

Annual Report Summary 2015-16

Welcome to the summary of Bridgend County Borough Council's annual report for 2015-16. The annual report presents what we did in 2015-16 to improve people's lives in the county borough. It's important to note that the annual report focuses on the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan priorities only, not everything we did in that year. We hope that you find this summary informative and helpful.

For 2015-16, we set six improvement priorities and the sections below highlight some of our achievements

Priority One - Working together to develop the local economy

We planned to continue to regenerate our town centres, actively look for new funding opportunities and encourage new investments to help boost our local economy and create extra employment opportunities.

- In Bridgend town centre, we started redeveloping the new Rhiw multi-storey car park which will include 28 affordable apartments and a commercial unit that will create a community living in the heart of the town, boosting trade and helping to support the local economy.
- We secured a developer and obtained planning to redevelop the Jennings building in Porthcawl which will provide jobs and a visitor attraction.
- We continued to work with landowners to bring forward the Eweny Road site in Maesteg for a mixed use of new homes, retail facilities, and employment sites.
- The number of vacant premises in Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl reduced from 91 to 83.
- We provided £18,938 through our kick-start grant which helped 29 new businesses to start up and £104,834 of Special Regeneration Fund to 35 business to grow and create jobs.
- The number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses increased from 4090 in 2014-15 to 4400 in 2015-16.
- We spent £1million on shared pedestrian and cycle routes making journeys easier and more active.

- Our employment rate increased from 70.2 to 72.9, better than the Welsh average of 71.1.

Priority Two - Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

During the year we worked with the Central South Consortium (CSC) and schools to improve our education. We wanted to secure a big change in the rate of improvement so that, by September 2015, children would be functionally literate and numerate at the end of their primary education, and at least 60% of young people achieve the level of qualification expected of them at GCSE.

- We worked with CSC, schools, pupils and parents and achieved improved attendance at both primary and secondary schools and improvements in attainment at each key stage.
- The percentage of pupils at the end of the foundation phase (aged 7) achieving the expected outcome improved from 85.1% to 88.8%, above the Welsh Average.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 (aged 11) 87.6% of pupils achieved the Core Subject Indicator, up from 86.2%.
- 61.1% of pupils gained 5 GCSEs Grade A*- C, up from 59.7% last year, bettering our target of 60%.
- 99.9% of all pupils leaving school, training or work based learning left with an approved qualification.
- When surveyed, Bridgend citizens rated our education services highly – the fourth highest in Wales.

Priority Three - Working with children and families to tackle problems early

We wanted to increase the effectiveness of early support and intervention to prevent issues from becoming complex, and reduce the risk of children becoming looked after.

- We restructured our family support services into three local hubs to make it easier for families to access help more quickly.
- Our new Early Help service received 1912 requests for help for families from schools, Social Services and Health and 833 of those families were allocated to local hubs for support, preventing their circumstances from deteriorating further.
- 1,586 children and families accessed Flying Start services.
- Despite our efforts 608 children were referred to Social Services with concerns of neglect or abuse, and 176 children were on the Child protection register at the end of the year, up from 125 in 2014-15. We will continue to do everything we can to reduce the risk of children becoming looked after.

Priority Four - Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent

In 2015-16 we planned to focus on remodelling our services by working with partners in the third sector, families, carers and communities to create a supportive environment in local areas to prevent people's circumstances from deteriorating and leading to a loss of independence.

- Our community resource team supported 1100 vulnerable people to stay at home and remain independent.
- With our partners, Care and Repair Services, we helped 680 people maintain their independence with 99.79% of them remaining independent for six months or more.
- With partners, we set up a 'drop in' service to offer early intervention and prevention to support people with mental health issues. This included workshops on how to manage anxiety and depression, attended by 536 people.

- We worked with Bridgend Carers Centre to improve advice and information and the number of carers reporting that information and support improved almost doubled. We also found funding for an officer in a hospital discharge centre to support carers.
- We offered 2003 of 2102 identified carers an assessment of their support needs.
- We worked with partners and 86 families with children to prevent them from becoming homeless.
- We worked with 13 homecare service providers to ensure that people got the right package of support to meet their needs.
- 47 people with a learning disability are now living independently using assisted technology, up from 42.
- We supported 259 families with disabled children to be more confident in managing their child's disability.

Priority Five - Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles

We wanted to encourage more people across the county borough to live healthily and become more active.

- The Family Active Zone service worked with 144 families with young children to help them become more active and eat more healthily.
- We provided 239 young people with help, advice and guidance on substance misuse issues and a further 603 young people received advice sexual health.
- We worked with our partners, Halo Leisure, to increase the number of visits to sport and leisure centres for taking part in physical activity increased from 9,528 to 9,634 per 1,000 population.
- In one of our consultation exercises, local residents suggested a new path around Newbridge Fields. We undertook the work, opening up access and making it more accessible for wheelchair users, dog walkers and other park users.

