reporting life satisfaction scores of 6 or above on a 10-point scale, compared to 70% of Year 11 students. Additional data from the Short Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) showed lower wellbeing scores among older pupils, particularly around optimism, feeling useful, and feeling connected to others; all of which is influenced by children’s opportunities for play (or lack thereof).

Social connectedness and bullying

The Primary School Health Survey 2022–23 reported that 28% of children had engaged in or experienced bullying, with cyberbullying affecting around 21% of Year 6 pupils. These findings reinforce the importance of social play opportunities that support inclusion, build peer relationships, and reduce the risk of bullying. Children’s feedback in past consultations has highlighted the role of play in developing friendships and reducing isolation.

Sedentary behaviour and screen use

Secondary school data indicates that a significant proportion of older children, particularly girls, spend seven or more hours sitting on a typical weekday, much of it linked to screen-based and digital engagement. Primary school survey data shows that 66% of children own a smartphone, with regular use of social media and gaming platforms. This trend points to the importance of ensuring that children have accessible and appealing opportunities for outdoor and active play to balance the increasing time spent in more sedentary activities.

Health inequalities

Health outcomes in Bridgend continue to be shaped by deprivation. Children living in low-income households are more likely to experience poor physical health, lower perceptions of wellbeing, and reduced access to play and recreational provision. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals in participating schools ranges from 20 to 24% across recent surveys, underlining the importance of prioritising free and low-cost play offers and ensuring that barriers such as transport and equipment costs are addressed.

Children living in areas of deprivation

Bridgend has pockets of significant deprivation, particularly in valley communities such as Caerau, Bettws, Nantymoel, and parts of Bridgend town. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and local authority data, around 18% of children in Bridgend live in poverty, and approximately 4,198 people live in low-income households. Deprivation in these communities is often linked to higher unemployment rates, lower household incomes, poorer housing conditions, and reduced access to services, all of which can have a direct impact on children's opportunities for play.

Children living in areas of deprivation can experience multiple barriers to play, including:

- Poor-quality or poorly maintained playable spaces in their immediate neighbourhoods.
- Lack of access to private gardens or safe outdoor space at home.
- Concerns around community safety, including fear of crime and traffic risks.
- Financial barriers that limit access to paid-for activities such as sports clubs, holiday schemes, or leisure centre sessions.
- Limited transport options, making it difficult to reach larger, better-equipped parks or supervised provision.

The local authority and its partners have developed a range of targeted responses to address these inequalities. One of the most notable examples is the Caerau doorstep activity project, delivered by the community anchor organisation Noddfa. This initiative brings play, sports, and creative activities directly into the heart of a deprived community, reducing reliance on families to travel or pay for opportunities.

The Active 4 Life programme has also been central in providing free or low-cost holiday play schemes in targeted areas, including Central Bridgend, Brackla, Pencoed, Porthcawl, Bettws, Maesteg Valley, Garw Valley, and Caerau. These programmes combine physical activity with fun and social engagement, helping to reduce inequalities in access to recreation. Food and Fun holiday enrichment schemes have also been delivered by schools in deprived communities, addressing food insecurity whilst also providing recreational opportunities during the summer break. However, the ongoing delivery of these initiatives remains precarious with both being reliant on external grant funding. Active4life is reliant on seasonal staff and short-term funding including contributions from Town and Community Council and Play Works funding with funding often secured at short notice on a year-by-year basis making staff recruitment and retention more difficult. Schools have also struggled to deliver Food and Fun schemes due to the availability of staff during school holidays, although there are examples of the Urdd providing sessions instead of school staff.

The council's recent investment of over £1 million in upgrading designated play areas has prioritised inclusive and accessible equipment in areas of deprivation. These upgrades have been informed by safety assessments of existing equipment, although some communities report ongoing issues in terms of maintenance and quality of provision.

In the early years, Flying Start operates across the most deprived wards, providing free childcare and family support alongside outdoor and indoor play. Family support services also deliver play-based parenting programmes aimed at improving parent-child interactions and supporting children's healthy development.

Despite these efforts, focus groups and local audits have identified persistent challenges. Families living in deprived areas are disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis, with increased anxiety about travel, equipment costs, and the affordability of paid activities. Community members have highlighted the importance of informal, local spaces for play and free-to-access provision. Safety concerns, particularly around antisocial behaviour in parks and estates, can further limit children's freedom to play near home.

There is a recognised need to strengthen the integration of opportunities for play within wider community safety, housing, and regeneration strategies. Expanding inclusive, no-cost provision, improving the play value and safety of local spaces, and involving children and families in shaping services are key priorities going forward.

Children living in rural areas

Bridgend County Borough contains a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities. The rural areas are mainly concentrated in the Llynfi, Garw, and Ogmore valleys and parts of the western borough near communities such as Cornelly, Pyle, Kenfig Hill and Bettws. These areas are more likely to face challenges in terms of access to provision, shaped by geography, transport, and the availability of services.

According to local demographic assessments, approximately 19% of the borough's under-16 population live in rural wards. These communities often have lower population densities, higher levels of worklessness, and fewer local services compared to urban centres such as Bridgend town and Porthcawl. The Rural Development Plan has identified around 18 eligible wards with significant rural child populations, underscoring the need for tailored local responses.

Access to play in rural areas is shaped by a combination of landscape, infrastructure, and service gaps. Children and families in these communities frequently report:

- Limited local spaces for play or facilities, often relying on small community parks, informal green spaces, or school grounds.
- Barriers to accessing larger or more equipped sites, including poor public transport connections, long travel distances, and cost.
- Road safety concerns, especially around fast rural roads without pavements or safe walking and riding routes.
- A lack of dedicated play or youth services in some villages, leading to reliance on voluntary or community-led initiatives.

The local authority has taken several steps to improve provision in rural areas. The Active 4 Life programme, for example, delivers summer holiday play and sports schemes in rural and valley communities, offering free or low-cost activities that help reduce transport and affordability barriers. The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) programme has supported the transfer of some rural parks and play areas to Town and Community Councils and local groups, enabling improvements and upgrades to local facilities. Community anchor organisations such as Noddfa in Caerau have been central in delivering doorstep play and family engagement, helping to reach children who might otherwise have limited opportunities.

Despite these positive developments, focus groups and spatial audits consistently identify rural provision as an area of shortfall. Residents and professionals have highlighted the need for:

- More outreach services, including mobile play schemes and pop-up events.
- Improved transport solutions, especially to help children access centralised provision in urban areas.
- Investment in safe active travel routes, including pavements, crossings, and cycle paths, to enable children's independent mobility.
- Greater attention to the play value and inclusivity of local spaces, ensuring they cater to a wide age range and to disabled or neurodiverse children.

Children living in rural areas are also affected by the same health and wellbeing challenges reported across the borough, with additional risks linked to social isolation and reduced access to supportive networks. Consultation work has shown that children value spaces where they can meet friends and experience freedom close to home, reinforcing the importance of maintaining and enhancing rural provision.

Children from other minority groups

Children from other minority groups in Bridgend include children from ethnic minority backgrounds, children from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, LGBTQ+ children and young people, care-experienced children, and young carers. While these groups make up a relatively small proportion of the child population, they often face disproportionate barriers to accessing sufficient opportunities for play.

Ethnic minority children

Although Bridgend has lower levels of ethnic diversity compared to the Welsh average, the borough has seen a gradual increase in the number of children from Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic backgrounds, including families who have arrived from Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Schools report growing diversity, particularly in urban areas. While no dedicated play services currently target these communities, general provision aims to be inclusive. Urdd activities play an important role in offering Welsh-medium and bilingual opportunities to children from both Welsh and non-Welsh speaking backgrounds. There is, however, a recognised need to improve cultural inclusivity in design, communication, and outreach of provision, especially as local diversity increases.

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) families live in several parts of the county, although there are no designated permanent sites in the local authority area. While schools and social care teams work with these families, the local authority currently has no targeted play provision or engagement for GRT children. This represents a notable gap, as research consistently shows that GRT children face some of the highest levels of exclusion and deprivation, including limited access to safe, welcoming spaces for play.

LGBTQ+ children and young people

LGBTQ+ young people in Bridgend are often invisible in play and leisure policy, although small steps have been made to improve inclusion. The Maesteg School breaktime project included awareness of LGBTQ+ needs, and the BING (Bridgend Inclusive Network Group) has supported pilot LGBTQ+-friendly sports sessions. While these are positive beginnings, young people and professionals highlight the need for more LGBTQ+-inclusive environments in youth services, sports clubs, and informal gathering spaces, alongside visible messaging that all children are welcome.

Care-experienced children and young carers

Bridgend has a relatively high number of care-experienced children, with 745 children receiving local authority care and support as of 2020.

This includes children in foster care, residential care, and kinship care arrangements. These children often benefit from targeted recreation and enrichment activities, delivered in partnership with social care and Prevention & Wellbeing . Examples include co-designed holiday programmes, free access to sports and leisure activities, and tailored sessions in partnership with Halo Leisure and Awen Trust.

There are also around 549 young carers identified in the borough. Young carers' networks provide a vital lifeline, offering holiday activities, peer support, and breaks from caring responsibilities. The Prevention & Wellbeing team works closely with schools, health services, and third-sector partners to identify and support these children, though transport and access to mainstream activities remain challenges.

Overall, while there are examples of good practice, particularly in relation to care-experienced children and young carers, there are clear opportunities to improve inclusion for minority ethnic, GRT, and LGBTQ+ children. Focus group participants also raised concerns about other groups of children whose play experiences are not well understood, including children on the child protection register. Furthermore, whilst there is targeted support available to children involved with social services, many children are not connected to these services and therefore do not have access to such provision but might benefit if they did. Without a mechanism to assess the sufficiency of children's opportunities for play, it is difficult to establish any unmet need.

Neurodiverse and disabled children

Neurodiverse and disabled children represent an important and growing group within Bridgend's child population. Current local estimates suggest around 3,176 children have additional learning needs (ALN) or disabilities, covering a wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism, ADHD, and learning impairments. School census data and service records show that these children are spread across mainstream schools, special schools, specialist resource bases, and alternative provision, with 439 children currently supported in special schools and 62 in alternative settings.

Access to play for neurodiverse and disabled children is shaped by a range of factors, including the design and inclusivity of public spaces, the availability of specialist or adapted provision, and the extent to which mainstream provision can accommodate diversity and additional support requirements. Focus groups and previous PSA data consistently highlight that families of disabled children face barriers in both physical and social access to play.

Provision in Bridgend includes several strong examples of targeted and inclusive practice:

- **Discovery Days/Youth Hub/ Wellbeing Days** are delivered as inclusive events specifically designed for disabled children and young adults aged 8–25, offering adapted activities such as swimming, cooking, sports, arts, and nature trails. These events are coordinated with Social Services with a mix of core and external funding and are highly valued by the families who have access to them.
- **Inclusive play equipment** has been installed in several local authority play area upgrades, such as at Newbridge Fields, where accessible swings, roundabouts, and surfacing have been added. The capital programme has prioritised improving the accessibility of equipment alongside general refurbishments.
- **Free swimming sessions** are offered to children with additional learning needs, supported through Welsh Government free swimming initiative across Halo Leisure swimming pools.
- **Leisure access cards** are provided to children known to Social Services, helping to reduce financial barriers to inclusive leisure and recreation opportunities supported by external funding
- **Play pods and loose parts play schemes** have been rolled out in primary schools, supported by recycling partnerships. Training is provided to schools to ensure inclusive use of resources supported via external funding.
- **Special school playground upgrades** have been supported through local investment, improving on-site play opportunities for children who may face greater barriers to accessing community provision.

Despite these strengths, challenges remain. Families frequently report difficulties in accessing local playgrounds, with barriers including a lack of appropriate equipment, poor maintenance, and safety concerns. Transport can be a significant barrier, particularly for families living in rural or disadvantaged communities. While some schools and clubs have made progress on inclusion, parents report variable staff confidence and awareness, especially in mainstream settings. Children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism may also experience sensory and social barriers in public spaces, limiting their ability to engage freely in local play environments.

Access to demographic data for planning

Bridgend County Borough Council has access to a broad range of demographic data that has the potential to support planning for play sufficiency. This includes population, education, health, and social care data, which together provide an important evidence base for understanding the characteristics and needs of local children.

The core dataset is the school census, which provides detailed information through the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). This dataset includes age, gender, additional learning needs status, and free school meal eligibility, offering important indicators of socio-economic status and inclusion needs.

In the early years, data is collected through Flying Start monitoring, nursery enrolments, and the childcare sufficiency assessment, which capture information about under-fives living in the most disadvantaged areas. Social care data, including records of children on the child protection register, care-experienced children, and young carers, is used by social services and the family support team to inform targeted interventions. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation also provides detailed local profiles of deprivation levels, which are important for identifying communities where children may face additional barriers to play.

Health data, including from the Child Measurement Programme, School Health Research Network surveys, and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board reports, offers valuable insights into children's physical health, mental wellbeing, and behavioural trends. This includes information about obesity prevalence, emotional difficulties, bullying, and sedentary behaviours.

Despite the range of available datasets, focus groups with professionals identified several gaps and challenges in how this information is used. While data is often available within individual departments, it is not always systematically shared across services or used to inform neighbourhood-level planning for play.

Improving the use of demographic data when planning for play will require stronger collaboration between departments and a shared approach to spatial planning, service design and performance monitoring at a neighbourhood level. There is also an opportunity to integrate children's voices and lived experience data alongside population data to create a more complete picture.

Children's voices and lived experiences

Children's voices and lived experiences are a crucial source of evidence for understanding the sufficiency of opportunities for play in Bridgend. Past consultation exercises, programme evaluations, and service engagement activities have provided important insights into what children value, the barriers they face, and what improvements they would like to see in their communities.

Although no direct child consultation was undertaken for this assessment cycle, previous work has captured children's perspectives across a wide range of settings and groups. In 2021–22, over 4,000 children in Bridgend participated in school wellbeing surveys, providing rich data

on physical activity, mental wellbeing, friendships, perceptions of safety, and their general satisfaction with life. These surveys consistently show that children value social opportunities, physical activity, and freedom in outdoor spaces, but that their ability to access these opportunities can be constrained by factors such as transport, perceptions of safety, cost, and the availability of provision.

Introducing a county-wide child and parent/carer satisfaction survey focused specifically on play would further strengthen the council's ability to understand and respond to the lived experiences of children and families. Such a survey would provide valuable insight into both what is working well and where gaps remain. By gathering data on key drivers of satisfaction - such as time, space, freedom, safety, and access - the survey would support the development of a consistent and meaningful monitoring framework. This in turn would enable the council to track progress over time, identify inequalities across different groups and localities, and inform both strategic planning and neighbourhood-level responses.

Beyond quantitative surveys, specific engagement with care-experienced children, disabled children, and young carers has been a strength of Bridgend's play sufficiency work. Projects have included feedback sessions where disabled children and their families have helped shape future events. Young carers have been consulted on what kinds of holiday and respite activities would be most helpful, leading to the development of co-designed programmes. Secondary school students, such as those at Maesteg, have taken part in targeted projects to improve breaktime experiences, creating more inclusive and engaging school environments.

Children have identified a range of barriers to play. Safety concerns are a consistent theme, with children in some areas reporting that antisocial behaviour, poorly lit spaces, and traffic risks make them feel unsafe playing near home. Older children have highlighted the lack of informal gathering spaces where they can socialise without being moved on or perceived as a nuisance. Disabled and neurodiverse children and their families have raised issues around the accessibility of play equipment, sensory aspects of public spaces, and the need for staff who understand them. Rural children have pointed to the lack of local provision and the difficulties of travelling to centralised facilities.

Children have also expressed strong views about the quality and appeal of local spaces for play. In some areas, they have reported disappointment when new equipment was installed without their input, describing the result as "boring" or "for little kids." Where children have been meaningfully involved, such as in school-based projects or youth centre designs, they have highlighted the positive impact of having a say in shaping their environments.

A consistent finding across engagement exercises is that children want more time, space, and permission to play, whether that means having access to safer streets, more after-school activities, or freedom to explore the public realm. Children also place a high value on social connection and opportunities that bring them together with peers are seen as particularly meaningful.

Looking forward, there is a recognised need to embed children's voices more systematically into play sufficiency work. This includes establishing mechanisms for regular consultation, involving children in the co-design of spaces and services, and ensuring that their feedback leads to visible action. Focus group participants from across departments expressed strong support for expanding child engagement in future planning cycles.

Agreed actions

Actions have been prioritised by focusing on those that are achievable within existing structures and financial constraints while offering the greatest potential for impact. The emphasis has been placed on actions that would help to develop a strategic, collaborative, and cross-cutting approach to play sufficiency, whilst maintaining existing assets and services that support play. Many of these actions address multiple aspects of the four themes covered in this assessment but each has only be identified once to avoid duplication.

- Continue to invest in inclusive and targeted provision, shaped by direct engagement with children who may experience additional barriers to play.
- Introduce a triennial county-wide self-reporting child and parent survey on play sufficiency, gathering lived experience data that can be used to track progress.
- Conduct hyper-local research in 2 case study communities, improving understanding of how opportunities vary by neighbourhood and community context, using this information to inform the 2028 PSA.
- Research into the play experiences of children with protected characteristics including girls, disabled children, children with ALN, ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, young carers, and care experienced children.
- Facilitate a multi-agency event to share research findings, children's voices and experiences of play at a neighbourhood level.

Theme: Places where children play

This theme relates to:

Matter C: The space where children can play, including open space, and any other space

Matter F: Traffic measures that are used to promote access to play

Matter I: The extent to which education and local development planning policies take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children

To what extent does the local authority meet the criteria?

