



Report of the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance

Cabinet – 17 March 2022

Quarter 3 2021/22 Performance Monitoring Report

Purpose:	To report corporate performance for Quarter 3 2021/22.
Policy Framework:	<i>Delivering a Successful & Sustainable Swansea Corporate Plan 2020/22</i> <i>Achieving Better Together Programme.</i>
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Cabinet endorses the performance results for Quarter 3 2021/22 and approves their use to 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 the third quarter of 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 have not been set for 2021/22. This should also be considered when comparing performance to previous years.

2.3 This has been an unprecedented time 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 Q3 2021/22 should therefore be considered within this wider context, the ongoing pandemic 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 2021/22 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 Q3 2021/22 outturn shows that **12 out of 26 (46%)** comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators showed improvement or stayed the same compared to Q3 2020/21.
- 2.10 The performance indicators are assessed each year to ensure that they remain appropriate; although the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown disrupted this process in 2020/21 and during 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.
- 2.11 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 2020/21, 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 2021/22

4.0.1 The following overviews provided by responsible departments describe the context to the performance meeting the Council's key objectives as at Q3 2021/22.

4.1 Safeguarding people from harm

4.1.1 As anticipated, the Winter period has proved particularly challenging not least with the emergence of a new variant of Covid. Whilst the success of the vaccination program has limited the kinds of harms that our population experienced this time last year, the impact of widespread community infection has further depleted our health and care workforce and led to further delays or limitations on the type of care and support we have been able to provide.

4.1.2 Given that context, overall performance has continued to hold up remarkably well and this pays further testament to the incredible efforts of our workforce. Our plans to recover health and care services, to deal with backlogs and to best respond to the changed needs of our population have been further delayed by this latest wave of Covid infection.

4.1.3 Our capacity and ability to report and manage performance remains significantly compromised by the new national care management recording system (WCCIS) that we have adopted.

4.1.4 Our immediate priorities remain to focus on the well-being of our workforce so that they can continue to deliver safe care and support to those individuals and their carers with the most urgent need whilst incrementally resuming arrangements that provide a broader span of support across the continuum of need.

4.2 Improving education & skills

4.2.1 During the third quarter, Swansea schools have faced greater disruption to education than seen in the first two quarters, because of Covid-19. The impact of Covid-19 on how schools operate is significant with the maximum control measures utilised for on-site learning in nearly all schools during quarter three. The negative effect on school attendance and examination year groups remains significant.

4.2.2 Authority wide attainment measures at foundation phase, key stage 2 and key stage 3 are no longer collected by Welsh Government and in key stage 4 and A-Level year groups the awarding of grades has been determined by schools themselves. School monitor levels of achievement in reading and mathematics closely.

- 4.2.3 Intervention is supported by Welsh Government funding to help learners catch up. Evidence from school improvement monitoring visits indicate good support for continuity of learning, appropriate accelerated learning for reading and mathematics as well as preparation for the new Curriculum for Wales. School councils provide valuable feedback to support planning. Support for vulnerable learners has remained stable during the reporting period. Additional counselling services have been actioned to support emotional wellbeing in school aged children and young people.
- 4.2.4 Greater access to Welsh medium schools has progressed well with handover of three new assets complete. A new ten-year strategic plan for Welsh has progressed through the consultation stage. Planning to improve the school estate and enhance the facilities for learners, as part of creating better learning communities, has progressed across three new projects in secondary schools.
- 4.2.5 Attendance in Swansea schools remains lower than usual because of Covid-19. Similar rates of lower attendance are seen in local authorities across Wales. The numbers of learners being excluded is growing and requires further careful monitoring. The rate of permanent exclusions has doubled compared to the same period last year. However, similar increased rates of exclusion are seen in local authorities across Wales.
- 4.2.6 Digital capacity to support the skills agenda is improving through the schools' infrastructure programme. Advice and guidance for vocational education and careers is developing well despite Covid-19. Keeping learners in education, employment and training remains a high priority outcome with effective prevention activities in place. The work towards implementing a new legislative framework to help learners with additional learning continues to progress well.

