

Annual Report 2012-13



Bridgend County Borough Council
Working together to improve lives

Foreword

Welcome to our annual report which provides information on how we performed in the financial year 2012-13.

Overall we performed well in 2012-13, with more than a quarter of our performance indicators in the upper quartile or top 25% of the whole Wales dataset. The area in which we performed best was waste management. We recognised that as a Council we need to raise standards of school attainment, as this is an area where we are performing below the Welsh average.

Some of the main outcomes we achieved and key actions we completed in 2012-13 are highlighted below, with full details provided in the main report:

- We successfully worked with partners including South Wales Police to tackle crime and disorder which has resulted in the lowest ever crime rate in the County Borough.
- The condition of our roads has improved and is now above the Welsh average. The roads are also safer, evidenced by a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in accidents on our roads.
- The number of citizens living in the Borough who are homeless has decreased and, through our assistance, more citizens were able to remain in their homes when faced with the risk of homelessness.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of young people (aged 19) who were formerly looked after by the authority and are now known to be in education, training or employment.
- Our Flying Start provision to support families and children under four years old has been expanded in some of the most deprived areas of the Borough, to provide free part time childcare provision and parenting programmes.
- The school modernisation programme has progressed to schedule, including the flagship award winning school Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen.
- The percentage of pupils leaving school without a recognised qualification has decreased, with performance now better than the Welsh average.
- An increasing number of older people are being supported in the community and take-up of our innovative Community Resource Team Services, offering interventions that provide an alternative to a hospital placement, increased by over 60%.
- A 'team around the families' (TAF) approach has also been developed and implemented, which included the establishment of the Western Bay Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) and Connecting Families service.

- Although our employment rates have decreased, they remain above the Welsh average.
- We made good progress with key regeneration projects, including the development of Bridgend and Maesteg town centres and the new Porthcawl Harbour.
- We have improved access to recreation and open countryside.

If you have any comments after reading this report, please do let us know by contacting us via:

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This report is available in another language or format at request.



Councillor Mel Nott
Leader of the Council



Darren Mepham
Chief Executive

Introduction

Our Annual Report summarises how we performed in 2012-13 by focusing on the outcomes we have achieved for citizens living in the County Borough.

We report against the nine improvement objectives from our Corporate Plan 2010-2013 (Improvement Objectives 2012-13), which represent our key priorities for the year. These are categorised into six main themes, as shown below:

Strong Communities

- 1 - To build safe and inclusive communities
- 2 - To develop and support sustainable and affordable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in need

Young Voices

- 3 - To work in collaboration with partners to meet the different needs of all children and young people and provide them with the best start in life
- 4 - To help all children and young people achieve higher attainment by improving learning opportunities and making them more accessible

Healthy Living

- 5 - To improve physical and emotional well-being by promoting and supporting active lifestyles, participation and learning
- 6 - To implement effective integrated health and social care services to support independence, health and well-being

New Opportunities

- 7 - To support and invest in our communities to promote economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability

Proud Past and Green Spaces

- 8 - To manage and promote our natural and historic environment

Corporate Governance

- 9 - To improve the way we work to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets

A full list of our performance indicators (PI) for 2012-13 is published separately. The PI list provides detailed information, including performance over the past three years and a comparison against regional and Welsh averages.

Section 1 – Summary of our performance against National Indicators

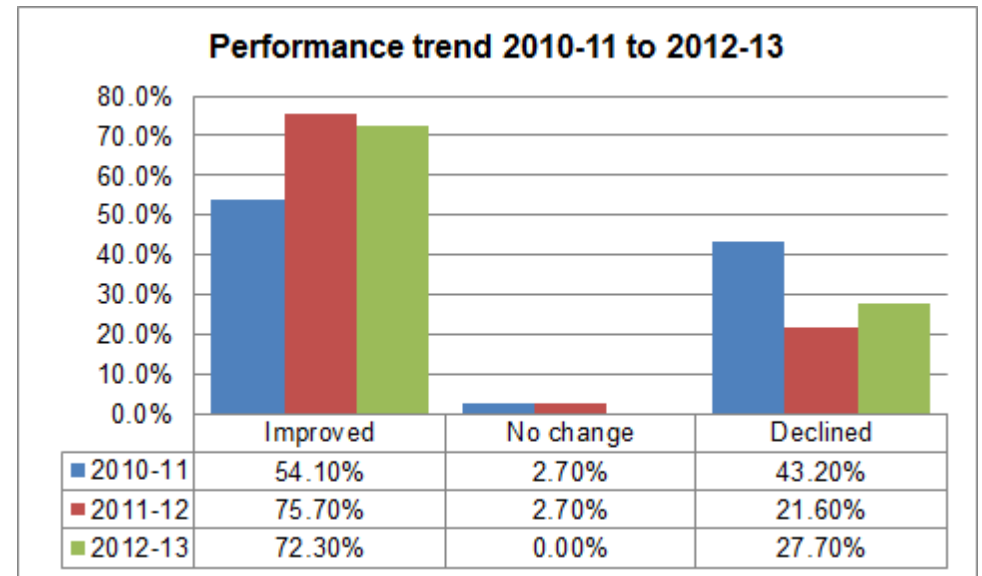
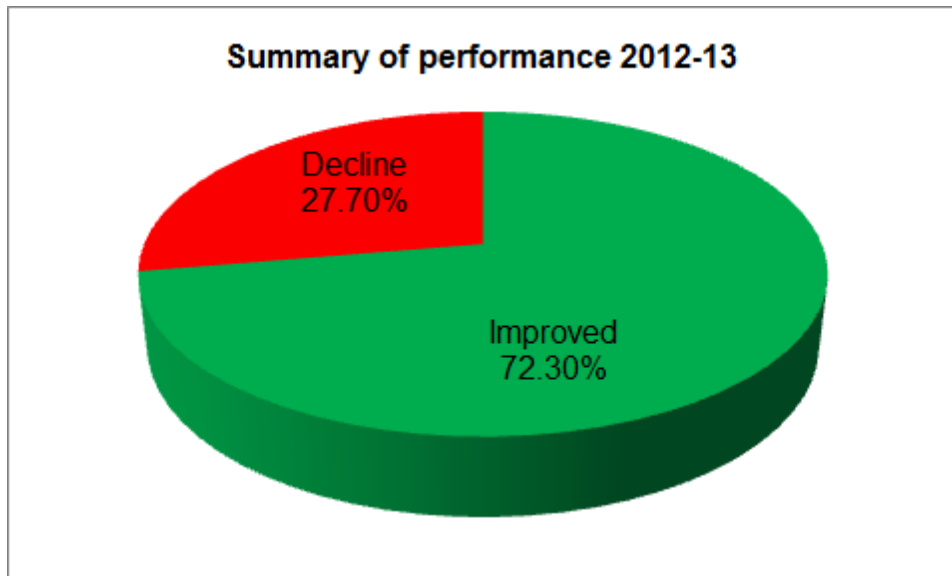
Each year, the Welsh Government and the Local Government Data Unit publish local authority performance information on a range of services, highlighting areas where there have been notable changes in the overall level of performance. This makes it possible to compare the performance of the 22 Welsh local authorities across those services.

This section summarises how we performed in 2012-13 in comparison with the previous year and with that of other local authorities.

Performance Compared with the Previous Year

In 2012-13, 44 performance indicators were collected and published nationally. Of the 44 indicators, 36 have data that can be compared against 2011-12 performance, of which:

- 26 showed an improvement, or stayed at 100%;
- 0 remained the same; and
- 10 showed a decline.

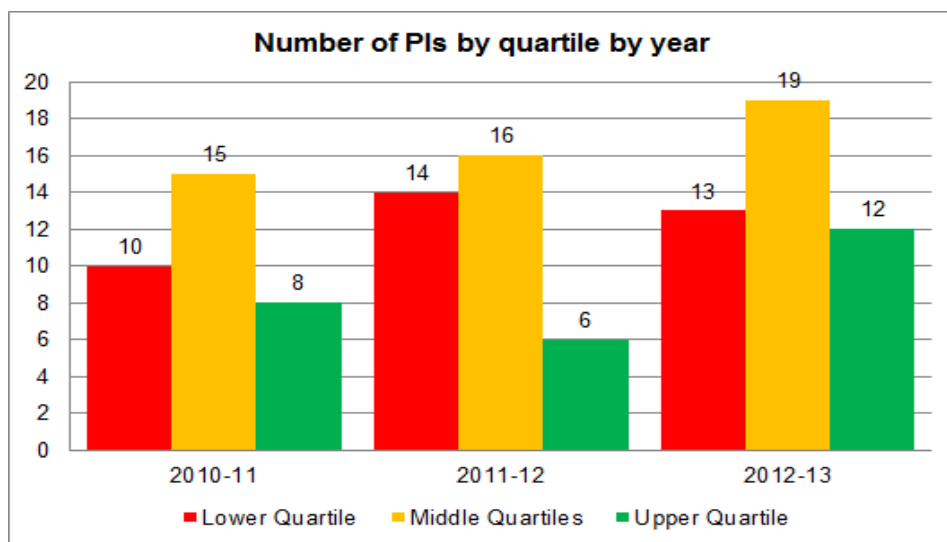


Performance Compared against Wales

The table below shows how we performed in 2012-13 per service area, compared with the rest of Wales.

Service Area	No. of indicators	% indicators that improved	
		Bridgend	Wales
Education	10	70% (7)	70% (7)
Social Care	17	71% (12)	71% (12)
Housing	3	100% (3)	100% (3)
Environment & Transport	4	75% (3)	100% (4)
Planning & Regulatory Services	1	100% (1)	100% (1)
Leisure & Culture	1	0% (0)	0% (0)
Overall	36	72% (26)	75% (27)

The breakdown below shows how we performed in each of the quartiles against other Welsh Local Authorities:



- 12 were within the top 25% (the upper quartile);
- 19 were within the mid 50% (the inter quartile range);
- 13 were within the bottom 25% (the lower quartile).

In 2012-13 we performed above or at the Welsh average for over half of the national indicators with over a quarter in the upper quartile.

Section 2 – Summary of our performance against our Improvement Objectives

This section contains the following information for each of our 2012-13 Improvement Objectives:

Self-Assessment




This is our judgement or 'self-assessment' of whether or not we achieved the Improvement Objective in 2012-13. It is based on our success measures that we identified in our Corporate Plan 2010-13. We also considered our progress against planned key actions.

Progress against Key Actions

Key actions represent the main actions or tasks we planned to complete in 2012-13. These can include a specific piece of work such as implementing a strategy or project, or a more general action to improve performance in a particular area e.g. improving school attendance.

To help you see how we performed, we have used the following symbols for our success measures. (Performance Indicators for each Improvement Objective are published in Appendix A). We use the following criteria to judge our success:

Success Measure

-  Planned outcome was achieved
-  Planned outcome was missed
-  Data or comparable data not available

Main challenges

This states our main challenges for the coming year 2013-14 i.e. anything that could result in us not delivering our priorities as set out in the 2013-2017 Corporate Plan. This section will also explain what action we will take to meet these challenges.

Strategic Theme One: Strong Communities







What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want people in the borough to live in **safe, inclusive** and **sustainable** communities

Improvement Objective One – To build safe and inclusive communities

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has mainly been met, evidenced by the following:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
More residents say they feel safe	Data not available for 2012-13. Our survey is scheduled to take place in October 2013.	
More residents feel part of the communities where they live	In 2012, 49.7% of residents surveyed felt part of the community where they live, a drop from 49.9% in 2010. In the same survey, 40.4% of respondents in 2012 felt that their local area has a strong sense of community, down from 45.4% in 2010.	
Crime rates continue to reduce	Crime figures show that all reported crime in Bridgend County Borough has fallen by 8% per cent from 8,021 in 2011-12 to 7,375 in 2012-13, resulting in 646 fewer victims of crime in the area. Levels of crime are now at an all-time low.	
We have fewer road traffic accidents	The number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads has dropped by over 11%, from 3.61 per 10,000 in 2009, to 3.20 per 10,000 in 2011.	

All of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

1.1 Work with South Wales Police and other partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, in particular first time offenders to criminal justice system

To better address crime and anti-social behaviour, the Council has further developed its joint working arrangements with our partners who include South Wales Police, Valleys to Coast, Wales and West Housing and Hafod Housing.

The 'Don't Miss a TRICK' scheme is a key initiative in making people feel safer and reducing the fear of crime. The scheme has been rolled out across the Borough, aimed at officers reassuring and supporting victims of crime or anti-social behaviour.

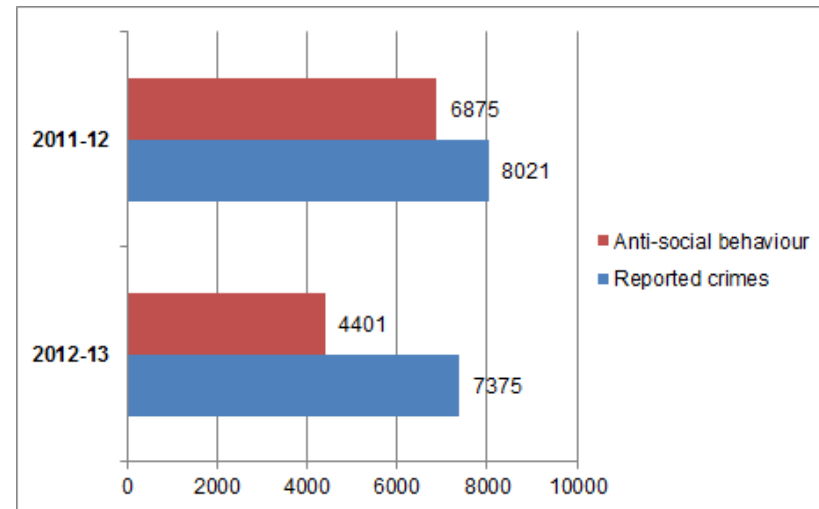
Hate crime awareness sessions for relevant staff have taken place. A 'hate crime' is any crime that is targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, trans and gender reassignment.

Actions have been taken to address the occurrence and impact of domestic abuse, with 150 active participants across the borough having benefitted from the Genesis 2 programme. Genesis 2 is a Welsh Government-driven project, addressing barriers such as: lack of childcare support; transport accessibility; debt; alcohol and drug misuse; and work-limiting health conditions. It also helps build confidence and make people ready for work.

We also introduced new CCTV cameras to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

All the above contributed to the following improvements in 2012-13:

- Crime rate is now at an all-time low. The number of reported crimes dropped by 8% from 8,021 in 2011-12 to 7,375 in 2012-13. Incidents of anti-social behaviour have also fallen by 36% from 6,875 in 2011-12 to 4,401 in 2012-13.
- The Youth Offending Service further reduced the use of custody. April to December 2011 saw nine custodial sentences, while the same time frame in 2012 saw only one young person in the Borough receive a custodial sentence.
- The number of young offenders has continued to decrease from 251 in 2011-12 to 161 in 2012-13; this is now the second best performance in Wales.



