



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement and Performance

Cabinet – 17 September 2020

### Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

<b>Purpose:</b>	To report corporate performance for 2019/20.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	<i>Delivering a Successful &amp; Sustainable Swansea</i> Corporate Plan 2018/22 <i>Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future</i>
<b>Consultation:</b>	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) The performance results are noted and reviewed to help inform executive decisions on resource allocation and, where relevant, corrective actions to manage and improve performance and efficiency in delivering national and local priorities.
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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the performance results for 2019/20 delivering the Council's Well-being Objectives (priorities) described in the Corporate Plan 2018/22 *Delivering a Successful & Sustainable Swansea*.
- 1.2 The outturn presented in the performance tables (Appendix A) incorporates an overview of performance that needs to be considered alongside the current financial situation of the Council.
- 1.3 The financial resources required to achieve the specified performance levels in 2019/20 have been provided in the approved budget. As part of the work on *Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the future* there will be an increased focus on understanding the level of activity and outcomes that are achieved for the budget allocated so that choices can be made about relative priorities.

## 2. Performance and Improvement

- 2.1 Performance is judged using the results measured by Corporate Plan performance indicators compared to agreed targets.
- 2.2 Improvement is measured by comparing the results of Corporate Plan performance indicators against the results from the same period last year where comparison is possible.
- 2.3 It is important to point out that each of the corporate priorities cannot be seen in isolation from each other. Each priority both affects and is affected by the others. For example, Improving Education and Skills is both important to our efforts to tackle poverty and improve the economy. For this reason, many of the performance indicators allocated to measuring one priority can also be used to show progress meeting other priorities.

## 3. Outturn

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan performance indicators measure progress meeting the following key objectives:
- Safeguarding people from harm.
  - Improving education and skills.
  - Transforming our economy & infrastructure.
  - Tackling poverty.
  - Transformation & future Council development.
  - Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity.
- 3.2 The outturn for 2019/20 shows that **43 out of 78 (55%)** Corporate Plan performance indicators (that had targets and where there was data) met their targets. **41 out of 66 (62%)** comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators also showed improvement or stayed the same compared to 2018/19.
- 3.3 The report also contains the provisional outturn for 2019/20 of the Council's performance against national **Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)**. The results show that **67%** of PAMs met their targets and **50%** of comparable PAMs improved or stayed the same compared to 2018/19.
- 3.4 Performance is pleasing in a number of areas and a number are among the best in Wales according to the last available national data. The last available national data, for example, shows that our performance determining planning applications on time continues to exceed targets and is among the best in Wales. However, the overall picture is affected by the council's focus on prevention, which is not always captured in the

current indicators and does not reflect that demands are increasing in areas such as looked after children.

- 3.5 The performance indicators are assessed each year to ensure that they remain appropriate; although the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown disrupted this process during 2020/21. The indicators will be reviewed in readiness for 2021/22 and the Council will consider how we can measure strategic directions and our priorities in a better way.
- 3.6 The performance tables in Appendix A set out an overview of performance for each Corporate Plan priority provided by Directors and Heads of Service who are the responsible leads; these overviews set the performance data within their proper context and can be found in para 5.

#### **4. Considerations**

- 4.1 When making comparisons between previous quarters and 2018/19, the following should be considered:
  - 4.1.1 The nature and number of some performance indicators (PIs) has changed between these two periods and therefore direct comparisons may not always be appropriate.
  - 4.1.2 Many of the performance measures are new and definitions may need further refinement.
  - 4.1.3 Some targets for new performance indicators are still being baselined.
  - 4.1.4 Some data will be enhanced and improved to be more robust as data collection methods are developed and / or refined by services over the coming quarters.
  - 4.1.5 The results do not always account for changes in resources and workload during that period (although details can be seen in the numerator and denominator information and in the comments column of the data tables attached to this report).
  - 4.1.6 There may be changes to the numerator and denominator information that may affect the trends by showing a decline while the volume of work has increased.
  - 4.1.7 Performance indicators are reviewed each year to ensure that they remain appropriate measures of performance.
  - 4.1.8 The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown occurred during March 2020 and before the financial year had concluded; this may have impacted on performance results and, where material, this has been noted within the report.

