

Working in partnership

We continued to 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 include:

- the *Western Bay Health and Social Care Collaboration Programme* that will be delivering new projects in our learning disabilities, mental health, community services and adoption services;
- *Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)*, a team of social workers and nurses that work intensively with families where there is substance misuse;
- a series of awareness raising events on welfare reforms for frontline workers in health, social care, housing, third sector and other agencies who provide support to vulnerable people; and
- providing work placements, traineeships and apprenticeships through joint working with other organisations such as Job Centre Plus and Bridgend College.

Citizen feedback

Citizen feedback is vital for planning the improvement of our services. We provided a wide range of regular opportunities for service users to help us with feedback on our services, often through working with the third sector and other partner organisations, and also through our Citizens' Panel.

In the past year, we consulted on our Medium Term Financial Strategy, on our improvement priorities, and on specific services. Of the 732 responses:

- 62% said they were aware of the council's financial situation;
- 32% believed the Council could save money through reducing the number of councillors, workforce and/or employee benefits;
- 4% said citizens could reduce demand by taking more personal responsibility.

Our latest Citizens Panel Survey found that:

- 44% of citizens surveyed found the Council was good or very good at telling them about the services it provides and council related news;
- 26% felt that they can influence decisions affecting their local area; and
- 63% said that their individual access requirements were met when contacting the council.

Want to know more?

You can access the full annual report via our website www.bridgend.gov.uk and copies are also available at local libraries.

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



What did our regulators say

Each year the Auditor General reports on how well Welsh authorities plan to improve and deliver their services. Drawing on findings from other inspections/reviews such as the CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales) Annual Review Evaluation of Performance 2012-13, the Estyn inspection October 2012, and the Council's self-assessment of performance, the Annual Wales Audit Office Improvement Report was positive overall. It concluded that the Council was likely to make appropriate arrangements to improve further in 2014-15. The report did not make any statutory recommendations for the Council to consider, or specific proposals for improvement.

Summary of improvement priorities for 2014-15

Our Corporate Plan 2013-17 sets out the following six priorities for 2014-15:

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

Annual Report Summary 2013-14



November 2014

This summary highlights our performance against our six improvement priorities

The full report can be accessed via the Bridgend County Borough Council website www.bridgend.gov.uk

Improvement Priority 1 Working together to develop the local economy

We made good progress towards achieving this improvement priority. We said we would continue to regenerate our town centres, look for new funding and investments to boost our local economy, provide extra jobs and attract more visitors to the borough.

Working together, we:

- completed regeneration works in Maesteg and Bridgend town centres, and secured future investment. The Porthcawl Marina was officially opened, although progress in further developing Porthcawl was delayed;
- supported 25 local businesses and created 47 new jobs through the Local Investment Fund;
- saw an increase in employment rates for our working age people, particularly for those aged 16-24;
- supported 29 micro enterprises and created 29.5 new jobs through the Green Shoots Project; and
- brought in over £6 million more revenue to the County Borough through tourism, although visitor numbers to Bridgend and Porthcawl town centres declined slightly in 2013-14.

Improvement Priority 2 Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

We achieved the challenging targets we set to carry out this priority for the year. We wanted to ensure that by working with schools, colleges and local training providers, our children and young people could achieve their ambitions by improving their educational results, gaining qualifications and undertaking training.

Working together, we saw the following improvements:

- 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 to 54.2% in 2013-14 academic year (provisional data);
- performance of our pupils at the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) in English/Welsh, mathematics and science improved from 82.6% in 2012-13 to 86.2% in the 2013-14 academic year. In Welsh, our pupils' performance was well above the average for Wales (provisional data);
- 88% of our school were graded as good or excellent by ESTYN inspections;
- a reduction in 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.



Improvement Priority 3

Working with children and families to tackle problems early

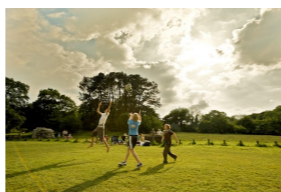
We achieved around two thirds of our improvement targets for this improvement priority. We wanted to bring about positive changes for more children and families.

To do this, we:

- provided intensive support to 184 complex and vulnerable families via Connecting Families and Intensive Family Support Services;
- undertook assessments of

need for 250 families, far more than anticipated and doubled the number undertaken last year;

- engaged with 1,301 parents/carers and 2,300 children/young people in family engagement/learning programmes such as Reading/Maths Cafés, Get Cooking and attendance workshops;
- provided intensive health visiting, free part-time childcare provision, early language development and parenting



programmes to 1,171 children through Flying Start, a rise from 950 children in 2012-13.

Despite our efforts, there was an increase in the numbers of looked after children, Children on the child protection register, children in need and children being referred with concerns about neglect or abuse in 2013-14.

Improvement Priority 4

Working together to help vulnerable people stay independent

We achieved what we promised to do to carry out this priority. We wanted to ensure that care and support was given to people when it was needed.

Working in partnership with ABMU HB, 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 with telecare packages increasing

their ability to remain independent ;

- helped over 100 people with dementia to gain skills they need to remain independent in their own homes; and,
- 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.

Improvement Priority 5

Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy

We made good progress towards achieving this improvement priority. We wanted to encourage more people across the borough to live healthily and become more physically active.

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;

- an increase in levels of physical activity leading to a reduction in the number of people who are overweight/obese;
- a reduction in the percentage of people who smoke;
- we developed an information leaflet for parents of children and young people who were found drinking alcohol in the community without parental supervision.

Improvement Priority 6

Working together to make the best use of our resources

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.

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;

- improved the way we communicate with citizens by expanding our use of social media;
- reduced staff sickness absence levels from 10.15 days in 2012-13 to 9.8 days 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;

- we were able to help resolve 88.7% of all the issues raised by our citizens through telephone or visitor contacts at the first point of contact;
- overall 83.3% of people surveyed said that they found the service to be excellent; and
- we trained our staff in British Sign Language to provide a better service for deaf and hard of hearing customers.

National indicator performance

For 2013-14, 44 national performance indicators were collected to measure how we would be doing against the Corporate Plan. Of those indicators 22 (50%) showed improvement - 21 (48%) declined and 1 (2%) stayed the same. More detailed information is available on our Council Priorities and Performance pages via www.bridgend.gov.uk.

Summary of financial performance

Last year, the amount we spent on delivering services to our citizens and investing in our landscape and infrastructure totalled nearly £370 million. The total amount that was available for us to spend was made up from three main sources, the revenue support grant from Welsh Government, specific grants, and fees and charges. We achieved our planned savings of £3.7 million. This consisted of £3.525 million through the savings proposals for 2013-14 and £175,000 through managing staff vacancies and a tighter control on general expenses.