1.2 Work towards the prevention of the supply of alcohol and other age related goods to minors

Collaborative working arrangements are in place, working alongside our partners, including; South Wales Police, Council Public Protection and Planning Departments, Local Health Board, Local Safeguarding Board and South Wales Fire and Rescue. Regular meetings are held throughout the year, where problem premises are discussed and appropriate action taken.

We continued the development of 'Counter Act' (a scheme to improve the compliance of premises with the law, in partnership with South Wales Police) along with discussions on the scheme's development with our public partners and the trade through Pub Watch. The trader guidance pack has been reviewed and we are now business planning jointly with the Police.

Underage sales tests have been completed in line with the programme prescribed within the Trading Standards Service plan, and in response to any complaints received. All of the above have been positive factors in reducing anti-social behaviour and young offender rates.



1.3 Take forward actions identified by the council's new Strategic Equality Plan to help foster good relations and tackle discrimination

Equality lies at the heart of everything we do; it means understanding and tackling barriers so that everyone has a fair chance to fulfil their potential. The council's Strategic Equality Plan sets out how we will meet our equality duties and make our services accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of the people who live in, work in and visit the County Borough.

The aim of the plan is to ensure equality is integral to our delivery of services, taking into account individuals' protected characteristics, including race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, transgender status, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

The Action Plan to deliver on the Strategic Equality Plan 2012-16 was reviewed in September 2012 and is [published on our website](#). Six service actions were identified and factored into our 2012-13 work plans, of which five were fully completed. One action was only partially completed, which relates to discussions with First Cymru, which had to be rescheduled for reasons beyond our control.

The [equalities pages](#) on the Council's internet provide more details of the work we're doing around transportation, fostering good relations, communication, consultation and engagement.

1.4 Progress actions supporting the Council's Citizen Engagement Strategy and further develop the Strategy to help ensure that citizens and service users are engaged in shaping local services

We identified the following actions as our priorities for 2012-13:

- Improve opportunities for the community to be able to express their views.
- Provide an infrastructure that will support coordinated engagement activities and reduce any organisational barriers.
- Improve awareness and skills of staff for carrying out good engagement and effective public participation.
- Manage engagement activities to improve consistency and quality – from planning through to making best use of the results.

We interacted with citizens throughout the year using a range of tools to find out about their needs and their experiences of our services. This includes our website, email communication, our 24-hour customer service helpline, surveys, focus groups, local media and social media.

We carried out specific consultations to seek out citizens' views about specific policy proposals and to get feedback on the quality and importance of services. For example, we undertook extensive consultation and engagement activities when we developed our Corporate Plan for 2013-17, seeking views from local people, businesses and partners. The feedback and our responses can be found on our [Corporate Improvement pages](#).

We conducted a comprehensive consultation and engagement with our citizens to identify their priorities. The findings had been used as the foundation for the [Single Integrated Partnership Plan, 'Bridgend Together'](#). This plan sets out the long-term outcomes the Council and its local partners want to achieve for our citizens and provides a focal-point for all work activities undertaken by our LSB partners.

A new 'Communications and Engagement Strategy' has been drafted which includes further measures to reach the 'seldom heard' groups, as well as to improve the take up and make up of the Citizens' Panel. The term 'seldom-heard' refers to under-represented people who may use or potentially use Council services but who are less likely to make their needs known to policy and decision makers. The specific measures of reaching the seldom heard are still being planned out in detail, but will include the following:

- identification of which groups are underrepresented on the Citizens' Panel by comparing panel demographics against Census 2011 data (this work has begun);
- working closely with Bridgend Equality Forum to determine the most effective and appropriate ways of engaging with seldom heard groups in the County Borough; and
- a targeted marketing campaign of seldom heard groups to raise awareness of opportunities for engagement.

1.5 Maintain and improve our infrastructure and environment, including our highways

All 'Highways Maintenance Programme' road improvement schemes for 2012-13 (Year One) have been completed, in line with the agreed Local Government Borrowing Initiative Business Case. For years two and three, our Local Government Borrowing Initiative bid has been approved by Welsh Government and further road improvement works are scheduled to start in 2013.

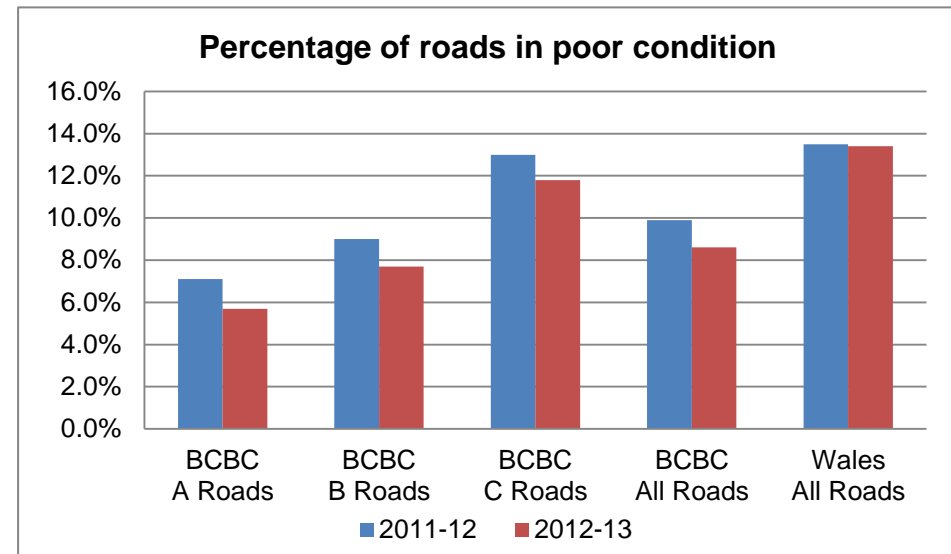
Overall, Bridgend reported 8.6% of roads were in poor condition (the breakdown of this is below); this was below the Welsh average of 13.4% and an improvement on our 2011-12 performance of 9.9%

- Principal (A) roads in poor condition – 7.1% in 2011-12, down to 5.7% in 2012-13
- Principal/classified (B) roads in poor condition – 9.0% in 2011-12, down to 7.7% in 2012-13
- Principal/classified (C) roads in poor condition – 13.0% in 2011-12, down to 11.8% in 2012-13

The 'cleanliness rate' of our roads and land has improved over the past year, going up from 97.7% in 2011 to 98.5% in 2012. As has been the case since 2007, the cleanliness rate in our Borough remains above the Welsh average, which was 95.8% in 2012.

To keep our busy urban areas safe for our drivers, cyclists and walkers alike, Civil Parking Enforcement has been introduced. Road safety schemes have also been developed, which have been funded through the SEWTA (South East Wales Transport Alliance) regional partnership.

From 2009 to 2011, the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads (per 10,000 population) has fallen, from 3.61 to 3.2.



1.6 Strengthen inspection of food and licensed premises and continue to strengthen good food hygiene enforcement and education

During 2012-13, we inspected food premises and awarded an appropriate score under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. We, along with all other local authorities in Wales, have adopted the scheme which allows consumers to make informed choices when purchasing food.

All high and medium risk inspections scheduled were completed on time and the percentage of new business identified as liable for an inspection that were inspected was 96%, which was 16% higher than our target of 80%.

With the support of grant funding from the Food Standards Agency, the Food Safety Team has facilitated training and coaching for food business operators in the Borough. The training is aimed at educating food businesses in their food safety management systems and is contributing to the general improvement in standards in food safety. As a result, in 2012-13, 84% of food establishments were 'broadly compliant with food hygiene standards', a 10% improvement on 2011-12 and above our 75% target.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

One of the biggest challenges we face is instilling a sense of community to make everyone feel a sense of inclusion. At present, less than half of the citizens (49.7%) we surveyed felt a part of their community and fewer still (40.4%) felt that there was a strong sense of community where they lived. We hope to improve this by consulting with our citizens on any decisions that may affect their community, to ensure they have the opportunity to share any views regarding potential changes. Also, schemes that encourage participation in sport and other health-living activities will bring people together and encourage a greater sense of community spirit.





We want our citizens to feel safe. Alongside our Local Service Board partners, we have made progress with this recently, with our crime rates last year at an all-time low. However, with the economic outlook and job prospects still uncertain, there is still a significant challenge in keeping our homes and streets safe. We will continue to work closely with our partners, to develop schemes and initiatives such as 'don't miss a TRICK' and the hate crime awareness schemes.

The condition of our roads and infrastructure is a high priority for our residents and is vital if we are to attract businesses and investment to the area. Improving our infrastructure will be a big challenge for us, particularly in times of reducing resources, fewer grants and higher-than-ever public expectations. We will work with communities and alongside public transport providers to improve transport links. We will also undertake highway works to improve the overall highway network and safety, identifying match funding (which reduces the amount we ourselves have to pay) where possible.

Improvement Objective Two – To develop and support sustainable and affordable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in need

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has fully been met, evidenced by the following:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
The number of homeless households is reduced	The rate of households accepted as 'homeless' (per 10,000 households) has fallen from 40.01 in 2010-11 to 35.57 in 2011-12.	
Increased percentage of potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months	The percentage of potentially homeless households that had homelessness prevented for at least 6 months increased from 43.2% in 2011-12 to 52.9% in 2012-13.	
Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant is reduced	The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a disabled facilities grant reduced from 251 days in 2011-12 to 201 days in 2012-13, exceeding our target of 279 days.	
Increase the number of additional affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all additional housing units	In 2012-13, 37% ¹ of houses provided were classed as affordable, exceeding our performance of 23% in 2011-12.	

The majority the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

¹ The Wales Audit Office has reservations about the robustness of data sourced nationally by Welsh Government and has, therefore, decided to universally qualify this indicator for 2012-13.

Progress against Key Actions

2.1 Develop appropriate support services and a range of quality supported accommodation

Our 'supporting people' service helps vulnerable groups, including those with mental health problems or disabilities, by providing assistance with tenancies and help to prevent homelessness. Some of these vulnerable groups also need support as part of their accommodation.

In 2012-13, we completed 44 units of supported accommodation as planned (28 units were completed by the end of March 2013 and the remaining 16 in August 2013), an increase from 22 units completed in the previous year. These units include supported temporary accommodation for homeless people and for people with mental health issues.

We also reviewed our service and began the commissioning process for an improved service that will link into new regional committees, to improve collaborative working with other organisations and areas.

A service model for a single point of access and referral for supported accommodation was scheduled to be completed in 2012-13. This action has been deferred so that it can be included in the new Housing Register that is being developed with registered social landlords to ensure the best use of available social rented property. The service model development began in April 2013.

This priority links to Improvement Objectives five and six for support and accommodation for people with mental health and substance misuse problems and for older people.

2.2 Provide a range of options to meet housing need, prevent homelessness and increase the amount of temporary and affordable housing

In 2012-13, 242 households contacted us regarding the risk of losing their home and becoming homeless. Our intervention and assistance resulted in 128 (52.9%) of the households remaining in their homes for at least 6 months. This was an improvement on our performance of 43.2% in 2011-12, although this remains below the Welsh average as shown in the graph opposite.

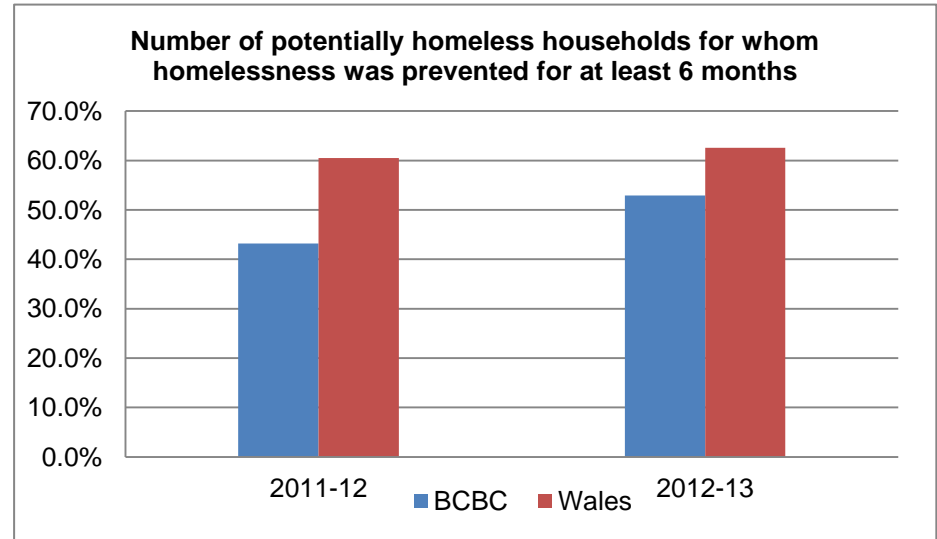
We also increased the numbers of affordable housing units from 105 in 2011-12 to 120 in 2012-13. This represents 37% of all additional housing units provided during the year, which is an improvement from 23% in 2011-12.

We used the Empty Homes Grant to bring empty properties back into use to provide additional rental accommodation. By the end of March 2013, five properties were either having works undertaken, or completed and occupied.

We included more prevention work in our contract with Shelter Cymru and Women’s Aid for victims of domestic abuse.

We provided additional support for young people (aged 16-25) with housing problems through locating housing staff in the Council’s ‘Just @sk+’ service and through mediation to help address disputes on accommodation issues. This links with the developments of the ‘Just @sk+’ service described under Improvement Objective three.

We worked with the Credit Union to provide financial help to enable people to access private rented accommodation.



2.3 Improve private sector housing conditions and bring empty homes back into use

We began implementing the Welsh Government 'Houses into Homes' empty homes loan scheme to bring derelict buildings back into use. By March 2013 we had received 14 applications that, subject to approval of planning and building regulations, will use £450,000 of Welsh Government Funding and bring 14 properties back into use as homes.

The Caerau Housing Renewal Area programme uses other Welsh Government grants to improve homes in poor condition. We completed work on 47 properties this year and commenced work on a further 13 properties.

Of the private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than six months at 1 April, 73 (7.19%) were returned to occupation during 2012-13 through the provision of advice and grants to owners. This was an improvement on our performance of 13 (1.27%) in 2011-12, and is both above the 2012-13 Welsh average of 5.11% and our own target of 4.34%. In 2012-13 we also secured £2.2m in grants to develop new housing schemes on previously derelict land in the County Borough.

We provide disabled facilities grants (DFGs) to disabled homeowners, which are used to fund adaptations to their homes to enable them to live safely. In 2012-13 we delivered 214 grants and the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG was 201 days. This was an improvement on both our performance in 2011-12 of 251 days and exceeded both our target in 2012-13 of 279 days and the Welsh average of 271 days.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

The UK Governments' welfare reforms started being implemented in April 2013. We anticipate an impact on homelessness as housing benefit is reduced, which may result in tenants falling behind with their rent and potentially facing eviction. As small households have to move to one and two-bedroom homes, we may also face a challenge of meeting the demand for smaller homes.

