

ANNUAL REPORT

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR



*"One council
working
together to
improve lives"*



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Introduction

Welcome to Bridgend County Borough Council's annual report. It evaluates our progress against our well-being objectives, outlined in our Corporate Plan. This report relates to our performance for the year April 2019 to March 2020.

Our vision is to act as "one Council working together to improve lives". We will do this by delivering our well-being objectives. These represent our ambitions and commitments to our citizens and our contribution to Wales' seven well-being goals as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act).

Progress against our well-being objectives

This report looks back on the progress we made together during 2019-20 on the steps to meet our well-being objectives. To evaluate performance, we have 56 measures of success, which we review annually to set targets to drive improvement.

Analysis of performance shows that for 52 of the measures for which we have data:

- 35 (67.3%) met their target
- 9 (17.3%) were off target by less than 10%
- 8 (15.4%) missed the target by more than 10%

Trend data is available for 45 indicators. Of these, 26 (58%) indicators showed an improvement in performance or maintained the maximum level of performance compared to last year. 18 (40%) indicators showed a downturn in performance, with 1 (2%) being the same

In addition to our measures of success, we also made a number of commitments to support the delivery of our well-being objectives. We delivered what we said we would, with 34 (83%) of our commitments successfully completed. Three (7%) achieving most of their milestones and a further four (10%) judged not to have made sufficient progress.

The implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act (SSWB) continues to be a priority and is a driver for change and for new ways of working. The principles underpinning the SSWB Act align with the sustainable development principle enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We continue to work hard to change and improve services at the same time as having to make significant efficiency savings. For 2019-20, we had to make total savings of £7.621 million with a further £2.413 million in 2020-21. Making smarter use of our resources will include prioritising our spend better. It will also mean investing in those things that make the most difference to outcomes for local people, and particularly the political priorities around young people and societies most vulnerable.

This report focuses on the key activities carried out during 2019-20 to help achieve our well-being objectives. We use a combination of quantitative (measures of success) and qualitative (case studies) evidence to measure progress.

Despite the financial challenges we face, we are proud of what we have achieved. We remain committed to working with our partners and local communities to achieve our ambitions for Bridgend County Borough now and over the longer term. We are putting in place solid foundations that future generations can benefit from and improve on. We do this so that we can provide effective services which are important to our citizens, and that will improve people's lives now and in the future.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges that have had a dramatic impact on the way we do business. Collaboration, partnership working, committed staff and an army of volunteers have helped us to keep delivering vital services and provide support to people from across Bridgend County Borough. Service reform and new ways of working introduced in extremely short timescales have provided insight into the benefits of doing different things to support communities. The Council is committed to maximising the lessons learned to inform our planning and service design to deliver better outcomes for people who live, work and visit Bridgend County Borough.

Please look at our annual report and let us know what you think. For those readers that would like to see more in depth information, the report includes many links to detailed reports and data. We welcome comments on how we have done and how we can further improve our services for those we serve.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huw David".

Cllr Huw David – Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Shephard".

Mark Shephard – Chief Executive

A snapshot of Bridgend County Borough

In Numbers



Population	144,876
Area	98.5 square miles
Households	64,766
Average House Price	£156,365 (UK HPI: March 2020)

Primary schools	48
Secondary schools	9
Special schools	3
Faith schools	6
Wards	39
Councillors	54
Constituency AMs	2
Regional AMs	4
MPs	2
Council staff –excluding schools (Full time equivalent)	4,303

Our Services include:

Bridgend County Borough Council delivers over 800 services, these include:

- schools
- social care
- safeguarding vulnerable adults & children
- maintaining highways and public transport
- refuse and recycling
- street cleaning and safety
- parks and play areas
- elections
- collecting revenues and administering benefits
- leisure, arts and libraries
- supporting business and tourism
- special events and festivals
- environmental health
- planning and building control

Well-being

Below is a snap shot of economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being across Bridgend County Borough. These categories of well-being are prescribed in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act:

Economic well-being

- 76.2% of the working age population are in employment (year ending March 2020)
- 20.6% of pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at A*- A (academic year 2018-19)
- 98.8% of pupils at A level achieved level 3 threshold, (academic year 2018-19)
- 4095 active businesses
- More than 80 local entrepreneurs helped to start their own business after attending a week-long course with the PopUp Business School in Bridgend
- 7 awareness sessions held for the EU settlement scheme

- 30 local businesses attended the SME business breakfast to promote apprenticeships
- Stalls from over 50 businesses and organisations were at the Jobs Fair in Porthcawl where over 300 people came to see opportunities available

Social well-being

- 22% of adults take part in sport 3 times a week
- 30,055 junior swims – 4,219 disabled children supported
- 47,506 over 60's free swims recorded for 5,200 individual users
- 1968 referrals through the National Exercise Referral Scheme resulting in 28,625 visits to 72 weekly classes
- 70% of adults feel they have good or very good general health
- More than seven out of every 10 children is a healthy weight (74.4%)
- 5 hours of day time support provided for rough sleepers every day Monday to Friday throughout the year
- 1,857 young people got involved in 123 outreach activities and drop in sessions across Bridgend County Borough to address anti-social behaviour.

Cultural well-being

- 74% of adults attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year
- 65% of people strongly agree that the 'Welsh language is something to be proud of'
- 27% of adults volunteer
- 11,437 children attended library events and activities over the summer holidays in 2019
- 2,472 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in 2019
- 45,882 children attended library events and activities throughout 2019-20
- 167,127 children's books were borrowed in 2019-20
- 794 Year 6 Pupils received National Cycle Standards training during 2019-20

Environmental well-being

- 83% of people are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 2,210 trees were planted at 6 locations across Bridgend County Borough
- 67.66% of waste in Bridgend County Borough is recycled which is above the Welsh Government target of 64%
- In 2019-20, Bridgend County Borough residents recycled 7,893 tonnes of food waste, which is enough to power a typical school for over four years.
- Bridgend Green Network has been established to bring together volunteer coordinators for environmental and conservation activities. 22 Members from 14 different organisations are volunteering to improve our green spaces.
- Rest Bay, Trecco Bay and Porthcawl Marina retained their Blue Flag awards
- 9 parks across Bridgend County Borough achieved a Green Flag award from Keep Wales Tidy

How we assess our performance

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies to act in a manner that seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Based on the sustainable development principle, our well-being objectives are intended to deliver long term positive outcomes. We review progress annually to ensure planned activities are getting us closer to our goals. Our well-being objectives also discharge our statutory duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to ‘make arrangements to secure continuous improvement’. We use a combination of quantitative performance measures and targets to assess performance, along with the progress of our commitments to help deliver our key programmes.

Our contribution to the well-being goals

Our well-being objectives are designed to maximize our contribution to achieving the seven national well-being goals. These are set out below:

Well-being Goal	Well-being Objective: Supporting a successful economy	Well-being Objective: Helping people be more self-reliant	Well-being Objective: Smarter use of resources
A prosperous Wales	✓		✓
A resilient Wales			✓
A healthier Wales	✓	✓	✓
A more equal Wales	✓	✓	✓
A Wales of cohesive communities	✓	✓	✓
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	✓	✓	
A globally responsible Wales	✓		

Performance measures

A number of performance measures are identified within the Council’s Corporate Plan which help show the progress made in delivering the Well-Being Objectives we have set ourselves. Where applicable, targets are set against these performance measures to show what we want to achieve.

Performance measures are assigned a Red Amber Green (RAG) status:

- **green** where the measure is on or above target
- **amber** where the result is within 10% of the target
- **red** where the result is greater than 10% from the target.

The trend arrow refers to the improvement trend. An improved trend on last year's performance will indicate an upward arrow. A brief explanation of where performance is below target is also given.

Key:	↑ = increased or maximum performance	↓ = performance declined	↔ = performance stayed the same
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Commitments

Progress against our key programmes' commitments affects how we assess progress on each well-being objective. We assign a RAG status to each commitment using a balanced appraisal of performance along with the current progress of agreed tasks. The self-assessment categories are below:

A **red** status means that there are delays of more than 10% of the total length of the planned action. And/or budget and/or performance measures for the commitment are mostly red.

An **amber** status means that there are delays of less than 10% of the total length of the planned action. And/or performance measures for the commitment are a mixture of red, amber and green.

A **green** status means that the commitment is being met, and on budget. Also that the performance measures are mostly green.

Well-being Objective 1

Supporting a successful economy

Why we choose this objective?

We want to build a county borough where people have more opportunities to secure meaningful work, develop a career and improve their family income and circumstances. We know that higher levels of prosperity boost health and well-being and create more resilient communities that need fewer services. We believe that education remains the most important lever for improving the life chances of young people. We believe that a successful economy can and should be balanced against the needs of the environment.

What do we want to achieve?

Our Aims

1. To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed and to extend that success to every community in the county borough
2. To create conditions for growth and enterprise
3. To create successful communities

Our key programmes.

Under this objective, there are four key programmes to help achieve our aims and deliver improvements in well-being.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Bridgend County Borough Council and its neighbouring South East Wales Councils, make up the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The £1.28 billion Deal will deliver a range of programmes that will increase connectivity, improve physical and digital infrastructure as well as regional business governance over the next 10-15 years. The Deal is projected to deliver 25,000 extra jobs across the region.

Strategic Review of Post 16 Education and Training –

This programme evaluates education provision and curriculum delivery across Bridgend County Borough. It ensures there are clear options available to provide the best possible opportunities for learners in the county borough.

Successful Economy Programme –

This programme consists of key regeneration and development schemes, including regeneration and a flood defence scheme in Porthcawl and Maesteg Town Hall Redevelopment. We are also developing a programme of improvement in Bridgend Town Centre, using Welsh Government's Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme. As part of the Valleys Taskforce, we are working to maximise opportunities for regeneration in the valleys.

Tackling Poverty

To ensure a consistent and targeted approach to tackling poverty we are streamlining the available grants to tackle poverty so we can focus on alleviating child poverty and supporting vulnerable families. We are doing this through early intervention initiatives including Flying Start, Families First, Supporting People and Communities First Legacy Funding.

How did we do?

Performance Measures

Aim – To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018 -19	Target 2019 - 20	Actual 2019 - 20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
Percentage of working age population that is in employment.** (Higher)	70.8%	71%	76.2%	↑	76.6%
Percentage of economically active 16 - 64 year olds.** (Higher)	74.0%	74%	78.6%	↑	73.7%
Number of apprentices employed across the organisation. (Higher)	43	25	35	↓	N/A
Number of apprenticeships taken by looked after children. (Higher)	1	1	2	↑	N/A
Percentage of Year 11 leavers from schools in the authority identified as not being in education, employment or training (NEETs) in the Careers Wales Destination Survey. (Lower)	0.9%	1.3%	0.7%	↑	1.8%
Percentage of care leavers who are in education, training or employment at: a) 12 months b) 24 months after leaving care (Higher)	a) 63.64%	60%	54.55%	↓	N/A
	b) 57.89%	60%	57.14%	↓	N/A
<p>a) This was impacted by a small cohort, who disengaged from programmes they had signed up to the beginning of the academic year. A renewed focus in supervision of young people who are NEET will be taken forward into 20-21.</p> <p>b) Where the young people are NEET this relates to physical or mental health issues which prevents them from working, or they are in custody. We will continue to strive to improve our performance in this area.</p>					
Percentage of 16 - 64 year olds without qualifications.* (Higher)	10.5%	11.2%	9.2%	↑	8.2%
Percentage of schools meeting the Learning & Skills Measure in terms of the subject offer at Key Stage 4 & Post 16. (Higher)	100%	100%	100%	↔	N/A
Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme going into employment (Higher)	New 2019-20	180	334	N/A	N/A
Gross Value added per head (Higher, data published one year in arrears)	£3,077	£3,078	£3,209	↑	N/A

* Data for year ending Dec 2019 (Stats Wales) (statswales)

**Data for the year ending March 2020

Aim – To create conditions for growth and enterprise

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018 -19	Target 2019 -20	Actual 2019 - 20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
Total annual expenditure by tourists. (Higher)	£347.3m	£347.4m	£362.69m	↑	N/A
The number of business start-ups. (Higher)	460	461	475	↑	N/A
The number of active businesses. (Higher)	4160	4161	4095	↓	N/A
Whilst this is only slightly lower, future figures are going to be negatively affected by the impact of COVID – 19. Economic recovery planning will be at the forefront of our activities for the coming year to mitigate the potential hit as businesses go into administration (Note: Due to a lag in data, figure provided is for 2018).					
The percentage occupancy of Council-owned starter units. (Higher)	93.5%	93.5%	95%	↑	N/A