Criteria	Previous PSA RAG Status*	Current PSA RAG Status*	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	What would address the shortfalls?
An up-to-date record of all designated play space, as described in the Statutory Guidance, is kept.	Green	Green	Council website includes an up-to-date list of designated play areas. Records are kept of Town and Community Council managed play areas.		
Designated play areas and playgrounds are assessed for play value and potential to increase in play use.	Amber	Amber	Routine safety inspections carried out across designated play areas; this informs capital programme priorities.	Inspection processes focus on safety and maintenance more than play value from children's perspectives.	Incorporate play value assessments of designated play areas into neighbourhood model of planning for play.
Public spaces are assessed for play value and potential to increase in play use, as set out in the Statutory Guidance.	Amber	Amber	Playable public open spaces included in Green Infrastructure assessment; focus on multifunctionality and accessibility.	Limited attention paid to the play value of green infrastructure and public open spaces beyond designated sites	Conduct holistic play value audits of community spaces using this to inform localised plans for play.
An Open Space Assessment (OSA) that maps areas that are used, or might be used for playing as listed in the	Green	Green	Outdoor Sport and Children's Play Space Audit (2021) and GI Assessment (2022) map extensive open space.	Quantitative data does not account for children's lived experiences of actual use of space.	Conduct qualitative spatial audits and hyper-local research with children to

Statutory Guidance, has been undertaken.					compliment quantitative data.
Open Space Standards in accordance with the advice and requirements of Planning Policy Wales, have been developed.	Green	Green	Fixed play standards included in SPG; LDP policy and GI assessments align with Planning Policy Wales.	Play sufficiency priorities not explicitly embedded in OSA standards.	Embed children's right to play and play sufficiency principles explicitly in future planning policy reviews.
Green spaces are assessed for play value and potential to increase in play.	N/a	Amber	GI Assessment includes multi-functionality data for green spaces.	Play value of greenspace often overlooked.	Developer a broader and holistic approach to planning for play beyond designated play areas recognising the play function of the wider public realm.
Neighbourhood spaces are assessed for play value and potential to increase play.	N/a	Amber	Neighbourhood-level deficits identified in Play Space Audit; asset mapping supports community project planning.	Limited integration of lived experience data to define neighbourhood play value.	Combine spatial data with local engagement to assess neighbourhood-level play sufficiency.
Access audits are undertaken at all designated play spaces and proposals are implemented to improve access and safety.	Amber	Amber	Accessibility included in capital programme design and procurement briefs.	Accessibility tends to focus on the design of equipment and surfaces, less attention paid to whether children can independently access provision.	Undertake access audits of designated play spaces as part of a neighbourhood wide approach to planning for play.
A new fixed play provision standard has been developed and agreed.	Green	Green	Open Space Assessment and SPG set out benchmark standards for fixed play provision.		
Brownfield sites owned by the local authority are assessed for the potential for the site to be reclaimed to provide for children's play.	Green	Green			
The Smoke-free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020 that require	Green	Green	BCBC playgrounds have been smoke free for an extended period.		

playgrounds in Wales to be smoke-free, are adhered to.					
'No ball games', or similar signs have been removed, to encourage more children playing in the community.	Amber	Amber	Recognised as outdated; informal play promoted in some community initiatives.	No borough-wide programme to review or remove 'no ball games' signage.	Audit signage and replace with play-positive messaging where appropriate as part of neighbourhood level approach to planning for play.
Play Priority Signs or similar, have been erected to encourage more children playing in the community.	Red	Red	Play priority signage previously purchased . Implementation has been limited.	No coordinated strategy for borough-wide use of play priority signs.	Expand pilot schemes and standardise signage as part of inclusive neighbourhood design.
A recognition of the importance of playing fields to children's play is included when any disposal decisions are made.	Green	Green	Deficit of playing fields makes it very unlikely that they would be disposed of. Asset transfer decisions consider multifunctional value; playing fields seen as valuable by councillors.		
Children and their families are included in any consultations regarding decisions to dispose of playing fields.	Green	Green	As above. Community engagement encouraged as part of CAT process.		
Access audits for all settings, as described in the Statutory Guidance, are undertaken.	Amber	Amber	Inclusive design in capital refurbishment of designated play areas.	Accessibility tends to focus on the design of equipment and surfaces, less attention paid to whether children can independently access provision.	Undertake access audits of designated play spaces as part of a neighbourhood wide approach to planning for play.
Guidance around creating accessible play space is referred to when refurbishing or developing new playgrounds.	Amber	Amber	Inclusive design of equipment and surfacing embedded in capital programme delivery.	Lack of consistency in how guidance is used by different departments or contractors.	Promote guidance and ensure training for staff and contractors.

Partners collaborate to identify a mechanism for assessing the impact of speed reduction and other road safety measures on the opportunity for children to play outside in their communities.	Green	Amber	Active travel focus group identified need to monitor play impact of 20mph and school street zones.	No agreed mechanism to assess impact of traffic calming measures on children's freedom to play.	Establish shared performance measures for play sufficiency that can be used to evaluate interventions.
There is a plan to reduce the negative effect of busy roads and junctions through the introduction of speed reduction measures and provision of safe crossing points/routes for pedestrians and cyclists.	Green	Green	Commitment to 20mph in residential areas; Transport and active travel plans prioritise walking and cycling.	Consideration of children's access to opportunities for play not embedded in active travel planning.	Prioritise play access in traffic calming schemes and neighbourhood planning.
There is a plan(s) to improve walking and cycle access to parks, outdoor play facilities and local leisure centres from residential areas. To be included on the Active Travel Network Maps.	Green	Green	Active Travel plans and infrastructure improvements are likely to have indirectly benefitted children and their play.	Access routes to leisure/play spaces not consistently mapped or supported.	Ensure parks and play spaces are fully integrated into active travel infrastructure improvements.
Road safety grants and/or other funding is used to provide pedestrian safety training and cycling training for children.	Green	Green	Road Safety Team delivers Kerbcraft and National Standards cycle training in schools.		
There is an accessible and well-promoted way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play outside their homes.	Amber	Amber	Draft procedures for Play Streets developed; supported by senior officers and elected members.	Pilot yet to be launched; low public awareness and operational clarity.	Implement pilot and promote guidance for communities and local partners.
Active Travel Act guidance is used when considering new developments and changes to the highway network/urban realm to ensure that safe and convenient routes for walking, wheeling and cycling are incorporated from the start.	N/a	Green	Planning and highways teams incorporate AT guidance into new developments.	Limited awareness of implications for children's play and freedom of movement.	Embed play sufficiency criteria into planning checklists and staff training.

APPENDIX 1

Child pedestrian road accident casualty data is used to inform the location and design of interventions which help children get around independently in their communities.	Green	Amber	Road safety data reviewed by transport teams; influence seen in Safe Routes and school street pilots.	No formal requirement to integrate casualty data into play planning.	Share child pedestrian data with play teams and embed in localised planning processes.
Active Travel Fund, Safe Routes in Communities and Road Safety grants and/or other funding is used to support access to opportunities to play	N/a	Amber	Active Travel and Safe Routes grants used to support walk/cycle links to schools and leisure sites.	Play sites not consistently prioritised in bid processes.	Include play site access in all relevant infrastructure funding bids.
The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the outdoor play needs of children.	Green	Amber	The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets standards for public open space provision including designated spaces for play	Planning policy tends towards a narrow focus on designated play areas	Develop guidance that promotes a more holistic approach to planning for play beyond designated spaces alone.
Schools ensure that children are provided with a rich play environment for breaks during the school day.	N/a	Amber	Activity Pods used in some primary schools; secondary school pilot underway; outdoor play valued in wellbeing planning.	Break times often shortened; overly managed environments limit free play.	Promote free play in school policy and provide training for school staff.
Schools provide play opportunities during out of teaching hours.	Green	Amber	Schools provide a diverse range of extra-curricula activities. Holiday playschemes and enrichment activities delivered on school sites; community groups sometimes use grounds.	Provision tends towards structured recreational activities more than open-ended opportunities for play.	Promote the value of children having time and space for open-ended playing to school staff.
Schools provide access to school grounds for playing out of school times.	Amber	Amber	Draft guidance developed to support community access to school grounds; Some dual use sites supported by Prevention and Wellbeing.	Guidance not yet implemented; variable take-up by schools; concerns associated with maintenance of school sites.	Adopt guidance and develop borough-wide community use policy.
Guidance to ensure schools understand and ensure that regular outdoor play is not curtailed, is provided.	N/a	Amber	Some work done with specific schools to promote the value of play e.g. through the activity pods programme.	Play is not consistently well supported in schools, with reports of play times being	Promote the value of children having time and space for open-ended playing to school staff.

				reduced and more structured activities favoured.	
The importance of play is considered as part of the local delivery of the Community Focused Schools initiative.	N/a	Red	Play noted in school development projects as supporting wellbeing and inclusion.	Play not consistently featured in CFS initiatives.	Embed PSA principles in CFS planning and capital investment criteria.
The importance of play is considered as part of the local delivery of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme	N/a	Red	Play noted in school development projects as supporting wellbeing and inclusion.	Play not consistently featured in SCL initiatives.	Embed PSA principles in SCL planning and capital investment criteria.
The Health and Safety policies explicitly recognise the value of children being able to experience risk and challenge.	Amber	Amber	Draft risk-benefit guidance produced and aligned with Play Safety Forum principles.	Not yet adopted or widely used by schools or council teams.	Promote consistent approach through cross-department training and policy integration.
The Health and Safety policies and procedures incorporate a benefit-risk approach to health and safety assessments as recommended by ISO, the International Organization for Standardization.	Amber	Amber	Draft policy reflects ISO-aligned benefit-risk language.	Implementation across departments remains inconsistent.	Promote consistent approach through cross-department training and policy integration.
The local authority offers the provision of insurance through the local authority scheme, to all third sector play providers and community councils.	Amber	Amber	TBA		

Additional comments

Planning policy and guidance

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has a strong policy framework in place to support the protection and provision of spaces where children can play. The Local Development Plan (LDP) policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) set out clear standards for public open space provision including designated spaces for play, particularly in relation to new housing developments. This includes highlighting

shortfalls in existing provision and clarifying requirements for developer contributions to address these gaps. The SPG on Outdoor Recreation Facilities and New Housing Development (2022) strengthens these commitments by providing clear benchmarks, using Fields in Trust standards, and promoting inclusive design principles. However, the focus of the SPG is largely on new development, with less emphasis on addressing the quality and availability of play provision in existing neighbourhoods.

The council's wider policy commitments, including the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, support a broader vision of play-friendly, walkable neighbourhoods where children can easily access playable spaces on foot or by bike. However, while the local authority's planning and transport strategies indirectly align with the goals of play sufficiency, they do not yet make this alignment explicit or fully integrate children's right to play as a policy driver.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhood Background Paper (produced to inform the LDP) further supports the development of compact, connected communities where residents can meet most daily needs within a short walk or cycle. This principle has the potential to benefit children's freedom of movement and access to local places for play. Yet, the paper stops short of explicitly addressing the importance of play or setting out play-focused design standards, missing an opportunity to reinforce the Play Sufficiency Duty within neighbourhood planning.

Recent progress has been made in embedding more nature-based approaches and biodiversity goals into public space planning, as highlighted in the Porthcawl Placemaking Strategy and the council's Biodiversity Duty Plan (2022–2025). The Biodiversity Duty Plan focuses on nature-based solutions, climate resilience, and green infrastructure, creating opportunities to design more diverse and playful outdoor environments. However, as with the other strategies, the potential synergy with play sufficiency is implicit rather than clearly stated.

Overall, Bridgend's planning policies and guidance create a supportive environment for play by addressing open space standards, walkability, green infrastructure, and inclusive design. However, the Play Sufficiency Duty is not consistently or explicitly referenced across these policies. There is a clear opportunity to strengthen the alignment between planning, transport, and environmental strategies and to make children's right to play a visible, cross-cutting priority in policy and design at all levels.

Public open space audit and green infrastructure assessment

BCBC's Outdoor Sport and Children's Play Space Audit (2021) provides an analysis of the amount and distribution of public open spaces across the county borough. This document is intended to provide evidence to support planning decisions, justifying the need for new provision and associated developer contributions, as well safeguarding existing facilities. In doing so the assessment provides baseline data

for planning the provision of spaces where children can play, informing investment priorities, and shaping the delivery of open space improvements.

Importantly, the audit provides a quantitative analysis of different typologies of space by geographic area, and recognises that other considerations relating to accessibility, proximity and the quality of provision will be important considerations in planning decisions. This emphasises the need for more granular and qualitative insights regarding children's actual access to and use of space.

The typologies of spaces covered by the audit include playing pitches, other outdoor sports provision, equipped / designated play areas, other outdoor provision (including MUGAs and skateboard parks), and amenity green spaces.

The following standards (in line with Fields in Trust guidance) in respect of the amount of space per 1000 population are identified for each typology:

1. Playing pitches 1.2 hectares
2. Other outdoor sports 1.6 hectares
3. Designated play areas 0.25 hectares
4. Other outdoor provision 0.3 hectares
5. Amenity greenspace 1.22 hectares

The audit divides the county into the 8 smaller 'sub-areas' Bridgend, Garw Valley, Llynfi Valley, Ogmore Valley, Pencoed, Porthcawl, Pyle Kenfig Hill and Cornelly, and Valleys Gateway.

For each sub-area, maps of every identified space, its typology, location and size are provided. For each typology of space, quantitative data is then provided on how much space there should be based on the agreed standard, how much space there actually is, and the extent to which this represents a surplus or deficit compared with the agreed standard. Data from the 2011 census is used for these calculations due to the unavailability of more up to date population data at the sub local authority level at the time of production. The audit therefore suggests that findings should be considered conservative and subject to regular review.

The audit confirms that there is considerable variation across the County Borough in terms of the different types of provision available and the related surpluses and deficits. All 8 sub-areas are identified as having deficits in playing pitches, other outdoor sports, designated play areas, and other outdoor provision (with the exception of Pencoed for playing pitches). The greatest deficits are consistently identified as

being in the Bridgend, Llynfi Valley, Porthcawl, and Pyle Kenfig Hill and Cornelly areas. In contrast, the only typology of space where all sub-areas are identified as having a “surplus” is in amenity green space, with the most significant being in Bridgend, Pyle Kenfig Hill and Cornelly, Pencoed, and Llynfi Valley.

These figures suggest that in some situations it may not be the total amount of space that is lacking but the type of space based on particular typologies. However, these headline figures also mask further variations at a hyper-local level. Furthermore, without data on children’s lived experiences, the audit provides limited insights in terms of how this availability of space influences children’s opportunities for play.

The Green Infrastructure Assessment (2022) is intended to guide and inform the planning and delivery of green infrastructure across Bridgend. It establishes a baseline for a holistic, proactive, and positive approach to managing and enhancing the county borough’s natural assets - particularly in the context of the growth projected in the revised Local Development Plan (LDP). The assessment also serves as a tool to support the implementation of local planning policies related to green infrastructure, aiming to embed green infrastructure principles into land use planning, design, and management, and to ensure that green infrastructure is a central and significant component of housing developments and broader infrastructure projects.

The Green Infrastructure Assessment builds on the public open space audit by including but also looking beyond public open spaces to incorporate a much wider variety of space, including natural assets such as woodlands, grasslands, open water and coastal areas. In doing so it provides a broader strategic framework, identifying the county’s parks, waterways, active travel routes, and green corridors as interconnected assets that deliver environmental, social, and health benefits. While this assessment recognises the contribution of green spaces to wellbeing and recreation, it focuses mainly on environmental functions such as biodiversity, flood management, and climate resilience. The specific value or potential of natural spaces for play is less developed in the current analysis, leaving scope to strengthen the integration of play sufficiency objectives into future green infrastructure planning.

The assessment uses the same 8 sub-areas as the public open space audit, with detailed maps and profiles for each area - data and resources that would be useful when planning for play at a localised level.

Overall, the council’s open space and green infrastructure assessments provide a valuable platform for understanding and improving children’s access to outdoor play. However, there is an opportunity to move beyond measuring quantity and distribution to explore

children's access to and use of space more systematically. Combining quantitative audits with insights from children's lived experiences would strengthen the council's ability to plan and deliver public spaces that meet the needs of children across all communities.

Furthermore, while designated play spaces are highly valued by both children and adults, an overly narrow focus on their provision carries several risks. It can reinforce the perception that children's play belongs only in specific, confined areas and is inappropriate elsewhere in the public realm. This perspective risks overlooking the potential of wider public spaces (such as streets, greenspaces, and more natural environments) as valuable assets for play. It may also divert attention from broader environmental and social barriers that restrict children's freedom to move and play, including those that limit their ability to access designated play areas. Crucially, it does not reflect the reality of children's play, which typically occurs across a much broader range of everyday spaces. To respond effectively to children's needs, a more holistic, neighbourhood-based approach to planning for play is required — one that pays attention to and supports children's freedom of movement and ensures a diverse mix of accessible, welcoming, and playable public spaces.

Master planning projects

Bridgend County Borough has several active and emerging master planning initiatives — including strategic sites at Porthcawl Waterfront and Bridgend Town Centre - that offer significant opportunities to embed play sufficiency into long-term spatial development. These projects reflect a growing emphasis on placemaking, sustainability, and community wellbeing, all of which are consistent with the core principles of the Play Sufficiency Duty. In particular, the focus on active travel, accessible green infrastructure, and mixed-use development supports the creation of neighbourhoods where it is more likely that children can move freely and access a diverse range of playable spaces.

Although the Play Sufficiency Duty is not always explicitly referenced within master planning documents, there is clear alignment in terms of strategic goals - such as promoting walkable, connected communities, reducing reliance on cars, improving public realm quality, and enhancing access to nature. These priorities, if designed and delivered with children in mind, can contribute significantly to enabling more play-friendly environments. There is an opportunity to make this alignment more intentional by incorporating child-focused design principles, requiring impacts on children to be considered as part of planning processes, and involving children and families in the co-design of public spaces within master plan areas. Doing so would help ensure that these high-profile developments actively contribute to children's right to play and create inclusive environments that support children's wellbeing and everyday freedoms.

Capital investment in designated play areas

A recent count shows that BCBC currently owns and maintains 98 equipped play areas, while Town and Community Councils are responsible for a further 21. BCBC is also in the process of adopting additional equipped play areas from new housing developments.

A key strength of Bridgend's approach has been its dedicated capital investment programme for renovating these designated play areas. Running over several years and supported through both council and external funding, this programme has delivered substantial improvements across the county borough, with a strong focus on improving the appearance, accessibility and safety of equipment and surfaces. The Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2025-26 continues this commitment.

This investment has largely been driven by the Play Sufficiency Duty, with funding for recent and ongoing upgrades being drawn from a combination of sources, including Play works, Section 106 contributions, and BCBC's own capital budgets. In total, around £1 million is set to be invested in the enhancement of local play areas through this scheme of work.