We will monitor the impact of welfare reform on demand for our housing services. This will include working closely with registered social landlords to improve the way we communicate and to ensure a common approach to eviction and links to support for potentially homeless households. We will continue to take a preventative approach to the issue of homelessness by helping residents find solutions to their housing needs and getting to the root cause of why people become homeless.

Strategic Theme Two: Young Voices








What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want children and young people in the borough to **thrive, learn** and achieve their **full potential**

Improvement Objective Three – To work in collaboration with partners to meet the different needs of all children and young people and provide them with the best start in life

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has been partially met based on the success measures bellow:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
The number of long term and stable placements for our looked after children is increased	The percentage of children looked after on 31 March who had three or more placements during the year increased from 7.8% in 2011-12 to 10.6% in 2012-13.	
Reduced percentage of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more change of school, during a period/periods of being looked after, that was not due to transitional arrangements in 12 months to 31 March	There was an increase in 2012-13 from 14.4% in the previous year to 15.2%.	
Increased percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact at age 19	Our performance of 100% was maintained.	
Increased percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be in suitable, non-emergency accommodation at age 19	There was a decrease in 2012-13 from 94.1% in the previous year to 93.3%. This represented one of the fifteen young people not being in suitable accommodation.	
Increased percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact, who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment at age 19	There was an improvement in 2012-13 from 29.4% in the previous year to 73.3%, which exceeded our target of 45% and the Welsh average of 56.4%.	

All of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

3.1 Deliver and expand Flying Start provision to help children aged 0-3 get a good start in life

Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme aimed at supporting families and children under four years old who live in some of the most deprived areas of Wales. The programme provides intensive health visiting, free part time childcare provision, early language development and parenting programmes.

In 2012-13 we completed all planned actions to expand the Flying Start provision in Wildmill and additional streets in the existing Flying Start area of North Cornelly. This resulted in 950 children benefiting from the service, exceeding the Welsh Government target of 794.

We also completed three capital (building) projects to develop suitable Flying Start accommodation in Brackla, Plasnewydd and Cefn Glas primary schools. Flying Start commenced the delivery of services in these new expansion areas in April 2013.

There are three further projects scheduled for completion in the 2014-15 financial year as part of the expansion of the programme.



3.2 Take forward actions identified in the council's Child Poverty Strategy to tackle child poverty

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 placed a duty on the Welsh Assembly Government to publish a Child Poverty Strategy for Wales which provides a focus on the following objectives:

- reduce the number of families living in workless households;
- improve the skills of parents/carers and young people living in low-income households; and
- reduce inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving outcomes.

The Bridgend County Child Poverty Strategy for 2012-15 shows how each of these objectives is being addressed by the Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan and its associated activities. However, the CYP Plan has now been superseded by the Single Integrated Partnership Plan, 'Bridgend County Together'. Actions within the strategy have been incorporated into the new plan and are monitored through the Communities Partnership Board, which is part of the Local Service Board (LSB).

High level actions undertaken in 2012-13 included the sign up by the LSB and Cabinet to demonstrate commitment for strategic plans to improve outcomes for families living in or at risk of poverty, the development of a commissioning plan for family support and parenting, and the development of multi-agency community services.

3.3 Review and improve provision of advice and information to children and young people and their families

Our Family Information Service (FIS) is responsible for providing information and guidance regarding childcare and services for families as their children grow into young adults, along with providing support to existing childcare settings and giving advice and assistance to prospective childcare workers. We regularly review our FIS website content to identify if there are any areas for improvement. In 2012-13 this process resulted in a number of updates to website, including incorporating direct links to the Welsh advocacy, information and advice helpline for children and young people (MEIC) and our Youth Service.

The annual 'Bridgend Fun Day' was held in April 2012, and it was estimated over 2,000 people attended. As well as providing activities for youngsters, such as bouncy castles and 'Krazy Karts', the event was used to inform our citizens about the range of services available for children and families. The providers that attended the event included Flying Start, Public Health Team, Bridgend Library BCBC, Childcare Team BCBC, Mudiad Meithrin (Welsh language early years provision), Fingers & Thumbs Playgroup, Fast Track Solutions Day Nursery, Active Young People BCBC, Tiny Talk (baby signing workshop), Road Safety BCBC, Chwarae Teg, and multi-agency teams.

These stand holders provided free activities for the children, such as making medals and Olympic torches, seed planting, face painting, sports activities and a drumming workshop, allowing parents to engage with the stand holders to gather information about the services they offer.

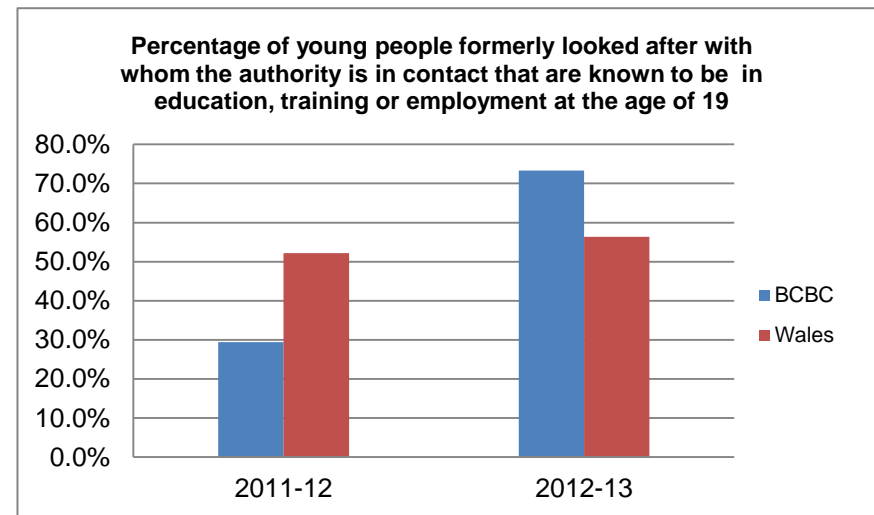


3.4 Improve aftercare focus on post 16 services

In April 2012 our after care service and youth service 'Just Ask' merged to create the new 'Just @sk+'. This is an integrated service for vulnerable young people aged 16-25 year olds, which is designed to provide support across a range of areas including housing, personal development, education and training. The services provided by the former 'Just Ask' continue to be delivered, such as a 'drop in' advice and information service, counselling, sexual health advice, and various workshops/courses on topics such as confidence building, media skills, money management and careers advice.

The successful work of the Just @sk+ service in supporting care leavers to access appropriate training, education and employment opportunities has contributed to an improvement in the percentage of young people formerly looked after aged 19 with whom we are in contact that are known to be in education, training or employment. This rose from 29.4% in 2011-12 to 73.3% in 2012-13 and represents an improvement from one of the lowest results in Wales to the 6th highest.

A number of key appointments were made during 2012-13, including a Social Worker to take on case management responsibility for all looked after children aged 16 and above, a homeless support worker, a substance misuse practitioner and a 'keeping in touch' worker to support young people not in education, employment or training.



3.5 Improve permanency in respect of fostering and adoption

Our adoption service continues to provide a strong and effective service across all aspects of the provision. In 2012-13 we placed 19 children for adoption, which was above our target of 15. Seventeen of these children were adopted, which was an improvement on the previous year's performance of 15. There were also seven general approvals for fostering in the year, which resulted in a net gain of one carer. The minimal gain was due to the three carers retiring, one resigning and two being terminated.

In 2012-13 we received positive inspection reports from the CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales) for all our children's homes and our fostering service; there are no issues on noncompliance in any area for these services.

3.6 Take action to reduce out of county placements for looked after children

'Out of County Placements' refer to situations where a child is placed in a residential care setting that is outside of the County Borough. This is necessary when a child's specific needs cannot be provided 'in house' e.g. severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or complex special educational needs.

In 2012-13 the total number of looked after children placed in out of county residential placements was 15 (as at 31/03/13). This figure was the same as the previous year and higher than our target of 11. Our 'Out of Authority' panel played a key role in ensuring the figure did not increase as they completed all quarterly reviews of care plans for relevant children. This resulted in five children/young people returning to the County Borough; four to 'in house' provision and one returned home to parents.

We opened two newly redesigned residential care units in January 2012 with the aim of reducing the reliance on out of county care provision. 'Sunnybank' accommodates children with complex needs and Newbridge House supports young people through the transition to independence. These new units replaced the previous residential homes at Cartrefle and Pant Morfa, and Maesteg Community Home which was decommissioned and sold. We completed our plan to undertake an initial evaluation of the new units in August 2012, which highlighted that stronger links had been developed between staff and multi-agency professionals, and young people currently accommodated in out of authority placements have been considered to return to in-house provision.

We are looking at potential efficiency savings for the cost of out of county placements by working with the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru. This work continues in 2013-14.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?






The financial pressure resulting from out of county residential childcare placements is a significant issue. In 2012-13 we spent over £2 million in this area. In 2013-14 we will aim to fully utilising our new residential units at Sunnybank and Newbridge House, which should reduce the need to send young people out of the county.

We need to meet the challenge of the increasing numbers of looked after children living in the County Borough. This involves meeting both the financial challenge associated with this demand-led provision and ensuring that we are able to provide the highest quality of care for this group of vulnerable young people. A range of specific actions will be taken to support this group such as developing work experience opportunities and apprenticeship schemes.

Improvement Objective Four – To help all children and young people achieve higher attainment by improving learning opportunities and making them more accessible

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has been met, evidenced by the following:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
More pupils reach the expected levels of numeracy and literacy (core subject indicator attainment at Key Stage 2)	The Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator improved from 77.1% in 2011-12 to 80.6% in 2012-13.	
Average points score for pupils aged 15 increases	The average points score has improved from 389.1 in 2011-12 to 425.2 in 2012-13.	
More pupils achieving five GCSEs grades A*-C including English/Welsh and mathematics	The percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs A*-C including English/Welsh and mathematics has increased from 44.6% in 2011-12 to 50.7% in 2012-13.	
Average points score for looked after children (LAC) aged 15+ in comparison with non LAC children increases	The average points score for looked after children at Key Stage 4 increased from 193.8 in 2011-12 to 273 in 2012-13. This has resulted in a reduction in the gap between the attainment of all pupils and looked after children.	
Percentage of pupils leaving compulsory education, training and work-based learning without an approved external qualification continues to improve	The percentage of pupils leaving school without a qualification decreased from 0.58% in 2011-12 to 0.33% in 2012-13. The figure of 0.33% represents five pupils in 2012-13.	

The majority of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

4.1 Provide community focused schools

We have continued with the implementation of a challenging school modernisation programme, aimed at ensuring our school premises are fit to support the delivery of a first-class education in the 21st Century. We progressed all projects as planned, which included the following schemes:

- Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen, which is a new college for 11-18 year-old pupils. The college will cater for over 1,570 pupils and has dedicated community facilities, including accommodation for the multi-agency team for the north to provide support for young people and the wider community. It is one of the largest investments in a shared community and education building in Wales, costing over £34 million, and is the first Welsh school to receive a BREEAM 'outstanding' rating, for which it received a national award. The school opened in September 2013. Phase two of the scheme, which includes external sports provision and car parking, is due to complete in spring 2014.
- The new £4.3 million Penyfai Church in Wales Primary School is being developed on the site of the previous school. Over 200 pupils will transfer to the new school in the autumn term of 2013, with phase two of the scheme, which includes the school playing field and car park, due to complete in spring 2014.
- Litchard primary school has benefited from extensive remodelling works, which included adaptations to the existing building and a new extension that provides a link between the former infant and junior school buildings. The remodelling was completed in April 2012.



Some of our planned maintenance work had to be postponed until 2013-14, because the funding was used for essential repair works instead, such as replacement temporary accommodation provided at Betws Primary School following a fire in the junior building in June 2012.

4.2 Improve basic and key skills for all children and young people, especially within disadvantaged groups

The key actions to improve basic skills were completed as planned in 2012-13. This included a specific focus on improving standards in numeracy and literacy, and involved our Basic Skills team visiting schools to provide training for school support staff in 'Catch Up Numeracy', 'Spotlight Maths' and 'Guided Reading'.

In order to track pupil achievement in key skills such as Communication and ICT and to monitor pupils with specific characteristics, including those within disadvantaged groups, we need an effective pupil tracking system. As planned, we completed initial testing on a new system that will be used to track pupil progress. The system will be rolled out to all schools during 2013-14.

We now have over 30 schools running either Family Learning or Language and Play/Number and Play programmes. These programmes engage parents and the wider family members in a child's learning of basic skills.

As part of our work under the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service we will be developing a collaborative approach with our neighbouring local authorities regarding how basic skills support will be delivered in the future. We are currently awaiting confirmation of the next steps from the Consortium.

4.3 Take actions to reduce the number of school exclusions

Reducing the number of pupils excluded from schools in Bridgend is an important area of work - if a pupil is excluded it can lead to issues that will affect that young person's quality of life, including social exclusion, unemployment and involvement in crime.

We completed all of our planned actions, including a review of our 'managed' moves protocol and Pastoral Support Plans. These plans were designed to avoid permanent exclusions by providing tailored additional support to children with challenging behaviour. Examples of such support are early referrals to support agencies and, where necessary, transferring pupils to another school.

These actions have contributed to a reduction in the number of pupils excluded from secondary schools in Bridgend. The number of permanent exclusions per 1,000 pupils from secondary schools has dropped from 0.5 in 2011-12 to 0.4 in 2012-13 (from five to three pupils), which is below the Welsh average of 0.6. Across the same period, the percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions in secondary schools remained constant at 0.08%. The 2012-13 targets were achieved for both of these indicators.

4.4 Take actions to improve school attendance

Improving school attendance is a key issue that we are focusing on. Historically, attendance rates in the County Borough have been below the national average, and this is something we are keen to address as research suggests there may be a correlation between pupil attendance and attainment where low levels of attendance will have a detrimental effect on pupil's attainment.