## **5. Context: Overviews of Performance in 2019/20**

5.0.1 The following overviews provided by responsible departments describe the context to the performance meeting the Council's key objectives as at 2019/20.

### 5.1 *Safeguarding people from harm*

5.1.1 The corporate plan sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring that citizens live their lives free from harm and exploitation. As we approached year end COVID-19 significantly impacted on all aspects of Council business and therefore the way in which the Council needed to reorganise service delivery to ensure it continued to play its part in safeguarding residents but also protected the health and well-being of its staff. Nevertheless safeguarding has remained at the heart of how that reorganisation of Council services has been ordered.

5.1.2 We continue to expect safeguarding to be seen as everybody's business and therefore that all officers and Elected Members should undertake safeguarding training proportionate to their role. As reported previously, the Council doesn't yet have a database which can sufficiently accurately capture the overall proportion of staff who have undertaken the relevant training at any given time but we can report that all Elected Members have undertaken the training. However intelligence gathered via the corporate safeguarding board indicates that more than 90% of staff have indeed completed the required training. Improvements to corporate reporting databases are planned along with other significant improvements to the Council's IT infrastructure but the timescale hasn't been specified as yet.

5.1.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that all children are safe from harm, living with their families or in family settings. Our work to create the optimum conditions in which Swansea children are most likely to remain living safely with their families or in family settings is captured within the Safe LAC Reduction Strategy. COVID-19 has further reinforced the importance of that strategy but has impacted on models of service delivery that has made the task of supporting children to remain safe and well at home more complicated. Despite that the numbers of children requiring to be looked after are higher at year end than remains our ambition, the numbers living in more institutionalised settings is down. This is a significant success.

5.1.4 Looking forward - the closure of schools and an extended period of lockdown will create conditions in which risk of family breakdown will be exacerbated. The remodelling of COVID-19 secure approaches to the delivery of early help and statutory children services working in partnership with key stakeholders such as schools must be a key priority for the Council for next year.

- 5.1.5 The Council remains committed to ensuring all vulnerable adults are safeguarded from harm, able to live to their maximum potential and that people age well, are able to live independently and safely within their own home. Again, COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of this strategy not least as it has exposed the increased risks for individuals of being cared for in closed care settings such as care homes.
- 5.1.6 The number of adults the Council is supporting has increased as the Council has remodelled more of its service delivery to focus on reablement, respite and complex care. This is consistent with a strategy of supporting more people to remain safe and well at home. However it remains concerning that the number of carers receiving an assessment has decreased. Work within the region to develop a fit-for-purpose carers strategy and remodel approaches to supporting carers as a result should help but will likely be delayed as a result of COVID-19.
- 5.1.7 COVID-19 has further heightened the need to improve safe hospital discharge processes. Work within the region to enhance and expand our approach to the hospital to home service will be a particular priority in the coming year.

## 5.2 *Improving education & skills*

- 5.2.1 Changes to how end of key stage measures are calculated, particularly at key stage 4 are reflected in the performance indicator results. Targets were difficult to predict when the impact of changes was unknown. However, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data shows that Swansea's performance provided significantly positive value added and all KS4 indicators ranked well above the expected benchmark position in Wales. Where targets have been missed, work will continue to support schools on accurate teacher assessment and ensure that pupils are well within the level of performance required.
- 5.2.2 Attendance continues to be closely monitored due to the importance of children and young people attending school regularly to achieve the skills and qualifications they need. This will continue, particularly for groups of pupils where attendance could be improved.
- 5.2.3 The level of children becoming NEET has improved from the previous year. The Cynnydd project continues to support children who are at risk of becoming NEET, providing tailored interventions to individual pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to prevent them from becoming disengaged from learning.
- 5.2.4 The number of statements issued within 26 weeks is a priority area of improvement. Improvements to systems within a challenging context of the impact of COVID-19 is ongoing. Work has begun on our Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategic Plan priorities, including changes required to meet the implications of the ALNET Act 2018.