Aim – To create successful town centres

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018 -19	Target 2019 -20	Actual 2019 - 20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The number of visitors to town centres - footfall for: (Higher)					
a) Bridgend	a) 6.7m	7.2m	6.3m	↓	N/A
b) Porthcawl	b) 2.1m	2.5m	2.7m	↑	N/A
Bridgend town centre footfall was adversely affected by a number of factors. Nationally, the uncertainty over BREXIT and a general election dented consumer confidence across the UK. Locally, the closure of the Ford plant and periods of heavy rain and flooding throughout the winter were a factor. The current configuration of the pedestrian space and Traffic Regulation Order in the town centre are seen by many visitors and businesses as barriers to footfall growth.					
The number of vacant premises in town centres (Lower)					
a) Bridgend	a) 60	69	64	↓	N/A
b) Maesteg	b) 10	9	13	↓	
c) Porthcawl	c) 11	10	19	↓	
d) Pencoed	d) 6	6	7	↓	
BCBC are progressing the review of its Local Development Plan with a view to consulting later in 2020. This will contain appropriate retail policies which will help to promote the vitality and viability of BCBC's town centres.					
The financial value of externally funded town centre regeneration projects underway/in development. (Higher)	£20.8m	£13m	£15m	N/A	N/A

Steps taken to achieve our key programmes

We made 15 commitments to support the delivery of this well-being objective, through our four key programmes. For 12 commitments, we achieved all that we had planned. Therefore, we have assessed our performance as **green**. The remaining three commitments we assessed as **red** because we did not fully complete the planned actions. We did not make a decision within the financial year 2019-20 regarding post 16 provision. We have since asked schools to work together to deliver on a range of improvements to the current situation. We did not complete our actions to progress strategies to assist young people who are more able and talented as this is now being delivered through the Central South Consortium. All activities to drive forward our agenda in support of pupils eligible for free school meals were completed apart from one. Changes to the structure of some resources planned to provide targeted support to vulnerable learners in having their educational needs met were delayed. These have now been reconfigured.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

We are one of 10 Local Authorities that are part of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal programme. City Deal will help boost economic growth by improving transport links, increasing skills, building homes, helping people into work and giving businesses the support they need to grow.

Metro Plus

The Metro Plus programme was initially agreed in March 2019. CCR City Deal in collaboration with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales identified a proposed £50 million for local transport schemes to support the implementation of the South Wales Metro.

The programme is designed to create 'interchanges' incorporating all modes of transport which can act as key hubs for using new and extended metro networks. This will improve access to work, training, education, culture, retail and leisure throughout the region

Phase 1 of Metro Plus saw each Local Authority within South East Wales receive a £3m share towards implementing schemes in their area. In Bridgend County Borough the funding is being used to implement a Park and Ride facility at Pyle as part of the development of an integrated transport hub. The hub will serve the local community and the nearby settlements of Porthcawl, Kenfig Hill, Cefn Cribwr and Cornelly with enhanced links to Village Farm Industrial estate. A bus interchange at Porthcawl is included with Active Travel connections. Programme delivery commenced in 2019 and will be complete by 2022.

The CCR is poised for the next stage of the South Wales transport network development. The potential Metro Plus phase 2 programme includes eleven local projects across the region. For Bridgend County Borough these are the Brackla Railway station and Pencoed Crossing.

Cardiff Capital Region Graduate Internships

A significant development for the City Deal was the launch of a graduate internship scheme. The scheme has provided targeted support to assist businesses create high quality placement opportunities.

The objective is to retain talented graduates in the region by highlighting the available employment opportunities and the investments in state-of-the art sectors such as financial technology, cyber security and compound semiconductors. The scheme is open to graduates from all degree backgrounds.

Key performance data on the CCR graduate scheme to end March 2020:

- 213 businesses engaged across the region, 17 of which were within the local authority of Bridgend
- 58 placement opportunities developed and advertised across the CCR
- 26 graduates placed with businesses across the CCR

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships remain a workforce planning priority. We employed 35 apprentices during 2019-20. The Council benefits from investing in growing our own talent to help with succession planning, and there are well-being improvements for those taking up the opportunity. Learning a new skill, connecting with people helps improve self-esteem, confidence, life satisfaction and improve job prospects.

To increase the number of looked after children taking up apprenticeships, the LAC Apprenticeship Group have

- Developed a pre-apprenticeship scheme
- Promoted apprenticeships to looked after children in Year 11
- Ensured relevant support is available to access the scheme

In addition, 26 looked after children in Year 11 were contacted about work experience with seven expressing an interest. Three engaged in work placements at Bryn y Cae, BCBC Catering Department and Bryngarw Park, two more secured employment.

Strategic Review of Post 16 education and training

A final decision on post 16 provision was expected during 2019. However, it was agreed in November 2019 that it would be prudent to conduct a second public consultation to measure the public views on the final three options.

- Option 1. A mix of school sixth forms with some mergers to create new local authority maintained sixth-form centre(s).
- Option 2. A mix of school sixth forms with some mergers to create new further education (FE) college-governed sixth-form centre(s).
- Option 3. The retention of sixth forms in all schools - the current position

The consultation took place between 2 December 2019 and 21 February 2020. To maximise the response rate a mixed methodology was used to gather views. Analysis of the findings from each of the data sources indicated that Option 3 is the preferred option. This option is now being taken forward as a solution for the foreseeable future. Schools have been tasked to work together to deliver on a range of improvements to the current situation.

More able and talented students

Each year our schools identify the brightest students and invite them to join the Seren Academy Network. In September 2019, Year 12 students for the Seren Academy network (post-16) and the Seren Foundation network (Years 8 to 11) were identified and recruited. The programmes are supported by grants from Welsh Government and good progress was made during 2019-20.

We continue to be committed to progress the development of strategies to assist young people who are more able and talented to help them reach their potential. However, we did not progress with this initiative as this is now being delivered through the Central South Consortium (CSC). The CSC are developing a regional More Able and Talented strategy, but activity was suspended due to the Covid-19 emergency. It is anticipated this work will be restarted in the autumn term of 2020. While formal education was suspended, the Council and CSC have worked in partnership to develop an “Excellence and Equity” teaching and learning strategy. Upon completion in autumn 2020, the document will be used to continue to support the improvement in specific groups of learners.

Successful Economy Programme

Porthcawl

Porthcawl has undergone significant regeneration to secure its future as a premier seaside town, creating jobs, homes and investment in the local economy for years to come. The £3m project to replace sea defences at Town Beach, has helped to transform the seafront area and protect 260 homes, businesses and historic buildings such as the Grand Pavilion.

The next phase of the Councils’ £6m plan to protect Porthcawl from flooding and coastal erosion have been submitted to Welsh Government. The business case has been approved, and the tendering process is underway. The new flood defence will see major work undertaken on the Western Breakwater, Eastern Promenade and Sandy Bay areas. The new flood defence will protect 530 homes and 175 businesses while complementing regeneration plans for Salt Lake. The improvements will act as assurance for future and current investors, businesses, visitors, and residents.



The new £1.5m Rest Bay Watersports Centre opened in October 2019. It has been purpose-built for surfers, kayakers, canoeists and paddleboard fans, as well as cyclists and walkers. The complex also includes a café, changing cubicles and showers, all weather bicycle storage, accessible beach wheelchairs and year-round lessons in watersports activities

EU funding was made available through the Welsh Government’s Tourism Attractor programme to help create this ‘must see’ destination to be enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

In addition to physical regeneration, efforts to boost recycling, ensure Porthcawl is a tidy, and litter free place to live and visit. In partnership with Porthcawl Town Council we are trialling an innovative solution to the problem of discarded chewing gum. People are encouraged to dispose gum in ‘Gum Drop’ bins attached to lampposts along John Street. The bins are made from recycled chewing gum. They can be removed and recycled along with their contents to create a range of products, including new bins and wellington boots. Porthcawl is one of the first Welsh towns to feature the innovative bins.

Three new-dedicated bins for recycling fast-food packing are available on the Western Promenade, John Street and Griffin Park. Two water fountains will be installed along the seafront to encourage people to fill up reusable bottles instead of buying single-use plastic bottles.

Maesteg Town Hall

In partnership with Awen Cultural Trust we are redeveloping Maesteg Town Hall, a grade II listed building to become a cultural community venue to support the social and economic regeneration of the town and wider valley communities. The project will generate employment opportunities; provide a prominent and suitable arena for commercial, learning and cultural use and help sustain Maesteg town centre and increase town centre footfall. Construction is expected to take 15 months to complete having been scheduled to commence in February 2020.

Planned improvements include a modern library, a heritage and volunteering centre, a café, new workspaces, toilets and fully accessible 'changing place' facilities. A multifunctional performing arts centre is to be created on the first floor. This will incorporate the main hall, a renovated stage, improved dressing rooms, a bar and for the first time a smaller, more intimate studio theatre and community cinema. The balcony seating area will be refurbished. Both upper and lower floors will be linked by a modern glazed atrium and foyer to address accessibility throughout the building.

Bridgend town centre

As part of our work to support business and make the town more attractive and accessible the indoor market has seen a lot of improvement work to help breathe a new lease of life into it. Over the last year, a series of illustrative panels providing information about the market's rich history have been set up to welcome shoppers. The market bell, which dates back to 1837 has been relocated to the main entrance.

A central market area is now available for specialist events, family entertainment, children's play facilities and other activities designed to encourage footfall and support trade. Tables and chairs allow people to enjoy a sit down lunch for food purchased at the market.



As part of the revamp, new public toilets were built in partnership with Bridgend Town Council and the market traders association. Located by the rear entrance, one will be wheelchair accessible and contain baby-changing facilities.

Covid-19 and the lockdown has had a significant impact on traders. To support stallholders and other small and mediums sized enterprises, the Council provided rent-free support for both the Bridgend and Maesteg markets.

Valleys Task Force

We are working alongside partner authorities in South East Wales to deliver a number of regional projects supported by the VTF, including the Empty Homes Grant. The grant helps support the delivery of the Council's priority of returning empty properties into use in the valleys area of Bridgend County Borough, to help generate communities and provide more choice and suitable accommodation for residents. Three projects are completed and the Council has committed to phase two to ensure a further year of funding.

We have also begun delivering a pilot foundational economy project B-Ridges in Bridgend and Maesteg town centres. The project will trial new approaches and create a support package for start-up businesses linked to the foundation economy. As defined by Welsh Government, this consists of basic services and products that people rely on, that keep the population safe, sound and civilised. Welsh Government provided £75,000 of the £100,000 total cost, with the 'Kickstart' funding programme supplementing the funding gap.

Work is underway with both the Bryngarw and Parc Slip discovery sites as part of the Valleys Regional Park (VRP) investment programme. Working with delivery partners AWEN (Bryngarw Park) and Wildlife Trust (Parc Slip) both schemes aim to maximise the social, economic and environmental potential of the valleys' natural, cultural and heritage assets.

Caerau Heat Scheme and Bridgend Town Heat Network Project

The Caerau Heat Scheme is an innovative project. The project aims to provide a sustainable low carbon source of heat for hundreds of homes in Caerau. The scheme forms part of our approach towards responding to the decarbonisation agenda through the delivery of our Smart Energy Plan. The project gathered further momentum during 2019-20.

The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) approved additional funding of £330,000, with a total grant offer of approx. £7.3 million. Nordic Heat were procured to deliver the technical and financial advice to the project and will support the development of an outline business case through to procurement. Work is progressing on a private wire from a local wind farm to provide electricity to the scheme. Options for the commercial delivery of the scheme are also being looked at.

The Bridgend Town Heat Network Project aims to supply several public buildings and homes with heat and power. Energy will be generated from a gas combined heat and power unit in the Bridgend Life Centre. We received a funding award of £241,000 from the Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) to conduct pre-commercialisation activities. This includes planning permission for the scheme, internal approval for the revised financial model and seeking approval from Council to provide borrowing for the construction of the scheme. A further £1m of capital funding is also available up until March 2021 subject to the project successfully passing through the pre-commercialisation stage.

TACKLING POVERTY

Financial well-being

The debt burden associated with poverty can be extreme. Debt affects people's ability to make decisions, including financial decisions, causing them to focus on short-term income over long-term gains, among other effects. Supporting people to manage their finances has a significant role to play in reducing future poverty.

The Housing Benefit and Supporting People teams collaborated to procure financial advice and support services from Citizens Advice. The service ran from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2020 with an option to extend for a further year. The service, known as Financial Advice and Support Service (FASS) supports people in poverty or at risk of poverty due to any of the following reasons

- Debt problems
- Financial difficulty

- Unemployment (claiming benefits, including Universal Credit (UC))
- In work poverty
- Budget management issues

The FASS service have supported 617 new clients, 83% of these clients residing in the former Communities First areas of Bridgend County Borough. The service reported almost £20,000 of debt written off and over £1million in financial gains achieved. This was mainly through welfare benefit applications.

