

Bulletin

SPECIAL EDITION



November 2012

Bridgend's annual report summary 2011-12

Welcome to this special edition of Bulletin, which summarises Bridgend County Borough Council's annual report and shows how we performed during 2011-12.

Responsible for delivering a very broad range of services for local residents, the council's goal is to provide the best local services in Wales.

The following information shows how we have been working towards achieving this.

Strong communities

We want local people to live in safe, inclusive and sustainable communities. In 2011-12, our priorities were to build safe and inclusive communities that were supported by an effective transportation and communications infrastructure, to develop and support sustainable housing solutions for those who were homeless or in need of affordable housing, and to put in place better integrated health and social care services that supported independence, choice, empowerment, dignity and respect.



Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We worked with agencies including South Wales Police to reduce nuisance and disorder associated with drinking in public places. This contributed to a 28% reduction in recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour. The number of first-time criminal offenders also fell by 50%.
- We delivered disabled adaptations to properties faster than ever before, reducing the Disabled Facilities Grant process by nearly 40% compared to 2010-11.
- We worked with four registered social landlords to provide an additional 82 affordable housing units. Overall, nearly 23% of the houses built in the borough were classed as affordable.
- We implemented a greater range of housing options and opened the Cornerstone House temporary accommodation facility, reducing bed and breakfast temporary accommodation costs by 37%.
- We established the 'Just Ask Plus' service for 16-25 year olds to provide prompt advice, assistance and support in areas including education, employment, training, housing, welfare rights, health and leisure.
- In partnership with the ABMU Health Board, we continued to undertake actions to enable and support senior and disabled citizens to stay in the community and live independently, including the opening of 39 extra care self-contained flats in Kenfig Hill. We more than doubled the number of Telecare installations to 1089 and significantly increased the number of people supported by the Community Integrated Intermediate Service.
- We recycled more than 50% of our domestic waste, sent less waste to landfill than in 2010-11 and were the best performing council in Wales for this measure.
- Despite our extensive programme of highways re-surfacing, there was a small increase in the percentage of A and B roads in poor condition. However, there was a reduction in the percentage of C roads in poor condition.

Young voices

We want children and young people in Bridgend County Borough to thrive, learn and achieve their full potential. Our priorities for 2011-12 were to work in collaboration with partners to combat poverty and provide children with the best start in life, and to help all children and young people achieve higher standards of educational attainment through access to high-quality learning opportunities.



Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We adopted a whole-family approach to delivering services for children, young people and their families. The number of families benefiting from our work increased from four in 2010-11 to 71 in 2011-12.
- Working with our partners, we supported 189 families by providing access to learning, training and volunteering opportunities - 18 participants entered further education and five gained employment.
- 91% of our looked-after children were allocated to a qualified social work practitioner, which was a 10% increase on 2010-11.
- We opened two redesigned residential units for looked-after children.
- As part of our school modernisation programme and in partnership with the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Welsh Government, we opened the new Archbishop McGrath High School in Brackla. The innovative design of the school has won a national award.
- Working closely with pupils, parents and teachers, the number of unauthorised school absences was reduced.
- Good progress was made in reducing the number of 16 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETs) from 7.1% in 2010-11 to 4.4% in 2011-12. However, despite continued support, fewer formerly looked after young people aged 19 were engaged in education, training or employment than in 2010-11.
- We continued to take action to improve educational achievement. Pupil achievement at Key Stage Two did not improve, with performance in maths being a key factor, but there were performance improvements in the Foundation Phase and Key Stage Three. We are one of five local authority partners in a Joint Education Service to support school improvement.

Healthy living

We want local people of all ages to live healthy, independent lives. Our priority for 2011-12 was to improve physical and emotional well-being by promoting active lifestyles, participation and learning.

Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We are keen to help residents to become more active and healthy. We opened excellent new sports facilities at Archbishop McGrath High School in Brackla, which are also available for the general public to use outside school hours.
- Participants in the Let's Walk Cymru programme nearly tripled from 350 to 948.
- Social enterprises Greenwich Leisure Limited and Halo took over the management of our indoor leisure centres and swimming pools. These arrangements offer better facilities and better value for money.
- Our Active Schools initiative aims to continually increase opportunities for participation in physical activities. In 2011-12, the number of boys and girls involved in sports programmes in primary and secondary schools exceeded all our targets.
- We continued to work with the NHS to deliver a range of health intervention programmes, resulting in increased referrals for individuals suffering from, or at risk of developing, long-term health conditions. The collaborative project in the Garw Valley also supported more people in taking up a healthier lifestyle, with 58% of all participants achieving an overall weight loss of 5% or more.



New opportunities

We want residents to have access to employment opportunities and be able to realise their potential and ambitions. Our priority for 2011-12 was to support our disadvantaged communities by promoting economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability.