5.2.5 Key consultative groups including the School Improvement Partnership (SIP) and Partneriaeth Sgiliau Abertawe/Swansea Skills Partnership (PSA) continue to meet. Key areas of improvement will be shared with SIP, comprising officers from across the authority and headteacher representatives. The aim of PSA, a group comprising Members, Local Authority officers and representatives from Further Education and Higher Education is to work towards a number of steps to meet the wellbeing objectives in the corporate plan, including ensuring that the skills and qualifications that children and young people attain meet the longer term aspirations of the city, including those that will arise from the Swansea Bay City Deal.

5.2.6 Looking forward, the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Tribunal Act 2018 and Curriculum for Wales 2022 under the Welsh Government's National Mission, against a challenging financial context, will present challenges and opportunities that will need reflecting in the performance frameworks of the Education Directorate. It will be particularly important to monitor the impact of services for vulnerable learners due to adverse childhood experience, poverty, additional learning needs and disability. Measures will also place an increasing emphasis on progress made and value added within a more localised curriculum and sustainable service offer.

### 5.3 *Transforming our economy and infrastructure*

5.3.1 The vast majority of targets have been met in 2019/20, with trends generally showing an upward trajectory on last year's performance. EC5 and EC6 have missed target, and these reflect grant funded projects being delivered by 3rd parties, where delays have occurred on site, due to the scale and complexity of the schemes involved and some COVID-19 related impact. However, our major regeneration priorities continue to make substantial progress.

5.3.2 Swansea Central Phase 1 works have made significant visible progress with superstructure steelwork erected for the major structures. The 82 week construction programme will complete in 2021; but some COVID-19 related delays are inevitable given the social distancing site working restrictions. The Swansea Central Phase 2 design & viability work, including the potential for a public sector hub, has made good progress and a feasibility report is scheduled for Cabinet in September 2020.

5.3.3 Whilst the official procurement of the strategic sites marketing opportunity was delayed owing to the pandemic, a local event was held in March and a virtual launch event is being organised for Autumn 2020. The Kingsway infrastructure project works have also suffered delays owing to the crisis, but work has resumed and continues to make excellent progress on site. Planning permission for the Kingsway Employment Hub building has been awarded and procurement has commenced. Wind Street feasibility options were also completed and a preferred option selected by Cabinet.

- 5.3.4 The works contract for the Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse contract has also been awarded. Acquisition of the Palace Theatre was completed following a successful grant bid and survey works are underway. Looking ahead to the medium-term, the ongoing delivery and momentum of the Council's regeneration programme is considered a vital plank in the economic recovery process and further projects will be added, subject to additional funding from government economic stimulus funding.
- 5.3.5 A £1m investment in Plantasia, by our partners Parkwood Leisure, saw this venue receive strong interest and a Tourism Award, effectively adding a new attraction to the City Centre. Investment in the City's Leisure Centres was also completed as part of the contract with Freedom Leisure, seeing £5.1M investment across the portfolio. The partnership has secured new state of the art studios and fitness suites; Energy efficient lighting and mechanical and electrical improvements have also been made to reduce energy costs and carbon footprint.
- 5.3.6 Continuing the theme of invest-to-save, the refurbishment of the Grand Theatre progressed, with the new restaurant - The Malthouse - and upper bars being managed by Gower Brewery, alongside a capital investment with Race Council Cymru to secure a new multi-cultural digital hub for training, advice and skills development, alongside a new approach to programming for the Arts Wing.
- 5.3.7 Whilst COVID-19 has kept the venues closed since the end of March, work has continued under lockdown, and plans are in development for reopening when guidance indicates it is safe to do so. We also saw a great programme of Special Events, befitting our 50th year as a city celebrations, including Royal Visits, the Stereophonics and a variety of street parties and festivals. Bookings were secured for 2020 but again these are now rescheduled to future times.
- 5.3.8 Visitors to our Events add a significant boost to the local economy estimated as being in the region of £20m each year, and support for the tourism sector continued with a new marketing campaign and Memorandum of Understanding with the Trade organisation to develop our profile and partnership even further. This has continued as we've adjusted our resources to support the sector during the difficult months at the close of the year and since, digitally and remotely. This way of working has also been developed with new websites and marketing plans for the venues and the full integration of Spektrix as our digital box office and data management/ marketing tool, enabling all venues and events in the city to be supported and audiences to remain connected.
- 5.3.9 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme in 2019/20 delivered major levels of repairs to council homes and achieved full spend of £47.9m ensuring homes are in a good state of repair, thermally efficient, safe and secure and meeting the needs of individuals. By year end the Council delivered over 2,000 new kitchens, 1,900 new

bathrooms, which represent the highest level of delivery for this area work in a single year. Additionally, the Council undertook major thermal insulation improvements to 315 homes. Further work is taking place to renew roofs, renew electrical wiring in homes, provide new efficient gas boilers and improve garden boundaries and paving.

