

# Annual Report 2013-14



Bridgend County Borough Council  
**Working together to improve lives**

## Foreword

Bridgend County Borough Council is a large and complex organisation serving 140,480 people across a mix of coastal, rural and urban communities.

Unlike private sector organisations that may specialise in specific areas, the council operates on many business levels. These can range from personal care, education, maintaining public open spaces and regulating businesses to providing refuse and recycling collections, library and leisure services and undertaking both long and short term planning for the area.

The council often works in close partnership with other organisations to provide local services, so there can sometimes be a 'blurred line' – for example, between community policing and the council's role in community safety, or services provided by the NHS and our own role in helping people to live fulfilled and independent lives.

Such a diversity of business means that we have to work hard to ensure that we are able to focus on the things that matter the most to local residents. As most of the money that we spend on providing services comes either directly or indirectly from the communities we serve, it is also important to achieve value for money and sound financial management.

With the Council's priorities clearly defined in our Corporate Plan for 2013-17, this annual report provides a summary of how well Bridgend County Borough Council did during the financial year 2013-2014. Because a single measure of success cannot offer a true reflection of how well the council is doing, we have used multiple measures. Some focus on processes or how quickly we do things, some measure the quality and others look at the outcomes of our actions, including those we have provided in partnership with others.

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

Corporate Improvement Team, Ravens Court, Brewery Lane, Bridgend, CF31 4AP

Email: [Improvement@Bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Improvement@Bridgend.gov.uk)

Phone: (01656) 643224

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



Councillor Mel Nott  
Leader of the Council



Darren Mepham  
Chief Executive

## Contents

Foreword.....	1
Introduction .....	4
Summary of Performance in 2013-14.....	5
<b>Improvement Priority One: Working together to develop the local economy.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Improvement Priority Two: Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Improvement Priority Three: Working with children and families to tackle problems early.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Improvement Priority Four: Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Improvement Priority Five: Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Improvement Priority Six: Working together to make the best use of our resources.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Financial Performance .....	58
Working in partnership .....	60
Citizens' Feedback.....	63
What did our regulators say about us?.....	65
Our Improvement Objectives for 2014-15.....	66

## Introduction

In April 2013 we published our new Corporate Plan 2013-17. The Plan sets out our improvement priorities, the outcomes we want to achieve by 2017, how we will know we are succeeding and our specific commitments for 2013-14. Our six improvement priorities<sup>1</sup> are:



The Plan emphasises that we must to work together with our partners and, in particular, with citizens if we are to achieve these outcomes and secure improvement for people in the county borough.

Our annual report gives an account of what we achieved collectively in 2013-14 against what we committed to do in that year, as set out in the Plan, focusing on outcomes. We use the following symbols to indicate the progress we made against both the success indicators and commitments:

-  planned improvement or target achieved (G=Green)
-  planned improvement or target mostly achieved (A=Amber)
-  planned improvement or target mostly missed (R=Red)
-  data not available

<sup>1</sup> These six priorities are our improvement objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

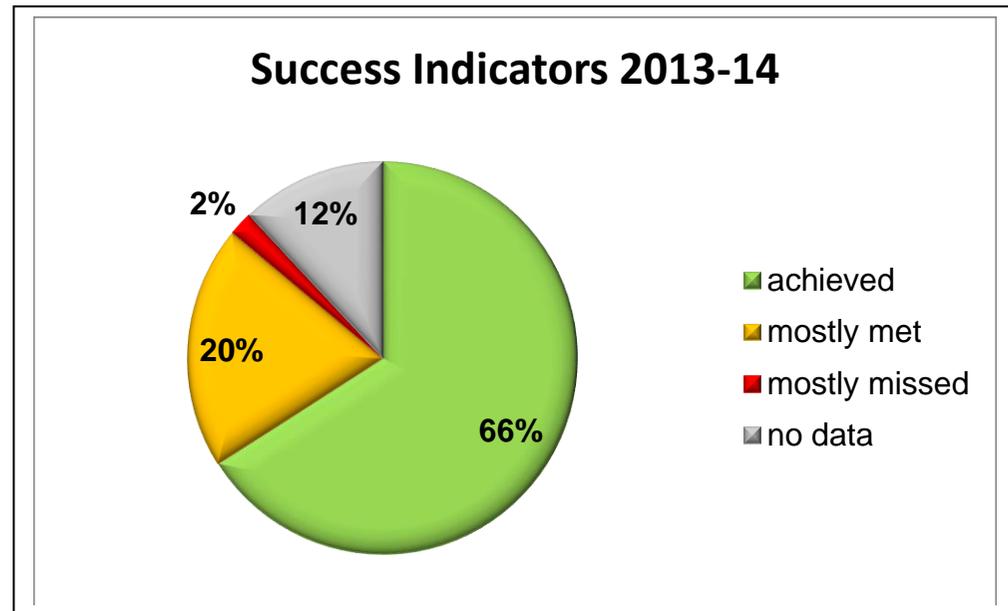
## Summary of Performance in 2013-14

### *Progress against Success Indicators*

We identified 41 success indicators for 2013-14 to measure how we would be doing against the Corporate Plan.

Of these indicators:

- 27 (66%) achieved or exceeded the target;
- 8 (20%) mostly met the target;
- 1 (2%) mostly missed the target; and
- 5 (12%) had no data available.



The table below shows performance of these success indicators against each of our improvement priorities.

Improvement Priorities	Success Indicators				
	Number	Red	Amber	Green	No Data
<b>One:</b> Develop the local economy	11	0	1 (10%)	10 (90%)	0
<b>Two:</b> Raising educational achievement	5	0	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	0
<b>Three:</b> Tackle problems early	6	1 (16.6%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)	0
<b>Four:</b> Helping people stay independent	6	0	0	3 (50%)	3 (50%)
<b>Five:</b> Encourage healthy lifestyles	7	0	2 (29%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)
<b>Six:</b> Make the best use of our resources	6	0	2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)	1 (16.6%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1 (2%)</b>	<b>8 (20%)</b>	<b>27 (66%)</b>	<b>5 (12%)</b>

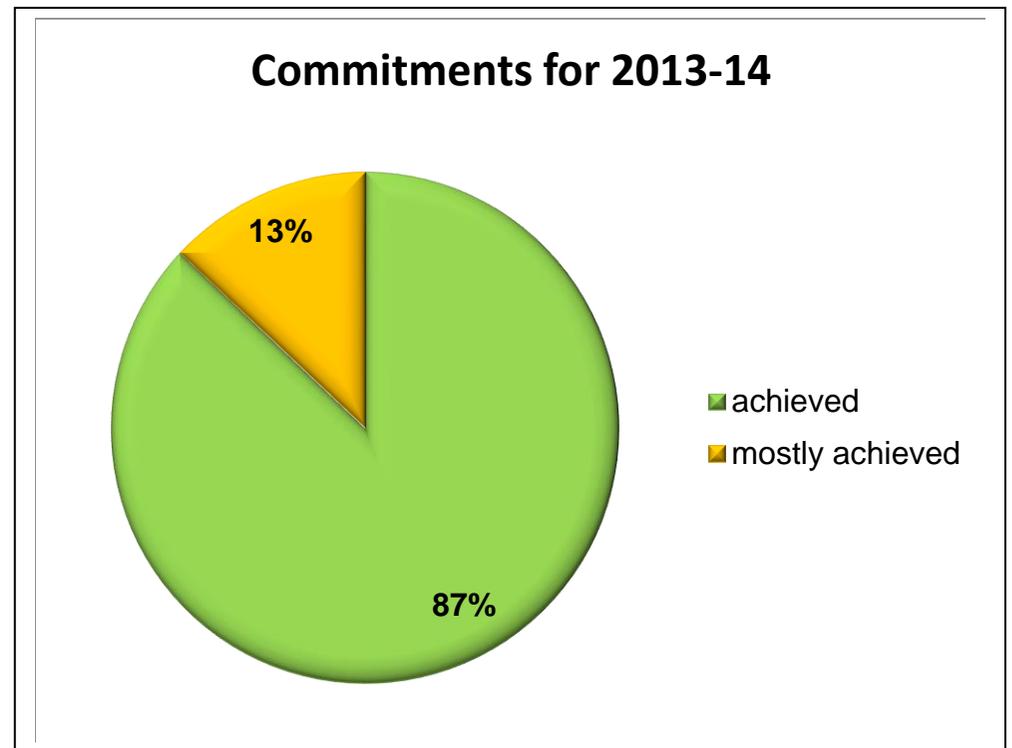
In addition to these success indicators we also identified a suite of performance indicators against each improvement priority. A full list of our indicators is published separately on the Council's website [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) in the 'Council Performance and Priorities' section.

## ***Progress against Commitments***

In our Corporate Plan, our commitments are the key pieces of work we plan to complete. In 2013-14 we made 60 commitments.

Of these commitments:

- 52 (87%) achieved the planned improvement;
- 8 (13%) mostly achieved the planned improvement; and
- 0 (0%) mostly missed the planned improvement.



The table below shows the progress we made in carrying out these commitments for each of our improvement priorities.

Improvement Priorities	Commitments			
	Number	Red	Amber	Green
<b>One:</b> Develop the local economy	17	0	3 (18%)	14 (82%)
<b>Two:</b> Raising educational achievement	9	0	1 (10%)	8 (90%)
<b>Three:</b> Tackle problems early	10	0	1 (10%)	9 (90%)
<b>Four:</b> Helping people stay independent	7	0	1 (14%)	6 (86%)
<b>Five:</b> Encourage healthy lifestyles	6	0	1 (20%)	5 (80%)
<b>Six:</b> Make the best use of our resources	11	0	1 (9%)	10 (91%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b> (13%)	<b>52</b> (87%)

## ***Performance against National Indicators in 2013-14***

Each year, the Welsh Government and the Local Government Data Unit publish a suite of national indicators to show how local authorities performed in delivering nationally important services. Forty-four (44) indicators were collected and published nationally for 2013-14, the same number as for 2012-13.

Above the good progress we made in 2012-13, we achieved improvement for half of those national indicators in 2013-14, summarised below:

- 22 (50%) showed improvement;
- 21 (48%) declined; and
- 1 (2%) stayed the same.

