



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

Cabinet – 15 July 2021

### Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21

<b>Purpose:</b>	To report corporate performance for 2020/21.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	<i>Delivering a Successful &amp; Sustainable Swansea Corporate Plan 2020/22 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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#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the performance results for 2020/21 delivering the Council's Well-being Objectives (priorities) described in the Corporate Plan 2020/22 *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 2020/21 have been provided in the approved budget. As part of the work on Achieving Better Together 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.

## **2.0 Performance and Improvement: impact from COVID-19**

- 2.1 The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has brought huge challenges and changes to the Council, its services and workforce. The Council has never undertaken such change in such a short timescale and in such challenging circumstances. A number of non-essential services were suspended in order to redeploy resources to areas where they were most needed.
- 2.2 This inevitably has had a significant impact on the usual areas of performance across the council and that is why targets for performance indicators were not set for 2020/21. This should also be considered when comparing performance to previous years.
- 2.3 This has been an unprecedented year and the Council's response to the pandemic, whilst not necessarily reflected in the established performance indicators in this report, has been extraordinary.
- 2.4 In summary, since March 2020 the Council has transformed the way it works to manage the impact of the pandemic. Thousands of staff were successfully mobilised to work remotely and/or from home within a matter of weeks. This took a massive effort from our ICT team to provide the necessary changes enabling staff and councillors to have full network links at their preferred location.
- 2.5 Other changes include:
- Supporting the Welsh Government's Shielding Programme by setting a new call centre and providing daily support to thousands of vulnerable people.
  - Focusing social services care on the most vulnerable, re-opening a care home and supporting the private care sector.
  - Overseeing the planning and construction of the Bay Field Hospital on Fabian Way.
  - Remodelling schools into care settings for key workers' children.
  - Providing meals to care settings and delivering free school meals.
  - Providing food banks across the city and county.
  - Providing financial support in excess of £100 million to thousands of businesses.
  - Setting up a Track, Trace and Protect function and providing community testing centres.
  - Preparing for mass vaccination in our communities.
- 2.6 These results for 2020/21 should therefore be considered within this wider context and achievements noted.
- 2.7 Performance is judged using the results measured by Corporate Plan performance indicators and is usually compared to agreed targets. For the sake of this report and given the issues set out above, targets for 2020/21 have not been set due to the ongoing impact from COVID-19

and the associated lockdowns and other preventative and reactive measures.

- 2.8 The impact on the performance indicators from COVID-19 can also be seen where this occurs by comparing the results of performance indicators against the results from the same period last year where comparison is possible.
- 2.9 The 2020/21 outturn shows that **35 out of 59 (59%)** comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators showed improvement or stayed the same compared to 2019/20.
- 2.10 Of the 45 indicators that had a comment added, 25 (56%) referred to the impact from COVID-19 on performance.
- 2.11 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 and interrupted preparations underway for 2021/22. The indicators and how the Council can better measure strategic directions and our priorities will be reviewed as soon as allowed by the progress of the pandemic.
- 2.12 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 4.0.

### **3.0 Other considerations**

- 3.1 When making comparisons to 2019/20, the following should be considered:
  - 3.1.1 The nature and number of some performance indicators (PIs) may have changed between these two periods and therefore direct comparisons may not always be appropriate.
  - 3.1.2 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).
  - 3.1.3 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.
  - 3.1.4 None of the corporate priorities can 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.

#### **4.0 Context: Overviews of Performance in 2020/21**

4.0.1 The following overviews provided by responsible departments describe the context to the performance meeting the Council's key objectives as at 2020/21.

##### *4.1 Safeguarding people from harm*

4.1.1 Clearly over this past year we have faced unprecedented challenges to maintain the safe delivery of health and care services. Given the impact of the pandemic on our population, the severe disruption to the routine delivery of services and the impacts on our workforce, we would quite reasonably have expected a severe impact on performance. However quite remarkably our performance has held up well.

4.1.2 This is testament to the resilience, commitment and hard work of managers and staff across the social services directorate, the wider Council and our partners - statutory, third and independent sector.

4.1.3 This year, across adult services we have provided even more care and support albeit very differently and with even greater emphasis on short term reablement and recovery interventions. We have reduced the number of planned reviews undertaken in order to prioritise urgent support but are making progress in catching up the backlog.