Bridgend Learning Partnership

Having the right skills to access quality jobs is a key route out of poverty. As a member of the Bridgend Learning Partnership, we work with partners to improve the skills level of the workforce in to tackle inequality by getting more people into work and better paid jobs.

The Partnership has continued to promote apprenticeship opportunities, particularly to under represented groups. Over 3,000 students aged 11 to 16 attended 'Have a Go events ' held in schools across the borough. The days are interactive and provide students with the opportunity to experience the wide range of apprenticeship opportunities available locally and nationally. The board also promoted the benefits of the apprenticeship programme to local businesses via business meetings and well-being events.

Seventy-two young people are undertaking the junior apprenticeship programme at Bridgend College. Students attend 5 days a week and study Maths and English GCSE as well as their chosen vocational route, and nine young people with additional learning needs have completed the Intern Programme at the Princess of Wales Hospital.

Employability

Employability Bridgend has had a successful year, with a very effective outreach and engagement strategy. This included 19 drop in sessions weekly and 12 engagement events and fun days to raise awareness of the support available. During 2019-20, we supported 1,254 participants from across Bridgend County Borough. Some 334 people entered employment. We worked with people currently in jobs, to further their development and improve their job prospects through training and mentoring. Some 204 people took up this offer of in work learning.

Volunteering is another avenue we utilise to help people progress. During the year, 93 participants volunteered. This is a very effective way of learning new skills and identifying new job routes, while at the same time having a positive impact on well-being. Training is an essential aspect of the employability support. 350 participants went on courses to improve their skill set and increase their chances of gaining employment or to find better jobs. While numbers tell one part of the story, the real impact on people's lives and families is best understood through the words on one of our participants.

Case Study: Employability

Davinia had been unemployed for several years and wanted a change of direction. She had some training in electrical work but felt she was struggling to get her foot in the door of the construction industry. She wanted to show her teenage daughter that women could achieve anything they set their mind to.

A neighbour recommended she go to the local Life Centre to meet with Employability Bridgend, which she did. Once signed up, Davinia was put on a CSCS course and received support with travel costs. She passed the CSCS course and her mentor supported her to secure employment through Bluewater Recruitment.

Davinia says, "Best decision ever coming to meet you... can't believe the help I had on my doorstep, it baffles me to why people aren't queuing at your door, thanks so much for everything."

Vulnerable learners

We continued to work with schools to close the gap in educational attainments for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not and improve outcomes for vulnerable groups including looked after children and young carers. In the 2018-2019 academic year (reported in the 2019-2020 financial year), the gap in performance at key stage 4 between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not, was smaller than the all-Wales average at 28.8% compared with 32.1%. All activities to drive forward our agenda in support of pupils eligible for free school meals were completed apart from one. Changes to the structure of some resources planned to provide targeted support to vulnerable learners in having their educational needs met were delayed. These resources are now reconfigured and the new 'Access to Education Team' will focus strongly on supporting the narrowing the gap agenda in 2020-2021. A profiling tool is being offered to all schools to track wellbeing progress in children who are looked after and young carers.

We continued to work with CSC to support schools in implementing the 'Closing the gap' strategy. The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) forum was launched in December 2019. This work is ongoing. Meetings have been held with Bridgend College to look at the young people that we currently have within the education system whose pathway may be Bridgend College.

Work with Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus to identify and support young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) through the 'Inspire to Work' Project continued. These partnerships have resulted in getting more participants into employment than was originally projected. To further our partnership links, plans were in place to house Inspire 2 Work staff in Job Centres throughout the borough to simplify the offer of support when a young person presents. With the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, these plans have been put on hold. These plans will need to be amended, but the drive from all parties is to co-locate staff to enhance partnership arrangements.

Well-being Objective 2

Helping people to be more self-reliant

Why we choose this objective?

Providing the right support, in the right place, at the right time can make a real difference to outcomes and ensure individuals and families can thrive. A people centred approach with a focus on prevention and wellbeing helps ensure we support people to lead independent lives and reduces the likelihood of becoming dependent on Council services.

By building on our track record of working with the third sector, the not-for-profit and private sector, we can support communities to develop their own approaches to local issues and meet people's needs within the community.

What do we want to achieve?

Our aims

1. To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information;
2. To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes;
3. To support the third sector, town and community Councils and community groups to build community resilience.

Key Programmes

Under this objective, there are two key programmes to help achieve our aims and deliver improvements in well-being.

Remodelling Social Care

- We will continue with this large programme of recommissioning adult home care, developing extra care and information and advice services for people and their carers.
- Working with partners, we are implementing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a single point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
- We are implementing new models of residential care for children and young people and respite care for children with disabilities in order to make them more targeted and more effective.

Community Asset Transfer

This programme is about the sustainable transfer of assets to communities as a way to preserve community assets for the long-term and contribute to building community resilience.

How did we do?

Performance Measures

Set out below is how we performed against the performance measures we set ourselves to meet this well-being objective and what we achieved in 2019-20 against our two key programmes.

Aim – To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The percentage of a) adults b) children who received advice and assistance from the information, advice and assistance service during the year. (Higher)	a) 74.36%	65%	63.91%	↓	N/A
	b) 81.37%	75%	80.06%	↓	N/A
Target marginally missed. Staffing cover has been a challenge for the service. As transformation funding became available, recruitment has taken place towards the latter quarter of the year to mitigate this.					
The percentage of people who are satisfied with the care and support they received (Higher) a) Children aged 7-17 years b) Adults aged 18 years+	a) 86%	85%	*N/A	N/A	*N/A
	b) 82.87%	85 %	*N/A	N/A	
The number of people who have been diverted from mainstream services to help them remain independent for as long as possible. (Higher)	1284	1000	1508	↑	N/A
The percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement and six months later have (Higher) : a) a reduced package of care and support b) no package of care and support	a) 67.27%	70%	71.43%	↑	N/A
	b) 61.31%	60%	68.48%	↑	N/A

*Data no longer collected as per Welsh government decision to cancel this survey

Aim – To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family (Higher)	64.13%	65%	62.83%	↓	N/A
Ongoing monitoring of caseloads to ensure care and support cases are appropriately closed or stepped down to Early Help has resulted in stable workloads, whilst LAC numbers also remained stable. The effect of these 2 factors means our performance is consistently close to target and will continue to be monitored.					
The percentage of children who receive Connecting Families interventions during the year who remain out of the care system as at 31 March of that year (Higher)	93.4%	85%	92.5%	↓	N/A
The percentage of completed TAF (Team Around the Family) support plans that close with a successful outcome (Higher)	69%	72%	70%	↑	N/A

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
A greater number of cases were 'stepped up' to statutory services. This was the right outcome given the presenting circumstances. As these are recorded as TAFs closing without a positive outcome, it reflects negatively on performance.					
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year (Lower)	10.24%	12%	9.39%	↑	N/A
The percentage of individuals discussed at Transition Panel that have a transition plan in place by age of 16/17 (Higher)	100%	100%	100%	↔	N/A
The percentage of households threatened with homelessness successfully prevented from becoming homeless (Higher)	70.6%	70%	66.2%	↓	N/A
The latter part of the year saw the transition from the old operating system to Jigsaw, which coincided with an increase in the level of, drop ins who were homeless and required immediate response. Covid 19 had limited impact on these figures but will have a significant impact going forward, as there will be a large increase in final duties due to new WG guidelines regarding priority need status. In addition, the lockdown hampered the usual preventative actions we have been able to undertake.					
The percentage of people presenting as homeless or potentially homeless, for whom the local authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation (Lower)	8.1%	11.85%	10.51%	↓	N/A
The percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year (Lower)	5.88%	13%	8%	↓	N/A
The percentage of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority (Higher)	8.41%	5%	PAM* no data available		
The number of dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use (Higher)	New 2019-20	5	20	New 2019-20	N/A
The percentage of people who feel they are able to live more independently as a result of receiving a Disabled Facilities Grant in their home. (Higher)	100%	80%	98.1%	↓	N/A

*Public Accountability Measure

Aim – To support the third sector, town and community Councils and community groups to meet local needs

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The number of adults who received a service provided through a social enterprise, cooperative, user-led service or third sector organisation during the year (Higher)	529	480	526	↓	N/A
The number of Council owned assets transferred to the community for running (Higher)	4	5	4	↔	N/A
The Community Asset Transfer Policy was revised to enable applications to be Fast Tracked and the process speeded up with only a 5-Year Financial Forecast needed. Additional support and incentives for community groups and in particular sports clubs designed to stimulate community asset transfers are now in place.					

Steps taken to achieve our key programmes

We made 12 commitments to support the delivery of this well-being objective, through our two key programmes and our early help initiatives. All 12 commitments were met and within budget. We have therefore assessed our performance as **green**.

Remodelling social care

Adult Social Care- Information, Advice Assistance

The Common Access Point (CAP) is a single point of access enabling service that provides accessible health and well-being information and advice that supports people to self-manage their needs and maintain their independence. Providing high quality and reliable information ensures people can access help and assistance should it be required, in a timely manner.

The CAP is for people who need access to Adult Social Care with the exception of Learning Disability and Mental Health services. To support Mental Health services, there is an information and signposting service. Those needing help can be directed to GPs or can attend a drop in information clinic located throughout Bridgend County Borough. This service assists in identifying where specialist assessments are required and through the Assisted Recovery in the Community Service.

To ensure the benefit of quality information and advice can reach as many people as possible, we invested our resources to provide information centres within and across communities. We worked with BAVO (Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations) to develop and deliver strategic programmes and interventions such as Connected Communities.

Connected Communities

The “Connected Communities” project aims to support older adults, people with learning disabilities and carers of vulnerable people to develop their support networks within their communities.

This project has enabled BAVO to recruit staff and help support people with information, advice and assistance (IAA), community based support to maintain or enhance independence and well-being and to connect or signpost people to appropriate community opportunities that meet their needs. This has complemented the local community co-ordinator roles within the Council, helping to create a network across Bridgend County Borough.

Connected communities recognises the need for “community building” to create sustainable community opportunities that can support access to community activities such as craft groups, activity programmes and well-being sessions. Support is also available to address housing concerns, welfare benefits and make connections to health and social care via the Common Access Point. BAVO have also been able to provide telephone support for people during evenings, weekends and bank holidays. The Council and BAVO worked together on the project to harness the third sectors potential to support community well-being and develop new ways of working. By doing this we have been able to identify opportunities to support more people in the community. Over 200 local people are benefitting and this figure is set to grow. The number of organisations making referrals is increasing, as is the range of community groups offering their services to support people

There are examples of local people taking up alternatives to care visits to home or attending day services- helping to reduce demand on these services. The case study below perfectly demonstrates the impact of this project on an individual level

Case Study:

Mrs P is 85 years old and lives alone. She had always been an active member of the community, through hobbies and interest groups. A number of falls had dented her confidence and she was worried about a planned hip operation

The community navigator met Mrs P at a Friendship Coffee Morning. She raised her concerns about how she would cope following the operation. The community navigator put her in touch with the charity Age Connect Morgannwg. They have a Hospital to Home service that provides 6-8 weeks of support for people over 50 discharged from hospital.

After the operation Mrs P had been reasonably active and mobile, but her mobility and confidence was again worsening due to her right knee. The community navigator provided support, helping Mrs P:

- to contact her GP and seek medical advice for her knee condition
- to make a referral to Care & Repair
- to apply for a Blue Badge,

Mrs P herself illustrates the impact of the support provided best:

“I have more peace of mind setting out to go shopping, knowing that I can park close to the shop. I was tending to put things off because I worry about how far I will have to walk from the car to the supermarket and back.....Much happier now I know GP has visited and is going to speak to other people to support me’.

Towards the end of the year, we received additional funding to recruit volunteers, which proved to be an invaluable resource during the pandemic and lockdown. The Council and CVCs (County Volunteer Councils) streamlined their approach to recruiting volunteers, with Covid-19 creating a sense of urgency around this issue. There is a real opportunity to sustain the volunteering spirit that has emerged during the pandemic, to support longer-term community development.

Carers

All carers should feel that they have voice, choice and control over their lives and that they have the right support to make informed choices. During 2019-20, we carried out extensive engagement and consultation with service users, families and stakeholders to co-produce a vision for our carers' service. We estimate that we have 18,000 unpaid carers in the borough of which around 1,600 are known to us.

