



Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance

Cabinet – 21 July 2022

Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

Purpose:	To report corporate performance for 2021/22.
Policy Framework:	<i>Delivering a Successful & Sustainable Swansea Corporate Plan 2021/22</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 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 2021/22 delivering the Council's Well-being Objectives (priorities) described in the Corporate Plan 2021/22 *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 were not 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 up 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 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 were not 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 2021/22 outturn shows that **20 out of 40 (50%)** comparable Corporate Plan performance indicators showed improvement or stayed the same compared to 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 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 during 2021/22.

4.1 Safeguarding people from harm

4.1.1 This past year has again been dominated by the impact of Covid on our population with care and support needs, our workforce and health and care services. Delivery of our key strategies to support children, families and adults with care and support needs to remain safe and well at home have been severely challenged.

4.1.2 In children services the Wales wide deficit in social worker capacity has significantly impacted as has the Wales wide issue around sufficiency of looked after children placements.

4.1.3 In adult services the backlogs caused by individuals being unable to access health and care services have compounded the complexity of individuals presenting needs. This has in turn exacerbated the difficulties in meeting that increased need caused by the shortfall in workforce capacity across all adult health and care services. Workforce shortages are particularly acute in domiciliary care services further undermining delivery against our strategic ambition to support more individuals in their own homes rather than in more institutionalised settings.

4.1.4 There has been a further complicating factor with reporting and monitoring performance during this crucial period caused by the lack of stability of the Welsh National Community Care Information System which went live in Swansea during this reporting year. The system is now stable but some end of year reporting to Welsh Government on some indicators will not be possible due to the significant in year impact.

4.1.5 Quite understandably, the challenges highlighted above had a significant impact on performance particularly where our focus has necessarily shifted to managing the emergency and ensuring that health and care systems did not collapse. In that context, overall performance has held up astonishingly well and is a credit to our Heads of Service, their senior management teams and most importantly our workforce.

4.1.6 In children services the twin focus of delivering more early help whilst maintaining robust proactive safeguarding practice has meant that more children have been supported to remain safely living at home and our looked after children numbers have continued to reduce. There is a particular challenge around older adolescents with complex and challenging behaviour requiring specialist residential provision which we

have been unable to provide or commission. Our strategy to expand in house local and specialist regional provision will address this in the medium term but in the meantime we have seen an increase in young people being placed in England or in unregulated placements. The numbers aren't high but nevertheless it is an indicator of concern that we will need to monitor closely into next year.

- 4.1.7 In adult services a strengthened prevention offer both through local area coordination and work with third sector colleagues has meant individuals and their carers unable to access formal care and support have had a level of mitigating support. This has helped bear down on levels of demand that exceed current capacity but we still end the year with significant backlogs in assessments, reviews and access to domiciliary care.
- 4.1.8 Our day services and other day opportunity provision have continued to expand throughout the year and we maintained extra capacity in our in house residential provision to provide emergency and extended respite/ short term placements. We have also expanded access to direct payments both for individuals with care and support needs and carers in their own right. Again these measures have mitigated some of the negative impacts of backlogs/ lack of access to usual levels and types of care and support but those negative impacts have still been significant on individuals with care and support needs and their carers.
- 4.1.9 Our hospitals continued to be under significant pressure as a result of workforce shortages, the Covid impact on patients and restrictions caused by the need to implement stringent infection control measures. These hospital pressures have added to pressure on community services and vice versa. This has meant that more people have had to access residential care placements on a short term basis without necessarily being able to access reablement therapy. This has increased the likelihood of some individuals eventually remaining in a long term placement. This also means that in addition to backlogs we finish the year with high numbers of individuals in the 'wrong' part of the health care system.
- 4.1.10 It will take many months to recover the system as we move from managing the pandemic to living with endemic Covid. Consequently it will take the best part for the coming year for our performance across the usual range of indicators to return to something like we would have expected to see if Covid hadn't happened.