The programme has prioritised replacing outdated equipment, installing inclusive features such as accessible swings and multi-user play units, upgrading safety surfacing, and making general infrastructure improvements. Investment has been directed to both urban and rural areas, with particular attention paid to addressing historic underinvestment and achieving a fair geographic spread.

Recent years have seen notable improvements in some of Bridgend's flagship parks and playgrounds, particularly through targeted capital investment. Upgraded sites such as Newbridge Fields and Bryngarw Country Park now feature high-quality, durable equipment, inclusive and accessible features, and improved landscaping that encourages imaginative and active playing.

This sustained investment represents a clear strategic commitment to safeguarding and improving the borough's play space infrastructure and has been well received by communities and elected members alike. However, several limitations have emerged that should be acknowledged when assessing its long-term impact.

Firstly, the council has limited direct control over the design and selection of equipment. Procurement is typically managed through framework agreements and public tendering processes, which means that while broad specifications can be set, the final designs are often determined by suppliers and contractors. This can reduce opportunities for locally distinctive or bespoke solutions and potentially overlooks the experience of the local authority's own officers.

Secondly, there has been limited involvement of children and families in shaping the design and equipment selection. Anecdotal feedback from focus groups and community engagement indicates that in cases where children were not consulted, some new installations were seen as underwhelming, with equipment described as “boring” or not well suited to local needs. This highlights the importance of embedding co-production into future capital projects to ensure that children’s views and experiences inform design decisions.

Thirdly, while the capital programme has delivered visible improvements, it has primarily focused on formal, designated play areas. Less investment has gone into informal greenspaces, more natural play environments, or play spaces used by teenagers and older children.

Overall, the capital investment programme remains a major asset for Bridgend and a visible expression of the council’s commitment to delivering its Play Sufficiency Duty. By increasing opportunities for community and child engagement, the programme could have an even greater impact - ensuring that high-quality, easily accessible spaces are available to more children.

Play space assessments

While this capital investment is ongoing, there also remains considerable variety in the overall quality of designated play areas across the county, with concerns continuing to be raised in some communities. These differences are influenced by investment history, management arrangements, levels of community involvement and other localised issues. Such variables point towards the need for a localised and place-based approach to planning for play.

The capital investment programme has largely been informed by routine safety inspections of council-managed play areas. These inspections are undertaken regularly, with risk assessments and repairs guided by recognised safety standards. This process is focused on the maintenance, safety and condition of equipment and surfaces. Less attention has been given to the location, accessibility, design and play value of these spaces from children’s perspectives – or to other social and environmental factors that shape children’s experiences of safety (for example, traffic levels or natural surveillance from nearby homes).

Furthermore, while recognising the importance of safety, there were concerns raised in focus groups that overly risk-averse approaches may result in sterile or uninspiring spaces that fail to offer the variety, challenge, and adventure that children seek in their play. The suggestion being that improving the quality of Bridgend’s designated play spaces, requires sustained investment and maintenance, as well as a focus on play value and the development of a risk-benefit approach to decision making and design.

Community asset transfers

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) has become an increasingly important element of BCBC's approach to managing public open spaces. The CAT programme allows the local authority to transfer ownership or management of public spaces, including parks, playgrounds, and community facilities, to Town and Community Councils or other local community groups. This strategy has been used both as a response to budget pressures and as a means of fostering local stewardship and sustainability.

In the context of play sufficiency, CAT has provided a mechanism to protect local spaces for play that might otherwise have faced closure or decline due to reduced council resources. Several local playgrounds and green spaces have been transferred to community management under this scheme, particularly in smaller or more rural communities. This comes with the added benefits of CAT agreements stipulating particular considerations, for example Town and Community Council's needing to demonstrate that they have taken the access requirements of disabled people into account.

The CAT officer role, which supports communities through the transfer process, has been identified as a key strength in Bridgend's approach. This post has played a critical role in helping community organisations build governance capacity, develop funding bids, prepare business plans, and navigate legal agreements. As a result, some transferred sites have seen innovative improvements, with community input shaping how the spaces are maintained and used.

However, CAT also presents challenges and risks. Not all communities have the same level of capacity, skills, or access to funding, which can result in uneven outcomes across the borough. While some Town and Community Councils have been able to take on play areas successfully, others may struggle to manage maintenance responsibilities or invest in improvements. Supporting community groups to grow their experience and capacity also takes time. This risks creating a patchwork of provision, where the quality, safety, and inclusivity of play spaces may vary depending on local capacity and resources.

Whilst progressive in terms of the support offered, there is also potential to better align CAT processes with the Play Sufficiency Duty by embedding play sufficiency principles into CAT agreements, with technical advice and guidance on how best to provide for children's play. This should include supporting community organisations to develop a risk-benefit approach to the design and maintenance of such spaces.

Active travel and road safety

Active travel and road safety are critically important for enabling children to access spaces for play independently, safely, and confidently within their communities. BCBC's work in this area is guided by national legislation, including the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, and supported through local policies and improvement plans aimed at promoting walking, cycling, and sustainable travel.

The council has made notable progress in recent years in expanding its active travel network, particularly through improvements to walking and cycling routes that link schools, town centres, residential areas, and some key leisure destinations. Schemes such as the Pencoed Active Travel project, which reconnects communities divided by a dual carriageway, and new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure near schools in areas like Pen-y-fai and Coity, have improved local connectivity and supported children's mobility. These improvements indirectly benefit play sufficiency by making it easier and safer for children to reach local parks, playgrounds, and community spaces without depending on car-based transport.

Road safety initiatives, including traffic calming, new crossings, and National Standard Cycle Training delivered in schools, further support children's ability to travel safely to places where they play. However, feedback from focus groups has highlighted important gaps and areas for improvement. Active travel planning has largely focused on school commuting and adult transport priorities, with less explicit attention given to children's journeys to spaces for play or the creation of "playable streets" where children can play close to home.

In residential areas, concerns about traffic speed, volume, and unsafe crossings often deter children from playing outdoors or travelling independently to local play areas. While the council has mechanisms in place for temporary play street closures, these have been underused, and there is scope to promote this initiative more actively, particularly in deprived or high-density neighbourhoods where children may lack access to private gardens or local parks.

The council's active travel and transport plans also offer opportunities to embed more child- and play-focused priorities. For example, aligning active travel routes with local play space improvements, reducing traffic speed limits in residential streets, and incorporating child-friendly design into public realm projects could significantly enhance children's freedom and safety in their neighbourhoods. Similarly, stronger links between road safety education, active travel promotion, and play sufficiency planning would help ensure that transport and play strategies reinforce each other.

Support for play in schools

Schools in Bridgend play a central role in providing daily opportunities for play, and there have been encouraging developments in both primary and secondary settings. The local authority has worked proactively to strengthen support for play, although challenges remain in sustaining this progress and embedding a consistent, whole-school approach.

A key initiative in primary schools has been the Activity Pods project, which has provided 24 schools with shipping container style storage filled with loose parts and recycled materials to support play at playtimes. In June 2024, a survey showed that 16 schools were still actively using their pods, though some reported issues such as wear and tear, dwindling materials, or a need for additional training. The council responded innovatively by linking schools with Plan B recycling and Groundwork Trust to restock pods with surplus materials, making the programme more sustainable.

In secondary schools, a 'Promoting Play in Secondary Schools' project was piloted at Maesteg School, using student consultation, playground audits, and enrichment activities to improve breaktime experiences. This consultation process involved over 200 students and revealed that while 57% enjoyed breaktimes, many wanted more time, shelter, and access to varied opportunities. The school has since trialled flexible timetables, student-led enrichment clubs, and new outdoor equipment. Other secondary schools such as Brynteg also report a permissive culture towards break times with children allowed to access much of the school's outside areas with limited adult controls. There is also a growing focus on student enrichment in response to the New Curriculum for Wales, with recreational activities built into secondary school timetables. How playful and open-ended these activities tend to be is likely to depend on the staff responsible for them.

In primary schools, the Foundation Phase embeds play-based learning in the early years. However, as children move into upper primary, the emphasis often shifts toward more formal, structured learning. Focus group participants reported that break and lunch times are increasingly being shortened or tightly managed, particularly in response to behavioural concerns. Yet there is little evidence that reducing playtime leads to improved behaviour; in fact, several schools acknowledged that the strategy has had limited impact. At the same time, approaches to managing behaviour during breaks tend to favour structured activities, further reducing children's opportunities for self-directed play.

Access to space is another key constraint. Schools with only tarmac yards face significant limitations but where schools have fields children's access is also often limited to dry weather. In such situations, space becomes more contested, and children's freedom to move, explore, and

interact is more easily restricted. Midday supervisors, often central to managing playtimes, may not receive training in playwork approaches, and their role can also unintentionally shift toward control rather than support.

These pressures combine to create a school environment in which children's play is often undervalued or deprioritised. Without a consistent strategic approach, many schools are left balancing competing demands, and the space for unstructured, child-led play is easily eroded. This highlights a clear need for borough-wide guidance and support to ensure that every school can protect and promote time, space, and permission for children to play.

Concerns were raised by professionals involved in education about the costs associated with tried and tested school playtime improvement programmes like [OPAL](#) but also that schools may not understand the benefits and savings such interventions can bring about, for example through reductions in behaviour instances and the staff time required to respond to these. This highlights the need to provide school staff with more information about the value of supporting children's open-ended play.

Community use of school grounds for play

School grounds across Bridgend have significant potential to support children's play beyond the school day. As local, familiar, and often well-maintained spaces, they are especially valuable in areas where access to public open space is limited. The local authority has taken positive steps to unlock this potential, including the development of draft guidance on the community use of school grounds. This guidance addresses key practical issues such as insurance, safety, keyholder arrangements, and maintenance responsibilities, with the aim of encouraging more schools to open their grounds to local children and families after school, at weekends, and during school holidays.

strongest examples of this approach in action across many primary and secondary schools operating as community sites, where facilities such as sports halls and pitches are made available for community use outside of school hours. These sites host a wide range of recreational and sporting activities, including free holiday provision funded by the council - such as the Active 4 Life programme - and community-led clubs, many of which support children's play, either directly or indirectly.

The youth service, in such one instance, responded to concerns raised by the police about vandalism by running staffed sessions on a school site, which attracted 40 to 50 teenagers. In another case, a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) project in Pen-y-bont may help relieve pressure on a school site by providing an alternative location for ball games nearby. These examples illustrate how collaborative, neighbourhood-based planning can help address persistent challenges. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but flexible, locally managed

arrangements - supported by schools, communities, and the local authority - could enable wider use of school grounds for play, particularly given the willingness among some schools to engage more openly with their communities.

Opening up school grounds could help address gaps in public play provision, particularly in areas where space is scarce and children's opportunities for informal play are limited. Building on existing good practice, a coordinated effort to pilot and resource wider community access - including addressing concerns around supervision, safeguarding, and cost recovery - could make a meaningful contribution to play sufficiency in Bridgend.

Risk-benefit approaches

Approaches to managing risk in children's play are key to achieving a balance between safety and the freedom children need to explore, test boundaries, and develop their capabilities. BCBC recognises the value of a risk-benefit approach and has developed a draft guidance document to support more proportionate, play-friendly decision-making across the county borough.

The guidance encourages those with responsibilities for managing risk in children's play provision to move away from a default of risk elimination and instead adopt a "safe enough" philosophy - where the physical, social, and emotional benefits of play are weighed alongside potential risks. It provides a framework for thinking about the aims and objectives of play provision that prioritises play value, children's freedom and their opportunities to engage with risk of their own volition.

Formally adopting the risk-benefit guidance and embedding it into all aspects of play provision - from design and maintenance to supervision and policy - is a necessary next step. This must be accompanied by active promotion and training for officers, schools, and community groups. Risk-benefit should become the default framework for decision-making across all play initiatives in Bridgend, helping to create rich, stimulating environments that support children's wellbeing, resilience, and right to play.

Agreed actions

Actions have been prioritised by focusing on those that are achievable within existing structures and financial constraints while offering the greatest potential for impact. The emphasis has been placed on actions that would help to develop a strategic, collaborative, and cross-cutting approach to play sufficiency, whilst maintaining existing assets and services that support play. Many of these actions address multiple aspects of the four themes covered in this assessment but each has only be identified once to avoid duplication.

- Continue capital investment in play areas, ensuring that children's views, experiences and preferences inform the design and development of all designated spaces for play.
- Promote the use of best practice guidance from Play Wales when developing designated spaces for play.
- Deliver one managing risk in children's play seminar per year to embed a risk-benefit approach across departments and partners (including schools and town and community councils).
- Develop a publicity campaign to promote temporary play street closures and work opportunistically to support the delivery of resident-led initiatives.
- Provide workshops on the Play Sufficiency Duty and the literature review Playing and Being Well as part of the annual suite of professional development opportunities available to both community and educational settings.
- Develop and pilot a collaborative neighbourhood model of planning for play actively involving children in hyper-local research, including those with protected characteristics. As part of this pilot neighbourhood planning process, work with local schools to pilot a school streets initiative, a school playtime improvement programme, and the agreed guidance on out of hours use of school grounds.
- Work proactively with three communities per year to deliver the collaborative neighbourhood model of planning for play, prioritising valley and rural areas and areas of higher deprivation. As part of this neighbourhood planning process, work with local schools to develop school street initiatives, improve the quality of play times, and implement agreed guidance on out of hours use of school grounds for children's play.
- Work with at least one secondary school per year to improve children's experiences of break times based on the Maesteg pilot.

Theme: Supervised provision

This theme relates to:

Matter D: Supervised play provision

Matter G: Playwork training and workforce development

To what extent does the local authority meet the criteria?

Criteria	Previous PSA RAG Status*	Current PSA RAG Status*	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	What would address the shortfalls?
An up-to-date record of all supervised playwork provision, as described in the Statutory Guidance, is kept.	Amber	Green	Audit of supervised provision completed as part of PSA; includes early years, youth, leisure, and cultural services.	Playwork provision limited to paid-for out of school childcare provision.	Promote the role of playwork provision in addressing situations of play insufficiency.
Playwork provision offered by the local authority provides a rich play environment, as described in the Statutory Guidance	Amber	Amber	Existing provision provides a range of recreational activities to children, with initiatives like Activity Pods in schools demonstrating approaches to creating rich play environments.	Few services formally labelled as playwork; limited open access provision.	Embed playwork principles in service design. Develop shared quality standards and provide support and training to partners.
The local authority ensures that partners offering playwork provision are supported to offer rich play environments, as described in the Statutory Guidance	Amber	Amber	Partner organisations provide a wide range of recreational activities.	Limited guidance or monitoring for play quality across third sector providers.	Develop shared quality standards and provide support and training to partners.
Staffed playwork provision that the local authority provides meets the regulatory requirements and the Welsh Government's National Minimum	Amber	Amber	Regulated early years settings meet CIW and NMS standards through regular monitoring.		Ensure all commissioned services meet NMS and embed quality indicators in contracts.

Standards (NMS) for regulated childcare for children up to the age of 12 years.					
Staffed playwork provision that the local authority funds meets the regulatory requirements and NMS	Green	Amber	Services funded via Families First or Early Help are expected to meet registration standards.		As above.
Staffed playwork provision that the local authority's partners provide meets the regulatory requirements and NMS	Green	Amber	Commissioned services comply with safeguarding and insurance requirements.	Strengthen clarity on how standards align with playwork principles.	Review contracts to reflect playwork and play sufficiency frameworks.
Staffed playwork provision that is not registered under the Child Minding and Day Care Regulations is supported to ensure staff suitability and quality of opportunities for children to play.	N/a	Amber	Unregistered projects like Active 4 Life , Youth Hub, Wellbeing days and Discovery Days developed using co-design approaches.	frameworks for play in place.	Develop shared quality standards and provide support and training to partners.
Staffed playwork provision across the local authority works to a recognised quality assurance programme.	Green	Amber	Play included as a focus in QA processes for Early Years settings.	No borough-wide QA framework specific to playwork or supervised play provision.	Introduce a light touch play-based QA framework for staffed provision.
Settings assessed as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSAs) have been assessed in respect of the quality of play opportunities they provide and offer.	N/a	Amber	Play included as a focus in QA processes for Early Years settings.	Limited focus on the quality of play experiences of environments offered beyond early years provision.	Introduce a light touch play-based QA framework for staffed provision including childcare.
Local authority sport, physical activity, and active recreation plans are contributing to increasing access to play and recreational activities.	Green	Green	Comprehensive offered including Active 4 Life programme, leisure services and sports-based sessions.	Programmes often framed as physical activity and wellbeing	Ensure recreational offer include informal and play-based sessions.
The sports agenda contributes to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children.	Green	Green	Comprehensive offer via schools, Halo Leisure and the Urdd, as well as other community groups.		Provide playwork training to staff facilitating recreational, sports based and cultural activities if appropriate

The cultural and arts agenda contributes to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children.	Amber	Green	Awen Trust offers comprehensive variety of cultural opportunities including play-based opportunities for young children.		Provide playwork training to staff facilitating recreational, sports based and cultural activities if appropriate
The Local Authority Youth Service provides for children's opportunities for leisure and association.	Amber	Green	Youth Network includes broad mix of universal and targeted leisure; youth hubs support free choice.		Introduced playwork provision for children in middle childhood.
The playwork workforce in regulated provision is supported to achieve the qualification level required by the Welsh Government's National Minimum Standards (NMS) for regulated childcare for children up to the age of 12 years.	N/a	Green	Flying Start and CSA-registered providers work toward qualification compliance; Early Years QA tracks workforce.	Playwork-specific qualifications not consistently prioritised across settings.	Promote playwork qualifications as part of broader workforce development.
The playwork workforce in unregistered provision has access to training and qualifications in playwork.	N/a	Red	Staff in community projects often bring play and playwork based experience from previous roles.	Limited access to playwork training or qualifications beyond registered childcare.	Promote playwork qualifications as part of broader workforce development.
The Local authority has a staff development budget	Amber	Red	Early Years and Families First budgets support some CPD; occasional play training sessions delivered.	No dedicated or protected budget for play or playwork development.	Secure training funds and promote cross-sector access to play CPD.
There is a comprehensive range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities available for playworkers in the area.	Amber	Red	Practitioners from leisure, youth, and childcare report strong interest in play-based CPD.	Limited access to playwork training or qualifications beyond registered childcare.	Promote CPD opportunities and partnerships to widen access to formal and informal learning.
Playwork is included within local Workforce Development strategies.	Amber	Red	Playwork discussed within Early Years and Youth workforce forums.	Playwork not explicitly named in formal workforce strategies.	Promote playwork training and qualifications in workforce development
Family support initiatives provide up to date information and support for parents to enable them to support their children to play.	Amber	Amber	Family Information Service and Family support teams offer advice on parenting and promotion of available activities.	Limited strategic approach to the promotion play sufficiency and children's right to play.	Promote coordinated play messaging and access routes for parents and carers.

