

Swansea Public Services Board
Assessment of Local Well-being 2022

The evidence base for Swansea's Well-being Plan

MAY 2022



Swansea PSB Assessment of Local Well-being 2022: v3.0_30-09-2022

Swansea Public Services Board:

Assessment of Local Well-being 2022



Message from Swansea Public Services Board

Welcome to the second Assessment of Local Well-being in Swansea.

As a partnership we have undertaken an analysis of different aspects of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being in Swansea in 2021-22

The main purpose of the assessment is to help Swansea Public Services Board identify a focused number of well-being objectives that will contribute to the national well-being goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The goals provide the vision and ambitions for Wales for today and the future and recognises the importance of collaboration between bodies in achieving them. The Act aims to make public bodies think more about the long-term, work better with each other, people and communities as well as look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. This will help to create a Wales (and Swansea) that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

As well as helping Swansea Public Services Board to identify their well-being objectives and inform its Well-being Plan in 2023, we hope that this assessment will also be a resource for anyone working around any of these issues and be a focus for debate and discussion.

This period since the previous assessment in 2017 has in many ways been a momentous and extraordinary time. The increased awareness of the threat of combined and inter-related local and global climate and ecological disaster have resulted in the declarations of Climate and Nature Emergencies. The long-term impacts of Brexit on economic prosperity and well-being in general are still unclear, but with more definite effects in some sectors of the economy and areas. The recent cost of living crisis and the significant rise in energy bills will have a significant negative impact on households across Swansea. The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally impacted the well-being of people, households and communities in a multitude of ways since March 2020, including the prospects for children and young people, the impacts on physical and mental health, income and employment, crime and abuse, equality, connectivity and lifestyles – to name but a few. More recent and ongoing world geo-political events, whilst clearly mostly affecting those directly involved, will ultimately have consequences for people's well-being locally.

The effects of these recent, external factors remain ongoing, often with combined or cumulative impacts that couldn't have been easily anticipated when the last assessment was undertaken in 2017.

Who has produced this assessment?

The evidence in this document has been compiled by a team of officers from the partner organisations of Swansea Public Services Board – a partnership of public agencies working in Swansea. You can find out more about the Board at the web page www.swansea.gov.uk/psb.

The Assessment has been produced in two stages following an approach agreed by the Board's Joint Committee in early 2021. First a draft document was produced and shared in a public consultation during February and March 2022. The results of this consultation were then carefully considered by a multi-agency group and agreed changes fed into this revised document. In line with the National Principles of Public Engagement we have listed all of the proposals we heard from the consultation along with how we have responded to each, in a separate Consultation Feedback Report.

This task has been especially challenging in recent times, in large part due to the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our ability to assess well-being. This has affected the availability of data for some topics, but more fundamentally the resource and capacity of partners. As this work has been undertaken in the context of very limited resources, collaboration has been a key factor in producing the assessment.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation of the efforts of everybody who has contributed to this assessment, from a number of different public and voluntary sector bodies, who have been able to pull together a broad range of evidence in a very short period of time.

The Final Assessment

This final version of the 2022 Assessment for Swansea was considered and agreed by Swansea Public Services Board in early May 2022.

Following the consultation on the draft assessment, a number of additional sources are included:

- Updated information and statistical data which was possible to incorporate between the draft and the final publication.
- A closer look at the information obtained via our on-line public well-being survey, reflected both within the assessment and an updated annex.
- Accepted suggestions to improve the assessment received through the consultation, as detailed in the consultation feedback report.
- Additional annexes: 'About the Assessment' (providing further background) and 'Community Areas in Swansea' (statistical profiles of each Community Area).

While this marks the conclusion of the assessment process for 2021/2022, we know there is still a great deal of further work to be done. There remain acknowledged gaps in the assessment and a number of issues raised in the consultation that we could not address at this stage. These include:

- Gaps in aspects of our assessment of social well-being in particular; including the topics of physical health, mental health, and loneliness and isolation.
- Consideration of the full implications of Welsh Government's Future Trends report.

- Some aspects of the organisation responses to the consultation, for example from the Future Generations Commissioner and Welsh Government, will be considered as part of a longer-term development programme for the Board to take forward. These are included in the Consultation Feedback Report.

Next Steps

With our regional partners at Neath Port Talbot PSB, we have commissioned academic research from Swansea University which aims to bring out the key implications and messages (the ‘so what’) from the assessment, the key links between topics and dimensions of well-being, and what this means in practical terms for Swansea. This piece of work will be an important step towards the ‘response analysis’ element of the overall process, and will be used to inform next year’s Well-being Plan.

While we believe that this Assessment is valuable in its own right, we are clear that its main purpose is to inform a Well-being Plan for Swansea that will make a real difference for citizens.

Arrangements are being developed to produce this plan by May 2023. This process will draw on the content of this Assessment and include:

- Drafting a set of local objectives and steps to address them
- Receiving advice from the Future Generations Commissioner
- Gathering information from partners
- Undertaking Integrated Impact and Equality Assessments
- Consultation with the public before the final objectives are agreed.

Throughout this period there will be opportunities for the public and other interested stakeholders to contribute to the Well-being Plan for Swansea.

Thank you for taking the time to read this assessment.

Swansea Public Services Board

May 2022

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Introduction

Background

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') requires each Public Services Board (PSB) in Wales to prepare and publish an Assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being in its area once every five years.

This Assessment of Local Well-being for 2022 has been produced by Swansea Public Services Board (PSB), a partnership of public agencies working in Swansea. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the well-being of people and communities in Swansea, and to capture the main economic, social, environmental and cultural factors that impact on people's lives.

The main purpose of the assessment is to provide the evidence base for Swansea PSB's Local Well-being Plan in 2023. It will also help the Board identify a small number of well-being objectives that will contribute to the national well-being goals set out in the Act. The goals show the kind of Wales (and therefore Swansea) we want to see. They are:

- A prosperous Wales;
- A resilient Wales;
- A healthier Wales;
- A more equal Wales;
- A Wales of cohesive communities;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- A globally responsible Wales.

How are we working?

In Wales, sustainable development is the central organising principle that shapes what we do and how we work. In producing this document we have been mindful of the five ways of working that underpin the sustainable development principle.

Long term: When thinking about well-being in Swansea we have considered both current or short term issues and future trends (as far as possible), and taken both into account.

Prevention: We have considered Swansea's strengths and how the assets we have might help prevent problems occurring or getting worse in future.

Integration: The assessment will help the different public bodies in Swansea identify their shared and individual well-being goals in a joined-up way.

Collaboration: The assessment was produced in partnership by the different bodies participating in Swansea Public Services Board and represent their shared view.

Involvement: We shared a draft of our work early in the process and asked a range of organisations and practitioners for their views. We undertook an on-line public well-being survey and invited the public to contribute to the assessment during the consultation draft stage.

What is 'well-being'?

'Well-being' is a far from straightforward concept, and there are many descriptions and possible interpretations of the term. People will have different views of what well-being means to them personally and for their communities.

However, for the purposes of the Act and accompanying guidance, Welsh Government most clearly defines well-being within the following extracts from "Shared Purpose; Shared Future (SPSF) 1 Core Guidance, section 2 – the fundamentals":

17. Sustainable development is about acknowledging that there are many things that determine a person's quality of life (their well-being), and that these all can broadly be categorised as environmental, economic, social and cultural factors. These are captured in the well-being goals. This means that improving the quality of our environment, our economy and society and culture can improve the well-being of individuals and that of Wales as a whole.

20. It is important to recognise the difference between the well-being of Wales, and the well-being of individuals. Sustainable development connects the environment in which we live, the economy in which we work, the society in which we enjoy and the cultures that we share, to people and their quality of life.

On this basis, well-being could be defined (in short) as *the environmental, economic, social and cultural factors which determine a person's quality of life*. However, whilst this might be useful as a working definition, the relationship between well-being and quality of life isn't direct or straightforward.

Overall approach to the 2022 Assessment

This assessment aims to build on the first assessment published in 2017, but our approach has changed in some key respects. In spring 2021, the Board agreed to structure this Assessment around the four dimensions of well-being in the Act: social, economic, environmental and cultural. Working groups (of PSB partner representatives) were also established to progress the assessment, including a smaller Editorial Group (to steer the project), an Engagement sub-group and a Research Forum. Subsequently, four dimension-based groups developed detailed content for the assessment.

The assessment has also been progressed against a backdrop of greater regional collaboration with Neath Port Talbot PSB and the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board – working together on a joint and common approach to the Assessments of Local Well-being and the Population Needs Assessment (required under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014). A regional Co-ordination Board was also set up to provide direction and support for the various assessments required across existing governance arrangements.

Engagement and involvement

This assessment is based primarily on statistical and research-based evidence but a context of lived experience helps to provide a balanced and more meaningful document. This approach aims to ensure that gaps are identified and seldom heard from voices considered.

Therefore the perspective of citizens is central to the Assessment, supplementing the technical detail behind statistics with people’s experiences, reflecting reality on the ground.

To this end, a survey of the people of Swansea’s views on well-being was undertaken in autumn 2021 – to help understand what matters most for individuals in Swansea and what this means for our economy, our society, our environment and our culture. People were also asked to share their experiences and stories to help illustrate this. The level and quality of response was encouraging, and a selection of quotes received from local people during the survey have been included in the document.

Further information about the well-being survey, and the wider context to our approach to engagement and involvement, is included in annexes to the Assessment

Community areas in Swansea

As before, the Assessment is required to set out ‘community areas’ within the Board’s area and analyse the state of well-being in each area. Our analysis refers to the community areas and the contrasts between them within the specific chapters as far as possible.

For this purpose, the city and county is split into six community areas:

- Bay East
- Bay West
- City
- Cwm Tawe
- Llchwyr
- Penderi

These are the same areas identified in the 2017 Assessment and mostly coincide with our local Primary Care Network Areas – an all-Wales network of GP cluster areas used across the health and social care sectors in particular. However, the largest of them (‘Bay’), which includes both rural Gower and more urban parts of Swansea, is split into East and West areas.

The areas are made up of groups of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) – a national statistical geography for small areas. A map and summary statistics for the areas are included in the Swansea Profile section.

Dimensions of well-being: chapter content

To provide a coherent structure for analysis across diverse subject areas, a similar process has been followed by those working on the individual sections of the assessment. We have initially gathered local well-being evidence at a topic level, compiling information available from published statistical or organisational sources and local qualitative data and feedback.

Each of the main sections or chapters of this assessment, corresponding with the four strands or dimensions of well-being, begins with an introduction and summary of what we feel each dimension includes (in the absence of agreed national definitions) and to set the scene for the detailed topic content that follows.

The topic summaries aim to consider the available evidence around well-being associated with each topic in a common format, and to include the following aspects as far as possible:

- **Strengths and assets:** capturing the main strengths or assets in Swansea's population or environment related to the topic and an outline of the current services and partnerships that support it.
- **Changes over time:** available trend-based information associated with the evidence around this topic.
- **Comparisons with other places:** both with/within Wales and the UK, as appropriate.
- **Differences within Swansea:** comparisons between our identified community areas (as far as evidence is available) or other local areas/geographies; and different aspects of well-being affecting different population groups, including those noted in the Act.
- **Perceptions and perspectives:** relevant survey evidence, both from our recent public well-being Survey, and other relevant primary research and reports.
- **Future trends and prospects:** an assessment of what will happen if the current situation and direction continues; and how expected future trends may impact on the topic. Welsh Government's Future Trends report will be considered at a later stage.
- **Integration:** identified connections between this topic and other topics and dimensions of well-being; and impacts or links to the national well-being goals.
- **Improvement:** what we would hope to see if the current situation were to improve, for example, changes in indicator(s) and any other evidence of improvement.
- **About the evidence:** notes on the evidence source(s) for the topic, their strengths and limitations, and any links (or contradictions) between them. Gaps in the evidence and any further work required; both at this draft stage and the longer term (five years).
- **Conclusions and key messages:** what the evidence about the topic tells us about well-being and what we need to do.

For further information about the process, the assessment document and background annexes, please visit the web page www.swansea.gov.uk/psbassessment2022.

We would very much value your continued feedback and suggestions for improvement, so if you have any comments about the Assessment or the Well-being Plan, please contact Swansea.PSB@swansea.gov.uk

Swansea Profile

Situated in the middle of the South Wales coast, Swansea is the second largest city in Wales and the regional centre of South West Wales. Swansea's two neighbouring local authorities are Carmarthenshire to the west and Neath Port Talbot to the east.

The City & County, which has a land area of 378 square kilometres, can be broadly divided into four geographic areas: the open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands in the north; the rural Gower Peninsula in the west, containing the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the suburban area stretching from the edge of Swansea towards settlements in the west and around the M4 corridor; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, which includes the city centre and adjacent district centres including Uplands, Sketty and Mumbles.

Swansea's landscape

The Gower peninsula is renowned for its scenic quality, particularly the coastline and prominent open hills such as Rhossili Down and Cefn Bryn, its attractive sea and coastal views and strong sense of place. The Swansea area has spectacular geology and geomorphology, which is internationally important, including 20 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 9 regionally important geological and geomorphological sites (RIGs). The well-visited south Gower coast is indented with rocky cliffs, headlands and sandy bays backed by dunes. The coastline of north Gower is noted for its broad estuarine marshes, part of the internationally important Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation, and boasts views across the Loughor estuary. Inland Gower has open rolling farmland fields and hedges with picturesque and tranquil rural villages. Historic interest is evident throughout rural Gower, including the medieval field system of the Vile at Rhossili and prehistoric features of the uplands. Gower is extremely important for coastal recreation, including surfing, sailing, and swimming and for walking along the coast and uplands.

Tourism, in particular camping and caravan parks, feature strongly. Around the edges of Swansea, commons, small wooded valleys and farmland provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding. Crymlyn Bog is a nationally important nature reserve, and parkland and forest at Penllergaer provide informal recreation. Away from the M4 corridor, these areas can be peaceful. Mumbles Head and the sweeping beach of Swansea Bay define the city's coast and provide the focus for coastal recreation, walking and cycling routes. Open upland rolling hills and valleys dominate the northern part of the area, with extensive views over Carmarthenshire and the Black Mountain. The uplands are also important areas for recreation. Settlements, woodland and pasture dominate the valleys, which are important routes for walking and cycling, often associated with historic infrastructure such as canals and disused railways as in the Tawe Valley.

Population

The latest official estimate of the City and County of Swansea's population (as at June 2020) is 246,600. Swansea has the second largest local authority population in Wales and accounts for almost 8% of its total population (3,169,600).

Community areas

Swansea's six identified community areas range in population size from 28,800 (Bay West) to 58,900 (Cwm Tawe), and in area from 9 sq. km (Penderi) to 158 sq. km (Bay West). An outline map and summary table showing population, area and density is below:

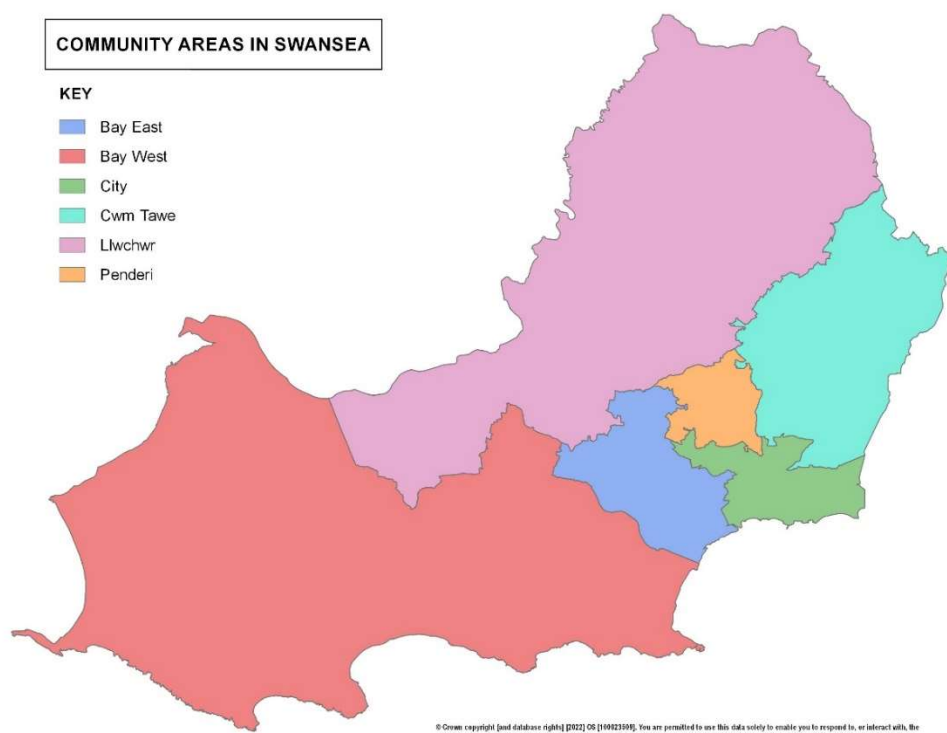


Figure P1: Community Areas in Swansea

Table P1: Key statistics for Community Areas

Community Area:	People aged:			Population (mid-2020)	Change (2015-20)	Area (sq. km)	Density (people/sq. km)
	0-15	16-64	65+				
Bay East	5,100	27,100	8,200	40,400	-1,400 (-3%)	19	2,128
Bay West	4,300	15,200	9,200	28,800	-200 (-1%)	158	183
City	6,100	28,600	5,200	39,900	+2,000 (+5%)	12	3,418
Cwm Tawe	10,800	36,900	11,300	58,900	+1,700 (+3%)	45	1,313
Llŵchwr	8,400	27,900	9,700	46,000	+1,200 (+3%)	137	335
Penderi	6,800	20,400	5,300	32,600	+900 (+3%)	9	3,532
<i>total</i>	<i>41,600</i>	<i>156,000</i>	<i>49,000</i>	<i>246,600</i>	<i>+4,200 (+2%)</i>	<i>380</i>	<i>653</i>

Source: Population estimates to 2020 and land area/density statistics, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

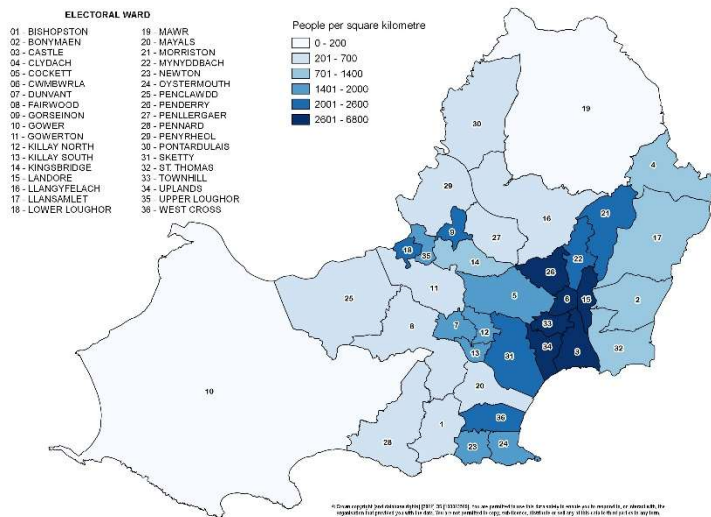
More detailed statistical profiles of the Community Areas are available as an Annex to this assessment.

Population density

The average population density of the city and county is 653 people per sq. km (2020 estimate), the fifth highest of the 22 local authority areas in Wales (average: 153 people per

sq. km). The population is not evenly distributed within Swansea, with most people living within the urban area and the surrounding settlements to the north, including Morriston, Clydach, Gorseinon and Pontarddulais.

The population density of Swansea’s community areas varies widely, but even more at a ward level with high concentrations of population in and around the city (Castle) and the adjacent wards of Cwmbwrla, Townhill and Uplands (at 6,693 people per sq. km – the highest ward population density in the county).



These are in contrast to the sparsely populated rural areas of the Gower and northern Lliw area. Both Mawr and Gower wards have a population density of 32 people per sq. km, the lowest in the county.

The map opposite illustrates the estimated population density of each ward in Swansea as at 2020.

Figure P2: Population density by Ward

Source: Population Estimates (ONS, 2020) and land area (sq. km).

Population structure

The latest ONS estimates of the age structure of Swansea’s population (as at June 2020) are set out in the table below, along with the equivalent percentages for Wales and the UK.

Table P2: Composition of Swansea’s population by sex and age, mid-2020

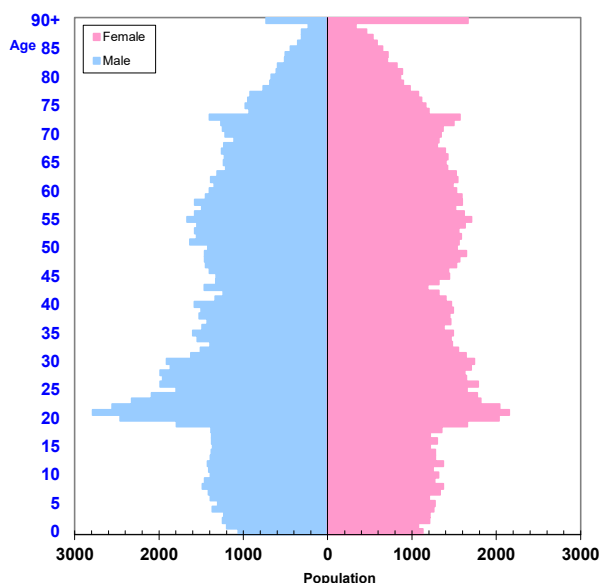
Age	Swansea				Wales %	UK %
	Males	Females	Total	%		
0-4 years	6,100	5,900	12,000	4.9	5.1	5.6
5-15	15,400	14,200	29,600	12.0	12.7	13.3
16-24	18,200	15,300	33,500	13.6	10.9	10.5
25-44	32,100	30,200	62,300	25.3	24.1	26.1
45-64	29,300	31,000	60,200	24.4	26.2	25.8
65-74	12,100	13,800	25,900	10.5	11.4	10.0
75+ years	9,600	13,400	23,000	9.3	9.7	8.6
Total	122,700	123,900	246,600	100	100	100

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020, ONS.

The proportion of Swansea’s population of working age (i.e. all aged 16-64), at 63.3%, is higher than Wales (61.2%) and the UK (62.4%). However, Swansea has a lower proportion of children (aged 0-15), at 16.9%, than both Wales (17.8%) and the UK (19.0%).

The population pyramid opposite illustrates the latest estimates for Swansea by age and gender.

Figure P3: Swansea’s population, mid-2020



The pyramid highlights in particular the large spike in the population cohorts aged between 19-22 years, in part associated with students at Swansea’s universities. Published statistics for 2020-21 record 24,400 full-time students in Higher Education at the two local universities (Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity St. David), with 4,600 additional full-time students in Further Education at Gower College Swansea.

Population change

The long-term published mid-year population estimates (ONS) suggest that Swansea’s population has steadily grown between 2001 and 2019 (although there was a small fall in the year to mid-2020). Between 2015 and 2020, the average rate of population growth in Swansea was approximately +850 people (+0.4%) per year.

The official estimates of the key components of population change – namely births, deaths and migration – suggest that the main driver of population growth in Swansea since 2001 has been migration. In the last five years (2015 to 2020), estimated average annual net inflow from all migration was around 1,100; although this has slowed considerably in the last two years (2018-20). Since 2017, there has been net internal (UK) out-migration from Swansea; whilst estimated population growth from international migration has remained high (above 1,400 in each of the last five years).

In terms of natural change, the recorded number of live births in Swansea has generally fallen since 2015. Deaths remained relatively constant from 2015-18, then fell in 2019, before a sharp increase during the year to June 2020. The net result is that from 2015 onwards the number of deaths has exceeded births, leading to negative natural change in Swansea’s population (contrary to the 2005 to 2014 period).

Change by age

An overview of recent trends can be provided via analysis of the main changes in the age structure of Swansea’s population over the five-year period 2015-2020.

In terms of the key 'life stage' groups, the broad trends are as follows:

- All people: an increase of 4,200 (+1.8%), from 242,300 to 246,600.
- Children (aged 0-15): negligible change (-100 / 0.2%) to 41,600.
- Working age (16-64): an increase of 2,200 (+1.4%) to 156,000, below the equivalent overall rate of population increase in Swansea.
- People aged 65 and over: an increase of 2,100 (+4.6%) to 49,000; reflecting an ageing population, in line with national trends.

For specific smaller cohorts, the trends for Swansea over this five-year period are:

- Aged 0-4: overall decline of around 1,200 (-9.4%), with numbers in this cohort falling in recent years, mainly due to lower birth rates
- 5-15: an increase of 1,200 (+4.1%). This increase is concentrated in the 10-14 age group (+900 / +6.8%), in part linked to the small upturn in births from around 2006
- 20-24: a growth of 1,000 (+4.6%), partly linked to increasing levels of student in-migration from elsewhere in the UK and overseas.
- 25-29: another significant increase in this population cohort, of 1,600 people (+9.7%), attributable to in-migration, student retention, and growth in population numbers within the previous generation (e.g. those now aged 55-59).
- 30-39: an overall gain of 2,000 (+7.0%).
- 40-54: a decrease of 2,800 (-5.9%), in contrast with cohorts either side.
- 55-59: increase of 1,200 (+8.2%), due in part to the early-1960s baby boom.
- 65-74: overall increase of 800 (+3.2%), with reductions in people aged 65-69 offset by increases in the 70-74 group (reflecting the post-war baby boom).
- Aged 85 and over: estimated to have increased by 5.4% (+300) over the five years to 2020, to around 6,600 people in Swansea. However, the rate of increase in the numbers aged 85+ appears to have slowed in recent years.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy in Swansea, as elsewhere, has increased over the long-term, contributing to a generally ageing population. The latest ONS figures on average life expectancy at birth (for 2018-20) now stand at 77.5 years for males in Swansea (Wales 78.3) and 81.8 for females (Wales 82.1). Five years previously, i.e. 2013-15, life expectancy in Swansea was 78.0 years for males (Wales 78.4) and 82.5 years for females (Wales 82.3). In recent years therefore, long-term improvements in life expectancy have slightly reversed.

Projected population change

The Welsh Government's latest trend-based population projections suggest that between 2018 and 2043 Swansea's population will grow by 7.5% (+18,400 people) to 264,800. In these (2018-based) projections, Swansea has the fifth highest projected growth rate of the 22 Welsh local authorities. In comparison, the projections suggest a total population increase of 3.7% across Wales over the 25-year period.

In reality these projections can only provide an indication of future population should recent demographic trends continue, and only provide one scenario based on a particular set of

assumptions. The 2018-based projections are based on past trends, essentially using five years of fertility, mortality and migration data (to mid-2018).

These projections suggest that the number of people aged 65 and over will increase by 10,700 (+22.3%) to 58,800 over the 2018-2043 period – an average annual increase of 430 (+0.9%). The main reason for this is long-term improvements in mortality rates (reflected in people living longer) and the ageing on of certain population cohorts. However, the projections suggest smaller rates of growth in the working age (16-64) population over the 25-year period, by 6,300 (+4.0%) overall, an average of 250 people or 0.2% per year. Projected change in the 0-15 age group, suggests a smaller increase of 1,400 (+3.2%) over the 25 years. The official projections will be reviewed later in light of the release of 2021 Census results.

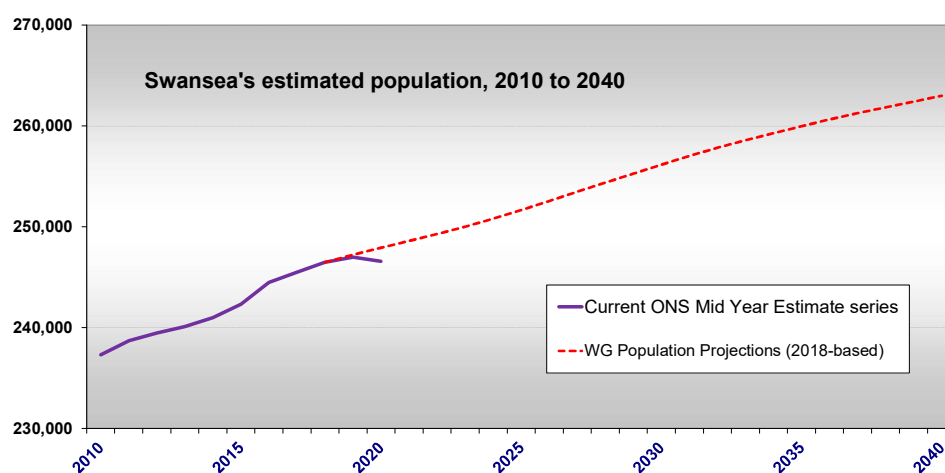


Figure P4:
Population change
in Swansea, 2010 to
2040 – estimates
and projections

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates, ONS and Sub-national Population Projections, Welsh Government.

Household composition

The total number of households (with residents) in Swansea in mid-2020 is estimated at 109,700 (rounded), an increase of approximately 200 (or 0.2%) on the 2019 figure. Since 2015, the number of households in Swansea has increased by 3,400 (+3.2%), with average household size slowly falling to 2.20 people (2020).

In 2020, single-adult households (38,900 / 35.5% of total) and 2-person 0-children households (32,200 / 29.4%) were the most common household types in Swansea. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of single-person households increased by 2,400 (+6.6%), with other significant change occurring in 2-adult 0-child households (an increase of 900 or 2.7%) and 4+adult 0-children households (an increase of 200 or 5.6%); perhaps reflecting in part an increase in student households. By contrast, the number of 2-adult, 1 (or more) child households in Swansea has fallen by 300 (-1.7%) over the five-year period.

Population Characteristics:

- by Ethnic Group

2011 Census estimates (the most recent available) suggest that 14,326 people in Swansea were from a non-white ethnic group, 6.0% of the total population; higher than the

equivalent figure for Wales (4.4%) and the third highest percentage of the 22 local authorities in Wales, although lower than the equivalent UK rate.

20,368 (8.5%) of Swansea's population were non-'White British' in 2011 (i.e. also including other white ethnic groups); above the Wales average (6.8%) and again third highest rate in Wales, but below the UK percentage.

Over the period 2001 to 2011, the proportion of people in Swansea from a non-White ethnic group increased from around 2% of the population to 6%, an increase of 9,500 (+198%). The number of non-'White British' people increased by 10,800 (+113%).

The 2011 Census data suggests that the largest non-white ethnic groups are:

- Chinese – 2,052 people (0.9% of Swansea's population)
- Bangladeshi – 1,944 (0.8%)
- Other Asian – 1,739 (0.7%)
- Black African – 1,707 (0.7%)
- Arab – 1,694 (0.7%).

Amongst the non-white ethnic groups, the largest estimated increases in population between 2001 and 2011 were in the Black African (+1,500 approx.), Bangladeshi and Indian groups (both +900). The 'Other-White' population increased by 1,400.

More recent Schools' Census data suggests that the number of pupils in the school population who are not 'White-British' increased from 3,700 in 2015 to 4,600 in 2020 (+900 or 25%).

Community Area level breakdowns of Swansea's population by ethnic group are also available from the 2011 Census. The largest ethnic minority populations were recorded in the community areas of City (5,154 / 14.5%) and Bay East (3,681 / 8.9%). At a more localised level, Castle and Uplands wards both have ethnic minority populations of above 10% (2011).

- by Religion

In the 2011 Census, Christianity is the predominant religion in Swansea (55%); although 34% held no religious beliefs and 7% did not answer (the Census question on religion is voluntary). Of the groups listed, 5,415 people (2%) stated their religion as Muslim, making this the most common religion in Swansea after Christianity.

Census data on the distribution of non-Christian religion by Ward again sees the greatest numbers in Castle (2,049), Uplands (1,208) and Sketty (886). In proportionate terms, Castle (13%), Uplands and Landore (both 8%) have the highest rates of population with a non-Christian religion.

- Welsh language

The proportion of people aged 3 and over able to speak Welsh in Swansea decreased from 13.4% (28,938) in 2001 to 11.4% in 2011 (26,332 people); a fall of 9% despite an overall increase in the population.

Changes in Welsh language skills between Censuses vary by age. In Swansea, the proportion of children aged 3-4 who can speak Welsh increased from 10.5% in 2001 to 14.6% in 2011, with a slight increase also in the 5-15 age group, to 26.0%.

Within Swansea (2011), the Llchwyr community area had the highest number and percentage of its population (aged 3+) able to speak Welsh, at 7,823 (18.4%), followed by Cwm Tawe (6,957 / 12.6%). In 2011, City and Penderi had the lowest proportions able to speak Welsh (under 7.5%).

- *Economic activity*

Recent data on the structure of Swansea’s workforce suggests that economic activity and employment rates in Swansea are relatively close to the Wales average but below equivalent UK rates. However, the large number and proportion of students resident in Swansea has some effect on these figures.

Table P3: Swansea’s workforce structure, 2021

<i>Area</i>	Economically Active (aged 16 & over)	Economic Activity Rate (working age)	Employment (aged 16 & over)	Employment Rate (working age)
Swansea: Total	125,100	76.5%	117,100	71.5%
Men	65,000	78.9%	61,300	74.4%
Women	60,100	74.0%	55,800	68.6%
Wales	1,512,800	76.4%	1,449,800	73.1%
United Kingdom	33,582,500	78.2%	32,099,400	74.7%

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates, year ending December 2021, ONS.

Swansea’s position as a regional administrative, commercial and leisure centre in South West Wales is reflected in the higher proportions of employment in the service sectors, and corresponding lower rates of manufacturing employment.

Swansea has a relatively high proportion of working age residents with NVQ levels 3 and above, but also those with no qualifications. 39.4% of Swansea's residents (aged 16-64) are qualified to NVQ level 4 (degree level) and above, above the Wales figure (38.7%) but below the UK (43.5%). However, 7.7% of Swansea’s working age population have no qualifications (Wales 8.2%; UK 6.7%) (APS, 2021).

Swansea’s status as a sub-regional hub is also shown by the latest data on commuting patterns, with significant estimated daily inflows to Swansea of 27,000 (net inflow +6,800). The majority of in-commuting is from Neath Port Talbot (11,500) and Carmarthenshire (7,400) (APS, 2021).

2021 Census

A more up-to-date demographic profile of Swansea and recent population change will be provided through the results of the national 2021 Census. These are expected to emerge from summer 2022, together with the latest annual mid-year population (2021) and revised annual estimates back to 2012. These will provide a new benchmark for Swansea’s population (as at 2021), a more up-to-date picture of population and household characteristics, past trends and will later form the basis of revised future national and local projections of population and households. The data is also a key component of population surveys, including as denominators for the APS and other national surveys.

As a result much of the analysis included here may be subject to change, in some cases substantial, during 2022 and 2023.

Social well-being

Introduction

Social well-being is perhaps the most complex and wide-ranging of the four dimensions of well-being, and not easy to define. In a straightforward sense, it can relate most directly to society and to people's lives in general. More specifically, research into social well-being tends to focus on people's mental and physical health and how people care for each other. It considers how safe, connected and comfortable we feel in our communities and the extent to which we have independence, equality and respect. The national goals particularly influencing the social dimension of well-being are:

- *A healthier Wales* - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood, and
- *A Wales of cohesive communities* - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

"All areas of social well-being are interconnected and can be tackled jointly. I.e. if there is trust placed in people and communities in Swansea, the initiatives that can develop can positively impact physical and mental health, opportunities to age well, for children and young people" – survey respondent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant and unprecedented pressure on our public services, staff and citizens. At the onset of the pandemic during March 2020 many of our key public services were either stopped, or re-focused to respond to the immediate crisis. Those which continued during the pandemic were delivered in a radically different way and in line with Welsh Government guidance and messaging "to stay home and keep everyone safe". As we have moved through the different stages and waves of the pandemic, public services have faced different challenges in relation to responding to the immediate pressures of the pandemic and during the different stages of recovery. Likewise the effects and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have differed across our communities and vulnerable people have faced potentially the greatest risks and challenges.

Health and Social Care services have faced some of the biggest pressures in relation to every stage the pandemic and continue to do so. The unprecedented nature of the pandemic has meant that previous operating models and "business as usual" have been suspended. In relation to the production of this assessment, the pressures of responding to the pandemic has meant that some partners have not been able to contribute to the assessment. Moreover, many partners have only been able to do so in a limited way due to capacity and the need to respond to more urgent pressures. The effects of non participation and/or limited participation in this assessment is perhaps most acutely reflected in the Social chapter as the scope of this particular strand requires the contribution from those at the centre of responding to the crisis.

“Physical and mental health are key for overall wellbeing and increased contribution to society”

“Mental health issues have been brought to our attention during the pandemic, this shows how important it is to address this issue”

“Loneliness and isolation are still a huge issue and has an impact on mental health and aging well, although not just an issue for older people” – survey respondents.

The following information contained within this draft chapter is therefore limited in a number of key aspects, primarily physical and mental health, early years and loneliness/isolation, leading to some gaps, inconsistencies and limitations. Nevertheless, this chapter does contain extensive good quality data, information and insightful analysis in relation to social well-being in Swansea.

The Social chapter of the assessment includes analysis of the following topics:

- Social care: including Adult Social Care; Children, Young People and Families; Carers and Young Carers; Workforce
- Early Years
- Listening to Children and Young People
- Ageing Well: Age Friendly City; Listening to Older People (50+ years)
- Poverty: Income below minimum standards; Access to necessary services, opportunities and resources
- Housing
- Crime and Safety: Violence Against Women, Domestic, Abuse and Sexual Violence; Substance Misuse; Street Vulnerability; Evening and Night Time Economy; Hate Crime; Community Cohesion; Wildfires.

Due to resource and time constraints, we were unable to further develop and refine the content of this chapter between the draft and final assessments. However, there is a range of content and information related to local care and support needs included in the regional Population Needs Assessment developed concurrently under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A link to this assessment is below:

www.westglamorgan.org.uk/west-glamorgan-population-needs-assessment-2022-2027

Social Care

Good access to modern health and social care services enable people to lead fulfilled lives with a sense of wellbeing within supportive families and resilient communities. There is growing need for care and support in all population groups. Years of austerity have made their mark on public finances, the sustained impact of COVID-19, increasing demand for care and support, the stress placed on carers, and recruiting/retaining a skilled social care workforce. All these factors suggest there will be significant underlying challenges. Complexity has become the overriding feature of the care and support landscape in Swansea and Wales. Analysis within this overall topic is broken down into the following four sub-topics: Adult Social Care; Children, Young People and Families; Carers and Young Carers; Workforce.

“Social care is massively under resourced, this needs to be top priority for the area” – survey respondent.

i. Adult Social Care

Strengths and Assets

Swansea’s approach is about supporting more people to remain safe and well at home, by living within supportive communities. Our approach to Adult Social Care focuses on prevention, early intervention and enablement, aiming to deliver better support for people, making best use of the resources available, supported by a highly skilled and valued workforce.

We aim to help our most vulnerable people to keep safe and protected from harm and give opportunities to exercise voice, choice and control in all aspects of their lives. COVID-19 has highlighted the increased risks for individuals of being cared for in closed care settings such as care homes. There is a risk of certain sections of the community becoming socially isolated which can have a significant effect on an individual’s mental health and well-being.

Swansea has embedded Tackling Poverty services into Adult and Child Social Care and wellbeing services. Through a recently updated, comprehensive Tackling Poverty Strategy, Swansea aims to empower local people through involvement and participation, change cultures to reflect that tackling poverty is everyone’s business and target resources to maximise access to opportunity and prosperity. We have adopted certain principles to this work: targeting a whole system approach to tackling poverty; building resilience, social capital and social networks; involving citizens, and implementing ‘what works’ and ‘what matters’ in future delivery.