4.1.4 Likewise we had to temporarily reduce capacity in our team that undertakes DOLS assessments but the team is now back in place and performance improved as the year progressed.

4.1.5 The new adult safeguarding team was established and feedback on the quality of their work from a range of partners indicates that those new arrangements focussed on putting the person properly at the centre of the safeguarding process have transformed our approach.

4.1.6 Our expanded cohort of Local area coordinators have been at the heart of work with and in communities during the worst peaks of the pandemic and the testimonials of the difference they have made have been extraordinary.

4.1.7 None of the above should detract from the enormous impact of Covid on those individuals receiving care and support and their carers. Our ability to provide direct support in the way that we usually would has been and remains severely restricted. Even with all of our services back open, the restrictions on capacity necessitated by social distancing means that we can only support about a third of individuals in the way we would prior to the pandemic. Covid has had a devastating impact in care homes across the UK and it may take a number of years to stabilise the sector.

- 4.1.8 Take up of carers assessments has declined even further despite the fact that carers have had to provide even more support to family members to keep them safe and well. Reversing this trend is a key part of our recovery planning going forward.
- 4.1.9 In children services, we were concerned that the absence of the usual societal support and safeguarding provided by schools and the usual community support infrastructure during extended periods of lockdown could lead to a significant increase in child protection concerns and the risk of family breakdown. Children services worked hard with colleagues in education, schools and from other partners to mitigate that risk as best we could.
- 4.1.10 We have seen an increase in the complexity of children and family's needs as they present at the front door of our services but encouragingly we have proved ourselves remarkably effective in continuing to support children to remain safe and well within their families and communities and consequently looked after children numbers have dropped this year.
- 4.1.11 Despite the restrictions on our ability to deliver our early help services as intended this year, we have still seen a greater number of children and families being safely diverted to and supported by those services leaving statutory children services to concentrate on supporting those children with the highest level of needs.
- 4.1.12 There has been a detrimental impact on assessment performance and some of the other formal processes we are required to follow but actually given the significant reductions in workforce availability we have seen this year, these reductions are far smaller than we might have anticipated.
- 4.1.13 It cannot be stated often enough, the performance that has been achieved this year in circumstances that none of us could have imagined is nothing short of miraculous. Our workforce, our frontline managers, our Heads of service and their senior management teams have achieved extraordinary things and should all be extremely proud.

## 4.2 *Improving education & skills*

- 4.2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on performance in education, particularly for examination year groups. In academic year 2019-2020 key stage 4 examinations were replaced by centre assessed grades, making it difficult to make comparisons with prior performance. Collection and collation of teacher assessment results for the earlier key stages was cancelled by Welsh Government in 2020, and is also cancelled for 2021.
- 4.2.2 Attendance during a pandemic year has been affected negatively. At times it has been safer to be educated at home. The impact of self-

isolation has had an ongoing negative effect on attendance at schools. Education Welfare Officers continue to monitor carefully and support families to send children back to schools. The normal collection of attendance data by Welsh Government did not take place in 2020, and will also be suspended for 2021.

- 4.2.3 During the pandemic, schools were supported well with their provision for remote learning. When the disruption to onsite learning increased, support was accelerated to ensure pupils had access to a blend of teaching and learning opportunities. Education was delivered despite absence in schools.
- 4.2.4 The level of young people becoming Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) has improved from the previous year. Provisionally, 1.4% of the 2020 Year 11 leavers were recorded as NEET, but official publication of this measure is not due until May 2021. 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. However, it is anticipated that the disruption in education may affect NEETS numbers in future. A new NEET partnership now meets with a clear aim of NEETS reduction. Enhancements planned for the Vulnerability Assessment Profiles (VAP), which are a tool which can help in assessment of future NEET, were delayed due to the pandemic, but are now due to take place in Autumn 2021.
- 4.2.5 The number of statements issued within 26 weeks has been an area for continual improvement. However, more relevant performance measures will be introduced next year as the system transfers from statement to individual development plans. Improvements to systems within a challenging context of the impact of Covid-19 is ongoing. Swansea's ALN Strategic Plan priorities, including changes required to meet the implications of the ALNET Act 2018 are progressing well, despite the pandemic. A new IT system (CACI Impulse) has been procured to manage the process around creating and managing IDPs; this will also be used to map provision and reduce most of the existing paperwork associated with the current system.
- 4.2.6 Partneriaeth Sgiliau Abertawe/Swansea Skills Partnership (PSA) continues to meet, despite Covid-19. The aim of PSA, a group comprising Members, LA 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.
- 4.2.7 Looking forward, the assessment of emotional and mental wellbeing of children and staff in schools will be a key consideration as in the future. The implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Tribunal Act 2018