Early years and Flying Start plans and services recognise the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich opportunities to play for younger children.	Green	Green	Strong focus on play in early years provision including Flying Start settings.		Ensure high-quality outdoor spaces and regular playwork CPD for Flying Start staff.
--	-------	-------	--	--	---

Additional comments

Playwork provision and the playwork workforce

Bridgend has historically supported a broader network of playwork provision, including open access community playschemes and after-school clubs led by qualified playworkers. However, 3rd sector opportunities do exist but are limited. Where playworkers are employed, it tends to be in out of school childcare but here again capacity has reduced as families have moved away from paid-for childcare arrangements.

Where playwork principles are in evidence - such as in inclusive programmes either internally or external community-led initiatives like the Caerau doorstep activity scheme - they are often embedded within broader wellbeing or support services. This dilution of playwork identity and practice represents a gap in Bridgend's play sufficiency landscape. This is particularly significant in areas of higher deprivation where community safety concerns are likely to limit children's freedom to play. Playwork has a distinctive role to play in overcoming such barriers.

With few settings employing qualified playworkers, opportunities for professional development, mentoring, and skill-sharing have diminished. This has implications not only for playwork but also for related sectors - including childcare, youth work, and family support - where playwork-informed practice could add value. Furthermore, as in the early years and childcare sectors, staffing challenges (including low pay, limited hours, and a lack of career pathways), further constrain the workforce, even where there is interest and willingness to embed playwork values.

Nonetheless, there is a clear appetite among professionals to build play expertise and opportunities to make greater use of playwork principles across non-playwork settings. Staff in schools, youth services, leisure, and early years settings have expressed interest in training on play theory, playwork principles, and risk-benefit assessments. Furthermore, many of the approaches already used in these services reflect key playwork values (such as supporting voluntary engagement, fostering independence, and creating flexible, child-led

environments) even if staff do not identify as playworkers. Making these links more explicit could help raise awareness of playwork practice and its relevance to a wider workforce. However, playwork qualifications are currently limited to the out of school childcare sector.

Moving forward, there is an opportunity for Bridgend to review its playwork offer and consider how playwork principles and practice could be more clearly supported through training, and partnership delivery. Strengthening the visibility of playwork and embedding its ethos in broader provision could help ensure that children have access to rich, child-led play experiences, even where dedicated playwork settings are not available.

School holiday provision

A range of services have traditionally been delivered to support children's play and recreation during school holidays. Currently this includes the Active 4 Life programme which provides free or low-cost holiday playschemes in targeted areas, including Maesteg, Caerau, Garw Valley, Betws, Central Bridgend, Brackla, Pencoed, and Porthcawl as well as the URDD providing a number of geographical opportunities. . These programmes combine physical activity with fun and social engagement, helping to reduce inequalities in access to recreation. However, the ongoing delivery of these initiatives remains precarious due to reliance on external grant funding including contributions from Town and Community Council. Food and Fun holiday enrichment schemes have also been delivered by schools in deprived communities, addressing food insecurity whilst also providing recreational opportunities during the summer break. However Schools have also struggled to deliver Food and Fun schemes due to the availability of staff during school holidays, The Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2025-26 includes a commitment to enlarge this programme.. The Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programmes (until their funding ceased) also offered free access to diverse activities including sport, circus skills, creative workshops, animal therapy, and water-based play.

Inclusive and targeted provision

Bridgend demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive and targeted provision, with initiatives across youth work, leisure, cultural services, early years, and family support that focus on reaching children most at risk of missing out on social opportunities due to disability, disadvantage, or caring responsibilities. A key examples are Wellbeing days, youth hub and discovery days , which offers bespoke, co-designed sessions for disabled children and young people with complex needs. These events, delivered with support from social services, are tailored to individual preferences using 'All About Me' plans and include activities such as adapted swimming, craft, cooking, and outdoor play in accessible venues. Care-experienced children and young carers also benefit from dedicated group sessions, holiday

provision, and supervised recreational activities, often delivered in partnership with children and families services and community organisations. In addition, the council provides Leisure Access Cards to children and families known to social services, supporting free or subsidised access to Halo Leisure centres. Staff across youth hubs and cultural venues are briefed and trained to foster inclusive, welcoming environments for children with a wide range of needs and backgrounds, helping to ensure that inclusivity is embedded as a core strength of Bridgend's supervised play offer.

Welsh-medium provision

The Urdd plays a valuable role in promoting recreational play opportunities for children and young people in Bridgend through the medium of Welsh funding through external funding via BCBC. It delivers a range of regular after-school and holiday-time sports clubs, providing accessible and enjoyable physical activity in a culturally and linguistically supportive environment. These clubs offer opportunities to participate in games, team sports, and active play while reinforcing Welsh language use in informal, social contexts. The Urdd's provision supports both Welsh-medium pupils and those learning Welsh as a second language, helping to create inclusive, bilingual play environments. There are also plans to expand this offer further by introducing toddler sessions and swimming classes, ensuring that Welsh-medium play and recreation opportunities are available from an early age. In addition to its direct delivery, the Urdd's presence helps normalise the use of Welsh in leisure and play settings, contributing to broader goals around language revitalisation and cultural identity.

Early years services

Early years services in Bridgend provide some of the most consistent and well-embedded supervised play opportunities in the county borough. Delivered across both council-managed and commissioned settings, play is central to early years provision - not only as a developmental tool but as a right and daily experience for young children.

The core offer includes council-run and funded early education for 3-year-olds, Flying Start settings in eligible areas, registered childcare providers (including day nurseries, Cylchoedd Meithrin, playgroups, and childminders), and Language and Play programmes. Across these services, play is used to promote communication, emotional development, motor skills, and social learning, with outdoor play seen as a core part of the daily routine.

Flying Start settings operate in Bridgend's most disadvantaged communities and prioritise access to play-rich learning environments for children under four. These settings typically have well-developed outdoor play spaces and trained staff who deliver play-based learning in

line with the Curriculum for Wales and Foundation Phase ethos. These spaces often incorporate loose parts, natural materials, and sensory elements, offering young children opportunities for exploration and discovery.

In addition to formal settings, the Language and Play team delivers targeted support to families in Flying Start areas. Sessions take place in family centres and community venues and are often co-delivered with health visitors and family support workers. These sessions use play as a vehicle for family bonding, language development, and early intervention. Activities are inclusive and adaptable, with sessions incorporating music, movement, messy play, and storytelling.

The local authority also delivers training to early years staff on play theory and practice, including risk-benefit approaches and outdoor learning. Observational follow-ups are used to support reflective practice and ensure that play remains central to pedagogy and daily routines. Capital funding has been used to support outdoor play improvements, including surfacing and fencing upgrades in eligible settings. One identified strength is the requirement for applicants to explain how outdoor play and risk-taking will be supported when applying for capital funding - a clear signal that the council values play as a priority.

However, there are areas for development. While early years staff understand the importance of play, engagement with the broader Play Sufficiency Duty has been limited. Play is often framed in terms of learning outcomes rather than as a right in its own terms. Workforce shortages, staff turnover, and concerns about professional recognition remain ongoing challenges in the sector and risk undermining the sustainability of play-rich early years environments.

Out-of-school provision for under-fives - such as holiday clubs for nursery-aged children - is limited and not consistently available across the borough. This limits access to supervised settings for working families outside of term time. In addition, while Flying Start services are highly targeted, families in non-Flying Start areas may not have the same access to supported play sessions, particularly if they live in more rural areas.

Overall, early years services in Bridgend deliver high-quality, play-centred provision for young children, particularly in areas of deprivation. Strengthening links between these services and the broader play sufficiency framework would open up opportunities for joint training, shared planning, and more family-focused engagement, which would in turn support a more consistent approach to supporting children's play across all age groups.

Youth services

Supervised provision for older children in Bridgend is delivered through a strong network of partners coordinated under the Bridgend Youth Network, a borough-wide strategic and operational forum that brings together statutory and third-sector organisations involved in youth support. This collaborative approach enables a wide and flexible offer for 11- to 17-year-olds, combining universal youth work, targeted support, and informal recreational opportunities. The network is led by the local authority's youth service but includes delivery by organisations such as Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, Valleys Kids, KPC Youth & Community, and YMCA Bridgend.

The council's youth service plays a central role within this partnership, delivering a mix of centre-based youth work, outreach sessions, and school-linked provision. Youth workers create supportive, inclusive environments for informal interaction, creative expression, and social play. Sessions are designed to be responsive to young people's interests and needs, with a focus on empowerment and voluntary participation — both of which align closely with play sufficiency principles.

A flagship feature of the offer is the network of inclusive youth hubs, delivered in partnership with Halo Leisure. These spaces provide safe, welcoming environments where young people can access sports and games equipment, informal recreational activities, and wellbeing support.

The youth service and its partners also contribute to seasonal supervised provision, particularly during school holidays. This includes activities delivered through the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programmes (prior to their discontinuation), which offered free access to a wide range of experiences including climbing, circus skills, arts workshops, and social events. Many of these sessions were staffed by youth workers and community leaders and were delivered in community halls, leisure centres, and public outdoor spaces.

While this partnership model is a strength, access remains uneven across the borough. Provision is generally stronger in urban areas such as Bridgend town, Maesteg, and Porthcawl, while communities in the Llynfi, Ogmore, and Garw Valleys have fewer options and limited outreach. Transport continues to be a barrier for young people in rural areas, particularly outside of school hours.

The youth sector also faces workforce challenges, including difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified youth workers, especially in part-time roles. Many partner organisations operate on short-term funding cycles, limiting their ability to sustain provision year-round or invest in long-term relationship building with young people.

Despite these constraints, both BCBC Youth Services and the Bridgend Youth Network offers a strong foundation for developing play sufficiency for older children. It brings together a diverse set of partners, shares expertise, and supports flexible, community-based provision that reflects the interests and lived realities of young people. Strengthening the links between this network and the broader play sufficiency framework - including data sharing, joint planning, and shared outcomes - would help ensure that teenagers' right to play, leisure, and informal social space is recognised and supported across the system.

Leisure services

Leisure services in Bridgend play a significant role in delivering supervised recreational opportunities for children, contributing directly to the play sufficiency offer. The majority of these services are delivered through Halo Leisure, a charitable trust commissioned by BCBC to manage the county's leisure centres and swimming pools,. Halo operates in partnership with council teams and third-sector organisations, offering a blend of structured and semi-structured recreation opportunities that are open to all, with targeted access for vulnerable groups.

A key feature of Halo's contribution to play sufficiency is its provision of inclusive holiday activity programmes funded by town and community councils , often run from leisure centres and sports facilities during school breaks. These programmes include multi-sport sessions, swimming, climbing, games, and creative activities, with many of them designed to be accessible to children with protected characteristics. Halo also supports inclusive youth hubs for 8–25-year-olds, where children and young people can engage in social and recreational activities in a supervised and supportive environment.

Access to these services is supported through various mechanisms. Leisure Access Cards are available for children and families known to Social Services, allowing free or subsidised use of facilities. In previous years, Halo has also been a key delivery partner in Welsh Government-funded initiatives such as Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing, offering free play and recreational activities to large numbers of children and young people across the county borough.

In addition to centre-based provision, Halo supports schools through the delivery of swimming programmes, balance bike training, and active travel awareness sessions, helping to embed physical activity and mobility skills in early education. These services, while not always labelled as “play,” form part of a wider ecology of supervised, recreational, child-led activities that contribute to children's wellbeing and everyday enjoyment of life.

Despite these strengths, some barriers remain. Access to leisure services is more challenging for children in rural or valley communities, particularly where transport options are limited or where there is no local leisure facility. While Halo has a strong record of inclusion, cost may still be a factor for families not eligible for targeted support.

Nonetheless, Bridgend's partnership with Halo Leisure is a core strength of its supervised provision offer. It provides a scalable, inclusive model that blends recreational infrastructure with a commitment to equity and access. With continued support and closer alignment to play sufficiency planning - including promotion, outreach, and co-design with children - leisure services have the potential to reach even more children and help fill gaps in accessible, high-quality supervised play provision across the borough.

Cultural services

Cultural services in Bridgend provide a distinctive and often under-recognised contribution to supervised play provision, offering creative, social, and exploratory opportunities that are especially valued by families with younger children. The council's strategic partnership with Awen Cultural Trust is central to this area of provision. Awen operates a network of libraries, arts venues, and cultural programmes across the borough, and its approach to delivery blends informal learning, community development, and inclusive play opportunities. Awen Trust also manages the Bryngarw Country Park, a valuable asset in respect of destination spaces for play.

Libraries in Bridgend are explicitly designed to be welcoming, family-friendly spaces. Weekly sessions such as Bounce and Rhyme, storytimes, and craft workshops are well-attended and free of charge. These supervised sessions create regular opportunities for babies, toddlers, and young children to engage in social, creative, and sensory play in a safe, staffed environment. In some libraries, children are actively encouraged to move, explore, and interact with books and play materials, breaking with more traditional models of library behaviour.

Awen's newer library spaces have been designed with play in mind. The Maesteg Town Hall library, for example, incorporates physical play features such as stairs and climbing walls, as well as informal seating, floor cushions, and interactive installations. Staff are trained to support children's engagement in these spaces and to support parents and carers in using the environment playfully. Libraries also serve as safe, accessible spaces for families during school holidays and at weekends, particularly in areas where access to other community facilities may be limited.

Beyond libraries, Awen's theatre and arts programmes also provide play-adjacent experiences, including supervised youth theatre, holiday drama workshops, and participatory cultural events. While these activities are often structured, they retain a strong element of creative exploration, improvisation, and social interaction - aligning closely with the wider goals of play sufficiency.

While these services are not always identified as part of the supervised play landscape, they meet the criteria in important ways: they are staffed, free or low cost, offer regular and structured opportunities, and are open to all. They are also particularly well-used by families with young children and those seeking quieter, more creative forms of play.

Challenges remain in terms of expanding provision for older children, ensuring equity of access across the borough, and embedding cultural services more explicitly within the play sufficiency framework. Nonetheless, Bridgend's partnership with Awen Cultural Trust provides a strong model for how cultural infrastructure can support play sufficiency, especially when delivered through a community development lens.

Alignment of services with play sufficiency

While Bridgend offers a wide range of supervised provision across sectors, there is currently no formal, joined-up strategy that ensures services are consistently aligned with the goals of the Play Sufficiency Duty. Opportunities for play are embedded within early years, youth, leisure, and cultural services, this is often as a secondary outcome or under a different policy label - such as wellbeing, enrichment, inclusion, or diversionary activity .

Many council services contribute meaningfully to play sufficiency, whether through direct provision (such as inclusive youth hubs or library play sessions), or through enabling access (such as free leisure cards, outreach transport, or social prescribing). However, these contributions are not systematically coordinated or evaluated against the Play Sufficiency Duty. There is no shared set of play outcomes or reporting framework that allows partners to reflect on how their work supports children's play in a consistent way.

This disconnect is not a reflection of disinterest or resistance. Across all focus groups (including early years, youth services, health and leisure, and cultural services) professionals expressed a strong commitment to supporting children's play and welcomed the idea of greater alignment. However, most had not previously been involved in play sufficiency planning or seen their work as directly contributing to it. Several noted that clearer language, shared planning tools, and more opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration would help them engage more intentionally with play sufficiency objectives.

There are promising examples of local services beginning to recognise their role within the broader play agenda. Similarly, the use of capital grant criteria requiring early years providers to demonstrate how they support outdoor and risky play shows how targeted funding can help embed play-based objectives into service planning.

The Bridgend Youth Network, Bridgend Inclusive Network, Bridgend Young Carers Network and partnerships with Halo Leisure and Awen Cultural Trust also demonstrate the potential of a strategic, commissioned approach to delivering play sufficiency through external providers. However stronger links to play sufficiency outcomes should be highlighted and reported on.

Better alignment will not only enhance the reach and quality of supervised provision but also ensure that play is understood and delivered as a shared responsibility by all those working to support children's health and wellbeing.

Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance

Monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance of supervised play provision in Bridgend vary significantly across sectors, with some areas demonstrating well-established systems and others relying more on informal feedback and short-term reporting requirements.

In early years provision, robust quality assurance is embedded through national regulatory frameworks. All registered childcare and early education settings — including those delivering Flying Start — are subject to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration and inspection. Settings working with the local authority also engage with internal quality monitoring processes. Observational visits, practitioner training, and capital grant applications are often used as points of dialogue about how well settings are supporting play. However, the focus is primarily on learning outcomes, health and safety, or developmental milestones not necessarily an outcome to be evaluated in its own right.

In leisure and cultural services, quality assurance is typically built around user satisfaction, participation numbers, and service-specific targets (e.g. number of swims, library visits, or event attendance). Halo Leisure and Awen Cultural Trust collect regular data and conduct public feedback exercises. While some partners recognise the importance of qualitative feedback - especially from children and families - there is currently no shared framework or common indicators for assessing the quality of play experiences in supervised settings.

Youth services, particularly those working with vulnerable groups, tend to collect outcome data linked to wellbeing, confidence, and engagement. Many third-sector organisations report on participation and inclusion outcomes not necessarily around children's experiences

of play. There are examples of good practice, such as youth-led evaluations and feedback mechanisms used in youth hubs or creative projects, but these are locally specific and not yet integrated into a broader system for play evaluation.