4.3 *Transforming our economy and infrastructure*

- 4.3.1 Quarter 3 results against our performance measures are largely positive, however, some indicators are showing downward trends when compared against results for last year, or against the last monitoring period. Where relevant, explanatory comments have been provided based on the specific circumstances prevailing.
- 4.3.2 As reported previously in quarters 1 & 2, the effects of Covid on the construction sector continue to have an impact on project delivery. Skilled and unskilled labour shortages, together with supply issues for some construction materials are having an impact on programme and construction costs. Dialogue continues with our contractors and all available countermeasures are being explored to mitigate the impacts of these issues. Despite this our major regeneration priorities have continued to make substantial progress on site during quarter 3. The Copr Bay works have continued to make significant visible progress with the arena, bridge, residential block, MSCP, and church hall all

significantly advanced and nearing practical completion. The Arena opening events are scheduled for March 2022, with fire safety events scheduled for February 2022. ATG have taken partial possession to commence their fit-out contracts.

- 4.3.3 The Shaping Swansea procurement has been concluded with the selection of Urban Splash as the Council's private sector development partner for the delivery of the next phase of strategic sites. This marks an exciting new chapter in Swansea's regeneration journey, bringing new resources and development expertise to the City. Discussions are underway to complete the legal contracts to formalise the selection and commence design work on phase 1 sites. The Castle Square redevelopment project has taken a significant step forward with allocation of capital budget for its delivery. Detailed design work is now ongoing. The Public Sector Hub project at the former BHS building has made significant progress. Planning permission has now been secured and the Transforming Towns formal grant funding award is imminent.
- 4.3.4 Works have also now commenced on the Kingsway Employment Hub building to construct a major new high-tech office development that will provide space for 600 jobs in Swansea city centre. Set for completion in early 2023, the five-storey development will include 114,000 square feet of commercial floorspace, providing flexible co-working and office opportunities for innovative tech, digital and creative businesses. The development will be carbon zero and worth £32.6 million a year to Swansea's economy. It will feature state-of-the-art digital connectivity, a roof terrace, greenery and balconies overlooking the city centre and Swansea Bay.
- 4.3.5 Wind Street works are now substantially complete, with all snagging and outstanding installations to be complete by end January 2022 . Substantial progress has also been achieved at the Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse project with works completion targeted for May 2022. Works have also now commenced to deliver the Place Theatre refurbishment project with works completion targeted for November 2022.
- 4.3.6 As previously reported, the delivery of actions within the Swansea Economic Recovery Action Plan is also ongoing. The action plan, that was prepared in partnership with key stakeholders, and that is supported by deployment of the Council's economic recovery fund, includes a range of initiatives to stimulate economic activity and resilience within Swansea's local economy. The City Centre re-purposing study has been approved by Cabinet and initial projects are under consideration. The Council has also led the production of the Regional Economic Delivery Plan in collaboration with other authorities in the region. This work is now complete and will report to Cabinet in January for adoption of the strategy and its accompanying action plan. The plan identifies transformational project investment in the region that will attract funds from the UK government's Shared Prosperity Funding programme that is envisaged in future years.