- 5.3.10 The Council is progressed well with its fire safety improvements, delivering sprinkler systems to individual flats and communal areas in the three tower blocks at Clyne Court as well as completing installations in sheltered accommodation which is now nearing the end of its long term programme. The Council has been working with a specialist fire protection company in developing and trialling new smoke alarms systems that continually monitor alarms ensuring they are operational and report incidence of fire via instant text message and email; this system offers a real opportunity to further improve fire safety in the home particularly for older and more vulnerable tenants. The initial trials have proved very successful and a new programme for sheltered accommodation will be rolled out starting in 2020/21.
- 5.3.11 The overall WHQS programme contributed significantly towards community benefits and employment opportunities; by the end of 2019/20 the WHQS programme created 1,556 weeks of targeted recruitment and training specifically for people who were unemployed and experiencing barriers to accessing the jobs market; 7 people from the local community have been employed in this period and 13 apprentices were engaged for WHQS work have seen their employment continued with ongoing projects.
- 5.3.12 As part of the Council's commitment to innovative, energy efficient housing, a number of retrofit schemes are being carried out: 6 bungalows in Craig Cefn Parc were completed resulting in homes that have extremely high levels of energy efficiency and very low running costs for tenant; also a project in Garnswllt completed 10 properties which included solar panels and air source heat pumps. These schemes provide a test as to how renewable technologies can be applied to existing housing, transforming them into some of the most energy efficient homes in the Council's housing stock.
- 5.3.13 The Council's More Homes Programme, focussed on providing new build Council housing, continues to move forward at pace. Cabinet approved the first Housing Revenue Account Development Plan in February 2019, which set out a programme to develop over 140 new homes up to 2022. The Council is currently looking to increase this ambition, and has presented a 10 year delivery ambition to Cabinet for 1000 new Council homes plan from 2021-2031.
- 5.3.14 Following on from the first Passivhaus pilot at Colliers way, the second phase of the More Homes project is underway at a further 2 sites at Parc Y Helyg and Colliers Way Phase 2. As part of this phase, 34 new homes will be built as 'Homes as Power Stations' using funds from a £1.5m



Innovative Housing Programme grant from the Welsh Government. The homes will have innovative features such as solar panels and battery-powered energy, as well as the inclusion of swift bricks to support biodiversity. 16 new homes at Parc Yr Helyg are due to be handed over in September, and 18 at Colliers Way Phase 2 in January 2021. Work is also nearing completion on a conversion of a former social services building in West Cross into 2 new family homes. A number of acquisitions of former Right to Buy homes has also taken place, and these homes have also been added to the council's stock. The number of acquisitions will increase this year due to a funding award from Welsh Government as part of the response to deal with homelessness as a result of COVID-19.

5.3.15 A planning application has also been approved for a further 25 homes on Hill View Crescent in Clase. This scheme has also been awarded £1.5m of Innovative Housing Funding, which will fund the renewable technologies to continue the Homes as Power Stations theme. This will also be the site of a new build Welsh medium primary school, and will provide an opportunity to regenerate the area; work is starting in August 2020.

5.3.16 The Council is also progressing the procurement of a development partner or partners. The aim will be to deliver mixed tenure housing on the Council owned sites, whilst maximising the delivery of affordable housing to meet local need. The Council has also procured a multi-disciplinary team to deliver a masterplan for the regeneration of a large Housing Revenue Account (HRA) site. This work is progressing however, the timeframe has been extended as the planned resident consultation events, site visits and surveys were delayed due to COVID-19.

#### 5.4 *Tackling Poverty*

5.4.1 Performance shows that we have achieved our targets against the majority of key indicators and are making good progress in delivering our objectives. One of those missed is linked to procedure changes which did increase Council Tax Reduction processing times, but maximised the amount of Council Tax Reduction and financial benefit for residents.