The table below shows our performance compared with Wales average performance against each service area.

Service Area	No. of indicators	% indicators that improved	
		Bridgend	Wales
Education	11	7 (64%)	9 (82%)
Social Care Adults	7	6 (86%)	4 (57%)
Social Care Children	13	3 (23%)	8 (62%)
Housing	4	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Environment & Transport	6	2 (33%)	5 (83%)
Planning & Regulatory Services	1	1(100%)	1(100%)
Leisure & Culture	2	2 (100%)	1(50%)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22 (50%)</b>	<b>31 (70%)</b>

Of particular note is the extent of progress we jointly made for adult social care services, where 86% of the indicators showed improvement. Recycling and waste services continued to perform well and we are among the top six councils in Wales for all these indicators. Strong improvements were also seen in 2013-14 in indicators related to education, road conditions and visits to libraries.

Detailed information about each of our indicators is included in the full list of indicators published separately on the Council's website [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) in the council performance and priorities section.

The following section provides detailed information about how we did in 2013-14 for each of our improvement priorities.

# Improvement Priority One: Working together to develop the local economy



## What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?

We want town centres, business premises and transport and communication networks that cater for the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, to ensure access to employment opportunities that are varied and secure in the long-term.

## How did we do in 2013-14?

We made good progress towards achieving this improvement priority.

We said we would “continue to regenerate our town centres, actively look for new funding opportunities and encouraging new investments to help boost our local economy, provide extra employment opportunities and attract more visitors to the borough”.

Working together, we

- completed the planned regeneration works in Maesteg and Bridgend town centres, and secured future investment. Progress in Porthcawl, however, was delayed;
- supported 25 local businesses and created 47 new jobs through the Local Investment Fund;
- supported 29 micro enterprises and created 29.5 new jobs through the Green Shoots Project; and
- generated over £6m more revenue from tourists.

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified 11 indicators to measure success. All those indicators met their targets or showed improvement (see table below).

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Total revenue coming into the borough from tourism grows	Tourist revenue has increased from £282.8m in 2012-13 to £289m in 2013-14.	
Number of visitors to the borough increases	Visitors to Bridgend town centre decreased slightly from 5,030,292 in 2012-13 to 4,912,934 in 2013-14 and the visitors to Porthcawl dropped very slightly from 2,700,000 in 2012-13 to 2,644,632 in 2013-14.	
Employment rate improved relative to the national average	The percentage of working age population in employment increased from 68.8% in 2012-13 to 72.1 in 2013-14.	
Youth employment rate improved relative to the national average	The percentage of 16-24 year olds in employment increased from 46.4% in 2012-13 to 50.1% in 2013-14	

Proportion of our population, aged 16-18, reported not being in education, employment or training(NEET) falls	The proportion of NEETs reduced significantly from 6.4% in 2012-13 to 3.7% in 13-14.	
Percentage of children living in households where nobody works falls	The percentage of children in workless households reduced from 20.4% in 2011 to 17.5 in 2012. (This is the latest data currently available.)	
Percentage of children living in low-income households reduces	The percentage of children in households with less than 60% average income reduced from 22.7% in 2011 to 21% in 2012. (This is the latest data currently available.)	
Length and number of community routes increases	In 2013 -14 one additional community route was created, adding 0.41km to the length of community routes.	
Percentage of overall roads in a poor condition reduces	The percentage of A, B and C roads in poor condition reduced from 8.6 in 2012-13 to 6.9 in 2013-14.	
Gross Value Added (GVA) per head rises	According to the latest published figures (September 2014) GVA rose from £14,489 in 2011 to £14,964 in 2012.	
Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head increases	According to the latest published figures (September 2014) GDHI rose from £13594 in 2011 to £14,122 in 2012.	

### Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 17 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14, 14 (82%) of which were fully completed.

<b>1.1 Complete the European-funded regeneration project in Maesteg town centre</b>	
---	---

The regeneration works to Maesteg town centre have been completed providing 14 new market units, a new indoor waiting area at the bus station, and a new public square where a programme of events has already started making use of the new central location with plans for more future community events and performances. The new units are fully occupied, a considerable achievement in

the current economic conditions, and an indication that if we continue to invest in our town centres, we can deliver tangible economic regeneration, creating jobs and businesses.

## **1.2 Work towards the completion of current regeneration works in Bridgend and Porthcawl town centres**



Good progress has been made with the ongoing regeneration works in Bridgend town centre. Public realm works at Nolton Street and Rhiw Hill are nearing completion and have been re-opened. The final phase of the development of the new retail area at Elder Street will be completed in 2014-15. The use of high quality materials and good workmanship are supporting and enhancing the setting of other private sector led regeneration projects in the town centre.

The Porthcawl Marina was officially opened on 11th April and all of the 70 Berths have been allocated. The plans for the development of the town centre in Porthcawl were delayed when the preferred provider for the supermarket withdrew from the bidding process last year. We are reviewing options to bring forward other ways of progressing the regeneration.

## **1.3 Complete feasibility work for the mixed development of Bridgend town centre**



The feasibility work was completed and our subsequent submission for the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places Programme was approved in June 2014 for a £6 million regeneration programme to continue the redevelopment of Bridgend town centre. The programme will focus on the redevelopment of the Rhiw car park to create additional housing and commercial uses, and a new car park.

## **1.4 Prioritise under-utilised sites for development in the Llynfi Valley**



We have developed proposals for improvements at the Ewenny Road, Lower School site and the washery sites to bring forward these sites for future housing development, and are awaiting formal approval of our bids for funding from the Welsh Government to progress these developments in 2014-15.

<b>1.5 Commence construction of the new Porthcawl highway, to release sites for development</b>	
---	---

The highway scheme in Porthcawl is very much linked to the development of the supermarket. Whilst the original tender process for the scheme has been completed, the need for highway works will need to be reviewed in the light of future development options for Porthcawl.

Marketing of the Jennings Building has been able to go ahead, and bids are currently awaited from prospective developers.

<b>1.6 Commence the development of the Ewenny Road site in Maesteg</b>	
--	---

Clearance of the Budelpak and Cosi sites has been completed. Outline planning permission has been sought for the development of the site for hot food restaurants, a family pub, food retail units, non-food retail units, approximately 125 homes and a mix of different size employment units. Discussion with the other land owners of development options have been extended in the hope of achieving an even more comprehensive and coherent development of the site.

<b>1.7 Attract external funding to implement regeneration projects</b>	
--	---

We attracted a range of funding to the area. Some examples include:

- the Porthcawl Town Heritage Initiative (THI) bid was submitted and approved, making Bridgend the most successful area in the UK in terms of the number of THIs approved
- Digital Bridgend Project progressing on target in line with funding deadlines.
- £6m of regeneration funding for the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme from the Welsh Government, to further regenerate Bridgend town centre.

<b>1.8 Use the Local Investment Fund to support business investment and job creation</b>	
--	---

Bridgend is one of six authorities participating in this European project. It has well exceeded its targets for the number of businesses supported and jobs created. It has not yet reached its target for new business start-ups but of the six authorities, Bridgend has come closest to reaching this target set at the start of the programme.

Since its start in 2009, LIF has created 355 jobs, supported 146 businesses and helped 41 individuals to set up a new business. In 2013/14, it created 47 jobs, supported 25 existing businesses, and helped 8 individuals to set up a new business. The LIF programme has now been extended to provide even more support for businesses.

### **1.9 Continue the Green Shoots projects to support micro-business investment in rural areas**



Green Shoots is a grant scheme for new and existing micro-enterprises in rural areas. A micro-enterprise employs less than 10 people.

The scheme achieved the following in 2013 / 14:

- financially supported 29 micro-enterprises;
- supported 25 Individuals financially to create a micro-enterprise;
- advised or assisted 36 micro-enterprises;
- advised or assisted 26 Individuals to support the creation of a new micro-enterprise; and
- led to the creation of 29.5 new jobs.

As part of the Centres of Rural Enterprise, new small business units have been created on the Sony site in Pencoed, in Blaengarw and in Cornelly.

### **1.10 Actively bid for funding to assist existing firms to develop and help local entrepreneurs to set up new businesses**



As set out above, funding has been secured through the Local Investment Fund and Green Shoots projects to support businesses. A bid was also made jointly with two other authorities to the Welsh Government for an Enterprise Facilitation Project aimed at supporting local entrepreneurs to set up new businesses.

Additional European Structural Funds are becoming available. However, they are slower in coming through than originally anticipated. The start has now been put back to late summer 2014 and formal bids for those additional funds are yet to be submitted.

In the meantime, Bridgend as a member of the South East Wales Directors of Environment & Regeneration Group (SEWDERG) is continuing to develop regional projects in preparation for the formal start of the European Union 2014 - 20 funding programmes.

<b>1.11</b>	<b>Improve pedestrian and vehicle links to main rail and bus interchanges</b>	<b>G</b>
-------------	---	----------

In 2013-14 a Park and Ride facility was constructed at Pencoed station and a pedestrian link was provided from the Park & Ride to the platform.

<b>1.12</b>	<b>Produce a Destination Management Plan that identifies the roles and actions of stakeholders in managing specific tourist destinations</b>	<b>G</b>
-------------	--	----------

The Destination Management Plan was established in 2013-14, along with a tourism partnership, focusing on improving the experience of the County for all visitors.

A number of events are held each year in the County Borough. Preparations were made in 2013-14 to ensure successful delivery of the Senior Open Tournament, Mash Up and Festival events to be held in the Summer and Autumn 2014.

Organisers of events will benefit from a new tool developed in 2013-14 – the events portal – that gives simple advice and guidance about setting up and running events. The portal also helps event organisers access funding for putting on their events.

<b>1.13</b>	<b>Continue to engage people on the ‘Employment Routes’ scheme to help them get jobs</b>	<b>G</b>
-------------	--	----------

Employment Routes helps participants attain skills in a variety of disciplines required by various industries across the Bridgend County Borough. In 2013-14 the project helped 86 people find work, which is 72% of the total number of people entering the project.