in September 2021 and Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 under the Welsh Government's National Mission, against a challenging context of re-setting education has already influenced the performance framework 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, mental well-being and disability.

### 4.3 *Transforming our economy and infrastructure*

- 4.3.1 Despite the Covid-19 global pandemic, the vast majority of our targets have been met in 2020/21. However, some targets have shown a declining trend compared with last year's performance, owing to the effect of the pandemic. One example of this is the number of projects with social benefit clauses in their contracts.
- 4.3.2 Although the target has been exceeded, the number of projects with clauses that commenced works is down compared to last year, owing to Covid-19 impact related delays on site. Likewise, the percentage of all planning applications determined within 8 weeks also achieved target, but the trend and performance was impacted by changes to working practices early in the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and due to significant increase in number of planning applications received during last quarter.
- 4.3.3 Over the last year our major regeneration priorities have continued to make substantial progress on site. The Copr Bay works have made significant visible progress with the arena, residential block, MSCP, and church hall superstructure steelwork all erected. The removal of the redundant bridge structure and positioning of the new bridge was also a major achievement this year. 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 Copr Bay Phase 2 design & viability work, including the potential for a public sector hub, has made good progress, however, the timing on any announcement relating to the government's Hubs programme is currently unknown. As an interim solution a temporary public realm scheme has been designed for consideration by Cabinet.
- 4.3.4 The Shaping Swansea procurement has continued at pace during the pandemic, seeing the completion of the competitive dialogue stage of the process. Meanwhile the Kingsway infrastructure project has achieved practical completion, with works to remedy minor contractual defects scheduled for spring 2021. Planning permission for the Kingsway Employment Hub building was consented and procurement of a contractor is nearing completion with a contract award report drafted for Cabinet consideration. Wind Street works have commenced on site and are making good progress. The works contract for the Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse contract has also been awarded and good progress is being made on site. Acquisition of the Place Theatre was

completed following a successful grant bid and design and procurement works are underway. We have also delivered a range of improvements to Swansea Market including new public toilets and a Changing Places facility, lighting upgrade and installation of solar panels. In response to the local economic impacts of the pandemic we have supported businesses with a range of grants, including the outdoors adaptations grant. A Shop Local Campaign was also launched November to encourage local spending habits thus keeping money in the Swansea economy.

- 4.3.5 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. With this in mind a re-purposing feasibility study has been carried out to identify opportunities to revitalise the city centre in the wake of the impact on retail from the Covid-19 pandemic. An action plan is being prepared to identify key interventions.
- 4.3.6 This links to the Swansea Economic Recovery Action Plan that was prepared in partnership with key stakeholders and agreed by Cabinet as part of the Council's wider Covid-19 recovery strategy. The Council has also been leading the refresh of the Regional Economic Regeneration Strategy in collaboration with other authorities in the region. This work will be completed later this year and will provide an economic delivery plan to guide transformational project investment in the region, utilising funds from the UK government's Shared Prosperity Funding programme that is envisaged in future years.
- 4.3.7 The WHQS Capital Programme for 2020/21 was affected by the Covid pandemic which curtailed the Council's ability to deliver planned works to occupied existing dwellings. This was recognised by Welsh Government and Swansea Council has been granted a further 12 months in which to deliver its WHQS Compliance Programme. The revised completion date is now 31st December 2021.
- 4.3.8 In spite of the Covid lockdown and the impact on revised safe working practices which limits labour resources delivering work inside residents homes and confined external spaces, the Council achieved a full spend of its Covid adjusted capital budget of £33m for the financial year against its original target of £45m, which was set before the onset of the pandemic. The investment was to ensure homes are in a good state of repair, thermally efficient, safe and secure and meeting the needs of individuals. Over the course of the financial year the Council delivered 870 new kitchens and bathrooms. Major external repairs and improvements to 280 properties which includes reroofing, weatherboards and rainwater goods together with insulated render and other insulation upgrades were completed. Other energy efficient measures such as the installation of 350 high performance combination boilers were delivered. Maintenance and improvement of 1,600 gardens was carried out to