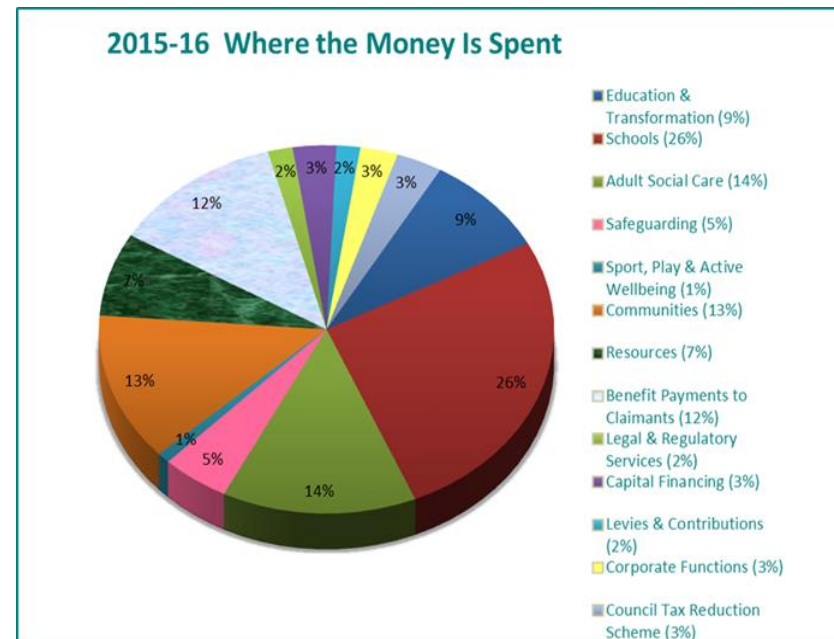
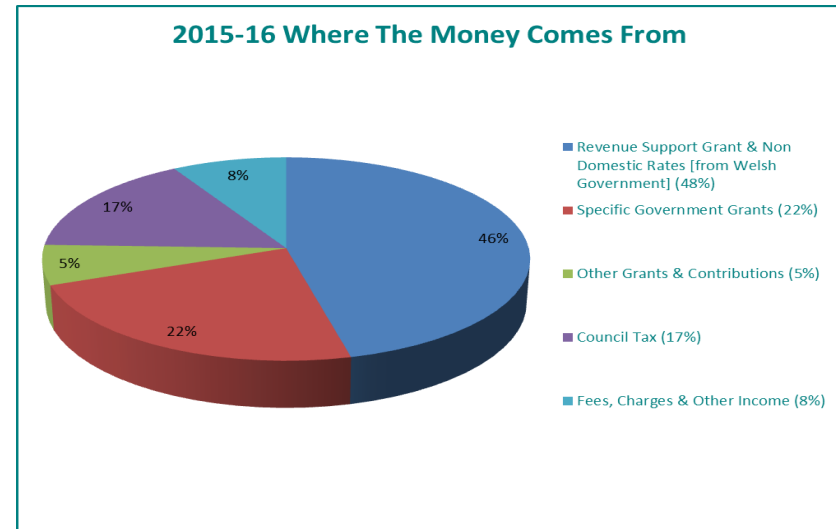
Priority Six - Working together to make the best use of our resources

We needed to make £11.225 million of savings. Budget cuts of this scale require us to make many difficult decisions about what services can be maintained and what cannot. We wanted to minimise the impact of reduced funding on our services by both maximising the way that we use our resources and by exploring innovative and flexible ways of delivering services, including commissioning .

- We made £9,316 million of savings but reached our target of £11.225 million by actively managing job vacancies.
- We completed the contracts register to increase efficiencies in the commissioning and the procurement of services.
- With partners, we set up the Awen Cultural Trust to manage our theatres, libraries, community centres, and Bryngarw Country House and park.
- We restructured the School Music Service whilst maintaining the same level of service at no extra cost to pupils.
- The Shared Regulatory Services is now fully operational across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, delivering more efficient and cost effective Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing services.

Finance

Last year, the amount we spent on delivering services to our citizens and investing in our landscape and infrastructure totalled around £420 million. The diagrams below show where the money came from and how we spent it.



What our regulators said about us

In 2015, the Wales Audit Office undertook an in-depth corporate assessment of the Council. The assessment focused on the whether or not the Council's governance arrangements are helping to improve services and outcomes for citizens. It also considered our track record of performance.

The overall conclusion was that "the Council is developing appropriate plans for the future and subject to aligning ICT and human resource functions with the transformation programme, is well placed to secure improvement".

The report is positive and balanced. The Auditor General did not make any statutory recommendations. Instead, it made 8 proposals for improvement. The Auditor General's report is available via this link: <http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/media/326178/corporate-assessment-report->

The authority has already started addressing the areas that the report said needed improving. The Wales Audit Office will "keep track of developments through progress updates".

Our Improvement Objectives for 2016 - 17

In 2015-16, we undertook a comprehensive review of the Council's improvement priorities, taking into account shrinking resources, increasing demand on services, whilst still delivering the things that citizens told us are most important. Three new improvement priorities came out of this review which are included in our Corporate Plan 2016-20. These are:

- Supporting a successful economy
- Helping people to be self-reliant
- Smarter use of 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 and view our Corporate Plan:

<http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/media/341723/corporate-plan-2016-2020.pdf>.

Want to know more?

To read the full report, go to the BCBC website: www.bridgend.gov.uk. Copies are also available at local libraries. You can also contact the Corporate Improvement Team on (01656) 643224 or email improvement@bridgend.gov.uk.

This report is also available in Welsh.