**1.14 Deliver the second year of the three-year highway improvement programme**

The Council has benefited from a grant from Welsh Government for a three-year highway improvement programme that will be completed by March 2015. All works in the highway improvement programme for 2013-14 were completed, resulting in improved road conditions for our (A), (B) & (C) roads.

**1.15 Implement and monitor a Civil Parking Enforcement scheme**

We set up a joint Civil Parking Enforcement Service with the Vale of Glamorgan CBC. The service commenced operations on 1 April 2013. There are currently 17 Civil Parking Enforcement Officers covering the two authority areas. The collaboration allows the flexibility to target greater numbers of enforcement officers in any particular area as and when the need arises. The Scheme continues to be monitored and is on track to achieve what it promised.

**1.16 Prioritise and deliver rights of way awaiting determination and improve the rights of way network**

We improved our Rights of Way network, including enhancements of existing paths and creation of new paths. All projects identified as part of this year's Rights of Way Improvement Plan funding programme were completed and the final grant claim was made in March.

**1.17 Develop Bryngarw House and Park as a place where people can learn and develop new skills, and visitors can enjoy a quality health experience**

There was much to celebrate at Bryngarw House and Park during 2013-14. In the House, all rooms were upgraded. Wi-Fi and other audio visual upgrades were completed. TripAdvisor comments have been carefully monitored with Bryngarw House maintaining a 4 star rating with 19 Excellent and 17 Very Good reviews.

Because of improved visitor facilities and a comprehensive events programme, ranging from Bushcraft to Easter Egg Hunts to Music in the Park, over 200,000 people visited the Park in 2013-14.

### **What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?**

The Council is facing unprecedented challenges of diminishing resources and increasing demands for services. To meet these challenges, our key priorities for 2014-2015 are as follows:

- Complete the current programme of regeneration works in Bridgend town centre.
- Begin a new programme of works to develop retail, office and residential sites in Bridgend town centre subject to the success of our bid for funding to the Welsh Government.
- Reappraise development options and continue to manage regeneration projects in Porthcawl.
- Commence development of the Ewenny Road site in Maesteg and develop proposals for future development in the Llynfi Valley.
- Work with neighbouring authorities to provide focused support for businesses to help them invest and create jobs.
- Complete the final year of the three year highway improvement programme and improve transport, pedestrian and cycle links between the bus and rail networks and employment and education sites.
- Establish the Bridgend Tourism Partnership and work with partners to improve tourist accommodation, attractions and events.
- Work with partners to establish a county borough wide provision of training to help people gain skills which lead to employment.
- Better engage people and communities in developing course to meet their needs and improve their employment prospects.

## Improvement Priority Two: Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement



**What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?**

We want to ensure that by working in partnership with schools, colleges and local training providers, our children and young people achieve their ambitions through improvements to their educational results, by gaining qualifications and undertaking training.

## How did we do in 2013-14?

We achieved the challenging targets we set to carry out this priority.

We wanted to secure a big change in the rate of improvement, so that by September 2014:

- at least 55% (amended target for that year) of young people achieve a minimum of 5 GCSEs Grade A\*-C or equivalent including English/Welsh and mathematics at the end of statutory secondary education;
- most children would be functionally literate and numerate at the end of their primary education;
- Adult Community Learning in the borough would be strengthened by working better with partners and ensuring more people accessed local learning opportunities, particularly around literacy, numeracy and IT skills; and
- we would have established the role of libraries within a learning network, creating more opportunities for people to take new steps into learning skills and increasing self-confidence.

Working together, we saw the following improvement:

- the percentage of our young people achieving a minimum of 5 GCSEs Grade A\*-C or equivalent including English/Welsh and Mathematics increased from 52.35% in 2012-13 academic year to 54.2% in 2013-14 academic year (provisional data).
- 88% of our school were graded as good or excellent by ESTYN inspections.
- Targeted support and interventions for pupils helped to reduce the percentage of our Year 11 school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training from 6.4% to 3.7%.
- Attendance of secondary school pupils improved, and a significant programme of actions was introduced to bring about further improvements in attendance overall.
- The collaborative Transformation Review for Post-16 learning provision was completed and implementation was ongoing throughout the year.

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified 5 indicators to measure success, all of which showed improvement (see table below).

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
<p>Most of our children can read, write and count to a level of skill needed to get by in life, by the time they complete their primary education (end of Key Stage 2)</p>	<p>The percentage of our pupils in the final year of the Foundation Phase achieving the expected outcomes in teacher assessments for Language, Literacy and Communication skills, Mathematical Development (MD) and Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural improved from 81.8% in the 2011-12 academic year to 82.3% in the 2012-13 academic year and to 85.1% in the 2013-14 academic year.</p> <p>Performance of our pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in all subjects of the Core Subject Indicator (English/Welsh, mathematics and science in combination) improved from 80.6% in the 2011-12 academic year to 82.6% in the 2012-13 academic year and to 86.2% in the 2013-14 academic year. In Welsh, the performance of our pupils was also well above the average for Wales.</p>	
<p>Our children achieve the level of qualification expected of them at GCSE</p>	<p>Provisional 2014 data suggests that at least 54.2% of our children gained 5 GCSEs at grades A* - C, including English/Welsh and Mathematics, in the 2013-14 academic year. This is an improvement on the 52.3% result of last year, although we narrowly missed our challenging target of 55%.</p>	
<p>Our children who have left school either further their education, find employment or undertake some form of training</p>	<p>Our Year 11 school leavers who did not continue in education, find employment or enter training reduced from 6.4% in 2012-13 to 3.7% in 2013-14.</p>	

When our children leave education or any form of training, they do so with an approved qualification that will help give them a good start in life	Of the total number of Year 11 pupils (1,797), eight left school without an approved qualification in 2012-13.	
Children who receive free school meals have as much success throughout their education as those who do not receive free school meals	<p>Attainment of the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator, in teacher assessments, by pupils entitled to free school meals improved by almost 3.5% points this year. This was a significant contributor to the gap between attainment of free school meals pupils and those pupils who were not eligible for free school meals reducing from 18.39% to 16.77%.</p> <p>The gap between achievement of the Core Subject Indicator, at end of Key Stage 2, for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who were not narrowed from 22.57% to 19.26%.</p>	

### Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 9 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14, of which all showed improvement and 90% were fully completed, detailed below.

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Raise aspirations among all young people and their families</b>	
------------	--	---

We have made significant progress in addressing issues around non-attendance. We have put in place a new process to support the 'team around the school' approach, which makes use of the full resources of the Educational Welfare Service and a multi-agency team to tackle poor attendance in any given school. This approach has proved successful. One comprehensive school, for example, saw a 3.7% increase in attendance for autumn term 2013 compared to autumn term 2012.

Through the Pastoral Support Programme, we enabled support to be provided to both pupils who either have been or could be at risk of exclusion and their schools.

The Learning Communities Team engaged with 1301 parents / carers and 2300 children / young people through referrals and the Family Engagement / Learning Programme. Parents/carers participated in activities designed to help them engage with their children's schools and support their children's learning. Of these, 484 completed questionnaires and stated that they were happier supporting their child's learning at home as a result of attending the activities.

Results in the core subject indicator at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 all improved, and the gap in the improvement differential with the Wales averages across all 3 subjects narrowed.

2.2	<b>Ensure that head teachers, school staff and school governing bodies act more effectively to improve their performance</b>
-----	--



Improving school performance is about both improving schools that are performing poorly and stretching those who are already performing well. We commissioned a comprehensive training package from the Central South Consortium for Councillors on how to use data to better challenge the performance of schools and the Local Authority.

The Central South Consortium (CSC) is a key partner in the strategy to improve school performance. During the year, the Consortium introduced Challenge Advisors, whose role is to work with school and governing bodies to challenge and support school performance.

A CSC-led model to improve literacy and numeracy was agreed and a range of activities and packages were put in place to deliver tailored support to individual schools.

We commenced the monthly reporting of attendance data to head teachers, with analysis of performance and trends. Education Welfare Officers meet regularly with head teachers or responsible officers to discuss the reports. We also commenced the development of a summary attendance report for governors. The Education Welfare Officers and Family Engagement Officers continued to work closely together to identify and work with families whose difficulties could be impacting the school attendance of the children in the family.

<b>2.3</b>	<b>Ensure that we support more able children and young people who, overall, are currently underachieving</b>	
------------	--	---

Our schools improved their use of systems to track the progress of individual pupils. The results and data from those systems were used to tailor support for pupils who are underachieving as well as those who are more able and talented.

<b>2.4</b>	<b>Reduce class sizes and pupil-to-teacher ratios in our primary schools</b>	
------------	--	---

The percentage of primary school classes with more than 30 pupils rose slightly to 1.8%. We continued to monitor pupil numbers and use projections of future pupil numbers in our planning of school places. Our school modernisation programme continued on schedule with works at a number of our primary schools including early years provision in Bryncethin, temporary accommodation at Ysgol Yr Ferch O'r Sger, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and at Coychurch Primary to meet the needs arising from the local housing development.

<b>2.5</b>	<b>Support schools to meet pupil's additional learning needs (ALN)</b>	
------------	--	---

We improved the provision in mainstream schools for learners with additional learning needs. Additional training was delivered for support staff focusing initially on supporting learners with mathematical difficulties and pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

We started restructuring our Inclusion and Educational Psychology Services, providing an opportunity to review provision and support for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) in schools.

We also undertook a number of actions to improve the tracking and monitoring of learner's progress. These included improved accessibility to data, which enabled our Inclusion Service to manage and monitor special educational needs provision and the effectiveness of interventions for individual learners. Personal Education Plans were in place and monitored for all our looked after children with special education needs.

## **2.6 Offer 14-19 year olds the right type of qualification for them, for example, school based or job related**



We are now offering more opportunities for pupils aged 14-19 to gain qualifications in a wider range of subjects, with all secondary schools offering the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification at all levels.

Bridgend is leading the regional integration of services for 14-19 year olds, with our partners in the Central South Consortium. This work is improving the provision of advice to 14-19 year olds and helping them to identify the right type of qualification for them.