The outcome of the engagement work was to commission a new Bridgend Carers Well-being Service with a priority to offer outreach to as many previously unidentified carers as possible.

This new service has a Carers Panel made up of 12 local carers. The new service is undertaking what matters conversations and carers assessments for carers, and is establishing a presence at community venues around the borough. It is anticipated this approach will support the process of promoting more 'carer-friendly' communities

Carers choir: Case Study

“Off Duty”, the Bridgend Carers Choir was formed in 2019. It was set up to provide some “me time” for carers in a welcoming and fun atmosphere, surrounded by people with similar experiences. Originally supported by the Council, Awen Cultural Trust and Bridgend Carers Centre, the choir has gone from strength to strength. This year they worked to expand opportunities for community based singing connecting more people into the choir.

The group have performed at a number of public events and produced their own song “Strong” written by Izzy Thomas the choir’s conductor. The song was recorded by students at Bridgend College and used as part of a media campaign by Carers UK with all the proceeds going to the charity.’ The choir showcased the song at the Councils celebratory *inspire for life* event in March 2020.

Group singing is evidenced to support better well-being and is an effective way of bonding people and together. Members of the choir say the singing helps with memory and report improved happiness and well-being. Being together as a choir has supported the carers to share experiences whilst having a common focus of singing together.



During 2019-20

- The Bridgend Carers Wellbeing service provided support to 1,263 unique individual Carers;
- 392 Adult Carers Assessments were completed and 99 Young Carers Assessments;
- Action for Children continue to support young carers, providing access to relevant information advice and assistance. 31 young carers received support, where feedback showed that:
 - 100% reported improvement in emotional and mental well-being;
 - 97% reported improvement in family relationships; and
 - 95% felt they could make positive changes in lifestyle and behaviour because of the support received
- During the Covid-19 lockdown period a further 34 young carers were supported via digital platforms. There with 11 carers who received more intensive one to one telephone support and 10 families received emergency grants for food and activities.

Young carers group

Since October 2019, the young carers group meets once a week. The 35 young carers access health and well-being sessions delivered by an experienced youth worker. The weekly breakfast sessions are an opportunity for young carers to socialise with their peers and take a break from their caring responsibilities. The group have become a support network for one another and other

young carers. They have held fund-raisers to support their activities and raise awareness of young carers within the wider community. Recently they were awarded winners of the Mayors Citizenship Award.

Childrens social care: Early help

Since 2016, Children Social Care has been remodelling its services so that services focus on delivering early help and effective permanence arrangements. The service is designed to improve and promote outcomes for children and young people in the County Borough of Bridgend.

During 2019-20 there was an increase in the range of 'Universal, Additional and Vulnerable' services that assist with supporting children and their families to prevent their circumstances deteriorating and becoming more complex.

What we have done for universal services:

- Helped children and young people develop healthy behaviours
- Delivered a programme of events under the "Getting Bridgend Moving" that include activities targeting children and young people
- Developed a positive parenting programmes and partnerships with Flying Start
- Invested in early years and whole household approaches- recognising the importance of the 'First 1000 days' of a child's life

We have also changed the way we work to provide better outcomes. There has been a growing engagement with primary and secondary schools. We recognise the potential of schools to contribute to Ageing Well in Bridgend through intergenerational working and the development of age friendly communities. Closer working with schools is critical to develop the knowledge of teachers of how to refer and access appropriate services as required.

What we have done for additional services:

When children and young people need additional support to help them meet their full potential, accessing timely and appropriate early help can prevent issues from escalating and increase the likelihood that any intervention will succeed.

Early help in Bridgend delivers services in three Early Help Hubs located in the north, east and west of Bridgend County Borough. In addition, a central hub offers a range of specific family support services across the whole of Bridgend County Borough.

Within each hub, there are a range of professionals who can offer support to children and their families. Referrals are through a 'one front door' route from numerous agencies including schools and by self-referral. Early hubs use a team around the family approach, with 1,203 families supported during 2019-20.

High quality universal and additional services are the building blocks of effective early help. We will continue to develop the service so that it better supports Information, Advice and Assistance by improving content and making certain information is clear, concise and provides confidence. This will help ensure contacts and referrals to Children Services receive the appropriate level of service at the right time. We will streamline pathways between services and work closely with other professionals to advise how services should be accessed appropriately.

Services for vulnerable children

There has been significant service transformation to meet the needs of vulnerable children. These changes have led to better outcomes with a reduction in the number of children placed in out of county accommodation. In the five years between 2014 and 2019 the number of looked after children reduced from 412 to 381. Though the most recent data shows a slight increase (394 as of

31st March 2020), intensive interventions continued to be made to help children from becoming looked after.

Performance data

	Number of individual children worked with	Number of families worked with	% of children prevented from becoming looked after	% of children removed from CP Register	% of children closed to Children's Social Care
2018-2019	146	72	88.5%	54.0%	10.3%
2019-2020	115	59	92.5%	44.8%	23.5%

Our work focuses on reunifying families where this has been a necessity and the delivery of parenting groups including:

- Non-Violent Resistance – Parenting programme for children who are displaying challenging and aggressive behaviours.
- Incredible Years – Parenting programme for younger children exploring attachment, routines, boundaries and play.
- Grobrain – Early years programme for parents with babies looking at secure attachment, interactions and play.
- Connecting Dads – a programme for fathers looking at their role as a Dad and the importance of this.
- Chill Out Group – Group for teenagers looking at anxiety and stress management and strategies to deal with this.

How we assess need

To ensure that we appropriately identify need and provide the right support to families, we use the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes.

The JAFF is a standardised approach to assessing a child’s needs and deciding how these should be met. The JAFF promotes more effective, earlier identification of additional needs particularly in universal services. It aims to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of child’s needs and strengths. The process takes into account the roles of parents, carers and environmental factors on a child’s development. Practitioners are better placed to agree with children and families about appropriate modes of support. A TAF is required when the family require support from different services to meet their identified needs.

In 2019-20, we received 2,147 JAFF referrals, 28% of these were from schools and 31% from health services. 1,065 JAFF assessments were undertaken resulting in 399 TAF action plans. 70% of these were closed with a successful outcome, which is an indicator that the family’s needs have reduced.

Transition services

A key outcome for effective transitioning for looked after children has been the development of supported and semi-supported living accommodation. This has increased the range and capacity of our accommodation. There are now seven transitional supported accommodation beds, and four step down beds. These are designed to offer young people flexible staffing support to ‘step down’ from care environments that had 24 hour support. It is intended this service model will support care

leavers to move onto more permanent and independent housing accommodation. These new options have reduced the pressure on the Homelessness service. Previously this was the only way for carer leavers to access supported accommodation, and has made transitioning planning more effective. Regionally we will work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to identify how they can engage as appropriate to joint work cases in transition and ensure that children receive effective and equitable health services.

Fostering services

Bridgend foster care assess, recruit and support a wide range of carers. This includes general foster carers, relatives, parent and child, transitional family link, supported lodgings and When I'm Ready households.

During 2019-20 we targeted the recruitment of new carers in a number of ways

- Contributing to the National Fostering Framework to develop the all Wales brand 'Foster Wales'
- Promotional events to raise the profile of fostering – including attending school fetes, working with local church communities, and an evening in Court Coleman
- Multiple online campaigns
- New referral scheme for existing carers
- MAX cards that give foster carers discounted or free admission to activities



During 2019-20, we exceeded our target by recruiting, eight new generic foster carer households, and 14 connected persons (or kinship) carers were approved. Thirteen fostering households left the service, the majority due to significant changes in their personal circumstances. Three households were adopting the children and young people already in their care. We terminated the approval of two carers due to safeguarding concerns.

During 2019-20 we also developed new services. The “mother and baby service” is an innovative approach to the demand for high supervision of parent and baby, forming part of the parenting assessment within proceedings. It can be a direct alternative to residential care or can be a preferred resource in its own right. Reunification Support Workers is a recent new service. The objective of the service is to prevent a potential breakdown of a foster care placement.

The introduction of transitional foster carers has been an important addition. These carers are experienced short-term carers who have a therapeutic approach to parenting. The role of the carers is to use their parenting skills to prepare children for transition to a permanent placement this might be within fostering or reunited with their family.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Bridgend MASH brings together key professionals, either co-located or virtually, to ensure better decision making through timely information sharing and robust analysis ensuring effective safeguarding for vulnerable children, young people and adults. This way of working ensures MASH can identify needs early and respond proportionately leading to better outcomes for service users.

As part of our continuous improvement approach to service delivery, MASH monitors and reviews its processes and systems in line with the needs of services. The MASH are about to implement the Mhub system, a bespoke multi agency information management system which will further enhance the sharing of information between partner agencies.

We have also improved the process for assessing Public Protection Notifications (PPNs) in relation to children. All PPNs are now subject to the Joint Filtering Process which involves three services (Information Advice Assistance, Early Help and Police) collaboratively agreeing how best to meet the needs of the child. This ensures speedier decision-making and reduces the risk of any delays in response. There is also a collective agreement on whether the PPN meets the threshold for an intervention or would be better serviced by a referral to the BAVO social navigator who sits within MASH. In 2019-20, there were 6,351 contacts in relation to children to the Information Advice Assistance service. There were 3,119 contacts to our Early Help team and 325 Adult Safeguarding referrals.

Case Study: High Risk Victim of Domestic Abuse

A high-risk repeat victim of domestic violence and abuse is one of the most difficult cases that the MASH receives. Ensuring the safety and well-being of the service user requires a timely multi-agency response to address the diverse range of risks and issues. Such a referral was made to the MASH as soon as the incident had been risk assessed and is an example of how effective collaboration across sectors can provide life changing support for the most vulnerable in our community.

Upon receipt of the referral, the case was presented at the Daily Discussion meeting, which is a multi-agency risk assessment conference to agree an immediate safety plan and the long-term actions to ensure the safety of the service user. The agencies involved include police, health, child protection, adult protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

The case involved physical, mental, emotional and financial abuse as well as stalking. To provide appropriate support required drawing on a wide range of partners to help:

- Police provided a TESCOS alarm (panic alarm) which would immediately alert police to respond
- IDVA supported the service user to navigate the criminal court proceedings and liaised with the prosecution to request an application for special measures and a restraining order.
- IDVA contacted the prison service to stop the aggressor contacting the service user
- A debt management plan was put in place to help her manage debts affordably
- With lower rent arrears she was eligible to be put on the housing register- and was moved to a new location before the aggressor was due to be released from prison
- Additional safety measures were added to make the property secure along with a fire safety assessment by SWFR
- Police put a marker on the new address- meaning any calls to police would be prioritised

With these measures in place, the service user was able to focus on her mental health supported by her GP. The family are now back under one roof, and she is more confident to rebuild her life. The IDVA will monitor the release of the aggressor and keep the service user informed.

Community Asset Transfer

Community Asset Transfers (CAT) is one of the key ways in which Councils can help build community resilience and safeguard services and assets that are of value to the community. The Council's CAT Policy was revised to include a 'Fast Track' protocol to streamline the process and is appropriate to the scale of the asset being considered. During 2019-20, the following assets were transferred to the community.

Pencoed Pavilion (*Pencoed Town Council*) – The transfer of the Pavilion was completed in March 2020 following a refurbishment funded by the Council and the Town Council at a cost of more than £90,000. The Pavilion has been closed since March 2018 following storm damage and is due to be re-opened for the local playgroup and sports clubs.

Griffin Park Health & Wellbeing Centre (*Porthcawl Town Council*) – The Town Council has taken over day to day running of the centre on a renewable management agreement while the development of a new road scheme for Sandy Bay is being progressed by the Council. The facility is currently used to support veterans.

Caerau Community Centre (*Caerau Development Trust*) – The charity has agreed a short-term lease to enable solar panels to be installed while a long-term 35 year lease is being progressed.

Great Western Avenue Play Area (*Coity Higher Community Council*) - The Community Council has taken over the responsibility for the play areas in Coity and introduced a programme of refurbishment jointly funded under the Council's T&CC Capital Grant Scheme. Funding of £30,000 was awarded for two projects costing £60,000.

Improving places and spaces

To support the community have greater voice and control over assets, the Council has established a £1million CAT fund. This fund will enable buildings such as pavilions to be improved post transfer. The fund was extended to also be used to support pitch improvements and to provide equipment grants to enable the self-management of facilities. An additional model has seen several town and community Council's progress arrangements to manage sports pavilions. This community ownership model may in time include playing fields.