4.2 *Improving education & skills*

- 4.2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect performance in education, particularly for examination year groups. In academic year 2020-2021, key stage 4 examinations were replaced with centre determined grades, making it difficult to make comparisons with prior performance. Collection and collation of teacher assessment results, for earlier key stages in

- education, was cancelled by Welsh Government in 2021, and is also cancelled for 2022.
- 4.2.2 Attendance during another pandemic year in academic year 2020-2021 has been affected negatively. The continuous impact of self-isolation has lowered attendance across schools. Nearly all schools are at least five percentage points below normal attendance rates. Education Welfare Officers continue to monitor carefully and support families to encourage children back to schools. The normal collection of attendance data by Welsh Government did not take place in 2021, and will also be suspended for 2022.
- 4.2.3 The level of young people becoming Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) has improved from the previous year. In 2021, 1.6% of Year 11 leavers were recorded as NEET. 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.
- 4.2.4 Enhancements planned for the Vulnerability Assessment Profiles (VAP) are now complete and ready for schools to help identify learners who need the most support.
- 4.2.5 The number of statements issued within 26 weeks has been an area for continual improvement. However, the transition to a gradual implementation of new rules means that this performance measure will soon be fully replaced and will focus on plans called individual development plans (IDPs) for additional learning needs learners.
- 4.2.6 Swansea's ALN Strategic Plan priorities, including changes required to meet the implications of the ALNET Act 2018 are developing well with a range of improvements to support children and young people (CYP) with additional learning needs. The new system to manage the process around creating and managing IDPs, as well as mapping provision for CYP, is developing well.
- 4.2.7 Partneriaeth Sgiliau Abertawe/Swansea Skills Partnership (PSA) continues to focus on the five themes of Swansea's UNESCO Learning City Status, NEETs prevention, support for future occupations, effective practice in remote learning and building digital capacity.
- 4.2.8 In order to meet the well-being objectives in relation to education and skills in the future, it will be important to focus on the areas identified below.
- 4.2.9 The local and national challenges in regulating pupil behaviour following the pandemic has resulted in increased pupil exclusions from schools. In Swansea, we are addressing this challenge by developing a strategy to reduce exclusions and contributing to a youth violence reduction strategy. Both strategies require close collaboration and integration across services in the Council.

- 4.2.10 Additionally, responding to the Estyn thematic review on peer on peer harassment and abuse that identifies many children not telling their teachers about harassment will be a key issue. Developing a whole school approach to Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) through our work with relationship and sexuality education leads in schools will be a key priority.
- 4.2.11 The assessment of emotional and mental wellbeing of children and staff in schools continues to be a key consideration within the recovery plan. The phased implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Tribunal Act 2018 in January 2022 and beyond as well as the Curriculum for Wales, including an emphasis on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) local curriculum in September 2022 remain key priorities, with the evaluation of readiness a key consideration. Support for professional learning and leadership development will be delivered by the regional key delivery partner in future. It will be important to monitor the success of the new partnership closely. As inspections of schools re-commence, it will be important to monitor and evaluate leadership, provision and progress of learners robustly.
- 4.2.12 The importance of reviewing and monitoring the impact of services for vulnerable learners due to adverse childhood experience, poverty, additional learning needs, mental well-being, disability, language, literacy/ communication and low attendance will be key priorities for the future.

4.3 *Transforming our economy and infrastructure*

- 4.3.1 Quarter 4 and annual results are largely positive. 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 Q1, 2 & 3, the effects of Covid on the construction sector continue to have an impact on programme 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.
- 4.3.3 Despite this our major regeneration priorities have continued to make substantial progress on site during Q4. In particular the Copr Bay works have continued to make significant visible progress. As previously reported, work has been completed on the construction of a 3,500 capacity arena alongside the completion of the Copr Bay site. The Ambassador Theatre Group have been awarded the contract to operate the Arena and acts such as Alice Cooper, Rob Brydon, Diversity, the Cult

and Katherine Ryan have been confirmed for the Arena's programme for 2022. The first event was held on the 8th March 2022 as part of an opening launch, and high profile names such as John Bishop and Royal Blood have already performed their sell out shows. The new bridge over Oystermouth Road, a new MSCP and the 1.1-acre coastal park have also opened to the public. Other components of the scheme, including the residential block, North MSCP, and church hall are all significantly advanced and nearing practical completion.