In collaboration with partners, we developed a Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan to ensure a good match between learners' needs and the provision of the most appropriate course for them. The collaborative Transformation Review for Post-16 learning provision was completed and implementation was ongoing throughout the year. The aim of the Review was to improve access to clear impartial, careers advice and guidance to assist young people to make the best decisions about their future learning opportunities and options.

We now have a specific post within the Just @sk+ service to support looked after children and care leavers to access education, employment and training opportunities. We also began the restructure of our provision for learners who are not educated in a school setting. This includes provision for school-age single mothers to ensure that they are able to access the same opportunities.

Each year a survey is carried out on school leavers to identify how many pupils are not in education, employment or training (NEET). In 2013-14 Bridgend's result of 3.7% was a significant reduction on our 2011-12 result of 6.4%.

## **2.7 Ensure that all young people feel included and that their wellbeing and sense of worth is promoted**



The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the children and young people who are looked after have access to advocacy to ensure that their voices are heard. We recently retendered and awarded a contract for the provision of Independent Professional Advocacy Services for vulnerable children and young people who are involved with our Children Services. This new service offers young people the support of an advocate if there is a particular issue they feel they need support to resolve or for their voice to be heard.

Additionally, looked after children and young people who have little or no contact with their birth family are legally entitled to an independent visitor. This service, as part of our new arrangements, is supported by volunteers who offer friendship and support to children and young people, undertaking regular visits and taking an active interest in the child or young person's life.

Our school modernisation programme and buildings improvements are improving the learning environments for our children and young people and ensuring that learners with disabilities are able to access the full range of education facilities in the school of their choice.

2.8	<b>Strengthen Adult Community Learning (ACL) in the county by working better with partners to ensure more people can access local learning opportunities, particularly around improving literacy, numeracy and IT skills</b>	
-----	--	---

In response to what communities and learners told us, ACL changed the focus of the curriculum this year and delivered more courses to improve people's skills and employability. This approach was strengthened by links with Communities First Bridgend, Employment and Skills Project, and the Cyberlink service in libraries.

The changes meant that 81% of people taking a course now complete it and 92% gain a qualification.

We maintained our 'Silver Surfer' computer course for the over 50s and encouraged learners to take part in mainstream courses.

We increased the total number of ICT based adult learning sessions attendee hours. They reached 3,340.5 in 2013-14 compared to 3,137 in 2011-12.

We also continue to work closely with Bridgend College, BAVO, Workers Educational Association to design and provide training courses.

Welfare reforms and the rapid development of 'digital by default' services require us to ensure that as many residents as possible are able to access and make the most of opportunities available online. As a result, the Cyber-link service is proving ever more relevant and has been enhanced by the Communities 2.0 digital inclusion project. The service continues to provide learning and training opportunities through Learn Direct. The library environment provides an accessible, appropriate and comfortable informal setting more tailored to this learning.

During the year, we supported 380 people to get online and to use laptops, tablets and smart phones. Forty library staff have been trained to help people access the internet. Five training sessions every week have been running in libraries throughout Bridgend.

### What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?

- We face budget reductions, constraints and capacity issues in the face of increasing demands in some service areas. We will: Maximise opportunities to work with partners, agencies and other authorities to develop streamlined services, supported by re-alignment of resources.
- Increase collaboration with the Third Sector.
- Work towards managing expectations and reducing demand.
- Continue to engage with our citizens and all partners on managing expectations and reducing demand, also on changes to and the re-organisation of services, where these are necessary, and any wider service impacts.
- Maximise opportunities for our school catering service to capitalise on service successes and have a positive impact on pupil health.
- Continue to implement our phased school modernisation programme, but within a revised timetable;
- Continue to fund school modernisation through the council's capital programme and both maximise and ring-fence the funds obtained from the sales of school sites;
- Maintain our strong project management arrangements and track record of delivering projects to time, quality and cost;
- Continue to undertake regular health and safety audits of our school sites to enable appropriate prioritisation of improvement works.

## Improvement Priority Three: Working with children and families to tackle problems early



**What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?**

We want children, young people and families to know how and where to get help so that problems are tackled early, before they reach crisis point.

## How did we do in 2013 – 14?

We achieved around two thirds of our improvement targets for this improvement priority.

We want to achieve more positive changes for more children and families.

We provided intensive support to 184 complex and vulnerable families via Connecting Families and Intensive Family Support Services

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified six indicators to measure success, three of which showed improvement (see table below).

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
<p>Our early interventions lead to a reduction in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of children being referred to Social services</li> <li>• The number of looked after children(LAC)</li> <li>• The number of children in need (CiN)</li> <li>• The number of children on the Child Protection Register(CPR)</li> </ul>	<p>Despite our efforts, the numbers of LAC, CPR, CiN and children being referred with concerns about neglect or abuse increased:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of children referred to Social Services with concerns of neglect or abuse increased to 448, compared to 302 in 2012-13.</li> <li>• There were 412 looked after children as at 31 March 2014, compared to 387 in 2013.</li> <li>• The number of children in need increased to 972 as at 31 March 2014, compared to 931 for the previous year</li> <li>• There were 179 children on the Child Protection Register as at 31 March 2014, compared to 161 for the previous year.</li> </ul> <p>This situation has put greater pressure on our social services.</p> <p>There were campaigns in the year aimed at raising the public's awareness of children who may be at risk and to increase the</p>	

	reporting of concerns. This could have contributed to the increased reporting of concerns.	
Young people leaving care are able to get the help and on-going support they need	We aim to stay in contact with all young people aged 19, who leave our care. In 2013-14, we remained in contact with 19 of the 23 care leavers. Unfortunately, it was either not possible to contact the remaining individuals or they did not wish for further contact.	
Families benefit from working with the Multi-Agency Community teams	Our Multi Agency Teams undertook assessments of need for 250 families, which was significantly in excess of the anticipated number for the year and double the number undertaken in the previous year.  Support plans were developed for 157 families, an increase of 114 in the previous year. 100% of families and 100% of children and young people reported that they were satisfied with the service they received. We continue to develop our multi-agency community teams including locating our safeguarding teams at our hubs.	
Percentage of children living in households where nobody works falls (also a measure for Improvement Priority 1)	The percentage of children in workless households reduced from 20.4% in 2011 to 17.5 in 2012. (This is the latest data currently available.)	
Substance and alcohol misuse falls;	The percentage of adults who reported binge drinking on at least one day in the past week has remained static at 29% between 2012 and 2013-13.	
Worklessness reduces and skills in families increase	The percentage of working age population with NVQ Level 3 or equivalent increased from 49.4% in 2012-13 to 51% in 2013-14	

## Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 10 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14, 9 (90%) of which were fully completed.

<b>3.1 Improve the way we and other agencies help families to address the root causes of their problems</b>	
---	---

We developed our plans for co-locating our statutory safeguarding teams with other community services at our locality hubs. Once implemented, this change will support a more joined-up service approach and more timely interventions to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.

We introduced the Family Intervention Support Panel in November 2013. The FISP brings together all intensive family support interventions including Connecting Families, Intensive Family Support Service and the Safeguarding and Family Support Team. This ensures that children and families receive the right support at the right time with support from the right services.

We introduced measures that enabled us to increase the number of approved adopters and increase the number of children that we were able to place for adoption. Additionally, in partnership with the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot local authorities, the Western Bay adoption collaborative was established under proposals for a National Adoption Service in Wales. This service model is scheduled to be live from September 2014.

We have prepared a Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan to focus on reducing the number of young people aged 11 to 25 who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).

We continue to work in partnership to create joined-up services across a range of agencies, increasing the support available to families from our early intervention services.

<b>3.2 Put more money towards employing family support workers and train them to help families make decisions that are right for them</b>	
---	---

Through the re-tendering of the Families First programme, we have been able to employ more Family Support Workers. A Keeping in Touch Officer has also been funded by Communities First. This important position engages with schools to identify and support children and young people who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training NEET.

Our Family Engagement Officers engaged with 1,301 parents/carers and 2,300 children/young people through referrals and family engagement / learning programmes such as Reading / Maths Cafés, Get Cooking and Attendance Workshops, which were run in partnership with schools staff, our Inclusion Service and the Education Welfare Service.

### **3.3 Put systems in place that mean families need only tell their stories once**



We now use the joint assessment family framework (JAFF) and team around the family (TAF) processes when working with families which means that families need only tell us their stories once. We have improved 'DRAIG' - our social care case management system – to support the JAFF and TAF.

All Multi Agency Community teams are being trained in the JAFF and TAF processes in 2014-15. All services delivered through Families First are required to make a JAFF referral when two or more additional needs are identified in a family.

### **3.4 Join up the different services so that everyone knows what support is being given and is working to the same ends**



During the year we completed a restructure of the Children's Directorate. There is now clear delineation between the roles and responsibilities/functions under each senior manager, which will improve service delivery and accountability of the Directorate's services.

### **3.5 Support the extension of the Flying Start programme to benefit as many families as possible**



Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme aimed at supporting families and children under the age of four 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 2013 -14 we delivered Flying Start services in seven areas - Bettws, Brackla, Caerau, Cefn Glas, Cornelly, Plasnewydd and Wildmill and expanded into Blackmill. Some difficulties with building works delayed the start of the Lewistown project, but services to the area were provided through Blackmill.

There were 1,171 children who benefited from Flying Start services, a rise from 950 children in 2012-13. The take up of childcare provided by Flying Start also rose to 96.40% in the year, compared to 87.3% the year before.

### **3.6 Provide parenting support for those who ask for help**



Through Families First, we trained staff to deliver a range of parenting programmes covering early years, teenage years as well as specific courses for families who have a child/young person with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. These programmes can now be delivered by Education Welfare Officers and Family Support Workers working in Families First, Flying Start, Youth Offending Services and Children's Services. This means that families receive consistent training and support.

### **3.7 Establish a Multi-Agency Community Team in each of the 3 localities within the borough, so that support is closer to those who need it**



Multi Agency Community (MAC) teams were established in hubs in the west and north of the borough. The north MAC team covers the Llynfi Valley, Garw Valley, Ogmere Valley and Valleys Gateway area (Aberkenfig across to Bryncethin) and the west covers the Cefn Cribbwr, Mynydd Cynffig, Pyle, Corneli and Porthcawl areas. The Eastern Hub will cover the Bridgend and Pencoed areas.