Changes over time

Generally the demand for Adult Social Care in Swansea is increasing, though the resources available to meet the demand have been under constant pressure. The main reasons for the increasing or changing demand include:

- Increasing numbers of people as more people live longer,
- Increasing levels of need from people with complex / chronic conditions
- Increasing expectations from people that their needs can be met, particularly by health and social care services
- Immediacy of needs – people have expectations for faster response times
- Carers have their own wellbeing needs and lives.

Performance figures contrasting outcomes in 2017-2018 with those in 2019-20 confirm that Swansea Council is supporting more people in their own homes, with fewer people being cared for in care homes, suggesting that the direction of travel in moving toward a new model for Adult Social Care is beginning to pay dividends.

Of the 200,000 (approx.) adults aged 18 and over living in Swansea, the number who received care and support from Swansea Council's Adult Services during the last 3 years were:

- 2020/21 = 6,951
- 2019/20 = 6,463
- 2018/19 = 6,434

Adult Social Care activity remains consistent, and the figures above show this has continued to be the case moving into the pandemic with high levels of demand for information, advice and assistance through our front door, Common Access Point (CAP), for a social work assessment and for care and support services, in particular domiciliary care.

Comparisons with other places

The recent introduction of the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) within Swansea Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board is not just an implementation system, but an opportunity to improve and reshape our culture and practice to better meet the needs of the people we work with.

One of the major overhauls during implementation has to ensure recordings of referrals, assessments, care planning, reviews and service provisions are consistent across all services, and reportable from a single system, WCCIS, which is being rolled out across Wales. This should improve the quality of comparative information available to regional partnerships and local commissioners.

Differences across Swansea

Although social isolation is not only limited to older people, Swansea has an ageing population, who may be more at risk of becoming isolated and feeling lonely, particularly in remote areas of the city.

Swansea citizens are better supported within and by communities in which they can contribute to and enjoy safe and healthy relationships. Swansea is challenging historic ways of working through new practice models extending across the City and County.

Case study:

Our neighbourhood approach in Swansea through Local Area Coordination (LAC)

The successful development of the regional Our Neighbourhood Approach model has been achieved through utilisation of associated funding in support of community-based initiatives and focus on community-based care and review.

Swansea's approach is mainly taken forward by Local Area Coordination service. Whilst the majority of the Local Area Coordination posts are funded by the Council, there has been a significant investment from external partners including Coastal Housing Association, Family Housing Association, Pobl Housing Group, Swansea University Health Board GP clusters and the Welsh Government Transformation Fund.

In response to the pandemic Local Area Coordination coverage was expanded across the whole of Swansea and working with other partners was at the heart of the Council's response to mitigating the impact of lockdown on our residents and communities. There are now 19 Local Area Coordinators in post with coverage over most of Swansea.

LAC vision statement: 'All people live in welcoming communities that provide friendship, mutual support, equality and opportunities for everyone'.

An evaluation of the work of Local Area Coordination is being carried out during 2021, building on the initial evaluation from 2016 to critically examine the evidence-base of characteristics, activities and outcomes of Area Coordination in Swansea and measure its effectiveness.

The LAC team has also compiled a range of stories which are reflections on outcomes achieved with individuals involving work with a range of other organisations.

Perceptions and perspectives

Everyone, adult or child, should be given a voice, an opportunity, their right to be heard as an individual and a citizen, to shape the decisions that affect them, to have control over their day to day lives and to be firmly at the centre of their own wellbeing journey.

Coproducing outcomes with citizens is the main focus of the adult social care approach in Swansea. To focus on what matters most to people, as they seek out the care and support they need, to achieve the outcomes they or their families or carers may have in mind.

'Collaborative Communication' is Swansea's practice framework to focus on what matters to people, working with their rights as citizens, their strengths, the outcomes they wish for - the voice, choice and control of everyone.

Welsh Government's older people strategy to 2023 aims to address the barriers faced by older people in Wales today and to ensure that well-being is within the reach of all. Older people have the right to be able to participate as fully in society as they desire, including contributing to community and family life, influencing decisions and having their wellbeing needs recognised and addressed.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

West Glamorgan Regional Community Silver Command Group has overseen a coordinated, regional response to the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has heightened further the need to improve safe hospital discharge processes, and to support people safely in their own homes where possible. Work within the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership is set to enhance and expand our transformation approach. For example the hospital to home service has continued to be a particular priority as part of the response.

Limited resources requires a focus on efficient and effective approaches though regional integration with health and by improving local partnerships.

Under the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund, Swansea Council applied for funding to test out two new approaches to the design and procurement of services and to the delivery of services in rural areas of Swansea to:

- Support people with low level care and support needs to come together to design and procure their own service, making use of direct payments and cooperative approaches;
- Work in communities, alongside our Local Area Coordinators, to find citizens who are willing to expand the social care workforce, perhaps through the development of volunteering, micro enterprises, social enterprises or cooperative arrangements to deliver lower-level, flexible, localised care and support.

Integration

Adult Social Care transformation plans and commissioning arrangements are mainly focused on integrated working with partners both locally and across the region; which has been strengthened further recently. The last year has provided a clear focus of the capacity of these services needed and how services can be shaped to meet the future needs of our communities and service priorities.

Regional Partnership Boards will be a key driver of change in health and social care at regional and local levels, with population needs and priorities reflected in a revised West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Area Plan.

West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board – people with complex needs

One of the main aims of the Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme is to address the rising number of people with complex needs. The work programme aims:

- to affect a sustainable and efficient ‘practice to commissioning’ methodology across the region which commissions high quality health and social care services, which are proportionate to need cost effective and build upon coproduction
- to enable sharing and coordination of information, intelligence and planning together in service area of common interest
- to help partners shift front line practice towards the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

This is achieved through work streams including:

- Outcomes-focused assessment - promoting the best possible practice and interventions
- Mental Health & Learning Disability brokerage (to identify community-based placements)
- Regional Quality Framework for care homes to raise standards and stabilise the market.

Improvement

We fully recognise and respect diversity and Human Rights of all adults as citizens. We also recognise that to fully embrace these principles, we need to improve access to information about the care and support available to people and make our services more accessible. We are seeking to improve our advocacy offer. Coproduction and promoting community involvement are central to our work. We also need to ensure timely access to mental health

services including diagnosis and counselling, as well as other forms of support; to enhance mental health & wellbeing, prevent social isolation; and provide day opportunities and respite for unpaid carers. Through our transformation programme, we are increasing provision and sustainability of community-based support; and transport options to improve access and to manage our carbon footprint.

“As someone who has supported a loved one with significant mental illness I have experienced how a lack of prevention and early intervention in mental health services can exacerbate the distress the individual and their family experiences” – survey respondent.

About the evidence

More recently, data gathering is being carried out within the new National Social Services Performance Framework and comparative data has yet to be published.

The implementation of Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) should improve our reporting potential, data analysis and benchmarking to support local and regional commissioning decisions. Further information is available within the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme Area Plan and the Population Needs Assessment for care and support needs, as noted in the chapter introduction.

Conclusions and key messages

Our priority remains to ensure co-production remains central to how we plan, design, commission and deliver our services. COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of taking an inclusive approach to social care, albeit that we sometimes have to respond at pace to emergency situations as they arise, within the resources available.

Working in partnerships achieve what matters, building on strengths and by supporting citizens to achieve safety and their own well-being outcomes.

Swansea Council’s Recovery Plan: Achieving Better Together includes a transformation programme to implement the ‘optimum’ model for adult social care. This will be achieved by embedding new ways of working; to ensure we are providing the right service to the right people at the right time.

ii. Children, Young People and Families

Strengths and Assets

We promote the life chances and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people in Swansea, and to ensure that we are doing as much as we can, particularly in the early years, to enhance their lives and to prevent the need for statutory services. Swansea Council’s Child & Family Services are working in partnership to safeguard and protect the most vulnerable children.

Children have the right to reliable information under the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is important, as early as possible in our processes to provide as much up to date information about services and resource as we can to adults, children and young people. This can help people decide what to access and how, and an improved understanding of how services have changed as a result of COVID-19.

We must ensure the voice of the child is reflected in all service development work. We aim to achieve high levels of participation and co-production in our social care approach whether in consultation, through care planning, within statutory visits in reviews, and in the recruitment of staff. Frontline teams are constantly striving for excellence, taking forward a whole systems approach to meet the continuum of need for children in need of care and support. Our practice work using Signs of Safety and Signs of Wellbeing frameworks, and a wide range of innovative tools such as mapping, danger statements, safety plans, life story work, and child led reviews – leading the way among Councils in Wales.

Changes over time

In March 2021 there were 46,988 children and young people (aged 0-17yrs), living in Swansea, compared to 47,272 children in March 2017. During 2020/21, Swansea Council's statutory Child and Family Social Services received 9,309 contacts, compared to 10,251 in 2016/17.

In March 2021, there were:

- 1,303 (1,728 in March 2017) children and young people receiving care and support by statutory services in Swansea, including:
- 253 (252 in March 2017) children and young people on the child protection register
- 550 (480 in March 2017) children and young people looked after, of this number 30 (40 in March 2017) children were supported within residential placement

Being able to 'see' children regularly, undertake such direct work, provide intensive support to those most vulnerable children, young people and families and promote contact between care experienced children and their families, given the social restrictions has been a real challenge since March 2020.

During the pandemic this has been addressed through the effective use of virtual platforms, undertaking face-to-face contact using a risk-based approach and having in place clear guidance on essential visits. All statutory cases within Child and Family Services were given a RAG status, and weekly meetings were set up with partners in Police, education and health to monitor progress, ensure children were being seen, the visits/virtual contacts co-ordinated and RAG status reviewed.

Comparisons with other places

In March 2020, there were 16,581 children receiving care and support in Wales (according to the Children Receiving Care and Support Census) with a rate of 263 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years. In Swansea, the rate was 283 per 10,000 over the same time period, higher than the Wales average. Over the same time period (March 2020), there were 2,311 children

in Wales on the Child Protection Register, with a rate of 37 per 10,000. In Swansea the rate was 54 per 10,000, higher than the Wales average. In March 2020, 7,172 children were looked after in Wales (a 5% increase on the previous year) with a rate of 114 per 10,000 population aged under 18. Swansea's rate was 117 per 10,000 aged under 18 which was also higher than the Wales average over the same time period.

Wales has some of the highest levels of deprivation and child poverty in the UK, and this has a clear impact on the wellbeing and outcomes for children and young people. Swansea has slightly lower number of children in need of care and support than in recent years. Overall these population groups have remained fairly consistent. In Wales, the more densely populated, urban South Wales counties have similar rates of children in need of care and support within their statutory services.

The number of looked after children in Wales has been steadily increasing in recent years. Swansea has been working hard to reverse the trend. The main parental factors identified for children looked after in Swansea are: domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse. All agencies involved are fully committed to being child focused, and passionate about keeping families together to tackle these difficult issues and in achieving the best outcomes for children.

Differences across Swansea

The large majority of looked after children are from within the City and County of Swansea, with 20 supported from outside of Wales (2021).

Mapping of safer accommodation support is currently underway within the region, under the Transforming Complex Care programme. This planning work is taking into account multi-agency approaches to filling gaps across services including working with Health and Education colleagues to ensure the right support is made available to children and young people.

Perceptions and perspectives

Swansea's Corporate Parenting Strategy "Best Life" project covers a broad range of outcomes:

- To manage risk confidently and provide support at the edge of care to make sure that children who need to, come into care at the right time.
- To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high-quality placements to support all children to have positive experiences in care, whatever their needs and for them to be cared for in family placements within Swansea as long as this is consistent with their needs.
- To ensure all looked after children get a good education, whether this is in mainstream, specialist schools or in alternative arrangements.
- To ensure the health needs of looked after children are provided for through a good quality health assessment and plan.
- To ensure that looked after children get access to cultural and leisure opportunities

- To give children clearly planned journeys through care which enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements and exit the care system positively.
- To enable looked after children to participate fully in decision making and service design.

Since December 2020 members of Swansea Council’s Corporate Parenting Board and Care Experienced Children and Young People (CYP) have developed *what the key areas of a best life are*, the main areas for development for each area, and who is going to take accountability for improving services around those themes.

The next stage will be sub-groups unpicking the “hows” and reporting back to our care experienced population what we have done, what difference they should see and what we haven’t been able to do.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

By targeting interventions on ‘what matters most’ through early help and prevention programmes to where individual children and families have the most to gain, all multi-agency professionals and partner organisations can make the greatest impact.

Swansea Council’s Signs of Safety (SOS) approach to child protection assessment, safeguarding and care planning clearly prioritises risk to help children and families achieve the best outcomes

The Signs of Well-being’ framework introduces the potential for greater flexibility and broader outcomes, where the assessed need of children and families does not include safeguarding elements.

The Safe LAC (Looked After Children) Reduction Strategy aims to ensure that fewer children need to be looked after, that they are only within statutory care as long as they need to stay safe, and that they are helped to achieve permanence through our interventions and effective corporate parenting.

Integration

Our Early Help Hubs were launched as a new approach in Swansea during April 2020. This initial format is aimed at strengthening capacity to tackle demand at social services front door (IIAA), as contacts are re-directed to Early Help Hubs. There are five co-located, multi-agency hubs, making use of the Signs of Wellbeing framework. The new offer involves ‘what matters’ conversations at the front-door and also incorporates: an Integrated Safeguarding Hub, access to YOS Services that help improve behaviours and prevent family breakdown and the use of multi-agency panels to support preventative approach to contextual risks. There are also partnership links to support joined up working and better step-down arrangements. The services will also be trialling the use and development of electronic ‘auto-bot’ responses to support queries around domestic abuse.

Improvement

Being exposed to domestic violence or parental substance misuse, being a victim of domestic violence or child sexual abuse can have a serious impact on a child's emotional development and future life chances. We are working to prevent these Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) occurring, to promote child mental health and wellbeing, to be free from exposure to harmful or risky behaviours, and yet still keep children with their families, where this is in their best interests. Domestic abuse also represents a key challenge to wellbeing with implications for personal safety, child development, community cohesion and implications for demand on Police, Health and Social Care resources. Ensuring the right support to children and families at the right time will achieve best possible outcomes, including health, educational attainment and emotional wellbeing. A shared understanding of the safety thresholds for children and young people is crucial to maintain effective multi-agency working and to seek smoother transitions from children's to adult services by focusing on the rights of the child and what a better life means.

About the evidence

Data is reported to Welsh Government on a weekly basis during the pandemic, through the Children in Need census. This provides an early warning system, with a list of key performance indicator activity measures and quality assurance reports to identify trends and potential issues in child and family services. The recent implementation of Wales Community Care Information System in Swansea, and a roll out across the region should support data sharing, and comparison across other Welsh Local Authorities.

Conclusions and key messages

Working together in supporting and protecting our most vulnerable children is one of the key topics in social wellbeing. Although deeply challenging, by working together we are able to focus efforts on prevention and early intervention and tackling adverse childhood experiences. We have to help children and families through the most difficult time, keeping children safe and protected via a skilled, professional workforce. We should never lose sight of what matters most, and to reach out towards the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

iii. Carers and Young Carers

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid care to an adult or disabled child. The cared for person may be a family member or a friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. A carer could be a husband caring for his wife, a parent caring for their child who has care and support needs or a child (young carer) caring for their parent.

The pandemic led to improved visibility, awareness and public appreciation of the commitment shown by those people who provide social care. Acknowledgement must also extend to unpaid carers - without whose support, the pressure on our services and

communities would be too much to bear. 72% of carers in Wales have not had any breaks from their caring role during the pandemic. Of those who got a break, almost a third (30%) used the time to complete practical tasks or housework, and a quarter (25%) to spend time with friends and family.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea has a long history of holding events, training and activities to listen to carers' views, to hear what their needs are, and to reaffirm their rights. Events include Swansea Carers' Rights day and Carers Awareness week. Social Services have regular ongoing discussions with carers and always work co-productively with Carers on an individual needs and/or a collective strategic basis, so that their vital contribution is acknowledged, and their voice is heard. Though arrangements in support of carers are now worked on regionally, carers should be able to access support more easily directly from any of the partner organisations. Carers in Swansea have always been able to directly access sector services such as Swansea Carers Centre, without the need for a carers assessment. Swansea Carers Centre is a specialist voluntary organisation providing support to carers and former carers across Swansea, including people who care for those with an illness or disability including learning disability, mental health problems, physical disability, dementia and other long term limiting illnesses.

Swansea - support to Adult Carers

Swansea Council's Adult Services provides a range of internal and external services to carers in Swansea. These services include help provided directly to people who are cared for, to indirectly help carers or services accessed via a carers assessment, significantly reducing the burden on people with caring responsibilities:

Services include:

- Assistive technology services.
- Domiciliary care services to help provide care to people in their own homes.
- Domiciliary care respite services (sitting at home services) to enable carers to take a break as and when needed.
- Residential respite services at internal and externally commissioned care homes which offer temporary residential care for the cared for to enable carers to receive a break.
- Day Centres and other day opportunities for the cared for to relieve pressure on carers.
- Repair and adaptation services which can offer changes and improvements to the cared for, or carer's home to make it more suitable.
- Counselling and other therapeutic services aimed at relieving stress and improving wellbeing.
- Financial advice services, including welfare benefits advice to ensure carers are receiving their full entitlements and able to make best use of potential resources.

Swansea's YMCA Swansea Young Carers Service

A young carer often takes on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. Swansea has commissioned new services that provides support and information for young carers aged 8-18 in Swansea.

Although Swansea YMCA Young Carers Project had to suspend all face-to-face delivery during the pandemic, the services have adapted by providing a new, remote service. The new service includes:

- video 1-2-1 and group sessions with topic-based group discussions some led by young carers
- video group sessions delivered by other organisations (e.g. Plan UK session on Girls Rights, ALPHA Advisory Group) providing remote digital services via YMCA Swansea platforms
- YMCA Services - All youth and support services can be provided remotely, and Young Carers and families can access the online training, music sessions, CV writing, and advice and support services.
- A Young Carers Project Coordinator is facilitating a steering group to improve engagement in local/ regional strategy work, also in delivering support, workshops, quizzes, live baking sessions and virtual 1-2-1 sessions
- Young Carers ID Card Scheme- Swansea are early adopters of national scheme
- Cwmtawe Cluster- ensuring GP Practice has up to date information on young carers and services available and training GP practice staff
- Agored Qualification – entry level to Level 2 understanding needs young carers Young Carers Rights- by working co-productively, promoting active citizenship

The service is leading the co-production of a local Young Carers strategy and action plan. This will assess how young carers can access the help they need and how improvements could be made. Also they are currently offering Young Carers Awareness sessions to professionals interested via Zoom chats.

Changes over time

The number of carers assessed remains fairly low in Swansea. It is recognised that the approach to offering a carers assessment could improve, by using a ‘what matters’ conversation to increase the take up of carers assessments, and to support carers on their own wellbeing journey. This extended offer to carers is now embedded in multi-agency practice frameworks such as Signs of Safety and ‘Collaborative Communication’, and in the development of a new health and social care information management system/ recording tools, WCCIS (Welsh Community Care Information System). Training and awareness raising sessions are being held with a range of professionals.

Table S1: Carers assessments in Swansea, 2018-21

Swansea data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Number of assessments completed for Adults	12,400	10,912	5,444
Total number of carers assessments for adults	689	588	209
No. of new assessments completed for children	2,171	2,301	4,054

Total carers assessments for young carers	6	2	N/a
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Comparisons with other places

Social Care Wales estimate that 12% of the population of Wales are unpaid carers and this figure could increase to 16% by 2037. These figures include anyone caring for as little as an hour a week and most people who spend only very limited time on caring will not require any additional support. However, Wales also has the highest proportion of older carers and carers providing more than 50 hours' care a week.

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of carers in Wales has increased – the National Survey for Wales issued a monthly report in June 2020, which showed that 35% of people looked after, or gave help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others. This has increased from 29% in the 2019-20 full-year survey.

In 2019-20, the National Survey also asked people whether they looked after or gave help or support to family, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill-health, disability or age-related problems. This report refers to people who gave such unpaid help or support as 'carers':

The following factors are independently associated with people who care for others (for more than 5 hours per week):

- being aged 45 and over
- being female
- living in social housing rather than being an owner-occupier
- living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales
- feeling low levels of satisfaction with life
- having a limiting long-term illness
- being unemployed or economically inactive.

In June to September 2020, a similar proportion of people said they were carers (31%), with 95% of these saying they would continue providing help for at least 6 months or for as long as necessary. A Carers Trust briefing: Young Carers and COVID-19 (April 2020) reported that they believe the pressures created by isolation and the challenges of their caring role may be increasing risk to their mental health, well-being and safety.

Perceptions and perspectives

The Regional Carers Partnership Board, with support locally from the People Policy Development Committee, has recently developed the first Regional Carers Strategy, with a clear vision, mission, values and targets for how to support unpaid carers in West Glamorgan over the next five years. Though co-production of this strategy has been made difficult by the current pandemic, a new Carers Liaison Forum in West Glamorgan has been established and one of its first challenges will be working with Young Carers for their voices and insight.

A collaborative approach to developing a strategy has been agreed, which informs local actions and sets out targets for improving the support offered to carers, under the following four areas:

1. Promote early recognition of Carers and Young Carers so that they are signposted to information and support in a timely manner.
2. Provide information, advice, assistance, and support to Carers and Young Carers enabling informed choices and maintaining their own health and well-being.
3. Work co-productively with Carers on an individual and strategic basis.
4. Improved partnership working between funders and service providers in support of carers enabling carers to move easily between partner organisations and access sustainable third sector services.

Conclusions and key messages

Carers Wales say there are over 370,000 unpaid carers in Wales. The care they give is worth £8.1 billion each year (Strategy for Unpaid Carers, Welsh Government). This is a huge amount of value created by carers and young carers, and a huge contribution to a sustainable health and social care system. The value of unpaid carers, and how much they do for our communities, must be recognised.

iv. Workforce

COVID-19 has been very demanding for the health and social care workforce, who have responded with a strong sense of shared professional skills and effort. Organisations across Swansea have applied huge energy and commitment to meeting each and every challenge; by responding, adapting, innovating and learning at pace. Swansea has seen health and social care being delivered in new, exciting ways, often working across traditional professional and geographic boundaries.

There are growing concerns that the significant increases in demand across the sector is creating unprecedented pressure on the social care workforce. A strong focus on the health and wellbeing of the workforce has been a very clear priority during the pandemic. The principle of compassionate leadership, who are fully engaged, and supportive of staff to be the best they can be, is very important to social wellbeing, to the safe recovery of communities and building new approaches to attract future generations to support this improvement.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea has had a stable, motivated social care workforce in recent years, with few social work vacancies, particularly within the large organisations such as Swansea Council. The resilience of the workforce as we come towards the beginning of the end of pandemic and into recovery is a significant risk. Staff have been operating under immense pressure with very little opportunity for rest and recovery, so it is vitally important to make sure that staff are listened to, and that they have the flexibility and support they need.

Not all staff have had the same COVID-19 experience at the frontline, the back office or as parents and carers in their personal lives. A nuanced approach to recovery planning will be needed to address the range of experiences and the different requirements for different service areas. Some staff will be looking for new challenges or to change their own journey, requiring new ways to build opportunities.

Changes over time

Increasing demands over time are placing additional pressure upon social care staff. This is through higher caseloads, working in new ways, and working with more people with increasingly complex needs. If the number of social workers available falls below safe standards, there is a risk of the Council not meeting statutory duties, delays in assessments, care and support planning and reviews and increased waiting lists. In turn this impacts the whole system, wellbeing outcomes for citizens and their carers, delayed discharges from hospitals or increased waiting times for services. Workforce recruitment and retention in social care is seen nationally as being at crisis point. Solutions will need to be found at a national level, as well as regional and local levels.

Comparison with other places

Social Care Wales carries out annual workforce (regulated services) data collection. Regulated service covers areas such as residential and domiciliary care, day services and other direct or mixed care and support services. A number of workforce measures are reported on a regional basis and show that many thousands of people are employed in this sector.

The latest report (2019) shows variation in the number of Welsh Councils still directly providing services, and Swansea is one of those which has a mixed social care economy. Swansea had the highest percentage of reported vacancies (26% of all posts) for regulated services in Wales, and this has impacted on service availability in residential and domiciliary care. Swansea has a high proportion of part time staff in Wales within regulated social care services (just 6% are full time). Swansea are the third highest Council in terms of staff leaving but were able to match this by recruiting a similar number. Only 60% of regulated services managers in Swansea were shown to have the required/recommended qualifications (94% across Wales).

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Swansea's Child and Family Services has developed a Staff Well-being and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 which aims for each employee to have the right resources, tools and the best support for well-being, and in turn achieve the best outcomes for the children and families worked with. The key areas of focus include; Health Well-being (reducing stress, promoting physical health, sickness and resources), Relational Well-being (Building trust between colleagues/ other professionals, preventing isolation, engagement to feel a part of the service, social interaction and having a voice) and Employee Happiness (improving how staff are feeling inside and outside of work, work-life balance, role stability, self-esteem and meaningful recognition).

Early Years

In 2017 Swansea Public Service Board (PSB) identified the Early Years as a priority in their individual Well Being Plans, and the first key objective was to 'Give Every Child the Best Start in Life'. As part of our continued journey to improve children's outcomes from the earliest age, we have worked to examine the early years provision across Swansea. In 2019 Swansea, along with Neath Port Talbot Council, and Swansea Bay University Health Board were invited by Welsh Government to take a regional approach across Swansea Bay in shaping, piloting and testing the Early Years system, and signed up to become part of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme, also known as Pathfinder. This original invitation was also extended to another 6 PSB areas across Wales. This work came as a direct result of prioritising the early years in our assessment in 2017, and has already shown great examples of how working towards the five principles set out in the Act can help frame our work to better support our citizens.

Services across the Local Authority have responded positively to the challenge of supporting all children, and by continuing to align with the Early Years Transformation and Integration agenda, this work will continue to support children in new and more integrated and collaborative ways.

"Early years. Investment with this age group (and parents) reaps by far the biggest rewards in the long-term." – survey respondent.

Strengths and Assets

The approach we have taken in Swansea is a collaborative and integrated one. The recent amalgamation of various early years teams into the Early Years Programmes Team has integrated various elements of the early years workforce. This team takes an overview of all related programmes and projects across the landscape. A good practice example is that of streamlining workforce development, training and continual professional development opportunities to support the early years sector as a whole – all of which are packaged under the umbrella of the Family Information Service (FIS). The formation of this team, as well as addressing regional opportunities, has proven invaluable in delivering successful outcomes relating to the number of WG grants received, including the Child Development Fund, Childcare and Communities Grant, the Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of fun grants, along with the Flying Start programme, thus enabling discussion of good practice with elements of support being "flexed" across the region to benefit the early years.

This collaborative approach extends to the new Early Years ALN offer within the wider Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team which includes the Educational Psychologist service. This new pathway will enable the development of a consistent approach of early identification and intervention which is supported by the Educational Psychology Service from 0-25 within the consultation model of service delivery. The introduction of Performance Specialist for Primary Phase will support the existing Performance Specialist

team to quality assure, train and support the development of early years school based setting provision for ALN learners. This will support the statutory role introduced with the ALNET Act (2018) of the EYALNLO which will provide a strategic overview of Early Years ALN provision across Swansea. The Early Years ALN offer is a truly integrated approach which recognises the key ALNET principles of; A rights-based approach; Early identification, intervention and effective transitions; Collaboration, Inclusive education and a bilingual system.

Collaboration and integration is also a key factor in the creation of the new multi-disciplinary Mother and Baby unit that has been opened by SBUHB to support pregnant Mums with Mental Health conditions. The Uned Gobaith ('Unit of Hope') is the only inpatient unit of its kind in Wales to offer multidisciplinary mental health care to women from 32 weeks of pregnancy until their baby is one year old.

The multi-agency JIG-SO team also demonstrates this integrated approach. The team also show great results on key early years indicators, such as breastfeeding and decreasing smoking rates during pregnancy. Between 2017 and 2019, 58% of young women that were working with the JIG-SO team smoked in early pregnancy, of these, 34% stopped smoking during pregnancy. This is a significant number, showing the impact the team can have on vulnerable Mums health behaviours.

JIG-SO also shows positive outcomes in terms of supporting breastfeeding in the early days of pregnancy with higher rates of breastfeeding at birth than the Health Board and the Wales average. At 10 days the figures are higher than the Health Board average as well.

Table S2: Breastfeeding Statistics, 2017-19

Breastfeeding Statistics for 2017-2019	JIG-SO	ABMUHB/SBUHB	Wales Average
At Birth	66.8%	64.6%	56.7%
At 10 days	38.5%	28.9%	42.6%
At discharge from Jig-So (around 28 days or at 6 days SBUHB)	29.6%	33.0%	34.2%

The positive impact that the Flying Start programme has on key early years indicators is demonstrated through examination of the Foundation Phase Profile (FPP). The FPP is used to track and monitor children's development during the 40 weeks that they attend childcare. Childcare Workers observe and record children on entry. They then continue to observe and record throughout the child's entitlement before making a final, on exit judgement. The average expected outcome for a child age 2 years (on entry to Flying Start) is Gold. The average expected outcome for a child age 3 years (on exit from Flying Start) is Outcome 1. The following graphs show the on entry and on exit FPP Outcomes of children attending Flying Start 2018 - 2019. The outcomes in the graphs below show children achieving at least the outcome noted i.e. Gold+ incorporates children achieving Outcome Gold or more (Outcome 1, Outcome 2...).

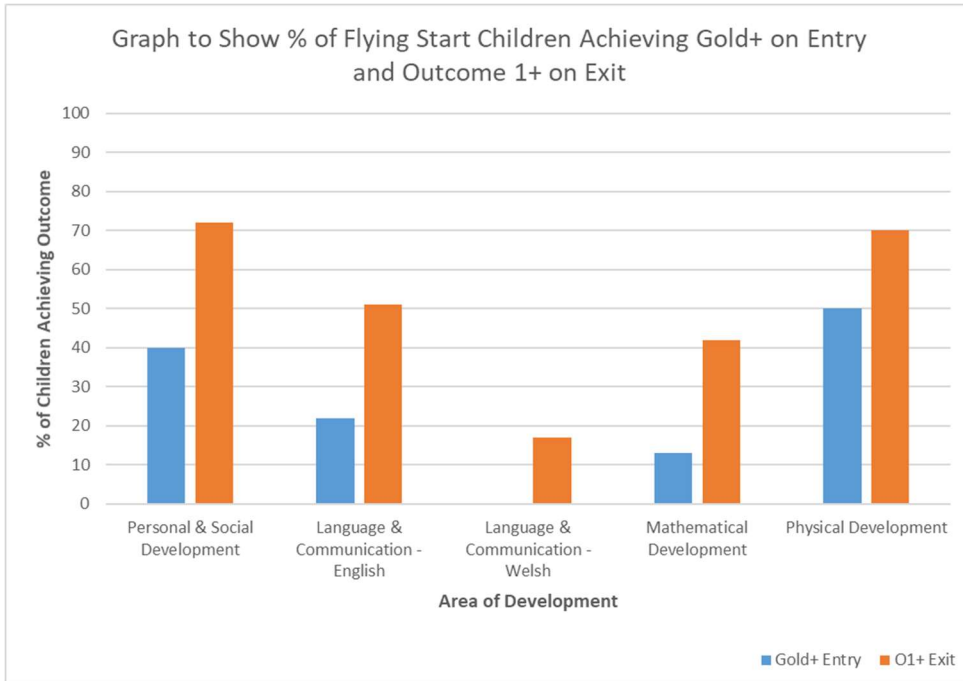


Figure S1: Achievement of Flying Start Children – Outcome 1+

The data collected suggests that on entry in Personal and Social Development, 40% of children were performing at their age expected outcome whilst on exit, this figure rose to 72%. Similarly, in Language and Communication, 22% of children were performing at their age expected outcome, in contrast to 51% on exit. In Mathematical Development, there was a 29% increase and in Physical Development, a 20% increase in children achieving their age expected Outcomes. The graphs show the on entry/on exit comparisons for children who attended Flying Start childcare in Swansea between 2018 – 2019, which show the positive impact that the Flying Start programme is having on children’s lives in Swansea.

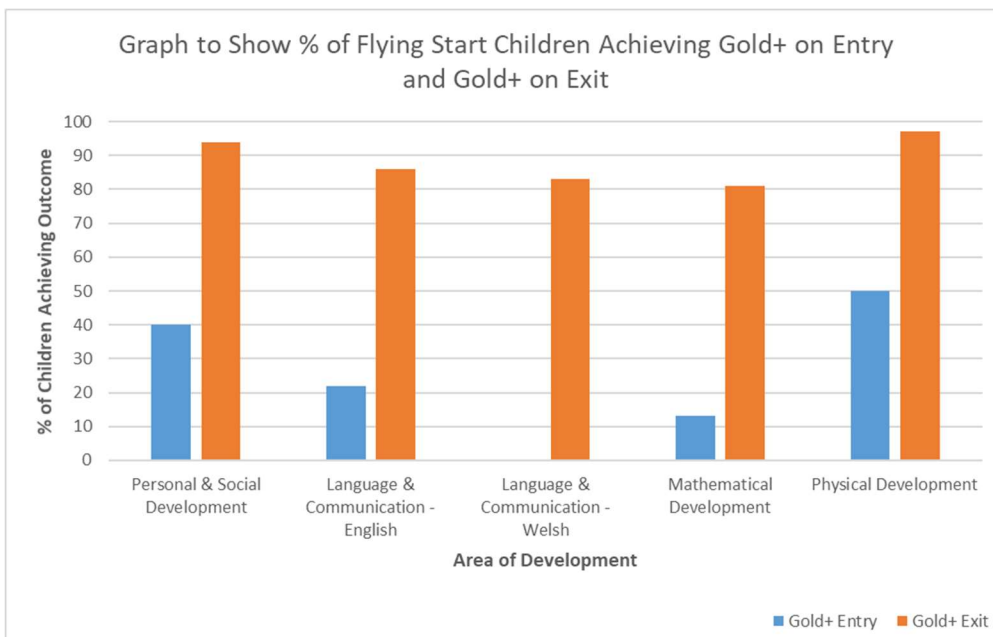


Figure S2: Achievement of Flying Start Children – Gold+

Changes over Time

One area of focus in early childhood is the increase in childhood obesity rates, especially in Wales, and especially in areas of high deprivation. The Child Measurement programme records from 2018/19 state that “Children are significantly more likely than the Welsh average to be obese, if they live in areas of higher deprivation. The gap between obesity prevalence in the most and least deprived quintiles has increased from 5.9% in 2017/18 to 6.9% in 2018/19.”

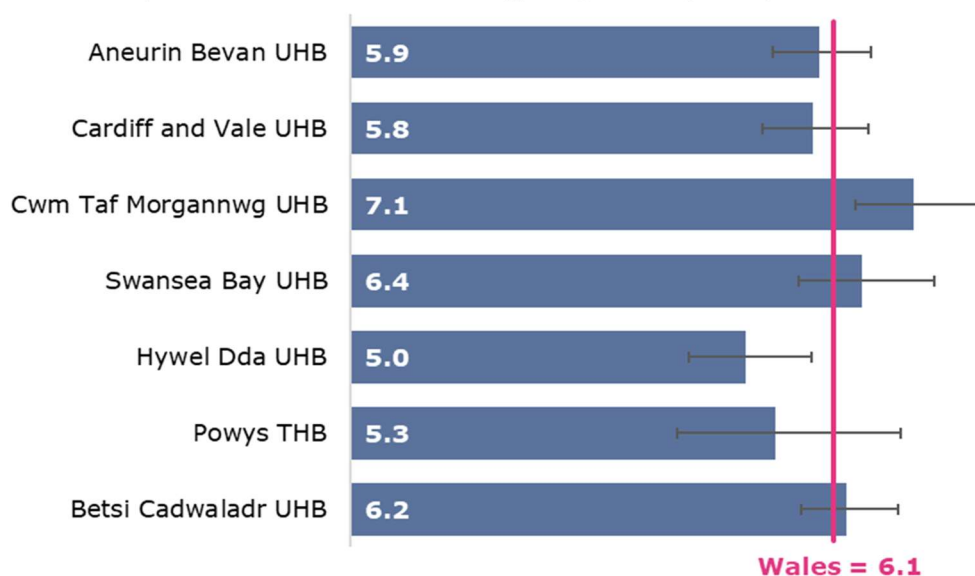
This is significant from a Swansea perspective as the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 identified that 17 (11.5%) of Swansea's 148 LSOAs are in the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales. The importance of supporting families has been recognised across this key area, with the creation of the new Children and Young Peoples Weight management service. This multi-disciplinary team will be made up of clinical professionals, dieticians, nutritionists, psychologists, and youth workers, and will aim to support families holistically.

Comparisons with other Places

Low birth weight remains a key indicator when assessing the health of children in early years. The Public Health Observatory figures, published for 2020, show that the percentage of live births with a low birth weight in Swansea is higher than the national average.

Percentage of singleton live births with a low birth weight (less than 2500g) by Health Board, 2020

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using NCCHD (DHCW)



*Numbers and percentages only include singleton live births where the birthweight and local authority of residence were known

Figure S3

Swansea is working closely with NPT and SBUHB to deliver on the key early years priorities to support families across Swansea. The ambitions will be to positively impact on children's lives by working collaboratively, and in an integrated fashion.

Differences across Swansea

Swansea will continue to offer Flying Start (FS) Outreach, which will include provision of FS services for children of families moving out of Flying Start areas, as part of a tailored package of support, with entitlement being part of a suite of support provided for the family as a whole, as well as communities of interest.

Perceptions and Perspectives

Partners in Swansea want every child to be ready for school. The Early Years Strategy focuses on how this can be achieved. The strategy aims to implement actions to improve school readiness and reduce inequalities between more or less deprived areas ensuring that no child is more than 6 months behind in attainment by age 3.

Part of the Early Years strategy is to reinforce the key messages by increasing awareness of what can be done by anyone caring for children to support the child's development and ensure that each child reaches their maximum potential.

Even before a child is born, parents can influence their future and provide them with the best start in life. To promote this idea, the Best Start campaign was devised.

The key messages of the Best Start Swansea campaign are:

- We play with our children to have fun and keep active
- We look after ourselves and our children by trying to be healthy
- We have routines to help our children concentrate and feel secure
- We enjoy talking, listening and singing with our children
- We enjoy reading with our children to get them ready for learning
- We know that nurseries and playgroups are where our children learn and make new friends
- We spend quality time with our children to help them develop

All of the work of the various early years teams supports the messages of this key campaign.

“Support young families and early years, it's critical to development, mental and physical health for youngsters and their families” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

2022/23 will continue our focus on the integration of early years services across the LA, and SBUHB, across the important disciplines of Speech Language & Communication, Physical Activity, Workforce Development, ALN to name a few. Roles will work flexibly across the early years landscape and include flying start, private childcare provision, school nursery and play provision, with a focus on achieving quality, equity, and parity. This will be undertaken in a number of ways, including;

1. Workforce development, and the scaffolding of knowledge, skills, experiences and understanding via sector support from the right individual or service at the right time.
2. Enhancement of relationships and relationship building
3. Calibration of outreach opportunities, particularly in the case of Flying Start
4. Dovetailing of early years grants and funding opportunities
5. Alignment of roles to compliment, enhance and expand the reach of existing services, projects and programmes
6. Synergy of, and within organisations, services, departments, projects and programmes in relation to early years, which in turn will enable perception and change in respect of quality, inclusion, safeguarding, prevention and early intervention.
7. The continuation of piloting and testing new approaches to help the system develop and support families in a more co-ordinated and joined up approach, in line with Welsh Government priorities for the early years, such as the potential funding for 2 year olds.
8. We are undertaking research into what a single point of entry into early years services for parents/carers and families might look like. This work is being carried out by the EYTI Pathfinder team.
9. Specific Communities of interest are being considered – This will concentrate on an exit strategy into additional Flying Start Outreach Health Visiting for those in receipt of the existing provision of additional midwifery support to young vulnerable parents, targeted at parents having their first baby.