- 4.3.4 The Shaping Swansea procurement has now been concluded and legal contracts have now been exchanged finalising the appointment 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. Design work has commenced on phase 1 sites.
- 4.3.5 The Public Sector Hub project at the former BHS building has also made good progress. Planning permission has now been secured and the 'Transforming Towns' in principle funding offer has been received. 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 floor space, 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.
- 4.3.6 The completion of the Reimagining of Wind Street project has improved the public realm and includes the installation of new street furniture, paving, lighting and environmental improvements. We have also secured funding for the regeneration of Castle Square with plans for a new Water fountain/jets, the addition of green space and a range of new cafes and restaurants overlooking the square. Detailed design work is now ongoing to inform the planning application process and the project is due to be completed in 2023. We have also made a series improvements to Swansea market, including upgrading entrances and the public realm, opened a market garden and commissioned some art works to improve the look of the area.
- 4.3.7 Substantial progress has also been achieved at the Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse project with shell and core works completion targeted for July 2022. The iconic Musgrave Engine House has been restored and Vivian Engine House repairs are underway. Work has also continued on the 110 year old Bascule Bridge working closely with Cadw. The historic but derelict Palace Theatre was acquired by the Council both saving a part of Swansea's heritage and acting as a regeneration catalyst for the

Upper High Street. Grant funding was secured and design and refurbishment works are underway. The innovative digital workspace will offer a home for growing businesses in the tech, digital and creative sectors. Heads of Terms have already been signed with the lead tenant Tramshed Tech.

- 4.3.8 Work has also continued with Skyline Enterprises who aim to create a gondola attraction with luge tracks, zip lines and visitor facilities on Kilvey Hill. The company has developed proposals, which include improving access and the ecology of the area. Heads of Terms had been signed by the Council and the Skyline board and survey work has made good progress. Although the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in Skyline temporarily stopping all of their projects across the world, Skyline intend to pursue their proposed development on Kilvey Hill - subject to securing Welsh Government support for their proposal.
- 4.3.9 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.
- 4.3.10 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 has been adopted by the 4 Local Authorities in region and the CJC. The strategy and its accompanying action 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.
- 4.3.11 Due to the impact of Covid pandemic, 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 corresponded with the end of Q3. The WHQS 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. Further slippage has been experienced during this current year, again due to on-going impact of Covid and issues relating to the shortage of contractor capacity, skilled labour and materials which has affected programme delivery. A total spend of £32m has been achieved for WHQS projects at the end of financial year, which represents 96.5% of the revised budget target. The investment aims and objectives have remained 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.
- 4.3.12 The Housing Service will collate data from completed improvement works to demonstrate achievement of WHQS compliance as is defined in

statutory guidance. From 1st April 2022, the capital programme for WHQS will pass from a compliance target stage to a maintenance phase of the WHQS. Welsh Government have undertaken a comprehensive review of the current WHQS provisions and will consult with social housing providers this summer before introducing revised regulation and guidance, which will be known as WHQS2. The revised WHQS2 guidance will introduce decarbonisation and fire safety targets for social landlords which 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 on the recruitment and training opportunities the WHQS programme provided during 2021/22 later this year.

- 4.3.13 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.
- 4.3.14 As part of the Welsh Government Phase 2 planning for homelessness, the Council has also developed 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 April 2022. A further 20 x1 bedroom acquisitions are planned for 22/23, 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.
- 4.3.15 A planning application has been approved to convert a former social services property in Gorseinon into 2 x 3 bedroom homes, and work is due to start in July. 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 approved 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 has now been completed, as part of the Creswell Road development of 9 new homes.
- 4.3.16 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 has 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.