MAC teams include professionals from the Police, ABMUHB, third sector organisations, Safeguarding and Family Support, Housing services, Education, Adult Social Care, Adult Community Learning and schools.

Work on the east hub will likely commence in late 2014. Plans have been made for the Safeguarding teams to move into the localities and the Porthcawl safeguarding team has already moved to the west hub.

Each hub offers a facility from which MAC team members and members of county wide resource teams (like the Disabled Children's Team) work with children, young people and families, to offer a comprehensive range of services.

**3.8 Work with partner agencies on sharing information, making best use of available funding and communicating effectively**



The directorate continues to strengthen its approach to sharing data with partners, which now includes the development of Data Disclosure Agreements and Information Sharing Protocols, depending on circumstances. These kinds of agreements allow partners from different agencies to appropriately share and use personal and sensitive information about the people and families they support in a secure way. To improve efficiencies, each corporate Director is now authorised to act as signatory for data sharing agreements within each directorate.

**3.9 Reduce the average number of days to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for children**



We were not able to achieve the target we set for the year. There were 11 applications for Disabled Facility Grants for children during 2012-13 and 15 applications during 2013-14. Two of the applications during 2013-14 were complex and therefore affected the average number of days to deliver them significantly. Monthly monitoring of active cases continues to ensure that applications are approved and works completed promptly.

**3.10 Continue our implementation of the Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Strategy**



All local authorities are legally obliged to provide school-based counselling. This includes community-based provision for children/young people not in education, employment or training aged 11-18 years (including Year 6 transition pupils). Our services are now secure and we have identified a budget to support them.

We improved the way we identify how we can help children and young people who have responsibility for looking after another family member. We developed a Young Carers Assessment tool and recruited a Young Carers Officer to help with Young Carers Assessments so that young carers can get the support they need.

To support pupils with specific needs we are constructing an Emotional Behavioural and Social Difficulties (EBSD) Specialist Provision at the former Ogmere Comprehensive School Site to be ready by December 2014.

### **What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?**

Budget reductions and constraints and capacity issues in the face of increasing demands in some service areas could impact on service development and improvement and impact on our ability to deal with unforeseen trends and risks. We may experience reduced income generation in some areas and uncertainties regarding future levels of funding, particularly grant funding. We will:

- Maximise the operational efficiencies from multi- agency, collaborative and partnership working, including developing streamlined shared or integrated services and regionalisation of some services, supported by re-alignment of resources.
- Increase collaboration with the Third Sector.
- Proactively share knowledge, skills and experience between services and partners.

There is the potential for the number of children at risk or looked after to continue to increase if we have insufficient high quality early intervention and preventative services, including multi- agency locally based support, that can offer the necessary support to avoid the more complex and severe needs arising amongst children and young people and their families. We will:

- Continue to review and improve the provision of advice and support to children, young people and their families and offer holistic support to children and their families through integrated, multi-agency working.
- Expand our co-location of multi-agency teams to support a more co-ordinated and timely approach and responses.
- Build on the successes of integrated and effective early interventions, to prevent problems escalating and reduce the need for specialist, complex and more costly interventions later on.
- Continue to extend Flying Start provision in areas of need by March 2015 and continue to extend provision through new Communities First developments.
- Enhanced Looked After Children provision through work experience opportunities, the BCBC apprenticeship scheme, proactive educational planning, training for designated teachers in schools and permanency planning.
- Continue to support care leavers through our integrated Just @sk+ service and other services.

## Improvement Priority Four: Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent



What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?

We want to enable vulnerable people to live independently.

## How did we do in 2013 – 14?

We achieved what we promised to do to carry out this priority in that year, evidenced by the following.

We wanted to ensure effective care and support is given to people when it is needed.

Working in partnership with ABMUHB, the third sector and other local and regional partners, we

- Supported 4456 people in the community, of these 28% were aged between 18 and 64 and 72% were over 65.
- Provided a reablement service to 329 people to enable them to continue to live independently at home.
- Provided 1909 people in the county borough with telecare packages increasing their ability to remain independent.
- Helped over 100 people with dementia gain skills they need to remain independent in their own homes.
- Each day, supported 2900 people in the community, and provided 682 people with a service that assisted early discharge from hospital or avoided a hospital stay.

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified 6 indicators to measure success. Data for 3 of the 6 indicators are available and all these showed improvement. The table below shows the status of these indicators.

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
The proportion of older people aged 65+ who live independently increases	<p>During the year, we supported more people to live independently than in the year before by increasing the number of people using telecare services and accessing community services, thus reducing the number of people needing to live in care homes.</p> <p>Working closely with partners, we also encouraged people to access advice and support directly from the third sector and within their own networks and communities. Ideally, we would only want to see our social care services supporting people with more complex and greatest needs.</p>	

The numbers of inappropriate admissions to hospital and residential care are reduced( that is where the necessary care is provided in a more appropriate setting)	We provided 682 people with an alternative to a hospital placement but missed our challenging target of 700.	
More carers say that they are supported and their needs are met	This is a new measure and data will be available in 2014-15	
The number of people who have been discharged home with short-term packages of care increases	This is a new measure and we will be establishing a baseline in 2014-15. However, we offered 96.9% of carers of adults an assessment or review of	
The costs of care (taking account of the effects of inflation) per person aged over 65 reduce	Average cost per client for home care and the unit cost of residential care placements for adults age 65+ have risen between 2011-12 and 2012-13. Data for 2013-14 will be available in December 2014	
There is increased involvement of service users and carers in the planning of services and the implementation of a quality assurance framework to measure how successful this is	Service users have had increased opportunities in 2013-14 to get involved in the planning of services. Examples include monthly 'Have a say' sessions with service users with a learning disability and a carers' conference held in January.	

### Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 7 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14, 6 (86%) of which were fully completed and the other 2 were mostly completed.

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Work with ABMU Health Board to progress the development of the Integrated Referral Management Centre, bringing District Nursing Services into these arrangements</b>	
------------	---	---

The ABMU Health Board reviewed and then re-organised the district nursing services. As a result, the district nursing referral process became part of the Integrated Referral Management Centre (IMRC) which has resulted in better and more timely services for frail older people and people with complex conditions.

People also received joined up support from integrated health and social care teams through a single point of access.

We implemented a partnership with the British Red Cross to develop a service associated with the referral management centre, for people who need support to re-engage with their communities. Fifty-five referrals were made and the team provided more than 600 hours of direct face to face advice and support to clients.

Volunteers underwent extensive training and received one to one supervision. As a result, volunteers gave nearly 2000 hours of their time to support people in Bridgend.

<b>4.2 Take early action to help people to remain independent</b>	
---	---

Taking early action to help people remain independent is an important priority as it lays the foundation for the changes that will be brought about by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. This Act promotes people's independence, and gives people a stronger voice and control over their care. It also shifts the emphasis of services to prevention and early intervention.

The number of people aged 65+ supported in care homes decreased, as more people were enabled to remain independent for as long as possible.

Our Community Resource Team supported 682 people to stay at home. We also steadily increased the number of Telecare installations in the homes of vulnerable people by over 10% from April 2013, helping them to manage the risks that may be present.

Our Homecare Service established a short-term enabling scheme to support people with dementia to remain in their own homes. Over 100 people have benefitted from accessing this service since April 2013.

Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to supporting carers and to ensuring that they are valued as equal partners in the provision of care so that they can continue to undertake their caring role. In conjunction with ABMU Health Board, we have developed a Carers Information and Consultation Strategy which sets out how we can continue to develop the appropriate support and services to do this. The Strategy was developed under the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.

We piloted an E-learning carers' awareness programme in a number of staff teams to raise staff's awareness of carers. The Carers' Development Officer also attended social work team meetings to ensure that support to carers is a priority at the point of assessment. This increased focus on support to carers enabled us to offer over 96% of carers of adults an assessment or review of their needs in their own right.

**4.3 Develop our collaborative work across the region to ensure available resources are used to the best effect and there are no unnecessary duplications in services for service users**



We developed joint commitments through the Western Bay collaboration across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend for mental health, learning disability services and community services for older and disabled people.

We set up a primary care mental health service based on early intervention with a focus on recovery and the promotion of mental wellbeing. This service responded to over 1,000 referrals. We also introduced a progressive model of service delivery enabling adults with a learning disability to be more independent.

Work also focused on developing a full business case for delivering a consistent intermediate tier of service for all citizens. A bid into the Intermediate Care Fund was successful for 2014/15. As a result there will be more investment into the Intermediate Community Resource Team which will deliver medical and nursing services within people's own homes where appropriate rather than at hospital.

**4.4 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, thereby ensuring that they receive the most appropriate level of information, support or care**



We developed new assessment tools in partnership with our health colleagues. The tools have been tested across all of adult social care and will go live in 2014/15. These tools will ensure that people are assessed and given the right amount of information, support or care when needed.

Direct payments for minor adaptations were introduced and have grown slowly but incrementally. It has meant that service users have had more choice and control and improved their safety at home at the right time for them, enabling them to remain independent in their own homes for longer.

#### **4.5 Continue to improve the timescales for delivering the Disabled Facilities Grant**



We worked hard to deliver adaptations to people's homes as quickly as possible. In 2012-13, our actual average days of delivering a disabled facilities grant were 201. We set a target of 253 days for 2013-14, which was higher than the previous year, in anticipation of an increase in large scale adaptations which are more time-consuming, compared to bathing grants, which can be delivered more quickly. We achieved an average of 222 days overall for the year, which is better than the Welsh average of 239 days for that year.

#### **4.6 Identify and prioritise service provision required to deliver a range of supported housing options**



We carried out an accommodation analysis that identified existing provision and need in order to assist in future developments. The analysis is to be used in conjunction with selection criteria that has been developed in order to prioritise future developments. The action to produce an Accommodation Strategy has been absorbed into the review of the 2009/14 Local Housing Strategy, to be approved by Cabinet in April 2015.