Integration

The regional working agenda is an area of significant focus with positive developments in respect of the creation of multi-agency thematic groups across the early years landscape, ensuring a two way information flow process to and from the regional Early Years Transformation Integration (EYTI) Steering Group. Throughout the sector, Swansea is taking a collaborative approach to supporting families, through the many multi-disciplinary teams, to the collaborative examination of the early years system undertaken in the Vanguard Systems review, and Mapping exercise undertaken as part of the EYTI.

Swansea early years organisations have committed to undertake the Early Years Maternity Maturity Matrix review. This toolkit will help further our understanding of how integrated our systems are.

Improvement

The continued regional working arrangements implicit in the EYTI, as well as collaboration in its broadest sense will be a pivotal factor in measuring success with key stakeholders including colleagues in Health, Education, Social Services as well as the Swansea's childcare and play sector.

The Early Years Programmes Team will continue to work towards the ambition of achieving quality, parity and equity that extends to all children and early years provision. This improvement will be achieved by the “flexing” of support across the workforce to include;

- A holistic and more specific targeted support e.g. ALN workforce development.
- Exploration in respect of expanding the Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-being (SSTEW) tool as a quality assurance tool for early years provision.
- Integrated meetings and networking opportunities – virtual and face to face.
- Improved transition arrangements across the sector, e.g Flying Start to 30 hour Childcare Offer, childcare to school.
- The delivery of evidence based programmes and interventions for families that sit across the social care continuum
- Regional working, as well as collaboration in its broadest sense will be a pivotal factor in measuring success with key stakeholders including colleagues in Health, Education, Social Services as well as the Swansea’s childcare and play sector.

About the Evidence

As a result of the pandemic, the gathering of key performance indicators across early years has become more challenging. The continued development and implementation of the new health and social care information system WCCIS (Welsh Community Care Information System), along with the use of DEWIS, will help agencies to examine the early years information in greater detail in future.

All of the work is underpinned by national strategies such as, Wales a Play Friendly Country, Childcare Act 2006, Childcare Guidance, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Play Sufficiency Assessment, National Minimum Standards, Flying Start guidance, Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 amongst others.

Conclusions and Key Messages

“Babies born during the pandemic have been reliant on care from parents that are more likely to be experiencing heightened stress, social isolation and mental health problems. But many new parents are not receiving the mental health support they need because there are gaps in these vital services in Wales. Urgent action is needed to help families recover by ensuring that perinatal mental health support is available for every family no matter where they live. Without this there is a real concern that the pandemic will have a detrimental impact on the mental health and wellbeing of parents and babies that is severe and long-lasting.” NSPCC Cymru/Wales

The pandemic has had a huge effect on the experience of parents over the course of the lockdowns, with the full effects on child development yet to be fully understood. However many of the key indicators that will support parents/carers and families will remain the same, and we must continue to strive to support families across Swansea to achieve positive outcomes.

The importance of supporting families to have healthy and successful births, to support Mums during pregnancy across a wide range of issues, such as birth weight, pregnancy

weight, smoking cessation, breastfeeding and mental health support remains paramount. Along with helping parents/carers and families to help their children prepare for nursery, early education, school and beyond by promoting positive attachment, bonding, upskilling of the workforce, improved transitions and quality across the sector will support our ambition to give Every Child the Best Start in Life.

Listening to Children and Young People

Local Authorities have a duty to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions which might affect them. The legal basis for this duty is Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. It requires local authorities to:

'make such arrangements as they consider suitable to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them, and to publish and keep up to date information about its arrangements'.

Strengths and Assets

- Swansea has a longstanding history of working in partnership to engage with, and listen to, children and young people. Meaningful and inclusive opportunities for children and young people to be heard in decisions that affect them is a priority. Since 2014, the local mechanism to ensure this has been the Big Conversation, offering opportunities for nearly 10,000 children and young people aged 5-25 to engage in accessible and meaningful opportunities to be heard.
- Swansea Council has a formal policy commitment to Children's Rights. It's unique in Wales, and sits alongside commitments made by other PSB organisations.
- Inclusivity, appropriate participation and engagement of those least likely to engage is a priority. For example, Swansea has a dedicated participation officer for Care Experienced Children and Young People, and children as young as 5 have participated in Big Conversations. Children are routinely included in the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Engagement with children as young as 2 years has taken place on this work.

Changes over time

The Pandemic meant that thought had to be given to how and where we engage with children and young people, in this new and unprecedented time. Engagement with children, young people, families, practitioners and data was undertaken between April-September 2021 to understand what good involvement may now look like (see perceptions and perspectives).

Comparisons with other places

Feedback from colleagues, locally and nationally indicate a common trend that engagement work since the pandemic has become more challenging, particularly in terms of recruitment and retention.

“From my experience there needs to more in the way of mental health support for young people that has a positive focus and stops mental health being something that young people do not talk about for fear of the response” – survey respondent.

Perceptions and perspectives

Swansea’s Children’s Rights Network is a Network made up of over 80 stakeholders with a vested interest in furthering the children’s rights agenda in Swansea. This includes Council and public service representatives, Third sector partners, school staff, parent carers and individuals. The Network coproduced consultation questions and developed a range of methods and formats in an effort to increase accessibility and uptake of the consultation.

During the period 16 June to the 31 July 2021 a total of 358 survey responses were received. This found:

- that a range of mechanisms is required and that work is particularly required to engage children whose voices are ‘quiet’, i.e. those who do not currently have the opportunity to be heard, and those who do not wish to speak up directly or publicly, but wish to contribute anonymously or as and when they have ideas to share.
- extensive work is required to ensure disabled children have opportunities to engage and have their voices heard in ways that are best for them, including opportunities for bespoke work when requested. Opportunities should be facilitated in a way that enables the integration of disabled children and incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons into the Swansea’s Children’s Rights Scheme.
- a wealth of practice takes place in schools to facilitate pupil voice but work is required to bring that local data and pupil’s voices together at a county level.
- extensive work has been done to ensure that children’s rights and the UNCRC are explicitly incorporated into the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. The introduction of the Act now places rights within National Policy, challenging schools and local authorities across Wales to consider how rights can be taught and embedded within curriculum and school life. Swansea has a sound foundation here as a direct result of historic work through UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools Programme
- a wealth of practice takes place to ensure children and young people, at a very local level, are able to participate in ways that are appropriate to them. Conversation and continued co-production is required to extend this local practice to a county-wide approach, to ensure a non-discriminatory approach to participation, supported by trusted and specialised adults in specific fields.

Based on feedback from children and young people, the key issues they wish to work on to make Swansea a better place to live are:

1. Protecting the Environment and Green Spaces
2. Quiet voices – developing systems for listening to children and young people who do not wish to ‘speak up’ but do want to have their say, e.g. digital platforms and virtual suggestion boxes
3. Supporting disabled children – working on making change so that disabled children feel integrated and able to have their voices heard as any other child would.
4. Equality for LGBTQ+ children and young people – developing resources that address discrimination and promote diversity and equality for children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+
5. Politics – developing resources for children and young people to understand what politics is, who local politicians are and how to organise change
6. Listening to Learners – strengthening collective pupil voice across the County, building on good practice currently taking place in individual schools.

Feedback and influencing real change is a priority for participants who responded. Formalising feedback between children and young people and decision makers and publishing that change (more regularly than annually) is essential.

Swansea Council have also been working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner with a group of young women to think about issues concerning wellbeing in respect of young women’s safety, which is an emerging priority locally.

Unanimously, the young women didn’t feel safe in public (during the day or night) and didn’t feel services did enough to reassure them to feel safe, or put in place things that would prevent feelings of unsafety. It was recognised that this is a partnership issue.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

One of the key principles outlined in the Children and Young People’s rights scheme is participation. The establishment of formal mechanisms for listening to children and young people requires a co-productive approach to development. Whilst we have initial data about how children and young people want to engage, we want to continue the conversation on what type of mechanism and structures would allow us to achieve inclusive and effective engagement of all children and young people. Specifically, further work is required with young people to understand issues pertaining to 11+ years, and with all stakeholders to refine the detail of how co-production forums can operate most effectively.

Improvement

As we recover from the pandemic, and community opportunities build, engagement work will continue to grow. Continuation of conversations in schools and community groups to fully develop co-production work with children and young people is essential.

While useful, the consultation above incorporates the views of a small sample of children, and in a specific area. Therefore, it should be viewed as a starting point, and one element of the process of co-production of effective and meaningful mechanisms for listening, that are right for children and young people. Arrangements for participation should be explicitly included as a central part of plans and policies moving forward.

Improvement would see that recovery plans and forward planning for future pandemics maintain the protection of children’s human rights at the centre of efforts. To do this they should consider the research and evidence available to ensure rights based approaches to children are embedding in all decision-making processes. This includes empowering children and young people to know their rights, and enabling them to speak up and be involved in decisions that affect them.

Conclusions and key messages

Swansea has a longstanding history of working in partnership to engage with children and young people. Meaningful and inclusive opportunities for children and young people to be heard in decisions that affect them is a priority. Since 2014, the Big Conversation has offered opportunities for nearly 10,000 children and young people aged 5-25 to engage in accessible and meaningful opportunities to be heard.

The pandemic meant that thought had to be given to how and where we engage with children and young people. As participation is a central tenet of the Children and Young People’s Rights Scheme, how children, young people and adults have inclusive and meaningful opportunities to engage with decisions makers has been of central importance.

“Young people aged 11+ in Swansea have limited access to safe and appropriate areas for them to meet and exercise their right to play under the UNCRC” – survey respondent.

Recognising and Respecting Children’s Rights

As the first local authority in the UK to voluntarily make a public commitment to Children’s Rights, Swansea Council are committed to creating a platform for change to achieve a culture where children’s rights are consciously considered in all of its work. Swansea’s Children and Young People’s Rights Scheme is an innovative road map to ensure consideration is given to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in every decision the Council makes.

The Scheme sets out the arrangements in place to ensure compliance with its duty to have due regard to the UNCRC. It provides transparency about the processes that will be followed to comply with the duty, and outlines monitoring procedures and expected outcomes. Swansea Council is not alone in its formal commitment and each organisation the Public Services Board has its own formal approach to embedding a culture of children’s rights, resulting in better services and lives for children, young people and families in Swansea

It is impossible to consider Children’s rights and the wellbeing of children without giving consideration to the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on children’s lives, and the impact

of it as we recover. In May 2020, and January 2021, the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales undertook consultation with children and young people across Wales to understand the impact of the pandemic on children's rights and wellbeing. 2,205 children and young people completed the survey in Swansea, approximately 5.7% of the targeted age range of 3 to 18-year-olds.

The survey had interesting findings, including young people's frustration and anger about missing people and experiences, loneliness, falling behind on learning, different group impacts (equalities), but also some positives. Detailed information from the survey is available.

The pandemic has had a crushing impact on many children and young people's lives, and for most the impact on them being able to access and exercise their rights has at the least been limited. It has exacerbated existing inequalities, having a devastating impact on children's rights, well-being and futures.

Ageing Well

i. Listening to Older People

Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales (2003) required Local Authorities to build engagement and participation of older people into their planning and consultative systems. The strategy update highlighted the need to strengthen structures and processes of citizen-centred engagement to ensure that older people have adequate involvement in decision making and were involved in the design and creation of innovation and change. 50+ Networks were one of many mechanisms established by Local Authorities.

From 2017 the Council developed a series of "Live Well, Age Well" forums on topics initiated and voted on by community members from a wide range of groups and individual participants. Feedback from community members continually shape these developments and more inclusive, open models of engagement are being co-ordinated to engage as many 50+ community groups and individuals as possible.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea has had a long standing commitment to the Ageing Well agenda. Swansea Council signed "The Dublin Declaration of Age Friendly Cities and Communities" in 2014 and in doing so pledged to:

- commit to specific actions and principles that aim to ensure that older people have the opportunities to make the most of their lives and to play as full a part as possible in their communities,
- develop citizen-centred engagement opportunities to ensure that older people have meaningful involvement in local development and service changes,
- develop safe and inclusive public spaces, housing of the highest quality, communities for all ages, available & affordable public transport, etc.

In November 2020 Swansea PSB agreed to join the World Health Organisation and work towards achieving “Age Friendly City” recognition. This is identified by Welsh Government and the Older Person’s Commissioner For Wales as the way to continue to deliver against the pledges made in the Dublin Declaration and address the aspirations contained within the latest national strategy Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy For An Ageing Society (Oct 2021).

In June 2021 Swansea Council put in place measures to support the development and implementation of Swansea’s Strategy for an Ageing Society, progressing actions within an action plan and identifying areas of need within the Ageing Well agenda. This was followed by a public consultation “Listening to People 50+ in Swansea” - to review mechanisms to hear the voice of people 50+ in Swansea, so that they could influence decision making processes that impact on their lives.

Perceptions and perspectives

“Ageing well is most important to me. When a person ages well they attain and maintain good physical and mental health through keeping active, being interested in things, socialisation” – survey respondent.

Swansea’s Ageing Well Steering Group is made up of over 50 stakeholders with a vested interest in furthering the “Ageing Well” agenda in Swansea. This includes Council departments and public service representatives, third sector partners, community groups and individuals. The Ageing Well Steering Group coproduced consultation questions and agreed it was important that a range of methods for engaging was available to people 50+ in an effort to increase accessibility and uptake of the consultation.

During August and September 2021 a total of 236 responses were received. The survey found:

- A range of mechanisms are required to engage people 50+ in inclusive, open models of engagement within the community.
- Work is required to ensure people with protected characteristics and aged 50+ have opportunities to engage and have their voices heard in ways that are best for them, including opportunities for bespoke work.
- Digital Equality has featured within the consultation feedback and face to face community engagement events. Provision of upskilling and support to access on-line engagement opportunity across the board is required should people 50+ wish to participate in this way.
- A wealth of practice takes place to ensure people 50+, at a very local level, are able to participate in ways that are appropriate to them. Conversation and continued co-production is required to extend this local practice to a county-wide approach, to ensure direct access to decision making processes in a way that is inclusive.

Based on feedback from people 50+, the key issues they wish to work on to make Swansea a better place to live are:

1. Transport (Public & Community Initiatives)
2. Increased activities for people 50+
3. Improved local services within the community
4. Support
5. Safety
6. Improving Swansea – City Centre & local facilities
7. Sport & Exercise
8. Improving Information & Communication

“Isolation and loneliness is one of the most devastating life experiences that affect people of all ages, but particularly our older people. Covid has made this a million times worse. They are doubly isolated as many cannot access or use the Internet or social media. I saw first hand how my mum nearly gave up on life, until I paid for sitters to stay with her and encourage her to eat and drink while u was in work. Company is so important” – survey respondent.

Improvement

As we recover from the pandemic, and community opportunities build, engagement work will continue to grow. Continuation of conversations to fully develop co-production work is essential.

Survey feedback suggests that citizens don't always wish to complete a survey and more investment in face to face engagement and provision of hard copy information in community buildings and direct to people's homes in relation to engaging people 50+ is something that needs to be explored. This is also highlighted in the Older Person's Commissioner for Wales reports: "Leave No-one Behind" & "State of the Nation 2021".

Recovery plans and forward planning for future pandemics should ensure that protection of human rights for Older People are at the centre of efforts. To do this research and evidence available should ensure that rights based approaches are embedded in all decision-making processes. This includes empowering people to know their rights, and enabling them to speak up and be involved in decisions that affect them.

ii. Age Friendly City

Swansea has had a long standing commitment to the Ageing Well agenda. Swansea Council signed "The Dublin Declaration of Age Friendly Cities and Communities" in 2014.

The Ageing Well in Wales programme 2014-2019 assisted local authorities across Wales to deliver its themes and meet the requirements of the Strategy for Older People in Wales.

As noted previously, Swansea PSB agreed to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Cities framework, consisting of eight interconnected domains, which can help to identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

Strengths and Assets

Ageing Well remains a work theme within the “Live Well, Age Well” Swansea PSB Objective. Swansea Council signed the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe in February 2014. Key to its success is the involvement of older people in describing their own experiences of the city’s positive characteristics and barriers. Inclusive community engagement opportunities is a focus for Swansea Council and a review of effective mechanisms was the purpose of Swansea’s recent consultation on “Listening to People 50+ in Swansea” in August and September 2021.

Swansea reviewed and re-launched its Ageing Well Steering Group in July 2021 to ensure a partnership approach to the wellbeing of people aged 50+. Membership includes individuals aged 50+ and community groups that support people aged 50+, public Services, the third Sector and partner organisations. The purpose of the group is to take on the role of Ageing Well Champions and support the development and implementation of Swansea’s Strategy for an Ageing Society.

Swansea has developed the Local Area Coordination (LAC) service, whose role is to help people build relationships within their community. Since the pandemic, the service has had an increased focus on tackling social isolation. Swansea has an active community and voluntary sector providing services to carers and older people. Community members and third sector organisations play a fundamental role in delivering preventative support services and ensuring that all stakeholders involved in shaping “An Age Friendly Swansea” in a co-productive working partnership. Engagement work within communities across Swansea continues to focus on the Well-being of people living in those communities.

Changes over time

A report produced by the Older People’s Commissioner For Wales in August 2020 “Leave no-one behind” is based on discussions with older people, carers, community organisations, volunteers, care home workers and others. The report explores the challenges, what has and hasn’t worked, and heard directly about older people’s stories and experiences of lockdown, exposing inequalities and ageism and the consequences that can flow from this.

The Older People’s Commissioner released her “State of the Nation Report” on 1 October 2021, International Older Persons Day. The report assesses how things have changed since the last report in October 2019 and shows that:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has had both direct and indirect impacts on older people’s health and well-being, as well as limiting people’s ability to access services or spend time with friends, loved ones or community groups.

- There has been a significant deterioration in older people’s physical and mental health and accessing community-based services – particularly health and care services – has been difficult.
- The danger that older people will be excluded as we move forward due to a shift towards digital services, changing working practices and reduced opportunities for engagement and volunteering.

Improvement

The National Ageing Society Strategy, with Age Friendly Cities domains as a framework and Older Persons Human Rights highlighted, is promoted. A co-productive approach to developing a local strategy and making it meaningful to those people that it impacts upon, where all stakeholders are at the table for discussion and development from its very beginning, is essential.

Provision of resources to ensure meaningful and on-going engagement with people aged 50+ in inclusive and open models of participation has been highlighted as a need in Swansea within the recent consultation and face to face engagement activities.

Acknowledging that people engage and participate in decision-making processes in different ways and therefore multiple mechanisms need to be established and maintained across Swansea to ensure relationships and trust is built to create a sound foundation for on-going participation which all communities feel they can engage with.

Although the number of older people who are digitally connected continues to rise, there are still around 5 million people over the age of 55 nationally who are not online. While factors such as income and levels of education play a part, age is still the biggest indicator of who is digitally excluded. The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales states that if we are to avoid leaving people behind, services like GP clinics and job listings must have other non-digital channels. Council consultations being mostly on-line have been highlighted in a similar way. The government should also support more people to get online and stay online. This includes universal access to the internet, availability of equipment in settings such as care homes, and personalised support to give confidence to people in developing digital skills.

Poverty

For the purposes of this assessment, poverty is defined as:

- Income below the Minimum Income Standard. The Minimum Income Standard is based on what the public think people need for an acceptable minimum standard of living as researched by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Inadequate access to necessary services of good quality.
- Inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision making activities.

Strengths and Assets

- In Swansea, organisations take an ‘everybody’s business’ approach to tackling poverty.
- Swansea will be the first local authority area in Wales to set up a Poverty Truth Commission
- Swansea Council’s Poverty Forum aims to embed tackling the causes and impact of poverty across all Council services.
- Swansea’s Poverty Partnership Forum brings together public and third sector organisations for their shared interest/involvement in the tackling poverty agenda in Swansea. The Forum is used to facilitate networking, sharing good practice, experience, information, trends, changes to services and to identify and encourage opportunities for partnership working and collaboration.
- An excellent working partnership exists between numerous organisations in the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) who work towards shared goals and share information and good practice; promote partnership working to increase financial inclusion with a view to reducing poverty and increasing economic growth in Swansea. The FISG identify gaps in provision and joint actions to address them and works effectively towards improving household financial resilience and reducing vulnerability to debt.
- Swansea benefits from some excellent welfare rights and specialist debt advice provision. As an example, the Local Authority’s Welfare Rights Team provide a second-tier service specialising in welfare benefit and tax credits law and supports those who are providing a front tier service and working with claimants. .
- The implementation of the Socio-economic Duty means considering socio-economic disadvantage is embedded in strategic decisions made by public bodies in Wales.

Changes over time; Perceptions and perspectives

The following section begins by outlining the current situation and changes over time in relation to our definition and perspectives on poverty in Swansea: firstly low income (below minimum income standards); and secondly inadequate access to services and opportunities to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision making activities.

The first part considers household income from employment, in work poverty, benefit take up, the Minimum Income Standard and the Living Wage in relation to the concepts of low income and income below minimum standards. The second part considers access to necessary services and opportunities to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision making activities in the context of digital exclusion, data poverty, food poverty, fuel poverty, debt, the poverty premium and child poverty.

“Basic income for all regardless of means. This allows financial security that impacts health and well being” – survey respondent.

i. Income below Minimum Standards

Household income from employment is a key factor determining the risk of living in poverty. Employment can mitigate against the risk of poverty, however there are a growing number of people in the UK, Wales and Swansea who experience “in work” poverty. Regardless of whether household income is made up from employment, benefits, or a mixture of both, people can experience the effects of poverty in a range of different ways if household income fails to meet minimum income standards and people are excluded from the opportunities and choices to participate fully in society.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provides information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees to local authority level.

The median weekly full time earnings figure for residents in Swansea stood at £552.60 (April 2021); which is 3.2% lower than the Wales figure but 9.5% below the UK average. The published workplace-based full-time weekly earnings figure for Swansea is around £3 per week lower than the resident-based figure, as shown in the table below:

Table S3: Average weekly earnings in Swansea, April 2021

WEEKLY earnings	Swansea	Swansea (% of Wales)	Wales	UK	Swansea (Workplace)
FULL-TIME employees	£552.60	96.8	£570.60	£610.70	£549.50
% change on previous year	+2.1%	-	+4.2%	+4.3%	+2.9%
Male full-time	£555.30	92.6	£599.70	£651.60	£549.50
Female full-time	£543.90	103.0	£528.30	£558.10	£551.00
PART-TIME employees	£199.20	92.1	£216.30	£215.30	£205.80
ALL employees	£462.60	98.6	£469.40	£504.40	£440.70

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021, ONS.

The Annual Earnings data shows that the Swansea median full-time figure (2021) of £28,827 is 0.1% lower than the Wales average, although both Swansea and Wales figures are below the UK average (in Swansea by 7.9%). Over the year 2019 – 2020, average annual full-time earnings in Swansea rose by 3.3% – as shown below – although analysis of recent, short-term change is more complicated due to the pandemic.

Table S4: Average annual earnings in Swansea, April 2021

ANNUAL earnings	Swansea	Swansea (% of Wales)	Wales	UK	Swansea (Workplace)
FULL-TIME employees	£28,827	99.9	£28,861	£31,285	£28,672
% change on previous year	+3.3%	-	+1.2%	-0.6%	+5.2%
Male full-time	£28,856	94.9	£30,420	£33,414	£28,525
Female full-time	£28,769	106.3	£27,065	£28,305	£28,688
PART-TIME employees	£10,405	90.2	£11,541	£11,310	£11,377
ALL employees	£23,383	97.4	£23,996	£25,971	£22,995

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021, ONS.

The Annual Earnings data above, does not show a breakdown of earnings by employment sector, gender, or by protected characteristics. It also doesn't give any information about job security, or zero-hours contracts which can result in fluctuating levels of earnings and

insecurity of employment. Earnings and employment trends are also analysed in the Economy chapter of this assessment.

In Work Poverty

In-work poverty in Wales (defined here as the proportion of workers who are in poverty) was at 14% for 2016/17 to 2018/19. Wales has one of the highest in-work poverty rates, behind London (17%). Workers in food, wholesale, and retail faced amongst the highest in-work poverty rates by industry.

Relative income poverty for working-age adults remains steady in Wales but is still above that seen for other UK countries. Between 2017 and 2020, 22% of working-age adults in Wales were living in relative income poverty.

Benefits Uptake

There is a recognised, ongoing gap between entitlement and take up of income and employment related benefits. National estimates show that:

- 6 out of 10 of those entitled to Pension Credit claimed the benefit
- up to 1 million families who were entitled to receive Pension Credit did not claim
- 8 out of 10 of those entitled to Housing Benefit claimed the benefit
- up to 1.1 million families who were entitled to receive Housing Benefit did not claim
- 9 out of 10 of those entitled to Income Support or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance claimed the benefit
- up to 0.3 million families who were entitled to receive this IS/ESA did not claim.

Minimum Income Standards

‘A minimum standard of living in the UK today includes, but is more than just, food, clothes and shelter. It is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society.’ In 2021, many people on low incomes are being held back from reaching the Minimum Income Standard (MIS), because of unstable work, inadequate pay and a benefits system that does not provide adequate income security.

A single person needs to earn £20,400 a year to reach a minimum acceptable standard of living in 2021, but the National Living Wage (NLW) is not high enough to reach this standard, as it pays around £17,400 for someone working full-time. A couple with two children need to earn £34,200 between them, which they can only achieve on the National Living Wage (NLW) if both parents work full-time. In practice, only just over one in four (28%) couples with children both work full-time, often because suitable jobs are not available or because of the availability of childcare or the health status of parents or children (Family Resources Survey, 2018/19).

Out-of-work families with children on Universal Credit (UC) fall about 40% short of the income they need, and those without children fall 60% short. Working-age adults or couples relying on out-of-work benefits get less than half of what they need through UC. Without

the £20-a-week increase to UC, which is included here, the proportion falls to around one third. Those relying on Income Support/Jobseeker's Allowance in the legacy benefits system already have extremely low incomes relative to need. With the UC cut now having taken place so will claimants of UC.

The National Living Wage is applied to over-25s only, with under-25s having lower minimum wage rates. Work improves income considerably, even for part-time jobs on the NLW, but still mainly falls short of enabling people to reach MIS, holding back millions of households from reaching the income considered adequate by society. Even working full time, a single person falls 14% short of this standard and a lone parent with two children falls 12% short, although a couple with two children can reach it if both parents work full time. For those with part-time jobs, the shortfalls are much greater, underlining the damaging effects of uncertain and sporadic work.

A recent Fair By Design survey found that the impact of stagnating wages and benefits over the last 10 years on low-income households was clear. From this survey, it was those under 35 who were struggling and the most likely to be falling behind on their commitments, or going without gas or electricity, and those over 65 – particularly those who were retired – who were the least likely to be. Perhaps unsurprisingly, homeowners were managing better than those who rented. Fifteen per cent of those in social housing were going without gas or electricity a lot of the time, due to financial constraints. Those who were unable to work were also struggling, with nearly one third (30%) falling behind on bills a lot of the time.

The Living Wage

The Living Wage calculation takes into account the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Minimum Income Standard (MIS) research in which members of the public, informed by knowledge from experts, identify what is needed for a minimum acceptable standard of living. This is then combined with an analysis of the actual cost of living, including essentials like rent, council tax, childcare and transport, for different family types. The current UK Living Wage represents an average of the hourly wage required by adults in different family types to reach the level of income that can purchase the relevant MIS basket of goods and services. After taking into account the different forms of government support such as tax credits, Housing Benefit and free hours of childcare that families are entitled to, the current Living Wage Rate (2020/21) is £10.85 (London) £9.50 (outside London); with new rates imminent. The rates apply to all workers over 18 – in recognition that young people face the same living costs as everyone else

ii. Access to necessary services, opportunities and resources

Household income is not the only determinant of poverty. People can experience poverty if they have inadequate access to necessary services and resources such as food, fuel and the internet. People living in poverty are often subject to the "Poverty Premium" and can pay more for goods and services than other people and are often more at risk of debt and high cost credit.

Digital Exclusion

Digital exclusion can be defined as ‘The lack of access or ability to engage in digital activity, which excludes people from equal opportunities to engage in social, political, and economic life’. Digital exclusion is characterised by a lack of access to connectivity, devices, skills and confidence and a lack of inclusive digital design which accounts for accessibility needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and further exacerbated the digital divide. Prior to the pandemic, people who were unable to afford equipment, access to the internet, or who lacked digital skills were already at a significant disadvantage, for example, in terms of seeking employment, accessing financial support, connecting with organisations and public services, and purchasing goods online. Being online can also reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness by helping individuals stay in touch with friends or family and other support networks, improving health and well-being. Those with the most to gain from using digital services are the least likely to be able to do so; those already at a disadvantage – through age, education, income, disability, or unemployment – are most likely to be missing out, further widening social inequality.

The accelerating shift of public services to online platforms risks further increasing the gap between the digitally included and excluded. The pandemic has demonstrated how critical it is for those who design and develop services to consider the impact of digital on those who lack basic digital skills and for whom access to, and the affordability of technology and/or connectivity is a barrier.

The National Survey for Wales 2019-20 revealed that 90% of people used the internet, similar to 2018-19. The survey showed:

- 76% of people used the internet several times or more a day in 2019-20 compared with 88% between May and September 2020.
- 73% of internet users demonstrated five digital skills in the previous three months. They were more likely to be aged 16 to 49, and be educated to degree level or above.
- only 49% of those with no qualifications demonstrated the 5 digital skills in the last three months.
- those who were economically inactive were less likely to visit a website (71%) than those in employment (82%).
- people living in private rented or owner-occupied homes are more likely to visit public service websites than those living in social housing.

Data Poverty

Data poverty means not being able to live well in a digital society, including not being able to apply for jobs online, bank online, or access essential services such as health and benefits. It means children can't afford to do school work online, nor keep in touch with friends. Data poverty leaves communities behind. It is an essential but distinct element of digital exclusion that requires specific action and support. Prior to the pandemic, data poverty was not likely to have been regarded as such a significant issue for so many, as children could access online activities at school or in libraries, and households largely had data contracts that met their needs. There is now a recognition that those needs have increased, with more members of

households sharing devices, data allowances and broadband bandwidth. Increasingly, households are having to choose between paying for Wi-Fi/mobile data or other household essentials such as food and fuel.

According to the Nesta Survey, Data Poverty in Scotland and Wales (Jan 2021):

- One in seven adults in Scotland and Wales are experiencing data poverty:
- Individuals' and families' needs for data are often not adequately met. One in ten people with monthly mobile contracts regularly run out of data before the end of the month and larger households struggle to meet very high data needs.
- Different needs and circumstances of data poverty require different solutions: Some people are restricted by income and unaffordability, others have high data or device requirements, especially in larger households. Poor signal at home is a common problem, while others have financial and digital literacy needs.
- Those who experience data poverty are significantly more likely to have a household income below £20,000.
- Disadvantaged groups are more likely to experience data poverty, including: adults living in more deprived neighbourhoods, unemployed, working part-time, those with disabilities, adults who feel less confident reading in English, adults who live with children and larger households.
- Financial and data literacy compounds data poverty: only about half of those interviewed felt they were able to shop around for the best data deals. People with low digital and financial literacy and weak purchasing power may not realise that better deals are available to them.
- Public Wi-Fi access is particularly important for those who are experiencing data poverty: Before COVID-19, public Wi-Fi offered a safety net, with one in five people experiencing data poverty regularly using Wi-Fi in public libraries. Restrictions resulted in the loss of public Wi-Fi via shops, public transport, libraries and leisure facilities, reducing use of public Wi-Fi sources by as much as a third of the pre-pandemic level.

In Swansea public services and third sector organisations have taken a variety of steps to try to mitigate the impact of digital exclusion locally particularly during the pandemic, this has included for example the Community Calling initiative, where Swansea Council for Voluntary Service have partnered with Hubbub and O2 to bring Community Calling to Swansea. Community Calling was launched locally in March 2021 to provide devices and connectivity locally to those identified as having unmet digital needs; who will also be able to access digital skills training at local support centres. In addition, as part of the 'Our Neighbourhood' project, SCVS, in partnership with Digital Communities Wales, is offering digital support to people who need help and guidance using technology. Volunteers are trained and supported to offer weekly support over the phone for people who would like some help with using unfamiliar technology (for example tablets, phones or laptops). Swansea Council's Lifelong Learning Team also continue to offer support to get people online and courses in IT and Digital Literacy.

Food Poverty

Food poverty is increasing, as shown by the number of food banks and those they support increasing. It has been estimated that the number of people using food banks was around 2.5% of all UK households (700,000) during 2019-20. During 2020-21 around 2.5 million emergency food parcels were given to people in crisis in the UK by foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network, a 33% increase from the previous year and over a 200% increase from 2014/15. In 2020/21, 980,082 children were fed from food parcels from the network, an increase of 36% from the previous year. Wales saw an increase of 8% from 2019/20 to 2020/21 in food parcels distributed and Swansea had the sixth highest increase (out of 22 local authorities) in food parcels distributed.

“Poverty: working as a volunteer during lockdown brought to light for me just how many people rely on food banks and charities just to survive!” – survey respondent.

The Trussell Trust Network added a new distribution centre in Swansea during 2020, increasing the number from 6 to 7, and a number of independent food banks started up to help with the demand for food. The total number of parcels distributed in Swansea through the network increased by 27% in from 2019/20 to 2020/21, with 11,877 parcels distributed. 4,195 parcels were given to children and 7,682 to adults.

Fuel Poverty

Rising energy costs, low incomes and energy-inefficient homes are creating fuel poverty with families having to make tough decisions on whether to heat their homes or feed their children. National Energy Action (NEA) estimate 22,500 more Welsh households will be in fuel poverty during winter 2021 due to increases in energy prices.

In Wales, there were 2,000 excess winter deaths in 2019/20 (excluding COVID-19 related deaths) and World Health Organisation estimates around 30% of excess winter deaths are due to cold homes (suggesting that around 600 deaths in Wales could be due to cold homes). Data from 2018 suggests that 10% of households were in fuel poverty in Swansea, a slightly lower proportion than the Welsh average of 12%. The highest levels of fuel poverty can be found in Gwynedd (23%) and Ceredigion (21%) with the lowest levels found in Bridgend and Torfaen (8%).

Debt

Prior to the pandemic, some 193,000 people in Wales, 8% of all adults, were estimated to be in problem debt and 412,000 people (16% of the population) were showing signs of financial distress. In 2018, seven in every ten people who turned to StepChange debt charity for advice said the primary reason they had run into problem debt was because of a life event or shock. This is also reflected in a representative survey of the wider population: People who had experienced a life event in the last two years were three times more likely to be in problem debt than those who had not, with additional life events experienced increasing the likelihood of problem debt.

By November 2020, Citizens Advice Bureau estimated that £73 million in arrears on household bills like rent, energy or council tax had built up since the outbreak began with approximately half of these arrears being new debts that had built up as a result of the pandemic. Over 280,000 people in Wales had fallen behind on payments up to that point. A third (34%) of people with household bill debts have been unable to afford food or other necessities in the period since the outbreak began. People whose work has been affected by coronavirus, households with children and people with disabilities are most likely to have fallen behind.

The economic impact of COVID-19 has seen the financial position of many Welsh families deteriorate, pushing some into problem debt for the first time and deepening the amount of debt owed by some of those already struggling. Across Wales 130,000 households (10% of all) had fallen behind on a bill between January and May 2021. Over the same period 230,000 households (17%) had borrowed money. Low-income households, renters, disabled people, 25-49 year-olds, lone parents and BAME households were all at a heightened risk of being in problem debt prior to the pandemic and evidence suggests that the situation for these at risk groups has deteriorated over the course of the pandemic.

UK and Welsh Government emergency schemes such as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) already played an important role in helping households to avoid problem debt by providing a grant to households struggling to make ends meet. Both these schemes have been strengthened over the course of the pandemic.

Poverty Premium

On average, low-income households incur £478 of extra costs through poverty premiums (2019). This average was calculated by applying the nominal cost of each premium against the level of its incidence, assumed through survey results. The equivalent figure for these premiums in 2016 was £432, however, it should be noted that the average amounts of the premium, both overall and components, are not directly comparable due to survey methodology changes. Some pernicious aspects of the poverty premium, particularly transport, remain very high in Swansea.

Fair by Design and Turn2Us commissioned a three-stage, mixed-methods research study to explore recent changes in the poverty premium landscape (2020). The study showed that low income households were spending the equivalent of 14 weeks' of food shopping just to access the same services as those who were better off. The research found:

- People struggling with money were paying an extra £478 a year for essentials like energy, credit and insurance because of the poverty premium.
- Car insurance was the biggest contributor to the poverty premium, with some people paying nearly £300 more a year because of living in a deprived area. Additional charges for paying monthly instead of annually could mean an extra £160, for a total poverty premium of nearly £500.
- Credit was expensive when on a low income, whatever form it took. A sub-prime credit card cost around £200 more a year and personal loans cost over £500 extra.

- Being on the best energy prepayment tariff was still £131 more expensive than the best online-only one. However, being on a fixed tariff could still be costly and not paying by direct debit cost up to £143 more a year.
- The experience of the poverty premium varied among different age groups. Under 35s, for example, struggled with the costs of owning a car. For over 65s, the poverty premium existed because of digital exclusion and not being able to access and engage with the market, to switch online to the best energy or insurance deal. Switching rates among families with young children tended to be higher, and they were more likely to use expensive forms of consumer credit for household goods.

Child Poverty

Child poverty is rising, with 4.3 million UK children living in poverty as at March 2020, over half a million more than five years previously. Swansea saw one of the lowest increases in child poverty rates in Wales, rising from 28.8% in 2014/15 to 29.8% in 2019/20. However, that is still 3 in 10 children in Swansea living in poverty. Wales has the worst child poverty rate of all UK nations, with 31% of children now living below the poverty line. 20 out of 22 local authorities in Wales have seen an increase in child poverty over the past 5 years.

75% of children living in poverty in 2019/20 were in households with at least one working adult; a large increase from 61% in 2014/15. Low-paid jobs, a freeze of in-work benefits and high housing costs mean wages are no longer enough to keep families out of poverty. Swansea ranks 18th out of the 22 local authority areas in Wales for child poverty rates. However, at constituency level, Swansea East is 12th and Swansea West is 17th out of the 40 constituencies.

The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is increasing. Within Swansea, 23.6% of pupils aged 5 to 15 were eligible for school meals in 2020, representing an increase from 19.4% in 2017. Since 2019, Welsh Government introduced Transitional Protection for Free School Meals which means pupils can get Free School Meals if they were eligible at any time since April 2019. The numbers of pupils aged 5 to 15 who were eligible or transitionally protected in 2020 was 8,264 or 28.8%. The number of pupils eligible varies significantly across Swansea, with the highest proportion living in Mayhill, Blaenymaes & Penlan (69%, 68% and 56% respectively) and the lowest proportion in Glais, Knelston & Newton (1-3%).