- 4.3.17 As the restrictions eased through the mid part of Q4, doors were able to reopen safely with reducing restrictions leading to a successful reopening of the Grand Theatre, with strong audience support. Work has continued in the background on the refurbishment of the Foyer to present a combined Box Office and Coffee/Catering offer, in partnership with Gower Brewery, alongside occupation of key spaces by Race Council Cymru, aiming to diversify usage, and a new production company in residence for the Auditorium and talent development strands - 'Grand Ambition'. The programming challenges of re-scheduling shows, and lack of availability due to the pandemic disruption will continue to be a challenge through the most part of 22/3. It is anticipated that with good management and physical improvements to the building and the programme offer, recovery will stabilise and will complement the increasingly exciting offer across the city.
- 4.3.18 Project milestones are continuing to be delivered within the Cefn Hengoed 3G Barn and improved Community Leisure and PE facilities, with a preferred bidder identified, increased Capital investment and overwhelming support from Cabinet in March, with a final request for funding from the Football Foundation due in mid to late April.
- 4.3.19 Continued restrictions on numbers for participant activity across leisure centres prolonged the challenges faced by these venues. This, as well as a high Covid rate in the community and general reduction in customer confidence impacted the bottom line in terms of income and new membership sales across the post-Christmas period, which will impact into the early part of 22/3. Community sites performed stronger than city centre attractions such as the LC in terms of gym membership, and this is also contributed to factors such as continued working from home and the significant city centre developments which impacted on access and parking. Late into the quarter the new Arena car parks opened and this addition, along with completed walkways to the Waterfront from the Arena should benefit the LC in terms of parking availability and general access.
- 4.3.20 Freedom Leisure's investment into these facilities continued through Q3, with significant plans for both Penlan and the LC, including installing Hydrolyser electronic chlorination, offering a safer, cleaner and more environmentally friendly way to chlorinate the pools. Mitigation measures such as this will prepare the facilities to be more sustainable moving forward, with shortages of chlorine across the world, and significant cost increases, the investment is now seen as critical. Energy prices continue to concern leisure facilities that have high gas and electricity consumption, and whilst mitigation has already been invested to reduce energy, the unit rate inflation presents a significant risk to the operational costs, and a range of further models of mitigation and investment are being developed by Freedom to present to the Council in due course.

- 4.3.21 Work commenced through the quarter with stakeholder engagement to develop a needs assessment and options appraisal by consultants in relation to the Swansea Bay Sports Park at King George V playing fields. This work aligns with our efforts to develop options to improve the site and leisure offer, in partnership with the University, for improved community, performance and student/educational sport, delivered under a single partnership model. Linked to this, work was completed to install a new water-based surface to the lower Hockey pitch at the Sports Park, which is now Olympic standard quality from Tokyo 2020, funded in partnership with Swansea University, Swansea Hockey Club and collaboration Welsh Hockey. Work also commenced to replace the playing surface, fencing, floodlighting and sports goals and equipment at the Phoenix Centre, Townhill, with funding via ERF, to benefit the local community. Phoenix Centre trust will continue to manage and maintain the facility on completion, late April/early May.
- 4.3.22 Demands for services such as beach huts continued to increase post pandemic and this continued in Q4 with applications for 22/3 surpassing 1000, for less than 80 available seasonal beach huts. With a number of leased huts now ending their 10 year lease cycle and being returned to the Council, further consideration can be given as to whether a further phase of refurbishment can be undertaken on the older stock.
- 4.3.23 Quarter 4 was also an extremely busy period for the Destination Management & Marketing team with the completion of the 3 ERF funded projects - Tourism Grant (8 projects supported) New Marketing Platform launch (TikTok Video on Demand & outdoor media) & underwritten Marketing Partner recruitment fees (202 business supported) all successfully completed. In addition, the team completed the publication of the Visitor Guide for 2022/23 with 200,000 English & Welsh publications printed and made available for the Easter holidays.
- 4.3.24 Record number of visits (compared to 2019) to the visitswanseabay.com and increased engagement helped present a positive end to the year for the tourism sector with page views up 56% to 2.7M, Users up 28% to 608K and the number of sessions up 32% to 829K. The website continues to sell more event tickets for major events, Grand Theatre and Brangwyn Hall. Marketing support for events included the successful Christmas Parade and Croeso (St David's Day) event in the city centre. Our Enjoy seasonal campaigns during the period also supported other services and events and continues to be recognised as the Council's day visitor campaign to inform and encourage residents to participate in events and cultural activities.
- 4.3.25 The team is increasingly 'cross sector', supporting the delivery of the city centre Arts Strategy and working with major event providers in readiness for summer 2023, resulting in the development of a new 'event brand' to harness the 3 major sporting events planned for this summer, highlighted below.