- 4.3.7 Due to the impact of Covid pandemic the Welsh Government extended the Compliance period for Local Authorities to complete the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The completion date was revised to the 31st December 2021, which corresponds with the end of Q3. The revised capital investment programme for 2021/22 was initially set at £46.875m, which included £12m of slippage from last year's Covid pandemic affected end of year financial outturn.
- 4.3.8 Further slippage has been experienced during this current year, again due to on-going impact of Covid and issues such as the shortage of contractor capacity, skilled labour and materials which has affected programme delivery. The investment aims and objectives remain the same as proceeding years; 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 this financial year, the Council intends to deliver planned repairs and improvements to the following number of dwellings:
- Kitchens and bathrooms - Initial target of 700 completions to be exceeded, 797 kitchens and 598 bathrooms projected
 - External fabric envelope upgrades (reroofing and insulation, weatherboards and rainwater goods, insulated render and replacement high performance windows) - Initial target 456 completions reduced to 300 by end of financial year.
 - Chimney removals or rebuilds. Initial target of 661 reduced to 385 by end financial year.
 - 475 high performance combination boilers - Initial target to be delivered
 - Garden upgrades to improve safety and security - Initial target 3,700 revised to 2,200 by end of financial year.
 - Fire safety improvement work - High and medium rise blocks of flats and sheltered housing complexes including installation of sprinkler systems. Programmed work behind target as number of projects require retender due to lack of contractor responses.
 - Smoke alarm systems in sheltered housing complexes - Initial target 2,000 reduced to 1,800 by end of financial year.
 - Electrical re-wires to ensure installations comply with the prevailing regulations. Initial target 537 revised to 400 by end of financial year
 - New passenger lifts at Jeffreys Court flats. One lift completed, second on-going, completion July 2022.
- 4.3.9 A further element of work, to help meet future decarbonisation targets of social housing, has been integrated in this year's programme. Solar PV panels and battery storage to generate energy for the benefit of 137 households has been included as part of external envelope upgrades. Due to shortage of suitably qualified and experienced engineering consultants, it has been difficult to procure the necessary design skills. A consultant has now been identified and designs for the 6 sites started. It is anticipated all the work on these projects will commence during 2022/3.

- 4.3.10 The above mentioned projects are just some of the headline work streams we continue to deliver as part of a wider programme of repairs, maintenance and improvements which forms the WHQS Compliance Capital Programme. At the end of the financial year, the Council will collate data from completed improvement works to demonstrate achievement of WHQS compliance as is defined in statutory guidance. From April 2022, capital programme for WHQS will pass from a compliance target to a maintenance phase of the WHQS. Welsh Government are reviewing the current WHQS and set to introduce a new version which will become WHQS2. It is expected the new WHQS2 will introduce decarbonisation and fire safety targets for social landlords and will come into effect in April 2023. The overall WHQS programme will continue to contribute significantly towards community benefits and employment opportunities. We will report at the end of the final quarter on the recruitment and training opportunities the programme provided during 2021/22.
- 4.3.11 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. Following the completion of 34 homes in 20/21, work is continuing on 25 homes on Hill View Crescent in Clase, which is due for completion in Spring 2022. 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 As part of the Welsh Government Phase 2 planning for homelessness, the Council is also developing 8 one bedroom homes at a former Education site in Uplands. The conversion of the existing building has been completed and is now occupied, and the 4 off site-manufactured pods will be ready for occupation in March 2022. A further 20 x1 bedroom acquisitions are planned for 21/22, as well as 6 acquisitions utilising Integrated Care Fund (ICF). Work has also started at West Cross, to develop 6 bungalows, which has also been awarded IHP funding to include the additional renewable technologies.
- 4.3.13 A planning application has been approved to convert a former social services property in Gorseinon into 2 x 3 bedroom homes. The former Education site at Brondeg House has also been acquired to develop for affordable housing, and the existing building will be demolished to make way for new affordable housing. Cabinet has also been asked to approve the appropriation of 3 sites from the General Fund to develop for affordable housing, and concept plans are now being developed for these sites. The demolition of the former Clase DHO will also be starting in February 2022, as part of the Creswell Road development of 9 new homes.