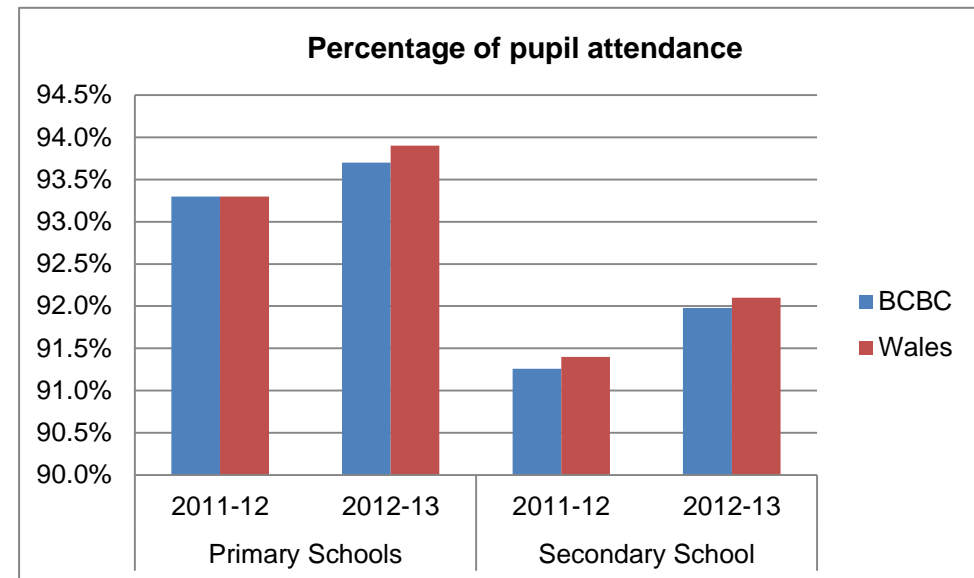
In 2012-13 there was an improvement in both primary and secondary school attendance compared with the previous year: primary increased from 93.3% to 93.7% and secondary increased from 91.3% to 92.0%.

Whilst these results are encouraging, the increases are in line with the national improvements across Wales and therefore both figures were below the 2012-13 Welsh average – 93.9% attendance for primary and 92.1% for secondary schools. This is shown in the graph opposite.

We had planned to complete a detailed analysis of school attendance data, with the aim of using the information to direct the work of the Education Welfare Service and target resources at specific issues in schools. We made good progress in analysing data across the following two key areas:

- non-authorised absence, especially holidays
- absence information focusing on differences between clusters and groups of pupils

We have also started work on developing a procedure to deal with mid-year transfer and admission requests. Our aim is to reduce the number of unnecessary school moves and minimise disruption to both pupils and schools.



4.5 Progress the action plan for the Council's 14-19 Strategy by improving post-16 learning pathways, and improving our formal and non-formal learning opportunities

In 2012-13 we implemented all planned strands of the 14–19 Quality Assurance Framework, which resulted in:

- more opportunities for pupils aged 14-19 to gain qualifications in a wider range of subjects. All secondary schools now provide courses in work accredited qualifications, and also offer the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.
- Work progressing to develop shared apprenticeships with 'Construction Skills', who will be developing a Skills Academy to provide the opportunity for young people to gain both vocational qualifications and work experience in courses such as brick laying and plumbing.
- The number of level 3 courses (A level or equivalent) available increasing from 35 in 2011-12 to 40 in 2012-13.

As planned, funding from the Welsh Government's 14-19 Grant was used to further develop the Youth Options Consortium of voluntary sector providers and other partners. This has increased the number of quality non-formal learning opportunities.

The new curriculum modelling group is now in place and the teaching group sizes will be agreed in 2013-14.

A survey is carried out each year on school leavers to identify how many pupils are not in education, employment or training. In 2012-13 our result of 6.4% was the worst performance in Wales and was an increase on our 2011-12 result of 4.4%. The results from the latest survey show 97.2% of our school leavers responded. We do not have information on what the response rate was in other local authorities.

4.6 Implement efficient and effective ICT across all schools to facilitate learning

All of the planned schemes to develop ICT in schools during 2012-13 were completed. This included using a grant of £700k from 'Learning in Digital Wales' to develop ICT infrastructure in schools.

We had intended to roll out and implement an ICT strategy for schools during 2012-13. The strategy was approved but implementation is in a process of negotiation with each individual school according to its baseline ICT position, its needs and the funding it has available. This will be on-going during 2013-14.

4.7 Implement the Education Inclusion Strategy by providing appropriate ALN support, and improving educational opportunities and attainment for looked-after children

In 2012-13 we carried out a learning needs analysis to identify training needs for support staff that work with pupils who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The actual training will be delivered during 2013-14. The first two areas covered by the training will be supporting pupils with mathematical difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders. In addition to this training a professional learning community has been set up to foster collaborative learning among school based employees that work with looked-after children (LAC).

To ensure there is effective early screening in place to identify children with ALN, specialist teams have worked with schools to develop a provision mapping tool that will be rolled out during 2013-14. All pupils that are identified as having a specific learning, communication or behavioural difficulty will then be placed on a register for monitoring and review.

The level of attainment for LAC pupils at Key Stage 4 improved in 2012-13. There were 27 young people in the 2011-12 cohort, three of whom did not achieve any recognised qualification and four that did not achieve any GCSEs. This compares to the 2012-13 cohort of 19 young people, where 18 pupils achieved at least one GCSE. This resulted in an improvement in the average points score for LAC pupils which increased from 194 to 273, which is above the Welsh average of 221.

We recognise one area where we need to improve performance is with the time taken to issue a child with a statement of special education need (SEN). Both of the performance indicators used to monitor this show our 2012-13 performance was the lowest in Wales, where the percentage of final statements of SEN issued within 26 weeks including and excluding exceptions was 10.7% and 50% respectively.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

One of the main challenges we face is improving pupil attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 as the standards being achieved by our children and young people are below the Welsh average. There have been improvements in the cores subject indicator and average point score; however, these improvements have been below the average increase across Wales. Full details of how we will improve standards in the coming years are included in our Corporate Plan 2013-17, which builds on a number of key actions contained in this report, such as the school modernisation programme and expansion of Flying Start provision.

In 2012-13 ESTYN carried out an inspection on the quality of our education services. We received an overall judgement of 'adequate' where it was concluded that we need to improve outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 3, improve school attendance, strengthen self-evaluation, provide better quality information to elected members and reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training. We have produced an action plan to address each of these points during 2013-14. Although we received a judgement of 'adequate' from ESTYN, it is important to note that the percentage of our schools that have been inspected by ESTYN since 2010 that have received an overall judgement of either excellent or good is 82%.

We are anticipating further budget reductions during 2014-15 which will have an impact on our ability to deliver the current school modernisation programme. In preparation for this we have revised our timetable for planned projects and have identified all funding sources for 2014-15, which includes the projected sale of school sites for £11 million.

We have identified that in some areas of the County Borough the demand for school places exceeds the current supply. To address this issue we have planned a review of school catchment areas boundaries during 2013-14.

There are rising numbers of looked after children and pupils with additional learning needs, which is putting an increased pressure on our budget. These are demand-led services that we must provide. The only way we can reduce potential costs is through effective early intervention. This involves working with families that are facing difficulties, the early identification of children with specific learning needs and putting in place effective support arrangements before their problems become more severe and complex.

Strategic Theme Three: Healthy Living








What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want people of all ages in the borough to live **healthy** and **independent** lives

Improvement Objective Five – To improve physical and emotional wellbeing by promoting and supporting active lifestyles, participation and learning

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has mainly been met, evidenced by the following:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Life expectancies for local men and women are improving	For men, average life expectancy in 2010 was 76.8 years, which is up from 76.4 years in 2009. For women, average life expectancy in 2010 was 81.4 years, which is up from 81.2 years in 2009. ²	
Obesity rates (Body Mass Index of 30 or more) are going down	Obesity rates have been improving over the last few years, from 25% in 2009 down to 24% in 2012.	
The adult smoking rate is reduced	Smoking rates increased, from 22.5% in 2011 to 22.8% in 2012. However, since 2007, adult smoking rates in the Borough have remained consistently below the Welsh average each year.	
The percentage of babies with a low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) is reduced	In 2011, the percentage (number per 10,000) of babies born with a low birth weight was 7.4%. This was an improvement from the rate of 7.7% in 2010.	
Teenage pregnancy rate (per 1,000 females) is going down	Since 2008, under-18 conception rates have remained consistently above the Welsh average. Our rates have also increased from 40.4 in 2010 to 41.1 in 2011.	

All of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

² Information provides is an indication. It does not reflect the 2012-13 situation as the data is not available. The same is true for birth weight and pregnancy rate measures.

Progress against Key Actions

5.1 Support improved mental health services for people of all ages

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure was passed by Welsh Government in 2010. The intention of the legislation is to ensure that people are able to access appropriate mental health support services, receive care that is coordinated by a named person, have direct access to services following discharge, and the entitlement to independent advocacy is enhanced.

We have responded to the legislation by focussing on Parts one and two of the Measure as follows:

The primary mental health service (Part one) is now well established at ARC (Assisting Recovery in the Community). It commenced on 1st October 2012 in partnership with the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust and voluntary sector agencies and provides comprehensive mental health assessments, short term interventions, advice and information and referral to secondary health if necessary.

Part two requires that all persons receiving a secondary mental health service have a Care and Treatment Plan. The Community Mental Health teams and managers have ensured that completing these care and treatment plans were a priority and organised their workloads accordingly. This was also monitored by the Community Mental Health Team managers. Targets were set by the Welsh Government to achieve 90% by June 2013. At the end of May 2013 the position across the Western Bay area (this work is being progressed and monitored as part of the collaborative agenda) was 92.8% of older people and 95.4% of adults requiring a Plan had one in place, both figures exceeding the Welsh Government target.

There are a number of other initiatives to improve mental health services being progressed via the Western Bay collaboration. A joint Mental Health Strategy has been agreed by all partners across the Western Bay region and this has prioritised actions and outcomes which need to be progressed to improve mental health services across the region.

Mental Health teams have been working closely with housing, health and third sector partners to identify gaps in accommodation. We are working on a number of accommodation options with Housing including the development this autumn of a six-unit accommodation for people with complex needs.

5.2 Implement the Emotional Wellbeing Strategy

The Emotional Wellbeing Strategy is part of the Local Service Board's wider strategy, which is to improve the emotional wellbeing of all citizens in the Borough. This year, we reviewed and implemented the Emotional Wellbeing Strategy action plan with our Local Service Board partners, to ensure co-ordinated and consistent service provision.

Using school councils as focus groups, we commenced raising awareness of current anti-bullying policies during summer 2013. Stakeholders will be invited to participate in developing strategies around Anti Bullying Policies to further develop good practice.

We have also established innovative family services, such as the Western Bay Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) and Connecting Families. The number of families benefiting from these services that provide a 'team around the families' approach almost doubled, from 71 in 2011-12 to 133 in 2012-13. The percentage of families saying they benefited from these services last year was 68.8%.

5.3 Implement the participation strategy to encourage people, especially children and young people, to be involved in decisions that affect them

We always strive to engage people in designing and delivering services to meet their needs. To do this we seek to interact with citizens throughout the year using a range of tools to find out about their needs and their experiences of our services. Examples include:

- the homecare questionnaires;
- the 'Having a Say' group and Parents' Forum for people with learning disabilities and their families;
- the years 6-9 (school) surveys to inform the planning of healthy living services to children and young people;
- the participation of children and young people during the scoping phase of the Regional Advocacy Commissioning Project where they were asked if they felt their voices were heard when decisions were being made that affected their lives;
- the participation of young people in the development of the Independent Professional Advocacy and Independent Visiting Specifications where they will be part of the tender evaluation process in the next few months.

A new 'Communications and Engagement Strategy' for 2013-14 has been drafted, which includes further measures to reach the 'seldom heard' groups, as well as to improve the take up and make up of the Citizens' Panel, including involving younger people in decisions that affect them.

5.4 Work with partners to encourage adults and children to be more active more often throughout life

An 'outcomes framework' had been developed with HALO Leisure Ltd (our partners in providing leisure and library services). The framework has been used to inform the priorities for our 2013-14 business plans.

We have worked closely with partners to continue levels of participation in the national exercise referral scheme. In 2012-13, we had 1,741 GP referrals to the scheme - this exceeded our target of 1,200 for the year. There will be an emphasis in 2013-14 on review of chronic condition programmes and retention of participants.

The 'Lets Walk Cymru' initiative with Sport Wales has been implemented, with community participants regularly engaging in walking programmes. The initiative has been a success, and the number of participants using improved walking routes and participating in community based exercise programmes increasing: from 350 in 2011-12 to over 1,500 last year. The programme is externally funded and a new agreement is being targeted for 2013-14.

The number of private sector employers who are our 'Health Challenge Business Partners' has increased by over 20% since last year, from 51 registered in 2011-12 to 65 in 2012-13.

School sport programmes are being delivered at primary and secondary schools in the County Borough, supported by Sport Wales and Welsh Government and further funding has been secured for the coming year.

We have also been supporting disability sport through our Community Chest grants scheme. Managed by the Council and agreed by a panel of volunteers with support from Sport Wales, the scheme provides funding of up to £1,500 to help grass-root sports clubs and organisations to get more local people taking part in sport and physical activity.



5.5**Develop library provision based on the life centre model where a variety of wellbeing services are provided under one roof**

The new library for the Garw Valley was completed to schedule and opened to the public on 2 April 2013. In partnership with HALO, the library opening hours have extended from a two-and-a-half day week to a five-day opening in a new modern environment. It offers a larger, more modern library space, and users will benefit from longer opening hours, more resources available for loan, increased opportunities for community and learning activities and enhanced ICT facilities, including Wi-Fi.

The relocation was supported by a 'Community Learning Library' grant from CyMAL, a Welsh Government programme to deliver modern, public library facilities to attract more people to use their services.

The improvement works at Pyle LIFE Centre were completed by summer 2013. Disruption has been kept to a minimum during the period of improvement works at these centres and visits to public libraries during the year (per 1,000 of population) only fell from 4,243 in 2011-12 to 3,820 in 2012-13.

The number of children completing the summer Reading Challenge increased last year, from 58% taking part in 2011-12 to 65% in 2012-13.

For adult community learning activities, we achieved high learner satisfaction rates of 93% for the academic year concluding in August 2012; 84% of learners stated that they have definitely benefited from undertaking learning, compared to 74% last year.

5.6 Work with partners to develop better leisure facilities across the County Borough

In April 2012, we established a 15-year partnership with HALO Leisure Ltd to run our leisure centres and swimming pools on our behalf, with the overall aim of increasing attendances and encouraging healthy living. We also developed an athlete support foundation with HALO, providing training and financial support to athletes.