#### **4.7 Review our purchasing arrangements for care packages to ensure that they meet the individual needs of vulnerable people**



We are working hard to improve the way we commission and contract for services to meet people's individual needs and to provide value for money. As part of the new assessment framework, we are "right sizing" care packages which involves reviewing packages of care to ensure service users are receiving the most appropriate levels of support proportionate to their needs.

## What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?

There are financial challenges and demographic pressures facing the council. For Adult Social Care this means that there is an older population with more complex needs and budget reduction of approximately £9million over the next three to four years. The Council has produced a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to respond to these challenges and we are developing innovative responses to ensure that people receive the support they need and that our services are sustainable into the future.

To meet these challenges, the key priorities for 2014-2015 are as follows:

- Work with partners across the Western Bay region to enable better outcomes for older people and people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions
- Work with service users, carers and partners, including the third sector, to develop services in a way which support people to remain independent for longer and only access statutory services when absolutely necessary
- Provide support to carers to enable them to continue in their caring role
- Work with partners to develop a range of accommodation options for vulnerable and older people who need help to achieve or sustain independence
- Ensure the needs of older people are recognised when designing community based activities and opportunities

## Improvement Priority Five: Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles



What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?

We want to see a healthier population.

## How did we do in 2013 – 14?

We made good progress towards achieving this improvement priority.

We wanted to “make good progress in encouraging more people across the borough to live healthily” and to “see increased participation in physical activity across all population groups”.

Working together, we achieved the following:

- The total junior swims paid and free totalled 51,159.
- The total number of swims under the free swimming senior initiative was 84,904, 7.3% above target.
- The number of visits to local authority sport and leisure facilities per 1000 population to take part in physical activities was 9588, up from 8914 in 2012-13.
- The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) made a total of 2162 referrals, up from 882 in 2012-13.
- Our ‘Play for Life’ programme encouraged 5244 children to get active, get creative, get involved and have fun playing.
- The leadership pathway that supports young people has been recognised by Estyn as sector leading.

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified 7 indicators to measure success. Data is available for 6 of the indicators, and we collectively made improvements for four (57%) of these (shown below).

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Percentage of the population who smoke reduces	The latest data (2013) showed a decrease in the number of people who smoke from 23% (in 2012-13) to 22%.	
Percentage of the population who are overweight or obese reduces	The latest data (2013) showed a decrease in the number of people reporting being overweight or obese, from 59% (in 2012-13) to 58%.	
Percentage of adults who binge drink on at least one day per week reduces	The latest data (2013) showed no change from the year before (29%)	

Teenage conception rates reduce	The under-18 conception rate per 1,000 females aged 15-17 reduced from 41.1 in 2011-12 to 37.4 in 2012-13 (latest data available)	
The rate of low birth weight babies (below 2.5kg) reduces	The low birth weight babies as a percentage of all live and still births with a stated birth weight increased from 7.4 in 2011-12 to 8.0 in 2012-13 (latest data available)	
Percentage of adults achieving the recommended levels of physical activity increases	The latest data (2013) showed an increase in the number of people achieving the levels of physical activity recommended from 30% to 31%. The number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres during the year per 1,000 population where the visitor participated in physical activity also increased from 8,914 to 9,588. In addition, the participation by the over 60s in the National Free Swimming initiative has been amongst the highest in Wales	
The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy between the borough's most and least deprived communities narrows	No new data after 2009 available. Male: 19.4 years Female 20.8 years	

### Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 5 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14. In addition, we identified a further action (5.6 below) to work with our partners to address the issue of teenage pregnancies. Altogether, 5 (83%) of these actions were fully completed.

<b>5.1</b>	<b>Improve healthy living programmes in leisure facilities, schools and communities to encourage participation in physical activity</b>	
------------	---	---

There has been an increase in the levels of physical activity by local people within leisure facilities and through use of the natural environment. We exceeded our target for physical activity based visits to Council owned leisure facilities.

The £4.2 million investment into Bridgend Life Centre was completed. There have been additional facility enhancements at Heronsbridge School and Garw Valley Life Centre supported by Sport Wales. The further development of community use of schools was achieved through investment into accessible facilities of Coleg Y Dderwen.

The National School Sport Survey highlighted good levels of participation with 11,644 Primary School participants and 9690 Secondary School participants. The leadership pathway that supports young people has been recognised by Estyn as sector leading. There has been a focus on developing active households and the Family Active Zone and MEND programmes have promoted healthy lifestyles.

The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) continues to operate successfully and targets a range of chronic conditions. The Foodwise programme has been developed to focus on the benefits of nutrition.

All our services and activities contributed to the Council's Strategic Equalities plan (SEP). The participation by the over 60s in the National Free Swimming initiative has been amongst the highest in Wales and Bridgend has also been awarded the Ribbon and Bronze 'Insport' accreditation for inclusive provision. The Access to Leisure scheme has been modified to reduce cost as a barrier to activity. The Community Chest scheme has invested £95,000 into third sector development.

Bridgend's section of the Coastal Path was the busiest section in Wales and the Park Run project attracts participants on a weekly basis. The Love 2 Walk programme has also achieved its targets in relation to developing community walking initiatives.

Bridgend developed a Play Sufficiency Action Plan in response to a statutory duty on recreational activity being introduced by Welsh Government and secured a range of low cost and no cost opportunities, in partnership with Town and Community Councils.

<b>5.2</b>	<b>Work with Public Health and other partners to further develop targeted projects to help tackle health issues and live healthy lifestyles including: Weight Management, harmful drinking and smoking</b>	
------------	--	---

There were significant changes to the Public Health team throughout 2013-14 and commitments and actions were reviewed. Progress was made and new programmes to reduce harmful drinking were rolled out.

Bridgend Youth Service and the Public Health Team developed a Substance Misuse Policy for all our comprehensive schools. The policy will guide school staff on developing substance misuse education, on how to respond to substance related issues on school premises and surrounding areas and support them with referral to services. Substance Misuse Toolkits for primary schools have

been developed in both Swansea and Cardiff. The Public Health Team and the Healthy Schools Scheme have been exploring which kit would be most suitable to implement locally.

The Public Health Team and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team developed an information leaflet for parents of children and young people who have been found drinking alcohol in the community without parental supervision. The leaflet provides useful information for parents, including guidance on how to discuss alcohol related issues with their children. The leaflet also contains a list of local and national services that offer support.

Twelve organisations of over 50 employees signed up to the Corporate Health Standard and all were working towards criteria which include promoting safe drinking practices. Twenty nine organisations of fewer than 50 employees who signed up to the Small Workplace Health Award will have to promote safe drinking, at some point in the criteria, but may not have chosen that health topic in the first stages.

<b>5.3</b>	<b>Enhance the role of libraries in helping citizens to improve their emotional and physical wellbeing by providing more joined up services in one place</b>
------------	--



In November 2013, the new Bridgend Library opened at the Bridgend Recreation Centre. This is the latest example of our Life centre / co-location model of service which had been already successfully implemented in the Ogmere and Garw valleys and was celebrated as good practice at a ministerial level.

<b>5.4</b>	<b>Reduce levels of tobacco consumption</b>
------------	---



The multi-agency Tobacco Control Steering Group developed an action plan to co-ordinate partnership working across the County Borough to tackle issues around tobacco consumption.

Throughout the year we continued to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking. As part of our anti-smoking campaign, we launched a voluntary code of no smoking in all Bridgend County Borough Council Playgrounds.

Communities First developed a smoke free homes project as part of their healthy living activity. As a result, 44 people said they had improved knowledge of the effect of second hand smoke, 8 people reduced their levels of smoking and a further 8 people were supported into smoking cessation services. Twenty-four people have made their homes smoke free.

The Trading Standards Service completed inspections and enforcements in response to intelligence from partners to reduce the number of underage sales. The Service also had a number of successful cases in which possession for the supply of illicit tobacco was brought before the Magistrates Court.

Our Environmental Health Service continues to inspect and take relevant action in relation to the smoking ban.

## 5.5 Reduce harmful drinking



We worked with partners towards joint inspections and enforcements of premises selling alcohol, and to tackle nuisance behaviour associated with excessive alcohol consumption. We completed several underage sales initiatives in relation to the sale and supply of alcohol. Funding and partnership work is being developed to provide a revised trader guidance pack, and targeted age restricted sales survey work based on intelligence and risk.

Neighbourhood Networks and local partnership work increased communication and sharing of knowledge, and ensured better coordination between organisations. This included a more detailed analysis of data around alcohol related problems, support for initiatives such as trialling a 'meet and greet' project in the town centre during the autumn rugby internationals, and promotion of the white ribbon domestic violence campaign often linked to alcohol related violence, along with greater partnership support around a number of town initiatives.

With regard to alcohol licensing, during the year 3 premises were subject to licence review. Licensing policy has an important impact on the availability of alcohol and the way in which it is sold. Bridgend's licensing policy is subject to a review and consultation will commence with key stakeholders.

## 5.6 Working together to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies



In 2013-14, our Youth Service worked with our Local Service Board partners to tackle the teenage conception issue.

The Llynfi Valley Project, led by the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board (ABMU) and work being developed by North Community Network, aimed to improve access to primary care services and to increase uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) amongst young people.

We jointly implemented the 'Empower to Choose' programme to reduce the proportion of unplanned conceptions among under 18 year olds. We delivered the provision of Sexual Health services via the Families First Programme.

Through our Healthy Schools Scheme, we rolled out sex and relationships education and promotion material to all primary schools, and delivered a one-day sex and relationships education course. Our Youth Service also engaged with GPs in the development of sexual health services and cost effective models of care and access.

Because of our joint efforts, the rate of teenage conceptions across Bridgend County has fallen for both under 16s and under 18s. However, we still have a long way to go to get where we want to be, because Bridgend County Borough remains above the Wales average rate of teenage conceptions.

### **What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?**

We face unprecedented challenges of budget cuts and increased demands for services. We seek to meet these challenges in a variety of ways including collaboration (both internally and with partners), joint teams and commissioning. We will adopt flexible working practices to enable staff to develop skills and commissioning models to support staff and services. Corporate investment is intended to strengthen areas that require particular emphasis in the future particularly in the procurement requirements of the Authority for savings, income generation, strong performance management, and partnership working.