- 4.3.14 The Council is also progressing the procurement of a development partner or partners to deliver mixed tenure housing on 2 Council owned sites in Penderry, 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. The Council is also appointing a multi-disciplinary team to develop a masterplan for 4 x sites in close proximity, which should achieve planning application stage by the end of 2022.
- 4.3.15 Quarter 3 took us up to Christmas and included the reintroduction of our festive marketing and events programme. Halloween, Guy Fawkes and Christmas events were permitted and the feedback for these, especially the long awaited Christmas Parade, was exceptional.
- 4.3.16 Support for the community continued through the provision of grants for tourism accommodation, freelance artists, sports clubs and organisations, which helped provide a much needed boost on the road to 'recovery' as restrictions continued to ease. Planning permission was gained for the new Skate Park at Mumbles, and work is underway to ensure the Community Council can deliver this as planned. At the same time, an exciting announcement to provide extra funding for skate facilities across the city was welcomed and provided another dimension to the play, leisure and recreation facilities in development.
- 4.3.17 Unfortunately, as we approached Christmas new restrictions were introduced, meaning the very popular Panto at Swansea Grand theatre had to be cancelled at the end of December, due to the cost of presenting to a socially distanced audience outweighing the income we could achieve. Waterfront Winterland similarly had to close its doors and the Christmas events planned for the Brangwyn Hall were also cancelled.
- 4.3.18 Whilst restrictions didn't mean that wider leisure facilities and attractions had to close, more restrictive measures regarding capacities and impact on consumer confidence disrupted business/trade through December. We would normally see a peak in early January of gym membership and activity registrations, but the impact of restrictions won't be fully known until next quarter close. On a positive note, despite significant staff absences due to Covid, our Leisure facilities and outdoor attractions managed to remain open through the peak of the latest wave, unlike a number of major and neighbouring cities, which faced forced closures due to staffing pressures.
- 4.3.19 The year ended on a high as we tested the new digital skin on the Arena, and saw the extraordinary impact Copr Bay can have on the city and the prospects of this new space creating a distinct and remarkable attraction. Developing ideas and work for these spaces took another step forward as we progressed with the take-over of the former Cranes Music Store, as a meanwhile arts space and Creative Hub, due to open its doors in

Quarter 4. Progress on the city centre Community Hub also took a step forward as we advanced with the feasibility study to provide accommodation for the Central Library and Archive, and funding was confirmed from Welsh Govt. to assess the roll out of the operating model across all libraries through further feasibility work.

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 *Continued 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.
- 4.4.3 *Universal Credit Claimants (DWP published November 2021).* The number of people on Universal Credit who were not working or on low earnings and required to search for work as a condition of their claim ('searching for work') has fallen by 190,000 to 1.8 million (32% of all people on Universal Credit) in October 2021 from 2.0 million (35% of all people on Universal Credit) in July 2021.
- 4.4.4 Over the same period, the number of people on Universal Credit whose circumstances mean they have no requirements to work ('no work requirements') has risen by 100,000 to 1.4 million (24% of all people on Universal Credit) in October 2021 from 1.3 million (22% of all people on Universal Credit) in July 2021.
- 4.4.5 The number of people on Universal Credit who were working and earning enough not to have any work-related requirements as a condition of their claim ('working - no requirements') has remained at 1.2 million (21% of all people on Universal Credit) in October 2021, when compared to July 2021.
- 4.4.6 The Bevan Foundation report on 'Debt in the Pandemic' (Sept 21) highlighted that 10% of all households have fallen behind on a bill between January and May 21 and over the same period 17% of all households borrowed money. The majority of the population will borrow money at some point, but being in problem debt including struggling to make payments, having high credit compared to income, negatively affects people's lives.
- 4.4.7 Arrears are concentrated in lower-income households: those with an income of less than £40,000 were significantly more likely to be in arrears in May 2021 than higher income households. Renters have been significantly more likely to fall into debt during the pandemic than owner

occupiers. Disabled people have been twice as likely to be in arrears over the course of the pandemic as non-disabled people.