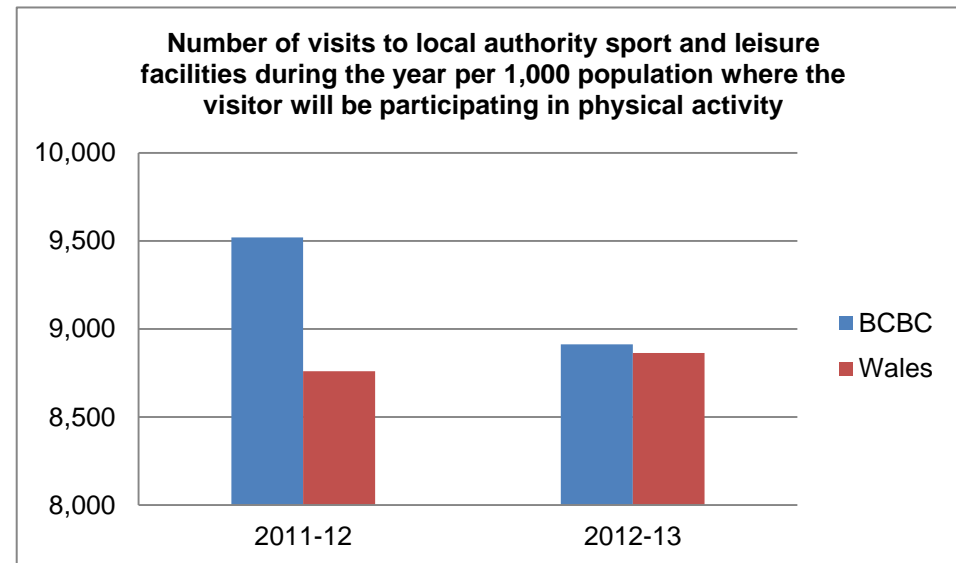
As a result of the nation's great sporting success last summer, we celebrated our Olympians and Paralympians, past and present, through the 'Following the Flame' exhibition. We also established programmes in our Arts and Sports and Physical activity services to inspire the next generation of athletes.

Improvements have been completed at various facilities within the Borough, including Bridgend Recreation Centre, Brackla Sports Centre and Garw Valley Leisure Centre, to encourage greater usage of our leisure facilities.

Visits (per 1,000 population) to sport and leisure centres have dropped, from 9,520 in 2011-12 to 8,914 in 2012-13 as shown in the graph opposite.

A delay in completing the improvement works at Bridgend Recreation Centre had a negative impact on our 2012-13 performance. This work is planned for completion during 2013-14. We anticipate the new facilities will increase the number of visits over the coming year.

Throughout the year we distributed financial support, through the Community Chest programme, to clubs and organisations to develop more opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity. Amongst the recent awards was a grant of £1,494 for Wildmill Table Tennis Club to spend on new equipment and sending coaches on training courses.



5.7 Take actions to help improve the health and wellbeing of people in the County Borough

To help improve the health and wellbeing of people within the borough, we carried out targeted health improvement programmes to encourage people to stop smoking, discourage alcohol misuse and eat more healthily, including:

- Families Physical and Emotional Wellbeing Programme – all elements of the programme are live and are presently meeting financial and performance targets.
- Older Persons Prevention, Promotion, Independence Programme – all elements of the programme are live and meeting financial and performance targets. Directory of services for older people was developed to support communication and engagement activity.

The number of people participating in the Garw Valley Obesity Project has far exceeded our expectations with 178 participating in 2012-13 - almost double the forecast amount of 90.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

Despite the progress we collectively made, there are still significant health inequalities within the Borough. Our obesity rates and life expectancy levels for both men and women remain worse than the Welsh average. If the Council does not promote and encourage healthy living and wellbeing, the emotional and physical wellbeing of our citizens will suffer. To counter this, we will look to improve healthy living programmes in leisure facilities, schools and communities to encourage participation in physical activity. We will also work with Public Health and other partners to further develop targeted projects to help people tackle health issues and live healthy lifestyles.






Our library visitor rate of 3,820 is still below the Welsh average of 5,968 and was the lowest reported in Wales in 2012-13. In moving forward, we anticipate the number of visits will increase in 2013-14 as users benefit from the improvement works undertaken this year, in particular at the new library in Bridgend town centre.

The role of libraries can be enhanced to provide more joined up service in one place, and we can establish their position in a learning network. This will create more opportunities for people to take steps towards learning and developing skills (particularly around literacy, numeracy and IT skills) and increasing self-confidence.

Improvement Objective Six – To implement effective integrated health and social care services to support independence, health and wellbeing

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has been met, evidenced by the following:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
The rate (per 1,000 population) of older people (65 plus) supported in the community increases	The rate has risen from 85.9 in 2011-12 to 86.1 in 2012-13.	
More citizens are supported by the CIIS (Community Integrated Intermediate Care Services) team	The number of citizens supported by the CIIS service has increased by over 60%, from 680 in 2011-12 to 1,112 in 2012-13. This was well above our target for the year of 700 citizens.	
Number of total (rolling total) open, live Telecare installations increases	The number of Telecare installations rose from 1,089 in 2011-12 to 1,312 in 2012-13, which exceeded our three-year target of 1,000 installations.	
Increased percentage of Telecare clients who felt that the service made it easier for them to manage in their own home	94% of clients felt that the Telecare service made it easier for them to manage in their own home in 2012-13, up from 93% in 2011-12.	
Increased percentage take-up of rooms in the Extra Care Housing Scheme, providing specialist homes for older people	We achieved a 100% take-up of the extra rooms in the scheme, which exceeded our forecast/target of 85% for 2012-13. There are now 39 apartments with modern kitchens and bathrooms.	

All of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

6.1 Take forward Welsh Government's Families First Programme, in particular the Team around the Family (TAF) and Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)

We have implemented the Families First programme, a Welsh Government initiative that aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, emphasising prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those in poverty. Through Families First funding, we have appointed a Family Liaison worker to join the e-learning team to engage adults within families to improve their essential skills.

To facilitate joined-up working, we reviewed and revised our service model to include the family dimension. This has been a critical development in bringing together different services and how they assess and respond to needs. The revised model supports the development of more integrated working between agencies.

A 'team around the families' (TAF) approach has also been developed and implemented over the past year, which included the establishment of the Western Bay Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) and Connecting Families service.

In 2012-13, 133 families were supported from different agencies and services that adopted a 'team around the family' approach, which exceeded the target of 50 families. Of the families that received support during the year, 68% formally responded that they had benefitted from the service.

The development of the Integrated Working Team is on-going and the team has been successful in its development of an ICT system to provide a solution for the newly-implemented Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF). Last year, 85% of JAFF referrals were managed within the agreed timescales, which is below the challenging target of 90% we set ourselves.

There was some progress made in 2012-13 towards having agreed communication and information sharing protocols in place. This will help facilitate effective multi-agency working through being able share and use personal and sensitive information in a secure way.

6.2 Bring health and social care services together for older people and physically disabled people

In the last year, we developed an integrated referral management centre. The centre provides a single point of access across the health and social care system for older people and people with disabilities, providing access to advice, support and services, including third sector brokerage.

The next phase in the development of the Community Resource Team is to develop and expand the early response nursing service, to complement and support community district nursing service. Preparatory work for the integration of district nursing services into the referral management centre has started, and a plan for full integration is being developed.

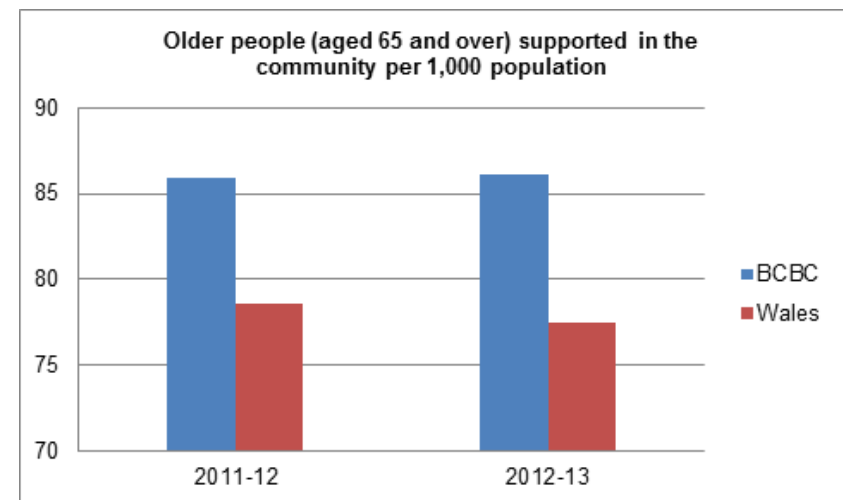
The development of the fully integrated health and social care community network teams is also progressing as planned. Within the Community Resource Team services, the enabling and re-ablement services provide short-term intervention to promote independence by avoiding admission to hospital or long term care. The service also aims to improve the ability of people who live with long term conditions to care for themselves and avoid hospitalisation wherever possible. The number of citizens supported by the Community Resource Team has increased considerably over the past year, from 680 people in 2011-12 to 1,112 in 2012-13.

We are working proactively with the health board to targets people affected by frailty, particularly older people, to maximise their independence through enabling and Reablement approaches.

We also established the Integrated Community Independence and Wellbeing Team. The team provides multi-disciplinary interventions to adults with complex physical and sensory needs and long term limiting illness in order to support them to lead as full a life as possible.

Through the above schemes and programmes, the amount of older people who are being supported in the community has increased from 85.9 per 1,000 population in 2011-12 to 86.1 in 2012-13, which is above the Wales average of 77.53 (see chart).

We have also implemented a partnership with the Red Cross to develop a third sector brokerage service for people who need support to re-engage with their communities. The impact of this service will be measured during 2013-14.



6.3 Facilitate early discharge from hospital by providing an environment at Bryn y Cae in Brackla, whereby people can regain their independence through therapeutic support prior to returning home

Refurbishment of one wing at Bryn y Cae in Brackla has been completed and we opened the six-bed reablement unit in May 2012. This service enables people to be discharged from hospital into a specialist and supportive environment in order to regain sufficient physical ability and confidence to return safely to their own home, or to decide if residential care is appropriate for them. The service provides on-going multi-disciplinary assessment and reablement programmes with 24-hour support over an agreed period of up to six weeks.

The reablement unit continue to be a key part of the community resource team services. Occupancy rates have exceeded expected targets as they are running at approximately 90%. Consideration is now being given to any further development of the facility as part of the next phase of community development and integration.

6.4 Increase services for people with dementia at Glan yr Afon in Ynysawdre

During the last year, we increased provision of beds for people with dementia at Glan yr Afon in Ynysawdre, ensuring that we have capacity for our patients to have the required care and support. The residence provides a range of residential, day and respite care services for older people, and has increasingly focused on dementia care over the past few years.

The refurbishment has provided beds for 30 people with dementia and enables the residents to enjoy greater access and freedom of movement around the home and its gardens. The work also established special 'quiet' areas, a colour-coded living environment that will help residents find their way around the home, an enhanced dining room and a new visitor area.

In April 2012, an enabling homecare service for people with dementia commenced. Individuals who require a further assistance following the enabling homecare service are referred to a broker who facilitates a package of care with an independent provider or via in-house service.

We have been highly commended in the national 'Social Care Accolades 2013' for our joint work with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, in delivering specialist dementia care training to staff. More than 12,000 employees, from care home staff to social care workers, have been given the training and the partnership project has already made its mark in our communities. The work has led to more timely referrals to specialist services for those in need and has improved the quality of life for people with dementia thanks to consistent, quality care.

6.5 Provide integrated area teams within Bridgend County Borough

Teams and working practices are coming together through the establishment of multi-agency community hubs/networks. The hubs/networks have been launched as part of the Council's commitment to integrating health and social care services and delivering the best possible local health and social care to residents. The community hubs/networks for different configurations of services are being established in areas across the Borough:

- West Community Hub/Network at Pyle Life Centre for Children's, Adult Social Care and Health – opened June 2013
- North Community Hub at Y Dderwyn for Children – opened August 2013
- North Community Network at Bryncethyn for Adult Social Care and Health – opened January 2013
- East Community Network at Sunnyside for Adult Social Care and Health – opened June 2013

We developed stronger links and more formal joint working relationships with Neath Port Talbot Council, City and County of Swansea and ABMU Health Board as part of the Western Bay Regional Collaboration. As part of this joint working relationship, we produced a Carers Information and Consultation Strategy in partnership with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board.

NHS and social care integration has been further supported by facilitating the move of the Local Health Board Locality Team into Council premises. Integrated working within the authority has also been enhanced. The safeguarding team has been working with the long-term health care team to develop an integrated approach to the monitoring of care in residential and nursing homes.

6.6 Improve support for young people with disabilities so they achieve a smooth transition through adolescence into adulthood

We have established a Transition Strategy Group and created a joint transition pathway. The Transition Strategy Group is reviewing the multi-agency transition protocol, amending our Care Pathway and developing a guide for parents/carers which reflects the amended pathway. Further work will now be taken forward in the context of the Western Bay health and social care programme. The completion of a learning disability pathway is a high priority for the Council and our partners, and a work stream will be established to take this forward.

Further discussions with partner agencies will be undertaken regarding the roll out of new Continuing Care Guidance for Disabled Children and Young People via the Disabled Children and Young People's Strategy Group, to ensure a continuous approach.

We also recently participated in an independent review of the learning disability service, which highlighted a number of areas of good practice that will be adopted in our schemes and programmes going forward.

6.7 Reduce the number of referrals of children with complex needs

In collaboration with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils, we launched the Western Bay Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS), to provide services for families in greatest need, particularly those experiencing parental substance misuse and domestic violence. The service became operational on 1 February 2013 and received referrals immediately.

Through the establishment of the multi-agency team, Connecting Families, we are exploring different ways to work more effectively with families that have the most chronic and complex difficulties, and who draw on a wide range of multi-agency services.

Through these services, we have been able to target the most complex families within the Borough to effect positive change. The number of families benefiting from intensive family support provided by Connecting Families and Intensive Family Support Service has almost doubled, from 71 in 2011-12 to 133 in 2012-13.

These schemes and services have contributed to us being successful in reducing the number of children referred to social services with concerns about neglect or abuse, from 391 in 2011-12 down to 302 in 2012-13.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

At any one time in our Borough, some 3.5 per cent of the population will be receiving social care from the Council and our partners. The care can range from safeguarding children and vulnerable adults to providing practical help with daily living tasks to supporting people so that they can be independent. A further challenge is the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill 2013, which may raise public expectations at a time of already reducing budgets and stretched resources.

If we do not change how services are delivered, we, alongside our partners, will not be able to meet the significant challenges brought about by high public expectations, a stretched budget with reducing grant funding and a population that is both older and has more complex health needs. In response to this challenge, we will work with ABMU Health Board to progress the development of the Integrated Referral Management Centre.

We will also look to develop a more effective and proportionate response to an individual's need by only assessing people when their circumstances are such that they need it, ensuring that they receive the most appropriate level of information, support or care.

If we fail to develop high quality early intervention and preventative services, including multi-agency locally based support, this may lead to an increase in the number of children at risk or looked after. It could also lead to more complex and severe needs amongst children and young people and their families. This would place greater demands on services that support vulnerable children, young people and their families. Early intervention and preventative services across multiple agencies is critical.