## Improvement Priority Six: Working together to make the best use of our resources



**What do we want for people in Bridgend County Borough by March 2017?**

We want people in the borough to be confident that the Council is fair, ambitious, customer-focused and efficient.

## How did we do in 2013 – 14?

We made good progress towards achieving this improvement priority.

We wanted to make £3.7 million savings in 2013-14 and to prepare for further savings in future years while driving improvements in priority areas.

Working together, we

- achieved the savings for the year.
- reduced the time to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit from 23.48 to 15.92 days.
- established a strategic change management programme.
- improved the way we communicate with citizens.
- reduced CO2 emissions.
- improved the way we commission facilities and services.

## Progress against Success Indicators

We identified 6 indicators to measure success. Data is available for 5 of the indicators, and we collectively made improvement on all of them (shown below).

How did we say we would measure success?	How did we do?	Traffic Light
Planned savings are achieved	We achieved the savings for 2013-14.	
The use and value of our available office space is maximised	The target was not achieved within 2013-14, but plans are in place to significantly reduce the available office space by the closure of one of the three core offices and through implementation of a 3:2 desk (3 staff to 2 desks) ratio.	
Our spend on current contracts and commissioning is reduced	This is a new measure. We are establishing baseline.	

Our current spend on ICT systems is reduced	The savings targets for ICT systems for 2013-14 were achieved.	
Our resource strategies clearly support the delivery of the corporate improvement priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Fully achieved.	
There is positive feedback from citizens regarding communication, engagement, access to services and value for money	<p>Our latest Citizens Panel Survey found that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44% of citizens surveyed found the Council was good or very good at telling them about the services it provides and council related news;</li> <li>• 26% felt that they can influence decisions affecting their local area; and</li> <li>• 63% said that their individual access requirements are met when contacting the Council.</li> </ul> <p>Our survey on value for money is planned to be conducted in November 2014.</p>	

### Progress against 2013-14 Commitments

We defined 11 key actions (our commitments) to carry out this priority in 2013-14, 10 (91%) of which were fully completed.

<b>6.1 Deliver the savings proposals identified in the 2013-14 budget</b>	
---	---

Our medium term financial strategy (MTFS) sets out our financial plan covering expenditure and savings across all areas of the authority from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

We achieved the total savings of £3.7 million. This consists of £3.525 million through the savings proposals for 2013-14 and £175,000 through the Council's staff vacancy management protocol and a tighter control on general expenses.

We planned for further budget reductions for 2014-15.

We have improved the way we plan and review budgets using a new Collaborative Planning Module for Budget Setting and completed reviews of current budgets for some of our largest services. We have prepared outline business cases for all budget reduction proposals so that we will continue to secure the savings we need in 2014-15.

<b>6.2</b>	<b>Establish a Strategic Change Management Programme</b>	
------------	--	---



The Bridgend Change Programme (BCP) has been established to lead a number of changes to the way we work and spend to ensure that we are able to continue to deliver the aims and priorities of the Council with increasingly limited resources.

<b>6.3</b>	<b>Review fees, charges and surplus assets and make recommendations to optimise income</b>	
------------	--	---



We developed and made good progress with our 'improving your space' plan to reduce running costs and CO2 emissions of office accommodation and get better value from our property assets. This enabled preparations to be made for the sale of the Sunnyside building in Bridgend.

We developed a new performance management system, which will help us to monitor performance and seek improvements in services across the authority.

<b>6.4</b>	<b>Deliver the actions for the Council set out in the Single Integrated Partnership Plan 'Bridgend County Together'</b>	
------------	---	---



Bridgend County Together is the name of Bridgend's single integrated partnership plan that sets out the priorities and actions that private, public and voluntary sector partners in Bridgend County will work together to deliver. We reviewed the priorities and actions in the plan in 2013-14 and those actions for 2013-14 were delivered, amended or carried forward into 2014-15. Full details can be found in the LSB Annual Report on their website [www.bridgendlsb.org.uk/bridgend-county-together](http://www.bridgendlsb.org.uk/bridgend-county-together)

#### **6.5 Take action to further reduce sickness absence levels**

G

Reducing sickness absenteeism remains a priority for the Council - not only because of the associated costs of employees being absent, but also because of the disruption to the delivery of services. An absence management officer was appointed in July 2013 to support the authority and directorates in tackling the issue. The overall sickness absence level for the council has reduced from 10.15 days in 2012-13 to 9.8 days in 2013-14.

#### **6.6 Expand social media**

G

Citizens need to be able to easily get the information they need from the authority and be able to have two way, real time communication with the authority and its partners. In 2013-14 we developed our use of social media through 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' to improve levels of communication, participation and understanding of the authority's services and increase consultation opportunities among citizens and employees.

Our Customer and Community Support Unit staff have been trained to use social media so that they can respond to customers out of hours. We have also trained elected members in how to make the best use of social media. However, the use of social media with members needs further development.

#### **6.7 Develop a communication and citizen engagement strategy**

G

The review of the Citizens' Engagement Strategy was conducted in March 2014, and the Strategy's Action Plan for 2014-15 is currently awaiting approval. In 2013-14 we increased the number of Citizens Panel members from some 'seldom heard' groups, including young people and under-represented wards. We also continued to monitor and develop social media and media coverage trends.

<b>6.8 Reduce energy costs and CO2 emissions from our estate</b>	
--	---

We have a comprehensive strategy to reduce energy costs and CO2 emissions from Council property. A review of the Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan was completed in July 2013 with updated targets for resource use and actions to deliver improved energy management. Energy surveys were completed in 2013-14 on all council property and the results displayed.

<b>6.9 Implement a customer services strategy</b>	
---	---

During 13/14 the Customer services team increased the range of services it delivers at the first point of contact. The team now deals with telephone calls, e-mails and in personal enquiries about housing and homelessness, highways issues and the Family Information Service.

To improve our service delivery for deaf and hard of hearing customers, two members of the team attained the BSL level 1 qualification and the 'Louder than Words' Charter was retained for a second consecutive year. A Customer Services Apprentice was appointed for a 2-year term in November 2013.

<b>6.10 Establish a shared public protection service with other councils</b>	
--	---

In order to provide a more resilient and responsive service and at the same time achieve savings in service costs, proposals have been developed for a single shared service to be created comprising the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing functions of Bridgend, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils.

Funding for this project had been secured from Welsh Government to support development and implementation, however, following the publication of the Williams' report which included proposals for the amalgamation of some local authorities in Wales, the project was delayed but is now progressing through each authorities Cabinet and Council for formal approval.

## 6.11 Review procurement practices and develop joint working opportunities with other public sector bodies

G

Our aim is to get the best deal when we buy goods or services from others through an effective purchasing route. In 2013-14 BCBC undertook a review of procurement and commissioning practices and identified a number of areas for improvement. We continue to work collaboratively with other local authorities and have set up partnering arrangements with the National Procurement Service, Welsh Purchasing Consortium and Western Bay which will help us to deliver efficiency savings for front line services.

### What are our challenges for 2014-15 and how will we respond?

Our main challenge for 2014-15 will be to continue to improve services for our customers whilst achieving the savings we need to meet the medium term financial strategy. To meet this challenge in 2014-15 we will

- continue to develop our Medium Term Financial Strategy aligning our resources to our improvement priorities;
- deliver the 'Making Best Use of Resources' projects in Bridgend Change Programme for the coming year;
- continue to rationalise and improve council systems and processes;
- deliver the savings proposals identified in the 2014-15 budget;
- complete our procurement and commissioning review;
- share best-practice and take action, where necessary, to reduce absence levels;
- implement the Asset Management Plan (AMP) 2014-15 actions, including energy and carbon reduction measures;
- work towards a collaborative land agreement for Parc Afon Ewenny (Waterton);
- deliver the enhanced disposals programme;
- review the work with our partners, including the Local Service Board and the third sector;
- develop a management competency framework and organisational development plan; and
- further develop mechanisms to enhance customer feedback.

## Financial Performance

Our financial environment is becoming increasingly challenging. We need to make unprecedented savings in the future that can only be achieved by changing the way we work and changing the way services are delivered.

### 2013-14 Expenditure

Last year, the amount we spent on delivering services to our citizens and investing in our landscape and infrastructure totalled almost £400 million. The total amount that we have available to spend is made up from three main sources listed below.

### Revenue Expenditure

Our revenue expenditure represents day to day costs such as salaries, equipment, supplies and services. Our net revenue expenditure in 2013-14 after allowing for appropriation to earmarked reserve, additional income from council tax and an underspend on general contingencies (as reported in the 2013-14 Statement of Accounts) was **£254.65 million**, which resulted in an underspend of £75,000 which was transferred to the Council Fund. The table below shows the expenditure and proportion of spend per Improvement Priority in 2013-14:

Improvement Priority for 2013-14	Revised Budget 2013-14 (£'Million)	Actual Outturn 2013-14 (£'Million)	Actual Over/(Under) Spend 2013-14 (£'Million)
1. Working together to develop the local economy	13.6	13.4	(0.2)
2. Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement	118.0	117.5	(0.5)
3. Working with children and families to tackle problems early	24.3	25.0	0.7
4. Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent	26.3	26.9	0.6
5. Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles	23.8	23.4	(0.4)
6. Working together to make the best use of our resources	3.7	3.5	(0.2)
OTHER-Not linked to Improvement Objectives	45.0	44.9	(0.1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>254.7</b>	<b>254.6</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>

## 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 2013-14 was **£36.73 million**, where the main projects carried out during the year included:

£11,405,000	Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen	£ 1,455,000	Porthcawl Harbour
£ 2,495,000	Pen Y Fai primary school	£ 2,106,000	Carriageway Reconstruction
£ 3,941,000	Bridgend Town centre Convergence	£ 1,528,000	Bridgend Recreation Centre
£ 2,125,000	Disabled facility Grants & Private Sector Housing		

## Grants

We also received specific government grants, in addition to the core Revenue Support Grant and Non-domestic Rate (NDR) allocations, totalling **£87.57 million** during 2013-14, which we are able to use in addition to our own Revenue and Capital expenditure. The main grants received during 2013-14 included:

£6,101,000	Supporting People grant	£2,898,000	Sustainable Waste grant
£2,486,000	Flying Start grant	£1,913,000	Families First grant

## 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 £15.9 million. However additional savings of £11.274 million need to be achieved in 2014-15 and each year it gets more difficult to identify new savings.