5.4.2 There has been a 10% decrease in people gaining employment through Council Employability support compared to 2018/19; although 354 people did gain employment. The cross cutting review of the Council's employability support function started in 2019/20 and will result in the better capturing of the results of all employability activity across the Council during 2020/21.

5.4.3 More residents moved onto Universal Credit during 2019/20 and our Welfare Rights team continued to support individuals to secure their rights and entitlements.

- 5.4.4 The corporate Tackling Poverty Strategy and action plan along with the Poverty Forum and partnership work to tackle poverty has included utilising data to ensure that resources are targeted effectively, initiatives to tackle food poverty have been supported along with initiatives to address isolation and wellbeing. Employability initiatives focused on targeted groups have worked well including NEETS and Prison leavers. The training, skills and qualifications achieved have increased during 19/20 and this continues to be a focus during 20/21. Funding for a Swansea Poverty Truth Commission has been secured and this will commence in 20/21, providing a platform for those with lived experiences of Poverty to inform and influence policy and practice.
- 5.4.5 The impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the household income started to be seen towards the end of the financial year and this will be significant during 20/21. The Tackling Poverty focus will include supporting those temporarily housed into more permanent homes, offering skills and qualifications for new employment opportunities, tailored employability support, access to quality advice and information and support to take up entitlements. It will continue to be an all-age approach, but we anticipate an increased demand from those who are short-term unemployed, young people and those with health conditions.

## 5.5 *Transformation & future Council development*

- 5.5.1 Good progress was made during 2019/20 across the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives, as reflected in the majority of performance indicators.
- 5.5.2 The Sustainable Swansea transformation programme underwent its annual review and the decision was taken to adopt a new strategy, particularly in light of COVID-19. A new strategy and plan are being developed combining recovery from COVID-19 lockdown, a new forward looking sustainable transformation programme and budget strategy
- 5.5.3 The Council has continued to strengthen its organisational development programme alongside Gower College, particularly leadership and management and the management of change. A Leadership Hub was established with monthly guest speakers from both across the organisation and external leaders
- 5.5.4 Equality Champions were identified across Directorates and underwent equalities training in order to support the implementation of the Strategic Equalities Plan objectives and plan. Equalities Champions also took on the remit of working with the Council's established community groups where any consultation, engagement or co-production was needed around changes in their service areas. This remains an ongoing area of work and development to build capacity and resilience.
- 5.5.5 Projects to deliver sustainable procurement to secure local economic and community benefits include:

- a large number and range of contracts have been tendered by the Council and 'community benefit clauses' incorporated, for example, in work related to the Swansea Bay City Deal, the Targeted Regeneration Investment programme, the Hafod Morfa Copperworks, 21st century schools and many other capital projects which are currently on-going.
- Community benefit clauses have also been incorporated within services commissioned by the Council such as Social care and Housing. Since the inception of the Council's key programme for securing community benefits in relation to training employment (Beyond Bricks and Mortar) over 10 years ago, the Council have let over 190 contracts with community benefits and secured more than 150,000 training weeks.
- The Council also adopted the Welsh Government initiative and Code of practice: Ethical employment in supply chains - working in partnership with Trade Union colleagues - to tackle social issues in procurement and supply chains, such as eradicating modern slavery.
- The Council's Transformation and Future Council Policy Development Committee (PDC) explored barriers to local suppliers securing Council contracts and this review then informed changes to the Council Constitution – particularly the contract procedure rules - in order to tackle the barriers to engaging with local suppliers; these changes were finalised in 19-20 and agreed by Council, and which will inform and provide the platform for further work to assist local suppliers and their development.

5.5.6 The Digital Strategy was reviewed during 2019 and a new updated version has been produced, which will be taken through Cabinet and pre-decision Scrutiny during 2020. Hundreds of projects have been successfully delivered as part of the strategy since 2015, which put the Council in a strong position going into the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown. The cloud first and digital first approach not only improved the resilience of services across the Council, but also made it easy for staff and Councillors to switch to homeworking. Most importantly it meant Swansea residents could continue to access services online or via virtual call centres.