Strategic Theme Four: New Opportunities









What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want people in the borough to have access to **employment opportunities** and be able to realise their **potential** and **ambitions**

Improvement Objective Seven – To support and invest in our communities to promote economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability

Self-Assessment

This improvement objective has mainly been met. The economic environment continues to be challenging and has limited the impact of the actions that we have taken on income and employment rates, as evidenced below:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Our employment rate is improving	Employment rates fell in 2012-13, from 71.7% in 2011-12 to 68.9% for 16-64 years, and from 55.8% in 2011-12 to 47.1% for 16-24 years.	
Gross Value Added (GVA) per head is improved. (GVA is a measure of the size of the economy of an area)	GVA increased from £15,182 in 2010 to £15,440 in 2011. Figures are not yet available for 2012.	
Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head is increased. (GDHI measures the level of disposable income available to households)	GDHI increased from £13,648 in 2010 to £14,007 in 2011. Figures are not yet available for 2012.	
Reduced proportion of population aged 16 reported as not in education, employment or training (NEET)	The percentage of year 11 school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training has increased from 4.4% in 2011 to 6.4% in 2012.	
Reduced rate of children living in workless households	The rate of children living in households where there is no one in work dropped from 20.4% in 2011 to 17.5% in 2012.	
Reduced number of children living in low-income households (60% or less of the median income)	The percentage of children living in low income households has reduced from 23.1% in 2009, to 22.7% in 2011. Figures not available for 2012.	

The majority of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

7.1 Continue to regenerate our towns and valley communities through the various initiatives and grants available

All planned work to create a marina in Porthcawl was completed to schedule. A new public square is also being developed, that will link the marina, car park and town centre.

The design works for the Portway highway diversion have been undertaken and procurement of the highway and related infrastructure contract has also taken place. The highway project is also on track for completion in 2015.

We made good progress in 2012-13 with the redevelopment of Maesteg town centre (shown opposite), which was completed ahead of the planned completion date of June 2013. The improvements include 14 new market units, a new indoor waiting area at the bus station, and a new public square that provides a central location for events and performances.



Our Rural Development Programme supports rural communities to develop and deliver their own community action plans, and to develop rural tourism. In 2012-13 the Rural Development Programme targets were delivered as scheduled and we have applied for an extension to the plan.

All planned improvements to Bridgend town centre were completed including Merthyr Mawr Road, Cheapside and Court Road improvements and works progressed at Derwen Road. The contractor was appointed for Nolton Street and the Rhiw improvements, and the new Elder Lane retail area is nearing design completion.

In 2012-13 the estimated number of visitors to Bridgend town centre fell by 167,000 compared with the previous year (a decrease in annual footfall of 3.2%); this is in line with the UK average figure of 3% fall for 2012. A number of factors contributed to the decrease includes the recession and increased levels of internet shopping. In 2012 the estimated number of visitors to Porthcawl town centre increased by 49,267, from 2,650,733 in 2011 to 2,700,000 in 2012.

7.2 Work with partners to ensure that the skills strategy is delivered

The skills strategy incorporates a range of measures at community level, designed to teach basic and vocational skills and build confidence. The objective is to help people currently out of work into employment, further learning or volunteering. In all cases we exceeded our targets for 2012-13 and achieved the following successes:

- Employment Routes: our target was 45 and we recruited 46 trainees. Of these, 25 went into employment.
- Bridgend Employer Liaison Partnership work clubs helped a total of 165 people get jobs.
- Contractors and sub-contractors on the new Gateway to the Valleys site took on 17 apprentices (our target was four) and 16 trainees (our target was two), including those through links with Bridgend College and the Coastal Project that supports people aged 16+ who have difficulty finding work because of illness or disability.
- 58% of the participants in Caerau Construction Skills Centre started work experience (our target was 50%) and 42% entered employment (our target was 40%).

7.3 Continue to support and provide grant initiatives that strengthen the local economy and increase the number of jobs available

Over the past year we focused on the following initiatives to strengthen local businesses and increase the number of jobs available:

- Local Investment Fund - Businesses can apply for a grant to meet up to 40% of the cost of investment in capital equipment, specialist software, website design, marketing costs and refurbishment of industrial premises in order to improve their business and secure or increase the number of jobs they offer. In 2012-13 we distributed grants totalling £185,856 to support 116 existing businesses and one social enterprise. We also helped 33 people to set up new businesses. Overall, the local investment fund created over 275 jobs in 2012-13.
- Green Shoots/ Micro-business investment - In August 2012 we started our Green Shoots initiative to support businesses in the rural parts of Bridgend County Borough. We provided small grants and advice to micro enterprises employing nine or fewer people and have a turnover of less than £2 million. Within the first eight months of the project, we helped seven people to set up new micro enterprises and supported 14 existing micro enterprises. This led to 6.4 jobs being created.
- South East Wales Community Economic Development (SEWCED) - This is a grant scheme that supports social enterprises whose purpose is to support the community, and invests profits back into the business or the community rather than to its shareholders. In 2012-13 we awarded £383,265 of funding to one newly created and seven established social enterprises. To date, SEWCED has created 12.38 jobs.

7.4 Provide a robust planning framework to guide future development

The Local Development Plan provides a guide for future development in the County Borough. We have prepared the plan and submitted it to Welsh Government for examination. It is on track to be adopted as the final plan by the Council in December 2013.

In the last year we considered 84% of planning applications within 8 weeks, exceeding the national target of 80% and our local target of 82%. In 2012-13 we had the best performance in Wales for major applications determined in 13 weeks (68%), and 100% of planning applications were approved first time.

7.5 Implement the Council's strategy to reduce the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

All the actions of the strategy have been completed, including:

- providing individual learning and other support to children and young people who are NEET;
- providing a better range of flexible learning opportunities to keep children and young people engaged with learning; and
- having a common approach and a new data management system to help with identifying and keeping in touch with young people in need of support.

Despite all the actions we took, the percentage of our year 11 school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training rose from the previous year to 6.4%, meaning we missed our target of 4% and that of the national average for 2012 of 4.2%. The percentage of young people leaving school at 16 without a recognised qualification, however, dropped from 1.5% in 2011-12 to 0.26% in 2012-13. This was better than our target of less than 1.5%.

7.6 Ensure impartial advice to young people aged 14-16

We are working with all secondary schools, special schools and the pupil referral unit in the County Borough to help them achieve the Careers Wales Mark for Continuous Quality Improvement award. This will help to make sure that we constantly look to enhance the ways in which we provide careers education and guidance to prepare the young people for the world of work and employability, for example, through enterprise activities, work experience and links with employers.



In 2012-13, five of our secondary schools and two special schools attained the Careers Wales Mark for Continuous Improvement, joining St Johns Independent School and the Pupil Referral Unit. This was below our target of ten schools in 2012-2013. The progress has been affected by the restructuring in Careers Wales so we will need to continue to work on this in 2013-14.

7.7 Increase opportunities for our looked after children, including further developing workplace engagement (work experience, placements, traineeships, apprenticeship) for young people leaving care

During 2012-13, the Council reviewed its approach to apprenticeships in order to increase the opportunities for young people, particularly young people leaving care.

In April 2013, Cabinet agreed to establish a project board to take forward a number of actions to develop a greater range and more coordinated support for young people who are at high risk of not entering employment or training, with particular focus on those who are looked after or care leavers. The project board has since been established, and its membership and the project brief, including timescales, have been agreed. A progress report will be provided to Cabinet in the autumn of 2013.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

The impact of persistent economic downturn is being felt in our town centres by both businesses and individuals. It is affecting our outcome indicators for employment and income as fewer jobs are available or being created. It also has implications for young people, who face a reduction in the number of opportunities open to them.

In response to this, we will continue our work to support existing local businesses and encourage the start-up of new ones to stimulate our local economy and create more employment opportunities. To this end, the Green Shoots project has been extended until the end of 2014.

We will keep taking action to help unemployed people back into work or training, and to reduce the number of school leavers not in education, employment or training. We will continue to work with schools to help them achieve the Careers Wales Continuous Quality Improvement award in order to ensure our young people are being provided with relevant advice on their futures. We will continue to endeavour to increase the number and availability of opportunities available to our unemployed.

The biggest threat we face in supporting and investing in our communities to promote economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability is budget cuts. A large number of the activities linked to this improvement objective rely on external funding, much from the Welsh Government. The future of some of this funding is uncertain as budgets and available resources become further reduced.

Proud Past & Green Spaces








What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want local communities and visitors to **enjoy** and **benefit** from the borough's **natural** and **built environment**

Improvement Objective Eight – To manage and promote our natural and historic environment

Self-Assessment

We have mainly achieved this improvement objective, based on the data available:

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Carbon dioxide emissions are reduced	Our carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced, from 16,623 in 2011-12 to 15,757 in 2012-13.	
The ecological footprint is improved	We measure our ecological footprint by the total global hectares per person needed to support current levels of consumption and waste production. The most recent update in 2005-06 published by Welsh Government suggests that we equalled the national average of 4.4.	
The cleanliness rate of highways and relevant land improves	There has been an improvement in the percentage of our highways and relevant land inspected that is classed as a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness, from 97.7% in 2011-12 to 98.5% in 2012-13.	
Rate of municipal waste sent to landfill is reduced	We are the best performing Council in Wales for this indicator. In 2012-13 the percentage of municipal waste collected and sent to landfill was 16.7%.	
Historic and natural areas are preserved	In 2012-13 the number of historic buildings no longer at risk or at reduced risk was two. There is no comparable data from previous years.	

The majority of our key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

8.1 Develop green infrastructure guidance in support of the Local Development Plan, focusing on protecting our landscape & biodiversity and seeking to deliver multiple benefits on a landscape scale

In 2012-13 we achieved our plan of developing Green Infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity guidance to support the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP) and planning process. Green Infrastructure is a network of high quality green and blue spaces and other environmental features that can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work. The LDP, which has been endorsed as 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate, contains specific policies on these issues.

To build on the LDP policies, we also made progress in developing formal Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which expands on the policies in the LDP and provides more detailed guidance on landscape, biodiversity and Green Infrastructure matters. The purpose of this is to raise awareness of the Green Infrastructure approach in development management and to guide developers to ensure appropriate consideration is given to protecting our landscape and biodiversity when planning applications are made.

8.2 Continue to improve access to the open countryside, the coast and communities

Public Rights of Way provide one of the main means by which people can enjoy access to the countryside. In 2012-13 we completed all planned schemes to improve our Rights of Way network, which included improvements to 9.6 miles of paths and 1.9 miles of new paths.

The schemes included improvements to surfaces and structures on public Rights of Way in Blackmill, Blaengarw, Bridgend, Ogmere Vale and Laleston. This contributed to an improvement in the percentage of our public Rights of Way network that was deemed easy to use (based on a 5% sample), which increased from 88% in 2011-12 to 90% in 2012-13 and was the highest result in Wales.

We completed the rationalisation of the Rights of Way network at the Maesteg Washery Reclamation Site which has resulted in a much improved network of public Rights of Way and two new bridleways being created. We also started work on the rationalisation of the Rights of Way network at Park Slip Nature Reserve.

In May 2012 the Wales Coast path was opened by Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales. We followed this in August 2012 with our own successful launch of a booklet and leaflet detailing the Bridgend section of the Wales Coastal Path.

8.3 Continue to improve access to informal and formal recreational areas

In 2013 the Council achieved a Green Flag Award (national standard for excellence for a green recreational space) for the first time for Maesteg Welfare Park. Through a scheme known as Llynfi Llonydd, which was jointly funded by the Welsh Government, new paths, a footbridge, a new seating area and an improved parking area have been provided at the park. By providing additional opportunities for pleasant walks away from roads and the local industrial environment, we will hopefully encourage more people to visit the park and take more physical activity. A Green Flag Award was also achieved for the third consecutive year for The Wilderness Lake in Porthcawl.



Further progress to implement changes to the cleaning and caretaking arrangements for sports pavilions across the Borough (that will result in a saving of £100,000 per year) has been made, although full implementation is now unlikely to take place until the autumn of 2013.

Whilst the Parks Service has hosted a number of work experience students, a training placement via Adult Services, and a 'Pathways to Apprenticeship' student from Bridgend College, we did not achieve our plans to appoint a full time apprentice.

8.4 Continue to improve and protect our environment and built heritage

Our 2012-13 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Porthcawl Town Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme was successful, taking our total to five THI schemes including 2 in Maesteg and 2 in Bridgend. Porthcawl was one in only 12 THI's approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2012-13, which means we have secured more THI schemes than any other local authority in Wales and are equal only to Glasgow in the whole of the UK. Bridgend THI continues to be used by the HLF as an example of best practice.

We levered £580k private sector funding, exceeding our target of £440k.

We planned to renovate six properties with THI funding in 2012-13, and we completed four of them, with the fifth scheme having been approved. We also brought four vacant buildings back into use as planned, delivered four conservation training workshops, and achieved 100% satisfaction rate for service and support (4/4).

8.6 Improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions in all main operational activities, and monitor air quality

The Carbon Dioxide Commitment/Energy Efficiency Scheme is a mandatory UK scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and cutting carbon dioxide in large public and private sector organisations. We completed all actions in relation to the scheme in 2012-13 which included developing an energy policy and action plan. We also appointed an Energy Manager in January 2013 who will be responsible for implementing a five-year energy and carbon management programme. Elements of this programme will be integrated into the corporate Climate Change Strategy.

Work progressed installing Gas Automated Meter Reading (AMR) and electricity smart meters across our buildings; by 31 March 2013 approximately 40% were covered by AMR/Smart metering. The benefits are accurate billing on actual rather than estimated readings, the ability to carry out energy profiling across our buildings and assisting with reporting on carbon dioxide emissions.

We achieved reduction in carbon dioxide emissions (from 16,623 in 2011-12 to 15,757 in 2012-13). We monitored air quality for fine particles and Nitrogen Dioxide at locations around the Borough in 2012-13 to ensure we comply with current standards in line with the Local Air Quality Management framework. The data shows there are no indications that there are any significant breaches of the air quality objectives. An Air Quality Progress Report for Bridgend County Borough Council will be produced in 2013.

8.5 Carry out strong and measurable communication and marketing activities particularly in relation to town centre regeneration projects and the Borough's key attractions

We carried out marketing and media campaigns to publicise a range of high profile events and regeneration activities during 2012-13, which included the 'MashUp', 'Shake Ramble & Role', the development of Cheapside, 'Feastival' food festival, the indoor market arts project, Porthcawl harbour, 'Splash Up' and Maesteg Market. MashUp, Feastival and SplashUp were all publicised through bilingual leaflets, posters and advertising in the Glamorgan Gazette and Gem. Feastival and SplashUp were also advertised on Bridge FM during the week preceding the events and banners for them were hung throughout Bridgend.

The Glamorgan Heritage Coast Countryside campaign involved us working in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan tourism department to promote the Borough as a tourist destination across the UK and the world. From March 2011 to March 2013, 80,000 holiday guides were produced and distributed across the UK and the world allowing readers to view what to do and see, where to go in Bridgend County and where to stay in graded (Visit Wales) accommodation. We are also engaged in promoting the Borough with visit Wales (www.visitwales.co.uk) and the Valleys (www.thevalleys.co.uk).