4.4.8 'A snapshot of poverty in Winter 2021' Wales published in December 2021 by the Bevan Foundation found that:

- *Households are struggling to make ends meet* - Nearly four in ten Welsh Households (39%) do not have enough money to buy anything beyond everyday items, up from 33% in May 2021.
- *Incomes are still falling but not for everyone* - More than three in ten households with a net income of less than £40,000 have seen their income drop since May 2021. For households with a net income of more than £40,000 more than one in five have seen their incomes increase.
- *Living costs are still rising* - Households across Wales have seen their living costs increase. More than half have seen the cost of food increase with more than six in ten seeing the cost of their utilities increase.
- *Living Standards are being squeezed* - Thousands of households are having to cut back and ration their use of the essentials we all need to live with dignity. Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents, and adults aged between 25 and 64 are more likely to have had to cut back on everyday essentials than other groups.
- *The impact on children is getting greater* - More than one in five families with children have had to cut back on items for children including books, toys, nappies and clothing, whilst one in ten families with two children have had to cut back on food for children.
- *Personal debt is a major problem* - Since May 2021, 25 per cent of Welsh households have borrowed money whilst 12 per cent of Welsh households are at least one month behind on a bill. Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents, and adults aged between 25 and 64 are more likely to be behind on a bill or to have borrowed money than others.
- *Many people are worried about losing their homes* - More than one in twenty households are worried about losing their home.

4.4.9 *Increased Living Costs (Bevan Foundation January 2021)*. Wales has the highest electricity bills in the UK. Average household incomes are relatively low in Wales. Proportionately, energy accounts for a higher level of outgoings. Fuel prices are set to rise further. Benefits and wages are failing to keep pace with inflation.

4.4.10 *National Energy Action* warns that the average household gas bill could increase by £467 compared to October 2020. This means that the cost of heating the average home will have doubled since last winter.

4.4.11 *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. More people have secured employment again this

quarter compared to this time last year. This has been through the employability support programmes; Swansea Working, Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Workways STU and Workways Plus. We continue to see an increase in vacancies and employment across many sectors.

- 4.4.12 *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 during quarter 3 is £284,122 a 16% increase on quarter 2 and a significant increase on the same period last year. The team have had an 80% success rate with appeals during 2021/22 (16/20) and responded to 573 benefit enquiries. They have also supported residents to address over £50,000 of personal debt and trained 176 support workers on disability benefits and Personal Independence Payments.
- 4.4.13 *Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit.* The performance indicator of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and Housing Benefit (HB) average time for processing new claims has decreased compared to this time last year, whereas the processing time for changes in circumstance for Council Tax Reduction has improved. The increase in time taken to process new applications for HB/CTR claims reflect a number of issues including the shift of more straightforward applications for financial assistance with rent over to Universal Credit.
- 4.4.14 Those applications that remain with Housing Benefit being the more complex cases, particularly those for supported accommodation where in depth consideration of the rent charges must be carried out. However, it must be noted that the Benefits Service are also managing additional grants on behalf of Welsh Government and this is having a very significant impact on processing times as staff are diverted away from core functions to deal with these payments to vulnerable citizens. Over 13,200 applications for winter fuel payments have been processed to date, resulting in payments totalling £1.06m. Work is continuing to promote the availability of the funding to ensure that everyone who is eligible for these payments take these up as last date for claims is 18th February 2022.
- 4.4.15 The team is also responsible for administering Covid Isolation Payments for which over 18,000 applications have been assessed and payments of over £3.9m issued. The impact on core benefits processing services in Swansea, and indeed all Welsh LAs, from the need to divert resources to processing these grants continues to be very significant and as yet, we do not know when these payments will come to an end.
- 4.4.16 Improvements in the time for processing changes in circumstances for Council Tax reduction cases are indicative of the recent implementation of additional automation within the service designed to deal with the

increased number of changes arising from monthly re-assessment of Universal Credit awards made to CTR recipients.