improve safety and security of properties for the benefit of residents. Fire safety improvements work has continued and further sprinkler systems installed at high rise blocks of flats and sheltered housing complexes. Installation of remotely monitored smoke alarm systems is also being rolled out in sheltered housing complexes. Other routine safety work such as renewing electrical re-wires have been carried out to ensure installations comply with the prevailing regulations. The above are just some of the headline work streams delivered in the past 12 months, representative of a much wider programme of repairs, maintenance and improvements which forms the complete capital programme.

- 4.3.9 The overall WHQS programme contributed significantly towards community benefits and employment opportunities. By the end of 2020/21 the WHQS programme created 1,645 weeks of targeted recruitment and training specifically for people who were unemployed and experiencing barriers to accessing the jobs market and 18 people from the local community have been employed in this period. In addition 18 apprentices engaged for WHQS work have seen their employment continue with ongoing projects. To date, 34 community benefit measuring tools have been submitted relating to work undertaken as part of WHQS.
- 4.3.10 The Council's More Homes Programme, focussed on providing new build Council housing, is looking to a 10 year delivery ambition of 1000 new affordable homes. The site at Parc Y Helyg of 16 new homes was handed over in September 2020 and Colliers Way Phase 2, a site of 18 new homes was completed in April. As part of this phase, 34 new homes will have been built as 'Homes as Power Stations' using funds from a £1.5m Innovative Housing Programme grant from the Welsh Government. The homes have innovative features such as solar panels and battery-powered energy, as well as the inclusion of swift bricks to support biodiversity. Work was also completed on a conversion of a former social services building in West Cross into 2 new family homes, which were handed over in December 2020.
- 4.3.11 Work is underway on 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.
- 4.3.12 The Council is also developing 8 one bedroom homes at a former Education site in Uplands. Work will also be starting at West Cross, to develop 6 bungalows, and a further 10 homes in Clase. All these schemes have been funded through Welsh Government funding to support Councils to deal with homelessness through the pandemic. This funding has also enabled the purchase of 20 1 x 3 bedroom units. 3 additional homes have also been purchased and adapted, and will be used to house families or households requiring adapted accommodation.

- 4.3.13 The Council is also progressing the procurement of a development partner or partners 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 owned 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.
- 4.3.14 2020/21 has presented unprecedented challenges for the Leisure and Cultural Sector. Following the first lockdown, team members undertook to support the community, taking on leadership for services to those shielding or without family support; organising food distribution and volunteer responses in the communities.
- 4.3.15 New ways of working evolved as a result, with project work continuing during this period with the third sector and colleagues in poverty and prevention, area coordination and health. The conclusion of the service's work for the European Pilot programme 'Agenda21: Culture in Sustainable Cities' resulted in the realisation of a partnership with Race Council Cymru to create a new multi-cultural and digital Hub in the Arts Wing of the Grand Theatre, and the commitment to Diversity in the service through a 'Pledge'. This work was recognised by APSE as good practice, when the service was shortlisted for their annual Leisure and Cultural Service Team of the Year award; contributing to the wider set of shortlisted services that placed the Council in the running for Council of the Year.
- 4.3.16 The pledge to diversify and recognise all our communities in our cultural programming also set the framework for a review, undertaken by the service, into the city's street and place names, monuments, statues and other commemorations, in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign and subsequent council motion. This work will continue in partnership with the community, to build a resource for future commissioning and street naming - with the first being applied to the new bridge walkway - Cupid Way - in the city centre. Challenges were presented, and overcome, by the easing of and then return, to lockdown, as venues prepared for and established the means to reopen, only to be closed down again some months later.
- 4.3.17 Theatre and Events were particularly affected as these moved to online engagement, such as the online Airshow and Christmas Parade, as did a number of talks, workshops, virtual exhibitions and learning programmes. New Websites and platforms were created however, including the launch of a new site for the Glynn Vivian Gallery and a whole rebrand for the Grand Theatre, with a much improved website and booking system - embracing all venues and events as a 'Swansea Box Office' strategy for digital engagement and sales going forward. All the venues saw work continue behind the scenes, with the Arts Wing being upgraded - and a complete refurbishment of the Brangwyn Hall floor to prepare for when