Children start to learn vital money skills and habits between the ages of three and seven. Previous research has shown that financial capability, by the time of reaching financial independence, is in large part a consequence of what is seen, learned and experienced during childhood and adolescence. The 2019 Children and Young People's Financial Capability Survey found that:

- Children in Wales are more involved in managing their finances, including their bank account, than the UK as a whole.
- In Wales, the proportion receiving key elements of financial education at school or at home has increased slightly since 2016, from 48% to 50% in 2019.
- Children in Wales aged 12 to 17 have the same level of confidence managing their money as the UK (46%).

In Wales there have been other positive changes since 2016 in particular: 71% of children aged 14 to 17 use a system to keep track of their spending, up 8% points from 2016. Only 20% of children aged 16 to 17 with a bank account have never deposited money, the lowest of all nations and an 8 %-point improvement since 2016. Well over one-third (37%) of children aged eight to 17 say they put money aside into savings at least monthly, up from 31% in 2016.

“Everyone should have access to the services they need to lead a stable and comfortable life” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Regional analysis by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) as part of the latest quarterly UK economic outlook shows that unemployment rates in Wales are projected to rise sharply over the period 2021-2023 to about 6% or above, compared to UK average of 5.2%. Labour force participation is also under stress. Wales is projected to see sharp rises in economic inactivity throughout the period 2021-2023, with projected inactivity rates rising to above 40% over the period, compared to a UK average of 37%.

As economic growth accelerates after the lifting of lockdown restrictions across the UK, the recovery in the devolved nations and regions will vary widely. Wales is projected to just about catch up with its pre-pandemic levels of economic output, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA), by the end of 2024, a year later than England and Scotland. This is still far below pre-pandemic trends, and low productivity persists.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report ‘UK Poverty 2020/21’ states that before coronavirus, 14.4 million people in the UK were caught up in poverty, more than one in five people. Child poverty and in-work poverty had been on the rise for several years and some groups were disproportionately likely to be pulled into poverty. Many of those groups already struggling most to stay afloat have also endured the most of the economic and health impacts of COVID-19. These include:

- Part-time workers, low paid workers and sectors where there are much higher rates of in-work poverty, such as accommodation and food services.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic households.
- Lone parents – mostly women, many of whom work in hard-hit sectors, who are more reliant on local jobs, and are more likely to have struggled with childcare during the lockdown.
- Private renters, who have higher housing costs, and social renters, who tend to have lower incomes, both leading to higher poverty rates. Renters in work are also more likely to be in a sector more affected by coronavirus.
- Areas where there were already higher levels of unemployment, poverty and deprivation.

The Bevan Foundation’s Report *A Snapshot of Poverty in Spring 2021 (Wales)* identified that:

- One in five Welsh households have seen their incomes decrease between January and May 2021, which is on top of earlier falls during 2020.

- More than one in five households with a net income of less than £20,000 have seen their income drop since January 2021.
- For households with a net income over £40,000, more than one in five have seen their incomes increase.
- Households across Wales have seen their living costs increase. Social renters, and parents/guardians have been especially affected by rising costs.
- 43% of households are spending more on heating, electricity / water.
- 38% of households are spending more on food.
- 20% of households are spending more on internet costs or devices to access the internet.
- Social renters have been four times more likely to see their housing costs rise than people living in other tenures.
- Households with children have also faced pressures on their living costs, being more likely to report increased spending on everyday items than households without children.
- A third of Welsh households never have enough money to buy anything beyond day-to-day items.
- Over 40,000 households (3% of all households) often or always do not have enough for the basics, whilst nearly 70,000 (5%) sometimes do not have enough for the basics. Combined approx. 110,000 households in Wales (8% of all households) struggle to have enough for everyday essentials at least some of the time.
- Personal Debt is a problem. Since January 2021, 10% of Welsh households (over 130,000) have fallen behind on a bill, whilst 17% (over 230,000) have borrowed money to pay a bill.
- Low-income households, renters, disabled people, lone parents and adults aged 25-64 are more likely to be behind on a bill or have borrowed money than others.

Breathing Space is a debt respite scheme introduced in May 2021 to help people in England and Wales struggling with problem debt. Breathing Space is available to those with problem debt who access advice and meet the eligibility criteria. There are two parts to the scheme, the Standard Breathing Space and Mental Health Breathing Space. The Breathing Space Impact Assessment estimates that the initiative will help around 700,000 people nationally in one year. Of this, more than 25,000 people who are experiencing a mental health crisis are set to benefit. Breathing Space will magnify the benefits of debt advice for those who already seek it and encourage more of those in problem debt to seek advice. Debt agencies estimate that the value of debt advice will be 14% higher under Breathing Space and it is forecast that an additional 1.3m debtors will seek advice over the assessment period as a result of Breathing Space. People seeking debt advice earlier will lead to more positive debt outcomes and improvements in mental and physical health.

However, there are concerns that the situation will worsen. Many of the support schemes that have protected households have recently either ended or are due to end soon and the £20 Universal Credit uplift has now been removed. Living costs are set to increase further, with a projected further increase in fuel poverty, whilst there are still concerns about the health of the economy and job losses because of the end of the furlough scheme. The Bevan Foundation project that in the short term, households in problem debt were likely to find autumn and winter 2021 difficult. In the medium to long-term, households in problem debt

face multiple challenges. Repaying debt accrued over the course of the pandemic will leave many households with less disposable income, creating everyday shortfalls. Accumulated debt will also make it difficult for households to access some services, and they may find it more difficult or expensive to borrow money in future. With pressure on low-income households increasing, the Bevan Foundation think it is timely to consider a new approach to solving problem debt, with a clearer focus on relief and prevention.

As the UK assesses the short- and longer-term effects of COVID-19, millions of households are struggling to make ends meet. Even before the pandemic, three in ten UK households had incomes too low to meet a minimum budget as defined by members of the public. While the pandemic has profoundly affected the ways in which people live, members of the public continue to underline the need for a stable income that allows people to participate in society including, for example, being able to socialise, travel, and maintain living standards. In some areas aspects of life, such as modes of shopping and the use of technology, there may be significant changes affecting minimum budgets in the future, but it is too early to assess their impact.

Housing

Good quality housing plays a significant role in the well-being of Swansea, in particular safeguarding people from harm, tackling poverty, transforming our economy and infrastructure and maintaining and enhancing Swansea's natural resources and biodiversity. In addition, the extensive range of housing services contribute to the wider national and local agenda of health, well-being, poverty, public service improvement and housing plays a direct and indirect preventative role.

Safe and secure housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of individuals and the wider community and an essential element in achieving the well-being of future generations. Without a secure, affordable home it is difficult for people to progress in other areas of their lives including employment, education, training, health and family life.

The Council also has a critical role to play towards contributing to the Welsh Government's ambition to "achieve a net-zero-carbon public sector" by 2030, by substantially investing in the decarbonisation of its housing stock. Investment in affordable housing, which includes social housing, has significant economic impacts which include creating jobs and providing large multiplier effects in the local economy.

Poverty and low income prevents people from accessing the full range of housing choices and can make housing costs hard to sustain. Housing is a key contributor to the anti-poverty agenda through a wide range of activities. These include the provision of council housing as a safe, secure and affordable option for households, support with financial matters, homelessness prevention, working with the private rented sector to improve conditions and security for tenants, provision of tenancy support to enable people to live independently and through the development of additional affordable housing to meet needs.

Housing tenure, the demand for social housing, rent affordability, homelessness (including the threat of homelessness) and rough sleeping are key factors which impact upon well-being.

“Housing. Everyone needs a secure home, it's the bottom of Maslow's pyramid. People can't build a life without safe housing. It's a basic need.” – survey respondent.

Housing tenure

Housing tenure is a key factor in terms of determining whether people live in secure, warm, good quality and affordable accommodation. The absence of a good quality affordable, secure and permanent home can have a significant impact on well-being. Research has shown that people who live in privately rented accommodation are more likely to live in poor quality accommodation, pay more for housing and are subject to greater housing insecurity than people living in other types of tenure. The table below shows the distribution of housing tenure across the City and County of Swansea from 1981 to 2011.

Table S5: Households in Swansea by tenure, 1981-2011

Tenure	1981	1991	2001	2011
Owner occupied	50,200 (62.3%)	61,300 (70.1%)	65,600 (69.5%)	66,700 (64.3%)
Private rent	6,600 (8.2%)	5,700 (6.5%)	10,400 (11.0%)	17,100 (16.5%)
Social Rent	23,700 (29.4%)	20,500 (23.4%)	18,300 (19.5%)	19,900 (19.2%)
Total	80,600	87,500	94,400	103,500

Source: UK Census of population, ONS.

The number of properties available for social rent is significantly lower than in 1981. This is due to the Right to Buy Policy that was in place. The Welsh Government developed powers in relation to housing and in 2013/14 passed regulations to allow local authorities to apply to suspend the Right to Buy in their areas if they could demonstrate high levels of housing need. Swansea applied for this and the right to buy was suspended in December 2014. The suspension was due to run until December 2019, however in the intervening period the Welsh Government has enacted legislation to permanently abolish the right to buy across Wales.

This has had a significant impact in protecting the amount of social housing available, which has been further enhanced by Welsh Government increasing the amount of capital investment available for new build affordable housing and the Council being able to build for the first time in a generation. Therefore there has been a gradual increase in the amount of social housing available to rent in Swansea since 2014. The new Census figures when available may show a further increase. Swansea Council, in conjunction with its Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners have set ambitious targets to develop 5,000 units of new affordable housing in Swansea over a 10-year period (1,000 to be delivered by the Council through direct building programme, 4,000 to be delivered by Housing Associations).

Current Demand for Social Housing

As of 30/9/2021 the Council's waiting list held 4,639 households:

- 26% were households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness
- 43% were waiting list applicants with other, less severe forms of housing need
- 31% were council tenants who have applied for a transfer to another property/area.

Demand for social housing remains high and there is insufficient supply to fulfil the needs of all households on the waiting list.

Future housing demand

In addition to the current levels of demand and housing need, Swansea's Local Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2019 showed that between 2018 and 2033 there will be a need of an extra 15,365 units of accommodation with 31% of these being affordable housing.

Between 2018 and 2033, it is currently projected that there will be a 28% increase in population aged 65+ and a 58% increase in those aged 80+. This is due to an ageing population rather than in migration. Likewise there is a projected decline in numbers in the younger age groups due to out migration.

In terms of property type the greatest need will be for 1 and 2 bedroomed properties, this reflects the ageing population with many of those aged 65+ downsizing to smaller properties.

Rent affordability

In the absence of sufficient social housing to meet current levels of demand, private renting remains the only option for many households – some of whom select it as their tenure of choice, but many others are forced to rent.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation has stated that private rents are forecast to rise by 90 per cent in real terms between 2008 and 2040, more than twice as fast as incomes, pushing up to half of private renters into poverty. Local data analysed shows that this predicted trend applies to Swansea. Rents are rising at a faster rate than incomes.

This means that rents in the private rented sector are largely unaffordable for people on welfare benefits or with low incomes.

The tables below show that the median rents in the private sector have increased at a much higher rate than the median income.

Table S6: Comparison of Median Private Rented Sector (PRS) Rents 2017/18 and 2020/21

DATA SETS USED		
	Source	Data Set

Median Gross Income for Swansea	Office of National Statistics	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Release Dates Nov 2017 and Nov 2020
Median Rents for Private Rented Sector in Swansea	Hometrack Intelligence Systems	Advertised rental properties in and around Swansea. The data is drawn from advertised asking rents, as well as assessed rents from mortgage lenders

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Median Private Rent 2017/18	£126.00	£125.00	£137.00	£178.00
Median Private Rent 2020/21	£126.00	£154.00	£162.00	£276.00
Percentage increase	0.0%	23.2%	18.2%	55.1%

Median Weekly Gross Income 2017/18	£473.00
Median Weekly Gross Income 2020/21	£538.00
Percentage increase in Income	13.7%

The percentage difference between the Median rents in the PRS and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have also increased for 2+ bedroom Properties.

Table S7: Median Rents, Private and LHA, 2017/18 and 2020/21

2017/18:

Property type	Private - Median weekly rent	LHA Rate	Difference between Rent & LHA Rate	% difference between rent & LHA rate
1 bedroom	£126.00	£92.97	£33.03	26.21%
2 bedroom	£125.00	£105.94	£19.06	15.25%
3 bedroom	£137.00	£113.92	£23.08	16.85%
4 bedroom	£178.00	£153.02	£24.98	14.03%

2020/21:

Property type	Private - Median weekly rent	LHA Rate	Difference between Rent & LHA Rate	% difference between rent & LHA rate
1 bedroom	£126.00	£103.56	£22.44	17.81%
2 bedroom	£154.00	£113.92	£40.08	26.03%
3 bedroom	£162.00	£120.82	£41.18	25.42%
4 bedroom	£276.00	£166.16	£109.84	39.80%

“A lack of affordable housing impacts on all other areas, with high rents and insecure housing leading to mental health problems, increased debt, low self-esteem, physical illness due to stress” – survey respondent.

Homelessness

People who have experienced homelessness are more likely to have poor physical and mental health than the general population. Poor mental and physical health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. Chronic and multiple health needs are common and often go untreated. Homeless people are also far more vulnerable to issues relating to alcohol and drug use. Multiple health needs alongside drug and alcohol use can act as a barrier to accessing mainstream health services, and as a result often end up using more costly primary healthcare services.

For children experiencing homelessness, this is an Adverse Childhood Experience that increases their risk of poor outcomes in later life. The Welsh National wellbeing indicator for homelessness is NI34: Homelessness Preventions – Number of households who are threatened with homelessness (within 56 days) who were successfully prevented from becoming homelessness, per 10,000 population. Due to Welsh Government revising the data collection requirements during the pandemic this figure has not been calculated nationally for 2020/21 but previous year results show Swansea performs well in comparison to the Welsh average, despite having the second highest number of households found to be threatened with homelessness in Wales.

Homelessness is a significant issue in Swansea but there are effective services in place to ensure that it is prevented or where it cannot be prevented solutions are in place to alleviate it quickly. However there are increasing difficulties in identifying affordable, secure accommodation to move on to. There is high demand for social housing and the private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable.

Over 2,500 homelessness applications are made each year.

Table S8: Homelessness applications in Swansea, 2016 to 2021

Total applications for assistance which resulted in Section 62 assessment (homeless application) being made	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Apr 2017 – Mar 2018	Apr 2018 - Mar 2019	Apr 2019 - Mar 2020	Apr 2020 - Mar 2021
	2,557	2,564	2,511	2,870	2,485

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, temporary accommodation is provided. The Council has its own temporary accommodation suitable for families and bed & breakfast (B&B) accommodation is only used as a last resort when there are no other options available.

In the last five years, the annual number of families in temporary accommodation in Swansea has fluctuated between 22 and 41.

Whilst the number of families in temporary accommodation fell during 2020-21 number have increased in the first two quarters of 2021/22.

A key performance indicator is the number and amount of time families spend in B&B accommodation. This is an inappropriate form of temporary accommodation and therefore every effort is made to avoid this. Where it is not possible, the time spent in temporary accommodation is kept to an absolute minimum.

Table S9: Families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Swansea, 2016 to 2021

Number of families in B&B	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017	Apr 2017 – Mar 2018	Apr 2018 – Mar 2019	Apr 2019 – Mar 2020	Apr 2020 – Mar 2021
total number of days	30	3	9	64	7
No. of families	8	2	5	14	4
Average no of days	3.8	1.5	1.8	4.6	1.75

The higher use of B&B for families in 2019/20 was due to the refurbishment of Council run temporary accommodation.

The top causes of homelessness remain similar to previous years with the notable exception that loss of rented accommodation is no longer the top cause of homelessness. Reasons for this are outlined below:

- Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate – 19% (compared to 13% in 2019/20)
- Other relatives/friends no longer willing or able to accommodate – 16% (12% in 2019/20)
- Breakdown of relationship with partner (Non-violent) – 12%
- Domestic abuse – 11%
- Prison leaver – 11%
- Loss of rented accommodation – 10% (15% in 2019/20).

Rough Sleeping

Since 2015, the Welsh Government has required local authorities to carry out an annual rough sleeping count. The actual counts of rough sleepers are single night snapshots. The estimated count is based on data collected over a two-week period with assistance from the voluntary sector, faith groups, local businesses, residents, health and substance misuse agencies, and the police. Due to the pandemic, the national count was not carried out in 2020 and figures for Wales were not produced. However, Swansea continues to closely monitor rough sleeping numbers so local data is available. The number of rough sleepers has fallen dramatically since the start of the pandemic and the suspension of the priority need test.

Table S10: Number of people sleeping rough in Swansea between 2015 and 2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Actual count	5	16	21	18	19	1
Estimated rough sleepers (2 weekly count)	19	23	26	33	37	13

Local authority comparisons are not available for 2020. Data from the one night count in 2019 showed Swansea with the fourth highest number of rough sleepers in Wales, behind Cardiff (57), Newport (24) and Wrexham (21). Other areas had under 10 people sleeping rough on the night of the count.

The significant drop in rough sleeping in Swansea is due to Welsh Government guidance in March 2020 that all homeless households are to be considered vulnerable during the pandemic. Therefore, temporary accommodation was made available to those households who would not normally be in priority need and to households with no recourse to public funds. This was to ensure that people who are, or are at risk of, sleeping rough have the support and resources needed to protect themselves and adhere to public health guidance on hygiene and isolation. Welsh Government have indicated that this will continue for the foreseeable future and they are intending to legislate to make the policy change permanent.

In terms of the scale of the issue, prior to the pandemic, the number of people sleeping rough in Swansea averaged between 15/20 per night. After March 2020, the numbers of rough sleepers reduced greatly, particularly in the two lockdown periods where at times there were episodes with no individuals sleeping rough in Swansea. Since the reopening of the day and night time economy, the number of people sleeping rough has been on the increase and in September 2021 there was an average of 9 rough sleepers per night.

The change in Welsh Government policy has led to a significant increase in the number of people in temporary accommodation, and B&B. This reflects the situation across Wales.

There is significant “move on” of people from B&B into permanent housing and more appropriate forms of supported accommodation; however new households continue to present as homeless and require temporary accommodation and there is not enough suitable alternative accommodation to avoid use of B&B.

Table S11: Households in B&B accommodation in Swansea, 2016 to 2021

Households in B&B accommodation	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Priority need households	173	178	244	319	292
Winter Provision ¹ / Covid placements	n/a	n/a	n/a	131	293
Total number of households	173	178	244	450	585

¹ Winter Plan provision is in place to provide anyone sleeping rough with temporary accommodation when the temperature falls below 5 degrees. This has been in place for many years but numbers were not collected separately to priority need cases until 2019.

Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency measures can support good physical and mental health primarily by creating healthy indoor living environments with healthy air temperatures, humidity levels, noise levels, and improved air quality. Homes with poor energy efficiency are likely to lead to more households living in fuel poverty.

Welsh Government uses Energy efficiency of dwellings as a national wellbeing indicator – NI33: Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance (% of dwellings with SAP 65 or higher).

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is a methodology used to assess the energy performance of dwellings, assessing how much energy is consumed and how much carbon dioxide is emitted, based on standardised occupancy conditions. The SAP rating is expressed on a scale of 1-100, the higher the number the lower the energy costs (100 = no energy costs).

47% of dwellings in Wales have a SAP rating of 65 or above. This data is taken from the Welsh Housing Conditions Survey carried out in 2017/18, which was a sample survey of properties across Wales. This data is not available at a local authority level.

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which is the statutory standard for all social housing in Wales, currently requires all social housing to achieve a SAP rating of 65 or above. Due to investment to improve the thermal efficiency and insulation of council properties, the average SAP rating for Council dwellings in Swansea is 69 (band C) and 100% of properties have reached this level.

As an indication of energy efficiency in the private rented/owner occupied sector, data is available from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - Energy Performance of Buildings Data England and Wales.

This provides the results of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data from 2008-2021. Whilst this does not take into account energy improvement measures carried out since an EPC was provided or data for the whole housing stock, in the absence of up-to-date private rented/owner occupier stock condition information, this provides an indication of levels of energy efficiency in dwellings across Swansea.

Table S12: Swansea EPC data January 2008-June 2021 (81,926 domestic EPCs)

Band (SAP rating)	Number	Percentage
A (92-100)	72	0.01%
B (81-91)	6,538	8%
C (69-80)	21,956	27%
D (55-68)	32,178	39%
E (39-54)	16,097	20%
F (21-38)	4,030	5%

G (1-20)	1,055	1%
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Welsh Government is in the process of setting new decarbonisation requirements and targets for social housing providers, which will mean Councils and RSLs will be required ensure their social housing stock is net carbon zero by 2030.

Strengths and Assets

Housing demand/need

- Targets set to develop 5,000 units of new affordable housing in Swansea over a 10 year period (1,000 to be delivered by the Council through direct building programme, 4,000 to be delivered by Housing Associations).
- A Council Housing Development Programme – building new council homes for the first time in a generation, with a commitment to building energy efficient, zero carbon homes and to Lifetime Homes Standards to ensure they are suitable for the long terms needs of tenants.
- A corporate approach to identifying new land for affordable housing to meet targets.
- Specific planning policies to increase affordable housing in areas of high demand/need.

Housing conditions/energy efficiency

- Regeneration plans in development for key sites within the Housing Revenue Account
- Achievement of the WHQS in 100% of council properties.
- A commitment to a zero eviction approach for Council tenant rent arrears wherever possible, which has involved taking a more psychologically informed approach and focussing on early intervention, prevention and support to council tenants to sustain their tenancies, with eviction as a last resort.
- Improvements in energy efficiency of council properties to average SAP rating of 69 (Band C), contributing to the reduction of fuel poverty amongst council tenants.

Homelessness

- Reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in Swansea to lowest levels ever recorded, as a result of Welsh Government instructions ensure all people who required it are provided with temporary accommodation during the pandemic, including those with no recourse to public funds.
- The Rough Sleeper Intervention Team (Wallich) operates seven days a week and is responsible for ensuring that support is provided to every person within 24 hours. This support focuses on moving the person on to more suitable accommodation as quickly and safely as possible.

- Strong partnership working between Homelessness, Support Services, and accommodation providers demonstrated by the effective homelessness and housing support response to the pandemic, for example a strong partnership approach the development of Ty Tom Jones – an award winning supported housing project.
- Implementation of innovative new projects to tackle homelessness e.g. Housing First and Rapid Rehousing approaches.
- Increased funding provided by Welsh Government to sustain additional homelessness services and new approaches to service delivery developed during the pandemic through an uplift in Housing Support Grant allocated to Swansea of £4m bringing the overall spend to £18m per annum.
- Robust Homelessness Strategy in place 2018-22. New strategic approach currently being adopted to combine strategic planning for homelessness with Housing Support Grant Programme and to produce a new strategy for 2022-2026.
- Large-scale systems thinking review of all Temporary Supported Accommodation Projects underway, which will identify how the sector and homelessness services in Swansea will transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach over the next 5 years, i.e. minimising time spent in temporary accommodation before moving on to permanent accommodation.

However, there remain challenges and areas for improvement:

Energy efficiency

- New guidance on the requirements for decarbonisation with social housing in Wales is awaited. It is currently unclear how the carbon emissions target will be funded and whether it will impact on other priorities such as developing new affordable housing.
- Lack of information about house conditions in the private rented /owner occupied sector will impact on assessing resources required to increase energy efficiency and ensure properties are fit for current and future needs.
- Low number of properties in Swansea with energy efficiency ratings C or higher.

Housing supply/demand

- Demand is exceeding supply for social housing. Over 4,000 households are on the council's waiting list, and reduced numbers of lettings across all tenures due to the pandemic.
- Private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable for people on low to mid incomes.
- Local Housing Allowance does not meet the cost of private renting for many households.
- Challenges in the construction supply chain caused by COVID-19 and Brexit could impact on building new affordable homes. The UK Construction Leadership Council has confirmed cement, aggregates, and plastic products have been added to the growing list of essential items in 'short supply'. The impact may worsen due to the current lack of haulage drivers. It is not known if this will remain a long term issue.
- Lack of affordable housing supply – particular lack of 1 bed properties.

Homelessness

- High levels of households in temporary accommodation and lack of affordable 1 bed accommodation.

Differences across Swansea

There is limited housing data available at below local authority level. However, data from the Housing domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) provides information on housing conditions at a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level. Swansea has 7 LSOAs in the ten percent most deprived areas in Wales in the Housing Domain.

The Housing Indicators used in WIMD 2019 are:

- the percentage of people living in overcrowded households (2011 Census-based bedroom measure)
- A new modelled indicator on poor quality housing. It measures the likelihood of housing being in disrepair or containing serious hazards (for example, risk of falls or cold housing), and was calculated from a mixture of survey and administrative data sources by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). This includes the likelihood of housing containing serious hazards (%) and the likelihood of housing being in disrepair (%).

These indicators are combined and weighted to provide a ranking for the Housing Domain. There are 16 LSOAs in Swansea that are in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales within the Housing domain, as shown below:

Table S13: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019, Housing domain Wales rankings

	LSOA	WIMD Ranking: Housing
Top 10%	Castle 6	5
	Upland 9	14
	Castle 4	19
	Landore 4	28
	Uplands 4	32
	Uplands 6	65
	Uplands 7	91
Top 20%	Cwmbwrla 1	129
	Castle 5	143
	Uplands 8	148
	Castle 8	160
	Cwmbwrla 2	195
	Cwmbwrla 3	199
	Morrison 7	229
	Landore 1	245
	Uplands 3	249

The majority of the areas consist of private rented/owner occupied properties. Areas with predominately social housing do not feature in the top 20% most deprived areas for housing

due to large scale investment and improvement programmes carried out by Social Landlords to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. However there is a lack of up-to-date information on the condition of properties in the private rented and owner occupied sector.

Table S14: WIMD 2019 Indicator data Domain: Housing

	Indicator: People in overcrowded households (%)	Indicator: Likelihood of poor quality housing (being in disrepair or containing serious hazards)		
		Likelihood of poor quality housing (%)	Likelihood of housing containing serious hazards (%)	Likelihood of housing being in disrepair (%)
Local authority area: Swansea	5.89	16.6	15.0	3.0
Constituency Area: Gower	3.72	16.3	14.8	2.7
Swansea East	6.99	16.6	15.1	3.0
Swansea West	6.92	16.9	15.2	3.2
WALES	5.53	19.7	18.0	3.2

Perceptions and perspectives

A report by the Wales Audit Office Report (2018) showed that;

- The Council’s approach to WHQS is generally well-integrated into its strategic housing function.
- The Council has comprehensive stock condition information about its homes that effectively shapes its investment programme to meet the WHQS by December 2020, but delivery will be challenging.
- Most tenants are satisfied with the quality of improvement works done to their homes, and with the housing service they receive
- Most tenants felt that the Council takes their views into consideration, but tenant engagement could be strengthened.

Swansea Council’s Housing Service have been awarded a number of development awards including from Construction Excellence Wales (CEW) and recognition from APSE, Municipal Journal and the Welsh Housing Awards in 2021.

The Housing Service carries out a bi-annual survey of all 13,500 tenants to test levels of satisfaction with the service and identify areas for improvement. The last survey was carried out in 2019 and the main results showed an overall improvement in satisfaction levels:

- Satisfaction with Housing Services: 89% (compared to 88% in 2017)
- Satisfaction of Quality of Home: 86% (78% in 2017)
- Satisfaction with Your Neighbourhood: 86% (75% in 2017).

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Demand for affordable housing will continue to rise and demand for homelessness and support services will remain high. Key factors affecting this include:

- Continuation of the suspension of the Priority Need test, which was implemented as a response to public health requirements during the pandemic, to ensure that everyone who required it was provided with temporary accommodation. Whilst this has an extremely positive effect on the numbers of people who are rough sleeping it will maintain pressure on homelessness, tenancy support services and temporary accommodation.
- Continued challenge of a small number of hard to reach people. Whilst rough sleeping has significantly reduced with good outcomes for many, there are still people with extremely complex needs who services are struggling to engage with and solutions for this cohort are diminishing.
- There is a lack of affordable, one-bed properties, both in the social housing sector and private rented sector. This has been made worse due to reduced turnover of permanent social housing stock and reduced end of tenancies during the pandemic. Welfare benefit reforms also continue to impact and the affordability of the private rented sector for people under 35 who are limited to shared room rent allowance Housing Benefit payments. Increasing rents in the private sector and general lack of supply make accessing this accommodation difficult for households.
- Levels of homelessness are expected to increase. For example, it is expected that evictions will increase when the current extension to notice periods for evictions ends. There will also be an increase in households requiring assistance following a Home Office decision on their immigration status, dealing with the backlog caused during the pandemic. An increase in poverty levels following the end of the temporary £20 per week increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit will also increase risks of homelessness.
- Increasing demand for mental health support arising from concerns about people's mental health, caused by loneliness and the stresses of the pandemic.
- The growing energy crisis will increase fuel bills for households and risk pushing more into fuel poverty.

In terms of housing demand/supply, the latest Housing Market Assessment for Swansea highlighted the need for 16,174 new homes between 2018 and 2033, over 1,000 per year. The assessment indicated that 11,139 of these properties should be at market value, with the remaining 5,035 being affordable homes.

Declining rates of home ownership and increased private renting means that more old people will be living in private rented housing. This will have significant cost implications once people reach pension age and will lead to greater insecurity of tenure for older people as time goes on.

Conclusions and key messages

Access to decent, low-cost housing can increase disposable incomes, prevent material deprivation and improve work incentives.

Swansea has effective and responsive services in place to prevent and alleviate homelessness. In order to strengthen this and deal with increasing demands on the services a continued focus is required on prevention of homelessness, including a new statutory approach to join up strategic planning between Homelessness Services and Housing Support Grant Services.

Joint working between Health, Housing and Social Care sectors will be required to develop and implement a new Health, Housing and Social Care Strategy for the Western Bay Region.

A decarbonisation plan for the Council's housing stock will need to be developed in order to work towards the national target of net zero carbon emissions from all social housing by 2030.

Crime and safety

Crime and safety is a significant key topic within Social well-being, with a number of distinct (but interlinked) elements. To help set the broad context, it is useful to consider recent recorded crime figures by type in Swansea.

Over the 12 months to June 2021 there were a total of 18,240 recorded crimes in Swansea, an overall decrease of 1,101 (-5.7%) on the previous 12 months.

Significant decreases over the year can be seen in the categories violence with injury, down 132 (-6.4%), and for burglary, shoplifting and theft categories. The biggest increases (over +10%) occurred in possession of drugs and public order offences.

Comparing recent quarterly periods, there were 4,798 recorded crimes in Swansea from April-June 2021, an increase of 615 (14.7%) on the same quarter in the previous year. However, the different stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and life and rules at those times will have an impact on this, and short-term trends in general.

Beyond the headline recorded crime statistics, policing is an increasingly complex operation with considerable impacts on social and community well-being.

“Minimising crime in Swansea is important to me. If I don't feel safe - what's the point!! Increasing anti-social behaviour needs to be dealt with” – survey respondent.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Strengths and Assets

Across Swansea there are a wide array of established projects and services to support victims and survivors of VAWDASV.

There are specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence agencies, namely Swansea Women's Aid, Hafan Cymru, BAWSO, New Pathways and Calan DVS, which prioritise support and safety for those affected, including refuge and safehouse provision for women and children, supported housing, tenancy support, outreach support, group support in the form of the Freedom Programme and Recovery Toolkit, children and young people's projects as well as specialist posts to support older victims, male victims and LGBTQ victims of domestic abuse and children affected by sexual violence.

There is a specialist organisation to support victims from BAME communities which offers additional training and support around issues such as Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Trafficking. The SWAN Project is an innovative approach to support women exploited by the sex industry, and provides a holistic and flexible service to some of the most vulnerable women in the community.

Further data and information on these services is available in the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) – note link in the introduction to this chapter.

Within social services, there is a Domestic Abuse Hub which is a specialist team to process all Child and Family referrals where domestic abuse is a feature. In 2020/21 the Hub received public protection notifications for domestic abuse related incidents for 4,376 children or young people involved; 2,255 of these already had an allocated lead worker or social worker, 2,121 were provided with information, advice or assistance by the Domestic Abuse Hub. Within the team seven qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) offer support to all high risk victims of DA in Swansea. Of 1,398 referrals for high risk DA victims, 1,209 received support.

There is commitment across Swansea to address the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse, with several accredited interventions available including Equilibrium, DRIVE and Building Better Relationships. Further work is ongoing towards a whole system approach.

There is investment from the health sector with the IRIS project targeting GPs for VAWDASV training and embedding a clear referral pathway to identify and offer support options at an earlier point. The Corporate Safeguarding team within Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) are committed to overseeing the National Training Framework rollout across health, monitoring and improving the response to disclosures, and have developed a 'Health IDVA' post to further enhance the service to victims and survivors who disclose domestic abuse whilst in a healthcare setting.

Swansea Council is also committed to rolling out the National Training Framework, in partnership with SBUHB, meaning that all public sector staff receive at least basic awareness

and understanding of VAWDASV issues with increased levels of training targeting front facing staff and specialists.

Changes over time

Referral numbers across several VAWDASV services have increased year on year since 2018, particularly those where risk levels are high or there is increased vulnerability. This may demonstrate an increase in incidents or an increase in reporting linked to awareness raising and training.

Table S15: Referral numbers to VAWDASV services

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	
SARC (Western Bay)	217	246	276	Sexual Abuse Referral Centre
IDVA (Swansea)	1032	1302	1398	High risk DA victims
SWAN Project (Swansea)	75	123	140	Women exploited by the sex industry

Another key change is that there is more of a focus towards Primary Prevention which involves the commissioning of community based awareness and training programmes, specifically targeting certain groups such as hairdressers/ barbers and sports teams. There is work ongoing with Education to develop a ‘Whole School Approach’ to VAWDASV to ensure awareness raising and education for young people and children as well as routes into support should a need be identified.

It is impossible to ignore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is well reported that an increase in domestic abuse was observed, particularly those victims accessing the Live Fear Free helpline which saw a 66% increase in emails (from 53 to 88), a 10% increase in web chats (from 578 to 635), and a 780% increase in texts. There has been an increase in police recorded domestic abuse-related offences and IDVA referrals over recent years (including pre-COVID) so it is difficult to determine whether the increase is directly related to the pandemic. There has been however, a change in the offer of service delivery options, as a direct result of the lockdown measures with many organisations offering telephone and video call options for support sessions which has in general been well received and many of the new support options remain in place.

Perceptions and perspectives

VAWDASV issues often co-occur with a range of concerns which contribute to the experience of victims/ survivors, including but not exclusively; substance misuse, mental ill-health, financial pressure, debt and homelessness/ housing issues. However, it is widely considered that while wider factors such as these may exacerbate abuse, they do not cause or justify abusive behaviour. According to Welsh Women’s Aid’s Annual Membership Report 2019-20, the highest co-occurring issue that victims/survivors presented with was that of a disability related to mental health, which was disclosed by 44% of survivors (2,570 females and 68

males). This was followed by survivors who need assistance in relation to legal issues, for example support to obtain injunctions or deal with the family courts (733 females and 27 males). Whilst there can be overlap between VAWDASV and the above issues, all forms of VAWDASV can occur in isolation and affect people from all demographics regardless of age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexuality and disability.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The new National VAWDASV Strategy is currently in development. Swansea will be developing a new strategy to reflect our commitments to all areas of the VAWDASV agenda and our priorities and objectives moving forward based on the needs of our population.

We recognise that the responsibility of VAWDASV lies with those who perpetrate it, and work must be done to encourage all agencies to recognise this. A Whole Systems Approach to perpetrator work is the aim, and to work closely with Police and other partners towards achieving this.

Sexual violence and abuse infiltrates many areas of society, including schools and colleges, workplaces, night time economy and aspects of daily life, so we aim to work with partners across all sectors to highlight the issue and ensure it is everyone's responsibility in line with the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015.

Integration

Swansea Council invest in VAWDASV and work closely with the specialist sector to monitor emerging needs and ensure that available resource is directed appropriately, with regular meetings with specialist providers and a survivor network. There is excellent attendance and engagement from the specialist sector as well as a wide range of both statutory and non-statutory services at Leadership level and many partnership subgroups which focus on specific workstreams. Collaboration with the voluntary sector is a key part of all planning and delivery.

Swansea has an effective MARAC structure, which in 2020/21 discussed 736 high risk victims of domestic violence and associated children (506). The meetings are consistently attended by partners from the IDVA team, Children's services, Adult Services, Education, Housing, Health, Specialist VAWDASV agencies, Probation, Mental Health and are chaired by Police.

Improvement

Key areas for further development are:

- Primary/ community-based prevention and early intervention
- Improved Survivor Engagement
- Focus on holding perpetrators of VAWDASV to account
- Further engagement at a senior leadership level
- Complex Need Provision, particularly accommodation.

About the evidence

The number of high risk referrals to the IDVA services continues to rise year on year, as do the referrals to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and the SWAN Project for women exploited by the sex industry. This is of real concern as these groups are amongst the most vulnerable, so we will continue to prioritise and support this area of service delivery.

The number of victims/ survivors from the LGBTQ community presenting to agencies is consistently low across all services. In response to this a new post has been developed to provide specialist support and encourage referrals, which will be monitored to identify impact.

Multiple agencies have reported an increase in older victims/ survivors of domestic abuse and male victims/ survivors. This had led to the development of further posts specifically to support these groups, which complement the existing support options in Swansea. These will be monitored and developed in response to emerging needs.

The percentage of BAME cases referred to MARAC has remained in the region of 6.6% and 7.4% since 2018 with less than 1% fluctuation year on year. However, the specialist advice service for BAME victims saw a significant drop in numbers from 2018 to 2021, possibly correlating to the lack of outreach events due to the pandemic.

A VAWDASV monitoring framework is in place to continue to identify emerging needs and gaps in provision, and this is overseen by the VAWDASV Leadership Group.

Conclusions and key messages

It is clear that high risk client groups such as those subject to MARAC, SARC and the SWAN project continue to be a priority and we must ensure that they can access the services they need. Referral numbers continue to rise in these areas, possibly due to the increased awareness raising and training so safeguarding infrastructures such as MARAC remain an essential part of everyday working.

In order to reduce the number of people affected by VAWDASV issues, we must target both those responsible for perpetrating the harmful behaviours as well as wider communities in a continued effort to make VAWDASV everyone's business. The onus should not be on the victim to change their behaviour but on the perpetrators, services and wider society to take a stand against it.

No single agency is responsible for VAWDASV, and we must continue to build on strong existing partnerships, ensuring that the survivor's voice is at the heart of future planning and development.

Substance Misuse

Substance misuse is a significant challenge to public services across Wales, including health and social care, policing and local authorities, as well as to our wider communities. Whilst substance misuse impacts on all parts of society across Wales, there are geographic variations within Wales, including Swansea experiencing higher levels of adverse outcomes than others due to historic patterns of alcohol and drug use, socio-economic deprivation and current trends in availability, methods of use and poly-drug use.

“The social and economic problems in Swansea generate the crime and drug use in the city and then lead on to greater mental health problems.” – survey respondent.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Swansea drug and alcohol services provide help and support for those wishing to change or manage their relationship with drugs and/or alcohol. Western Bay Area Planning Board strategically commission services to deliver the aims and objectives set locally in line with the Welsh Government Delivery Plan. Services that are commissioned in Swansea include: Swansea Bay UHB, Adferiad (WCADA), Barod, PSALT (Primary Substance Abuse Liaison Team), Platform and Dyfodol.