5.5.7 The channel shift to digital first can be seen evidenced in the performance indicators CUST2a and 2b, which have both exceeded targets. It also meant the Council could respond quickly during the COVID-19 crisis, developing apps that would support the most vulnerable and those shielding.

5.5.8 Other examples of projects delivered during 2019-20 include: Automation of important but nevertheless routine administrative processes saving hours of time so those staff could be utilised on other more valuable tasks; replacement of old legacy systems with new applications utilising the latest technology with the ability to integrate with other key systems

including telephony reducing manual processes; new digital solutions for schools and parents including schools catering ordering automation, a walking route distance calculator, family information services, free child care and free school meals applications; delivered digital solutions to help services make savings through automation and going paperless, e.g. in domiciliary care; implementation of equipment and systems to support agile working; large scale upgrade to cloud of the HR, finance, and payroll system; large scale replacement of the Council's telephony system; and a new digital first ICT service desk solution amongst other projects.

- 5.5.9 Hand in hand with the drive towards an ever more digital world is the area of digital inclusion. A revised digital inclusion strategic framework was delivered in 2019; however, this will now be further reviewed in light of the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown and the significant escalated channel shift to digital and online. Research and evidence shows digital exclusion is relatively low in Swansea and this gap narrowed further during lockdown.
- 5.5.10 The Council's commitment to the Welsh Language continued in 2019-20. Specific Welsh speaking areas were established in the agile working spaces. For 2018/19 there were c20 participants on Mynediad Level 1 and none for Mynediad Level 2 or Sylfaen. For 2019/20 there were 15 participants on Mynediad Level 1 and 9 on Mynediad Level 2, none on Sylfaen. Participation was hampered by COVID-19 which meant that lessons were held virtually for those who were able to attend. For 2020/21, subject to sufficient numbers, the intention is to run Mynediad Level 1, Level 2 and Sylfaen courses. This may require running courses in partnership with other organisations.
- 5.5.11 A strategic framework around co-production was developed. Historically co-production has resided specifically within the Social Care and Health field. This framework aims to expand the use of co-production across other services where appropriate. Co-production is just one tool and does not replace consultation and engagement. Training around the definition and application of co-production was delivered to key groups and a pilot was undertaken in Social Services.
- 5.5.12 Performance around sickness continues to be a concern as reflected in the indicator CHR002 (PAM001) and a review of the data is underway. During 2019 the HR department undertook some targeted work with Heads of Service on long term sickness. COVID-19 inevitably impacted this during the last few months of the year.
- 5.5.13 Performance around the budget FINA6 is a complicated picture impacted by COVID-19 during the last quarter and resulting in an overall positive outturn for 2019-20. The longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 and the Council's financial strategy moving forward is being developed alongside the Recovery Plan and the future revised transformation programme, which is replacing Sustainable Swansea.

5.6 *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity*

- 5.6.1 Our well-being, prosperity, quality of life and future survival is dependent on a healthy resilient natural environment and stable climate. Significant steps were taken during 19/20 to meet this wellbeing objective:
- 5.6.2 The Council's first Section 6 Monitoring Report was submitted to Welsh Government outlining what it has done to comply with its Biodiversity (Section 6) Duty and an Action Plan drafted. A new Corporate Biodiversity Working Group as well as a Scrutiny Panel have been established to oversee delivery of identified actions over the next 3 years. The Group also considers the issue of climate change and the Council's response to Climate Emergency.
- 5.6.3 A Policy Development Committee (PDC) has been designated the Equalities and Future Generations Future Generations PDC charged with a specific remit to cover the response to Climate Change emergency. Work has begun reviewing relevant Council policies and looking at how they align with tackling climate change or where gaps may exist.
- 5.6.4 A draft Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy has been consulted on, which sets out a vision for the central area of Swansea to be much greener, creating green spaces which deliver resilience, prosperity, health and well-being, and will include a target for increasing tree canopy coverage within the public realm. A Countywide GI strategy is also being prepared
- 5.6.5 Tree planting targets have been exceeded helped by the £12 million Kingsway development which has resulted in over 200 new trees being planted, and a new City Centre park is in the process of being created. A Corporate Tree Policy has been drafted with consultation to follow current consultation on Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows as well SPG relating to Biodiversity. An Ash dieback management strategy has been implemented and an Ash Dieback Action Plan is in place with around 3,000 Ash trees surveyed on public land, many of which show varying signs of dieback.
- 5.6.6 High level mapping of biodiversity and GI has been undertaken to identify areas of poorest environmental quality and identify and prioritise areas for GI enhancement over the next 3 years. Work has also begun on a biodiversity review of all Council assets. Clauses are now routinely inserted into new service level agreements, contracts, licences, etc. relating to land use and land management to prevent loss of biodiversity. A service level agreement has been renewed with the local biodiversity records centre to ensure effective management of land/buildings.
- 5.6.7 Local communities have become routinely involved and supported in participating in initiatives that maintain and enhance tree cover and improve ecological connectivity. Work has included planting over 4000