- 4.3.26 A busy Christmas period included a new and refreshed Waterfront Winterland attracting over 150,000 visitors, preceded an equally demanding new year into Q4. Alongside its regular programme of events, community and third sector oversight, including supporting the official Ministerial opening of Copr Bae and the Arena; its first public events and a Royal visit, the Special Events Team took on the management of the Digital Skin around Swansea Arena, requiring significant time and effort to understand its functionality, capability and best use. This asset has already proved popular with visiting artists and social media and will complement the other digital assets which have / are being developed in the city centre and which individually and collectively will be able to provide a fully immersive events experience in the future.
- 4.3.27 As mentioned above, the period saw the return of the popular two day Croeso event, celebrating all things relating to St Davids Day and Welsh culture - with live entertainment once again returning to the city centre, along with a busy Welsh produce market and a parade. In reflection of how the regenerated city centre will need cross sector collaboration, Creative Wales funded the creation of a new Creative Hub for the South West, to be based in Swansea. In collaboration with local businesses and Swansea University, the first phase of this is installed at the former Cranes music store, which the Events team oversaw the repurposing of, as a digital and cultural 'laboratory' providing training and engagement for local artists. There are current artist residencies underway with the vision to close the skills gap with our local creative sector and those working in digital realms so that we can fulfil the potential of the new city centre as a creative city going forward. This will be amplified by several ERF projects which are under commission including a mobile stage and the enhancements for the Amphitheatre in Copr Bae, alongside the continuation of support for community events, lettings, and sustained trading and use of outdoor space for covid recovery. We are well placed to secure this with a busy and exciting programme planned for 2022, including the popular Wales Air show, Singleton Park Concerts and some brand new events including Ironman 70.3, which sold out in record time, a Para Sports Festival and the World Para Tri Championships.
- 4.3.28 Progress on our participation in the 'Unboxed' Festival included identifying key buildings and stories in the community for the literature/ history trail in collaboration with Swansea Libraries and similarly, for The World Reimagined, we hosted sponsorship events, artist and community briefings to maximise engagement. We are now in the process of delivering training and resource support for teachers, artists and community groups, agreeing the route and 'social history' stories to accompany this public arts trail in future months.

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 *Welfare Benefits.* The number of people on Universal Credit in Swansea (Swansea East / West and Gower) 23,045 (DWP March 2022). People on Legacy Benefits (Child Tax Credit / Housing Benefit / Income Support / Income-based Jobseekers Allowance / Income-related Employment and Support Allowance / Working Tax Credit) Swansea West: 4312, Swansea East: 5346 and Gower: 3147 (DWP Nov 2021). From early May 2022 those on legacy benefits will migrate to Universal Credit by the end of 2024. DWP estimates that 54% of people will be better off when they move to UC, 35% of people will be worse off (approx 4,400 using Nov 21 figures) and 11% will see no change.

4.4.4 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.

- 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.

4.4.5 '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.

4.4.6 *Increased Living Costs* - The cost of living increased by 5.4% in the 12 months Jan – Dec 2021, the highest rate of increase in 30 years. (ONS). National Insurance contributions increased in April 2022 and household fuel and food costs have significantly increased and benefits and wages are not keeping pace with inflation. Additional support has been provided through costs of living payments to eligible households.

4.4.7 *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 year compared to last year, with 481 people supported into employment. 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.

4.4.8 *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 21/22 was £1,139,249.25 a 24% decrease on the 2020/21 total. Due to the ongoing pandemic, there continued to be a reduction in the number of appeals at tribunal and the value of benefits secured decreased. The team responded to 817 benefit enquiries and

trained 231 support workers. They have also supported residents to address £77,670.63 of personal debt.