During the pandemic drug and alcohol services remained operational and have been delivered more assertively with the focus on outreach based practice to try and engage with vulnerable people who require support. Although the pandemic presented its own challenges for service delivery it helped improve a number of areas within substance use, including the forging of closer partnership working with other sectors, such as housing, who would often be working with the same population engaging in substance use services.

Poly drug use still remains a cause for concern as many people who use substances are taking unknown quantities and qualities of various drugs that are causing significant risk and harm. It still remains a priority across all the commissioned services that we work together to make positive changes and ensure our most vulnerable people have timely access to support to meet their needs. This ranges from children and young people right through to adult services. A harm reduction initiative that is unique to Swansea and Neath Port Talbot is the Local Drug Information System (LDIS) which provides early warning alert systems in place to ensure the communities of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot have the correct information in a concise and timely way that is shared through a variety of mediums including social media platforms.

Comparisons with other places

Swansea unfortunately has the highest levels of fatal drug poisonings in Wales. Recent data from the Office for National Statistics' *'Drug deaths registered in 2020 in Wales'* report indicated that Swansea recorded 42 drug deaths, nearly 40% more than any other local authority, with Wrexham the second highest (17). Data from Public Health Wales shows that Swansea has had the highest rates of drug deaths since 2016.

In 2020, 12.3 drug misuse deaths per 100,000 population were recorded in Swansea Bay UHB area. This above the Welsh national average. The rolling average of the rate of deaths in both local authorities in the area have increased compared to last year with Swansea significantly higher than Neath Port Talbot.

The recent Public Health Wales Drug Mortality report 2020/21 also highlighted that Swansea Bay has a higher number and rate of drug deaths involving heroin/morphine, at 6.6 deaths per 100,000 population (24 deaths) from 2016 to 2020, higher than other Health Board areas. Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Cardiff and Vale have the next highest equivalent rates (2.2).

This report also highlights the Swansea Bay has high rates of drug deaths involving cocaine, at 5.8 deaths per 100,000 population (21 deaths) from 2016 to 2020, with Betsi Cadwaladr having the next highest equivalent rate (1.8).

Data accessed from the Harm Reduction Database, Wales (HRD), indicates that Swansea has positive engagement rates in Needle and Syringe Programmes. The activity indicates that Needle and Syringe Programme provision is accessible and supports diverse individuals and communities across Swansea. A majority of the activity takes place within the city centre perimeters but there is evidence to show wider engagement in communities such as Treboeth, Penlan and Fforestfach.

National data from 2020/21 indicates that the Swansea UHB area has one of the highest rates of take home naloxone distribution in Wales, this includes new kits issued and kits issued in re-supply events. Naloxone is the lifesaving medication that can reverse the effects of opioid (e.g. heroin / morphine) overdose and help reduce the rates of fatal opioid poisonings that represent approximately three quarters of reported deaths. Naloxone is available from specialist Substance Use services and can be given to persons at risk, family members, carers and professionals.

Data highlights that Swansea based distribution sites equates to approximately 65% of naloxone kits issued within the Swansea Bay UHB region. This is a monumental effort as the recent data set from the *Harm Reduction Database Wales: Drug Mortality Report 2020/21* includes date ranges that covers two national lockdowns and local restrictions that were in place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020/21, 887 kits were issued to 423 individuals in Swansea Bay.

Perceptions and perspectives

In last few years, much work has been undertaken across the UK to review and assess the breadth of evidence of impact and effectiveness both with drug and alcohol policy perspectives and prevention, engagement and treatment interventions. Evidence reviews including the House of Commons Select Committee on Drug Policy which recommended a radical change in UK drugs policy from a criminal justice to a health approach and the Independent Review of drugs (part 1), commissioned by the Home Office which further evidenced the need for a different approach highlighting the unintended and negative

effects or harms resulting from involvement in the criminal justice system. The rationale behind the reviews, as well as the work on introduction of minimum unit pricing for alcohol, indicate a health focused approach would not only benefit those who are using drugs and alcohol but reduce harm to, and the costs for, their wider communities. Whilst in Wales, substance misuse is embedded within health, representing a devolved issue, legislation in relation to illicit drugs remains under the remit of UK government and criminal justice.

A public health approach has been a key element of Welsh Government policy for many years, as evidenced by the 2008-18 substance misuse strategy 'Working together to reduce harm' and associated Delivery Plans as well as Police & Crime Plans. The Partnership between the Welsh Government, Police & Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables, Housing / homelessness and Public Health Wales has led to joint initiatives including establishment of the Violence Prevention Unit and promotion of a trauma informed approach to the work of the police, education, health and social care organisations and their partners which is now Wales-wide as Early Action Together. Evidence from adoption of trauma-informed approaches indicates increased engagement with services and improvements in outcomes. On-going work seeks to develop a similar approach to mental health, so the approach proposed in this document aligns with the priorities of criminal justice, health and social care as well as that of local government and other partners.

"Substance misuse in Swansea fuel crime and anti social behaviour. We need bold innovative strategies to tackle this. I have to walk my child past intoxicated people every day." – survey respondent.

Street Vulnerability

The term 'Street Vulnerability' describes individuals who, due to certain risk factors and complex issues, will have an increased likelihood to homelessness, street sleeping and street begging. Those risk factors and complex issues that may lead people to homelessness, street sleeping and street begging may include;

- Physical abuse
- Substance Misuse and/or alcoholism
- Neglect
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Domestic violence in the home
- Parental substance misuse and/or alcoholism
- Mental Health issues
- Poverty
- Lack of available or affordable housing
- Changes to the benefit system
- Social Exclusion.

“Swansea is by no means an outlier, but in the last 5-10 years I have seen more homeless people on the streets in the city centre, and those with apparent addiction issues. It is very sad.” – survey respondent.

Strengths and Assets

The Street Vulnerability (SV) Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was established in 2018. Since inception, 108 individuals have been referred in Swansea and it is currently assisting 14 people with forms of support and intervention.

In Swansea, Stronger Communities is one of five strategic priorities of the Safer Swansea Partnership and the Street Vulnerability MARAC is one of a number of approaches to supporting vulnerable people. The SV MARAC was established to increase effectiveness and co-operation between statutory and non-statutory partners, and to deliver a more integrated approach to offering support to vulnerable individuals living, sleeping or begging on the streets of Swansea.

Comparisons with other places

The SV MARAC is one of only 2 that exist in South Wales, the other being in Neath Port Talbot. In Swansea it is chaired by the local authority.

Perceptions and perspectives

The following two case studies are examples of how Street Vulnerable people are supported in Swansea:

Case Study A - 58 year old male

Individual was a significant concern in the city centre, repeat cause of calls for assistance from businesses in the centre. Regularly intoxicated through alcohol. Was sleeping rough in Castle Square.

On release from prison, he was staying in a Quay House for a while but was asked to leave because of his behaviour. He was then sleeping rough, begging, causing anti-social behaviour and public nuisance.

Underlying mental health issues. He is Bipolar but either did not have access to his medication or just did not take it.

He had been engaging with Pathways prior to leaving Quay House. He has lived in a tent in a friend's garden for a while.

His behaviour towards an officer in Housing Options was inappropriate.

He had been seen rough sleeping in the market door way opposite Primark.

He had been banned from all Job Centres because of his violent behaviour.

He has been under Probation Services.

Unfortunately, due to his vulnerabilities, he was assaulted in the City Centre and admitted to hospital. When discharged from hospital, he was placed in alternative accommodation other than B&B (ABBA).

He now seems to be in a more stable environment and has been supported by the Red Cross.

He has since been housed in Griffith John St and continues to receive the necessary support from Partners and Services.

Case Study B - 46 year old male

The individual is an open case to CMHT 3 and is Care Co-ordinated by a CPN. He was homeless and rough sleeps in the city centre.

He was having support from the Wallich and known to Barod.

Housing accommodated him in temporary accommodation last year. He is a risk to himself and could not manage his tenancy due to his mental health. Consequently was rough sleeping for some time and Housing were concerned because of his health. He was put into B & B but went AWOL.

He would miss his depot injections as he was rough sleeping and could not always be found. He has been a victim of assault and arrested for being the perpetrator of assault in the past. As a temporary measure, he is housed in Dinas Fechan hostel, where he receives his depot injections and has a support worker who checks on him.

He was referred to the Oasis project but he would not undertake his assessment.

We continue to offer support and hoping some stability will start to improve his well-being.

Integration

The main objectives of the SV MARAC are to:

- bring together representatives from statutory and non-statutory partners and organisations
- deliver a more integrated approach to offering support to vulnerable individuals,
- reduce risk factors and vulnerability
- share and manage information in a secure and professional manner
- ensure each partner and/or organisation is accountable for delivering on their respective actions and agreed outcomes to improve the wellbeing of referred clients.

Improvement, conclusions and key messages

All those supported through the SV MARAC process find the opportunity to improve their personal wellbeing and allow them to become more independent and are able to access the most appropriate support services. What is clear, one single intervention alone will not reduce or prevent homelessness, street sleeping or street begging. This multi-agency partnership approach is needed to ensure that there are a range of integrated services available to meet the requirements of those with highly complex needs or significant risk factors.

Evening and Night Time Economy

Like all towns and city centres in the UK and across the world, Swansea City Centre's diverse and vibrant Evening and Night Time Economy (ENTE) has had a challenging time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, much of the work

undertaken by the multi-agency partnership to oversee the coordination, management and development of the sector has centred on responding to the COVID-19 Regulations in Wales and to support operators during this difficult time.

Whilst the treatment of COVID-19 has been priority, this has not stalled the expansive programme of regeneration in Swansea. Significant progress has been made on a number of key developments, many of which will impact positively, directly and indirectly, on Swansea's ENTE offer. These changes, together Swansea's strategic response to aid local economic recovery, operational projects as well as new openings are supporting the hospitality sector and the audience it serves to move forward.

Strengths and Assets

The multi-agency ENTE group continues to meet regularly to manage the immediate crisis, consider the implications of the pandemic on the hospitality sector and to guide the execution of COVID-19 measures and the reopening process. Members of the ENTE Group sit on specialist forums with Welsh Government officials to help guide decisions and ensure that the practical application of these decisions is considered. #UniteForTheNight has also been formed by Swansea Hospitality Forum and Cardiff Licensees Forum as a voice for the night-time industry. In the period from March 2020 to June 2021, 68 direct communications were sent to the ENTE sector providing advice and guidance from trusted sources on reopening guidance. In this period the Hospitality Forum of operators has met and provided industry specific webinars.

The following practical measures have been taken by the partnership to support the reopening of premises who were closed during the pandemic:

- A template COVID-19 risk assessment and guidance for businesses on reopening safely.
- A campaign to raise the profile of the Night-Net radio communications scheme to encourage its take up among new venues and provide better intelligence.
- Over 3,000 items of free PPE and pocket sprays provided to businesses.
- Grants of over £275,000 were issued to 57 sector businesses to support adaption works and purchase equipment to use outdoor spaces.
- Changes to the existing Outdoor Café Licencing scheme to streamline processes and enable fees to be waived. Plans to make Wind Street (Swansea's main entertainment district) a one-way street with controlled access were also brought forward by several months to release more pavement space.

One of Swansea's key strengths is its impressive portfolio of regeneration which is set to transform the area and inject new life into its ENTE. These include:

- Copr Bay Phase 1, including 3,500 seater Digital Arena, new MSCP, landmark bridge over Oystermouth Road, residential accommodation, a 1.1-acre coastal parkland, park pavilion and hotel.
- The reimagining of Wind Street, Swansea's main entertainment district. This public realm improvement scheme aims to expand the appeal of the area by providing a safer, more accessible and attractive environment.
- Castle Square, to make it a more active, distinctive and vibrant public space for events and gatherings.

There are an abundance of other regeneration schemes underway or pending that will improve the appeal of Swansea and its City Centre as a destination to shop, live, work, visit and invest, including Albert Hall, Palace Theatre, 71/72 The Kingsway, Orchard House and the Oxford Street community hub. Outside the city centre, progress is also being made on the historic Hafod-Morfa Copper Works site (visitor attraction, distillery and cable car from Kilvey Hill); University of Wales Trinity Saint David's new Swansea Waterfront campus at SA1, and the City Deal investment to introduce full-fibre connectivity in the City Centre.

During the pandemic, action has been taken by the Council and its partners to define Swansea's strategic response to the crisis and set out an approach to facilitate a remodelled future for the City Centre and its retail and leisure offer. In September 2021, Swansea Council appointed its preferred development partner for a number of key sites in and around the City Centre. These developments will ultimately have considerable impacts on the ENTE in Swansea.

In terms of vulnerability, following the high profile murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa, together with the recent claims of drug spiking in ENTE venues across the UK, Swansea is responding to calls to improve safety for customers, in particular women and other vulnerable groups when visiting the city centre by day and after dark. This includes the following initiatives:

- The Live Free From Fear campaign is a through and below the line campaign targeting venues and taxis working with Welsh Women's Aid.
- Developing its existing Safe Space UK scheme, signposting people to designated safe spaces if they feel under threat.
- A Safe Student below the line campaign, in conjunction with higher education partners and one of the largest local taxi operators, for safe transport back home in an emergency.
- A Safer Streets external funding bid, led by South Wales Police, has been submitted by the partnership to undertake a range of activities to help address vulnerability in the ENTE.
- Establishment of weekly engagement sessions at the three main City Centre student accommodations, attended by Council Community Safety Officers, South Wales Police and University Liaison staff.
- Design and distribution of spike awareness posters to all ENTE venues.

During the pandemic, the City Centre Rangers played a critical role in coordinating efforts on the ground with both visitors and businesses. The team have worked throughout the crisis and additional staff recruited.

Swansea's ENTE has a number of existing operational projects which are well established that support the customer safety, care and well-being of its patrons. These include:

- Front-line Support. A dedicated policing service *Swansea After Dark* provides a visible and engaged police presence focused on key areas and times. This is supported by CCTV cameras, a team of Taxi Marshalls, a 'Night-Net' radio network (including CCTV,

Police, Taxi Marshalls and door staff with 134 members in total) and a St Johns Ambulance coordinated medical Help Point on The Strand.

- **Engagement.** A dedicated Police Licensing Officer works closely with the Council and other partners on licencing issues. Police Liaison Officers also work closely with both local universities. A downloadable ENTE 'safe routes' map is being promoted particularly to students about the facilities that are available in the ENTE for their enjoyment and safety. Standards of customer safety and service is evidenced by the provision of Best Bar None status for 21 venues. Swansea's ENTE is one of only two areas in Wales to be awarded a Purple Flag. The flag, similar to Green Flag for parks and Blue Flag for beaches, recognises best practice for ENTE areas and has been in place since 2015.
- **Regulation.** Multiple multi-agency operations are carried out by Police Licensing and partners regarding key issues and during events. This has been a key priority to achieve COVID-19 compliance in venues, among taxi and bus operators and the public. Weapon related crime is minimised through thorough entry condition checks for visitors. Drug Drop Safes and receipt books are also installed across the ENTE to provide safe storage and testing of any substances collected. A saturation policy limits the number of licensed premises operating in the City Centre. Those aged 18-25 years who are arrested for alcohol or drink related offences are referred to a specialist agency for health awareness and drink/drug safety.
- **Coordination.** Operational issues, events and projects are coordinated via the ENTE Group which meets monthly. The application of COVID-19 measures and escalation strategies has been a critical part of the work of this group, with Swansea BID a key partner. All special events attracting more than 500 additional visitors are considered by the monthly Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which is organised by the Council and attended by emergency services. The Hospitality Forum enables operators to come together regularly to discuss concerns and issues which are escalated via Swansea BID. The Door-Persons group has a similar remit.
- **Access.** Swansea City Centre is known as a walkable city and the ENTE area is compact and easily traversed on foot and by cycle. Several changes to the road and cycle network have been undertaken in recent times to make the area more pedestrian friendly, e.g. Boulevard Project and reconfiguration of The Kingsway and West Way. Wind Street has formally become a one-way street, which is pedestrianised from 11am to 7am daily with access for service vehicles from 7am to 11am. Wayfinding has been implemented since 2014 including on-site map boards and finger posts which are in the process of being updated together with new wayfinding measures installed as part of the Arena development. In-Line BT kiosks are in situ in several locations providing information on local amenities and free phone and internet access. The measures above are supplemented by the Big Heart of Swansea App which provides mobile navigation as well as the downloadable ENTE map.

As part of the local Active Travel Plan, a number of Cycle Hubs are in the process of being built across the City Centre with external funding. These aim to provide secure

bike storage and to help connect cycle routes in and around the area. Taxis and private hire vehicles in the City Centre are supported by 13 taxi ranks with 8 operating for 24 hours, which are well located and signed with the busiest being supervised on key evenings by Taxi Marshalls. Train services across the region and beyond are popular from Swansea Train Station which is located within the ENTE area. Swansea Bus Station, which prior to COVID-19 attracted approx. 40,000 visitors per day, is open 24/7. During the pandemic bus services were severely restricted in and around the area and bus capacity was reduced to allow for social distancing with double decker buses were deployed to allow for social distancing. However, a more comprehensive bus network has returned including those for the ENTE, coinciding with the return of students to their studies and the 24-hour bus that runs between both Swansea University campuses and the City Centre.

- Marketing & Events. The promotion of the ENTE is key to its success as is perceptions of safety. As part of this process, activities undertaken include traditional press, social media and digital technology is well used by the partnership to promote the area including upcoming events, new openings, news and projects. A number of campaigns such as *Drink Less Enjoy More* have been promoted over the years and at the height of the pandemic a city wide *Enjoy Swansea Responsibly* campaign was undertaken with a particular focus on the ENTE. The City Centre Loyalty Card and smartphone app provides a number of ENTE related offers which encourage patronage. The popular Student Lock in event resumed this year with the event taking place at the beginning of October in the Quadrant Shopping Centre after 5pm. The Swansea Fringe also returned in October to ENTE venues across the City Centre followed by the popular Beaujolais celebration and Christmas Parade in November.
- Swansea's ENTE area comprises a mix of unit sizes and offers from both chains and independent outlets, available during the day, early evening and throughout the night. A variety of activities, including shopping, dining, dancing, cinema, events, arts and cultural pursuits and sport are available to visitors. Whilst there have been a number of national closures, particularly in retail that have been felt in Swansea as a result of COVID-19, 16 new openings in the hospitality sector have taken place. Swansea's new Arena is also now open.

However, the following areas have been identified as weaknesses in the current management, coordination and development of Swansea's ENTE offer:

- A reduction in the total numbers of taxis and private hire vehicles in operation as a result of COVID-19. The latest figures show that there are approx. 1,511 licence/badges active at present which is approx. 200 less than before. This is affecting the speed of dispersal of patrons out of the area and is causing conflict on the street particularly around taxi queues.
- Police colleagues are reporting concerns about the level of public aggression in the local ENTE towards the Police at present which is giving rise to conflict and assaults on officers.

- There is negative perception associated with Swansea's ENTE which is likely to be affecting visitor numbers to the area. The perception is that Wind Street in particular is a place that is suited to young people and that fights and rowdy behaviour are the norm as a result of an established over-drinking culture. In more recent times reports of alleged spiking incidents are making women in particular fearful of going out. Whilst some perception data is available (see below) the last study was undertaken several years ago.
- Whilst colleagues in the health sector are members of the ENTE Group they have not been able to attend the meetings for some time. Health data in respect of A&E admissions associated with alcohol and drugs has been unobtainable.
- Whilst measures have been made by the government to relax certain laws to support businesses to recover from COVID, in some instances this has adversely impacted the ability of regulators to effectively manage the ENTE. For example, there are proposals from next year to increase the number of Temporary Event Notices that can be applied for by a venue from 15 to 22 per year. Due to the pandemic, officers are currently dealing with multiple applications some of which are into the early hours up to 5am and the process provides little opportunity for these to be rejected on legitimate grounds. There is concern, particularly if the numbers increase, officers will be inundated with applications especially on key dates and this may give rise to crime and anti-social behaviour as well as a disparity of venue opening and crowd dispersal times to be resourced.
- The works to Wind Street will, once complete, transform the public realm in this area, presenting a great opportunity for the operators to maximise their outdoor space. However, investment is required in infrastructure and changes in operational practices to be able to use the space in a safe, attractive and accessible manner and to expand the appeal of the area to a wider demographic over the long term.
- The marketing and promotion of the ENTE is piecemeal. Whilst partners do their best with limited resources, there is a need for a more cohesive and consistent approach. Also, the Partnership has not capitalised on its Purple Flag status.
- Whilst the City Centre Repurposing Strategy is helpful in providing a general strategic direction regarding the recovery of the City Centre, its focus is mainly on the day time economy. There are some cross cutting activities proposed; however in order to build upon this and Swansea's Purple Flag status in particular, the sector would benefit from a mid to long term strategy. Key to the baselining process would be understanding the demographic of the current ENTE customer and perceptions of the area (as above), evaluating the effectiveness of the current policies and procedures that are in place together with the impact of the Arena and the works to Wind Street (and other developments) as well as emerging changes in legislation.

Changes over time

Statistics on recorded crime in Swansea City Centre by type are available from SW Police. From 2014, the general trend has been a slight reduction in the overall total, although the figures were generally static between 2016 and 2018. However, there was a sharp fall in total city centre crime in 2019, and again from 2020, although the pandemic is a major factor in this. Numbers of recorded crimes have generally fallen across most major types since 2014.

The composition of types of premises making up Swansea's ENTE has changed between 2017 and 2021, with the highest number (2021) in the 'Late opening shops and markets', 'Family restaurants & global cuisine' and 'Fast food & takeaways' categories (each over 40 premises), with the largest growth since 2017 being in the 'fast food...' and 'late opening shops...' categories (both +10).

The number of Licenced Premises has also increased, from 112 in 2016 to 134 in 2021. Total capacity over the whole period has increased by 675 to just over 30,000, although there was a fall of over 2,000 between 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Detailed statistics are also available on specific aspects of ENTE-related services and change over time.

Comparisons with other places

As a member of the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), the Council's City Centre Management service and Swansea BID has access to a network of town and city centre managers and BID officers who are involved in the management of their respective towns and city centres including their evening and night time economy areas.

Regular information sharing is undertaken through a BaseCamp network. Regional meetings also occur regularly to discuss issues pertinent to Wales.

The Purple Flag renewal process provides a system whereby Swansea's credentials are assessed against set criteria and best practice is shared as well as gaps in provision identified for future action.

Licencing colleagues are involved in licencing-related forums with their counterparts across Wales the details of which are fed back to the ENTE Group where relevant.

Differences across Swansea

There are small pockets of ENTE activity outside the City Centre in other parts of Swansea such as in Mumbles and Uplands, however the scale of operation is not comparable.

Perceptions and perspectives

Prior to start of the public realm improvement works on Wind Street, a number of formal and informal consultation exercises were undertaken in 2018-19 among local businesses and residents located on or near to Wind Street as well as with key stakeholders to test views on the area and options going forward. These included surveys as well as engagement events and workshops.

This feedback was used to help shape the project which is now nearer completion. However, there were a number of reoccurring general themes that emerged from the process which are summarised below and which the project aims to help tackle by improving the overall environment of the street:

- Perceptions of the area being rowdy
- Perceptions of violence
- Acknowledgement that it's an attraction but mainly for young people
- Safety concerns about vehicles accessing the area whilst the road is closed.

The latest Swansea Bay Tourism Visitor Survey was undertaken by Beaufort Research on behalf of the Council in 2019. This involved over 1,000 face to face interviews which were conducted from April to September 2019 at various locations across Swansea including two locations in the City Centre (referred to below as 'Swansea') where 300 people were interviewed.

Although this was a survey tailored to visitors, some of the headlines are relevant to Swansea's ENTE. For example, respondents rated numerous aspects of their visit on a five-point scale ranging from 'excellent' to 'very poor'. At least half of all Swansea visitors rated these as either 'excellent' or 'good', however approximately two fifths or fewer rated any of these aspects as 'excellent'. Aspects rated highest were the 'quality of accommodation' and 'range of places to eat and drink', followed by 'feeling of safety and security from crime', the 'quality of attractions and places to visit/ things to do', the 'range of shops' and the 'range of attractions and places to visit/ things to do'. Least likely to be highly rated were the 'cleanliness of the streets', 'standard of tourist signposting (road signs and pedestrian signs)' and the 'availability and cleanliness of public toilets'.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

As demonstrated by the measures taken above to support Swansea's ENTE businesses, the pandemic focused attention on the value of the ENTE on the local economy – something that perhaps in the past was not so recognised.

On a national level 'A study of the night time economy' by the Night Time Industries Association (published October 2021) established the economic, cultural and community value of the night time economy (NTE) and the contribution the night time cultural economy (NTCE) within the UK. This report found that over the last decade the UK NTCE has shown a steady and sustained contribution to the UK's gross domestic product (GDP), generating 1.64% or £36.4bn in 2019, and supporting approximately 425k UK jobs and 38k businesses in 2018 (latest figures). The UK NTE contributes 5.1% and £112.8bn of GDP. The report noted that the NTCE has significant impact beyond pure economic analysis in the areas of social cohesion, community engagement, mental health and well-being.

Integration

The ENTE is cross cutting. For example, its commercial and economic value creates a clear association with economic well-being.

Similarly the cultural premises that are part of the ENTE offer, for example museums, theatres and cinemas, contribute to cultural well-being.

The ENTE also cuts across the environmental aspects as the treatment of the public realm that forms part of the ENTE aligns with environmental aspirations through regeneration and other activities.

In terms of social well-being topics, there is an overlap with activities that sit under the Safer Swansea Partnership. In particular, the impact of alcohol consumption on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is well documented in research. Similarly, the ENTE has a strong association with substance misuse, the management of which is key to operational practices and for the Police.

Improvement

- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour with less front line/ Police resources needed.
- A more diverse leisure offer including a more buoyant early evening scene and less 'wet lead' establishments and drinking offers.
- An expanded customer base including older adults and families.
- Provision of attractive and well managed outdoor areas.
- A well marketed offer and perception of being *The* place to visit for an enjoyable and safe night out.
- A continued collaborative approach to the ENTE including health.

Conclusions and key messages

Swansea's ENTE has a reputation nationally among professional colleagues as a leading light in how the sector should be managed. The partnership is strong, operators are well supported and there are multiple examples of best practice. On the ground however informal and ad-hoc feedback from visitors and residents suggests the area has a limited appeal and is perceived by some to be unattractive and unsafe – a view which has not been tested in recent times and one which may have been expedited by the pandemic.

There are a number of positive developments ahead for the sector. However, the implications of these require proper consideration, together with others, in the form of an ENTE Strategy, and Marketing and Communications Plan. This approach will help maximise the changes coming forward and develop others to agree and fulfil a vision of a thriving social centre for fun and entertainment that is welcoming, safe, prosperous and inclusive for those seeking leisure pursuits across a diverse range of activities.

Hate Crime

Hate crime is defined as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.' This common definition was agreed in 2007 by the Police, Crown Prosecution

Service, Prison Service (now the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime:

- race or ethnicity
- religion or beliefs
- sexual orientation
- disability
- transgender identity (UK Government, 2020).

In the year ending March 2020, there were 105,090 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester), an increase of 8 per cent compared with year ending March 2019 (97,446 offences). This increase nationally reflects a similar overall picture in Swansea.

Changes over time

Data from 2014/15 provides a more holistic picture of the rates of reported hate crimes for Swansea, with trends more easily identifiable.

The figures have increased from 2014/15 but then decreased slightly in 2017/18 but increased slightly to 2020/21. In the early part of the 2021/22 year to date there had been 191 hate crimes recorded; however the predicted trend if hate crime reporting continues at its current rate will be 458 hate crimes.

Table S16: Total Hate Crimes in Swansea by Year and Sector, 2014 to 2022

Year	City	Eastside	Gorseinon	Gower	Morrleston	Penlan	Townhill	Total
2014/15	123	30	17	22	30	34	20	276
2015/16	121	46	28	20	36	26	34	311
2016/17	130	28	22	24	38	34	36	312
2017/18	119	38	23	21	32	51	24	308
2019/20	115	37	39	36	37	36	28	328
2020/21	118	47	31	32	48	31	31	338
2021/22 YTD	65	17	41	10	25	22	11	191
2021/22 PYE	156	41	98	24	60	53	26	458

Racial hate is the most prevalent hate offence recorded in Swansea. 209 were reported in 2014/15 rising to 240 by 20/2021. 312 crimes are projected for 2021/22. Hate crime is quite predictable in its patterns and increased reporting tends to coincide with good weather and summer months. There is no pattern or trends or any particular form of hate crime against any specific racial group. Reporting is sporadic around geography and location.

Religious hate crime has comparatively low numbers in its reports, with no annual Swansea figure since 2014/15 above 20. The most prominent area for the crimes occurring is in the City Centre sector which would reflect the demographics of that area.

Hate crime offences related to Sexual Orientation has generally fluctuated in reporting, at around 40-50 reports annually. However, the projection for 2021/22 is 96.

Transgender Hate Crimes are generally low in reporting, with the highest annual total being 10 in 2020/21.

Hate crime offences related to disability are also generally low in reporting, although numbers are increasing. The highest annual total was in 2020-21 with 42 reports. The most prominent area in recent years for occurrences of this type is in the Gorseinon sector although incidences are quite low.

Comparisons with other places

Analysis of hate crime between areas of South Wales Police (Cardiff & Vale, Mid Glamorgan, Swansea & NPT) for 2017-18 indicate that during this period the number of hate crimes recorded were lower during the winter months but higher in the summer months. Cardiff and the Vale consistently has the highest figures within the Force area, with racial hate crime the most widely reported type of hate crime – in part reflecting the demographics of that area.

Differences across Swansea

Swansea is an extremely vibrant City with many cultures, with reports of hate crime relatively low in comparison to other UK cities, and crime reporting has remained at a relatively constant rate over the past five years.

Swansea's approach to diversity has been translated into policies, projects and a strong focus on communication. It was the second city in the UK to become a City of Sanctuary, a network of cities that welcomes those fleeing from war and persecution. Swansea was also among the five towns and cities shortlisted to become the UK's City of Culture in 2021.

Whilst all the policing sectors have remained at a steady reporting rate, the City Centre has consistently seen the highest level of reporting of hate crimes, with 123 reported in the year 2014/2015 (45% of the Swansea total of 276), and 118 in the year 2020/2021 (35% of the Swansea total of 338). However the hate crime reports are sporadic across the City Centre and there are no areas where there are significant trends.

Gower has the lowest level of reported hate crime over the past 5 years with 155 reported incidents in total.

These reporting figures are in line with the population dynamics in each sector area, with the densest concentration of residents from minority backgrounds residing in the City Sector, resulting in the highest level of reporting.

The overall level of reporting across the sectors within the Swansea Basic Command Unit (BCU) has also remained steady, remaining around 300 per annum.

Looking at the future projection for 2021/2022, this figure looks set to rise to a figure around 450, which can be seen as a success from a policing perspective, showing the increased trust and confidence in reporting.

Perceptions and perspectives

There have been several high-profile incidents, some now historical, which are still having an impact on tension within local communities. Some of these incidents have been the subject of both academic and judicial review. The narratives that have been written however are primarily focussed on the investigations themselves and enquiries into their circumstances. The recent disorder in Mayhill (May 2021) led to a partnership and formal review. Part of this work is to understand why this occurred, the contributory factors and the police and partnership response. The trigger event for this incident was the unexpected death of a person who was well known in the community. There have been a number of incidents, both pre and post pandemic that have been the trigger mechanisms for tension to turn into some level of disorder. These can be linked to national protest where a belief or incident is transposed into local feeling often when the incident has occurred in a different area of the country or even has an international dimension (e.g. Black Lives Matter).

Local police and partners are very much alive to the increasing power of the internet and social media with its ability to galvanise public opinion. This can be based wholly within perception that can turn into physical action and have a significant impact on local cohesion and the sense of feeling safe in some potentially marginalised communities. In Swansea we have not seen this to such an extent with tension not resulting in disorder and most protests have been well managed and do pass without incident. It is also of note that the social media public space has a tendency in this area to police itself and counter narratives are provided openly where derogatory or divisive language is being used. However partners need to continually work hard to land significant and pertinent messages both proactively and in response to community safety concerns.

Hate crime and incident data in this area will show that there has been no particular bias in reported incidents outside what historical and seasonal data is projecting what should happen. The trends that we see year on year are consistent with race-related matters forming a substantial part of the reporting landscape. Work continues for partners to identify potentially 'susceptible' communities and proactively together make efforts to build relationships with those communities and relevant third sector partners. Sound relationships exist within these spaces with robust informal and formal dialogue in place to reassure should incidents occur, and critical matters arise. Partners understand pre-emptive activity in this area and that understanding the changing local demographic is critical.

The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice sets out the framework for understanding indicators for a rise in community tensions and this framework is used to inform and pre-empt partnership and police responses. Examples of such indicators include:

- hate crime (e.g. racist and homophobic attacks)
- vigilante patrols
- police raids on sensitive premises (e.g. cultural or religious buildings)

- threats to community safety (e.g. potentially problematic additions to the sex offenders register)
- inter-community threats (e.g. between religious sects)
- repeated incidents of serious antisocial behaviour
- strong media interest in community issues (e.g. asylum seeker issues)
- global conflict, particularly where UK populations have heritage in affected regions
- political unrest or terrorist activity overseas, particularly where it affects UK-based populations or where it receives extensive media coverage.

Local to Swansea there has been some rise in the visibility of some far-right views manifesting themselves in the city centre, for example against taking the knee, and being very prevalent within social media. Some tension has also been seen around the homeless communities who are housed in temporary accommodation and also recently some nervousness around asylum seekers and some real sensitivity around violence against women and girls and impacts on the student population.

All partners and police are confident that structures and interventions are sufficiently joined-up to meet these on-going challenges.

About the evidence

There has been a significant amount of research conducted by various bodies including the Home Office that illustrate that victims of hate crime do not report their experiences to relevant organisations or the Police. The under reporting of hate crimes varies significantly according to the type of hate crime reported. This is for several different reasons including low levels of public awareness and how hate crime is defined in relation to different groups. Low levels of hate crime convictions also play a part, together with a lack of tailored support for the victims of hate crime.

In response to this a more defined set of processes have been implemented to support victims of hate crime. Although hate crime figures have increased, it can be seen as a positive as confidence and awareness of victims has increased to be able to do this.

In order to improve the response to hate crimes and to improve confidence of victims to report incidents in Swansea, South Wales Police have frequent dialogue with partner agencies and BAME communities, to discuss issues identified. The establishment of a Hate Crime MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is also being considered. The Cultural Hub was set up in the Grand Theatre which has representatives from different BAME groups and communities, and relationships continue to be built with the different groups. The long-term aim is to develop and build on confidence with our communities so that they are aware of mechanism to report hate crimes, they are aware of what constitutes a hate crime or incident and have the trust and confidence to report it.

Conclusions and key messages

The city is constantly evolving with the growth of the student population, an increase in the size of both universities, coupled with recent increases in immigration to Swansea.

Hate crime is generally low across all areas of Swansea, although it tends to be higher in the city area for racial hate crime – the most prominent hate crime offence reported. Rates of hate crime reporting have increased nationally since 2012 and this is reflected in the figures for Swansea, although this has been generally lower than the national increase. This is because the mechanisms to improve hate crime reporting has improved, which includes better victim support, better awareness of reporting mechanisms, increased activities and engagement events with different groups and victims.

There is still a significant amount of work to be undertaken in ensuring that all Hate Crimes are reported and this links to Community Cohesion. It is imperative that tensions in the community are monitored and any increase reviewed, and actions put in place to reduce tensions.

The excellent work that has been undertaken in improving hate crime reporting will continue to develop over time. Demographic change will continue to be monitored and community cohesion will need to reflect this in the future as one size does not fit all in terms of demographics and the make-up of each community. There are no trends against any particular BAME group or other groups, there are no areas where the trends are higher other than the city centre however this is reflected in the demographic make-up of the City area. The rise of the far right has been experienced in Swansea, with the creation and emergence of certain groups and individuals. Interest in them at present is generally low and the number of followers is again generally low. However the effect that they have had to date on community cohesion has been minimal, although the situation will be monitored and feed into community tension indicator mechanisms.

Swansea has seen an increase in immigration to the City over the last ten years. Recently this has included Syrian refugees and refugees from Afghanistan. At present the numbers are low; however there is no indication at this time that community tensions have increased and their assimilation into the city has happened smoothly.

One of the main objectives for maintaining and improving community cohesion is ensuring that the police and partners are aware of issues before they escalate. In order to achieve this, community policing and the Safer Swansea Partnership will be at the core of monitoring cohesion. The use of social media platforms is also important, both in monitoring community issues as well as for placing community safety messages.

Ultimately there are sections of the community that will have less access to social media, including older people, so it also important that messages are conveyed through other means. The use of social media has been important during COVID-19 lockdown to publicise community safety messages as engagement events have not being able to be delivered.

Other factors that will be very important in maintaining cohesion is more face to face activities with the first sector and third sector partners such as housing associations and voluntary groups. As the COVID recovery progresses then the use of face to face activities will increase in the future and benefit community cohesion.

Community Cohesion

The key aim of the community cohesion programme is to break down barriers amongst people, overcome the fear of difference, encourage tolerance and celebrate diversity as a benefit to our communities. This directly links to the national goal of 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities' under the Act.

In December 2018 Welsh Government issued details of their latest funding programme for Regional Community Cohesion Co-coordinators in Wales, with each region expected to:

- Identify and mitigate community tensions (hate crime, extremism, anxiety, anti-social behaviour) relating to Brexit;
- Improve community cohesion communications;
- Organise events/activities to promote social inclusion; and
- Deliver non Brexit activities as outlined in the National Community Cohesion Plan (2019).

A Community Cohesion Officer for the Western Bay region was recruited and funding subsequently extended to March 2022. In June 2021 the Welsh Government amended the themes for the Community Cohesion project for 2021 to 2022. The revised themes are:

- Engagement and Awareness Raising: engagement with minority communities, involving them in developing initiatives to promote community cohesion based on the needs of that community, the wider community, and mitigate tensions.
- Training and capacity building: support public bodies and others in the region to build their awareness and capacity to effectively implement the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Tension Monitoring and mitigation: understand ongoing and emerging community tensions and put in place processes and procedures to address this as required.
- Inclusive policy and decision-making: ensure community cohesion issues are considered in the development of Well-being Plans, Strategic Equality Plans, Equality Impact Assessments and Community Safety planning.
- Research and Evidence: take an evidence based approach to community cohesion using research and evidence to develop provisions to meet the changing demographics, challenges, risks and needs of communities.
- Prevention of hate, exploitation and extremism: have an understanding of the likelihood and prevalence of this in the community and take action to ensure that vulnerable communities are aware of it and supported.

Strengths and Assets

The Community Cohesion team is based within the Swansea Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a sub board of Swansea Public Services Board. The CSP brings together public, private and voluntary agencies to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime. They do this by tackling the needs of both individuals and communities. The Community Cohesion team works

closely with Swansea CSP partners to avoid duplication and ensure collaboration across all aspects of community safety and cohesion.

The focus of the community cohesion team has included the social effects of Brexit, as well as the broader community cohesion agenda.

A key element of work has included engaging with individuals and communities to ensure maximum uptake of the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS). More than 9,000 EU citizens in Swansea have been supported to apply to the EU settlement scheme and produced a full report containing information such as the nationalities and age breakdown of EU people living in Swansea. More information can be found in Swansea's EUSS Briefing Report. EU Settlement Scheme awareness sessions are also delivered.