whips ( not included in planting targets) abutting Mynydd Newydd Playing Fields and tree planting with volunteers at Ravenhill Park and Singleton Park. A local not for profit tree nursery has been supported where volunteers help nurture indigenous trees. This is one of several not for profit organisations the Council works in partnership with. The planting of trees has also been supported through partnership working with a variety of community groups.

- 5.6.8 Collaborative working with services areas across the Council has improved ecological connectivity through developing verge habitats, wildlife corridors and habitats to encourage pollinators. Significant funding is available from a variety of sources for tree planting, identifying sufficient suitable sites on publicly owned land and procuring appropriate species types is proving more problematic.
- 5.6.9 A Climate Change Charter has been drafted setting out headline commitments which the Council seeks to adopt and which it encourages all organisations within the area to commit to. Launch of this Charter has been delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Swansea Environment Forum has accepted the Council's invitation to assist in developing a Climate Action Plan particularly in relation to supporting and facilitating wider stakeholder engagement.
- 5.6.10 The Council has built up the biggest public sector-operated electric vehicle fleet in Wales, which has been hailed a 'beacon of excellence' by Green Fleet Cymru. This will help cut our carbon footprint, save money and reduce air pollution. An infrastructure of Electric Charging Points is being developed which will be installed in 12 car parks across Swansea. The electricity supply will be 100% sustainably sourced.
- 5.6.11 Agile working has reduced unnecessary travel and plans are underway to vacate the Civic Centre and establish a Central Public Sector hub. This process was accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has been leading the implementation of the One Public Estate programme within Swansea and the South West Wales region. As a result, significant interest from public sector bodies has been established on the proposal to share office accommodation and associated services within a Central Public Sector Hub. The development is a key component of Swansea Central - Phase 2.
- 5.6.12 All the Council's energy is procured from 100% renewable energy sources. Community owned renewable energy schemes are supported, with the Swansea Community Energy and Enterprise Scheme Solar PV project delivering clean energy for 11 local schools and a care home during 2019 generating 356,000 kWh. Additional Solar PV installations at the Guildhall and four schools generated 89,000kwh.
- 5.6.13 The Council remains committed to the building of the world's first purpose built tidal energy lagoon. Through the Swansea Bay City Deal Region a Tidal Lagoon Task Force the concept plans have been

developed for a large floating development of commercial and residential accommodation.