- 4.4.17 *Housing.* The Council, along with partners in the housing sector and support charities continued response to addressing homelessness and many people have been supported to find a place to live and many moving on from emergency temporary accommodation into longer-term homes. This time last year there were less family homelessness presentations due to the suspension of evictions and a hold on move-on from Home Office accommodation. The average number of days homeless families with children spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation increased from this time last year. This was as a result of two families in B&B whilst appropriately sized suitable family accommodation is available.
- 4.4.18 *Skills and Qualifications.* The number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local Authority support has decreased this quarter (106) compared to the same period last year (333). Course arrangements and attendance has been impacted by the increase in Covid rates, both for the attendees and the course providers. The previous quarter there had been an increase in face to face training provision with infection control measures, but this was scaled back and online training has increased where possible. Non-accredited training continues with 1697 enrolments onto Lifelong Learning courses during 2021/22, this includes 266 enrolments on digital literacy and 126 enrolments on Essential Skills courses. The non-accredited courses provide a pathway for learners to progress onto further learning and accredited courses. Partnership working between Swansea Working, Lifelong Learning, Employability Programmes and partners has continued offer participants accredited training and qualifications to meet employment opportunities.
- 4.4.19 *Partnership Working.* The Swansea Council Poverty Forum, Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum, Financial Inclusion Steering Group and Swansea Food Poverty Network continue to meet, facilitating networking, sharing of good practice, information, trends, changes to services and new opportunities, encouraging partnership working and collaboration. During this quarter, support has continued for the seven Men's Shed projects that have been awarded grants, 39 projects have now been funded to address Food Poverty and 13 community projects have been funded to support Period Dignity to date. A Fuel Poverty Voucher Scheme has been set up with Citizens Advice to provide additional support for people in crisis. The Community Calling Project has distributed 300 free recycled smart phones together with full year contract with O2 to people who have experienced digital exclusion. Partnership working with the Children's Society and other partners in Swansea on the Coordinated Community Support Programme has supported the launch of a 'Worrying about Money' leaflet and the development of a pilot partner referral system.

4.5 *Transformation & future Council development*

4.5.1 Progress continues on delivering the Transformation & Future Council well-being objective. Key areas of progress in Q3 includes the following:

4.5.2 *Achieving Better Together Transformation programme:* Work is ongoing in relation to the continued recovery, re-focussing and reshaping the Council. The Organisational, Cross Cutting and Transformation steering group and Recovery, Reshaping and Budget Strategy Boards have both been meeting regularly. The refocus phase is working to set the budget for 2022-23 and refreshing the Medium Term Financial Plan. The programme has provided an update to Scrutiny and an update to the Governance & Audit Committee this quarter. The Council has also approved additional investment as part of its Covid recovery and transformation programme. This investment includes play areas, social services, and ways to enable digital transformation and resilience.

4.5.3 *Workforce Strategy:* The Workforce Strategy is in the process of development with four key themes and nine key strands. These have been developed with full and thorough consultation with councillors, senior management, employees and Trade unions. The final proposed Strategy will be presented to senior management and Cabinet in February.

4.5.4 *Embedding equalities and diversity:* A Workforce Equalities Group is being established. The group will meet bi-monthly to support the delivery of equalities, engage with the workforce to deliver solutions, and support the Council in being an exemplar employer in equalities related matters.

4.5.5 *Digital First:* Channel shift to online channels continues to generally grow, despite the performance indicators Cust 2a and Cust 2b showing a decline compared with the second quarter. Cust 2a shows a decline in online payments as a result of the Council offering some services for free, e.g. lifelong learning courses. However, the trend is still an improvement on the same quarter last year. Cust 2b is showing a decline in online service requests compared to last year as 2020 was impacted by Covid. With lockdown more residents used the online forms to request services. Q3 is also lower than quarter two as a result of the bank holidays in December.

4.5.6 *Digital Inclusion:* Swansea Council website has jumped 218 places in the Sitemorse report. Sitemorse ranks every English, Welsh and Scottish council's website on accessibility, content/links, code quality, performance and brand. The report was the first since the new Swansea and Abertawe sites went live and Swansea Council is the second most-improved website behind Tewkesbury, moving up 218 places (to 119 out of 410).