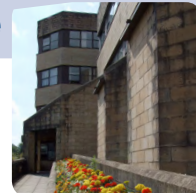
Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We supported businesses and communities in dealing with the difficult economic climate. Successful funding bids raised £982,414 for community projects resulting in new jobs, training or volunteering schemes. We helped businesses obtain £589,100 from the Community Enterprise Grant and Local Investment Fund, resulting in £810,220 further private sector investment and 82 new jobs.
- In partnership with three other South Wales authorities, we developed and delivered conservation training workshops and funded 50 work placements through the Employment Routes Programme.
- The Pencoed Park and Ride scheme became fully operational, which will help to attract people and businesses to the town centre.
- The Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan was adopted, which will guide development over the next 10 years. Improvement works progressed at Cheapside, Merthyr Mawr and Elder Street. We implemented a programme of events, such as the Bridgend Mash Up, to raise the profile of the town, and completed preparatory work for the 2012 Eisteddfod.
- We helped secure funding for regeneration projects in all three Western Valleys. Projects included the Caerau Village Square Enhancement, which transformed the centre of the village and has since been nominated for a national award for community-led regeneration.
- We were unable to complete Phase One of the Porthcawl Regeneration Programme due to the current economic situation. The council is committed to delivering regeneration, and an alternative development strategy is already being pursued.



Corporate governance

We want people in Bridgend County Borough to benefit from a council that is fair, ambitious, citizen-focussed and efficient. Our priority is to improve the way the council works to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets.



Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We reduced the time for processing new benefit claims by two days and improved our council tax fraud detection rate.
- We exceeded our customer charter commitments by responding to all email enquiries within five days, answering 82% of all telephone calls within 30 seconds and resolving 90% of customers' queries at the first point of contact.
- We terminated some property leases, achieving recurring savings of £280,000.
- We completed 44 actions under our ICT Strategy 2009-12, delivering a flexible and efficient technology infrastructure to support the transformation of services.
- Working with six partner authorities, we achieved savings of £15,000 in legal costs by jointly purchasing services.

Proud past and green spaces

We want local communities and visitors to enjoy and benefit from Bridgend County Borough's natural and built environment. Our priority for 2011-12 was to manage and promote the natural and historic environment.



Key achievements and challenges during 2011-12:

- We completed our Rights of Way improvement programme, resulting in 24.6km of improvements to existing paths and the creation of 6.6km of new paths. The path along the coastline of Bridgend County Borough was completed and the Boardwalk at Rest Bay was extended.
- The Maesteg to Caerau section of the Llynfi Valley cycle route was completed and formally opened in November 2011.
- We implemented safe routes to school in Blackmill/Evanstown and Laleston, and also the Maesteg Comprehensive Phase Two Safe Routes to Schools scheme.
- Wilderness Lake in Porthcawl achieved Green Flag status.
- Conversion of streetlights to part-night burning and upgrades to streetlights achieved reductions in both carbon dioxide emissions and energy usage. We also achieved reductions in carbon emissions from council-managed transport and our non-domestic public buildings of 21% and 5.9% respectively.

National indicator performance

In 2011-12, 41 performance indicators were collected and published nationally, compared to 151 indicators in 2010-11. Comparable data is available for 37 of the 41 indicators - 28 (75.7%) showed an improvement, one (2.7%) remained the same and eight (21.6%) showed a decline. More detailed information is available at www.bridgend.gov.uk

Summary of financial performance

We have to manage our finances carefully to direct money at our spending priorities and maintain the delivery and quality of core services. This incurs two types of expenditure.

Revenue expenditure covers day to day running costs and in 2011-12 amounted to £229.6m. Particular budgetary pressures arose from the continued demand for independent fostering placements, increased demand for the education support service, additional needs of home care service users and increased demand for residential and nursing placements. Capital expenditure is spent on physical assets and in 2011-12 amounted to £28.304m. Some of the assets involved were primary school amalgamations, Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen, Hartshorn House and the Llynfi Valley Cycle Network.

Citizen feedback



Citizen feedback is vital for planning the improvement of local services. There are a range of options for residents to tell us how we should be delivering our services, both now and in the future.

One of the ways we consulted with residents during 2011-12 was through the Citizen's Panel survey. The panel is made up of over 1,300 residents who are a representative group of the population in Bridgend County Borough. The main findings from the 2011-12 survey are shown below:

- Almost 70% of respondents were either 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their local street scene.
- Just over 68% were 'satisfied' with the management and maintenance of parks, playing fields and children's play areas.
- 75% were satisfied with the cleanliness of the streets in their immediate area.
- Just over 68% felt that performance in Highways Maintenance was good.

Summary of improvement objectives for 2012-13



Our improvement objectives 2012-13 are:

- To build safe and inclusive communities.
- To develop and support sustainable, affordable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in need.
- To collaborate with partners to meet the different needs of all children and young people, and provide them with the best start in life.
- To help all children and young people achieve higher attainment by improving learning opportunities and making them more accessible.
- To improve physical and emotional wellbeing by promoting and supporting active lifestyles, participation and learning.
- To implement effective integrated health and social care services that support independence, health and wellbeing.
- To support and invest in our communities to promote economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability.
- To manage and promote our natural and historic environment.
- To improve the way we work to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets.

For more details about how we will deliver these objectives, please visit the Corporate Improvement page at www.bridgend.gov.uk

Want to know more? You can find out more and give us your feedback by reading the full annual report for 2011-12 and filling in an accompanying survey at www.bridgend.gov.uk

A copy of the report is available at local libraries.

Performance indicators for all local authorities in Wales are available to view at <http://dissemination.dataunitwales.gov.uk>

For more information, please contact the Corporate Improvement Team on (01656) 643224 or email: improvement@bridgend.gov.uk