- 4.4.9 *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 increased compared to 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. 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.
- 4.4.10 However, it must be noted that the Benefits Service continue to manage 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 18,000 applications for winter fuel payments were processed, resulting in payments totalling £2.7M. The team is also responsible for administering Covid Isolation Payments for which over 18,000 applications have been assessed and payments of over £5.6M issued. The Cost-of-Living payment of £150 for eligible household will start being paid in April 2022 and the Unpaid Carers payment from May 2022. The impact on core benefits processing services in Swansea, and indeed all Welsh local authorities, from the need to divert resources to processing these grants continues to be very significant.
- 4.4.11 Improvements in the time for processing changes in circumstances for Council Tax reduction cases are indicative of the 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.
- 4.4.12 *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. The average number of days homeless families with children spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation increased from this time last year due to the continued pressure on temporary accommodation and families are moved into suitable accommodation as soon as possible. There has been an increase during the past year in the number of affordable housing units secured through planning permissions and an increase in the number of additional affordable housing units delivered by the Local Authority.
- 4.4.13 *Skills and Qualifications* - The number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local Authority support has increased this year to

620 compared to last year's 450, although it has not reached pre-pandemic levels yet. Course arrangements and attendance has been impacted by Covid, both for the attendees and the course providers. There were 1250 unique learners on accredited and non-accredited Lifelong Learning courses during 2021/22, with 1792 enrolments onto courses, including digital literacy, Essential Skills and Learning for Life Courses (languages, well-being and arts). 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.

4.4.14 *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.

4.4.15 During the year over £293K was granted to 97 projects via the Food Poverty Grant, Period Dignity in Communities Grant, Household Support Grant and Men's Shed's funding to address poverty and social isolation. The Community Calling Project has distributed 369 free recycled smart phones together with full year contract 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 21/22 includes: we want to modernise and transform the Council through our Achieving Better Together programme. In the short term, this is focused on actions and interventions related to Covid-19, including how we emerge and recover from the pandemic. In the medium to long term the programme will build on what has changed as a result of the pandemic and how we can deliver services in different ways to help tackle rising demand and reducing revenue budgets.

4.5.2 The future financial landscape continues to be increasingly challenging therefore innovation and transformation will continue to be vital in order to maintain local priorities. Work is ongoing in relation to the implementation of the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The following areas have been completed or well underway:

- Extending the Vote to 16-17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens including the establishment of an awareness programme/ campaign.

- Work on developing a public participation strategy is underway along with a petitions scheme and multi-site location meeting guidance document.
- Duty to publish electronic and postal address for each member has been completed
- Corporate Joint Committee has been established and met twice
- Self-Assessment and reporting well underway. New Corporate Plan and self-assessment being completed
- Amended the Constitution to reflect change in name of Audit Committee to Audit and Governance Committee including amendment to terms of reference by inserting review and assessing complaint handling
- Recruitment of lay members to reflect 1/3 membership being lay persons is almost complete with 1 Lay member required.
- E-democracy: Hybrid meetings went live from the Council Chamber and Gloucester Room in the Guildhall. This aims to increase access and involvement in the democratic process by the public

4.5.3 The Achieving Better Together Transformation programme work is ongoing in relation to the continued recovery, refocussing and reshaping the Council. The Organisational, Cross Cutting and Transformation steering group and Recovery, Reshaping and Budget Strategy Board have been meeting regularly. The refocus phase has set the agreed budget for 2022-23 and refreshed the Medium Term Financial Plan and is supporting the council to deliver its ongoing corporate priorities and plans, whilst adapting to address the impacts coming out of the COVID crisis.

4.5.4 The Achieving Better Together Programme is contributing towards the achievement of the national well-being goals through the work-streams:

- A prosperous Wales - Supporting and training the Council's workforce to deliver transformed services that provide the most sustainable outcomes for residents.
- A Resilient Wales - The Recovery to Transformation Strategy underpins our recovery from Covid-19 and aims to transform services, deliver better outcomes for residents and achieve financial sustainability with reduced carbon footprint.
- A Healthier Wales - The programme aims to encourage greater community ownership, improved health and wellbeing for staff, provide active lifestyle and healthy living for our citizens e.g. our approach to Housing and the Active Travel Project.
- A more Equal Wales - Providing the opportunity for local citizens to influence how policies are written and services are developed through co-production.
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities - The Community Response work-stream has a strong focus on community involvement. Projects include: supporting community volunteering, Local Area Coordinators expansion and working with third Sector and other statutory and non-statutory

partners in Swansea and encourage the continuation of community relationships.