As a result, we attracted 3.55m visitors to the Borough who contributed £282.8m to the local economy, an increase from £268.84m in 2011-12. The number of people employed in tourism also increased, from 4,197 in 2011-12 to 4,255 in 2012-13. Benchmarking research for www.thevalleys.co.uk reveals that the campaign is reaching expected outcomes of changing perceptions of the Valleys and generating awareness of the campaign.

8.6 Continue to deliver year on year improvements in recycling to ensure we meet the target set by Welsh Government

The Welsh Government set challenging recycling targets for local authorities in their 2009 Waste Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste', including a recycling and composting rate of 70% by 2025. We have worked in partnership with our waste services contractor May Gurney to make further improvements towards achieving these targets. This includes a recycling and composting rate of 57.1% in 2012-13, which was above the national average of 52.26%. The percentage of municipal waste (predominately household waste) sent to landfill was 16.7%, which was also better than our target of 24% - this was the best performance in Wales.

In 2012-13 we achieved our plans to carry out a range of advertising to raise awareness of recycling in the Borough, which included using local media, newspapers and the radio. The success of the partnership with May Gurney has been recognised by citizens as we won the prestigious Green Award at the Bridge FM Local Hero Awards 2012.

The January 2013 Citizens' Panel Survey gave an 83% satisfaction rate for recycling and refuse, the highest satisfaction among those services surveyed.

Good progress has been made with Neath Port Talbot on measures to improve the arrangements for the treatment of waste at the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) at Crymlyn Burrows. These detailed negotiations will continue into 2013-14.



What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

If we do not meet the challenging waste disposal targets that have been set by the Welsh Government we will receive fines, including include penalties of £200 per tonne if we fail to achieve the landfill allowance targets.

To ensure we meet these targets we need work in collaboration with other councils to develop new waste treatment facilities and ensure we recycle and compost as much of our waste as possible. In 2013-14 we will continue to work with other councils in the South West Wales Waste consortium on a project to procure a regional anaerobic digestion facility by 2017-18. This new facility will treat all household food waste collected for South West Wales. We will also continue to share best practice ideas in the waste arena through the County Surveyors' Society (Wales) Waste Group.

Corporate Governance









What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough?

We want people in the borough to benefit from a council that is **fair**, **ambitious**, **citizen focused** and **efficient**

Improvement Objective Nine – To improve the way we work to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets

Self-Assessment

This Improvement Objective has been mainly met, evidenced by the following:

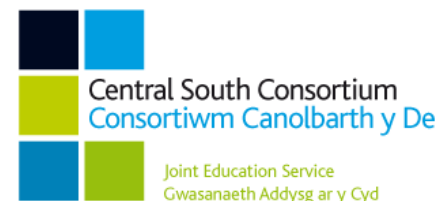
How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Services will be provided within agreed budget	In 2012-13 our overall spend against budget for the year resulted in an underspend of £170k.	
Efficiency savings will be achieved	In 2012-13 the value of efficiency savings achieved was £4.84 million, which was below the target of £4.9 million.	
We will have a pay and grading system that is based on the principles of equality and equal pay	Our final proposals for a new pay and grading system were agreed with the trade unions in December 2012-13. We implemented the new system in September 2013.	
Average number of days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (full time equivalent)	Sickness rates increased from 9.4 days in 2011-12 days to 10.2 days in 2012-13. We did not achieve our target of 8.5 days.	
The number of formal complaints will reduce	The number of complaints decreased from 62 in 2011-12 to 58 in 2012-13.	
Citizens' satisfaction rate will improve	Overall, citizen satisfaction rates (on average across all forms of contact with the Council) have increased since last year, from 72.73% in 2011-12, to 73.48% in 2012-13.	

The majority of the key actions for this Improvement Objective have been completed. Full details are provided on the next page.

Progress against Key Actions

9.1 Work with other local authorities in Central South Wales to agree the governance arrangements for joint working (the new joint education service)

The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (JES) replaced the Education and School Improvement Service (ESIS) on 1st September 2012. It provides a school improvement service to Bridgend, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils. The aim of the JES is to improve educational standards across the five local authorities, which covers in excess of 400 schools and over 140,000 pupils.



To ensure the JES is delivering an effective service that offers both quality and value for money we need to ensure good governance arrangements are in place. This involves developing a clear structure or framework of roles and responsibilities for all members of the partnership to cover areas such as budget monitoring, service delivery and reporting performance.

In 2012-13 we established the joint committee and governance structure as planned.

9.2 Develop our commissioning arrangements for children and young people's services and complete the development and roll-out of our toolkits to support the effective and efficient commissioning of services

Commissioning is about understanding needs and responding effectively to them. For children and young people this means that a number of public, private, voluntary and community service providers need to work together. We have developed an outcome-focussed commissioning model which is now the key delivery vehicle for the Bridgend Commissioning Strategy for children and young people.

In January 2012, we began acting as lead commissioner and project manager to a regional multi-agency commissioning project to develop and implement independent professional advocacy for vulnerable children and young people. Five local authorities and two health boards initially signed up to the project. Following the scoping exercise Cardiff, Swansea and Bridgend are the only remaining Councils who have made a commitment to proceed with the project. This project is currently at the beginning of the procurement stage and it is anticipated that it will be completed during 2013-14.

9.3 Develop collaborative commercial law team jointly with six partner authorities

The purpose of the new commercial law team is to strengthen collaboration between the seven Councils that work together to deliver shared legal services: Bridgend, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea.

In 2012-13 we successfully recruited a Regional Principal Lawyer for the shared commercial legal team. However, recruitment to the posts of Lawyer and Senior Lawyer was not successful and the jobs will therefore be re-advertised during 2013-14.

Achievements of this collaboration to date include a specialist group website, jointly procured training, joint procurement framework agreement for external solicitors and counsel. The total cost for the service per 1,000 population has decreased from £12,639 in 2010-11 to £8582 in 2012-13.

9.4 Implement the new pay and grading system based on the work undertaken in the Job Evaluation project

As an employer we are committed to paying all employees in a fair and equitable manner and have carried out a Job Evaluation exercise to achieve this aim. This has involved developing proposals for a new pay structure and changes to terms and conditions. Our final proposals were agreed with the trade unions in December 2012, and a Collective Agreement was signed on 17 April 2013. We are now implementing the changes.

9.5 Develop a new Single Integrated Partnership Plan

The Single Integrated Partnership Plan 2013-17 'Bridgend County Together' is the first plan of its kind for the Borough and it sets out actions aimed at improving the lives of people living, working or studying in the county. It integrates local service planning, streamlines partnership working and strengthens the strategic role and accountability of the Local Service Board. It replaces previous plans like the Children and Young Peoples Plan, Health Social Care and Well Being Plan and Community Safety Plan.

In response to Welsh Government Guidance, which placed an increased emphasis on data and evidence to underpin both planning and delivery, the Local Service Board carried out a joint needs assessment to identify the priorities for the Single Integrated Partnership Plan – 'Bridgend County Together'. The strategic needs assessment was published in June 2012 and was used as the basis for identifying priority outcomes within the plan.

In line with specified timescales the draft plan went to public consultation from January to March 2013. Following the consultation the plan was approved by the LSB for publication by the April 2013 deadline.

9.6 Actively seek a resolution to the risks associated with Equal Pay claims and prevent further claims

An Equal Pay claim can be made on the basis of an employee comparing their job to that of a member of the opposite gender who is carrying out a similar role, but has a higher rate of pay. This is an issue that has affected all councils where historically some groups of employees have been paid bonuses or allowances, which has resulted in employees in comparable jobs submitting Equal Pay claims.

In 2012-13 we carried out an Equal Pay settlement exercise where we spent over £16m paying claims from employees who submitted a claim, and any eligible 'non claimants'. The new pay and grading system will ensure we have a robust system in place for minimising the risk of any future claims.

9.7 Ensure that employee performance appraisals are undertaken consistently across the Council

Completing employee performance appraisals is an important issue for the Council. It is an opportunity to manage performance linked to our strategic priorities which are set out in the Corporate Plan. This ensures all employees understand how the role they are carrying out fits into the Council's overall vision.

We completed 72% of appraisals in 2012-13, which was below our target of 80%. This was an increase from previous years where, in 2011-12, only 31% were completed.

9.8 Take actions to decrease staff sickness absenteeism

Reducing sickness absenteeism is a priority for the Council as alongside the associated costs of employees being absent, it can cause a disruption on our ability to deliver services. Sickness is monitored using the average number of days lost in the year, per full time equivalent employee. We have made good progress in reducing sickness in recent years; however, in 2012-13 it increased from 9.4 to 10.2 days, which was below our target of 8.5 days. An analysis of the main reasons for the increase in sickness is being undertaken, with a view of finding solutions to the service's particular problems such as enabling managers to deal with employee sickness more effectively.

9.9 Further develop the Medium Term Financial Strategy

We are facing a time where our resources are reducing yet we must continue to deliver ever improving services to our citizens. Our medium term financial strategy (MTFS) underpins this work and sets out our financial plan covering expenditure and savings across the authority from 2013-14 to 2016-17. We completed all planned actions to develop the MTFS during 2012-13, and our strategy was approved by Council in February 2013.

9.10 Develop and deliver individual directorate health and safety action plans

We need effective health and safety policies and procedures to protect our employees from harm and minimise any potential sickness absence. All of our planned actions in this area were completed during 2012-13, including the development of a new Corporate Health and Safety policy and individual departmental plans.

Health and safety champions have been identified in each of the services to work with our Corporate Health and Safety unit in identifying potential hazards. This information has formed part of the departmental plans, which are monitored on a quarterly basis by our Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group.

9.11 Progress with the implementation of the workforce plan

In 2012-13 we achieved our aim of developing a workforce plan, which has been designed to ensure we have the right employees in the right place, at the right time with the appropriate skills to deliver a high quality service. We also implemented a Leadership and Management Programme to equip our managers with the right skills to become effective leaders.

We were not able to fully develop our succession planning protocol as this work needed to be postponed until after we had completed a review of the Council's senior management structure; this was completed in July 2013.

9.12 Deliver the Customer Services Strategy

The Customer Services Strategy underpins and drives our implementation of the Customer Services Charter, aiming to deliver consistent, high-quality customer service.

Customer Community Support Unit (CCSU) staff now handle out of hours emergency calls to 01656 643643, monitor the authority's lone workers, monitor the Council's Twitter account and respond to emails sent to 'talktous'.

We have further developed our contact centres, and reduced the number of advertised telephone numbers. The contact centres and CCSU between them are capable of handling all enquiries into the authority on the single telephone number, 01656 643643 and the 'talktous@bridgend.gov.uk' e-mail address, whenever possible offering resolution at the first point of contact.

9.13 Take forward actions identified in the Council's ICT Strategy 2012-15

Our ICT Strategy has been developed to support the technology-enabled transformation of services and to provide a flexible ICT infrastructure. The total number of actions in our ICT Strategy is 39, of which 18 were due for completion in 2012-13. Of these, 15 actions were completed as planned, which included delivering Public Sector Broadband network connections to the Welsh Government standard of 100/10mb in all schools. Of the actions not completed, two were as a result of a period of absence for key ICT staff and the remaining actions were reviewed and rendered unnecessary, therefore they were removed from the plan.

9.14 Progress the improvements agreed with the Wales Audit Office as set out in their Annual Improvement Report

Each year the Wales Audit Office (WAO) carries out an assessment of our capacity to plan for improving and delivering our services and produces their Annual Improvement Report which identifies any areas for improvement.

In 2012-13 we acted upon all the improvement proposals set out in the WAO Annual Improvement Report. As a result, we received very positive feedback from our regulator, evidenced by the fact that no further improvement proposals were made in the WAO Annual Improvement Report published in May 2013.

What are our challenges for 2013-14 and how will we respond?

The effective use of our resources has never been more important as we need to make unprecedented savings, while at the same time working to deliver our ambitious improvement agenda. In order to meet this challenge we need to make the best use of our physical, human, financial and technological resources and change the way we work through working with partners and carrying out internal reviews to see how we can improve efficiencies and value for money.

We are planning to make £3.7m savings in 2013-14, where our planned actions for the year include establishing a strategic change management programme, delivering our actions from the Single Integrated Partnership Plan, reducing sickness absence levels and reducing energy costs and carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings.

Section 3 – Financial Performance

Our financial environment is becoming increasingly challenging. We need to make unprecedented savings over the next four years which can only be achieved by changing the way we work and changing the way services are delivered.

2012-13 Expenditure

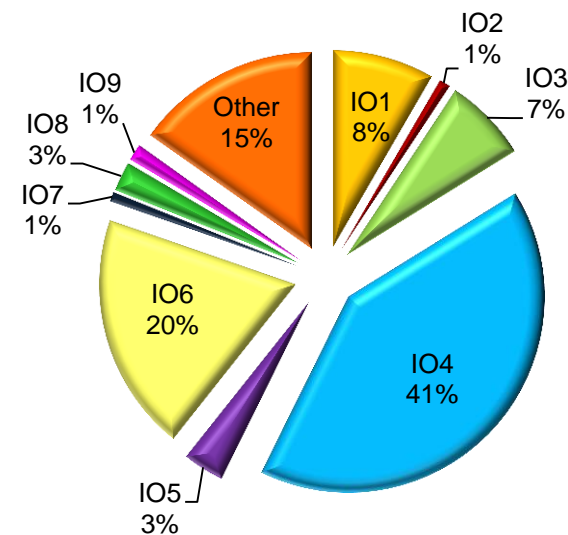
Last year, the amount we spent on delivering services to our citizens and investing in our landscape and infrastructure totalled nearly £400 million. The total amount that we have available to spend is made up from three main sources, revenue support grant from Welsh Government, specific grants and fees and charges.

Revenue Expenditure

Our revenue expenditure represents day to day costs such as salaries, equipment, supplies and services. Our net revenue expenditure in 2012-13 was **£234.2 million**, which equalled the budget set for the year.

The table and chart below shows the expenditure and proportion of spend per Improvement Objective in 2012-13:

Improvement Objective	2012-13 (£'Million)
1 - To build safe and inclusive communities	19.52
2 - To develop and support sustainable and affordable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in need	2.14
3 - To work in collaboration with partners to meet the different needs of all children and young people and provide them with the best start in life	16.22
4 - To help all children and young people achieve higher attainment by improving learning opportunities and making them more accessible	96.34
5 - To improve physical and emotional well-being by promoting and supporting active lifestyles, participation and learning	7.92
6 - To implement effective integrated health and social care services to support independence, health and well-being	45.86
7 - To support and invest in our communities to promote economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability	1.79
8 - To manage and promote our natural and historic environment	5.65
9 - To improve the way we work to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets	3.19
Other (not linked to Improvement Objectives)	35.56
Total	234.18



Capital Expenditure

This represents our spending on schools and infrastructure such as roads, bridges and buildings. These assets will benefit the community over long periods of time and the expenditure is largely financed by borrowing and capital grants.