In 2013-14, we planned to make efficiency savings of £3.7 million. Savings of £3.525 million were fully achieved during the year, with the remaining £175,000 not achieved. Savings proposals for 2013-14 that were not fully met relate to:

- Bryngarw House;
- Learning disabilities day services;

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

## 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 or financial savings or both. Some of our major collaborative activities from 2013-14 are shown below:

The **Western Bay Health and Social Care Collaboration Programme** was established in January 2012 to progress the integration of health and social care across Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea local authority areas. Good progress was made in 2013-2014. The collaboration has reached the point where new service delivery will be implemented. The main projects that report into the programme are learning disabilities, mental health, community services and adoption.

Our **Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)** that became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2013 is a model of working in a very intensive way with families where there is substance misuse. The team works across the Western Bay area and is made up of social workers and nurses working with every individual in the family unit.

Our **Invisible Walls Wales Project** is a new initiative which seeks to integrate the support and interventions offered to specific men in custody alongside the whole family. Services are tailored to individual families, including mentoring support, group work, mediation, family group conferencing, parenting and other related services according to need. The project is a partnership between G4S, Barnardo's, BCBC, Gwalia and the Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice.

Through Bridgend's Local Service Board work has continued on mitigating the effects of **welfare reforms** in Bridgend. A series of awareness raising events was completed in 2013 which concluded with two events for local councillors. Concerns over pay-day loans and loan sharks were raised at these events. In response the LSB organised a specific event on illegal moneylending and pay day loan for frontline workers, advocates and intermediaries in health, social care, housing, voluntary sector and other agencies who provide support to vulnerable people. Delegates also had the opportunity to meet a range of providers able to offer alternative means of credit and support with budgeting.

We are providing **Work Placements, Traineeships and Apprenticeships** through joint working across service areas and in partnership with other organisations such as Job Centre Plus and Bridgend College. Since April 2013 the Council has provided in excess of 100 work placements. These include 36 apprentice placements in Building Maintenance for first year students and placements for young job seekers and young people with health issues that affect their ability to find jobs. These projects will develop further in 2014-15 to provide support for more young people including those who are leaving care.

The **South West Wales Regional AD Hub** is a Welsh Government supported project with Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils to develop an anaerobic digestion (AD) facility to deal with the region's food waste. It is intended that this facility will use food waste from households and businesses to produce fertiliser and biogas that will be used to generate electricity and heat. The procurement had been proceeding well and was nearing financial close when the preferred bidder withdrew from the process. Discussions are current ongoing between Hub Members and the Welsh Government on what action and direction to take following the decision by the preferred bidder to withdraw from the procurement.

The **Joint Vehicle Maintenance Facility and Fleet Management Service** is a partnership with South Wales Police which will service both organisations' fleets. Work was progressed on this new facility in 2013-14, which will cost in excess of £2M, and it is due to 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. This will enable both parties to seek best pricing policies due to larger volumes and turnover within the mechanical engineering/fleet servicing department.

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. The collaboration is allowing the flexibility to target greater numbers of enforcement officers in any particular area as and when the need arises.

The **Eco Llynfi** project aims to develop a local understanding of eco-connectivity and the actions that individuals and groups can take to develop it in everyday life. With funding from Welsh Government, Bridgend County Borough Council, Valleys to Coast, Groundwork Bridgend Neath Port Talbot and Natural Resources Wales have been supporting local groups to help the local community learn about the environment. Eco Llynfi is made up of 5 projects: Caerau Park Estate, Maesteg Welfare Park, Caerau Market Garden, River Corridor and Woodland Creation and has included drainage, hedgelaying and a community garden whilst also providing habitats for wildlife and plants.

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. 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;
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Natural Resources Wales;
- HALO/GLL and commercial partners;
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council;
- Other local authorities;
- Parc Prison
- Public Health Wales
- 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.

## 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 on the consultation page of our website [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) 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. In 2013-14 we also developed an improved social media presence through Twitter.

Across all our services we are communicating with our citizens every day. In 2013-14 our customer service centre dealt with:

- 15,971 written contacts, 99.5% of which were responded to within 5 days;
- 223,491 phone calls, 69.3% of which were answered in 30 seconds and;
- 38,000 visitors to the Customer Service Centre in the Civic Offices where 68.8% were seen within 10 minutes with the average wait time being 8.86 minutes.

These contacts related to all aspects of our services, including waste collection, planning, council tax, homelessness. Our Customer Service Centre was able to help resolve 88.7% of all the issues raised through telephone or visitor contacts on that first contact. Overall 83.3% of people surveyed said that they found the service to be excellent.

We continue to provide a wide range of regular opportunities for service users to help us with feedback on our services, often through working with Third Sector partner organisations and other partners such as Age Cymru and Bridgend People First. In 2013-14 these opportunities included:

- Monthly 'Have a say' sessions with service users with a learning disability;
- A well-attended carers' conference held in January that provided an opportunity for carers to share issues and identify the support they felt they needed to continue in their caring roles;
- Direct contact with people living in residential or nursing care homes through regular monitoring visits;
- Community Care Survey sent out to anyone who has received a service; and
- Regular service users meetings as part of the Neath Port Talbot/Bridgend Community Group to discuss topical issues relating to the Supporting People Programme and consider emerging service needs related to supported accommodation.

Each year we also hold specific public consultations to help us with planning services and setting priorities and making changes to the way we provide services. In 2013/14 these consultations included:

- **Council's financial situation** – Over the next three years Bridgend County Borough Council is expecting to have to make more significant savings on its annual budget. We wanted to better understand your awareness of the financial situation, and to gather your views on how the council might be able to save money.

The consultation received 732 responses overall.

- 62% said they were aware of the council's financial situation.
  - 32% believed council could save money through reducing the number of councillors, workforce and/or employee benefits.
  - 14% said citizens could reduce demand by taking more personal responsibility.
- **Nursery Consultation** – the purpose of this consultation is to invite your views on the proposals to amend the council's Nursery Education Policy, in order to contribute towards the savings required in the Schools and Early Years budgets. After over 2,000 responses to the nursery consultation, Bridgend County Borough Council agreed to continue their current nursery education provision after 81% of respondents stated they would like the policy to remain the same.
  - **Consultation on the review of the Corporate Plan** – the consultation was part of the preparation of the 2014-15 update to the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-17. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that the plan reflects citizens' priorities and also to ensure that it meets statutory requirements and the related statutory guidelines. Overall the Council received 36 responses to the consultation, counting the combined response from the Youth Council as one, and the feedback from the meeting with the Equality Forum as one.

Over 90% of respondents found that improvement priorities one to five were clear and easy to understand (this was 79% for improvement priority six) and over 70% of citizens agreed that the commitments were the right things to focus on to achieve each of the six improvement priorities. The Council considered all points made and wherever possible incorporated those views into the reviewed Corporate Plan for 2014-15, including bringing increased emphasis on supporting more-able pupils in schools, promoting walking as a healthy activity and providing advice to help our citizens to eat more healthily.

There were many other consultations held in 2013-14 on aspects of all our services including changes to adult day services and mergers and changes to school provision. Details of these can be found on the consultation pages of the Council's website [www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation)

### **Citizens Panel**

Our Citizens' Panel is made up of 1,082 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. The Citizens' Panel increased in representativeness over 2013-14, and provides an ideal method for two-way dialogue between the Council and the citizens through methods such as the 'you said, we did' styled response feedback on survey results. We conducted three Citizens' Panel surveys over the financial year 2013-14 that included questions on customer services, recycling and shopping habits in town centres.

## What did our regulators say about us?

Each year the Auditor General must report on how well Welsh authorities plan to improve and deliver their services. The Annual Improvement Report we received in May 2014 focused on the Council's delivery of its improvement objectives and evaluation of services in relation to 2012-13 and its planning of improvement for 2013-14.

The report drew on a corporate assessment that reviewed the council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and a performance assessment that reviewed the previous financial year's progress of planned improvements as set out in the council's forward looking plan (in this case, the Council's Corporate Plan 2010-13).

The report also drew on the CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales) *Annual Review Evaluation of Performance 2012-13*; the findings of the Estyn inspection that was carried out in October 2012; and the Council's self-assessment of performance (Annual Report 2012-13).

The overall conclusion of the report is positive, reflecting what the Council achieved and the improvement it made in 2012-13. The report acknowledged that the Council:

- Made good progress in delivering improvement in most of its priority areas and recognises the need to accelerate improvement in education.
- Had established a culture of self-evaluation which resulted in a fair and balanced account of its performance in 2012-13.
- Was ensuring it had sound plans for improvement, despite significant financial challenges.
- Had effective performance review arrangements in place, which it regarded as 'good practice'.
- Had an approach to financial management that they regarded as 'positive practice'.

Building on their review of the Council's collaborative working arrangements with the third sector, the report also acknowledged that the Council continued its efforts to improve the arrangements with the third sector, and to put actions in place to implement the proposals.

Based on these findings, the report concluded that the Council was likely to make appropriate arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15. The report did not make any statutory recommendations for the Council to consider, or specific proposals for improvement. The Annual Improvement Report is available to view on the 'Council Priorities and Performance' page of our website [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk)

## Our Improvement Objectives for 2014-15

Our Corporate Plan 2013-17 sets out six priorities (referred to as improvement priorities) for 2013-17. These priorities were reviewed and confirmed for 2014-15:

1. Working together to develop the local economy
2. Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
3. Working with children and families to tackle problems early
4. Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent
5. Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles
6. 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:

1. People in Bridgend County Borough are healthier
2. People in Bridgend County Borough benefit from a stronger and more prosperous economy
3. People in Bridgend County Borough are engaged and empowered to achieve their own potential
4. 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>.