For seasonal and grant-funded provision (such as Active 4 Life, youth Hub, wellbeing days, or Summer of Fun programmes) monitoring tends to be short-term and output-focused, capturing numbers, location, and broad demographics. While this data is useful for demonstrating reach and targeting, it does not routinely capture children's experiences or assess the quality and play value of provision. Feedback from families and practitioners is collected in some cases.

Overall, Bridgend has many of the pieces needed for effective monitoring and quality assurance, but these are dispersed and sector-specific. There is currently no shared tool or process for assessing the sufficiency, inclusivity, or quality of supervised play provision across the borough. This makes it difficult to evaluate progress against the Play Sufficiency Duty or to understand where gaps in quality, access, or impact might exist.

Developing a light-touch, flexible framework for evaluating supervised play across sectors could support more consistent learning, accountability, and improvement - without overburdening providers.

Agreed actions

Actions have been prioritised by focusing on those that are achievable within existing structures and financial constraints while offering the greatest potential for impact. The emphasis has been placed on actions that would help to develop a strategic, collaborative, and cross-cutting approach to play sufficiency, whilst maintaining existing assets and services that support play. Many of these actions address multiple aspects of the four themes covered in this assessment but each has only be identified once to avoid duplication.

- Embed play sufficiency objectives in planning across early years, education, youth, leisure, and cultural services.
- Develop a light touch quality assurance framework for supervised provision with clear principles, quality standards, and expectations for inclusive, child-led play.
- Support the playwork qualification L2APP to staff across the youth, early years, leisure, and cultural sectors.

- Continue and scale inclusive, equity-focused programmes linked to 3rd sector networks, youth Hub, wellbeing days, Leisure Access Cards,

Theme: Policy synergy, engagement, advocacy and information

This theme relates to:

Matter F: Measures used to promote access to play, including the provision of information, publicity and events

Matter G: Training opportunities for the play workforce

Matter H: The level of community engagement and participation

Matter I: The extent to which other policies of a local authority take into account the need to enhance play opportunities for children

To what extent does the local authority meet the criteria?

Criteria	Previous PSA RAG Status*	Current PSA RAG Status*	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	What would address the shortfalls?
There is a clearly identified section on the local authority website, which gives information about opportunities to play as described in the Statutory Guidance (play areas, playwork provision, clubs and their accessibility).	Green	Green	'Play in Bridgend County Borough' webpage	Limited wider, proactive engagement strategy aimed at changing perceptions	Develop publicity campaigns aimed at promoting children's right to play.
Information on access to play opportunities and contact for support if required.	Green	Green	Website provides information about available spaces and services for play	No clear contact for play-specific support or inclusion advice.	Include dedicated contact points and guidance for accessing inclusive play opportunities.
Events which encourage opportunities to play and events for children and families are publicised and supported.	Green	Amber	Partners such as Awen , Halo, 3 rd sector networks run family events; community festivals sometimes include play.	focused events are regularly organised, however Play is not promoted enough	Support play within community events showcasing national Playday with cross-sector coordination.
Information which contributes to positive community attitudes to play is publicised.	Green	Amber	Some messaging via wellbeing and anti-poverty agendas indirectly support play.	Limited borough-wide messaging campaign to	Develop a strategic communications plan

APPENDIX 1

				promote positive attitudes to play.	highlighting the benefits of play.
Information and support for parents to help them encourage their children to play is publicised.	Green	Amber	Family support teams promote play through early years and youth work activities.	Information to parents can be fragmented and not widely promoted.	Create borough-wide parent-friendly guidance on supporting play and share via schools and health visitors.
The local authority engages with the media to encourage the positive portrayal of children playing in the local area.	Green	Amber	Media engagement noted in pilot projects such as Activity Pods in schools.	Media strategy not embedded across play initiatives.	Engage press and local media to tell positive stories and highlight children's right to play.
A comprehensive training needs analysis for the play workforce, as defined in the Statutory Guidance, has been undertaken.	Amber	Amber	Training needs identified through PSA; appetite for development noted across services.	Strengthen play-based training for the wider play workforce.	Providing CPD based on the findings of this assessment to departments and partners with links to play sufficiency.
There is a variety of learning and development opportunities offered to staff so that they can consider their role in supporting play.	Amber	Amber	Some opportunities exist via Flying Start, Early Years, and Family Support programmes.	Not all staff have access to learning about their role in play.	Broaden play-related CPD to all frontline professionals working with children.
There is a comprehensive range of continued professional development opportunities for a range of professionals who work with children.	Amber	Amber	A variety of CPD opportunities are available to professional who work with children.	Strengthen cohesive CPD programme for multi-agency staff linked to play sufficiency.	Providing CPD based on the findings of this assessment to departments and partners with links to play sufficiency.
Play sufficiency and other training awareness sessions are available for professionals and decision makers whose work impacts on children's opportunities to play.	Amber	Amber	Understanding Play Sufficiency workshop delivered to officers involved in this assessment.	Play sufficiency awareness to be embedded in induction or leadership training.	Deliver play sufficiency awareness workshops to officers with responsibilities that link to the Duty.
Initiatives to engage relevant groups in enhancing play opportunities for children in its area, are promoted.	Green	Amber	Much of the staffed provision available is informed by co-design approaches and service user feedback. CAT	Limited hyper-local research with children and collaborative neighbourhood level planning for play.	Develop a collaborative model of planning for play based on research with children.

APPENDIX 1

			processes encourage engagement of community groups.		
Community engagement is promoted in: Making space available and suitable for play	Green	Amber	CAT processes support community engagement in management and development of playable spaces. Some Town and Community Councils actively involved in providing for play.	Greater joined up approach to planning for play at a localised level	Develop neighbourhood-level planning model including community voices.
Community engagement is promoted in: Organising play events	N/a	Amber	Community events often include playful activities.	Play is often a secondary component of broader events.	Support community-led play events and promote through schools.
Community engagement is promoted in: Positive attitudes towards children and play	N/a	Amber	Third sector partners including , 3 rd sector networks, youth service, Halo Leisure, Awen Trust and the Urdd promote child-friendly approaches and spaces.	No specific campaign to shift community norms about children in public spaces.	Launch messaging initiative to promote positive intergenerational attitudes towards play
Community engagement is promoted in: Training on the importance of play	N/a	Red	Training embedded in some early years and community safety projects.	Training on play's value for volunteers and community leaders not routinely available.	Offer community-based play training sessions, including online resources.
There is a named person on the Local Public Service Board who champions children's play	Amber	Amber	Lead elected member for play confirmed in 2024	Play not yet consistently championed across all board-level forums.	Promote role and embed champion's involvement in service planning.
The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to, and are incorporated within, the Well-being Plan	Amber	Amber	Play is referenced in Corporate Delivery Plan and supported through strategic aims.	Play sufficiency not yet explicitly embedded in Wellbeing Plan delivery mechanisms.	Include PSA actions and outcomes in formal Wellbeing Plan updates.
The local Public Health Team supports play and play sufficiency	N/a	Amber	Public health officers involved in PSA process and support neighbourhood play.	Play not yet a consistent priority in public health initiatives.	Include play sufficiency in Public Health Board priorities and planning frameworks.

There is a named person on the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) who champions children's play	N/a	Red	RPB links discussed during PSA process; potential champions identified.	No confirmed named play representative on the RPB.	Nominate and support a dedicated RPB play champion.
The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to, and are incorporated within the work of, the RPB	N/a	Amber	Play not yet embedded in formal RPB frameworks but acknowledged as relevant.	PSA and action plan not routinely incorporated into regional plans.	Integrate PSA outcomes into joint strategic needs assessments and RPB delivery.
Plans to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences recognise the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich play opportunities	Green	Amber	Some recognition of the links between play and ACEs in Early Help and Resilience programmes.	ACEs planning doesn't explicitly include play-based solutions.	Include play provision in ACEs resilience frameworks and programme design.

Additional comments

Strategic commitment to the Play Sufficiency Duty

Bridgend County Borough Council has made a formal and public commitment to supporting play sufficiency, most notably through its June 2024 Cabinet and Corporate Management Board approval of a cross-departmental, One Council approach to fulfilling the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty. This decision marked a significant shift in how play is framed within the council - moving away from a primarily compliance-driven reporting process and toward a more strategic, whole-system response that recognises play as central to children's wellbeing.

The Cabinet and Corporate Management Board report outlined a series of commitments, including the nomination of a lead elected member to champion children's right to play and the establishment of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group to coordinate activity across departments. The report also acknowledged that, despite pockets of good practice, play sufficiency had not previously been embedded in the council's core systems, and that more work was needed to ensure children's right to play is fully recognised and supported across planning, delivery, and evaluation.

In approving these recommendations, the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board signalled that play is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration across department's included but not limited to social services & wellbeing, education, housing, health, transport, leisure, planning, and community development. The report explicitly linked the Play Sufficiency Duty to wider council priorities, including

health and wellbeing, inclusion, and place-based regeneration, helping to position play as a cross-cutting issue rather than a stand-alone service.

While the high-level intent is clear, implementation of these recommendations has been affected by transition of a new group manager for Prevention & wellbeing with some of the agreed actions yet to be realised. Nevertheless, the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board decision provides a strong policy foundation for change. It has created the mandate for increased cross-departmental collaboration, better integration of play into service planning, and more consistent engagement with external partners. It also offers a valuable lever for strengthening advocacy, influencing wider policy development, and aligning investment decisions with the needs and rights of children.

This commitment is further supported by positive language in the Corporate Plan 2023-28 and more recently the Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26, which includes a specific reference to play sufficiency. This latest update of the delivery plan is more focussed than previous versions with a reduced number of objectives, aims and performance measures. Even so, play features prominently, with a number of other commitments that align with the findings of this assessment that would also support play sufficiency. The table below highlights specific strengths directly relating to play sufficiency:

Wellbeing Objective One - A prosperous place with thriving communities		
Aims	Performance Indicators	Commitments / Projects
1.2 Protect landscapes and open spaces	DCO23.07 Number of green flag parks and green spaces (COMM)	1.2.1 Deliver projects such as woodland enhancement, develop and protect our natural environment in partnership with our communities and key stakeholders as part of our Bridgend Biodiversity Plan (COMM)
1.6 Provide opportunities for culture, leisure, and play	DCO23.10 Number of play areas that have been refurbished (COMM)	1.6.2 Continue the children's play areas refurbishment programme and make sure inclusive play equipment is provided to allow opportunities for all. (COMM) 1.6.3 Enlarge the Food and Fun Programme for summer 2025 (EEYYP) 1.6.4 Develop whole Council action plan and networks to support the submission of the Play Sufficiency Assessment to Welsh Government. (SSWB)
Wellbeing Objective Two - Creating modern, seamless public services		
2.1 Improving how we engage with people, listening to views & acting on them.	CED59 Level of engagement (Welsh / English) across consultations	2.1.1 Improve how we communicate and engage with residents, including children and young people to help us become more customer focused and responsive. (CEX) 2.1.2 Improve the way we gather and use resident views (CEX)

		2.1.3 Improve the way we gather and use staff views (CEX)
2.4 Improve partnership working with partners, the third sector and Town and Community Councils	Number of children and young adults supported during school holidays (SSWB)	2.4.3 Work co-productively with our communities to develop their own solutions and become more resilient. (SSWB)

Leadership and partnership working

Responsibility for leading play sufficiency work in Bridgend is currently situated within the Prevention and Wellbeing directorate. Day-to-day coordination of the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment has been supported by commission partner Ludicology. External resources has been a key enabler for progress on several key actions identified in the previous Play Sufficiency Action Plan.

In a short space of time, the Development Officer has led work on a number of important strategic initiatives, including:

- Surveying and re-engaging schools using the Activity Pods programme, brokering a long-term restocking model with Plan B and Groundwork Trust.
- Drafting and coordinating interdepartmental collaboration on procedures for the community use of school grounds, including input from legal, health and safety, and insurance teams.
- Advancing work on a policy and framework for temporary play street closures.
- Supporting innovative school-based projects to improve breaktime environments in secondary schools, such as the student-led pilot at Maesteg.

This work provides clear evidence that even modest investment in play sufficiency leadership can have a significant impact.

There was a consensus among those involved in this assessment that maintaining a identify resources is essential to advancing play sufficiency in Bridgend. Without dedicated capacity, there is a risk that momentum is lost, especially in relation to partnership development, cross-departmental collaboration, and strategic planning.

Another barrier to coordinated leadership is the absence of a shared performance framework. While individual services collect relevant data, there are currently no agreed outcomes or indicators that allow departments and partners to evaluate their collective contribution to the Play Sufficiency Duty. Developing a light-touch, borough-wide framework would help link delivery across sectors, support accountability, and provide a clearer rationale for joint investment.

Awareness of the Play Sufficiency Duty also remains variable across the local authority. Many officers have had limited exposure to the Duty and few opportunities to understand its implications for their work. Engagement in this year's assessment process was described as the first time some professionals had been invited into a cross-sector conversation about play. Participants expressed a strong appetite for learning and welcomed the idea of further development sessions, training opportunities, and clear guidance on how their services could contribute to play sufficiency.

There is also untapped potential in developing a collaborative, neighbourhood-level approach to play planning. While some examples of good local practice exist, there is currently no framework for mapping and addressing play needs at a community scale. Supporting neighbourhood-level planning - with involvement from Town and Community Councils, schools, community groups, and families - would help tailor provision to local conditions and ensure that gaps in access, safety, or inclusion are addressed more effectively.

In summary, Bridgend has taken important steps toward building the leadership infrastructure needed to deliver on the Play Sufficiency Duty. To build on this progress, the council will need to secure resource to raise awareness of the Duty across all departments, develop shared planning and performance tools, and foster more localised approaches to co-producing play sufficiency.

Participation of children in planning and decision-making

Children's right to be heard in matters affecting them is a core principle of the Play Sufficiency Duty and a requirement under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Bridgend, while children's voices have informed the delivery of specific projects and services, there is currently no systematic mechanism for ensuring their participation in the planning and evaluation of opportunities for play across the borough.

Recent projects have demonstrated the value of listening to children's experiences. The Promoting Play in Secondary Schools pilot at Maesteg School, for example, was shaped by consultation with Year 7 and 8 pupils and led to tangible changes to the school breaktime

environment. Similarly, feedback from children and families has influenced decisions about youth hub, and wellbeing days. These examples show that when engagement takes place, it can directly shape provision in meaningful and responsive ways.

However, these engagements have tended to be project-specific and time-limited. The absence of a regular, borough-wide approach to gathering children's views means that the council currently lacks a robust understanding of how children and families experience play in their everyday lives, or how this varies across different communities and social groups.

There is a strong case for establishing a county-wide self-reporting survey for children and their caregivers, designed to assess the sufficiency of opportunities for play based on lived experience. Such a survey (like the version in the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Toolkit) could explore issues associated with time, space, permission and satisfaction, and could be repeated on a regular cycle to track progress over time. Embedding this into the council's engagement and planning frameworks would give children and families a clearer voice in shaping policy and provision.

In addition to large-scale survey work, there is also a need for hyperlocal research to understand how generalised issues - such as traffic, access to green space, or concerns about safety - play out in different neighbourhoods. This kind of place-based engagement is essential for understanding the realities of children's lives and identifying locally specific barriers or opportunities. Insights gathered through neighbourhood-level conversations, focus groups, or participatory mapping can inform more tailored, effective responses and support the development of play-friendly communities from the ground up.

To date, children's lived experiences have been largely absent from the strategic planning of play sufficiency in Bridgend. There is strong support from officers across services for changing this. Many participants in this year's assessment process expressed interest in co-production and called for new tools, frameworks, and support to help them engage meaningfully with children and families.

Play messaging, public information and promotion

Clear, consistent, and accessible messaging about children's right to play is an essential part of delivering on the Play Sufficiency Duty. It helps build public understanding, promotes a positive image of play in community spaces, and ensures that families are aware of the opportunities available to them. In Bridgend, however, there is currently no coordinated communications strategy dedicated to promoting play or supporting a more play-friendly culture among adults. Messaging remains fragmented, often delivered through individual services rather than as part of a wider, strategic narrative.

The local authority's official 'Play in Bridgend County Borough' webpage outlines a broad commitment to play sufficiency, showcasing a range of initiatives such as the Play for ALL initiative, volunteering opportunities, and the statutory requirement to carry out regular Play Sufficiency Assessments. It provides access to information about available spaces and services for play including playgrounds, beaches, nature reserves, libraries, leisure centres, and cultural venues, and signposts to key partners such as Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, and the Urdd.

Parents and carers play a pivotal role in enabling or restricting children's play, particularly in unsupervised community settings. Their attitudes toward safety, access, and social norms profoundly shape children's freedom to play. Evidence suggests that while many parents value outdoor play, their confidence is often undermined by concerns about traffic, antisocial behaviour, and lack of suitable local spaces. These concerns are particularly acute in areas of higher deprivation or where older children may be viewed negatively in public space.

At present, there is no borough-wide approach to understanding. Opportunities to involve parents in shaping local play policy are limited, and few families are likely to see themselves as partners in decision-making. The absence of a coherent public message makes it harder for residents, professionals, and elected members to recognise the importance of play or understand how local provision fits into a broader system of support for children's rights and wellbeing.

Play is promoted indirectly through communications from partner organisations (such as Halo Leisure's holiday activities, Awen's event marketing, or the Urdd's Welsh-medium sports clubs) but these are often service-specific, short-lived, and focused on programme uptake rather than on raising broader awareness of play's value. There is no consistent branding or shared language across services, and no coordinated use of council channels (such as newsletters, social media, or school communications) to highlight play as a shared priority.

Feedback gathered during this assessment reveals a strong appetite for more visible, joined-up messaging. Officers and partners have called for a shared communications plan, co-branded promotional materials, and accessible tools to help families navigate and understand the play offer. Suggestions include promoting children's right to play as part of wider wellbeing or anti-poverty campaigns; mapping supervised and informal opportunities; using social media and local media to share positive stories; and encouraging councillors to become visible champions for play in their communities.

There is also a critical role for messaging in challenging misconceptions (particularly around older children in public spaces) and in normalising everyday outdoor play as a vital part of community life. Campaigns that address concerns about risk, promote intergenerational tolerance, and highlight the benefits of child-led play could help shift public attitudes and strengthen community support.