Our capital expenditure in 2012-13 was **£36.54 million**, where the main projects carried out during the year included:

£13,671,000	Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen	£ 1,923,000	Porthcawl Harbour
£ 2,121,000	Pen Y Fai primary school	£ 1,943,000	Carriageway Reconstruction
£ 3,104,000	Bridgend Town centre Convergence	£ 1,802,000	Bridgend Recreation Centre
£ 3,160,000	Disabled facility Grants & Private Sector Housing		

Efficiency Savings

We have made good progress in making efficiency savings over the past three years, which has resulted in a recurring annual saving of £9.3 million. However, additional savings of £3.7 million need to be achieved in 2013-14 and each year it gets more difficult to identify new savings.

In 2012-13, we planned to make efficiency savings of £4.9 million. Savings of £4.84 million were fully achieved during the year, with the remaining £0.6 million being partially achieved. Savings proposals for 2012-13 that were not fully met relate to:

- adult social care proposals linked to continuing health care;
- out of county placements;
- reductions in grounds maintenance;
- implementation of citizen directed support; and
- anticipated increases in car park income not being realised.

To compensate for this shortfall, additional savings are being achieved through the use of the Council's staff vacancy management protocol and through a tighter control on general expenses.

Further information can be found in the Councils' Statement of Accounts 2012-13 at <http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/services/finance-budget-book.aspx>.

Section 4 – Working in partnership

We work in partnership with a range of public sector, private sector and third sector organisations on a local, regional and national basis to tackle some of the most complex issues facing our citizens and communities. These partnerships allow us to operate in a more effective and efficient way, resulting in an improved service for our citizens and financial savings.

The majority of actions for our Improvement Objectives 2012-13 had some element of partnership working. This ranged from working with partners to tackle crime and disorder to working in collaboration with others to meet the needs of our children and young people, We also engaged with citizens and local groups in reviewing and planning services, e.g. health and social care. Some of our major collaborative activities from 2012-13 are shown below:

Partnership working with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board was strengthened during 2012-13 with the establishment of the Integrated Referral Management Centre, which provides a single point of contact for community health and social care services across the Borough. Three integrated community network teams were also formed bringing district nursing, social work and occupational therapy services together under one manager.

The four Chief Executives from Bridgend County Borough Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, City and County of Swansea and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board have come together to form the Western Bay Regional Collaboration. The group is driving forward the development of joint approaches in Adult Learning Disability; Adult Mental Health; Community Services (Older People); Children's Services (which includes the Adoption Service Workstream); and Commissioning and Contracting. This collaborative approach will improve quality of services for service users and develop efficiency in the region.

The Central South Consortium has been implemented which will provide a joint school improvement service covering Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils. By joining forces we have established a better, more effective service that aims to improve education standards across the regions. For example, the adoption of a consortia wide tracker system enables us to better understand the performance of individual pupils. Nearly all school improvement activity will be delivered via the Consortium from September 2013.

In April 2012 we transferred the management and operation of our sports centres and swimming pools to GLL Ltd and their local partners HALO Leisure. In a departure from some traditional models of procurement, the relationship is very much based on a partnership ethos and built upon a shared outcome framework designed to produce positive wellbeing benefits while also delivering cost efficiencies. In 2012-13 work commenced on a £4.2m investment on Bridgend Recreation Centre; Phase I was opened in January 2013 and Phase II is underway. This will include a new library for Bridgend town as part of the LIFE Centre model for integrating services. The development of an integrated library service for the Garw Valley at the Garw Valley Leisure Centre was completed in partnership and opened in May 2013.

Arrangements are in place for further collaboration with South Wales Police. An example of this is the work with our Safeguarding and Family Support service, through which we are improving the management of domestic abuse referrals where children are part of the household. The partnership approach will give a more responsive service to adult victims and the safeguarding of children. We are also continuing to work in partnership with South Wales Police for the provision of a new Joint Vehicle Maintenance Facility and Fleet Management Service which will service both organisations' vehicles.

Trading Standards supports the work of a number of regional partnership initiatives to tackle issues such as illegal money lending and rogue traders, through the Scambuster and Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit. These partnerships with Police, neighbouring authorities and other partners, such as the voluntary and third sectors, work to prevent people from becoming victims of doorstep crime through advice, awareness and working with key partners to bring those responsible to justice, and support those who may become unfortunate victims. The collaboration, which involves regular interaction between partners and joint planning of initiatives on a local and national level, helps raising awareness of rogue trading not just among potential victims but also those who can help prevent and support work in tackling such crime.

Our Licensing team have developed closer working links with the Police Licensing team and attend the weekly Raven briefings, as well as developing regular responsible authority meetings. A joint Workwise review of the licensing function has already yielded a number of practical benefits, along with improved partnership working with South Wales Police and other responsible authorities under the Licensing Act, such as South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Child Protection and Planning. This has led to further joint projects across the borough to tackle problems associated with the licence trade and to help promote best practice. There has also been continued use of the licensing act to tackle problem premises, advice and education where required.

The Integrated Public Health Team began operating in April 2011 to test new ways of working. It brings together a range of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategic functions along with the Local Public Health Team. The team is led by a single manager in a jointly funded post with Public Health Wales. This joint approach has helped develop a number of initiatives and partnerships focused on Public Health issues, such as substance misuse, obesity and frailty.

We are working with Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils on a Welsh Government supported project to develop an anaerobic digestion facility to deal with the region's food waste. This facility will use food waste from households and businesses to produce fertiliser and biogas that will be used to generate electricity and heat. We anticipate the facility will be in place by 2014 and will generate enough power to meet the energy needs of approximately 5,000 homes. The contract will be for a 20 year period with an estimated combined cost to the Local Authorities of £35 million. Ceredigion and Powys Councils have requested to join the above regional hub, expanding it to a seven-authority collaboration, for the procurement of a residual waste treatment facility to deal with the regions residual waste over a 25 year period.

We are continuing to work in partnership with South Wales Police for the provision of a new Joint Vehicle Maintenance Facility and Fleet Management Service which will service both organisations fleets. This new facility, which will cost in excess of £2 million, is due to be constructed next year, and be operational towards the end of 2014-15. The collaboration will result in the merging of the two existing workshop staff structures to form one larger, more robust and flexible workshop structure which will provide a broader range of skills enabling less outsourcing of work, and being more able to deal with peaks and troughs in workload. The collaboration will also benefit from economies of scale when dealing with procurements.

We have set up a Civil Parking Enforcement Service on behalf of Bridgend CBC and the Vale of Glamorgan CBC, which commenced operations on 1 April 2013. There are currently 17 Civil Parking Enforcement Officers covering the two authority areas, and the collaboration is allowing the flexibility to target greater numbers of enforcement officers in any particular area as and when the need arises.

We have developed a joint legal service with our partner authorities of NPT, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire to improve the capacity of legal services. This collaborative initiative included the development of special interest groups involving all lawyers of the partner Authorities and secured an agreement for the provision of cross authority work sharing. Achievements of this collaboration to date include a specialist group website, jointly procured training, joint procurement framework agreement for external solicitors and counsel. The total cost for the service per 1000 population has decreased from £12,639 in 2010-11 to £8582 in 2012-13 (a 32% decrease).

We will continue to look for new opportunities to work in partnerships where we can see that working with others will improve service quality or value for money. Over the next four years we will maintain our close working relationships with other organisations, including:

- Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board;
- Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations;
- Bridgend Business Forum,
- Bridgend College;
- Bridgend Equality Forum
- Bridgend schools;
- Bridgend Tourism Association;
- Bridgend Youth Council;
- City and County of Swansea Council;
- Community groups;
- Environment Agency Wales;
- HALO/GLL and commercial partners;
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council;
- Other local authorities;
- Service user and carer representation groups;
- South Wales Fire & Rescue Service;
- South Wales Police;
- Town and community Councils;
- Vale of Glamorgan Council;
- Valleys to Coast and other registered social landlords;
- Wales Probation Trust; and
- Welsh Government.

Section 5 – Our citizens' feedback

Citizen feedback is vital when planning how we will improve local services for local people. There are a range of options available for you to get in touch and have your say on how well we provide services to you or how you think we should be carrying out our services both now and in the future. Some examples of how we consulted with you during 2012-13 are shown below.

Citizens Panel

Our Citizens' Panel is made up of 1,111 residents that are a representative group of the population in Bridgend County Borough. The group reflects the make-up of the County Borough in terms of age, gender and geographical location. A Citizens' Panel survey was carried out between January and March 2013. A total of 710 survey returns were received, representing a response rate of 64%. The following is a summary of the responses per category:

Bridgend County Borough as a place to live

Thinking generally about Bridgend County Borough as a place to live, 72% of panel members are satisfied with it, including 1 in 5 (20%) who give the most positive response of 'very satisfied'. Among the remaining panel members, 17% hold a neutral position stating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the County Borough as a place to live, and 11% are dissatisfied.

Bridgend County Borough Services

When considering our Council services, views amongst panel members on balance are positive. In total, 62% state that they are satisfied to some extent with Council services, although within this only 6% give the most positive response of very satisfied. In total, 13% of panel members express dissatisfaction with council services, while 25% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

The services that panel members identify as being most important to them are; schools (65%), highways and recycling (60%) and refuse (56%). In addition, almost half (49%) of panel consider social services to be important to them.

Consultation on the new Corporate Plan 2013-2017

We have undertaken extensive consultation on the content of our Corporate Plan, seeking views from local people, businesses and partners using the press, email, our website and focus groups. The information we gathered through the consultation has helped us to refine our priorities for improvement and our actions in support of our Corporate Plan. We asked:

1. *Do you think this plan clearly sets out our priorities and what we will do to achieve them?*

While many felt that overall our priorities were clear, a number of respondents indicated that the priorities lacked sufficient detail on what would be done to achieve them.

2. *Are the priorities described in the plan important to you?*

Overall, respondents agreed that the 5 improvement priorities outlined by the Council were important to the local community of Bridgend County Borough. However, a number of respondents felt that the priorities were too idealistic and not specific enough to be clear on what was going to be done.

3. *Do you think the measures of success in the plan are the right indicators to tell us if we are succeeding?*

Most respondents broadly agreed with the areas of measurement outlined for each of the 5 improvement priorities and were keen to see improvements in these areas in them. Many, however, felt that the actual measures themselves were not always clear or meaningful in indicating success. In particular, several highlighted that the measures were not as 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound) as they could be.

4. *What do you think individuals & communities in Bridgend can contribute to help achieve the priorities set out in this plan?*

Respondents largely thought that individuals and communities could contribute, and that the Council should encourage and seek citizens' involvement. There was a recommendation that the Council add a section for each priority in the plan with suggestions for how citizens and communities can contribute.

5. *Is there anything else you think this plan should cover?*

Respondents offered many suggestions on additional areas for inclusion in the plan, although no common areas emerged from those suggestions.

Actions Taken in Response to the Consultation Feedback

We considered all information gathered through the consultation process while finalising our Corporate Plan for 2013-17.

Key actions taken in responses to the consultation feedback:

- to improve clarity, we re-visited all the priorities and the contents for each, and simplified the ‘language’ of the document to make it as clear as possible;
- in response to concerns about how achievable the priorities and supporting activities are, we reviewed each priority to ensure our aims and planned actions are realistic and affordable;
- to respond to concerns over the affordability and achievability of the priorities in the current financial climate, we strengthened the alignment of our Mid-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013-17 to the Corporate Plan;
- we have included more information in the section dealing with ‘Existing Services’ and also information on progress and relevant achievements so far under each priority;
- for each priority, we added a section containing some suggestions on actions that citizens can take, under the subtitle of ‘How can you get involved?’;
- we strengthened our clarification of the levels of detail that could be found in our directorate business plans and service delivery plans in the section on Effective Business Planning;
- we have taken action to simplify and clarify the measures further, and added qualitative measures where appropriate;
- to give a longer-term picture of progress, we have included a table showing the baseline data for the measures of success and performance already achieved, where relevant;
- to emphasise collaboration and shared responsibility, we amended the title for each priority by adding ‘working together’.

Our full ‘Corporate Plan – Response to Consultation Feedback’ can be found on the Corporate Improvement pages on our website.

Specific Consultation

Other examples of consultation undertaken in 2012-2013, where citizens’ feedback has helped to inform decisions, included:

- relocation of Bridgend town library;
- fairer charging for non-residential social care;
- play sufficiency assessment.

Section 6 – What did our regulators say about us?

The Auditor General is required to produce an annual report on Welsh Councils and other public bodies entitled the “Annual Improvement Report”, which presents a picture of how well we are planning for improvement and delivering services. Each year the Wales Audit Office carries out an improvement assessment, which consists of the following two parts:

- a corporate assessment that reviews our likelihood to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and
- a performance assessment that reviews the previous financial year’s progress of planned improvements as set out in the Corporate Plan 2010-13.

The Annual Improvement Report is informed by the findings of these two assessments, and also draws on the CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales) Annual Review Evaluation of Performance 2011-12; the findings of the Estyn inspection that was carried out in October 2012; and our self-assessment of performance (Annual Report 2011-12).

In May 2013, Wales Audit Office issued the Annual Improvement Report. The overall conclusion of the report is positive, where the following key points were identified:

- during 2011-12 the Council made good progress in delivering its improvement objectives;
- the Council continues to enhance its arrangements to deliver improvement, developing a more robust and balanced approach to evaluate and report its performance;
- the Council is improving the way in which it evaluates performance and aligns service improvement with financial planning;
- the Council’s arrangements to support improvement are sound, though it faces a period of change within its senior management; and
- the report also recognises the challenges we face, including improving the standard of educational attainment at both primary and secondary levels; addressing some operational weaknesses within Children’s services; large-scale regeneration; and improving information management processes.

The Audit General did not make any new proposals for improvement.

For a copy of the 2012-13 Estyn inspection please visit the Estyn website: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/>

For full details on our 2012-13 Annual Improvement Report, please visit the Wales Audit Office’s website: <http://www.wao.gov.uk>

Section 7 – Our Improvement Objectives for 2013-14

Our new Corporate Plan 2013-17 sets out six priorities (referred to as Improvement Priorities) for 2013-17. These priorities are our improvement objectives for the coming year and beyond:

- Working together to develop the local economy
- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
- Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent
- Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles
- Working together to make the best use of our resources

For full details on the actions we have in place to deliver each Improvement Priority, please visit the Corporate Improvement page on our website: <http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/web/groups/public/documents/services/015180.hcsp>

The six Improvement Priorities are our contribution towards delivering the four outcomes from the Local Service Board's Single Partnership Plan 'Bridgend Together' which are shown below:

- People in Bridgend County Borough are healthier
- People in Bridgend County Borough benefit from a stronger and more prosperous economy
- People in Bridgend County Borough are engaged and empowered to achieve their own potential
- Bridgend County Borough is a great place to live, work and visit

A copy of 'Bridgend Together' is available on the website: <http://www.bridgendlsb.org.uk/Bridgend-County-Together>.