Alongside community and stakeholder engagement, work continues on tension monitoring within local communities. Tensions identified by partners are reported via the weekly tension monitoring system, with monthly updates sent to the Welsh Government on community tensions and hate crimes/incidents.

Regular engagement is held with key stakeholders to share intelligence and concerns from, for example, students, BAME residents and refugees, and local Faith group leaders. Training programmes are delivered to staff and key stakeholders to understand the early signs of far-right influence and reporting mechanisms. This includes Hate Crime Awareness sessions and engaging with relevant networks to address tensions / hot spots; for example, raising awareness of hate crime and assisting with Hate Crime Awareness Week, and supporting a hate crime awareness programme in our Schools in Swansea. Partnership working also supports innovative campaign(s) to challenge myths and misconceptions, promote positive messages, celebrate diversity, and promote a sense of belonging including Eid in the Park, School Swap project, Interfaith week, Holocaust Memorial Day, Diwali, LGBT+ month, Windrush, Refugee week and Black History month. The *Our Abertawe – Celebrating Swansea Together* event has brought people from all backgrounds together to enjoy the contributions of all Swansea residents.

The local evidence-base has been further developed through a survey completed by more than a thousand participants, and a local campaign *Tell Me More* aimed to provide accurate information to our vulnerable communities in Swansea to address misconceptions and increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations.

Awareness and reporting of Anti-slavery / human trafficking in Swansea has been raised and an Anti-Slavery MARAC established to support the victims of human trafficking. Anti-Slavery / Human Trafficking awareness sessions have also been delivered.

Perceptions and perspectives

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has commissioned SAPERE and Show Racism the Red Card to support pupils and teachers to deliver hate crime prevention sessions in schools. By training teachers, it is hoped that this will provide a more sustainable approach to dealing with the issues of Hate Crime in our schools. Swansea Council has signed

up to the Race Council Cymru 'Zero Racism Wales' and Victim Support 'Hate Charter' for which we received the trusted partner charter mark.

Swansea has been an asylum seeker dispersal area since 2001 and features in the top 10 in the UK in terms of numbers of asylum seekers in relation to population size. It is one of 4 dispersal areas in Wales. Swansea is proud of its position of welcoming those fleeing conflict and persecution and was recognised as a City of Sanctuary in 2010.

Asylum Seekers, until their cases are recognised and they receive refugee status, are one of the sectors of the community profoundly negatively impacted. The background and trauma of fleeing the situation in a country to a place of safety, waiting on the decision on whether their cases are deemed genuine and therefore given status to remain in the UK and access rights like other citizens, having no say on where they live, limited finances and no right to work, all contribute on well-being.

Swansea has a history of solid partnership across statutory and third sectors working together with asylum seekers and refugees. This was highlighted during lockdown when partners worked closely together to ensure that asylum seekers were connected and contacted to ensure that essential needs were being addressed. A strategic Asylum Seeker and Refugee Multi Agency Forum and Coordination Group continues to operate.

However, migration is not a devolved matter and asylum seekers' status and access to work, housing and other benefits is still lacking. This will impact greatly not just on the physical quality of life but on mental well-being. More effort could continue to be made to integrate support for asylum seekers into service delivery including:

- Mainstreaming, in order that asylum seekers are part of whole population of Swansea not a stand-alone group
- bus passes be provided to assist with tackling poverty and isolation
- investing in more mental health services and counselling
- opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to share their skills and experience (highly skilled and professional group of individuals)
- continue to raise awareness of staff across services and organisations.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The Community Cohesion Programme is funded by Welsh Government until 31 March 2023, with a workplan agreed. The intention is to move to a long-term funding model from 2023 onwards subject to the outcome of a rapid review in autumn 2022.

Integration

The Community Cohesion programme demonstrates the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working:

- Long term – the programme seeks to understand and mitigate the long term implications on Swansea residents and communities of Brexit and other aspects of community cohesion

- Prevention – working with partners to map and understand community tensions will help prevent serious problems occurring and mitigate existing tensions
- Integration – the community cohesion programme contributes to the wellbeing goals: an equal Wales, a healthier Wales and Wales of Cohesive communities and to the local well-being objective of stronger communities in Swansea
- Collaboration – the programme relies on collaboration with partners across Swansea and wider regional partnerships
- Involvement – a significant element is based on engaging and involving residents and community groups.

Improvement

- A more representative local democracy and workforce representation truly reflecting our local demographics.
- Applying the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensuring all protected characteristics and minority groups are considered in activity that contributes towards eliminating discrimination, fostering good relations and ensuring equality of opportunity.
- Effective engagement with ethnic minority communities (including people seeking sanctuary, Gypsies and Travellers, and EU Citizens), LGBTQ+ communities, disabled people and religious minority groups.
- An All-Wales Cohesion Programme approach, which requires regional collaboration to minimise duplication of activity, share best practice and maximise impact across Wales.
- Collaboration to address cross-border issues or tensions, including informing awareness in other regions of any oncoming issues which may affect them.
- Increased focus on measuring the impact of activity rather than the output.
- Develop an asset-based approach to cohesion work, focusing on the positives which can be harnessed in the community to tackle inequalities (as opposed to the deficit approach).
- Frequent flow of information and partnership working with the Welsh Government.
- The public sector fully embedding community cohesion elements into its functions, service delivery and key decision making processes.
- Ensuring that public sector organisations create safer places for people from different backgrounds and abilities to interact.

“Community work is essential and more needs to be done to fund local grass roots provision to restore communities post pandemic” – survey respondent.

Conclusions and key messages

- Good partnership working is a key factor in community cohesion, including information sharing, support for the programme and establishing a comprehensive contact database to reach out to all sections of our community. However, partnership working generally can also at times become a barrier, leading to time delays on project outcomes.

- Online engagement including social media campaigns have worked well and provided tangible results – proving that future engagement could be more hybrid but will need new investments to develop infrastructure.
- Staff and partner training have proved to be very successful in widening networks and promoting key messages, including establishing good relationships with community champions.
- By placing more of an emphasis on safeguarding and intelligence dissemination, the work conducted builds a bigger picture of changes within communities that could be affected by these issues.
- There has been a hostile response to the community cohesion agenda from certain community members, with Far-Right protests taking place in Swansea, for example, over Swansea being a City of Sanctuary.
- Whilst certain communities can remain relatively isolated, e.g. Gypsy, Roma & Traveller, some communities are more receptive. It can take years to identify and build trust among certain communities and engagement cannot be forced.

During COVID-19 lockdown, a mix of engagement styles, including face to face, online, training and workshops, has been developed. The style of engagement can be adapted to the targeted community's needs. The Community Cohesion programme needs to be long term focused, providing longevity in the work done. Key priorities around community cohesion could be given a more statutory footing to make sure that partners are working towards similar outcomes.

Wildfires

Between 2015 –2020 there were 15,576 grassfires across Wales, with 4,947 in the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) area. For context in that period the FRS attended:

- 1,694 Flooding incidents
- 2,951 House fires
- 4,919 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs).

Satellite data estimates 6,580 hectares of grassland were burnt across Wales in 2020 (equivalent to 12,296 football pitches). There are clear impacts for the FRS, including:

- Resilience/demand – attendance at grassfires may delay response in attending other life-threatening emergencies.
- Cost – deployment of a single appliance approximately £400/hr.
- Larger fires can take days to extinguish with obvious impact on availability.

Strengths and assets

MWWFRS work on an annual basis with key partners to reduce the impact of wildfires within the Swansea area. Vegetation fuel loads in combination with fire incident data is assessed to put prevention in place at various locations predominantly by means of creating spaces often known as 'firebreaks' – to reduce the travel, severity and impact of fire. The safe use of dedicated mechanical devices to cut and reduce vegetation at specific sites to limit the

spread of a grass fire is proven to be effective in safeguarding the environment, reducing demands on fire and rescue resources utilised to control and extinguish the fire, as well as providing benefits to the immediate community.

A Swansea based company *Commonsvision* work with MWWFRS, Swansea Council, NRW and other partners to look at practical solutions to reduce the occurrence and impact of fire for common land and ecological issues utilising controlled burning or mechanical land management methods.

Funding has been secured and a working group established focussing on prevention, awareness and improvement of rural areas. From the outset, a holistic approach was applied considering associated impacts such as sustainable grazing, community access, biodiversity, transport issues (including RTCs involving animals).

The approach will continue and can hopefully be emulated within other service areas. ITV Wales' Coast and Country programme have filmed with the arson reduction team and partners to highlight the implications of wildfires and the partnership working that has been carried out in the Swansea area. It focused on service impacts and Operation Dawns Glow, firebreak cutting, farming, ecology and local policing. Morriston Fire Station Red Watch and Swansea West Fire Station Green Watch have also been involved.

Differences within Swansea

Problematic sites currently include Garngoch, Fairwood, Pengwern, Clyne and, depending on the condition of vegetation, Pennard Cliffs and Rhossili.

MWWFRS regularly coordinate grass fire prevention work with Swansea Council to reduce grassfire impact on Kilvey Hill. This is an ongoing project to safeguard common land sectors at the location and adjacent streets. For the prevention of grass/wildfires to be optimally effective, and habitat protection, this work is carried out from January to March.

Perceptions and perspectives

The Service and partners have been impacted and restricted by the pandemic, especially in areas such as community engagement and multi-agency collaboration. Community initiatives and interaction have been significantly reduced as working parameters were restricted to essential work and core functions. Longer term, the lack of effective engagement had the potential to dilute the previously strong presence and awareness within communities.

Education and Youth Intervention has also been affected. Non-engagement policies, social distancing and PPE restrictions during the firebreak period meant that community work, events and activities with partners had to adapt.

Integration

Multi-agency debriefs in 2020 stressed the public health implications of wildfire smoke, with the focus around increasing collaborative awareness of the Clean Air Plan for Wales: 'Healthy Air, Healthy Wales'. It was also suggested that more could be done to highlight toxicity albeit with some concern that this could create an increase in the number of calls to fire and rescue services.

Other wider impacts include:

- Road traffic collisions involving livestock – this has financial and economic implications for farmers and graziers via the reduction or removal of grazing in areas. Consequentially, previously grazed areas increase their vegetation fuel loads which increases the number, severity and spread of wildfire incidents. The lack of grazing also has an accessibility impact on communities and financial impacts through vegetation management requirements.
- Off road vehicles – Anti-Social Behaviour associated with these tends to increase wildfire incidents unless addressed early. This can be through illegal fire setting or other ignition sources such as vehicle exhausts.
- Fly-tipping – 2020 saw an increase in fly tipping within rural locations leading to accumulation, ignition and wildfire incidents.
- As outlined in the 'air quality' topic within the Environment chapter, wildfire incidents have air pollution, water quality and biodiversity impacts.

Improvement

The broader change (outputs and outcomes) that the programme would achieve are:

- Protection of habitats/wildlife.
- Prevention of the severity, spread and damage caused by fires.
- Improvements to public and grazing access.
- Increased firefighter safety.
- Fire breaks to prevent the spread of fire.
- Reduced incident occurrences and severity.
- Ecological, environmental, community and financial benefits.
- Public perception / raised awareness of wildfires.
- Improved environmental outcomes.
- Improved community outcomes.

About the evidence

Evidence of project delivery is measurable by assessment and evaluation of:

- Collaboration with partners and previous/current project work.
- Fire incident data.
- Wildfire impacts.
- Information on improvement in the management of the area.
- Improvement in the management of any fire incidents.
- Improvements to firefighter safety.
- Video and photographic evidence.

Conclusions and key messages

The effect of climate change will be complex, but weather is a key variable in wildfire behaviour. The UK Climate Projections 2018 indicated that weather conducive to wildfire ignition will increase and the wildfire season will extend. Warmer, wetter winters could increase fuel load; and longer, drier summers may increase the risk of fire, with summers more hazardous than spring for wildfire by the end of the century. Climate variability and weather extremes may be of more concern than gradual changes. Better wildfire prevention could be achieved through landscape management.

Research shows that there is a low public awareness of wildfires in Wales. Many people do not recognise them as a problem for themselves or their communities. They often occur in remote isolated areas away from public view. Kilvey Hill in Swansea is a good example in that the fires are relatively small, but it probably attracts the most media and public interest across the entire service area. There is scope to link wildfire to longer term climate change, and improve public understanding of the risks.

There is also a misconception as to the causes of wildfire. Many people wrongly believe they happen naturally, linked to the warm dry weather usually experienced when they occur. However, the reality is that most wildfires are caused by human acts – whether deliberate or accidental – and should be viewed as avoidable fires. The public may not recognise that fire and rescue services attend almost twice as many grassfires as house fires and public perception of wildfires needs to change so that they are viewed as socially unacceptable.

To help, partners can:

- Be familiar with the all-Wales 'Operation Dawns Glow' Task Force and its aims.
- Ensure that deliberate grass fire awareness is considered
- Encourage wider engagement of communities to reduce such events
- Contribute to raising awareness of the impact from deliberate grass fires
- Share key data to identify local trends and assist preventative planning
- Continue good communication including social media.

Economic well-being

Introduction

Economic well-being is considered to be having the means to support yourself as an individual and/or family for example through financial security. Central to this is having a good income. To achieve a good income, people need to have the opportunity and means to access employment. Many things will influence a person's ability to obtain employment such as skills, transport options, digital connectivity, health and fitness. Employment opportunities for people to improve their economic and overall well-being are created through having a strong economy.

A strong economy is also fundamental to achieving the national well-being goals of a prosperous Wales, and closely linked to making Wales more resilient, equal, cohesive, healthier and globally responsive.

To facilitate aspects of a resilient and sustainable economy for the residents of Swansea, it is necessary to ensure Swansea has the right infrastructure in place; a strong, varied and growing business base that creates job opportunities for people; provides people with the right skills to take advantage of these opportunities and ensure that households have sufficient income. Reviewing these aspects will allow us to develop an overall picture of the economic wellbeing of Swansea.

It should be noted that the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has not been shown in a significant part of the latest data available to inform this assessment. In particular educational data and the analysis for educational attainment looks at data up to 2019 only.

Economic wellbeing is closely interlinked with many aspects of social wellbeing and environmental wellbeing through placemaking, education levels and the way the economy operates will affect the environment, for example air quality from business manufacturing processes and people commuting to work. Cultural assets also play an important role in attracting visitors to the city and in generating employment opportunities.

Swansea is the regional capital and the main driver for economic growth in South West Wales. Swansea offers an attractive mix of city working, living and learning, set on a sandy five-mile stretch of beautiful coastline which puts it in a good position to attract new companies and retain workers and graduates. Its unique selling point (USP) is its quality of life.

Nearly 70% of Swansea's land area is rural, and additional rural development funding supports work to promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth. A 'one planet' approach has been adopted to delivering the Rural Development Plan LEADER projects. The programme is part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), funded by the European Union and Welsh Government.

Swansea hosts the major hospital for the region (Morrison) and is also the regional centre for higher education. Over 24,000 full-time students are now studying at the two universities

in Swansea – Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David – and both have expanded in recent years. This pool of students help provide footfall for the city’s businesses.

The latest population estimates (mid 2020) shows there are 246,600 living in the city and county, and this is projected to grow by an average of 800 people (+0.3%) per year between 2018 and 2028. In 2020, an estimated 156,000 residents are of working age (16-64), 63.3% of the total population (above Wales and UK percentages).

83% of Swansea residents work within the local authority area, with only Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Gwynedd having a higher equivalent figure in Wales. This demonstrates the importance of the city in the workforce of the wider west Wales region.

Over 600,000 people live within a 30 minute drive to Swansea and two million within an hour. STEAM tourism data shows that there were 4.74 million visitors to the city and county in 2019. Swansea has regular rail connections to major cities around UK and a number of local stations in Swansea, for example Llansamlet and Gorseinon, offering connections to the city centre. Swansea also has extensive cycling and walking routes. It is connected to the National Cycle Network (routes 4 and 43) and the Celtic Trail West.

With 7,930 enterprises (2020), Swansea has the second largest business base of any local authority area in Wales. It has a higher proportion of retail businesses than the Welsh and UK average. The majority of businesses are micro sized and the total business stock between 2015 and 2020 has risen by 18%.

The Swansea economy has a proportionately large share of jobs in the public administration, health, education, financial services and retail sectors. Of the 110,000 people in employment within Swansea (2020), an estimated 87.3% (96,000) are employed in the service sectors, with 29.2% working within the public sector. In Wales, the proportion employed by the service sectors is lower, at 78.5%, with 24.3% in the public sector. The manufacturing and construction sectors employ approximately 11,000 in total; with both sectors’ share of employment in Swansea below the averages for Wales and Great Britain. There is also a higher proportion of people working part-time and lower rates of self-employment.

“Employment brings pride and self-esteem. This in turn leads to better productivity. Less stress therefore better wellbeing” – survey respondent.

Whilst Swansea has shown growth in GVA per head in recent years, it lags behind the UK albeit slightly above the figure for Wales. Over a longer timescale of the past five years, Swansea’s GVA growth has been relatively sluggish compared to figures for Wales and UK. Over the period 2014-19 Swansea has grown 12.9% compared to 15.6% and 15.1% in Wales and UK respectively. Based on this current trajectory, Swansea risks falling further behind the UK in terms of economic growth.

When compared with the South West Wales region (Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire), Swansea’s GVA per head is also currently higher but growing at a

significantly slower rate; at 12.9% compared to 20.4% in South West Wales over the past five years.

However, despite the overall GVA figures which show below national average growth, the Swansea figures for GVA per hour worked (productivity) illustrate a more encouraging trend. For the period 2014-19 Swansea has seen a 12.4% increase and in the period 2018-19 the rate of growth is almost double that of the UK. This could indicate that there is a movement in Swansea towards higher value, higher skilled and higher paid jobs in recent years.

There are pockets of deprivation across the county, with a number of areas among those with the highest levels of deprivation in Wales. In the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), Swansea has an above average proportion of its Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) featuring in the most deprived 10% in Wales, with 17 (11.5%) of its 148 LSOAs in the 191 (10%) most deprived. It is important that job opportunities that are created through new regeneration schemes are accessible to all. There are a number of employability projects in place to help support economically inactive people back into work. This supports the goal of a more equal Wales.

The UK's exit from the European Union has caused economic uncertainty for residents and businesses in Swansea, including for EU citizens residing in the city, the ability of businesses to import and export goods, and sectors such as tourism and the creative industries that have relied on free movement of people. It has also created uncertainty around future funding for economic regeneration schemes.

The global economic downturn as a result of Covid-19, and the longer term structural change in the retail sector, has heavily impacted Swansea's city centre. In recent years changing consumer habits and the growing influence of online shopping had already been driving a rethink of the role and character of city centres as retail destinations. The recent loss of high street anchors such as Debenhams and Topshop underlines the speed at which the contraction of the traditional retail offer is now occurring across the UK. In Swansea there has been a promotional campaign to encourage people to shop local to help retain money in the local economy, and procurement projects to help build local firms capacity and knowledge to secure public sector contracts. Local sourcing of goods and services by residents, businesses and public sector plays an important role in both supporting the local economy and reducing environmental impact, enabling a contribution to the national wellbeing goal of 'A globally responsible Wales'. We have learned a lot through the Covid-19 pandemic, our recovery from which represents a once in a generation opportunity to reset our individual and collective values and priorities, realigning them with those required to create a more sustainable future.

Fortunately, Swansea is expected to benefit from £1 billion in investment with a series of planned major private sector developments and Government-backed projects such as the City Deal. There are nine regional projects including Swansea City & Digital Waterfront District and Life Science, Wellbeing and Sports Campuses.

The city centre has recently undergone significant development and is currently benefitting from unprecedented levels of investment from both the public and private sectors. As a

result of this major investment, Swansea is regarded as being among the best-placed cities in the UK to attract further jobs and investment as it emerges from the pandemic. This investment helps to increase Swansea's economic resilience. Supporting this resilience is the opportunity to build in green infrastructure improvements such as green walls, energy efficient buildings in new developments that help future proof the city centre's offer as well as contributing towards decarbonisation.

The Council has recently adopted the new South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP) as its strategic framework for economic regeneration at the regional and local level. The REDP has been produced by the four local authorities in South West Wales in partnership with the Welsh Government. It sets out how we will build on our distinctive strengths and opportunities over the next ten years to develop a more prosperous and resilient South West Wales economy.

There is a firm commitment to decarbonisation by UK/Welsh Governments and Swansea Council. The South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan also commits to making our economy resilient to climate change and acting on decarbonisation, and outlines the following actions:

- Increasing the resilience of the region's manufacturing base, including in its (currently) relatively carbon-intensive foundation industries
- Supporting adaptation and adoption throughout the economy (across sectors and through the building stock and transport system)
- Delivering robust digital connectivity to support changing working practices and better access to employment.

One of the three key missions of the REDP is establishing South West Wales as a UK leader in renewable energy and the development of a net zero economy. A key renewable energy project being taken forward in Swansea is the Blue Eden project which will generate tidal energy. The Regional Energy Strategy has been developed in parallel with the Regional Economic Delivery Plan and links the energy system objectives of the Energy Strategy with opportunities for local business engagement and supply chain development.

Work is currently underway to develop a programme for industrial decarbonisation through the South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC) initiative, there are other projects such as City Deal-funded Homes as Power Stations scheme and the Swansea Bay and South West Wales Metro will be at the core of the region's lower carbon, more sustainable transport system. Another action is working to achieve a circular economy by building on current performance in reducing waste and transforming recycling rates, there are opportunities to increase re-use of goods and materials offering potential for community-based solutions to increase repair and the use of technology to increase the scope for re-use of materials and reduced food waste.

A key area of action in the REDP is to work to achieve a circular economy. A circular economy keeps resources and materials in use for as long as possible and avoids all waste. This will mean moving away from a 'linear economy' which assumes a constant supply of natural resources or the take-make-use-dispose culture based on the extraction of resources, the production of goods and services, and the disposal of post-consumer waste. The circular

economy offers an approach which can work to reduce consumption. Taking a circular economy approach is a key pillar of a green and just recovery, helping not only to address the climate and nature crisis, but also driving better and more equitable economic outcomes for Wales.

The REDP's third mission is to grow and develop the region's 'experience' offer. This will focus both on the quality of the visitor offer and the appeal of South West Wales as a place to live and work. Work will build upon the region's natural assets which offer an appealing quality of life and broaden the range of attractions and opportunities across the region, especially where they contribute to an increasingly sustainable offer. This will help diversify the city's offer to residents and visitors alike, for example improving the range of food and drink outlets, introducing more leisure facilities, linking up the regions rich culture and heritage offer. Investing in our city, town and community centres in this way will help overcome the decline in the retail sector and make a more resilient economy going forward.

The Economic chapter of the assessment includes further analysis of the following topics:

- Swansea's Economic Infrastructure
- Business Base
- Workforce: Educational Attainment in Primary and Secondary Schools; Adult Skills and Qualifications
- Good Living Standards.

Swansea's Economic Infrastructure

As part of reviewing Swansea's economic infrastructure we focus on digital connectivity, educational assets, commercial property and transport, all of which form the building blocks of a cohesive economy. Green infrastructure also plays a key role in the economic development addressing decarbonisation and green growth.

Strengths and Assets

In terms of digital connectivity, Swansea is the second best connected area in Wales (Cardiff is first) for Superfast Broadband (30Mbit/s or greater) internet access, with 98.9% of Swansea premises having access to this (Thinkbroadband Nov 2021).

98.9% of Swansea premises have access to Ultrafast Broadband (300Mbit/s or greater) (Thinkbroadband Nov 2021).

Generally Swansea has good mobile (4G) coverage but this becomes patchier in rural areas and varies between mobile phone operators. 5G has been deployed across the city centre.

Swansea is part of the regional City Deal £55 million Digital Infrastructure programme that will benefit residents and businesses in all parts of the Swansea Bay City Region, which includes Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. The programme is estimated to be worth £318 million to the regional economy in the next 15 years. Led by Carmarthenshire County Council, the Digital Infrastructure programme will:

- Ensure the region's cities, towns and business parks have competitive access to full-fibre connectivity
- Pave the way for the region to benefit from 5G and internet of things innovation, which includes smart homes, smart manufacturing, smart agriculture and virtual reality, as well as wearable technology that will support healthcare, assisted living and other sectors
- Focus on improving access to broadband in the region's rural communities, while stimulating the market to create competition between digital providers for the benefit of consumers.

There is a strong higher education presence in Swansea, anchored by Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity St David and Gower College Swansea. Both universities have expanded in recent years, and have made an important contribution to the region's physical regeneration (e.g. through the Swansea Bay campus and the SA1 development in Swansea city centre) and are key economic 'drivers' in their own right.

Swansea's Local Development Plan identifies a lack of available, high quality office space to meet economic growth needs, combined with an oversupply of sub-standard office space at central and out of town locations. There is a large amount of industrial/warehousing floorspace of varying quality within the employment landbank, including strategic site provision at Westfield Industrial Park, Waunarlwydd. Whilst there are key sites at Felindre and Fabian Way in Swansea there is a widely-recognised gap between demand and supply for industrial sites and premises, as low rents and/or resale prices present a viability gap to development

The Swansea Central Area Framework identified Swansea City Centre as having poor quality, dated office accommodation which doesn't meet the needs of modern day occupiers. In addition, the city centre offer is perceived as tired, dated and in decline with an average offer. This presents a major weakness in the city's ability to capitalise on potential opportunities, and is losing businesses (and graduates) as companies move elsewhere. The Swansea City Centre Repurposing Strategy 2020 also notes a lack of quality office accommodation and adequate provision for larger occupiers.

Overall there is a lack of grade 1 office space in the County to attract large inward investment inquiries. Flexible office space which can easily adapt to changing needs and tenants is also required. There is also no business centre to accommodate small business start-ups.

In terms of transport connectivity, Swansea is well served from the M4 motorway, with a number of key roads (A4067, A483, A4067 linking into the city centre. The A4067 Oystermouth Road (Mumbles Road) provides an important east-west corridor into the city via Fabian Way. A strength identified in the Environment chapter is that Swansea Council has a detailed transport model in place for the whole city and county which gives excellent detail on travel movements. Swansea Council's strategy is to promote sustainable transport – encouraging more cycling and greater use of public transport.

“A good transport network matters to make it easier to get around Swansea whether it be active travel, uncongested roads or good bus service. If traffic is clogged up, it deters people coming to the city” – survey respondent.

The Council operates two Park and Ride sites that include disabled bays and cycle rack provision. Bus priority measures are in place to reduce traffic congestion and pollution levels for the benefit of communities.

There are a large number of car parks in city centre, but a need for further blue badge parking has been identified. Electronic Vehicle charging points have been added to a number of car parks.

The City Centre repurposing report identifies gaps in public transport provision with challenges for multi-modal public transport interchange, lack of cross city routes a key issue driven in part by traffic congestion and limited route choice resilience for trips from the east and west of the city.

The Enterprise Park and other key employment sites such as Fforestfach are not well served by public transport in particular outside regular office hours. Transport is therefore a barrier to participants on employability schemes. Although there is a Wheels 2 Work project which offers a moped loan scheme for those who have no other means of getting to, or keeping, a job/training due to a lack of public transport at times they require and no transport of their own.

Whilst there are strong links between some areas, for example the city centre and hospitals; housing estates and city centres, there is a lack of cross county links for people to access employment opportunities in other areas, e.g. Amazon.

“Transport also needs to be cheaper to enable people to get around. Community transport schemes need further support and to expand who can access services” – survey respondent.

The city centre comprises a good network of cycle routes, including National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 4 which serves Swansea Marina and the river connecting north to Route 43 to the Swansea Valley. The analysis in the Environment Chapter reports an upward trend in usage across the cycle network from 2014 to 2021, however the City Centre repurposing reports identifies a gap in the provision of cycling hire schemes in the centre of the city centre.

Swansea’s LDP reports that the existing highway network experiences traffic congestion along certain main routes and junctions, which can have a negative impact on amenity, health and well-being, and economic competitiveness.

Swansea could be adversely affected by the scaling back of plans to electrify the South Wales main rail line in its ability to attract inward investment and access to a higher skilled labour market in the wider region. However, proposals are being advanced to take forward

the Swansea Bay Metro to provide an integrated regional transport system and Transport for Wales plans to increase services between Swansea and Manchester from 2022^{xviii}. The improvement of the transport infrastructure should deliver tangible economic benefits for the region in the medium to long term.

The Council recently developed the Swansea Central Area Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy – *Regenerating Our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife* setting out its vision of ‘A city with high quality multifunctional green infrastructure, which delivers resilience, prosperity, nature, health, wellbeing and happiness to the citizens and visitors of Swansea’.

Swansea Council is leading on work with the Western Gateway* Project for their green investment priority and implementing the Green Infrastructure Strategy which focuses on green energy provision.

Changes over time

Digital connectivity has continued to increase over the last 5 years, although there are still some ‘not spots’ in more rural areas. Superfast broadband access has increased to 98.9% in November 2021 from 95.6% 5 years ago. Ultrafast broadband has also increased from 70.8% of premises in 2016 to 84% at present.

There has been a greater focus and an increase in green infrastructure, in particular Property Enhancement Development Grant schemes require applicants to incorporate green infrastructure improvements into their buildings where possible, for example green roofs, living walls.

There are many exemplar projects around the city centre, such as the green wall on the Copr Bay car park on Oystermouth Road, green wall on the Potter’s Wheel building on the Kingsway, green roof on the Urban Village in High Street, biophilic development on Oxford Street which is applying for accreditation as world first.

This contributes to improving the attractiveness of the city as a place to visit, live, work and invest in addition to the environmental benefits.

City Centre office floorspace remains dated with low office rents (typically below £10/sq ft) along with a lack of suitable office space for start-up or grow on companies (particularly tech businesses), however this is being addressed with public sector led developments such as 71/72 the Kingsway which has given increased confidence to the market. On the back of this, a number of private sector led developments are now coming forward, e.g. the Morganstone development in the former Smith Llewellyn Building on Princess Way, and the Hacer Developments Biophilic building in Oxford Street, to create attractive and unique business and green space, although a large viability gap still remains to be met by public sector funding.

Major investments and projects that are either recently completed, under way or planned include:

- Copr Bay Phase One including new state-of-the-art-digital arena

- Kingsway – this £12m transformation has created a greener, more pleasant environment to live, work and visit and included new public areas, landscaped parkland, cycle routes, a two-way single lane vehicle route, and wide pedestrian walkways.
- 71/72 Kingsway - new offices to provide space for 600 jobs in the tech, digital and creative sectors. Set for completion in early 2023 and worth £32.6m a year to Swansea's economy once operational, work on the five-storey development will soon start. A new link between The Kingsway and Oxford Street also forms part of the scheme.
- Former BHS building in the city centre will become a multi-purpose community hub, providing services including a library and agile accommodation for organisations in a welcoming and easily-accessible environment.
- Renovation and reopening of cultural venues such as the Albert Hall. The £8 million restoration and refurbishment of the historic Albert Hall by Loft Co will create an 800-capacity music and entertainment venue, along with dedicated new spaces for lifestyle businesses and offices. Redevelopment of the Palace Theatre will bring the historic building back into use as a new home to tech, start-up and creative businesses through Tramshed Tech. The vision for the grade two listed building includes modern flexible workspaces.
- Digital infrastructure programme – a £55m Swansea Bay City Deal scheme will help the council introduce full-fibre connectivity in the city centre, business parks and across the region.

Comparisons with other places

More than 91% of the UK landmass has good 4G coverage from at least one operator, and this area includes nearly all of the premises in the UK. Coverage for both Scotland and Wales is significantly lower.

With regard to superfast broadband Swansea is better connected than the UK as a whole.

Differences across Swansea

There are some gaps in digital connectivity for mobile coverage in some rural areas, and variations between providers. Digital Connectivity data for the internet is not available at localised levels.

Perceptions and perspectives

The Swansea City Centre Retail & Leisure Review & Repurposing Strategy reports that 25% of retail units are vacant suggesting an overprovision of retail spaces in the Central Area and in particular in the Central Core. The strategy also notes that leisure and entertainment facilities are located outside of the central core and dispersed in the Central Area without a clear circuit linking them. There is also a lack of direct and accessible links to the marina and beach, and poor connectivity with neighbouring residential communities.

The Swansea City Centre Repurposing Strategy recommends that the masterplan for the Swansea city centre should have a strong placemaking approach to promote well-being in the area. Plans for the area require the creation of a cohesive high quality public realm

linking the centre to the waterfront, with the waterfront itself becoming an attractive destination.

The Centre for Cities report *Measuring up: Comparing public transport in the UK and Europe's biggest cities* suggests that:

- Urban public transport commutes to European city centres are easier and faster than in the UK. Approximately 67 per cent of people in big European cities can reach their city centre by public transport within 30 minutes, compared to only 40 per cent of the people in Britain's big cities.
- The low-rise built form of Britain's big cities prevents people from living near urban public transport. Britain's reliance on terraced and semi-detached housing means there are fewer people living close to city centres which reduces commuting by public transport and the efficiency of networks.
- Poor urban transport limits people's job opportunities and effectively makes our largest cities much smaller than European competitors. This negatively impacts the productivity and economic performance of big cities, costing the UK economy more than £23.1 billion per year.
- To deliver European-style transport outcomes, expanding urban public transport systems must be paired with efforts to change the built form of big cities, making it easier to live near and use public transport.

The development of the GI Strategy *Swansea Central Area: Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife* involved extensive stakeholder engagement about what nature in the city means to them. As outlined in the environment chapter the overwhelming message from this engagement was that #citynature is very important to people and will increase their enjoyment and, therefore, their dwell time in the city centre.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

For digital connectivity, the Welsh Government continues to provide top-up funds through a new voucher scheme, for those rural premises qualifying under the UK Government Gigabit Capable Broadband scheme. In addition, Access Broadband Cymru10 provides funding and grants for all premises to double broadband speeds

Property firm LSH in their 2018 South West & South Wales Office Market report predicted that when many of the long leases out-of-town come to an end over the next few years, Swansea could see a wave of requirements from those returning to the city centre but the appropriate floor space needs to be in place.

As part of the Swansea Central Area Transport Strategy work is underway to provide transport planning advice as part of developing a Swansea Central Area.

Proposals are being advanced to take forward the Swansea Bay and South Wales Metro as the core of a better-integrated regional transport system.

Transport for Wales plans to increase services between Swansea and Manchester from 2022; and work progresses in taking forward active travel measures across the region.

Funding has recently been secured through the UK Community Renewal Fund for a project led by SCVS that will work with communities to identify sustainable transport solutions led by them.

Additional sustainable transport initiatives and improvements identified in the Environment chapter include:

- Options for a new park and ride site for Landore are being assessed to provide a location that is more accessible to the M4 but further from the city centre, which will support a wider area and multi-modal usage.
- The Mumbles Coastal Defence Scheme includes an ambition for a 6m wide shared route.
- Swansea Council is working closely with partners to finalise late bus signalling at junctions with a view to this being operational in 2021/22

The Regional Economic Delivery Plan identifies a need to invest in the region's 'experience infrastructure' this will help attract new footfall to the city and support businesses. More detail on Placemaking can be found in the Environment Chapter.

The use of green infrastructure in commercial property schemes will contribute towards the goal of 'a Resilient Wales', however the revised flood maps for planning showing increased risk of flooding to the city centre will limit the ability to create right economic infrastructure including property schemes.

The £1.7billion, private sector led Blue Eden project recently announced for Swansea plans to include a newly-designed tidal lagoon, featuring state-of-the-art underwater turbines generating 320 megawatts of renewable energy from the 9.5km structure. This project will help lead a green growth economy.

Integration

The economic infrastructure available is key to facilitating a strong and prosperous economy which in turns supports people's wellbeing. It is important for all to be able to access transport to meet the 'cohesive communities' national goal.

Digital connectivity will potentially help enable people to reduce their carbon footprint by reducing commuting for example, and this in turn enables better wellbeing through increased leisure time.

There are also links between this topic and various aspects of the Environment chapter, including placemaking, flood risk, accessibility to services and facilities (active travel / modal shift to bus, electric, etc.)

There are also links to aspects of the Social chapter, including housing and poverty.

"Transport and travel is important as, without access this can isolate individuals and lead to further health problems" – survey respondent.

Improvement

There would be a greater level of inner city living, employment and footfall supporting a strong performing city centre.

Further green infrastructure in place and good connectivity to natural assets. The Green Infrastructure strategy needs to be resourced to drive these infrastructure improvements forward.

Active and sustainable transport options for people to access employment and public services, and for business to access customers, employees and suppliers.

Conclusions and findings from the Swansea City Centre Repurposing Strategy suggests:

- A need for a wider residential offer in the city centre, with a focus on intergenerational living.
- Despite two quality universities there is a lack of educational facilities in the city centre.
- Swansea has a strong leisure and cultural offer but leisure and entertainment facilities are located outside of the central core and dispersed in the Central Area without a clear circuit linking them.
- There is lack of quality office space available.
- There is a lack of “grown up” Food & Beverage (F&B) businesses in the core.
- Declining retail footfall and retail vacancy is a growing problem.
- Committed initiatives are major positives.
- There is a need to instil a sense of pride and a sense of ownership in the city.
- Swansea suffers from poor perception of the city centre with visitors and poor first impressions.

Many of these concerns have been identified previously and some are already being addressed though existing actions by the Council. Additional opportunities via the current economic recovery plan are also taking shape, but it is clear the Council will need to go further in terms of its repurposing ambitions, through simultaneously completing previous commitments and embracing new ones.

About the evidence

There is a lack of information on where digital ‘not spots’ are.

There are no audits on the quality of commercial premises and future requirements.

Conclusions and key messages

Generally digital connectivity is good in Swansea and this helps facilitate business productivity and growth; access to working from home; on-line education and, access to services. Being on-line also helps households to drive down costs by access to more

competitive pricing for things like utilities, so it is therefore important to ensure rural areas are well connected too.

The City Deal project to address digital connectivity will help to keep up pace of change to ensure working practices and business models can continue to evolve to support demands from consumers and to improve productivity.

Swansea's office space is dated and poor quality, in particular there is a lack of grade A office space to attract large inward investment inquiries. There also continues to be a lack of all sizes of spaces which hampers the ability to facilitate small start-ups and grow firms. However, a number of schemes have commenced which should help to start addressing these issues.

Due to the low rents and property prices in Swansea there is a viability gap that prevents developments coming forward from the private sector. Therefore, work needs to continue to address this viability gap to ensure Swansea has a fit for purpose supply of business premises to meet local demand and attract new companies to start up and or expand here. This is imperative to create job opportunities for people to improve their economic wellbeing.

Key workplaces need to be better connected to active and sustainable travel routes with timetabling to accommodate shift patterns. This will help unemployed people to access job opportunities and increase their wellbeing. More cross city routes are also needed.

Work is already underway to create more green infrastructure and green buildings and this focus should continue to help address the climate change and nature emergencies, in turn enhancing people's wellbeing through improved work and leisure places.

Swansea's Business Base

Strengths and Assets

With almost 8,000 active businesses (2020), Swansea has the second largest business base of any local authority area in Wales which, given it is the second largest city, perhaps is not surprising. Swansea ranks lower (around mid-tier) for businesses per head of population (working age) at approximately 500 per 10,000.

In terms of sector representation (2020 data), Swansea is not significantly disproportionate to Welsh averages for any individual sector with the possible exception of retail which, at 14.2% of stock, is higher than Wales (8.9%) and the UK (8.1%). Whilst this demonstrates that Swansea does not have an overriding specialism in any individual sector, it also highlights that the area is less vulnerable to market shocks owing to overrepresentation of an individual business sector.