- 5.6.14 The Council is a founder member of Low Carbon Swansea Bay (LCSB) - a network of public, private and voluntary organisations in South West Wales working to reduce our carbon footprint by sharing knowledge, ideas, networks and training opportunities. The Council actively participate in the Swansea Bay Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Group, support a Clean Air Roadshow and have engaged local businesses and partners by hosting the first Green Fleet Wales event in Swansea. Working towards decarbonisation will help provide long term sustainable solutions, particularly pertinent during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery; the aim is to develop a set of net zero commitments/pledges in 2021.
- 5.6.15 Interpretation boards have been installed to help visitors appreciate environmental and cultural features at both community green spaces and key visitor attractions. An Environmental Events programme is published annually which provides details of hundreds of free or low cost local environmental events. Awareness raising talks and training workshops have taken place across Swansea, including guided tours of specialist parks and Nature Reserves and in support of volunteering days. These events were well attended during 19/20 but will be impacted going forward in the short term due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.6.16 The 'Our Nature our Future' project has helped to embed the value of outdoor learning and supported 20 local primary schools to make better use of their school grounds for biodiversity. This has been complemented by the 'Giving Nature a Home' project working in collaboration with the RSPB which has helped children to access and learn about their local natural environment. Nature is widely acknowledged to have helped many people cope and build resilience during the coronavirus crisis as families reconnected with local green spaces as part of their daily exercise.
- 5.6.17 Training for school children has also been delivered at the Council's Bishops Wood Local Nature Reserve, Caswell, and the international Eco Schools programmes has been supported which encourages schools to promote recycling and reduce energy and water consumption and encouraged Foundation Phase pupils to learn outdoors. There will be limited opportunities for future events until social distancing restrictions are lifted.
- 5.6.18 Means of access to green space has been mapped, including access points and opportunities for improvements identified. The aim is to ensure that at least 75% of the local population live within 300m (5 minutes' walk) of their nearest area of natural greenspace. Work has started on a Green Fairness Policy. Green Fairness is about ensuring high quality GI and natural greenspace is available in deprived neighbourhoods to help improve resilience to climate change and reduce health inequalities.

- 5.6.19 The annual programme of wildflower planting and management saw over 31,000 square metres of wild flowers sown at almost 180 sites across the city including roundabouts, roadside verges and parks. The unplanned recent reduction in cutting of verges has accelerated the strategy of reducing mowing. The unintentional results in appropriate locations has resulted in a visible increase in nature. Work will continue to identify those locations in Council ownership which can be given over to wildflower planting; however the extent of planting will be reduced in 20/21 due to the delayed start to the programme.
- 5.6.20 Eighteen locations have been awarded prestigious Green Flag or Green Flag Community Award status. Among the 2019 winners are six Swansea Council parks including Clyne Gardens, Victoria Park, Brynmill Park, Cwmdonkin Park, Parc Llewelyn and the Botanical & Ornamental Gardens at Singleton.
- 5.6.21 Greater community ownership of parks, nature reserves and wildlife sites and working with 'Friends of' organisations is helping to ensure long-term sustainability of parks and public spaces. There are more than 30 active 'Friends of' Parks/Open Spaces groups with several undertaking leases and considering a Community Asset Transfer. Friends of groups have been able to access grants which the Council cannot - achieving in excess of £300k to support general building refurbishment as well as investment in new playground equipment, MUGAs, planting of new trees and shrubs, etc. A memorandum of understanding has been produced in partnership with the groups which will assist with future funding applications. Several roles across Council services and partner organisations now include volunteer coordination to encourage and provide volunteering opportunities for adults and children to help with practical conservation/maintenance tasks within their neighbourhoods. However organisational resources are still needed for the majority of our environmental assets and service areas have continued to maintain nature reserves and rights of way throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- 5.6.22 The mapping of Invasive Non Native Species has been completed for the whole of the County and long term site treatment is being rolled -out. A Japanese Knotweed advice leaflet has been produced and further guidance is provided on the Council's website.
- 5.6.23 A new key performance indicator has been developed based on the Bathing Water Quality for Swansea Bay linked to the prediction model and public message display. Results were fractionally below target but this has been linked to issues with external data feeds.
- 5.6.24 Environmental enhancement schemes have been prepared and are in the process of being implemented for Council housing estates as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard with hundreds of new trees planted or scheduled to be planted over the next 2 years. Replanting has been required in parts of Penlan due to vandalism.



5.6.25 The Council exceeded its waste reuse and recycling target of 64%, achieving a result of 64.7%, which was an increase of 2.43% from last year.

## **6. Equality and Engagement Implications**

6.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

6.2 This report has no direct equality and engagement implications itself although the data reported may form part of the information that leads to a service screening for and undertaking an EIA as required.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations**

7.1 The performance indicators in this report are part of the way in which the Council measures and reports progress meeting its Well-being Objectives as described in the Corporate Plan.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 In the current and anticipated financial environment further discussion and consideration will be required around priorities and target setting for performance improvement as part of *Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future*.

## **9. Legal Implications**

9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** None.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A End of Year 2019/20 Performance Monitoring Report