Cross-sector policy alignment and advocacy

BCBC's overarching policy environment offers a strong foundation for supporting children's play, with a wide range of strategies demonstrating alignment with the principles of the Welsh Play Sufficiency Duty. However, beyond the Corporate Plan (discussed above), explicit recognition of play as a statutory responsibility remains limited, and there is a need to more clearly embed play sufficiency within the council's core planning, policy, and performance frameworks.

Planning policy provides some of the most robust levers for supporting play. The Local Development Plan (LDP) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Outdoor Recreation Facilities require developers to contribute to play provision and outline minimum standards based on Fields in Trust benchmarks. The Green Infrastructure Assessment (2022) further strengthens the case for integrating play with climate adaptation, biodiversity, and health promotion. The Play Sufficiency Duty is not referenced in these documents, with missed opportunities to develop policy that better aligns with children's actual experiences of playing.

Other strategies (such as the Biodiversity Duty Plan, the Community Safety Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan) align with play sufficiency goals in principle but again lack explicit commitments to children's play. Active travel investments, urban greening, community policing, and traffic management schemes all offer opportunities to improve access to safe, child-friendly environments. Yet without a directive to think about children's play, these benefits risk being under-recognised. For example, the Local Transport Plan outlines important improvements to active travel networks but does not address traffic as a barrier to play or include child-friendly design principles in its vision for future infrastructure.

Advocacy for play could also be strengthened within sector-specific strategies. The Children's Social Care Strategic Plan, Education and Early Years Directorate Plan, and Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan all reference wellbeing, inclusion, and children's rights, yet none explicitly reference play sufficiency.

The limited shared play-related indicators or outcomes across strategies further weakens alignment. Without common measures, different departments and partners cannot easily track their contribution to play sufficiency or coordinate efforts to address deficiencies. This limits

the council's ability to advocate for play as a shared responsibility and to integrate play-friendly approaches into the design of services, infrastructure, and neighbourhoods.

To improve policy alignment and strengthen advocacy for children's play, Bridgend could:

- Embed the Play Sufficiency Duty explicitly in all relevant corporate strategies and planning frameworks;
- Introduce shared outcomes and indicators that reflect children's access to time, space, and permission to play;
- Ensure new housing, transport, and regeneration initiatives assess and respond to children's lived experiences of play as part of placemaking plans;
- Promote stronger cross-sector collaboration, ensuring play is considered across services including planning, transport, social care, education, and climate strategies.

By making children's right to play a clearly visible and shared objective across policies and services, Bridgend can shift from fragmented support to a whole-system approach that places play at the heart of child and community wellbeing.

Agreed actions

Actions have been prioritised by focusing on those that are achievable within existing structures and financial constraints while offering the greatest potential for impact. The emphasis has been placed on actions that would help to develop a strategic, collaborative, and cross-cutting approach to play sufficiency, whilst maintaining existing assets and services that support play. Many of these actions address multiple aspects of the four themes covered in this assessment but each has only be identified once to avoid duplication.

- Implement the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board approved recommendations associated with developing a play champion, named officers for each Matter and an active Play Sufficiency Steering Group.
- Sustain a resource to coordinate cross-departmental action and oversee delivery of the play sufficiency action plan.
- Share findings from the 2025 PSA with elected members and heads of service across the local authority.

- Deliver the Play Wales course Understanding Play Sufficiency with named officers for each Matter and members of the Play Sufficiency Steering Group.
- Develop a public-facing document that articulates a shared vision for play sufficiency in Bridgend, based on research with children and clearly aligned with well-being goals, that sets out performance indicators to track progress and evaluate impact.
- Ensure that explicit connections and references are made to the local authority's Play Sufficiency Duty within all appropriate policies and strategies.
- Embed consideration of the Play Sufficiency Duty within equality impact assessment processes ensuring consideration is given to impacts on children's right to play.
- Promote community events celebrating national Playday and use this as a vehicle to raise public awareness around children's right to play.
- Facilitate cross-departmental and multi-agency workshops on the topics of planning for play



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Play Sufficiency Action Plan

Name of local authority: Bridgend County Borough Council

Name of responsible officer: Sophie Moore

Job title: Group Manager Prevention and Wellbeing

Completion date: 30th June 2025

Play Sufficiency 25-28 Play Action Plan

Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment to secure sufficient opportunities to play.

Proposed actions for the period of 01/07/25 to 30/06/28

Theme / Matters	Action to achieve sufficient play opportunities	Milestones	Resources needed	Funding source	Lead Person
Population [Matters A, B, E].	Continue to invest in inclusive and targeted provision, shaped by direct engagement with children who may experience additional barriers to play.	December 2026 March 2027 June 2028	Education, Early Years and Young People Management Information Childcare and Early Years Post 16 years Youth Services Social Services and Wellbeing Inclusive Programmes Young Carer Support Services Welsh Language Support 3 rd sector networks Town and community councils Chief Executives Data on children living in poverty, rural areas and disability Policy on opportunities that are charged for and those subsidised Records of no cost or low-cost provision	BCBC External	Beth Davies Neil Arbery Owen Shepherd Nicola Fedyszyn Zoe Edwards PAW - TBC
Places where children play	Continue capital investment in play areas, ensuring that children's views,	October 2026 September 2027 June 2028	Communities Open Spaces and Playgrounds Community Focused Schools	BCBC External	Jack Dangerfield, Louise Connolly Andrew Mason

[Matters C, F and I]	experiences and preferences inform the design and development of all designated spaces for play.		Community Asset Transfers Town and Community Council links Active Travel and Safe Routes Safer Streets/ Play Friendly Environments Reducing Transport Barriers Chief Executives		Kwaku Opoku-Addo Nicola Fedyszyn Zoe Edwards PAW - TBC
	Promote the use of best practice guidance from Play Wales when developing designated spaces for play.	March 2027	Web Platform. Supporting Information Event and Activity Promotions Advocacy and Impact Support for Communities/ Awareness Raising Cross sector resources Wellbeing Plan	BCBC External	Jack Dangerfield, Louise Connolly AWEN Town & Community Council
	Develop a publicity campaign to promote temporary play street closures and work opportunistically to support the delivery of resident-led initiatives.	October 2026 June 2028	AWEN Schools Activities and Assets Schools Walking and Cycling Guidance provided to Schools Local Development Plan Local Transport Plan Early Years and Flying Start Family Support Initiatives Adverse Childhood experiences Inter-generational Activity Health and Safety	BCBC External	Nicola Fedyszyn Zoe Edwards PAW - TBC
	Provide workshops on the Play Sufficiency Duty and the literature review Playing and Being Well as part of the annual suite of professional development opportunities	March 2027	Policy Learning & development	BCBC External	PAW - TBC

	available to school staff.				
Supervised provision [Matters D and G]	Embed play sufficiency objectives in planning, funding, and commissioning across early years, education, youth, leisure, and cultural services.	March 2027	Education Early Years and young People Childcare Standards Play Development Delivery Resources for Workforce Development Balancing Childcare and Play Skills Development Social Services and Wellbeing Sport Wales Activities/Programmes Healthy Living Partnership (Halo) Cultural Partnership (Awen) 3 rd Sector Networks Inclusive Opportunities (BCBC) Youth Opportunities (3rd Sector) Volunteering Policy	BCBC External	Beth Davies Neil Arbery Owen Shepherd Partners leads
Policy, engagement, advocacy and information [Matters F, G, H, I]	Implement Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) approved recommendations associated with developing a play champion, named officers for each Matter and an active Play Sufficiency Steering Group.	December 2026 March 2027	Cross Council resource Play Sufficiency Steering Group.	BCBC External	Sophie Moore Play Sufficiency Steering Group.

	Sustain a resource to coordinate cross-departmental action and oversee delivery of the play sufficiency action plan.		Cross Council resource Play Sufficiency Steering Group.	BCBC External	Play Sufficiency Steering Group.
	Share findings from the 2025 PSA with elected members and heads of service across the local authority.	October 2026	Cross Council resource Play Sufficiency Steering Group.	BCBC External	Play Sufficiency Steering Group.
	Deliver the Play Wales course Understanding Play Sufficiency with named officers for each Matter and members of the Play Sufficiency Steering Group.	June 2027 March 2028	Cross Council resource Securing and Developing the Workforce Play Wales	BCBC External	Play Sufficiency Steering Group
	Develop a public-facing document that articulates a shared vision for play sufficiency in Bridgend, based on research with children and clearly aligned with well-being goals, that sets out	March 2027	Cross sector resources Web Platform. Supporting Information Event and Activity Promotions Advocacy and Impact Support for Communities/ Awareness Raising Healthy Living Partnership (Halo) Cultural Partnership (Awen) 3 rd Sector Networks Inclusive Opportunities (BCBC)	BCBC External	Beth Davies Neil Arbery Owen Shepherd Nicola Fedyszyn Zoe Edwards PAW – TBC Jack Dangerfield, Louise Connolly Partner Leads

	performance indicators to track progress and evaluate impact.		Youth Opportunities (3rd Sector) Volunteers Town & Community Council Early Years and Flying Start Family Support BAVO Schools		
--	---	--	--	--	--

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	SCRUTINY BUDGET WORKING GROUP
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CHIEF OFFICER LEGAL, REGULATORY AND ELECTORAL SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Committee considered a Review of Scrutiny on 17 March 2025 and, subsequently on 9 April 2025, Council agreed changes to the structure, names and remit of Scrutiny Committees and the setting up of a Budget Working Group. Accordingly, as required by the Council's Constitution, Council approved the related amendments to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules within the Constitution and the size and Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at its Annual Meeting held on 14 May 2025.
Executive Summary:	The Committee considered a report on the Scrutiny Review and the options for scrutiny arrangements going forward on 17 March 2025. Subsequently, on 9 April 2025, Council agreed changes to the structure, names and remit of Scrutiny Committees and the setting up of a Budget Working Group. The Committee agreed a report on 24 July 2025 which presented details of the work undertaken in consultation with Scrutiny Chairs and the arrangements for the Scrutiny Budget Working Group. Following the implementation of the Scrutiny Budget Working Group arrangements delivered last year, the Scrutiny Chairs have reflected on the process and discussed proposed changes to some aspects of the process for this year. The changes were circulated to Group Leaders and Cabinet and Corporate Management Team for their views. This report is presented for consideration by the Committee of the proposed amendments to the process for this year.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Following the implementation of the agreed Scrutiny Budget Working Group (SBWG) process delivered for 2025-26, the Scrutiny Chairs have reflected on the process and discussed proposed changes to some aspects of the process for this year. The proposed amendments were circulated to Group Leaders, Cabinet Members and Corporate Management Team for their views.
- 1.2 The report presents the Committee with:
 - a. The Terms of Reference previously agreed in **Appendix 1**, for noting;
 - b. The proposed amendments to the SBWG process for this year in **Appendix 2**; and
 - c. The proposed amended structure of SBWG and draft outline of schedule of meetings in **Appendix 3**.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members may recall that previous scrutiny of the Budget process included a dedicated Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP), plus detailed scrutiny of the draft budget by each individual Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OVSC) who feed back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) to provide recommendations to Cabinet. This process resulted in an intense period of scrutiny in early January, which was resource intensive for officers and Members and there has been cross party feedback that the sessions are repetitive and overlap in subject matters.
- 2.2 On 9 April 2025, as part of its consideration of the Scrutiny Review, Council took the decision to allocate budget scrutiny exclusively to COSC and agreed that a working group be established with representatives from all scrutiny committees and chaired by the Chair of COSC to feed back to COSC. This would reduce duplication and allow for in-depth scrutiny to be undertaken throughout the budget setting process with meaningful engagement between Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- 2.3 Following consultation with Scrutiny Chairs a report upon the Scrutiny Budget Working Group arrangements was agreed by the Committee on 24 July 2025.

Size, Composition and Nominations to the Working Group

- 2.4 On 9 April 2025 Council agreed that the working group be established with representatives from all scrutiny committees and chaired by the Chair of COSC, to feed back to COSC. The Committee agreed on 24 July 2025 that all Scrutiny Chairs sit on the Working Group.
- 2.5 The Committee also agreed that the Scrutiny Budget Working Group be comprised of a total of 24 Members from across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OVSC), with Group Leaders being asked to seek expressions of

interest for nominations from their Members. The Scrutiny Chairs agreed that whilst there would be an aim for political balance as far as possible, it was important that membership focused on Members who express a real interest in sitting on the Group and could commit their time, rather than meeting an allocated number. A membership of 24 was felt appropriate as it would allow for wide participation from Members with knowledge and experience from across all four Overview and Scrutiny Committee remits.

- 2.6 The Terms of reference for the SBWG approved by the Committee on 24 July 2025 are attached as **Appendix 1**, for information.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Following the implementation of the Scrutiny Budget Working Group arrangements delivered last year, the Scrutiny Chairs have reflected on the process and discussed some proposed changes to some aspects of the process for this year. The proposed amendments were circulated to Group Leaders, Cabinet Members and Corporate Management Team for their views.

The proposed changes to the SBWG process for this year are attached as **Appendix 2**.

Proposed Amended Structure of Scrutiny Budget Working Group

- 3.2 A proposed amended structure for the Scrutiny Budget Working Group is attached as **Appendix 3** which maps out the suggested meetings for this year to feed into the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Budget process for 2027-28 to 2030-31. The structure incorporates the following proposals from the Scrutiny Chairs:

a. Scrutiny Budget Working Group in July 2026

(Steering Group Members to be invited to join SBWG members for the first item on the Agenda for a Steer)

Comprising: Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Finance and Transformation, Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Scrutiny Chairs and Group Leaders. Steering Group to consider and discuss previous year's recommendations and 2027-28 indicative proposals, main priorities going forward and areas of concern. This to then inform where Scrutiny can add value, proposing potential areas of focus for the SBWG and Deep Dive Groups to consider.

Second part of the meeting for SBWG Members:

To discuss areas of focus following outcome from the Steering Group and allocate SBWG Members to each of the three proposed Deep Dive Groups. Membership of Deep Dive Groups should be based on Member knowledge, expertise or preference expressed to contribute to a specific Deep Dive Group. Corporate Director of Finance and Transformation to be invited to answer any overarching questions.

- b. **Three Deep Dive Groups meet twice each from September to Mid November 2026 and present findings to Scrutiny Budget Working Group mid-November**

These Deep Dive Groups would be chaired by the corresponding Chair of the related OVSC and include other Members of SBWG.

Scrutiny will support the meetings and draft outline actions arising, however it will be for the Chair of each Deep Dive Group to present the key findings to all Members of SBWG, to discuss their merits and agree any resulting recommendations.

This will enable there to be one clear overarching set of recommendations from the SBWG rather than four sets of recommendations that may potentially overlap, conflict or risk too much duplication.

Scrutiny Chairs can attend all Deep Dive Groups as well as chairing the relevant one to their OVSC.

- c. **Scrutiny Budget Working Group in Mid to End November 2026**

First Part of the meeting Scrutiny/Deep Dive Group Chairs to present feedback from each of the Deep Dive Groups to SBWG Members to consolidate the conclusions and recommendation from the 3 Deep Dive Groups.

Steering Group Members to be invited to join SBWG members for the second part of the meeting to receive the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Budget Working Group to feed into and potentially impact the development of Cabinet's draft budget proposals and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

- d. **COSC 10 December 2026**

To receive the conclusions from the Scrutiny Budget Working group for endorsing and formal onward reporting to Cabinet (as COSC is the Scrutiny Committee with overall responsibility for budget scrutiny).

- e. **Cabinet 15 December 2026**

To formally receive the conclusions and Recommendations of the Budget Working Group from COSC in advance of final budget proposals and formal response to be provided by Cabinet on 16 Feb 2027.

- f. **COSC 21 January 2027**

COSC consider draft MTFS and budget proposals and make Conclusions and Recommendations to Cabinet.

- g. **Cabinet 2 February 2027**

To present COSC Conclusions and Recommendations on the draft MTFS and Budget proposals

h. Cabinet 16 February 2027

Cabinet considers recommendations and recommends the MTFS 2027-28 to 2030-31 to Council for approval.

i. Council 24 February 2027

Council asked to approve the MTFS 2027-28 to 2030-31 and vote on it.

3.3 Members are asked to note that as well as the ongoing budget work of the COSC and SBWG, the Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation has agreed to provide regular budget briefing sessions to all Members and to individual Political Groups should they wish.

3.4 In order to ensure that Members nominated to the proposed Scrutiny Budget Working Group and allocated to the relevant Deep Dive Groups are able to commit their time to the Groups, and due to the number of Cabinet Members and Senior Officers who would be required to attend each of the Groups, the Scrutiny Team are currently looking at potential dates for Deep Dive Group meetings with a view to holding proposed dates in diaries pending approval of the proposed amended process and nominations to Deep Dive Groups.

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. 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 Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The scrutiny function contributes to the 5 Ways of Working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how they contribute to the Council developing its own five ways of working, driving and measuring those ways of working.

5.3 The scrutiny arrangements assist in the achievement of the Council's 4 Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, listed below:

1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
2. Creating modern, seamless public services
3. Enabling people to meet their potential
4. Supporting our most vulnerable

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change or Nature Implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is requested to consider the report on the proposed amendments to the Scrutiny Budget Working Group process and, any comments received following consultation, and to:

- a. Note the Terms of Reference in **Appendix 1**;
- b. Consider and agree the proposed amendments to the SBWG process for this year set out in **Appendix 2**; and
- c. Agree the proposed amended structure of Scrutiny Budget Working Group and draft outline of schedule of meetings in **Appendix 3**.

Background documents

None.