88.6% of businesses in Swansea (2021) are micro sized (0-9 employees) with 1.9% of businesses employing 50 or more people; this represents around 135 businesses in total.

Swansea has a strong business start-up culture with 1,050 new enterprise births in 2020. This shows the fifth highest business birth rate per head of working age population in Wales, but there was a drop in business births from the previous year (1,290 in 2019), in part due to the impact of the pandemic.

Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity St David provide a platform for innovation both in terms of start-ups directly from the campus or indirectly through local supply chains. In 2015/16, university activity contributed GVA to the value £442m to the Swansea economy, around 9% of the total at that time.

The Council and its partners are committed to support local suppliers and initiatives such as Beyond Bricks and Mortar (BBM).

Changes over time

The trend for business stock up to 2020 has been one of growth; this means that overall business births have exceeded business deaths. This growth in business stock displays both in real term numbers but also in businesses per head of population. Indeed, the total business stock between 2015 and 2020 has risen by 18% making Swansea the second best performing of the 22 local authority areas in Wales over this period.

In 2019 (latest data available), Gross Value Added (GVA) per head for Swansea stood at approximately £23,000. This represents an approximate 13% growth in the five years since 2014 and 3% growth in the year since 2018.

Comparisons with other places

Whilst Swansea has seen an above national average growth in both business births and business stock, business survival rates for Swansea are below the average for Wales and UK and amongst the lowest of local authority areas in Wales. Five year survival rates for businesses in Swansea (up to 2020) are just 39.9%, close to the Wales average (39.9%) but lower than the highest performing Welsh local authorities (up to 49%). Therefore, whilst businesses are being created in high volume, there is clearly an issue with these businesses either surviving or electing to continue trading over an extended period of time.

In terms of business sectors, Swansea has a disproportionately high quota of business activity in retail compared to Wales and UK totals. Conversely there is an underrepresentation of businesses in professional, scientific and technical sectors. In broad terms this highlights an overrepresentation in a lower paid, lower skilled sector and a lower quota in a high paid and skilled sector.

Perceptions and perspectives

The South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan highlights the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the South West Wales region. The report highlights the significant impact on hospitality which has strong representation across the region. It also highlights

the potentially longer-term disruptive trends, particularly within retail on which Swansea has a relatively heavy reliance.

“I think business and enterprise are central to creating and maintaining a thriving city centre. Not only do they provide employment opportunities, they stimulate income and cash flow within Swansea. Businesses also provide people with event opportunities and people are therefore more likely to associate Swansea with events, things to do and place to go. I think it would be great if the council could support more niche business ideas so that people have the opportunity to spend their money on more than just drink and food. Places that offer exercise or recreational activities would be great” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The fourth industrial revolution – digitalisation – is underway. However, digitalisation has disruptive effects. While it leads to greater efficiencies within industries, the ‘transformative’ power is in the convergence of technologies to drive entirely new markets and industries (gaming or robotics, for instance), which in turn drive applications elsewhere. This presents massive opportunities for all sectors: the expansion of artificial intelligence which will replace a lot of manual tasks; continued development of digital platforms enabling new transaction models (e.g. making rental of goods and services more viable); changes in the nature of the workplace such as more homeworking; development of new technologies and standards, as business models that did not previously exist become established and influence the regulatory models that impact future entrants; greater use of data to effect behaviour change.

Another key mission noted in the Regional Economic Delivery plan is building a strong, resilient and embedded business base which seeks to encourage a continued focus on innovation and the growth of capabilities at the ‘leading edge’, balanced with an approach aimed at achieving greater resilience, growth potential and capacity for sustained employment across the region’s wider business base, linked with the decarbonisation imperative in Mission 1.

Improvement

Whilst business stock and the rate of new start-ups in Swansea are amongst the best in Wales, the business survival rates show that longevity of these businesses is poor compared to other local authority areas in Wales. Maintaining these businesses and improving their survival rate would help to preserve and grow the overall business stock figures. This means ensuring that businesses are better connected to the support available to them and delivering early intervention before businesses.

By comparison, Swansea has particularly poor representation in professional, scientific and technical sectors. This is a sector where jobs are likely to be both better paid and higher skilled. Therefore, a growth within this sector would provide benefit to the wider economy.

Whilst Swansea’s GVA per head is currently higher than comparable geographies in Wales, the overall level of growth is sluggish. To maintain the level of comparatively higher GVA, the level of growth must be improved.

In April 2021, Swansea Council established a dedicated Business Support service named 'Business Swansea' with the primary aims of helping businesses recover post pandemic, boost the survival rates of young businesses, increase business engagement and improve business awareness of support available via Swansea Council and its partners. The activities of Business Swansea include:

- Distribution of a dedicated fortnightly Business Support newsletter to a circulation list of over 2,000 businesses
- Targeted communications strategy utilising various social media channels
- Revamped website with updated business support content
- Establishment of a Start-Up Enterprise Club with access to a small start-up grant
- Monthly topical business advice sessions to new and established businesses facilitated by local experts
- Formation of a Business Support Forum comprising the active business support partners operating within Swansea.

Swansea Council has an ambitious vision for the City that is a vibrant, 24-hour, living, working and leisure destination. There are new developments and ongoing regeneration projects that give cause for high optimism post pandemic such as:

- Copr Bay Development including new state-of-the-art-digital arena
- High tech office development at 71 and 72 The Kingsway
- The Palace Theatre transformed into a new hub for tech, start-up and creative businesses
- Albert Hall brought back to use as a music venue
- £3m upgrade to main nightlife economy area Wind Street
- Castle Square public space improvement
- £750m development of key sites in the City Centre, Swansea Central North and St Thomas
- £1.7bn Blue Eden Project.

“Sustainable business - a focus on the impact on the environment and using technology and innovation to become leaders in the UK for sustainable business and activity” – survey respondent.

About the evidence

The full impact of the Coronavirus pandemic is not yet clear from the latest data available relating to Swansea's business base; however it is likely to show a mixed picture. The high proportion of retail businesses and those in accommodation and food services may show negative impacts in the short term. The pandemic is likely to result in medium and longer term economic impacts including on retail habits and changing nature of demand for city centre office space. At the time of writing, the evidence does not indicate the direction of change and/or the full impacts have not yet been realised.

Conclusions and key messages

Swansea has a strong business base and healthy level of new business formations but this is offset by poor business survival rates and an underperforming growth in GVA. This leaves the area at risk of lagging behind the growth rates of both Wales and UK. Maintaining these businesses and improving their survival rate would help to preserve and grow overall business stock. This means ensuring that businesses are better connected to the support available to them and delivering early intervention before businesses fail.

By comparison, Swansea has particularly poor representation in professional, scientific and technical sectors. This is a sector where jobs are likely to be both better paid and higher skilled. Therefore, a growth within this sector would provide benefit to the wider economy and help raise people's income and wellbeing.

There is however cause to be optimistic. The recent, ongoing and forthcoming regeneration projects including Copr Bay, The Kingsway and Blue Eden projects will provide significant investment creating opportunities for the local business base both during construction and through the resulting infrastructure. Furthermore, the continued growth of the city's two universities promises to increase the volume of highly skilled businesses and individuals.

Swansea's workforce

A skilled workforce is an important aspect of a resilient and successful economy, as a skilled workforce can help boost productivity. For example, skilled workers are often better able to adapt quickly and effectively to change, contribute to innovation and improved efficiency.

For an individual, skills affect their ability to obtain a job and high skilled people tend to be employed in better paid jobs, thus enhancing their economic wellbeing.

"Without skills it's difficult for people, young or old, to have confidence in themselves and aspirations for their lives and futures" – survey respondent.

In assessing the skills of Swansea's workforce, we have considered the level of school attainment and overall levels of qualifications.

i. Educational Attainment in Primary and Secondary Schools

The measures used for this analysis are:

- Primary schools – the end of key stage 2 Core Subject Indicator (CSI). This refers to the percentage of pupils in year 6 who attain at least level 4 in each of English and / or Welsh First language, plus mathematics and science in combination. This measure has been discontinued due to the new Curriculum for Wales, and there is nothing to replace it at the moment.
- Secondary schools – the key stage 4 Capped 9 Point Score. This refers to the point scores attained by each student in their best 9 examination results, including literacy, numeracy and science. The exact definition of this measure has been changed frequently, so its use as a measure over time is indicative only.

Strengths and Assets

Results for Swansea pupils in primary schools have been in line with those seen in Wales overall.

As seen in the national data, boys' performance is generally below that for girls, with an average gap of 6% in the three years up to 2019.

Pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) have results about 14% below all pupils in these years; again typical of national results. However, when looking at deprivation using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), results for pupils who live in areas classed as being in the most deprived 30% of all areas in Wales are only about 6% below all pupils. FSM therefore appears to be more of a factor than deprivation overall (FSM is a measure of only income deprivation, as eligibility is via the benefits system). The effect of deprivation tends to be more significant for boys than girls.

A strength in primary school performance is the attainment of pupils from BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds). Despite many of these pupils learning English as an additional language, their results in key stage 2 are typically 1-2% above those for all pupils.

Pupils who are looked after by the local authority (LAC) typically have results around 23% below all pupils overall. However, the number of LAC pupils in most year groups is typically between 20 and 30, so care is needed in looking at their performance due to low numbers. The focus for these pupils is more on individual achievement compared to their potential.

There is a gap of around 25% between pupils who have additional learning needs (ALN) and all pupils. ALN pupils receive additional support, either within their schools or via external specialists who work with them. The gap seen in Swansea for ALN pupils is typical of that seen nationally. Swansea however tends to have a higher proportion of ALN pupils than Wales overall, and far more boys have identified ALN than girls.

Overall performance of Swansea secondary schools at key stage 4 is typically amongst the best in Wales, with most key measures above Welsh averages and with significantly positive value-added over time.

In the three years up to 2019, the capped 9 point score for all pupils averaged 366, with a gap of 26 points between boys and girls. This gap is typical of national results.

Pupils in receipt of FSM have average scores about 25 points below all pupils, whilst those living in the 30% of areas classified by WIMD as being the most deprived have scores 41 points below all pupils. Therefore, unlike key stage 2, deprivation overall appears to be a more significant factor than FSM alone.

Pupils from BAME backgrounds have results typically about 20 points higher than all pupils, and this is a particular strength of secondary school performance. There are usually between 200 and 300 BAME pupils per year group (10-15% of the cohort).

LAC pupils have results on average about 95 points below all pupils. This is a significant difference, although there are typically only 20-30 such pupils per year group. The focus is therefore in individual achievement compared to potential, rather than on the results for the small group overall.

Pupils with ALN in Swansea have results around 75 points below all pupils. This is similar to the gap seen nationally. ALN pupils receive additional support, either within their schools or via external specialists who work with them. Swansea however tends to have a higher proportion of ALN pupils than Wales overall, with far more boys having ALN than girls.

Changes over time

In the three years up to 2019, primary school results for the key stage 2 CSI fell slightly, by around 2.7%. This was due mainly to the introduction of more robust moderation processes for teacher assessment, and does not reflect a decline in performance. These changes were made regionally, and similar small falls in the CSI were seen in the other local authority areas in the former ERW region.

A review of Secondary schools results at key stage 4 are more difficult to assess over time, as the Welsh Government have made a number of changes in the calculation of the measures used. In the main, these changes have had the effect of slightly reducing the results; however Swansea results in the three years up to 2019 increased slightly by 8 points. When key stage 4 results in Swansea are assessed in terms of the progress pupils have made up to the end of year 11, the results represent significantly positive value-added each year.

Comparisons with other places

The CSI for key stage 2 in Swansea primary schools is typically similar to, or slightly lower than, the all-Wales result. In 2019, the Swansea result of 86.8% compared to 87.8% for Wales. As mentioned above, more robust moderation processes in Swansea have had the effect of slightly lowering this figure. Additionally, when considering the higher than national average deprivation context of Swansea, this position would not be surprising. Value-added data shows that pupils in Swansea make good progress during key stage 2. There is no comparison possible for this measure to areas other than Wales.

The Capped 9 Point Score at key stage 4 in Swansea secondary schools is typically well above the all-Wales figure each year. In 2019, the Swansea result was 15 points above the national outcome. Considering the relatively high deprivation context of Swansea, this is an excellent outcome. Additionally, value-added data shows that performance at key stage 4 in Swansea schools is significantly positive, with pupils making much faster progress than that predicted by modelled outcomes.

Differences across Swansea

There are significant differences in school outcomes between the areas in Swansea, and these can best be seen when looking at the relative deprivation of these areas, as identified via the WIMD.

In primary schools in 2019, the CSI for pupils living in the most deprived quarter of all areas was 81.0%; this compares to 93.3% for those living in the least deprived quarter of all areas. This difference becomes even more apparent when considering the most and least deprived 10% of all areas – 80.4% compared to 94.5%.

The same pattern is seen with the key stage 4 capped 9 point score. In 2019, this was 331 for the most deprived quarter of areas and 411 for the least deprived quarter. In the most deprived decile of areas, the result was 313 compared to 414 for the least deprived decile. These are significant differences.

Most educational outcomes, together with factors such as school attendance and exclusions, show a strong correlation with deprivation measures. Higher deprivation equates with lower attainment and achievement, poorer attendance and higher numbers of exclusions.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The new Curriculum for Wales means that almost all measures of educational outcomes in schools will either be discontinued or revised, and there are no measures used in 2019 which are likely to remain in the same form in future years. This makes further analysis of trends and patterns on performance difficult. It is likely that there will be no suitable measures that can be used for primary schools. For key stage 4, the current measures are regarded as “interim” by Welsh Government, and are expected to change again.

The pandemic has seen traditional examinations for year 11 and year 12/13 pupils replaced by CDAs – Centre Determined Grades. Results in 2020 and 2021 were well above those expected from previous trends. In 2022, whilst examinations may return, results will still be affected by the pandemic as these learners have lost curriculum time. It's therefore not possible at this stage to quantify future prospects for secondary schools in terms of examination results; however their performance will remain strong.

Integration

There are clear links between education and other aspects of well-being such as employment prospects, health and social wellbeing.

Improvement

As outlined above, it is likely that there will be significant gaps in the data needed to help identify improvement in future years. However, the analysis up to 2019 shows that improvement would be evidenced by:-

- Reducing the gaps in attainment and achievement between different groups of learners.
- Ensuring that all learners reach their potential in terms of the progress they make through their educational pathways (positive value-added results).
- Results in Swansea showing an upward trend with favourable comparisons to results for other areas and all-Wales.
- Students leaving school with the qualifications they need in order to access their chosen progression routes into further/higher education and employment, and a reduction in the numbers who end up not in education, training or employment (NEETS).

About the evidence

Data is available and well-researched up to 2019, but the effect of the pandemic and the new Curriculum for Wales means that in future there will be little data available for primary schools, and changed data available for secondary schools, as outlined in the section above.

Conclusions and key messages

Pupils in Swansea schools are doing well overall, and are making good progress. Results compare favourably to national figures. However there are some pupils who typically lag behind their peers, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, and the challenge is to ensure these pupils make progress in line with their individual potential.

The new Curriculum for Wales has a focus on learners as individuals, with each learner tracked to ensure they make progress in line with their potential. The aim is for this approach to narrow the attainment gaps seen at present, although how success will be measured has still to be decided.

ii. Adult Skills and Qualifications

Strengths and Assets

Regional partners work together on the Swansea Bay City Deal, which includes the recently approved Skills and Talent Project (led by the Regional Skills Partnership), which will work to develop skills in the region, plugging the skills gaps in many sectors.

The Council's Beyond Bricks & Mortar initiative works with local contractors to create work and training placements for local people.

Swansea Employability Network (SEN) consists of all employability organisations in the county with a purpose to improve provision by working together, making cross referrals and sharing best practice and innovations.

South West Workways+ and Swansea Working, along with other employability projects, offer a range of certificated skills training courses for participants.

The Swansea Employability Academy (SEA) is linking potential employers to university students and creating networking opportunities.

Swansea University has a particular focus on meeting skills shortages in sectors that depend on science, technology, mathematics, and medicine subjects and has grown provision in these key areas. The new Computational Foundry is increasing digital skill prospects, including the Institute of Coding.

Technocamps is a Swansea University based project working with schools across Wales to support learning of digital skills and to encourage uptake.

Gower College Swansea provides extensive training for businesses to upskill their staff. This includes Skills for Industry, a subsidised programme for employer upskilling.

Changes over time

Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Annual Population Survey (APS) data on the structure of Swansea's workforce, suggests that economic activity and employment rates in Swansea are lower than Wales averages and further below equivalent UK rates. However, the large proportion of students resident in Swansea is known to have some effect on these figures.

Economic activity dropped further below the Wales average in 2017 and has taken until 2020 to rise back to 2016 levels. This coincided with a rise in the working age population at this time.

The latest APS data for skill levels for 2020 has yielded a significant rise in the number of working age people with a qualification compared with data for 2015.

Statistics on the highest qualification held by people of working age (APS) for the year ending December 2020 suggests that Swansea has a higher proportion of working age residents with qualifications to NVQ level 3 and above than the Wales and UK average. In the last five years (2015 to 2020), the number of Swansea's working age (16-64) residents with NVQ level 4+ has risen from 51,400 to 64,000 (up by 12,600 or 24.5%); whilst the number with no qualifications fell from 19,600 to 11,100 (-8,500 or 43.4%). This is generally in line with national trends over the period.

The estimated percentage of the working age population in a Trade Apprenticeship in Swansea was 2.6% in 2015 and has risen to 3.3% in 2020; an estimated increase in the total of 28%.

Gower College Swansea also publish figures on Apprentices based in Swansea:

2016/17: 1,026,

2017/18: 1,614.

2020/21: 1,366 (numbers were lower than anticipated due to Covid).

2021/22 (forecast): 3,635 apprentices (includes those outside Swansea).

Table Ec1: Highest qualification of working age population, 2021

NVQ level	Swansea (total)	Swansea (%)	Wales (%)	UK (%)
NVQ 4 and above	61,600	39.4	38.7	43.5
NVQ 3	33,400	21.3	18.2	16.6
Trade Apprenticeships	3,900	2.5	2.6	2.8
NVQ 2	25,500	16.3	16.0	15.3
NVQ 1	13,100	8.4	10.4	9.4
Other qualifications	6,900	4.4	5.9	5.8
No qualifications	12,100	7.7	8.2	6.7
TOTAL	156,400	100	100	100

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) data for 12 month period ending December 2021, ONS.

Comparisons with other places

As the major commercial centre of South West Wales, Swansea has higher percentages of employment in the service sectors and corresponding lower manufacturing employment. There is also a higher proportion of people working part-time and lower rates of self-employment.

In the past, employment and skills levels in Swansea have generally tended to be just below those of Wales. However, in the last 5 years, whilst there has been a rise in the estimated numbers of people with qualifications across Swansea and Wales generally the greater rise for Swansea has taken the proportion with NVQ4 qualifications above the rest of Wales.

The number of working age people without any qualifications has reduced overall. In Swansea the larger reduction in people with no qualifications has taken the figure to 7.2%, just below the Welsh average (7.7%). The UK proportion of working age population with no qualifications is lower (6.6%) but with a smaller recent reduction.

The percentage of adults with trade apprenticeships has reduced in Wales and UK, but in Swansea has risen so this figure (3.3%) is now marginally above Wales and UK

The number of people with qualifications above NVQ3 has risen generally. However, a faster recent rise has taken Swansea from below to above the Wales average and closer to the UK percentage for this measure.

Perceptions and perspectives

Census data highlights that qualifications/skill levels have an impact on employment rates, with individuals with lower level skills far less likely to be in employment than those with higher skill levels. As an example, a working age person in Swansea with a level 4 or above qualification in 2011 was nearly twice as likely to be in employment (79.7%) than someone with no qualifications (40.3%). Three quarters of those with apprenticeships were in employment. The 2021 Census results (due 2022) may show a similar effect.

Lack of skills and experience prevents people from gaining higher skilled jobs and keeps them in low paid work or unemployment.

Continued positive investment in skills will enhance Swansea's economic performance, narrowing the gap with the UK's performance and improving people's prosperity.

Data published by Welsh Government from the Annual Population Survey illustrates the strong integration between the Swansea labour market and its neighbour authorities – Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire. Analysis of travel-to-work patterns suggest that the most significant cross-boundary flows occur into Swansea from these adjacent areas. In 2021, Swansea had the second highest net inflow of local authority areas in Wales (+6,800), behind only Cardiff.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The Council and its local / regional partners are working to create a more skilled workforce in the future, including the examples below:

- Swansea Bay City Deal, which includes the recently approved Skills and Talent Project, which will work to develop skills in the region, plugging the skills gaps in many sectors.
- Swansea Employability Network (SEN), whose participants consist of all employability organisations in the county with a purpose to improve provision by working together, cross referrals and sharing best practice and innovations.
- The Swansea Employability Academy (SEA) is linking potential employers to university students and creating networking opportunities.
- Swansea University has a particular focus on meeting skills shortages in sectors that depend on science, technology, mathematics, and medicine subjects and has grown provision in these key areas. The new Computational Foundry is increasing digital skill prospects, including the Institute of Coding.
- Technocamps is a Swansea University based project working with schools across Wales to support learning of digital skills and encourage uptake.
- Gower College Swansea provides extensive training for businesses to upskill their staff. This includes Skills for Industry a subsidised programme for employer upskilling.

Successful employability projects such as South West Workways+ and Communities for Work continue to provide skills and job opportunities in Swansea for residents and support them back into work. However these projects are generally funded through European funding programmes and there is a risk of reduced provision when this funding ends.

The expansions of Swansea University and University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) will increase learning and research & development capacity, generating higher-level skills and greater collaboration with industry, potentially leading to the creation of higher value jobs and spin out businesses.

The high proportion of part time mature students attending UWTSD demonstrates the opportunities taken up locally by businesses to upskill their staff and the numbers of people living locally who are able to make use of higher level training.

The recently approved Skills and Talent project (City Deal) led by the Regional Skills Partnership, will ensure that there is resource to address future skills gaps, identifying and providing training in areas currently not funded. The skills and talent project will develop and deliver an up-to-date training and skills programme through formal education; traineeships, apprenticeships and higher-level apprenticeships are critical to improving opportunities for lower skilled workers to upskill and to seek higher level outcomes. The programme will enable the support of employees already in the workplace to upskill/reskill to take advantage of the job opportunities provided by the City Deal projects. A highly skilled and productive workforce will enable the region to be connected and competitive. It will focus on specific sector skills required in order to meet the demand of the Swansea Bay City Region City Deal and the five themes of 'Digital, Construction, Health and Wellbeing, Energy and Smart Manufacturing all fused together to bring about Economic Acceleration in the region. The programme will help open up new jobs to increase the number of people moving into work (including those who have been out of work over a long period of time) and reduce the number of people who are economically inactive.

There are a number of employability projects in the County providing training and skills targeting the unemployed and economically inactive, such as:

- Beyond Bricks and Mortar
- Swansea Working
- South West Workways+
- Communities 4 Work.

Integration

Links have been established between poverty and the lack of qualifications. People with little or no qualifications are likely to earn less and are therefore most likely to be in poverty.

The lack of skills is directly linked to the ability of the workforce to get out of poverty, with people who gain more skills in or outside work more able to get better paid jobs.

There is a direct link with poverty and health and wellbeing as demonstrated in research by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and others.

An area of concern not focussed on in the past is the increasing incidence of mental health issues amongst unemployed and economically inactive people. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed outlooks for many people and there remains a legacy of fear for many in interacting within the workplace. Without the necessary support in place the future economic prospects could be affected.

The Council's Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy includes work to create a skilled and knowledgeable local economy to deliver and maintain GI. As part of this online training and

awareness raising events for professionals (engineers and architects) are planned, together with project development.

Improvement

High levels of digital skills in the population will be needed to support the digital revolution.

An increase in those qualified to NVQ 4 + to the UK average.

A reduction in those with no qualifications to bring Swansea at least in line with the UK average.

The supply of skills that people have matches industry demand, in particular that current gaps in construction, care and hospitality are addressed.

Conclusions and key messages

The last 5 years have seen an increasing number of people with improved qualification levels for NVQ 3, 4 and trade apprenticeships, and Swansea now stands above the UK average for NVQ 2 and 3. However, Swansea remains slightly below the UK average for the higher NVQ 4 level. Talent shortages will adversely affect the ability to attract and retain skilled industries into the region.

Skill shortages in many traditional areas such as care remain an issue. However, these are now being added to by shortages in catering, hospitality and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers. If Swansea is to succeed in future then these areas need to be addressed with not only training but the systemic issues that make jobs in these sectors less desirable— low wages and unsociable working hours.

Continued positive investment in skills and the workforce will enhance Swansea's economic performance, narrowing the gap with the UK's performance and improving people's prosperity.

In terms of workforce issues, the mental health impacts of the pandemic has changed the outlook of many people, including fears of interacting with or within the workplace. Without the necessary support in place the future economic prospects could be affected. There is also a gap in employability support for younger people and the over 55's.

The last five years have seen an increasing number of people with improved qualification levels, Swansea now stands above the Welsh average. Evidence shows that lack of skills and experience prevents people from gaining higher skilled jobs and keeps them in low paid work or unemployment. It is therefore important to continue upskilling the local workforce to enable more people to be lifted out of poverty and improve their economic wellbeing.

Good Living Standards

The overall health of the national and local economy will clearly have considerable impacts on people's economic wellbeing. However, despite the availability of some relevant measures at a local authority area level, these have certain limitations; therefore assessment of this aspect of well-being is consistently challenging.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea boasts strong multi partnership working with public sector and third sector organisations which strive to better the living standards of its citizens.

Employability projects are on hand to offer advice and mentorship on finding employment and offer training to upskill for a better salary. Kick-start placements are currently underway throughout Swansea, giving opportunities to young people who are struggling to find employment in the first instance.

Council projects are in place designed to strengthen the communities of Swansea and help citizens achieve a better standard of living.

Using a local supply chain is always encouraged in Council contracts which will strengthen the local economy and improve the living standards of those employed within those supply chains.

The Swansea Bay City Deal is a £1.3bn investment programme which aims to create a step change in the regional economy, creating higher value, higher skilled employment which would lead to higher paid employment opportunities.

The average 2020 gross weekly pay for people who live in Swansea and work full time is lower than the Wales average. This would suggest that there is an over reliance on lower skilled and lower paid jobs in the County.

"Income and earnings is vital to allow access to activities and supporting local businesses" – survey respondent.

Changes over time

Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) in Swansea has risen by 11.2% since 2014 to stand at £4,017m in 2019. However, over the same time period total GDHI in Wales rose by 14.5% and by 19.7% in the UK.

Growth in GDHI per head for Swansea between 2014 and 2019 was 8.5%, to reach £16,262 in 2019. Over the same period growth rates were 12.3% for Wales and 15.8% for UK. Consequently, GDHI per head in Swansea fell from 81.0% of the UK average in 2014 to 75.9% in 2019.

Between 2018 and 2019, the Swansea GDHI per head figure increased by 1.7%, in between Wales (+1.1%) and UK increases (+2.5%).

Between 2020 and 2021, average annual full-time earnings in Swansea increased by 3.3% to £28,827, above change figures for Wales and UK (+1.2% and -0.6% respectively). Between 2016 and 2021, the Swansea increase was £3,400 or 13.5%.

Female full-time earnings in Swansea have risen by just 0.2% since 2020 to stand at £28,769 in April 2021. Over the five years 2016-21 however, the overall increase was £6,000 or 26.3%.

Average weekly earnings in Swansea have risen from £473.70 in 2016 to £552.60 in April 2021, an increase of 16.7%.

Comparisons with other places

The average 2019 gross disposable household income per head for people living in Swansea is £16,262 and the UK average is £21,433; 75.9% of the UK level. Wales as a whole was 80.5% of the UK level in 2019. Compared to the 22 other local authority areas in Wales, Swansea GDHI per head is 1.1% below Neath Port Talbot and 3.9% lower than Carmarthenshire. The Swansea figure is 24% lower than Monmouthshire.

Provisional data suggests that Swansea median full-time annual earnings figure (2021) of £28,827 is 2.8% lower than the Wales average, although both Swansea and Wales figures are below the UK average (in Swansea by 7.9%).

In Swansea, the gender pay gap is reversed, with female full time workers (estimated at £28,856 per annum) earning on average marginally more than men (£28,769). In April 2020, median annual full time earnings for females in Swansea were 8.3% higher than their male counterparts and 10.1% higher than female workers in the rest of Wales (April 2020). However, female fulltime workers in Swansea only saw a 3.7% increase in their earnings from 2019, whilst the rest of Wales increased by 5.3%.

The latest median weekly full-time earnings figure for residents in Swansea stands at £538.00 (April 2020); which is 0.7% lower than the Wales figure but 8.1% below the UK average.

Over the latest year period (April 2019 to April 2020), the survey estimates suggest that full-time weekly earnings in Swansea fell by 4.6%, whilst figures for Wales and the UK remained relatively constant.

The April 2020 figures suggest that part-time weekly earnings increased by £21.20 (+11.7%) since 2019 for Swansea and only increased by £11.90 (+6%) for the rest of Wales. However, weekly earnings of part-time employees in Swansea are still 4.3% lower than the rest of Wales, but only 0.6% below the UK average.

Differences across Swansea

There is limited data available that highlights the difference in earnings between local areas in Swansea. However, there will be a variance between affluent areas and areas that are known to be deprived. For example, the WIMD 2019 Income domain rankings (essentially based on income-related benefits data) place most parts of Townhill in the top 10% in Wales in terms of deprivation related to low income.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The City Centre regeneration programme, which includes Copr Bay development and 71-72 the Kingsway will create employment opportunities for the citizens of Swansea, with salaries ranging from minimum wage to above the national average salary.

The Welsh Government are still working on implementing the Social Partnership Bill. This Bill aims to give workers better working conditions and better pay rates. Once implemented this could improve the standard of living for low paid Swansea residents.

9,000 additional jobs are due to be created by the Swansea Bay City Region City Deal. This will provide more opportunities for citizens to obtain a better standard of living through higher paid employment.

Welsh Government are carrying out research which looks at the benefits of implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI), to all Welsh citizens. The scheme, which is yet to be piloted, will provide adults with a standard, regular, unconditional payment, regardless of their other income. If citizens of Swansea received UBI, there should be a reduction in poverty and better living standards. Health and wellbeing would be improved, and barriers to education and employment could be reduced.

Integration

Living Standards have close, direct links with employment, skills and training, and poverty topics.

“Without a decent income you can’t look after yourself and family or contribute to the local economy” – survey respondent.

About the evidence

The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not shown in this data as latest GDHI data is 2019 and the latest earnings data relates to April 2020. The impact of this is unknown.

Gross Domestic Household Income (GDHI) is an estimate of the amount of money that households have available for consumption expenditure or saving. It is equivalent to the excess of income (including earnings, pensions, investments, benefits etc) over expenditures associated with their income (tax, property ownership and the provision for future pension provision).

Conclusions and key messages

Between 2019 and 2020, average annual full-time earnings in Swansea have fallen, whilst Wales and UK figures have increased. The overall rate of growth over the five year period 2015 to 2020 is also slightly lower in Swansea than Wales and the UK. However when reviewing gender pay difference, Swansea bucks the trend, with female full time workers earning more than men (April 2020). This could be due to Swansea's large public sector employers such as Health Board, local authorities as well as DVLA addressing the gender pay gap in their organisations.

Although figures have suggested that the standard of living in Swansea has improved, Swansea is falling below Wales and UK averages. Growth in Gross Domestic Household Income in Swansea has not kept pace with Wales and UK levels over the past 5 years and therefore GDHI per head is falling further behind UK levels.

However, Swansea has many programmes and projects underway or planned that would have a positive impact on wage levels and income. For example, the City Centre regeneration programme will create a broad range of employment opportunities for the citizens of Swansea. A further 9,000 jobs are forecast to be created by the Swansea Bay City Deal, providing opportunities for citizens to obtain a better standard of living through higher paid employment. The City Deal Skills and Talent programme will identify and deliver the skills and training requirements for all City Deal projects, enabling Swansea residents to take advantage of the job opportunities creating by the City Deal projects

Furthermore, if the Welsh Government UBI initiative comes to fruition, this would benefit all citizens of Swansea and bring Swansea's figures more in line with national averages.

The above analysis demonstrates how important it is to have a strong and growing economy to support people's wellbeing. There is already much work underway to help grow Swansea's economy and in turn improve its residents economic wellbeing, and lift people out of poverty. These include:

- new 3,500 capacity indoor Digital Arena which opened in March 2022 due to open early 2022, which will create a leisure venue capable of attracting high level of footfall to support local businesses
- Hafod Copperworks site - former site of the world's largest copperworks is being revamped to create a unique visitor destination through heritage led regeneration,
- Skyline is developing an exciting luge and cable car leisure facility to Kilvey Hill, dramatically overlooking the city centre.

These developments will attract tens of thousands of new visitors to the city, and create new spending and supply opportunities for businesses, in turn strengthening the economy to facilitate economic well-being.

Environmental well-being

Introduction

There is an intrinsic connection between people, our health and well-being, and the natural and built environment of which we are a part. Indeed, we are dependent on the Earth and its natural resources and systems and, in turn, our own actions shape and impact the world around us - for better or worse.

However, our natural resources are finite, and we are not using them sustainably, or equitably. The global, national, and local evidence is indisputable: we are not living within the capacity of our planetary limits. According to 2015 estimates, if everyone in the world consumed the same as the Welsh (and Swansea) average, 2.5 planets would be needed to provide the necessary resources and absorb associated waste (1. Welsh Government, 2019). As a result, we are facing a combined and inter-related, global and local, climate and ecological disaster, with an increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events and catastrophic flooding, rising sea-levels, and 17% of species in Wales at risk of extinction (2. Swansea Council, 2021). As a society, we need to address our over-use of resources and its impact locally and globally. Protecting the environment for future generations is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and decisions made now will determine outcomes in 10, 50, 100+ years with consequences for the economy, trade, food, national security, etc., which will shape the lives and well-being of our children, grandchildren, and unborn citizens.

“We need to do everything possible to lessen our impact on the world, as we are already seeing the results of climate change” – survey respondent.

Climate change is already happening and will continue to happen for some time regardless of mitigation measures we take today. There is a time lag of decades between steps taken now to limit the amount of change that happens and when that will take effect (e.g. limiting global warming by the end of the century to well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels requires commitment to achieving net-zero by mid-century). Although mitigation is vital to avoid catastrophic and chaotic climate change and protect the well-being of future generations, we also need greater emphasis on adaptation to support Swansea’s communities, nature and economy to adjust to current and projected impacts.

But we can change this by taking action to decarbonise society and put nature into recovery (2. Swansea Council, 2021). In Wales, importantly and uniquely, we have two laws that help us to do this. Together, the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment Act give us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to protect and improve our environment, our economy, society and culture. The Environment Act requires Natural Resources Wales to carry out an assessment of our natural resources every 5 years at a national scale, which then informs WG’s Natural Resources Policy. This is then looked at through a regional lens by way of Area Statements, which set out the key challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) and environmental well-being in that locality.

The environmental well-being of a place can be assessed by understanding the extent to which natural resources are being sustainably used and managed. The 2020 State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR), produced by NRW, has made an assessment of environmental well-being at a national level and identified 4 aims that must be met to achieve SMNR and establish the foundation for the Well-being goals. These aims are shown at the base of the pyramid, in figure En1.

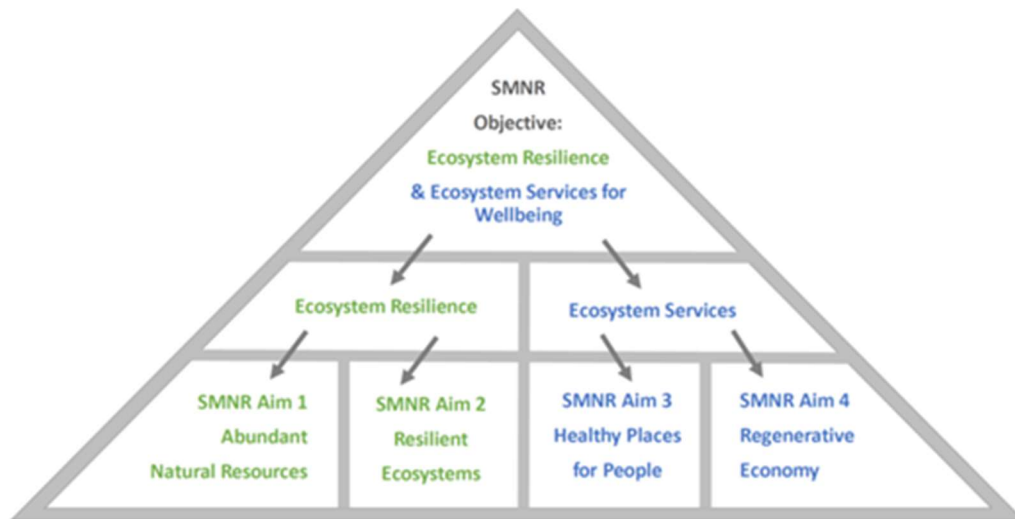


Figure En1: SMNR: One objective, four aims

The four aims work together and are cyclical: we cannot create healthy places for people without resilient ecosystems and cannot make our ecosystems resilient without safeguarding stocks of natural resources; and a regenerative economy safeguards and restores those stocks and is the route to transformational change for our economic system.

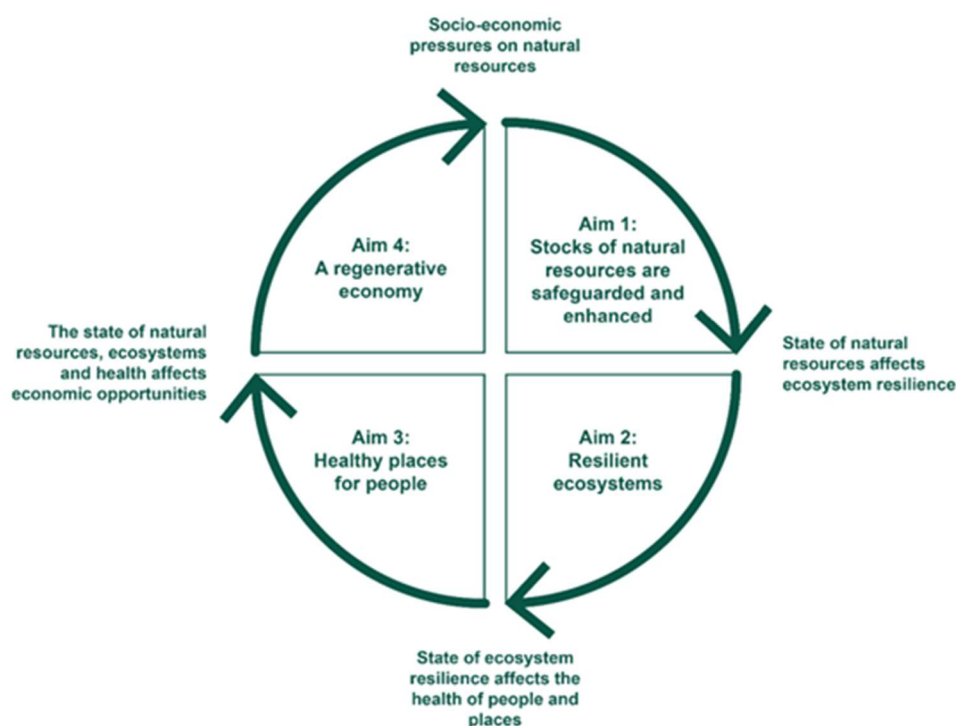


Figure En2: Cyclical nature of the 4 aims from SoNaRR

Evidence taken from SoNaRR 2020, along with additional local and national evidence sets inform the local assessment of environmental well-being to help public bodies better understand the extent to which the sustainable development principle, central to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, is being delivered. The SoNaRR report found that none of the 4 aims above are being achieved at a national scale, and there is no evidence to suggest the picture is significantly different locally. It is to be noted that the state / quality of our natural resources and built environment is also a determinant of health. A degraded environment and exposure or vulnerability to environmental hazards - including poor air quality, low tree cover, poor access to green space, and flooding - impact the health of individuals and populations. Low-income households, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities tend to carry a greater burden of environmental impacts and hazards as they are less empowered and less able to respond to them.