we can welcome our partners and events back into our venues. Further support was provided to businesses by way of accessing and promoting Freelancer grants to those in the creative industries, and businesses in the city centre and districts to enable outdoor trading, health and wellbeing opportunities – including the creation of 'foodcourts' in Singleton and Mumbles. Parklives and the National Exercise Referral programme continued online, drawing praise from partners across the region, and funding has been agreed for these to continue next year. All being well, rescheduled programming from last year will also go ahead in coming months and fresh opportunities for new events, commissions and a new cultural strategy can also go ahead.

#### 4.4 *Tackling Poverty*

4.4.1 The corporate plan sets out the council's commitment to Tackle Poverty to ensure that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential. To meet this commitment the corporate Tackling Poverty Strategy ensures that Tackling Poverty is everybody's business.

4.4.2 *Impact of Covid-19 - Tackling Poverty.* The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on those already experiencing poverty and is driving those that were at risk of poverty, into poverty. A report published by the Bevan Foundation in February 2021, 'Different experiences of Poverty in Winter 2020' found that:

- Incomes have fallen: 24% of Welsh households have seen their incomes decrease as a result of the pandemic.
- Many households have seen their living costs increase: 41% are spending more on heating, electricity and/or water, 38% are spending more on food and 16% are spending more on internet costs or devices to access the internet.
- Many households have seen their living standards drop with some having to cut back on their spending as a result of the economic impact: 22% have had to cut back on spending on clothing for adults, 15% have had to cut back on food for adults, 14% have cut back on heating, electricity and/or water.
- There is a growing personal debt crisis in Wales: Thousands of households have fallen behind on their bills or have had to borrow money as a result of the economic impact: Over 120,000 households, 9% of Welsh households have fallen behind on at least one bill since March 2020. Over 200,000 households, 15% have borrowed money since March 2020. Rising debt levels does not just have an impact on households in the near term, but also has longer term implications.
- Households who are in debt face extra costs for the period that they pay off their debt. For households already struggling these additional costs may be a significant challenge.
- Some groups have been especially badly affected including disabled people or people with long-term health conditions, 25-49 year olds, social renters, private renters, lone parent households, single person households without children and couples with children.

- 4.4.3 Lower paid workers in Wales in industries such as accommodation and hospitality saw 78% of jobs furloughed. Low paid workers are at higher risk of job loss as a result of the pandemic. By August 2020 In Wales, the number of Universal Credit claimants had almost doubled since the start of the year.
- 4.4.4 *Employability Support.* The number of people gaining employment through Employability support, supports the well-being objective steps; ensuring that young people are able to access employment, education and training after reaching 16 and, individuals are supported to overcome their barriers to employment through coordinated person centre employability support. This is achieved through the Swansea Working coordinated employment approach and associated employability support programmes of Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Workways STU, Workways Plus and Cam Nesa.
- 4.4.5 There has been an increase in the number of people gaining employment through Employability Support in 2020/21 (453) compared to 2019/20 (354). There has been an increase in referrals into the programmes directly and through Swansea Working referrals in 2020/21 (2,566) compared to 2019/20 (2,113).
- 4.4.6 *Welfare Benefit Entitlements.* The step to help address the impacts of Welfare reform, including supporting people to claim the full benefits they are entitled to so that they are able to maximise their income is reported through the amount of welfare benefits raised through securing rights and entitlements by the Welfare Rights team. The amount of benefits secured has increased from £1.359m in 2019/20 to £1.366m in 2020/21, even with an increased level of complexity in cases. The team have achieved a 91% success rate in appeal representation during 2020/21 despite face-to-face appeals not taking place.
- 4.4.7 *Council Tax Reduction.* The performance indicator of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) average time for processing new claims has slightly increased, this is due to a significant increase in those claiming CRT in 2020/21 compared to 19/20 and the team being diverted from core functions to process Isolation Payments for the Welsh Government.
- 4.4.8 *Housing.* The number of additional affordable housing units has increased during the 2020/21 with additional performance information highlighting how many were delivered through Section 106 agreements, those delivered by Registered Social Landlords and those delivered by the Local Authority. The Council, along with partners in the housing sector and support charities' response to addressing homelessness and rough sleeping ensured that many people have been supported to find a place to live and many moving on from emergency temporary accommodation into longer-term homes. There has been a significant reduction in the number of days all homeless families with children spend in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