- 4.5.7 *City Deal Digital programme and collaboration:* City Deal partners have been working together on plans and projects to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity. Partners are also implementing two internet of things projects, piloting the use of sensors to increase efficiency and improve services to residents.
- 4.5.8 *Local Government Act:* The Council continues with its implementation of e-democracy. Technology to enable hybrid meetings continues to be rolled out and several of these have now been held.
- 4.5.9 *Welsh Language:* The Council continues to promote the Welsh Language and is currently assessing the model for the new Community Hubs. The Council has reviewed and updated its website in Welsh and English.
- 4.5.10 *Staff Sickness:* There are Service areas in Education, Place and Social Services where sickness rates are particularly high. Sickness Absence Officers have been appointed to support Managers in managing sickness in each of those areas.
- 4.6 *Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity*
- 4.6.1 In Nov 2021 Swansea Council declared a Nature Emergency and committed fully to preparing and delivering a Nature Recovery Action Plan to be implemented in tandem with the developing Climate Action Plan. Work has since progressed to maintain and strengthen the corporate priority for Natural Resources and Biodiversity including Climate Change. The Swansea Climate Charter has been refreshed to become an integrated Climate and Nature Charter. The terms of reference and membership of the Council's steering group on climate change have been changed to include nature and biodiversity. Work in progress includes a Climate Change and Nature Emergency Strategy.
- 4.6.2 The Leader of the Council has written to both UK and Welsh Governments to seek support and resources to maintain and enhance biodiversity. An on-line climate pledge wall has been set up by the Council inviting citizens, businesses, community/voluntary groups, schools and young people to make their own pledge and join the Council in working together for a Net Zero, Greener Swansea by 2050.
- 4.6.3 Swansea has been named as one of 13 Queen's Green Champion Cities around the UK as part of the monarch's platinum jubilee celebrations in 2022 in recognition of past and future tree planting programmes. A wide range of tree planting projects will be rolled out over the course of the year involving the local community.
- 4.6.4 Complementing this Supplementary Planning Guidance has been approved for 'Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows' including adoption of a Swansea Tree Replacement Standard and a Strategy for the Management of Trees on Council land has also been approved by Policy

Development Committee and will shortly be considered by Cabinet. Ecosystem resilience mapping is now underway county-wide with the intention of identifying areas where biodiversity enhancements are needed, including additional locations for tree planting.

- 4.6.5 On the ground the Council's wildflower planting programme has now extended to around 40,000 sq. m (about 6 football pitches) of wildflowers across approximately 190 sites. In support of this new grant funded cut and collect machinery has been trialled to help better manage grass cutting and help boost wildflowers and pollinators by maintaining species-rich vegetation. Plans are being prepared for extending this method of cutting next season using lessons learned and public and stakeholder engagement.
- 4.6.6 Other complementary work to meet priority objectives includes preparation of a sustainable transport strategy; environmental and well-being goals now being incorporated into procurement processes as part of a more socially responsible and sustainable procurement policy; and all future 21st century schools' projects new buildings, major refurbishment, and extension projects to be designed net zero carbon with a reduction of 20% embodied carbon.
- 4.6.7 Feedback is still awaited on carbon emission returns to Welsh Government in order to prepare an offsetting strategy and action plans to deliver net zero by 2030 and also to establish whether procurement is in or out of scope.
- 4.6.8 The percentage of municipal waste collected and prepared for reuse and/or recycled was 64.65%. The recycling performance is lower than last year (66.57%) due to an increase in kerbside black bags and commercial waste following Covid, but it is still above the statutory recycling target (64%).

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.

- 5.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 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'.
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.2 The report itself has no direct impact on the relevant groups considered within the IIA; however 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 Q3 2021/22 Performance Monitoring Report