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - Through the coproduction framework we will establish a diverse forum for community volunteers to be involved in the decision-making process and give them an opportunity to express their views and opinions. The programme will improve the communication and engagement with communities, which includes welsh medium provision.
- A globally responsible Wales - The Achieving Better Together programme has a focus on the future and delivering social, environmental, cultural, economic and financial sustainability through the work-streams. Any decision making considers future impacts e.g. climate change.

4.5.5 A draft Workforce Strategy for 2022-27 has been developed following extensive consultation with Members, senior leadership, Trade Unions and a cross-section the workforce from all Directorates. The Strategy is aligned with the Achieving Better Together Programme, Digital Strategy and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The Strategy contains four key Themes and nine accompanying Strands. A number of activities identified under each Strand will support delivery of the Strategy and expect to have a positive impact on sickness figures (indicator CHR002), The Strategy is intended to be launched post-election 2022.

4.5.6 The Council continues promote the Welsh Language and is currently assessing the model for the new Community Hubs. The new Council website went live in August 2021, which has improved access to information, online forms, and payments for residents. It has undergone a review to ensure it is available in Welsh and English. The Council's Complaints Policies were updated in line with Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. This also incorporated processes for Welsh Language complaints.

4.5.7 The shift to digital channels continued to grow during 2021-22 (Indicators Cust2a and 2b). Online payments and use of online forms is increasing year on year compared with pre-pandemic levels. COVID-19 increased the amount of online and telephone workload in the Council's contact centre. A significant number of applications were developed to support Swansea residents and businesses and to issue payments as a result of the pandemic. This continued into 2021-22.

4.5.8 Swansea Digital Services, at very short notice, set up a virtual call centre to take the phone calls from members of the public requesting vaccination certificates. Most recently, payments to 45,000 residents totalling £6.8m as part of the £150 Welsh Government Cost of Living Support Scheme were successfully processed, this was achieved by Services working together. We have also implemented two new Robotic Process Automation (RPA) processes; Recycling Bags Requests and Bulky Waste Collection requests.

- 4.5.9 A new event booking system went live on 1 September 2021, with the first service using it being Lifelong Learning for their very popular adult learning courses. The Lifelong Learning Service (LLS) continues to offer a daily telephone IT Support service, which was introduced at the beginning of the pandemic. The telephone service supports residents to access online services and signposts individuals to support organisations where required. Get Swansea Online and basic digital and IT courses are offered as face-to-face delivery wherever possible to assist beginner and low-level learners, who may find accessing online delivery difficult. Courses are offered at entry level through to Level 2 for individuals wishing to achieve an accreditation or improve their digital skills for work and life.
- 4.5.10 The Service (LLS) has worked with employability partners to develop bespoke digital delivery courses and workshops to members of the public interested in developing their digital skills to support employability prospects. A number of Digital classes have also been delivered in the community to support users using their own tablets or devices to access services and improve digital communication and collaboration skills. Digital safety and responsibility is heavily embedded into all Digital Programmes to support individuals' resilience and safety online. Courses are designed with Staff and community members to ensure community needs are met. The courses were in response to residents' recognition of the need to improve digital skills following lockdown.
- 4.5.11 It is recognised that learners across all programmes have improved their digital skills levels. This has been confirmed by learners and is a positive outcome following the switch to online delivery due to the Pandemic. A mixture of online, blended and face to face delivery has continued. We also continue to offer IT equipment on a loan basis to individuals wishing to access our programme of learning. The loan scheme has been highly beneficial to individuals enabling access to learning opportunities, support and accreditation.
- 4.5.12 As part of the Schools Digital Strategy, email service were migrated to the Welsh Governments Hwb email on 25th May 2021. Schools investment from Welsh Government has been announced for the next 3 years. This will support schools to provide effective digital learning for schools across Wales.
- 4.5.13 Swansea Council continues to work with Swansea Bay City Deal partners on the internet of things project to improve services to residents across Swansea. As part of the Connected Cities strand, we are working with the Swansea Bay City Deal Digital programme to identify and target future infrastructure opportunities, starting with public assets and building out from there