4.4.9 *Skills and Qualifications.* The partnership working between Swansea Working, Lifelong Learning, Employability Programmes and partners has continued offer participants accredited training and qualifications however on a much smaller scale than the previous year. The number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local Authority support has dropped significantly in 2020/21 (450) in comparison with 2019/20 (1000). This is due to employability/learning programmes being unable to offer face-to-face training for long periods of 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions. Whilst training opportunities continue to be offered online, a number of the awarding body sector specific accredited qualifications require an element of practical assessment.

4.4.10 *Partnership Working.* The Swansea Council Poverty Forum, Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum and Financial Inclusion Steering Group continue to meet, facilitating networking, sharing of good practice, information, trends, changes to services and new opportunities, encouraging partnership working and collaboration.

4.4.11 The Swansea Food Poverty Network was established in October 2021 to facilitate greater collaboration to tackle food poverty and food insecurity in Swansea. 41 Food Poverty Grants were awarded by the Council during 2020/21 proving support for the network of food banks and food aid projects across Swansea to maintain and further develop their services meeting increased demands. Period Dignity in Community Grants were awarded to 19 organisations and services supporting those experiencing poverty or at risk of poverty. Men's Sheds Grants were awarded to nine existing and developing Men's Sheds projects in Swansea reducing social isolation and increasing wellbeing.

4.4.12 The Swansea Poverty Truth Commission Facilitation Team started in 2020/21, hosted by Swansea Council for Voluntary Services and the development of the commission will continue into 2021/22.

4.4.13 During the year effective partnership working has been demonstrated between the Council, the Third Sector and communities as a part of the Covid community response, including the Local Area Coordination team working with more than 5,000 active community and street champions to support over 23,000 requests for food and medication, as well as support for people that were socially isolated. The legacy of street champions continues throughout Swansea.

#### 4.5 *Transformation & future Council development*

4.5.1 The impact of Covid-19 on the Council's performance indicators has resulted in a mixed picture this year. First and foremost the Council was unable to monitor targets in the MTFP (indicator Fina6) due to the call on significant financial resources to support local residents, communities and businesses through the pandemic. This included a range of interventions from food banks and support for those shielding, to issuing

grants to businesses and direct payments to carers, those self-isolating, or to parents for free school meals. All services had to divert attention to the pandemic however, by year-end the Council is in an overall underspend position.

4.5.2 Additionally, the shift to online channels reflects the good performance on indicators CUST 2a and b, particularly with more residents completing online forms for service requests. Online learning courses for residents shifted online with telephone support (indicator IT10). Numbers did reduce as face-to-face learning had to be suspended however, some new funding and alternative courses were secured. Those Council staff in desk based roles were able to shift to working from home. This may have had a positive impact on sickness figures (indicator CHR002) but more research into the data and sickness recording is needed.

4.5.3 The Council was in a strong position going into the pandemic so that desk based staff could make the shift to homeworking easily. In addition, staff across all services got involved in volunteering or supporting vital work to help residents and businesses.

4.5.4 The Corporate Plan Transformation and Future Council well-being objectives have been reviewed in light of the pandemic. The Council has a recovery plan in place (Achieving Better Together) and this is reflected in the revised well-being objectives. Moving forward a new transformation programme will be devised to replace the previous Sustainable Swansea strategy, aligned to the Corporate Plan and financial strategy. The future financial landscape continues to be increasingly challenging therefore innovation and transformation will continue to be vital in order to maintain local priorities.

#### 4.6 *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity*

4.6.1 The diverse natural environment of the County and the variety of accessible green/open space within the area has a direct impact on our health and well-being. It can help us to adapt to and mitigate for climate change impacts, such as extreme temperatures or flooding, reduce air and water pollution, capture and store carbon, support active recreation whilst also providing places to relax and leave daily stress behind. Recent studies have indicated that being able to spend time in nature is something that communities have particularly missed during periods of Covid-19 lockdown.