The Council has created its own £75,000 Bridgend Sport Support fund to provide immediate financial assistance to local sporting clubs. Originally intended to focus on mini, junior and youth teams involved in the CAT process it has been broadened in recognition of current pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

There has been continued partnership working with national governing bodies. Football Association Wales supported a review of school and community resources to identify potential sites for community hub models.

A similar project has commenced with the Welsh Rugby Union at the Parc Derwen site in Coity with the development of an 'alternative rugby' hub. The project has already seen the site adopted as the home of the Welsh Touch Rugby Association and Wales Deaf Rugby will be using it for their training camps. The WRU intend to use the site for festivals as part of their seasonal realignment project. It is hoped it will become a hub for coach education.

Early Intervention and prevention programmes

Although not identified as one of our key programmes, one of our aims is ‘to reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes’. During 2019-20, we continued to develop our approach and took steps to improving well-being by delivering community based initiatives that focus on early intervention and prevention. Some of the key achievements are set out below.

Children’s Play – Activity pods

We strongly believe in the importance of play in children’s lives and the benefits it gives to their health, happiness and well-being. It is also important in laying the foundation for each child in reaching their full potential during their adult life. To help the Welsh Government achieve its commitment that Wales becomes a country where every child has a wide range of challenging and interesting opportunities to play, we offer innovative ways to help children enjoy their leisure time.

The activity pod programme, developed in partnership with the reuse charity ‘Scrap Store’, offers outdoor play opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1. The charity diverts reusable waste away from landfill/energy recovery to help improve art and play opportunities. Scrap materials such as cardboard tubes, tyres, lengths of material, netting, ropes, crates, and bins are used to create innovative and interesting spaces to play.



Schools are provided with the scrap material and poddely (a type of play equipment) to allow them to make their own play environment that best meets their pupils needs and maximises opportunities for play, sport and physical activity. To safeguard the long-term sustainability of the programme, training is provided to all schools. This ensures there are the right skills and confidence to take full advantage of the activity pod.

The programme supports children’s inventiveness and creativity. This results in children using the items in endless different ways, enabling all ages, genders and abilities to find ways to play and socialise together. The reuse principle of the activity pod also makes a positive impact on the environment.

New Generation of Community Health and Well-being Centres

During the year there have been improvement works taking place at Bridgend Life Centre to continue our aspiration of creating a series of wellbeing hubs to support the wellbeing of people for generations to come.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act has increased our focus on ensuring our leisure facilities move with the times and recognise the changing needs of people. During 2019-20, Audit Wales carried out an in-depth examination of our Active Bridgend plan and identified a number of positive aspects of our approach. This included our focus on long-term planning to ensure the sustainability of our services to improve health and well-being.

The development of our leisure facilities as Life Centres with a broad range of services and facilities is now moving to the next level of integration. We are working with partners to provide an even

broader mix of facilities. The outcomes will focus on dementia support, falls prevention, combatting loneliness and isolation and physical and mental well-being.

Through our Healthy Living Partnership with Halo Leisure, we secured a £750,000 investment to transform the Indoor Bowls Centre in Bridgend to create our first well-being hub. Completed in October 2019, the new facilities include studio spaces for targeted programmes, meeting and training rooms, consultation spaces and a larger office base for strategic services. There was additional investment towards the end of the year to improve accessibility. This included adapted fitness equipment for people with physical disabilities, new sensory equipment to support mental well-being initiatives and an improved lift system and access to the building.

The exercise referral programme is now located in the hub, which has over 2,000 referrals per year. The programme supports conditions such as Parkinson's, stroke, pulmonary rehabilitation and falls prevention. The venue also supports the Feel Good for Life programme for people living with dementia and their carers. The programme won the Community Leisure UK award for physical activity. Through our partnership with BAVO a base for the third sector has been created and the Employability Bridgend programme has co-located its staff and services within the Life Centre. This focus on co-location and accessibility of facilities and services will be expanded to other locations.

Super Agers

The Council has been successful in securing investment for a regional programme from the Healthy and Active fund to develop a "Super Agers" project. The Super Agers is a collaborative project and includes third sector, health board, public health and the local authorities in the region. The aim is to develop age-friendly communities, recognising the health and well-being benefits this brings to older adults

Super-Agers was launched at the 2019 'Olympage' games. There were 10 teams with 239 participants, including for the first time regional teams from RCT and Merthyr Tydfil. There are now similar opportunities taking place in community hubs, programmes for people with learning disabilities, in community centres and leisure/cultural venues and in independent care settings.



A series of workshops were also conducted with Bridgend College social care students who support activity-based work with older adults including the Olympage programme.

To support Super Agers in the home, there is an 'Active at Home' resource, which includes tai chi, seated exercise videos, a home activity tracker, pedometer and thera band. 124 participants have received these resources, with packs also available for those digitally excluded.

Housing and homelessness

During 2019–20, we made strides in meeting the key aims set out in our Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and subsequent action plan. Tackling housing and homelessness requires a multi-agency response. The Council adopts a proactive approach with partners to tackle rough sleeping.

During the year, developments have included:

- afternoon drop in sessions at local churches for rough sleepers,
- 5 hours of day time support provided for rough sleepers every day Monday to Friday
- frequent meetings and information sharing with key third sector partners

- creation of a specific Street Vulnerable MARAC which allows for multi-agency support to tackle rough sleeping on an ongoing basis

We continue to work with our partners to deliver services funded through the Housing Support Grant. During 2019-20, we awarded contracts to allow continued provision for two key projects:

- **Alternative to Bed & Breakfast Accommodation**, suitable accommodation with specialist support to those who we offer temporary accommodation. These units ensure those in temporary accommodation are supported to develop independent living skills to help secure long-term accommodation. The service ensures less reliance on unsuitable Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- **Kerrigan Project** provides for the continuation of longer-term supported accommodation for those with multiple and complex needs. Support staff on site 24/7 work with individuals to develop independent living skills to support a move on into independent accommodation. The project also provides step down accommodation for those with lower level support needs and 'Floor Space', which, provides a direct access, night by night accommodation service to those, who would otherwise be rough sleeping.

Successful funding bids to Welsh Government Youth Homelessness Innovation Fund has brought additional funding to allow for the development of a Housing First youth project (in partnership with Caer Las) and an Assessment Centre (in partnership with Llamau). Both projects have increased our provision to young persons who find themselves homeless.

We put in place a single point of contact, the Housing Support Gateway for those looking to access or refer to housing support services. We improved on-line capabilities with the launch of our new case management system, 'Housing Jigsaw' that allows people to make an application for housing through the BCBC website.

We continued our work with the Home Office and Welsh Government to support the Syrian Refugee Relocation Scheme. We welcomed four additional families into Bridgend County Borough throughout 2019-20.

Case Study – Housing First

Our Housing First service, delivered in partnership with Caer Las, provides an alternative method of support, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness for some of the areas most entrenched and complex rough sleepers. 'Paul' (an anonymised name) was one of the first individuals supported through the project.

Paul was rough sleeping and had issues with alcohol dependency. Evicted from various temporary accommodation placements, Paul had never been able to maintain a tenancy and relations with family and friends had broken down. Housing First undertook pre tenancy work, which included building a relationship with Paul and addressing his concerns regarding his ability to maintain accommodation. After two months Paul was allocated a property through the Housing First steering group. Working with Paul, he was supported to do things for himself including setting up payments for utilities, securing furnishings and decorating the house to make it home

Paul has now been living in his property for around 9 months and is having reduced support, after gaining experience and confidence in managing his own tenancy. In line with the principles of Housing First the project is not however looking to completely end support to Paul until we can be completely confident that his support needs are completely addressed.

Empty Properties

Empty properties are a wasted resource and have many negative impacts, which can be categorised under three headings:

- **social**, such as crime including arson, graffiti, squatting, as well as reduced public confidence in the area or the Council
- **environmental**, including rodent infestation, fly tipping, dangerous structures, and a poor impression of the area
- **economic**, such as repair costs, increased burdens on Councils' resources, property devaluation, deterred investment

Over the last few years, the Council has developed many tools and approaches to encourage empty homes back into use. This included the removal of the 50% council tax reduction for properties empty for six months or longer, as well as investing grant monies and loans to support owners of empty properties. During 2019-20, thirty-four properties were renovated, creating 20 additional homes.

Most recently, we entered into a service level agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to allow them to deliver an empty property loan scheme in eligible rural parts of Bridgend County. The loan scheme is funded by the Valleys Task Force empty homes grant. The scheme aims to support the valleys area of Bridgend County helping to regenerate communities, provide choice and suitable accommodation for residents.

Well-being Objective 3

Smarter use of resources

Why we choose this objective?

Over the period 2018-19 to 2021-22, the Council is expected to make recurrent budget reductions of some £32.6 million. For 2019-20, our target budget reduction was £7.621 million and as in previous years, we continue to be committed to finding at least 50% of these reductions for the year by making smarter use of resources, and minimising any reductions in services. As austerity continues, it becomes harder each year to make further budget reductions, but this year we continued to seek ways of working to save us money, primarily by making smarter use of our resources, including our people and our buildings, and making the most of the assets we retain.

What do we want to achieve?

Our aims

1. To achieve the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. To improve the efficiency of and access to services by redesigning our systems and processes.
3. To work collaboratively to make the most of public assets.
4. To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation.

Key Programmes

Under this objective, there are three key programmes to help achieve our aims and deliver improvements in well-being:

Digital Transformation Programme

This programme aims to change the way we operate to enable customers to access information, advice and services on line.

Rationalising the Council's Estate

This programme is about disposing of assets, transferring assets to communities to manage while making the most of assets we retain.

School Modernisation Programme –

This programme invests in a sustainable education system in school buildings that reduces cost and their carbon footprint

How did we do?

Performance Measures

Set out below is how we performed against the performance measures we set ourselves to meet this well-being objective and what we achieved in 2018-19 against our three key programmes.

Aim - To achieve the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018- 19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The percentage of budget reductions achieved (Higher)	91.7%	100%	89.4%	N/A	N/A
Not all saving measures actioned achieved full year savings as they were implemented part way through the financial period, with some not realising as much as anticipated, however overall the budget outturn showed an underspend due to savings been made elsewhere.					

Aim -To improve the efficiency of and access to services by redesigning our systems and processes

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The number of new services that are available to the public on line. (Higher)	5	3	2	↓	N/A
School transport applications and the Housing Jigsaw solution were put on line. A lot of work was done to configure, set up and test the online reporting tool with the aim to go live in March. Due to the Covid-19 issues that arose, this was not achieved but will be revisited at some point in the future.					

Aim - To work collaboratively to make the most of public assets

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The percentage of surplus capacity of school places in a) primary schools b) secondary schools (Lower)	a) 4.89%	10%	9.36%	↓	N/A
	b) 22.01%	18%	20.65%	↑	N/A
Changes in demographics and use of spaces has resulted in a reduction in surplus places in the secondary sector.					
Realisation of capital receipts target (Higher)	£1,821 million	£2.8 million	£794,000	N/A	N/A
The sale of Ysgol Bryn Castell was delayed by Covid 19 but contracts were exchanged and the sale receipt of £2.6 million will now be achieved in 2020/21.					
Percentage of £500k planned budget savings achieved through Implementation of Corporate Landlord model. (Higher)	New 2019-20	100%	95%	New 2019-20	N/A
Within the end of year finance figures the service absorbed an additional known but unbudgeted cost pressures of c. £300,000. This is without the additional impact of Covid-19.					
Percentage of BCBC operational buildings achieve full statutory compliance (Higher)	New for 2019-20	100%	54.6%	New 2019-20	N/A

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
Compliance is below target. This is due to us increasing the compliance testing regime by a further 3000+ items across the estate. This has impacted on the overall percentage performance. We also had issues with external certification. Provision of certificates for the period January to March by contractors were impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown as were the performance of some inspections due during March. Steps have been taken to improve the performance of contractors to ensure full compliance is achieved and maintained.					
Percentage change in carbon dioxide emissions in the non-domestic public building stock on previous year (Higher)	18.98%	6.46%	28.83%	↑	N/A
Income generated from the Council's non-operational property portfolio (Higher)	£29,028	£25,000	£30,000	↑	N/A

Aim – To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation

Measure and preferred outcome (higher or lower)	Actual 2018-19	Target 2019- 20	Actual 2019-20 & RAG	Trend	Wales average
The number of staff taking up in-work health checks (Higher)	New 2019-20	Set baseline	169	New 2019- 20	N/A
The percentage of employees completing e-learning modules (Higher)	54.1%	25%	40.02%	↓	N/A
The number of interactions from citizens on the corporate social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) (Higher)	48,701	41,444	82,422	↑	N/A
Number of participants in staff survey (Higher)	1291	1356	1150	↓	N/A
The survey was made available to 3,054 staff (non-schools) in both Welsh and English in both online and paper formats. Reminders were also published. Despite this less staff completed the survey this year. Although there was a slight reduction in the number of participants, comparison of the tracker questions shows that overall responses were more positive in 2020 compared to 2018.					
The proportion of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statements: (Higher)					
a) I feel every department is working towards the same common goal	a) 35%	36%	37%	↑	N/A
b) I am satisfied with BCBC as an employer	b) 59%	60%	66%	↑	N/A
c) Working here makes me want to perform to the best of my ability	c) 69%	70%	74%	↑	N/A
d) I feel that BCBC values its employees ideas and opinions	d) 31%	32%	39%	↑	N/A
e) Do you think there are opportunities for two-way communication to discuss and raise ideas and issues?	e) 59%	60%	72%	↑	N/A

Steps taken to achieve our Key Programmes

We made 14 commitments to support the delivery of this well-being objective, through our three key programmes. Ten commitments were fully met and within budget, therefore our performance is assessed **green**. Three commitments judged **amber**, as we did not fully achieve what was planned and one assessed **red** because we did not fully complete the planned actions. We did not achieve all we set out to do in rationalising the Council's estate, as there was a delay in marketing the Waterton site and progressing with exit strategies to further reduce our administrative estate. We did not meet our planned budget reductions. However, we did still realise full savings by holding vacancies and making savings elsewhere. We therefore assessed ourselves as amber. We did not make progress in relation to the expansion of Welsh-medium childcare provision, as part of the school modernisation programme, therefore we assessed ourselves as red.