Scrutiny Budget Working Group
Terms of Reference

Aims:

- a. Achieve consensus on the direction of the budget over the life of the medium-term financial strategy.
- b. Assist the Council to develop a budget for the forthcoming year that aims to meet the needs of the communities of Bridgend County Borough;
- c. Facilitate firmer understanding of the budget setting process and to assist COSC in making informed comments, constructive challenge and recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

Terms of Reference:

1. Identify and explore potential budget areas for budget reductions / investment and agree Recommendations to Cabinet for consideration and development prior to finalisation of the Council's draft MTFS and budget proposals;
 2. Areas of focus should consider the impact of proposals on:
 - a. Council's corporate plan and wellbeing objectives
 - b. The needs of individuals and communities
 - c. Service performance and outcomes
 - d. Affordability, achievability, sustainability, and value for money
 3. Work with Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors to understand the need for change in the context of the Council's emerging corporate priorities and MTFS;
 4. To treat any budget information received as part of the budget planning process as confidential until such time that it is formally placed in the public domain;
 5. To focus on non-political, Council wide issues and priorities;
 6. To have innovation at the centre of its work to identify effective proposals and solutions and take a consistent challenging approach to achieve the aims as set out above;
 7. To ensure that the SBWG process assists and is central to the scrutiny of the MTFS and adds value, avoiding duplication with the Scrutiny Committee budget process.
-

This page is intentionally left blank

	<u>Scrutiny Budget Working Group (SBWG) Process for 2025/26:</u>	<u>Proposed changes for SBWG Process for 2026/7:</u>
1.	24 Members were nominated by Group Leaders to sit on the Scrutiny Budget Working Group based on political balance.	Same number of Members and nominations from Group Leaders, politically balanced as far as possible, to address some non-attendance / apologies given last year.
2.	6 Members from the SBWG membership were nominated by Group Leaders to each of the 4 Directorate Deep Dive Groups, so each member of SBWG sat on one Deep Dive.	Increase to more than 6 Members to be nominated by Group Leaders to each Deep Dive Group due to low attendance / apologies given last year. To enable nominees most interested in the subject area and who are available to attend the Deep Dive Groups to attend and politically balanced as far as possible.
3.	Only one of each of the 4 Directorate Deep Dive Group meetings were held, with any additional information requested and draft Recommendations reported back to SBWG.	Hold 6 Deep Dive Group Meetings; 2 of each of the 3 Service Directorates (excluding Chief Executive's and Corporate Services), rather than just 1 of each Directorate as done last year. This would enable more work to be done in the Deep Dive Groups before feeding back to SBWG. Potential future Deep Dive to consider Transformation at the appropriate time.
4.	Scrutiny Chairs each chaired their own Deep Dive Group meeting and the Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) who is also the Chair of SBWG observed all the Deep Dive meetings.	Scrutiny Chairs to Chair their respective Deep Dive meetings as before, but also attend any of the other Deep Dive Group meetings. (May consider chairing each other's Deep Dives in 2027/28 following a review of SBWG process and attendance at Deep Dives at the end of this year's process.)
5.	Deep Dive Group meetings were scheduled for longer sessions last year due to the need to hold them in a more concentrated period of time.	Meetings to be scheduled for no more than 4 hours (sessions to be shorter than last year) and will be spread out at intervals, as the scheduling of Overview and Scrutiny Committees this year has created more space to hold the SBWG meetings.
6.	Steering Group meeting held to give a Steer from the Leader, CM for Finance, Chief, Director for Finance and Transformation to feed into Deep Dive FWP's prior to first meeting of SBWG.	In place of two separate Steering Group meetings, it is proposed that for the first and last meetings of SBWG, to invite for the first item on the Agenda, the Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Chief

	<u>Scrutiny Budget Working Group (SBWG) Process for 2025/26:</u>	<u>Proposed changes for SBWG Process for 2026/7:</u>
	A Steering Group meeting held to receive feedback from the Deep Dive Group / SBWG process informally, prior to reporting to COSC and Cabinet.	Executive and Director for Finance and Transformation to give a steer on areas of focus to feed into Deep Dive FWP's, and to receive feedback from the process informally, prior to reporting to COSC and Cabinet.
7.	Steering Group meeting held in July then first meeting of SWBG in September, followed by one of each of the 4 Deep Dive Groups held in September and October.	Hold 1 (or 2 meetings if possible) of SBWG before the school holidays begin on 20 July, to get steer on areas of focus for the Forward Work Programme and to look at the items identified last year. Programme dates of other SBWG and Deep Dive meetings to recommence straight after the summer recess.
8.	Meetings of Steering Group, SBWG and Deep Dives were held in the Council Chamber.	Proposed that meetings are less formal, in person attendance, round table / workshops where possible (dependant on when work on the Committee rooms is completed or explore other potential venues.)
9.	Previously full budget book provided for SBWG and Deep dives to identify potential areas of focus.	Rather than requesting full budget book, propose requesting reverse budget book from highest expenditure top down, to focus on the big ticket items as areas to explore potential savings.

STEP 1 - Scrutiny to seek nominations of up to 24 Members (politically balanced as far as possible) to sit on the Scrutiny Budget Working Group – June/July 2026

STEP 2 – SCRUTINY BUDGET WORKING GROUP MEET (WITH A STEER AT THE START) – JULY 2026

Comprising: Total up to 24 Members and Chaired by Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To be invited for Steer - Group Leaders, Scrutiny Chairs, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Chief Executive and Corporate Director - Finance and Transformation

Role:

Steer - To propose areas of focus for Scrutiny Budget Working Group and Deep Dive Groups to consider the previous year’s recommendations and 2027-28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) indicative proposals, the main priorities going forward, areas of concern and areas of focus where can Scrutiny add value.

SBWG - Discuss areas of focus following the Steer from Invitees for first Item and any referrals/proposals from any Overview and Scrutiny Committees and allocate SBWG Members to each of the Deep Dive Groups based on their knowledge, expertise or preference expressed to contribute to a specific deep dive. Scrutiny Chairs may attend all Deep Dive Groups.

(Members will need to ensure they are able to commit to attending the Deep Dive Groups on the identified dates)

STEP 3 – DEEP DIVE GROUPS MEET TWICE EACH (FOR NO MORE THAN 4 HOURS PER MEETING) FROM SEPTEMBER TO MID NOVEMBER 2026

Education and Youth Services – 2 dates TBC

Chaired by Chair of Education and Youth Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comprising: SBWG Members to be agreed by SBWG, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Cabinet Member for Education and Young People, Corporate Director for Education, Early Years and Young People, Corporate Director - Finance and Transformation, Deputy Head of Finance, Finance Manager - Communities, Education and Family Support, and any other relevant Officers

Role: To undertake a deep dive into areas of focus in the Education and Youth Services Directorate as directed by the SBWG.

Social Services and Wellbeing – 2 dates TBC

Chaired by Chair of Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comprising: SBWG Members to be agreed by SBWG, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing, Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing, Corporate Director - Finance and Transformation, Deputy Head of Finance, Finance Manager – Social Services and Wellbeing, and any other relevant Officers

Role: To undertake a deep dive into areas of focus in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate as directed by the SBWG.

Communities – 2 dates TBC

Chaired by Chair of Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comprising: SBWG Members to be agreed by SBWG, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing, Corporate Director for Communities, Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation, Deputy Head of Finance, Finance Manager – Communities, Education and Family Support and any other relevant Officers

Role: To undertake a deep dive into areas of focus in the Communities Directorate as directed by the SBWG.

Scrutiny will support the meetings and draft outline actions arising, however it will be for the Chair of each Deep Dive Group to present the key findings from their Group and Members of each Group to discuss their merits at the SBWG for the agreement of any resulting overall Recommendations

STEP 4 - SCRUTINY BUDGET WORKING GROUP FOLLOWED BY FEEDBACK TO STEERING GROUP – MID/END NOVEMBER 2026

SBWG
Comprising: Total up to 24 Members and Chaired by Chair of COSC
Role/Purpose: Chairs of the Deep Dive Groups present the Key Findings from their Group. SBWG to discuss findings and reach an agreement on overall conclusions and recommendations from the Working Group.

Steer
Comprising: Group Leaders, Scrutiny Chairs, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Chief Executive and Corporate Director - Finance and Transformation
Purpose: To present the Recommendations from the Scrutiny Budget Working Group to feed into the development of the draft budget proposals and MTFS.

STEP 5 – CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 DECEMBER 2026

Purpose: To receive the Conclusions and Recommendations from the Working Group for endorsing and official onward reporting to Cabinet (as Scrutiny Committee with overall responsibility for budget scrutiny)

STEP 6 - CABINET – 15 DECEMBER 2026

Purpose: To formally receive the Conclusions and Recommendations from COSC to be considered by Cabinet/CMB in advance of final budget proposals published. Formal response to be provided by Cabinet on 16 Feb 2027

STEP 7 - CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2027

COSC consider draft MTFS and budget proposals in the public domain and make any conclusions/recommendations.

STEP 8 - CABINET – 2 FEBRUARY 2027

To formally present the Conclusions and Recommendations from COSC on the draft MTFS and Budget proposals to Cabinet.

STEP 9 - CABINET – 16 FEBRUARY 2027

Cabinet considers final recommendations and recommends the MTFS 2027-28 to 2030-31 to Council for approval and provides formal response to Recommendations.

STEP 10 - COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2027

Council asked to approve the MTFS 2027-28 to 2030-31 and vote on it.

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	CWM TAF MORGANNWG PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD (PSB) JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (JOSC) NOMINATIONS
Report Owner/ Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, REGULATORY AND ELECTORAL SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees relate to the review and monitoring of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution to be updated.
Executive Summary:	Joint scrutiny arrangements and Terms of Reference for Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) were agreed by Council on 19 July 2023, to ensure effective scrutiny arrangements are in place to scrutinise the newly established single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) as the Scrutiny Committee designated to scrutinise the work of the Public Service Board as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and based on the political balance of this Committee as far as practical, nominates 5 Members to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC and one substitute Member from the Committee to attend the JOSC when one of the core Members are not available.

	This report seeks nominations to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC for the 2026-27 municipal year, for 5 Members of COSC and 1 Substitute member to attend when one of the core Members are not available, based on the political balance of the Committee, as follows: - 3 Members from Labour; - 1 Member and 1 Substitute Member from Bridgend County Independents; - 1 Member from Democratic Alliance.
--	---

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request the Committee to nominate for the 2026-27 municipal year, 5 Members to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and 1 Substitute Member to attend when one of the core Members are not available, based on the political balance of the Committee, as follows:
- 3 Members from Labour;
 - 1 Member and 1 Substitute Member from Bridgend County Independents;
 - 1 Member from Democratic Alliance.

2. Background

- 2.1 Joint scrutiny arrangements and Terms of Reference for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee were agreed by Council on 19 July 2023, to ensure effective scrutiny arrangements are in place to scrutinise the established single Public Service Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- 2.2 Since the 2023-24 municipal year, COSC (as the Scrutiny Committee designated to scrutinise the work of the Public Service Board as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 and based on the political balance of this Committee as far as practical), have nominated five members of the Committee to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PSB JOSC) and one substitute Member from COSC to attend the JOSC when one of the core Members are not available.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Consequently, for the 2026-27 municipal year nominations are requested to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC of 5 Members and 1 Substitute Member from this Committee to attend when one of the core Members are not

available, based on the political balance of the Committee as far as practical, as follows:

- 3 Members from Labour;
- 1 Member and 1 Substitute Member from Bridgend County Independents;
- 1 Member from Democratic Alliance.

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

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 Ways of Working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:
- Long Term – The establishment of the Joint Scrutiny Arrangements will enable the Authority's long-term commitment to effective scrutiny of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB.
 - Prevention – The PSB Wellbeing Assessment and Plan will be preventative in nature and progress will be scrutinised effectively.
 - Integration – The proposed arrangements are for integrated joint scrutiny by three Local Authorities of the integrated partnership arrangements of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board.
 - Collaboration – This report supports collaborative working with other Local Authorities and partners to effectively scrutinise the PSB.
 - Involvement – The joint arrangements will enable effective scrutiny of the wellbeing assessment, plan and progress and promote the involvement of stakeholders, partners in scrutiny activity.
- 5.2 The proposed arrangements will assist in the achievement of the Council's 4 Well-being Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, listed below:

1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
2. Creating modern, seamless public services
3. Enabling people to meet their potential
4. Supporting our most vulnerable

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change or Nature Implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

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

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 For the 2026-27 municipal year, the Committee is requested to nominate 5 Members to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC and 1 Substitute Member to attend when one of the core Members are not available, based on the political balance of this Committee, as follows:
- 3 Members from Labour;
 - 1 Member and 1 Substitute Member from Bridgend County Independents;
 - 1 Member from Democratic Alliance.

Background documents

None.

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL, REGULATORY AND ELECTORAL SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and monitoring of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council’s Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution to be updated.
Executive Summary:	Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards care experienced children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the ‘Corporate Parent’ therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for care experienced children and young people in Bridgend. In order to further develop and enhance the Council’s Corporate Parenting role with its partners, a Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting comprising all Members of Cabinet was established by Cabinet on 4 November 2008. The Committee is being asked to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards care experienced children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'Corporate Parent' therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for care experienced children and young people in Bridgend.
- 2.2 In order to further develop and enhance the Council's Corporate Parenting role with its partners, a Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting comprising all Members of Cabinet was established by Cabinet on 4 November 2008.
- 2.3 The inaugural meeting of the Cabinet Committee was held on 27 November 2008 where it was agreed that the Cabinet Committee will meet quarterly. The terms of reference for the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting are:
- to ensure that care experienced children and young people are seen as a priority by the whole of the Authority and by the Children and Young People's Partnership;
 - to seek the views of children and young people in shaping and influencing the parenting they receive;
 - to ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place;
 - to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Authority in its role as Corporate Parent against Welsh Government guidance.
- 2.4 At its inaugural meeting, the Cabinet Committee requested that a Corporate Parenting "Champion" be nominated from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to become permanent invitees to the Cabinet Committee.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.
- 3.2 The role of the Corporate Parenting Champion is to represent their Overview and Scrutiny Committee, partaking in discussions with Cabinet over items relating to care experienced children and young people.
- 3.3 It is also suggested that in this role each Champion considers how all services within the remit of Scrutiny affect care experienced children and young people

and encourage their own Committee to bear their Corporate Parenting role in mind when participating in Scrutiny.

- 3.4 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

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

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 Ways of Working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:
- Long Term – The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee demonstrates the Authority's long-term commitment to improving and strengthening their role as Corporate Parents to care experienced children and young people.
 - Prevention – The Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee are preventative in their nature and ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place for all care experienced children and young people.
 - Integration – This report supports all the Well-being Objectives.
 - Collaboration – All Members are Corporate Parents and this report supports collaborative working with Cabinet and Members of Scrutiny and emphasises the role of Corporate Parents for all Elected Members.
 - Involvement – Corporate Parent Champions provide practical support and guidance to care experienced children and young people to ensure they achieve their well-being goals.
- 5.2 Nomination of a Corporate Parenting Champion assists in the achievement of the following of the Council's 4 Wellbeing Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-**

Enabling people to meet their potential

Provide an effective Childcare and Early Years Offer, provide safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching, provide Welsh medium education opportunities, be good parents to our care experienced children and help people get the skills they need for work.

Supporting our most vulnerable

Providing high-quality children's and adults social services and early help services, supporting people in poverty, supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live, supporting children with additional learning needs and safeguard and protect people who are at risk of harm.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change or Nature Implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting addresses any impact on children or young people within the care of the Authority, under the Council's responsibility as a Corporate Parent. Safeguarding is everyone's business and means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is asked to nominate one Member of the Committee as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

Background documents

None.

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner/ Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, REGULATORY AND ELECTORAL SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.
Executive Summary:	The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee. The Committee is asked to consider and agree its Forward Work Programme, identify any specific information it wishes to be included in and any invitees they wish to attend for the reports for the next two Committee meetings, identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the criteria set out in the report, note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee and the Forward Work Programmes for each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached for information.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A** for consideration and approval;

- b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.5 of this report;
- d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee attached as **Appendix B** to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings; and
- e) Present the Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E** for information, following consideration in their respective Committee meetings.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 2.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework. Where a matter for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee also falls within the remit of one or more other Committees, the decision as to which Committee will consider it will be resolved by the respective Chairs or, if they fail to agree, the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Best Practice / Guidance

- 2.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 2.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximise the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.
- 2.5 The CfGS's guide to effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

3. Current situation / proposal

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

- 3.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 13 May 2026, the standing statutory reports to this Scrutiny Committee of: the Corporate Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget, Performance and Budget Monitoring, etc. have been mapped to the appropriate timely meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.
- 3.2 The draft outline Forward Work Programme for each of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
 - Directorate Business Plans;
 - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
 - Committee / Member proposed topics;
 - Policy Framework;
 - Cabinet Work Programme;
 - Discussions with Corporate Directors;
 - Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.
- 3.3 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g., the MTFS including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in January 2027, following which the Committee will make conclusions and recommendations in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2027.
- 3.4 An effective Forward Work Programme will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The Forward Work Programme will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting and any updated information gathered from Forward Work Programme Planning meetings with Corporate Directors.

Identification of Further Items

- 3.5 The Committee are reminded that the Scrutiny selection criteria used by Scrutiny Committee Members to consider, select and prioritise items emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. The criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST:	The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;
ABILITY TO CHANGE:	Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

Corporate Parenting

- 3.6 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards care experienced children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'Corporate Parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for care experienced children and young people in Bridgend.
- 3.7 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 3.8 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 3.9 The Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.

3.10 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings is attached as **Appendix B**.

3.11 The Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees are attached as **Appendices C, D and E** for information.

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

5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 Ways of Working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service and Elected Members.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

5.2 When setting its Forward Work Programme, the Committee should consider how each item they propose to scrutinise assists in the achievement of the Council's 4 Wellbeing Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** as follows:-

1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
2. Creating modern, seamless public services
3. Enabling people to meet their potential
4. Supporting our most vulnerable

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects climate change, the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 target and how it meets the Council's commitments to protect and sustain the environment over the long term. There are no Climate Change or Nature Implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way the Committee can assist in these areas. Safeguarding is everyone's business and means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

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

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme for this Committee in **Appendix A**.
 - b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend.
 - c) Identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.5 of this report.
 - d) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in **Appendix B** to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings; and
 - e) Note the Forward Work Programmes for the other Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E for information**, following consideration in their respective Committee meetings.

Background documents

None.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2026-27 Draft Forward Work Programme

Monday 29 June 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Revenue Budget Outturn 2025-26		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director – Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services.
Age Friendly Baseline	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Service – Public Realm; and Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing.
Play Sufficiency	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing.
Scrutiny Budget Working Group		N/A
Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination		N/A
Nominations to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements following Transition to a Single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg		N/A
Forward Work Programme Update		N/A

APPENDIX A

Monday 27 July 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Budget Monitoring 2026-27 – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director – Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services.
Corporate Performance Quarter 4 / Year End 2025-26		As above plus: Corporate Performance Manager
Self-Assessment 2025-26		As above.