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

4.6.1 Swansea is one of the most ecologically rich and diverse counties in the UK with over 50% of the County's area being of significant biodiversity value including 17% of international importance. Its unique variety of habitats and species and wonderful range of parks, greenspaces, nature reserves, beaches and landscapes needs to be maintained, enhanced and sustainably managed for the benefit of everyone now and into the future. Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and natural resources is a corporate priority and in this context, which includes measures to tackle climate change, significant progress has been made over the past year. Key achievements include:

- Following on from the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in June 2019, a Nature Emergency was declared in 2021 and an Energy Crisis in February 2022.
- A Climate Change and Nature Recovery Strategy was approved in November 2021 and an Action Plan is currently being developed.
- In taking action to reduce our carbon footprint streams of work have been divided into a 2030 target of Net Zero emissions for Swansea Council and 2050 for Swansea as a whole.
- A Climate Charter and Pledge Wall have been developed to encourage Swansea groups, public bodies, businesses, schools and individuals to make a commitment to get to Net Zero by 2050.
- An Energy Strategy and Carbon Management Plan were approved in December 2021 and an Action Plan is in place to support delivery to reduce costs, provide cheaper energy and reduce the Council's carbon footprint. Regional collaboration has been established to support reductions across the West Wales region.
- The Council has maintained its membership of and commitment to the Low Carbon Swansea Bay (LCSB) network. Activities and events were once again disrupted by the pandemic this year, but on line webinars took place and the key focus for LCSB partners this year was the preparation of a Swansea Bay Healthy Travel Charter in collaboration with Public Health Wales and Swansea Environmental Forum.
- Training and awareness campaigns have commenced with internal staff and work is currently underway to develop an awareness programme for the business sector.
- An Energy Awareness Hub has been piloted in the town centre, run by the Environment Centre, supporting citizens with help and guidance on energy provision, the paying of bills, renewables, etc.
- The Council have continued to support community owned renewable energy schemes to deliver clean energy and benefit local schools and communities having successfully installed 900 kW of roof top Solar Photovoltaic systems across a number of schools.
- The first urban park to have been created in the city since the Victorian era has been completed adjoining the new arena.
- Other complementary public realm enhancement schemes within the central area have been delivered at the Kingsway, Wind St and St

Davids, as well as green roofs and walls on buildings and other structures through successful application of the Council's City Centre Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- Enhancement of greenspaces has also continued as part of the environmental works programme to meet the Council's commitment to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to address deficiencies in access to natural greenspace.
- A suite of tree policies/protocols have been adopted including: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Swansea Tree Replacement Standard, Tree Planting Guidance and a Management Strategy for trees on Council owned land.
- Further extensive tree planting has been undertaken on Council land throughout the County including up to 1000 trees and 5600 whips, and the Council has been declared a Queens Green Champion City in recognition of its extensive tree planting projects.
- Grant funding worth over £240,000 was obtained during 21/22 to improve the quality of parks and greenspaces including tree planting schemes, whilst over £370,000 funding has been bid for 22/23 to continue this work.
- The Council's wildflower planting programme has now extended to around 40,000sq.m (about 6 football pitches) of wildflowers across approximately 190 sites. In support of this new grant funded cut and collect machinery has been purchased to help better manage grass cutting and help boost wildflowers and pollinators by maintaining species-rich vegetation. Complementary training has also been delivered including grassland management of parks/verges; benefits of cut and collect; right tree in right place and nature emergency.
- A pilot project for improved management of corporate assets for the benefit of biodiversity and natural resources has considered all More Homes sites and advised on ecological surveys to be undertaken. Swift bricks have been installed and will continue to be installed on all new More Homes properties.

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 This reports on performance during 2021/22 delivering the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, so there is no direct impact on people or communities.

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 End of Year 2021/22 Performance Monitoring Report
Appendix B IIA