Digital Transformation Programme

The Digital Transformation programme has a citizen centred focus. We listened to the initial feedback from the 2015 budget consultation that 87% of our citizens wanted more council services online, as well as in the 2019 budget consultation where 70% of respondents stated they would support a move to digitalise services.

New, modern functionality also meets the demand of over 85% of our citizens who have access to the internet and prefer the convenience of online transactions (ONS).

In 2018, we launched a new single digital platform (My Account) for citizens to interact with us online for key services. Since launching over 36,000 has registered an online account, with over 16,000 people registering for council tax online and over 11,000 subscribing for eBilling resulting in savings on paper, postage and packaging.

In 2019-20, we received 14,000 online applications for various services including council tax, housing benefit, school admissions and school transport. In addition, 26,286 payments were made by residents using My Account.

By providing more online services and self-serve solutions, it enables us to explore opportunities to streamline and automate current manual processes as well as helping to save money. Work to centralise and automate utility payments was completed during the year, which resulted in reducing transaction costs and late payment charges. Significant work was also undertaken in automating creditor payments.

Our new chatbot "Oggie" was launched in August 2019 to enhance the customer service experience and to reduce contact volume on other traditional channels e.g. telephone face-to-face and emails. The chatbot deals with the more routine customer queries and by being available 24/7/365, it enables the citizen to contact us outside the traditional working hours. Since Oggie was launched, there have been 9,956 online conversations.

Towards the end of January 2020, we also became the first local authority in Wales to launch a new online system for people in need of housing support. The system called "Housing Jigsaw" enables people to sign up for homelessness services or join the housing register. All individual cases are available online which negates the delays previously involved in housing applications and decision-making. By including our housing partners in this journey, the customer gets a faster response and a more efficient solution to their housing needs. Since its launch, there have been 1,017 online transactions made which has also helped us reduce transaction costs as well as printing and postage.

Work to centralise and automate utility payments has reduced the number of utility bills paid each year from approximately 2,860 down to 28, i.e. a single monthly invoice is paid for electricity and gas and a quarterly invoice for water. Individual departments also have access to an on-line portal to see their individual utility invoice and monitor energy consumption over the year.

Whilst some good progress has been made in implementing new functionality within iTrent, our HR system, to streamline key managerial processes there is an ambition to assess further functionality beneficial to our staff and managers and work will continue into 2020-21.

Work has also continued to develop the Council's corporate website. Following an independent accessibility review, the Council's website was named as the most accessible in Wales for disabled people for the second quarter of 2020. The website has been designed to meet level 'AA' – a worldwide standard for websites which aims to make pages as accessible as possible. With innovations in place such as specialist software, which reads out webpage text to support blind people or to make text readable for people with dyslexia or ADHD, the Council's website achieved an overall result of 8/10, putting it among just 17 per cent of all UK Councils who scored seven or more.

At the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, it was evident that digital has enabled citizens to continue engagement with us as we have seen a transition to the digital channel. The intention is to learn from the period of lockdown, assessing the possibilities and opportunities arising from the 'new norm' by further promoting digital services and introducing more innovative ways of working and serving our communities.

Rationalising the Council's Estate

Corporate Landlord Model

We continued to develop a more commercial approach to Council assets and property services. Our Corporate Landlord operating model was fully deployed and operational. During 2019-20, we saw large increases in both productivity and volumes of work completed. This will continue to be enhanced as full condition surveys are completed and a switch is made from responsive repairs to planned preventative maintenance through 2020-21.

A commercial property portfolio review was undertaken, which will help to shape the development of a strategy for the future to deliver accommodation based on supply and demand requirements going forward. The full impact of Covid-19 is not yet fully known, though we recognise that there are significant pressures facing the accommodation portfolio. As we embrace home working it is likely that we will need to look at opportunities to rationalise the administrative estate further and this work will continue into 2020-21.

Disposal of assets

As a Council, we have some 950 assets with a value of circa £454 million and a budget of £14.6 million per annum. We need to ensure where assets are no longer needed, they are disposed of in the most effective way and that the assets we continue to hold are utilised effectively and efficiently.

We continue to rationalise the Council's administrative estate and in particular the leased estate. During 2019, work continued on exit strategies for some of our leased buildings including successfully releasing Kenfig Nature Reserve. Sunnyside House is planned for release in spring 2021.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 the sale of Ysgol Bryn Castell was delayed, resulting in the capital receipt target of £2.8 million for 2019-20 not being achieved. Capital receipts of £794,000 were realised and contracts exchanged for the sale of Ysgol Bryn Castell. The sale will complete in 2020-21. We do remain on target to achieve our enhanced disposals programme target of £21 million capital receipts by 2020-21.

Investment also continued in 2019-20. Grant funding enabled the completion of the redevelopment of the Rest Bay café and water sports centre at Porthcawl. Funding was secured for the Enterprise Hubs and new starter unit developments at Village Farm, which will progress into 2020-21.

At Waterton, our depot site, in conjunction with adjoining land, is being promoted as a comprehensive regeneration opportunity known as Parc Afon Ewenni. Currently, we are working with the adjoining landowners to ensure that the scheme retains its status as an allocated site within the emerging Local Development Plan. This work will continue throughout 2020-2021. Redevelopment options for retention of part of the site for redevelopment of a new depot or school are being reviewed and will be progressed during 2020-21. The site can then be marketed once these have been finalised.

Energy

We continued to undertake engagement, communications and training related to energy and carbon saving initiatives throughout the Council. We conducted energy audits to identify, quantify and prioritise energy saving opportunities within our buildings. We also actively looked to increase the uptake of renewable energy technologies to decrease dependency on fossil fuels.

In early 2018, capital funding was approved for the delivery of energy efficiency improvements in Council owned buildings as part of an ambitious £1.3million investment programme. Welsh Government offered free surveys from Carbon Trust to investigate potential energy saving opportunities. The energy saving measures include LED lighting, pipework insulation, Building Management System (BMS) controls or solar PV systems, to name a few. Following a review of options, the Re:fit framework - a joint venture between HM Treasury and Local Government association, specialising in delivering retrofit projects to public sector buildings was chosen.

Nineteen buildings were shortlisted, out of the initial thirty identified, and engagement with stakeholders continued during the year. A project plan was developed and the procurement process completed early 2020. A high level appraisal process has commenced on the selected buildings, sixteen of which are schools. The Council is looking to reduce £162,000 on annual energy bills and approximately 258 tonnes of carbon dioxide. This investment continues our efforts to work towards net-zero carbon and to maximise the reduction of carbon emissions produced by our own activities and assets. Work will commence during summer 2021 and is expected to take 12-18 months

In early 2020, we started a trial in five schools to reduce gas consumption by introducing a heating additive. The results of the trial showed gas consumption reduced by an average of 10%.

We replaced four diesel vans with four electric vehicles (EVs) as part of a pilot to reduce vehicle running and maintenance costs and our carbon footprint. Following the successful trial, we installed eight electric vehicle-charging points at Ravens Court. This new infrastructure will allow the expansion of EVs within the Council.

Funding was granted in 2019 to retrofit the existing Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning system and lighting system in Ravens Court. The new system is expected to save £10,000 per year in energy costs, and save approximately 38 tonnes of carbon emissions as well as improving the working environment. Work is expected to be completed by the end of 2021.

Schools' Modernisation Programme

Our flagship school modernisation programme continued to work towards delivering new educational facilities for Bridgend County Borough, which are designed to support 21st century teaching and learning. With more than £68.2 million of funding set to be committed towards the next phase of the school modernisation programme, it remains our largest investment. We plan to build four efficient and sustainable primary schools and one special school over the next five to seven years as part of Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, ensuring there is a sufficient supply of pupil places across Bridgend County Borough.

Options appraisal work in relation to the primary school projects has concluded and approved in January 2020 to progress feasibility studies in respect of each of the primary school projects. Feasibility studies are underway and will complete in 2020/2021. Programmes were affected because of Covid-19, and certain survey work could not take place as planned. Notwithstanding this, the outcome of the studies will be reported to Cabinet in 2020/2021, and a decision made regarding the preferred way forward in respect of each of the schemes.

Option appraisal work in relation to the special school is ongoing into 2020-21. Subject to obtaining the necessary approvals, the construction of two primary schools and the one special school will be funded from Welsh Government and Council capital. The other two primary schools will be funded via Welsh Government's new Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding, whereby private partners build and maintain schools in return for a fee, and will cover the cost of construction, maintenance and financing the project. At the end of a fixed period, the buildings will become Council owned assets.

Funded by Welsh Government, the construction of the new East Hub building at Brynteg School is well underway. The Hub will allow effective joined-up working between Early Help, Safeguarding, multi-agency and joint services staff, supporting families and learners at the heart of the community that they serve. The building will be ready for occupation in the autumn of 2020.

The Council continues to work with contractors in order to maximise community benefits. Through our construction projects, we seek to ensure that schemes deliver on targeted recruitment and training, apprenticeships, work experience and pupil engagement, highlighting the future employment opportunities of a career in the construction industry.

Development work linked to the Cymraeg 2050 capital programme continued to progress in relation to the expansion of Welsh-medium childcare provision, but has been impacted by the Covid-19 emergency. Work will continue into 2020-21 to develop plans to identify childcare providers who will utilise the accommodation developed thus far to offer childcare in the communities identified (Betws, Ogmere Valley, Porthcawl and Bridgend Town).

In the Spring of 2020, we opened a Welsh-medium learning resource centre at YGG Calon Y Cymoedd. The provision, enables young children who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) to receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

CORPORATE CHANGE

Although this was not identified as one of our key programmes, we have three aims which focus on doing things differently corporately to meet our well-being objective of 'Making smarter use of Resources'. The three aims focus on delivering budget reductions, developing culture and skills in a changing organisation and making the most of our spend on goods and services through procurement. The steps we made are set out below:

Budget reductions and our medium-term financial strategy (MTFS)

When developing our MTFS, we consider a number of different funding scenarios and aim to balance investment in preventative measures against the costs of reacting to unanticipated situations in statutory services. We aim to ensure the majority of savings are generated from smarter use of resources, with front line service reductions kept to a minimum. Each budget reduction proposal is weighted in terms of the impact on other areas of the Council, on the public and on our well-being duty as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Where a budget cut in one area of non-statutory prevention would lead to increased costs in another, this is not considered to be good financial management. Similarly, budget reductions are achieved through remodelling of existing service provision and through making services self-sufficient rather than removing them in their entirety, to make them more sustainable going forward.

Alongside this is a capital strategy aligned to a 10 year capital programme, and a treasury management strategy, which demonstrate how the Council ensures that all of its capital and investment plans and borrowing are prudent and sustainable. They are intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future sustainability. The capital strategy is monitored on a quarterly basis and reports provided to Cabinet and council. The capital programme is updated in line with the strategy and approved by council quarterly.

Of the £7.621 million budget reductions required for 2019-20, we achieved £6.815 million through smarter use of resources, avoiding cutting the quality or level of services.