Thursday 22 October 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Budget Monitoring 2026-27 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> Chief Executive; Director – Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services.

Thursday 10 December 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2026-27		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director - Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities;

APPENDIX A

		Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services; and Corporate Performance Manager.
--	--	---

Thursday 21 January 2027 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2027-28 to 2030-31 and Budget Proposals		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director - Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Deputy Head of Finance; and Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate; and Finance Manager – Education, Early Years and Young People / Communities Directorate.
Capital Strategy 2027-28		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; <u>Officers</u> Director – Finance and Performance; and Group Manager – Chief Accountant

Thursday 11 March 2027 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2026-27		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director – Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director - Education and Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities;

APPENDIX A

		Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager Corporate Performance Manager; and Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
Budget Monitoring 2026-27 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Director – Finance and Transformation; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services.

Reports to be Scheduled		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Review		
Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 & 2025/26		N/A
Corporate Arrangements for Commissioning Services (once the National report is available or internal thematic analysis report is complete)		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; and Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change.
Whole-Council response to Climate Change and the Environment / Council's Preparedness to Respond to Storms and Adverse Weather to include the Council's Strategy regarding Flood Response and Prevention	Information on how the Council manages contingencies for emergency responses, e.g. the impact on the Highways budget due to recent storm damage. Council's Preparedness to Respond to Storms and Adverse Weather, to include: - Preventative measures against foreseeable damage; - Impact of adverse weather and any fallout (e.g. loss of power) on vulnerable residents;	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Communities; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People.

APPENDIX A

	- Invitees from Communities and Social Services; and - Information shared during internal and Local Resilience Forum debrief sessions held following Storm Darragh and any other inclement weather events.	
Staff Survey	Including responses, outcome of staff focus groups and future staff surveys.	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Group Manager – Communications and Public Affairs
Engagement and Participation Strategy Action Plan	Update to be provided within 12 months	TBC
Workforce Strategy Monitoring Action Plans	To monitor progress / implementation of Action Plans	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Group Manager – Human Resources Organisational Development
Independent review and transfer of Early Help service from the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate to the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate	Recommendation from COSC 30 June 2025	To be discussed in work planning meeting.
Quarterly Updates from the Transformation Programme Board once established.	Recommendation from COSC 27 January 2025	

Briefings and Workshops:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Information Required / Committee's Role</u>	<u>Invitees</u>
Funding arrangements with, and the steps being undertaken to ensure fair contributions from, partner organisations, including the Health Board, for the provision of residential placements and the delivery of social care.	Recommendation from COSC on 24 October 2024.	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing
School Modernisation Programme	To include detailed updates on each school modernisation and upgrade projects. Recommendation from COSC 16 March 2026	<u>All Member</u>

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET 2025-26

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
11 Dec 2025	Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2025-26	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a Transformation and Change Working Group and that regular updates be provided to the Committee but that there be a separation of powers between the Group and the Committee to allow clear scrutiny of the process.	Chief Executive / Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory, HR and Corporate Policy	Circulated for response. Chased.	
11 Dec 2025	Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2025-26	The Committee expressed concern regarding the performance against WBO2.1.4 relating to the handling of corporate complaints and that delays or failure to receive requested information from service areas appeared to be impacting on the ability to respond to complaints in a timely manner and requested a corporate response from the Chief Executive explaining how this will be addressed.	Chief Executive	Circulated for response. Chased.	

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to including more timescales in the narratives in the Performance Dashboards, in particular for the following: a. WBO 1.6.6 <i>Develop the Healthy Living Partnership Strategy</i> – timescale for securing feasibility funding; b. WBO 2.3.1 – timescale/milestones to <i>Approve and implement the new digital strategy</i>; and c. WBO 3.4 – timescale for each of the projects under <i>Modernise School Buildings</i>	Corporate Directors for Social Services and Wellbeing and Education, Early Years and Young People & Director of Finance and Transformation	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to amending the wording of WBO 2.1.4 from <i>'Improve the way we handle and learn from corporate complaints and compliments'</i> to include improving the <u>process</u> relating to complaints.	Chief Officer – Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	In relation to homelessness, the Committee discussed that sometimes, although the	Director of Finance and Transformation	ACTIONED – response and information	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		Council meets its legal duty to people presenting as homeless, e.g. through providing temporary accommodation, their particular housing need is not always met and given the number of new homes being built in the County, the need for a percentage to be appropriate for people's needs. The Committee therefore recommended that consideration be given to reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's interventions in relation to homelessness are measured in a citizen focussed way and how the Council is working with Registered Social Landlords and the private sector to ensure a range of suitable accommodation to address homelessness in the short, medium and long term.		circulated 19 June 2026.	
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee expressed concern regarding the statement in WBO 4.5.2 that the Service's three-year growth proposal ' <i>is still awaiting feedback from the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services</i> ' and	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		recommended that the narrative be updated as soon as possible in the Performance Dashboard.			
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee discussed the <i>Sickness Absence by Reason</i> table in the Performance Dashboard and recommended that last year's figures are also included in this table in order to demonstrate whether levels have improved and the overall direction of travel.	Corporate Policy and Performance Manager	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee recommended that consideration be given to including Estyn Inspection Outcomes on the Regulatory Tracker.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee discussed the measure, ' <i>higher/lower preferred</i> ' and requested a note setting out its use and how it is used when commitments/PIs are on or above target.	Corporate Policy and Performance Manager	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	With reference to WBO 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 relating to Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sger, Afon Y Felin and Corneli Primary School, the	Corporate Director – Education, Early	ACTIONED – response and information	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		Committee requested confirmation that the necessary paperwork for the land swap with Valleys to Coast had been signed and the likely timescales for the construction contract to be awarded.	Years and Young People	circulated 19 June 2026.	
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee discussed WBO 3.2 and requested details of the support for schools to address issues relating to behaviour and attendance, to aim to achieve the targets and that further detail is also included in the narrative on the Performance Dashboard.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee requested that the upcoming briefing referred to by the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services regarding the school modernisation programme includes detailed updates on each school modernisation and upgrade project.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Corporate Performance Quarter 3 2025-26	The Committee expressed concern regarding the statement in WBO 4.3 that <i>'more people are being made homeless from hospital requiring specially</i>	Director of Finance and Transformation	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		<i>adapted accommodation'</i> and requested the number of cases falling into this category and what measures have been considered to address this issue, e.g. possible step-down care or use of existing residential or nursing homes on a temporary basis.			
16 Mar 2026	Budget Monitoring 2025-26 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast	The Committee expressed concern regarding the significant projected year end underspend and requested an indication from Cabinet of their strategic priorities for use of any budget surplus after closure of the accounts and that any potential known significant under or overspends are reported to the Scrutiny Budget Working Group to improve transparency and to ensure that it adds further value to the budget setting process.	Director of Finance and Transformation	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here
16 Mar 2026	Budget Monitoring 2025-26 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast	The Committee expressed concern regarding the underspend in 8 out of 11 Service Areas in Adult Social Care and requested confirmation that the efficiencies	Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		are not having an adverse effect on service users.			
16 Mar 2026	Forward Work Programme Update	The Committee discussed the list of Reports to be scheduled and requested that these be scheduled as soon as possible.	Scrutiny / Chair of Committee	ACTIONED – response and information circulated 19 June 2026.	Follow link here

This page is intentionally left blank

Education and Youth Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2026-27 Forward Work Programme

Monday, 1 June 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
School Improvement	Arrangements into the Local Authority and future school improvement arrangements	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Group Manager – School Improvement <u>Youth Council Representative</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed <u>External</u> Representatives from Central South Consortium

Thursday, 2 July 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Healthy Eating in Schools	To include an information on Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations and an update on the Universal Primary Free School Meals Implementation. Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements), Maintained Primary Schools (Wales) Regulations 2025 and Healthy Eating Regulations 2025 Challenges of roll out UPFSM to secondary schools	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Strategy, Early Years and Youth; <u>External</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed <u>Youth Council Representative</u>

Monday, 21 September 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Review of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Support	To include an update on Commitment WBO4.4.2 <i>to develop a five-year plan to meet increasing demand on support services, specialist provision and schools</i> and any impact from progress against Commitments in WBO 3.4 <i>Modernise School Buildings</i>. To include an update on the progress against performance Indicator DEFS170 regarding the percentage of new local authority individual development plans (IDPs) delivered using the online IDP system.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Group Manager – School Improvement; <u>Youth Council Representative</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed

Monday, 23 November 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Home to School Transport		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Head of Strategy, Early Years and Youth <u>Youth Council Representative</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed

Monday, 1 February 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Close Current 3 year Strategic Plan and Open New 3 Year Strategic Plan	To include review of Post Inspection Plan To include information regarding support for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People;

		Head of Learning; Head of Strategy, Early Years and Youth; <u>Youth Council Representative</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed
--	--	--

Monday, 1 March 2026 at 11am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
School Modernisation	An audit of the condition of all schools in Bridgend County. An analysis of the lessons learned from the school modernisation projects that have happened or in the process of being planned and built, including the impact of wider political and economic forces. The report would need to consider such issues as the role and value of price caps; risk management and mitigation, including the impact of ecological ones on project timing and costs; procurement; land acquisition; the impact of design changes to projects; and project management and oversight, especially in terms of the contribution made by Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board. The future demography of the County Borough, and the impact of new and proposed housing developments, and the potential knock-on impact on school catchment areas and pupil numbers. The future of school modernisation and project finance in Wales. To include an on the progress of increasing specialist provision. To include an update on progress against Commitments	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Young People; Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Communities; Head of Learning; Deputy Head of Finance; Accountant – Capital and Grants; Head of Operations; Manager (Sustainable Communities for Learning); Group Manager – Corporate Landlord; Senior Portfolio Surveyor, Education and Wellbeing; <u>Youth Council Representative</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Invitees to be confirmed

School Maintenance (Communities – Corporate Landlord)	in WBO 3.4 <i>Modernise School Buildings</i> and their impact on Commitment WBO4.4.2 <i>to develop a five-year plan to meet increasing demand on support services, specialist provision and schools.</i>	
--	--	--

Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's 2027-2028 Forward Work Programme

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) – June 2027 (TBC)
- School Modernisation (New Builds) – to include a site visit – 2027 (TBC)

Information Report to be provided:

- Spring 2026 – English Language School Catchment Areas / Capacity

Research and Evaluation Panel

- TBC in 2026 - School Improvement Research and Evaluation Panel (REP)

Briefings and Workshops

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees and Date
Support for Home-Educated Learners		All Member Briefing
New Estyn Inspection Framework / Local Government Education Services (LGES)		
Update on Effective School Governing Bodies – Appointment, Support and Funding	Invitation to be extended to Governors Association	
School Safeguarding Audits Summary		TBC in 2026
Pupil and Learner Attainment Outcomes	To include Validated Exam Results	TBC in 2026

Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2026-27 Forward Work Programme

Monday, 8 June 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
'Our Bravery Brought Justice' – the Bridgend response to the North Wales Child Practice Review		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; and Head of Children and Family Services.

Thursday, 9 July 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Shared Lives	Pre-Decision and mid consultation	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and Commissioning and Service Development Officer.

Thursday 10 September 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Social Services Annual Report 2025-26	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children and Family Services. Group Manager - Prevention and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Commissioning; and

APPENDIX D

		Group Manager - Business Strategy, Performance & Improvement.
Social Services Representations and Complaints 2025-26	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; and Compliments and Complaints Resolution Manager.

Monday, 9 November 2026 at 10.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2025-26		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children and Family Services; Group Manager – Information, Advice and Assistance and Safeguarding; Team Manager – Older People Mental Health; and Education and Community Safety Leads
Provision of Accommodation Based Regulated Support Services in Bridgend	Post implementation progress report To include information setting out the provision of accommodation based regulated support services in Bridgend to include the following: - whether they are private, public or charity sector; - how staff are contracted; and - the ownership of the buildings.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; and Group Manager – Commissioning.
Partnership with AWEN	To include MTFs saving proposal.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing

APPENDIX D

		<u>External</u> Representatives from Awen
--	--	---

Thursday, 4 February 2027 at 10.00am

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Support for Care Leavers	Including input from Housing and Employability. The Committee have requested that Care Experienced young people be invited for this item. Joint report between Social Services, Health and Wellbeing and the Communities and Housing Directorates	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing. <u>External</u> Care Leaver invitees

Thursday, 4 March 2027 at 10.00am

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Integrated Health and Social Care Services	To include: Progress against the Regional Partnership Agreement	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing. <u>External</u>
Future Arrangements for Advocacy for Adults and Children		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing. <u>External</u>

Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's Forward Work Programme

- Review of the Fostering Service – to include actions arising from Elimination of Profit Legislation. June 2027
- External Review of Strength Based Outcome Focused Practice Model being embedded into Adult Social Care – post inspection of Adult Social Care in 2026/27

- Further Report regarding the Community Hubs Strategy (at the appropriate time in 2026/27)

Briefings and Workshops:

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Regional Operating Model of the Emergency Duty Team	Out of hours operation	Representatives from RCT
Overview – Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate / Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act	Attendance from: Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing Head of Adult Social Care Head of Children and Family Services Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing	To be scheduled post Annual Council depending on changes of Membership to Committee
The Replacement System for CareDirector (WCCIS)	The Committee requested a briefing on COR-2024-01 on the Corporate Risk Assessment: The threat to business continuity if the Council is unable to procure and implement major ICT systems which support critical services such as a replacement system for CareDirector (WCCIS). <i>CareDirector</i> is a Cloud-based case management solution for social care organisations that supports integrated working across health and social care.	Members and officers for the Briefing and Workshop – TBD. To be scheduled in partnership with IT and Head of Transformation and Digital – once appointed
Use of Artificial Intelligence within Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate	The Committee recommended that there be an all Member briefing on the use of artificial intelligence within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and how it is envisaged it could safely aid a reduction in staff numbers.	This will form part of the Digital Strategy and to be scheduled in partnership with IT and Head of Transformation and Digital – once appointed

Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Draft 2026-27 Forward Work Programme

Monday, 15 June 2026 at 4pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Bathing Water Quality Issues and Impacts of the River Ogmore	Representatives from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales to be invited.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation; Cabinet Member(s) for Communities and Environment. <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer – Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services <u>External</u> Operational Manager - Enterprise and Specialist Services (SRS); Representatives from Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. Representative from A Peace for Nature
Audit Wales Report – Bridgend County Borough Council Planning and Development Service	Update on Recommendations	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Head of Public Realm; Group Manager Planning and Development Services.

Monday, 13 July 2026 at 4pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan & Regeneration		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Head of Public Realm; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration.
Condition of the Highways and Status of Road Resurfacing Programme	Update on progress and budget: - Repairs and maintenance; - Road resurfacing and potholes; - Network management of utilities; and	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member(s) for Communities and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities;

	- The development of internal metrics for repairs and closing referrals. - To include information on the new Hotbox Teams, number of potholes filled and investment.	Head of Operations – Communities; Group Manager – Highways and Infrastructure; Highways Network Manager.
--	---	--

Monday, 12 October 2026 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Maesteg Town Hall TBC	- Impact and outcomes - Outcome of survey re: use of venue To include a walkaround the week before the meeting. Lessons learned to include: - Reasons for the overall project cost; - Details of the challenges encountered that led to increased costs (within the overall envelope); and - An appraisal of what could have changed or been done differently.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Head of Public Realm; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration. <u>External</u> Representatives from Awen
Grand Pavillion TBC	- Project Update To include a walkaround the week before the meeting .	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Head of Public Realm; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration.

Monday, 7 December 2026 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Local Lettings Policy – Porthcawl	Housing	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing;

		Group Manager – Housing and Homelessness Services.
Fleet Services Review	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member(s) for Communities and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Communities; Head of Operations - Communities; Group Manager - Highways and Infrastructure.

Monday, 15 February 2027 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
TBC		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member(s) for Communities and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Communities; Head of Operations - Communities; Group Manager - Highways and Infrastructure.

Monday, 15 March 2027 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
TBC		<u>Cabinet Member</u> <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities;

Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's Forward Work Programme - To be discussed in next Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Planning Meeting

- Cemeteries Review (June 2027)
- Street / Utility work including charges
- Car Parking Charging Review, to include:
 - Outcome of the review;
 - Free parking offers; and
 - The difference in revenue between the free parking period and a full charging model
- Housing (with Registered Social Landlord Invitees)
- A report on the CAT Programme to be added to the Forward Work Programme in 12-18 months to evaluate progress, including an update on the recommendations of an internal audit which took place in April 2025, set out in paragraph 2.1.6 of the report.
- Final UKSPF monitoring report, including a complete analysis of the successes and the lessons learned for future projects and to include:

- details of how the public, businesses and community organisations were informed and supported to make full use of available funding, including how the Bridgend County Prosperity Co-Production Framework had informed decision-making about the UKSPF.
- detailed information regarding the feasibility studies funded by the UKSPF and how many have or will become viable projects.
- detailed evaluation of the sustainability of jobs created across the three themes as a result of UKSPF funding, to include the monitoring processes and the support offered by BCBC; and
- detailed information about the impact the cut in funding during the transition year had on projects in the community

Briefings:

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Highway Infrastructure	Including: - Repairs, maintenance and prioritisation process.	20 April 2026 and 24 June 2026
Future Waste Services	<i>And see also Referral from COSC / GAC below *</i>	All Member Briefing pre-Council - July 2026
Corporate Joint Committees Regional Responsibilities		All Member Briefing Date to be confirmed
Revised Social Housing Allocation Policy	The changes especially in respect of the bands and how properties will be allocated.	All Member Briefing Date to be arranged in line with final adoption of Policy

***Referral from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11 December 2025**

The Committee discussed the Corporate Complaints report presented to the previous meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) on 27 November 2025 where concerns were raised regarding the number of complaints regarding waste contract, the majority of which were upheld. The Committee were given some reassurance by the Corporate Director and advised that GAC have requested further information but **requested** that the issue be referred to the Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information in the meantime. Potentially if Members wish this could be included in the Briefing on future waste services.