4.6.2 Whilst the pandemic has adversely affected people's lives and livelihoods it has had some short-term positive impacts on the natural environment. Travel restrictions have resulted in reductions in air pollution, carbon emissions and noise. People have also been exercising more - exploring and taking greater interest in their local area and enjoying the associated physical and mental health and well-being benefits.

4.6.3 Funding providers have recognised the importance of post-pandemic green recovery opportunities and solutions, e.g. by making additional funding available for such purposes over the past year to recover the economy and repair the damage to the climate and environment at the same time. This has been aimed at decarbonisation projects; nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change and respond to the need for nature recovery; and sustainable tourism proposals to prepare for changing tourism patterns. The Natural Environment Section delivered over £600,000 worth of such schemes through grant funding during 20/21. Similar levels of funding have been offered/bid for 21/22 and are anticipated over the medium term as national policy recognises the need to continue to respond to climate and nature emergencies.

4.6.4 The work of the various teams and sections committed to delivering the corporate well-being objective for maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity has been largely unaffected by the pandemic with work continuing as planned and good progress has been made in delivering the identified steps of the objective. This work is monitored on a regular on-going basis by both a Climate Change Programme Board and a Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel.

4.6.5 Key achievements over the past year include:

- Adoption of Biodiversity and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), as well as a Central Area Green Infrastructure Strategy and Green Factor Tool. Further draft SPG has been published in relation to Trees and Development along with a Design Guide for the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The Council has signed up to Welsh Government's place making charter which ensures that multifunctional green infrastructure and access to open space are integrated into the design of new development from the outset
- Further extensive tree planting has been undertaken on Council land throughout the County including over 230 heavy standard trees and 2800 whips.
- Despite Covid restrictions preventing volunteer support, the management, maintenance and access improvement to the rights of way network (over 400 miles) and local nature reserves has continued and intensified e.g. at Bishops Wood and Swansea Vale. Whilst heritage, interpretation, access and biodiversity improvements have been undertaken in Clyne Valley Country Park. This has enabled people to more easily visit, enjoy and benefit from their local greenspaces and the wildlife on their doorsteps.
- Elsewhere around Gower measures have been put in place and studies commissioned to reduce visitor impacts on biodiversity and the historic landscape, e.g. at Cefn Bryn and Port Eynon.
- Biodiversity awareness raising events and training, e.g. Green Infrastructure, Carbon Literacy, etc. have been adapted to continue through virtual delivery.

- The Active Travel programme has further upgraded and created six new walking and cycling routes around the County and an interactive route map published to encourage Active Travel as the normal way to get around for local journeys.
- The Council has signed a Charter on Climate Action which affirms its commitment to work towards becoming net zero carbon by 2030. This includes a commitment to review current strategies and plans to meet the challenge of climate emergency and ensuring actions and commitments meet the requirements of future generations and the need to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity.
- Linked to this an Energy Strategy and Carbon Management Plan has been adopted. Other linked actions include the preparation of a Sustainable Transport Strategy formally documenting street lighting and Grey Fleet approaches and a draft Waste Strategy. Procurement contract procedure rules have also been revised and processes must now take into account the Well Being of Future Generations Act, sustainability and carbon reduction considerations.
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels have installed on a number of primary and secondary schools including Cefn Hengoed, Morriston, Pentrehafod, Pontarddulais and Gowerton , Glynollen, Portmead, Sea View, Clwyd, as well as the Quadrant, Swansea Market and the Council's Building Services Depot.
- Two new 'demonstration' green walls and a green roof have been created at the Swansea Environment Centre as well as a Mumbles to Margam pollinator corridor
- The ongoing WHQS Programme continues to improve thermal performance of the building fabric of Council housing, complemented by the introduction of renewables to provide low carbon heating and energy solutions to reduce emissions and comply with Welsh Govt target of zero emissions in social housing by 2030.

## **5.0 Integrated Assessment Implications**

5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, 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 Acts.
- 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.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.



- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 5.4 This report has no direct impact on the relevant groups considered within the IIA itself although 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.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 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 *Achieving Better Together*.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** None.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21