These included:

- We further developed extra care housing, leading to £330,000 of savings,
- A further review of the HALO and AWEN partnership contracts leading to £150,000 of savings,
- £111,000 further efficiencies realised as part of the Shared Regulatory Services,
- Further rationalisation of software and hardware budgets, saving £200,000,
- Council wide staff restructures, leading to savings in excess of £1.4 million,
- We also reduced our corporate budgets by £2.388 million, mainly by reducing our annual capital financing commitment through a review of policy, removing funding set aside for pump priming and additional funding generated through the increase in Council tax from an original 4.2% to 4.5% in 2018-19.

We did not achieve our savings in full in respect of the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC), (£475,000) and Bridgend bus station (£45,000). Budget realignment is being considered for 2020-21. The savings relating to removing subsidies for bus services (£62,000), library and cultural facilities (£60,000) although not achieved in 2019-20, have been progressed, and full savings met in 2020-21. The savings relating to the implementation of the learner transport policy (£67,000) are dependent on the recent public consultation. The Council consults widely with citizens on all budget proposals as an integral part of its MTFS and strives annually to increase participation and involvement. This is reflected in the increased response rate year on year.

Developing culture and skills

The Council made good progress in transforming services and undertaking organisational changes. New staff engagement arrangements that were established in 2018-19, carried on into 2019-20, with regular induction sessions for new starters with the Chief Executive; open engagement sessions for staff with the Chief Executive and Leader; and a second annual staff survey undertaken. During the year, a strong focus was given to supporting managers to fulfil their

managerial responsibilities and to enable employees to look after their mental wellbeing with the introduction of mindfulness courses.

We continued to provide the learning and development opportunities for staff to meet future service needs by updating the learning and development website enabling employees to access or enrol on relevant training courses. Working with trade union colleagues, funding was secured for priority training opportunities, through the Wales Union Learning Funding (WULF).

Directorate specific training and development opportunities included extended managers' meetings taking place to ensure open communication on legislative and corporate changes. Leadership and management training opportunities continued to be offered to middle managers. Health board boundary issues were progressed and opportunities for cross-working/training continued to be examined. The availability of staff training is widely embraced by staff. Within constrained resources, the following has been achieved:

Six new e-learning modules developed:

- Managers' Induction
- GDPR
- Sensory Loss modules: Vision Loss, Hearing Loss and Dual Sensory Loss
- Safeguarding Children and Adults – Raising Awareness
- Carers E-Practice Guide
- Trans Awareness

Number of staff completing training

- IT Workshops – 21 workshops delivered and 199 employees attended
- Mental health training – 13 workshops delivered and 168 employees attended
- No of e-learning completions 2,040
- Workbook completions 685

Procurement

We spend around £170 million annually through procurement on bought-in goods, services and works and influencing the ways in which this is done can make a key contribution to 'sustainability and resilience'.

We are working towards the circular economy principles to ensure sustainable procurement, which ultimately underpins the seven well-being goals under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA). We will consider 'whole life costing' where money is spent in ways that deliver wider benefits and adds value as opposed to traditional procurement routes of awarding contracts based on lowest price. Consideration such as energy consumption and end of life decommissioning, financial and environmental factors will be considered as part of awarding contracts.

We continue to engage with businesses within our communities, to support new and innovative ideas. As well as considering how we integrate the five ways of working into our new procurement strategy and ensuring that the strategy enables procurement to maximise contribution to the well-being goals, some specific initiatives are being looked at. We have signed up to the UK Steel Charter and we are still looking at developing the foundation economy model.

As part of the new procurement strategy that we are developing, we will consider co-producing services with the public, private and community sectors to help shape innovative solutions. We will work with suppliers to identify the best solutions to suit our needs. We will work with others to replicate good practice. This new strategy will enable us to maximise our contribution to the well-being goals and encourage initiatives to help deliver sustainable procurement.

Consultations and engaging through social media

Throughout the year we carried out a range of consultations to find out your views and inform our decisions. We undertook online surveys, roadshows throughout Bridgend County Borough, ran focus groups and invited comment through social media on a number of topics. Further information can be found at <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/equalities-and-engagement/consultations/>.

During 2019-20, we made good progress against our aim of improving and promoting mechanisms to improve responses to consultations and to engage with the public through social media. A variety of engagement methods were used throughout the year to improve resident inclusion and the response rate of consultations. Progress was made in making available easy read versions of consultation where they were appropriate i.e. the budget consultation and strategic equality plan consultation. Youth versions were also created for the budget consultation and learner travel review. Residents and community groups were also more widely engaged using a variety of techniques including: one to one support to complete surveys, discussion groups, clicker pads and drop in sessions in libraries.



Clicker pad engagement sessions were used to include residents in the Strategic Equality Plan, Post 16 and learner travel consultations, and to carry out the Medium Term Financial Strategy budget consultation.

Sessions were held with full Council, in comprehensive schools with pupils and carers, Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum, the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People and Citizens' Panel members. We also used a variety of engagement methods including paper surveys, online surveys, Citizens Panel engagement events and public drop in sessions in libraries.

During the Budget Consultation period we also used promotional materials such as posters, flyers and business cards to aid promotion of the consultation. An explainer video was also developed and used on the website, social media channels and the digital screens within the Contact Centre to promote the budget consultation as well as a bilingual advert on Bridge FM. A QR code was also created to ensure easy access to the online surveys for residents.

During the year, we audited our social media channels and implemented new strategies and tactics to grow our social media channels, which contribute towards the Council's ability to engage with the public. Since July 2019, we have seen a significant growth in these type of interactions. We also received the highest amount of interactions on social media during the yearly budget consultation campaign than in previous years.

Being more strategic when we post content on our channels enabled us to engage with the public at the most popular times and days that people are online which contributed to a growth in the number of interactions. User generated content on Instagram proved popular and increased our interactions with the public Instagram stories with use of boomerang working well and for A-level and GCSE results day with hundreds of people viewing these videos. Trending hashtags on twitter increased reach and engagement such as #Goingtoxford on A-level results week.

On average, each post on social media reached 6,703 people. During the budget consultation social media campaign, a total of 2,009 interactions were received via social media. This included 147 interactions from the live question and answer (Q&A) session, 1,365 social media comments and 497 social media poll votes. Overall, the Council received 7,437 interactions during the budget consultation, covering survey completions, engagement event attendees and social media

interactions. This is an increase of 2,149 (40.6%) on the 5,288 interactions from last year, of which 1,200 relates to an increase on social media comments.

In the latter part of the year, due to severe weather and the Covid-19 pandemic, social media interactions increased by almost 50% which resulted in almost a doubling of the yearly target. We had the highest ever number of positive reactions (likes and loves) throughout the pandemic as the public have been engaging positively with our unsung heroes' campaign. We have turned the homepage of our website into a hub of information during the pandemic and residents have been actively engaged with our social media channels to find out the latest developments within Bridgend County Borough. In terms of developing our ability to engage with the public through social media we posted more regularly and consistently to generate more engagement. We created graphics, infographics and collages to promote important information. This resulted in a yearly increase of 9.94% in social media interactions.

Financial Performance

Our financial environment is becoming increasingly challenging. We need to make unprecedented savings in the future that can only be achieved by changing the way we work and changing the way services are delivered. Last year the gross amount we spent on delivering services to our citizens and investing in our landscape and infrastructure totalled around £439 million. The total amount that we had available to spend was made up from three main sources listed below.

Revenue Expenditure

Our revenue expenditure represents day-to-day costs such as salaries, equipment, supplies and services. Our **net** revenue expenditure in 2019-20 after allowing for appropriation to earmarked reserves, additional income from council tax and an under spend against council-wide budgets was **£270.246 million**, which resulted in an under spend of £563,435 which was transferred to the Council fund. The table below shows the expenditure and proportion of spend per well-being objective in 2019-20 and spend on other core services and statutory functions:

Well-being objective for 2019-20	Revised Budget 2019-20 (£'Million)	Actual Outturn 2019-20 (£'Million)	Actual Over/(Under Spend) 2019-20 (£'Million)
1. Supporting a successful economy	48.883	49.065	0.182
2. Helping people to be more self-reliant	55.900	54.548	-1.352
3. Smarter use of resources	5.063	5.054	-0.009
4. Core services and statutory functions	160.963	161.579	0.616
TOTAL	270.809	270.246	-0.563

Capital Expenditure

This represents our spending on schools and infrastructure such as roads, bridges and buildings. These assets will benefit the community over long periods of time and the expenditure is largely financed by borrowing and capital grants. Our capital expenditure in 2019-20 was **£22.822 million**, where the main projects carried out during the year included:

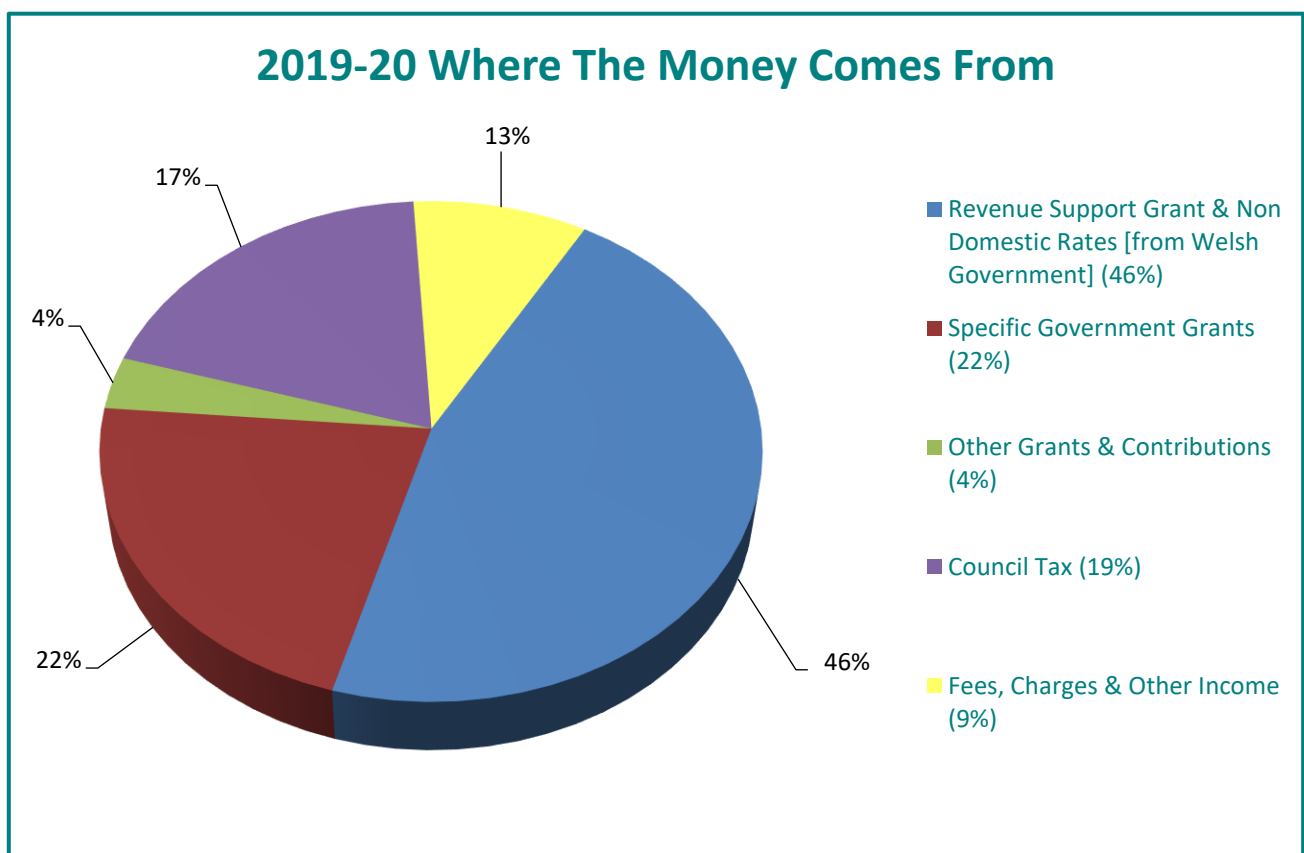
- £2.413 million Disabled Facility Grants and private sector housing
- £2.527 million on highways and carriageway works
- £1.908 million on Schools ICT infrastructure
- £1.562 million on schools capital maintenance works
- £1.117 million Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus

Grants

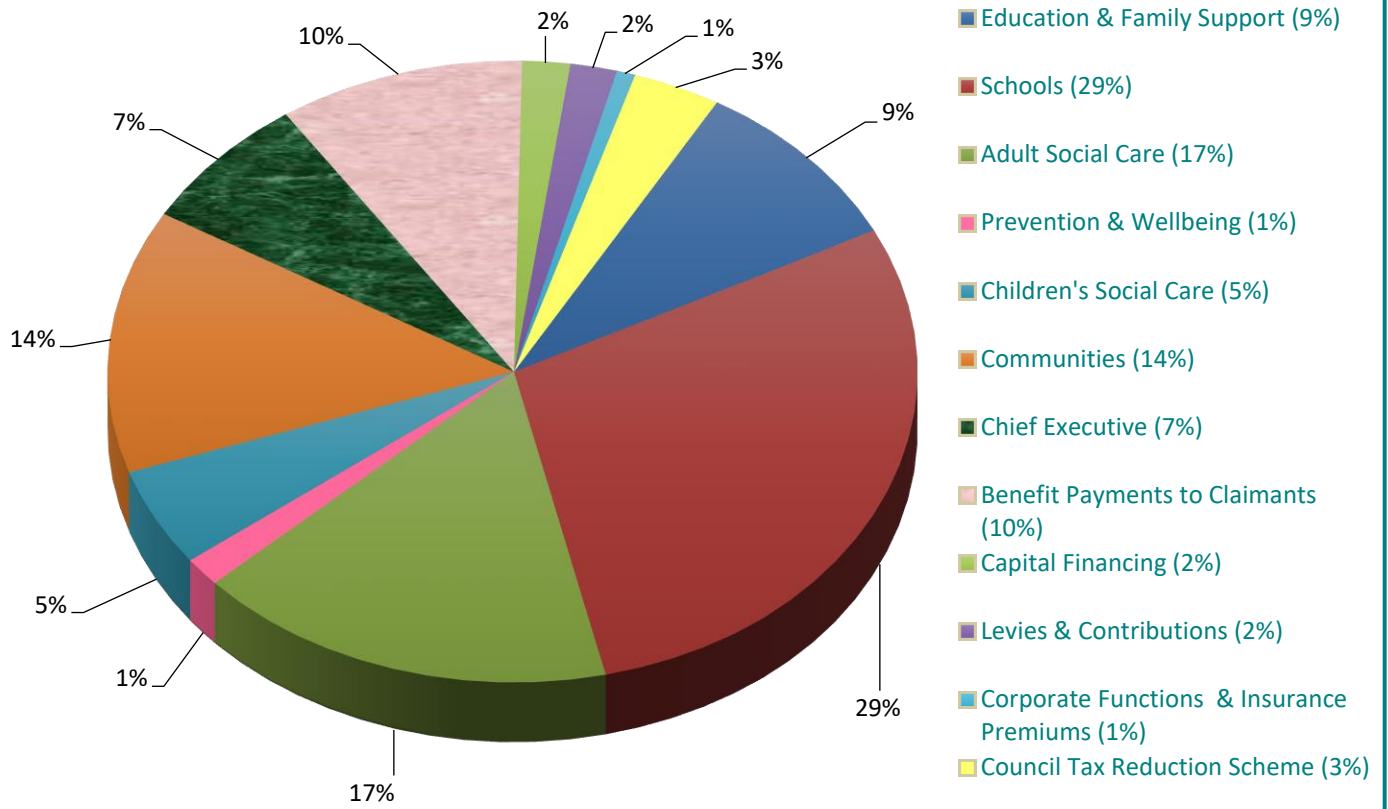
We also received specific government revenue grants in addition to the core Revenue Support Grant and Non-Domestic Rate (NDR) allocations and Housing Benefit Subsidy, totalling **£50.979 million** during 2019-20, which we are able to use in addition to our own revenue budgets. The main grants received during 2019-20 included:

- £6.105 million – Post-16 Grant
- £5.767 million – Supporting People Grant
- £4.895 million – Education Improvement Grant
- £4.592 million – Pupil Development Grant
- £3.076 million – Flying Start Grant
- £1.690 million – Families First Grant

The following charts summarise where the money came from and where the money is spent:



2019-20 Where the Money Is Spent



What Our Regulators Said about Us

Audit Wales

The work of all Councils in Wales is scrutinised by external regulators to ensure that we use public money efficiently and effectively to deliver benefits for our communities. Audit Wales has an annual programme of audit and assessment work that it undertakes in the Council, and the conclusions from all this work are brought together in an Annual Improvement Report (the latest report available is to be published October 2020).

During the course of the year the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations, however there were a number of proposals for improvement identified in the reviews undertaken during 2019-20. These reports can be viewed on the links below.

The Auditor General also researches topics at a national level in order to share best practice and make recommendations for how public bodies can improve. The topics covered during the year included the role of Public Service Boards, Well-being of young people, Violence against women, and First point of contact. These reports can be accessed via the links below.

Performance and Audit Reviews (local)	Link
Follow up review of the corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children in Bridgend	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/bridgend_safeguarding_report.pdf
Delivering with less- Environmental health services follow up review for Bridgend	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/bridgend_council_environmental_health_follow_up_english.pdf
Financial sustainability assessment	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/pdf_6.pdf
Examination under the WFG Act (Wales) 2015 – ‘Active Bridgend Plan’	https://www.audit.wales/publication/bridgend-county-borough-council-well-being-future-generations-examination-active
Savings planning follow up- Bridgend County Borough Council	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/1469A2019-20_BCBC_savings%20planning_final.pdf
Performance and Audit Reviews (national)	Link
Review of Public Service Boards	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/review-of-public-service-boards-english.pdf
The well-being of young people	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/well-being-of-young-people-english_0.pdf
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: First point of contact assessments	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/Front-door-to-adult-social-care-english.pdf
Tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence	https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/VAWDASV_eng.pdf

Estyn

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. The purpose of Estyn is to provide an independent inspection and advice service on quality and standards in education and training in Wales. To search for the latest reports, please visit https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-08/Bridgend%2520County%2520Borough%2520Council_0.pdf

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW evaluate the performance of social services (children and adult services) annually and publish their findings and recommendations in a letter to the Director of Social Services. The assessment for performance in 2019-20 can be found here <https://careinspectorate.wales/200803-local-authority-annual-performance-review-letter-201920-bridgend-county-borough-council>

During 2019-20, CIW also undertook an inspection in collaboration with Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) to evaluate how Bridgend County Borough Council is promoting independence and preventing escalating needs for older adults. The key findings and recommendations are published in a report, which can be found here <https://careinspectorate.wales/inspection-older-adults-services-bridgend-county-borough-council>

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Towards the end of the financial year 2019-20, Covid-19 presented a huge challenge for local leadership. The pandemic also underlined the importance of effective collaboration between local partners, and with national government. The need to be flexible and responsive to meet the unprecedented changes to how we lead our daily lives has meant service reform and new ways of working have been introduced in extremely short timescales.

Staff from across public services and the third sector have worked tirelessly to help their communities. This has involved delivering food boxes, securing housing for homeless people, the creation of hubs for key workers, delivering accredited online adult courses, supporting people in their homes, the distribution of business grants, supporting the roll out of the Test Trace and Protect programme, and the return of schooling before the summer holidays. Many Council staff volunteered to be redeployed to keep critical frontline services going, and had to adapt to different shift patterns, learn new skills and work through weekends, normal school holidays and bank holidays. The following are just some examples of how staff came together to help local residents at the start of the pandemic in mid March 2020:

Local schools Teachers and assistants prepared online learning materials for more than 23,000 pupils every weekday.

Housing Team In early April four pods were set up in temporary locations near projects run by the Wallich and housing association Pobl. The new pods, which contain a bed and toilet, were introduced to respond to the needs of rough sleepers, allowing them to comply with social distancing requirements and if necessary to self-isolate. 24/7 support was available to those using the pods.

Cleaning staff: Crews started work from 4am to get childcare hubs ready for each day. Armed with disinfectant and bleach, many had to travel much further than normal due to their regular schools closed. The hubs, which also acted as collection points for free school meals, and four Flying Start centres were their main focus, but they also continued to clean corporate buildings where essential staff were based.

Catering Team Around 400 cooks, catering assistants and meals at home delivery drivers fed children, keyworkers and vulnerable adults during the pandemic, providing hundreds of hot meals a day and thousands of packed lunches each week. Working in shifts, they prepared, cooked and delivered meals, with many giving up their holidays to ensure the vital service could continue.

Language and Play officers recorded a series of book readings, songs and craft sessions to help young children continue to develop and learn. Uploading the videos to a closed Facebook page for families registered under the scheme and basing themselves at one of the emergency childcare hubs, the team combined their usual roles with supporting the childcare provision for keyworkers.

ICT Team Ordering hundreds of laptops during a worldwide shortage while dealing with twice the normal number of cyber-attacks, the ICT team ensured that Council staff could work from home during the pandemic. The additional workload has been on top of supporting schools as teachers moved towards online learning, repurposing over 500 laptops and ICT devices for digitally excluded learners and providing tablets to local care homes so that residents could make video calls to relatives.

Fees waived for sports clubs Football and rugby clubs will not pay hire charges for using outdoor sports facilities for the 2019-20 season. The Council's decision takes account of both the exceptional circumstances around the Covid-19 crisis and the continued commitment of sports clubs and town and community Councils to complete community asset transfers of outdoor facilities.

Responding to the Covid-19 coronavirus in Bridgend County Borough



Business support grants paid **£29,025,000**
2,340 Business grant applications approved



Calls received to customer services **43,827**
6,172,763 Social media reach



1,553
Volunteers registered



10,500

Hours of domiciliary care provided each week



1,048

Individuals supported in their own homes



1,559

No of keyworkers' children supported to enable parents to work



169

Staff redeployed to a different role



2,600

Individuals supported by Telecare services



13%

Overall increase in recycled materials compared to this time last year



1,013

Reconditioned laptops and devices issued to school children



Stats since 23 March 2020.

Important themes that underpin our work

Performance Management Framework

Performance management is about taking action in response to actual performance to make outcomes for users and the public better than they would otherwise be. You can see our Performance Management Framework [here: https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/2281/bcbc-performance-management-framework-2017-version.pdf](https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/2281/bcbc-performance-management-framework-2017-version.pdf)

Scrutinising our performance

Overview and scrutiny committees are a valuable part of the transparent and democratic process. They support the work of the Council as a whole in the improvement of public services. You can see more information on the role of scrutiny here: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/democracy-and-elections/overview-and-scrutiny-committees/>

Risk management

With growing demands on services at a time of increasing pressure on finances, effective risk management remains an essential part of the framework for ensuring good corporate governance. Since Corp Risk Register was last agreed, the Covid-19 pandemic has occurred which has had an effect worldwide. The register is being continuously reviewed during this period to take into account any Covid-19 related risks. More information can be found here, agenda item 4 <https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/documents/g3915/Agenda%20frontsheet%2010th-Sep-2020%2014.00%20Audit%20Committee.pdf?T=0&LLL=0>

Equality and diversity

We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity through all of our services and dedicated to treating our residents, customers, employees and visitors with respect, while providing services which respond to people's individual needs. More information can be found at: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/equalities-and-engagement/equality-and-diversity/>

Welsh language

We are committed to treating Welsh and English on an equal basis when carrying out our public business. Our five-year strategy and more information on how we promote the language can be seen at: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/equalities-and-engagement/welsh-language/>

Bridgend Public Services Board

Bridgend Public Services Board (PSB) is a group of public sector and not for profit organisations who work together to create a better Bridgend County Borough. In July 2020 the PSB published its second annual report highlighting the activity it has undertaken in 2019-20. You can read the full report here <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/8924/psb-bridgend-ann-report-eng-0620.pdf>

Our well-being objectives for 2020-21

In our Corporate Plan 2018-22, we set out our well-being objectives. These are:

- Supporting a successful and sustainable economy
- Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient
- Smarter use of resources

As part of our corporate planning the well-being objectives were assessed against the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to identify opportunities to maximise our contribution to the 7 well-being goals.

The Council agreed to the rewording of two objectives. The rationale behind the changes was to strengthen the alignment with the seven well-being goals. Full details on the actions we have in place can be seen in our Corporate Plan 2018-2022, reviewed for 2020-21 here: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/8471/corporate-plan-english-version.pdf>



Feedback

We welcome your comments on this annual report and your suggestions for improvement. You can give your feedback through



our website: www.bridgend.gov.uk



on Instagram www.instagram.com/BridgendCBC/



via Facebook www.facebook.com/BridgendCBC



on Twitter: @BridgendCBC



email to talktous@bridgend.gov.uk



in writing to Corporate Performance Team, Bridgend County Borough Council, Raven's Court, Brewery Lane, Bridgend CF31 4WB

This report is available in both Welsh and English. It is also available in another language or format on request.