In the Interim Review of the Economics of Biodiversity, Sir Partha Dasgupta makes clear the need to recognise that our society and the economy are nested within the environment (Figure En3) and cannot be looked at separately to it: “The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, not the reverse” (quote by Herman E. Daly in Clark, 2007). This conclusion is in sharp contrast to the assumptions underlying contemporary growth and development economics, and by extension the economics of climate change. Whereas the literature sees humanity as external to the biosphere, the Dasgupta Review sees us as embedded. (3. NRW; 2020).

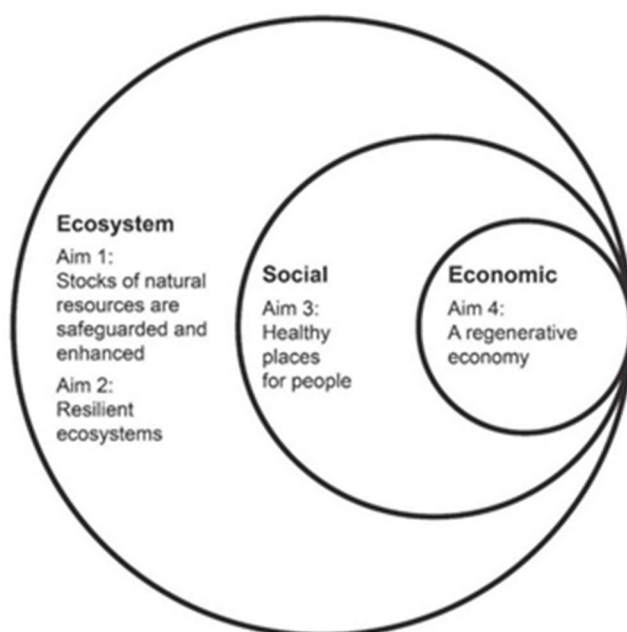


Figure En3: Economy is a subsidiary of the Environment (from SoNaRR 2020)

Analysis of how lifestyles across Europe are driving environmental degradation has concluded that in order to live within environmental limits, profound changes are needed, to reduce levels of production and consumption in pursuit of a regenerative economy. An obvious starting point is to focus on the core systems that are placing the most pressure on ecosystems. These are based around food, energy and transport (3. NRW;2020b).

Much more work needs to be done to address the drivers of unsustainable management within the social and economic spheres. Transformation in the food, energy and transport sectors has the greatest potential to improve well-being.

The Area Statement for South West Wales, which covers Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, has used evidence, local conversations and national engagement to identify 4 high-level priorities for the region, which are:

- Reducing health inequalities
- Reversing the decline of, and enhancing, biodiversity
- Ensuring sustainable land management
- Mitigating and adapting to a changing climate.

The Area Statement, SoNaRR, and many other local and national policies highlight the myriad opportunities there are to adopt and embed nature-based solutions, circular economy, and regenerative land management practices in addressing the challenges we face. These themes are reflected in Swansea Council's November 2021 declaration of a Nature Emergency, which follows WG's on 30th June 2021 when Climate Change Minister, Julie James, announced that 'Restoring nature and mitigating the impact of climate change are top priorities for this government.'

In the following sections we present an overview of key themes relating to the environment and well-being drawing on available data, evidence, perspectives, and trends. Starting with the state of natural resources in Swansea and, then, how we use, effect, and manage resources and systems through: flood risk; soils, land use and food; placemaking; air quality; transport and travel; waste; and, energy.

Direct links to the specific topics within the Environment Chapter are included below:

- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience
- Water Resources
- Flood Risk
- Soils, land use, and food
- Managing Green Infrastructure and Placemaking
- Air Quality
- Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
- Sustainable Waste Management
- Energy Generation and Use

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience

Everybody depends on our natural world - biodiversity, natural ecosystems, and the resources and services they provide - for health and well-being. Ecosystems need to be resilient to have capacity to deal with change and disturbances, and to continue to provide life-giving and -enhancing benefits to people and communities. However, biodiversity is declining globally and SoNaRR 2020 (1. NRW, 2020a) confirms that, in Wales, many of our

ecosystems are not resilient and that we have continuing declines in many species, with less wildlife in fewer places, with 1 in 6 species at risk of extinction and 73 lost since the 1970s. Nature recovery is fundamental to mitigating and adapting to climate change, but climate change is also key factor in biodiversity loss. Although we lack comprehensive local data, Swansea is almost certainly impacted by these trends and all dimensions of our well-being are compromised as a result.

Strengths and Assets

Ecosystem Resilience can be understood through the attributes of: Diversity, Extent, Condition and Connectivity and other emergent Aspects – DECCA; resilience arises from the interplay between these attributes, rather than from any one isolation. (3. NRW; 2020b)

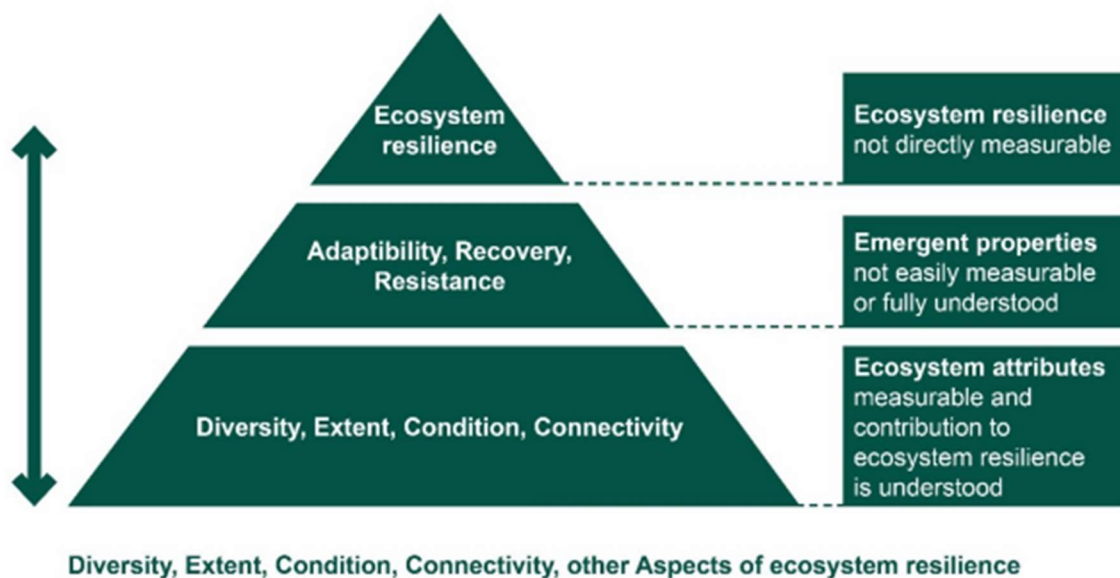


Figure En4: DECCA explained

The DECCA system can be applied to assessing ecosystem resilience within individual habitats or areas, such as Swansea, as follows.

Diversity: Swansea has a rich diversity of terrestrial, coastal, and marine habitats and species, including many internationally, nationally and locally important sites.

Extent: 80% of the county comprises natural and semi-natural green space. Through designations and planning policy, the total extent of protected land is approximately 50%. This is important, because protected sites play a crucial role acting as reservoirs of biodiversity which can flow into the wider landscape supporting ecosystem resilience.

Condition: Ecosystems are complex and dynamic and, combined with a lack of monitoring data, understanding their condition is difficult. However, a 2021 assessment of Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest showed that their condition was overwhelmingly unfavourable (33%) or unknown (52%), meaning that although these sites are still of ecological value, they need to be improved. The condition of these sites provides some indication as to the health of the broad habitats across the county and region.

Connectivity: Habitats are overall reasonably well connected through the area with notable networks of woodland and grassland/heathland habitats. However, there are exceptions,

and some sites are becoming increasingly fragmented, isolated, and less resilient. Of particular concern is the area around Penllergaer / Gorseinon where the built environment has formed a 'biodiversity bottleneck' between Gower and the rest of south Wales, restricting physical and genetic distribution and diversity.

A summary of resilience, key threats and opportunities for broad habitat types in Swansea is shown below.

Table En1: Resilience, threats and opportunities for broad habitats in Swansea

RESILIENCE	KEY THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
• WOODLAND		
<p>Diversity: Noted for good examples such as Gower Ash Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p>Extent: Woodlands cover 10.4% of county – below Welsh average.</p> <p>Condition: In common with rest of Wales, condition assessment often <i>unfavourable</i>.</p> <p>Connectivity: Forms important wider woodland network connecting Gower Ash Woods SAC in the west, through Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC, to the Cardiff Beechwoods SAC in the southeast.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Habitat loss and fragmentation • Lack of management • Climate change • Ash dieback and other diseases • Invasive and Non-Native Species (INNS) • Human disturbance • Pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted expansion to improve connectivity incl. between urban / rural areas (particular focus in the Penllergaer area) • Increased urban tree cover • Improved hedgerows to provide corridors • Coordinated approach to ash die-back. • PAWS restoration • Strategic management of INNS • Interest in woodland creation
• MOUNTAIN, MOORLAND, HEATH		
<p>Diversity/Extent: Gower peninsula is one of the most significant areas in the country for lowland heathland and supports a large resource of dry and wet heath.</p> <p>Condition: Lowland heathland habitats on the Gower Commons have been classed as <i>unfavourable</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under- and over-grazing • Scrub encroachment and wildfire • INNS • Reduction in commoners • Road safety issues • Scrambling • Changing climatic conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved management of the Gower commons • Use of experimental powers • Expand use of 'Fenceless Fencing' (GPS cow collars for remote management and monitoring)
• SEMI-NATURAL GRASSLAND		

<p>Diversity: Some notable examples of species rich grasslands</p> <p>Extent: Relatively large extent but scattered</p> <p>Condition: <i>Species poor.</i> Majority not managed for biodiversity and not under designation, so lack of control over how they are utilised.</p> <p>Connectivity: Connectivity is largely fragmented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss/connectivity • Development pressure • Especially vulnerable to lack of appropriate management • INNS • Waste tipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve condition through better management, conservation grazing • Improve connectivity through better management of e.g., road verges, field margins, amenity grassland
<p>• ENCLOSED FARMLAND</p>		
<p>Condition unknown – not monitored and in private ownership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss/ connectivity • Whole farm carbon-offset tree planting schemes • Pressures on long term food security • Soil degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain ecological connectivity through the landscape e.g., hedgerows and field margins, ponds • Increase support for restorative / regenerative / agroecological farming supplying to local markets e.g., Community Supported Agriculture • Welsh Government’s post-Brexit Sustainable Farming Scheme – to lower carbon footprint, help improve the environment, and support the production of food in a sustainable way.
<p>• FRESHWATER</p>		
<p>Diversity: As well as rivers, streams and lakes, the area hosts many freshwater habitats including the internationally significant Crymlyn Bog (SAC, SSSI and Ramsar site), as well as multiple ponds, man-made lakes, and Swansea Canal.</p> <p>Condition: <i>74% water bodies not achieving Good</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlyaltered hydromorphology • Increase in storms, flooding, droughts, water flow fluctuation • Industrial legacy pollution • Misconnections Land / catchment management • Urban diffuse pollution • Sewerage / storm overflows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore natural river processes • Improve management of surface water flows to take pressure off sewerage network • GI in urban areas • Tackle diffuse sources of pollution • Nature-based solutions & natural flood management • Use (and designation of) Inland bathing waters

<p><i>Ecological Status</i>, impacted by a variety of pressures.</p>		
<p>• COASTAL / MARINE</p>		
<p>Diversity / Extent: Numerous designated coastal and marine habitats, including Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC - largest expanse of saltmarsh within Wales. Iconic limestone sea cliffs of Gower. Significant dune heath habitats at Penmaen and Pennard dunes, and sand dune systems widely distributed within the County and exhibit a wide range of geomorphological types.</p> <p>8 EU designated bathing waters; 7 'excellent', 1 'good' status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse agricultural and urban source pollution • Coastal squeeze • Over grazing – north Gower • Recreational pressure • Overstabilisation of sand dune systems • Coastal defences • Land derived pollution via streams and surface water • Burry Inlet impacted by nutrients linked to land management practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve condition and connectivity through better management • Work collaboratively to tackle water quality impacts impacting on marine environment • Opportunities for blue carbon
<p>• URBAN</p>		
<p>Extent: 900ha of Fields in Trust provision (3.9ha per 1,000 population); >15,000ha of Accessible Natural Greenspace (>66.7ha per 1,000 population)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss / connectivity • INNS • Inequality of access and benefit • Lack of awareness • Lack of data and appropriate management • Skills to deliver and maintain GI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County-wide GI strategy • New and retrofitting multifunctional GI solutions • Green Space Factor tool to increase quantity and functionality of GI • Increase urban tree cover, pollinator verges, etc. • Harness increased community interest • Work with wider stakeholders, e.g., Registered Social Landlords • Pobl's Penderi Masterplan

The challenge is to ensure habitats are restored, maintained, and connected through wider ecological networks so they can function coherently. This is particularly significant in Swansea's urban areas where natural greenspace is patchy and not distributed equally across the county, meaning, also, that there are inequalities of benefit to people's well-being. Here, the role of well-located green infrastructure is vital, see GI section, as are the opportunities for connectivity presented by urban gardens and land in public ownership.

Under Section 6 (S6) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 public bodies have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems by embedding the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their day-to-day activities, policies, plans, programmes and projects; it is about changing the way we think about acting for biodiversity (2. Wales Biodiversity Partnership; 2021).

Through the Swansea Well-being Plan's 'Working With Nature' objective, delivery by key stakeholders and partnership working, much work is already being done: the Council has included a priority for nature recovery in its Corporate Plan for 2020-2022 and has established a Climate Change and Nature Programme Board to ensure that both issues are fully considered across all Service areas. Swansea's Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is active and well-placed with over 97 members from local wildlife and other organisations wishing to contribute to nature recovery, and together are preparing a local Nature Recovery Action Plan. But the evidence is conclusive: more action is needed, and with urgency. Acknowledging this, on 4th November 2021, Swansea Council supported a motion to declare a nature emergency (4. Swansea Council; 2021).

Changes over time

Biodiversity is declining globally, with rates of loss and extinction unprecedented in human history and accelerating. Recent analysis by the Natural History Museum found that the UK appears consistently in the bottom 10% of all nations for biodiversity intactness (5. NHM; 2021). In its assessment of natural resources in Wales, SoNaRR 2020 also tells us that many of our ecosystems are not resilient to unexpected or unforeseen change because one or more of their (DECCA) attributes are insufficient. There is no evidence to suggest that the situation in Swansea is any different.

Swansea is an economic growth area and over recent years we have seen continued incremental loss of green spaces and wildlife habitat to development and other pressures including inappropriate land use, invasive species, disease such as ash die-back, recreation, and lack of awareness, amongst others. This is exacerbated by ongoing lack of resources for monitoring and management of habitats and species and enforcement of regulated activities. Impacts from climate change are also taking a toll, worsening other pressures, and will increase as climate change accelerates.

Trends in biodiversity are projected to continue to decline if future trajectories follow business as usual scenarios. Various societal and systemic interventions could potentially alter the course of these trends, however not alone or in partial combinations. (6. WG; 2021)

"Swansea has great parks but I would like to see households being encouraged to grow more trees and bee friendly plants. Less paving over gardens" – survey respondent.

Comparisons with other places

Although lacking robust data, experimental CuRve maps (7. NRW; 2021) developed by NRW to explore how ecosystem resilience varies across Wales suggest that overall resilience in Swansea is relatively high compared to surrounding counties, this is likely owing to the extent of semi-natural habitats within the county, although unevenly distributed and compromised in some areas.

Differences across Swansea

Levels of ecosystem resilience vary across the county; higher levels are noted in rural parts of Gower and north Swansea, and lower levels around urban areas. Of particular concern is the contraction of natural habitats connecting Gower to the rest of south Wales, around Penllergaer / Gorseinon. As such, particularly in the north and east of the city, there are inequalities in health and well-being benefits that resilient ecosystems and natural resources provide; Swansea Council's draft Fairness in Green Health policy (8. Swansea Council; 2021) is seeking to address this.

Perceptions and perspectives

- In 2019, the public engagement for Swansea Central Area: Regenerating Your City for Wellbeing and Wildlife found that people want “A city which provides space for wildlife bringing people joy...” and, “A destination and liveable city which can adapt to and mitigate for climate change.”
- Nature is needed; many reports indicate significant increases in people visiting local beaches, parks, and wildlife sites during Covid lockdowns. Nature has been a source of solace for many. Public Health Wales states that nature supports our physical, mental, and social well-being with positive health outcomes across all life-stages including healthier immune systems, reduced stress and hyperactivity, higher positive emotions, reduced social isolation (9. PHW, 2021).
- Building a deeper understanding of the vital role that nature plays in human health presents two main challenges: the need to acknowledge and mitigate environmental damage caused; and, the necessity of finding effective and equitable ways to adapt human behaviour for the future benefit of all life on the planet. (10. WHO; 2021)

“Our countryside is important and can play a big part in peoples well-being and mindfulness experiences” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Global and national trends show continual decline in biodiversity if future trajectories follow business as usual scenarios. The nature emergency, hand-in-hand with climate change, needs to be addressed systemically across all spheres of society through reducing consumption, innovating within a regenerative economy, addressing multiple other drivers, climate change action, and delivering conservation / restoration of key sites.

Swansea's LDP Growth strategy considered the development of both greenfield and brownfield land and sought to balance the associated opportunities and constraints.

Development of brownfield land is maximised where viable, but a significant element of future growth will be delivered on greenfield sites albeit in a sustainable manner to maximise the retention of greenspace within developments. This strategy will be reviewed in time and will take account of contextual issues such as, the loss of greenfield land, biodiversity designations, flood data, and impact of Covid-19.

Integration

Only resilient ecosystems can continue to sustainably provide current and future generations with the natural resources we need to thrive and fulfil our potential. As such, ecosystem resilience and the sustainable management of natural resources underpins all aspects of well-being and should be fully considered by ensuring: we have a more localised and circular economy; integrated, catchment-scale, regenerative land and water management; that the role and benefits of nature are recognised particularly with regard to mental and physical health, for example through green prescribing; the value and importance of natural landscapes and coast to our culture, heritage, recreation, and tourism.

Improvement

Biodiversity decline is reversed, and overall ecosystem resilience is increased through healthy ecological networks that are afforded appropriate resourcing and protection, so that nature flourishes and retains the ability to deliver services and benefits now and in the future. For the natural environment to be seen as a clear priority and invested in now to put nature into recovery, with people more aware of and able to equally access the multiple well-being benefits from ecosystem services as well as the intrinsic value of nature. This will require that sustainable, long-term core revenue and capital funding is provided to build the capacity and resources to plan and deliver long-term strategies and initiatives for nature recovery (rather than relying on short-term grant-funded projects).

About the evidence

Evidence at the global and Wales scales is comprehensive and largely consistent. However, at the local scale, monitoring data to inform management and specific resource requirements is lacking for many designated sites and broader ecosystem networks. Also, assessment of ecosystem resilience is complex and still developing, with limited understanding of 'threshold' levels for species and habitats.

Conclusions and key messages

- Current action for nature recovery does not go far enough; a commitment to transformative change is needed from all parts of society, and to acknowledge that it is fundamental to both mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- The real and urgent need to put nature into recovery was acknowledged by Swansea Council when on 4 November 2021 they declared a Nature Emergency.
- The resilience of Swansea's ecosystems is a mixed picture, and a range of significant pressures continue to threaten fragmented and isolated habitats and species. Habitats

across the county need to be restored and connected to function coherently and provide well-being benefits.

- The biggest threats impacting ecosystem resilience across Swansea are development and farming practices, tourism & recreational pressures; we need to strike balance between nature recovery and future economic growth and development.
- There is clear resource deficit for ongoing, long-term management, to address data gaps and advance understanding of ecosystem resilience; but do not let that delay action now given the urgency of the need for recovery.
- Work with local community groups and schools to facilitate the widest possible engagement of Swansea residents in maintaining and enhancing local wildlife, recognising that doing so also provides physical and mental health benefits, as well as strengthening community cohesion.
- The PSB and wider stakeholders must work together on the importance of nature-based solutions, promotion and adoption of good practice, and build on Wales' policy framework.
- Consideration needs to be made to ensuring the equality of benefits of the natural environment.

Water Resources

Water is a vital resource for our survival and health. Rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries, and coastal waters provide significant benefits to our well-being in many ways including, drinking water, flood alleviation, recreation, income generation from business and industry, tourism, renewable energy production and angling. Poor and deteriorating water quality, as a result of pollution, and compromised water quantity as a result of over abstraction, will have a damaging effect on the water supply for domestic and industrial consumption, farming and food production, biodiversity, bathing, fishing and other leisure activities (1. Swansea Council; 2019).

Water is an integral part of Swansea's identity; situated on the shores of Swansea Bay and the river Tawe, the related cultural heritage has shaped the way Swansea is today, and the coastline of Gower attracts thousands of visitors each year and supports a range of activities. Yet, the current condition of our watery environment and the pressures we exert on it, combined with the climate and nature emergencies, presents us with great challenges – and opportunities; the importance of water resources is reflected in all four of the Area Statement priorities for south west Wales.

Strengths and Assets

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2. NRW; 2020) assigns a status of health to water bodies, based on biological, physical and chemical parameters. Any not achieving at least 'Good Ecological Status' (GES) are seen to be failing. As shown in Table En2 below, the 2018 WFD assessment found that of the 23 water bodies that fall wholly or in part within Swansea just 26% were at GES compared to ~40% across the whole of Wales, indicating low resilience. Reasons for failing vary across the county and can be summarised as being due to sewage/combined sewage overflow, misconnections, point source discharges, diffuse and

legacy industrial pollution, physical modifications, and barriers to fish migration. Invasive and non-native species, both aquatic and terrestrial, also cause unwanted impacts in and along water bodies.

Table En2: Status of Water Bodies in Swansea, WFD 2018 Interim Classification

Catchment / water bodies falling (wholly or in part) within Swansea boundary	Number of associated water bodies	Percentage in Good Ecological Status overall
Tawe	4	25%
Loughor	4	25%
Gower Coastal Streams	5	60%
Lakes	2	0%
Canals	2	50%
Transitional and coastal water bodies	6	0%

More positively, of the eight (EU designated) bathing waters across the region, 7 are rated as ‘excellent’ and one as ‘good’, namely Swansea Bay, which can be affected by short term pollution from heavy rainfall events leading to washing of sewage, urban drainage and runoff, and faecal material into the sea (3. NRW; 2021). Natural Resources Wales and Swansea Council have worked together to improve the bathing water quality in Swansea Bay, but further work is needed. Bracelet, Limeslade, Langland and Caswell bays are also vulnerable to urban runoff and sewer discharges.

The Welsh angling industry is worth around £200million per annum (4. NRW; 2018). There are important fisheries locally, which have significant health, social, economic and cultural benefits. However, the Tawe is currently classified as ‘At Risk’ (5. NRW, 2017), the worst classification bracket, for both salmon and sea trout populations resulting from consistent downward trends in fish numbers and catch statistics.

WFD surveys inform us that there are fish failures both within coastal streams, due to habitat and/or water quality issues, and in the lower Loughor which has experienced deterioration. Along with sewage and agricultural inputs affecting water quality, barriers to fish migration are a major part of the problem, particularly in more urban reaches of rivers where physical modifications impair and fragment habitats with consequent losses to biodiversity. This also presents a sanitised river form to communities who might otherwise benefit from encountering more natural landscape features.

In relation to water supplies, Water Resource Management Plans, produced by water companies, cover a 25-year period and are required to consider climate change projections, population growth and new developments to plan water demand, supply, output, river flows and account for population growth (6. Netherwood, A; 2021.) This provides some reassurance and certainty over public water supply, and potential health and well-being impacts, but does not negate the need for all water users to be considerate of the demands we place on this natural resource.

Changes over time

Across Swansea there have been clear improvements in the status of some biological indicators of water quality, notably in the lower Loughor and Dulais tributary. Against this, there has been deterioration in water quality in the Upper and Lower Lliw reservoirs, due to eutrophication. No discernible change has been apparent on the Tawe, bar some positive indications for addressing impacts associated with historic metal smelting. In the outer Burry Inlet, more biological indicators have improved than deteriorated, whilst the whole Inlet continues to reflect eutrophication, considered largely a result of diffuse inputs from agriculture and land management, and point source sewage discharge from the Gowerton catchment.

Status of all bathing waters in the region have stayed the same since 2017, except for Swansea Bay, which has seen an improvement from 2018 when it was classified as 'sufficient'.

Both Salmon and Sea Trout catches on the river Tawe have been on a downward trend over the last 10 years. River fishing activity has also reduced significantly due to less fish, an ageing demographic, and recent bylaw restrictions to conserve fish numbers may also act to reduce participation levels.

As the population increases so, too, does demand for and pressures on our water resources. For example, the dry, early spring of 2020 coincided with the first COVID lockdown and unprecedented demand for public water supply with a risk that reservoirs would be drawn down earlier than normal. Also, a dry period in 2018 affected crop growth and water supplies for stock; increases in future dry weather events may require more investment in sustainable water storage on farms.

Comparisons with other places

Of Swansea's 23 water bodies, 26% were at 'good ecological status' (GES). This compares to 36% within NPT, 65% within Carmarthenshire, and 30% within Pembrokeshire. 361 (40%) of the 907 surface water bodies are at GES across the whole of Wales. SoNaRR 2020 (7. NRW; 2020) assessed the combined resilience of the Welsh freshwater resource as medium to high rating for lakes, and low for rivers with significant intervention needed. From a fisheries perspective, many of the rivers in Wales are classified as 'At Risk'. So, the overall status of Swansea's water bodies is typical of, or poorer than, wider national trends.

Differences across Swansea

The status and sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems is intimately linked with the neighbouring land within their catchments. Rivers and streams in the urbanised and post-industrial/peri-urban areas are subject to multiple pressures: pollution from domestic misconnections; diffuse pollution from myriad sources within Swansea's many industrial estates continues to impact the Llan, Lliw, and Tawe catchments; direct drainage from the hard surfaced cityscape carries contaminants directly into the surface water drains and culverted streams that drain much of the city. Many watercourses have been canalised, diverted, constrained by hard engineering, dredged, partially blocked by weirs and silted up,

so even if the water is clean the physical environment is compromised, and habitats degraded and fragmented.

In contrast, surface waterbodies in Gower are relatively minor due to the local geography and dominance of permeable karstic limestone geology. They are also subject to fewer pressures due to the rural and substantially agricultural landscape, with traditionally managed small farms and common land with few large livestock units. Soil loss, from land use and management - including agriculture and development, and septic tank discharges cause localised water quality problems and mine-water discharges impact some areas such as the Clyne and Dunvant streams.

Table En2, above, shows an overall poor picture for water bodies across Swansea, based on WFD 2018 classification. Notably, no lakes or transitional / coastal water bodies achieved GES and just 25% of water bodies in the Tawe and Loughor catchments are at GES.

Contaminated land is still responsible for polluting the Tawe and tributaries, especially within the Nant-y-Fendrod sub-catchment, whilst others may require more stringent regulatory action to address them. Tidal water bodies fail in regard to their physical modification, in the main. The Swansea Bay coastal water body fails also for dissolved inorganic nitrogen, which is considered largely attributable to sewage discharges, which may contribute to the designated Bathing Water not meeting the 'excellent' standard.

This means there is inequality of access to local water bodies of good, or excellent, ecological status across Swansea.

Perceptions and perspectives

Water is important for people's wellbeing, but there can be conflicts between different users. For example, public enquiry around implementation of Salmon bylaws included extensive consultation which revealed that anglers are upset and consider water quality impacts and predation (avian) to be main factors in reducing fish numbers* and want more stringent regulation of the agricultural and water industry and control of fish-eating birds. * Note, climate change and marine survival are the most probable impacting factors but these are less obvious to stakeholders and so they look to impacts that are more locally observable.

The Clear Streams project found that, outside of active user groups - kayakers, anglers, swimmers, etc., people are generally disconnected from the water environment, often under-confident with how / where to access it and what they can do. People are also removed from what happens to their sewage, leading to sewer abuse and pollution. In some places, poor water quality has been 'normalised' and is perceived to be something outside of the public's ability to influence.

During consultation for the south west Wales Area Statement, stakeholders told NRW that "everyone should enjoy high quality bathing beaches and rivers", and to "investigate the possibility of designating inland bathing waters (in docks, lakes and rivers) to encourage people to use the blue spaces on their doorstep."

“Cold water swimming has been proven to help people with all kinds of ailments, yet water quality in the Bay is not what it should be. The number of untreated discharges has increased dramatically recently and is preventing people from accessing this valuable activity” – survey respondent.

The Rivers Trust ‘Is my river fit to play in?’ interactive map of the UK (8. Rivers Trust website; 2021) details several locations across Swansea as discharging excess rainwater mixed with raw sewage straight into water bodies at certain times. This practice appears widespread across the UK and is a key concern for river and human health. There is advice to “...avoid entering the water directly downstream of these discharge points, especially after rainfall.”

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Swansea’s water resources will come under increased pressure in the future, impacting the ecosystems, people, and businesses which rely upon them. Risks to freshwater associated with climate change include reduced water availability, higher water temperatures, longer and more frequent low flow events, and increased rate of native species displacement. Also, risks to our water quality include storms increasing soil erosion and other pollutants in surface run-off in rural and urban areas entering water bodies, as well as overwhelming sewage treatment facilities, and remobilising legacy pollutants. Regards angling, the projected classification for the Tawe in 5 years remains ‘At Risk’, and associated benefits will continue to be lost.

Swansea’s Local Development Plan states it will maintain and enhance the quality and quantity of water resources, including rivers, canals, lakes, ponds and other water bodies. Policy implementation will involve close collaboration with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and DCWW to secure adequate supply of water and sewerage infrastructure.

Integration

- Access to water can enhance well-being through recreation, sport and cultural events, as well as the local economy e.g. tourism, agriculture, food sector, and business development.
- Land management within the catchment of a water body impacts its condition, which also impacts biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.
- Access to good quality, natural ‘blue space’ is known to enhance mental and physical health.
- Water quality and quantity has implications for all seven goals e.g. cleaner and more biodiverse rivers and seas support a more resilient, prosperous, and healthier Wales.
- Regenerative agriculture that improves soil structure can increase water holding capacity of soil to replenish aquifers and reduce soil loss into water systems following storm events, as can maintaining soil cover in urban settings.

Improvement

- As part of the WFD programme, water bodies have objectives to achieve Good Ecological Status (GES) by 2027 unless there's an issue of technical infeasibility or disproportionate cost. Improvement would result in a higher proportion of Swansea's water bodies achieving GES by this date.
- Resources for monitoring are limited. Setting priorities and objective needs to be and informed by robust, long term, high quality data and analysis that increases our understanding of the dynamic and complex processes around water resources. It would help to have additional resources allocated for this.
- To ensure sustainability of improvements, an integrated, multi-stakeholder, catchment-based approach to land and water management should be taken, supporting higher levels of community engagement, awareness, and action. This is the ambition of the Taw Opportunity Catchment programme, but funding will be required to ensure long-term delivery and success.
- If current measures to reduce catches are adequate, they will result in sustainable increases in fish populations and river fishing activity.
- SoNaRR 2020 lists further opportunities for freshwater ecosystems and resilience.

"Water quality - we have such a beautiful bay; we need to protect it" – survey respondent.

About the evidence

The 2018 WFD classification will be superseded at the end of 2021 with one derived from more recent datasets. The data and trend analysis for fish numbers is robust and forms part of large data sets that have been gathered over many years.

In relation to water quantity (river flows), we make decisions on how much water the natural environment needs (and the amount of water it is safe to abstract) based on available evidence and working assumptions; however, we must ask if we fully understand the extent to which ecosystem resilience is affected by e.g. altering flow regimes - are we getting the balance right?

Conclusions and key messages

The demand for water must be balanced with the importance of protecting water resources for a healthy environment. With Swansea's population projected to grow by 3.2% (2018-2028), and the expectation of local economic expansion, the reliance on water resources will increase.

74% of water bodies in Swansea are failing to achieve 'Good Ecological Status' under the Water Framework Directive. The water we rely on in our rivers, groundwaters and seas is under increasing pressure from climate change, pollution, land management, invasive species, agriculture, development and physical modifications – and, more generally, from being a marginalised issue. It is not possible to secure compliance with WFD standards through regulation alone, we all must change our relationship with the aquatic environment. We need:

- to prioritise the protection of streams and rivers when planning or making decisions on development and regeneration;
- to move away from hard engineering towards nature-based catchment management solutions;
- for landlords in industrial estates to tackle diffuse pollution; and,
- most importantly, we need to encourage the whole community to get to know their local water courses and to begin to love and care for them, and work with residents to ensure equality of access to water bodies in good, or excellent, ecological status and realise the benefits associated health and well-being benefits of green/blue spaces.

Flood Risk

Whilst water provides many essential benefits for our health and well-being, it can also cause serious problems through flooding. This is currently the most frequent type of natural disaster affecting the UK. It carries a risk to life and, along with coastal erosion, impacts not only our physical and mental health, but wider economic, environmental, and social factors, disrupting the normal functioning of whole communities. The storm events of 2020 have emphasised the need to reinforce our strategic priorities for flood prevention, resilience and climate adaptation. Flooding and coastal change are top climate change risks affecting homes, communities, businesses and infrastructure and will increase as climate change accelerates. (1. WG; 2020)

Strengths and Assets

Over 10,000 residential and approximately 1950 non-residential properties in Swansea are assessed as being at risk of flooding. Surface water flooding is the greatest risk source with 1881 residential and 263 non-residential properties at high risk. The greatest impact generally occurs when there is a combination of capacity exceedance of watercourses and drainage systems, often exacerbated by blocked drains and culverts.

Swansea Council secured WG flood and coastal erosion risk management funding for capital works in 2021-22 to deliver several projects that will benefit around 540 properties and build on previous schemes.

Community Flood Plans are community led and may provide some indication of the awareness / concern and resilience of residents in a flood risk area. Two Swansea communities have active plans, Penclawdd and Crofty. Home or business owners whose properties are at risk of flooding can receive warning messages by phone, email or text. Of the ~3850 properties in flood warning areas, around 78% are signed up to receive alerts.

Climate change, extreme weather events, and modified waterbodies compromise the natural functions of water catchments and, in turn, the ecosystem services they provide including flood alleviation, making communities and the environment more prone to the impacts of flooding. WG's strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management recognises the need to consider Natural Flood Management (NFM) as a means of reducing

flood and coastal risk. There is also a requirement for developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which help reduce run-off and flood risk and may also relieve pressure on drainage systems. Well-designed NFM and SuDS schemes also bring multiple well-being benefits to communities.

Flood Risk Management in Wales involves several organisations, termed Risk Management Authorities, and include Natural Resources Wales, local authorities, water companies, and the Welsh Government.

Changes over time

Datasets from previous years are not directly comparable with today's data as monitoring methods have been refined. However, we know flood risk and flood events are increasing as climate change impacts weather patterns. There is no evidence to suggest that there has been a change in order of the greatest risk source in Swansea, which continues to be surface water flooding. Between April 2017 and September 2021, NRW's flood warning service coverage has increased by 8%, from 70-78% of properties in flood warning areas.

The largest flood alleviation schemes of recent years opened in 2014 and 2019 in Swansea Vale and Pontarddulais, respectively. They protect over 550 homes and businesses reducing risk to people and the local economy. The defence system in Swansea Vale delivers multiple benefits as it created natural wetland area and upgraded a section of National Cycle Network.

Comparisons with other places

Primarily due to surface water flooding, an area of the city of Swansea is one of 33 locations in Wales that have been identified as at 'most significant risk' in NRW's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (2. NRW; 2018). Other nearby areas included are Llanelli, Neath, Briton Ferry and Port Talbot. Many other areas of Wales have been heavily affected by recent major flood events including Skewen, Pontypridd, Llanelli.

Differences across Swansea

The top 5 areas at risk of flooding are central Swansea, Pontarddulais, Llansamlet, Gorseinon, and Fforestfach. Note, within the named community area not every property is at risk and the rankings are based on a combined score for all three sources of flooding (river, tidal, and surface water). Also, flood risk is not confined to these areas, others include Sketty, Blackpill, Morriston, Gowerton, and Vardre. This information is taken from NRW's Communities at Risk Register.

Climate change and extreme weather can exacerbate inequalities to health and well-being. As an example, lower-income households are less able to make their property resilient, or to recover from and respond to the impacts of flooding (3. WG; 2021). Research found that some areas in the centre and northeast of Swansea, as well as along the bay, experience relative and extreme flood disadvantage based on flood exposure vs. socio-spatial flood

vulnerability. (4. JRF; 2017). Rural communities are also susceptible where there is often a large dependency on access to services.

“Local sewer drainage is appalling in Killay, leading to residential and commercial flooding regularly” – survey respondent.

Perceptions and perspectives

The latest UK and Welsh government reports have identified flooding and coastal change risks to homes, communities, businesses and infrastructure as being one of the top areas of climate change risks.

During consultation for the South West Area Statement (5. NRW webpages), people told NRW that we must: ‘Ensure that communities are well protected and prepared against flooding. Inform and educate the public and local politicians on issues such as flood risk, including those responsible for making planning decisions. Engage with communities living in ‘at-risk’ areas to raise awareness. Utilise catchment restoration techniques (capturing water elsewhere before it floods an area), alongside ‘traditional’ flood risk management. Also, ‘We should improve awareness of how the coastline will change and shoreline management. We need to work with natural systems and processes to help adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change; e.g. by exploring natural flood management solutions. We need a robust development planning system that promotes energy efficient designs and where development is prevented in flood plains’.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Three key climate change impacts relative to flood risk are extreme rainfall events, river flood flows, and sea level rise. In Swansea, for the period (2015-2039), we may see up to 25% increase in river flood flows and 10% increase in extreme rainfall meaning that, at times, there could be significantly more water in the environment increasing flood risk, particularly in smaller catchments, and effecting land and urban drainage systems.

The change to relative mean sea level for the Swansea and Gower coastline is estimated to reach between 0.85cm and 1.11m by 2100 – these figures are based on latest UK Climate Projections and Welsh Government guidance (6. WG; 2021).

Risks from flooding and coastal erosion around the Welsh coast have been identified in Shoreline Management Plans (SMP), which also consider opportunities to maintain and improve the environment by managing these risks for the 100-year period 2005-2105. SMPs categorise where we should continue to defend the coastline or where it would be more sustainable to adapt over time, and decisions are being made about whether or not to manage existing defences. Around Swansea and Gower, the coast from Swansea Docks to Caswell Bay, plus Crofty and Penclawdd, has been assigned as ‘Hold The Line’, meaning these areas will continue to be defended. Oxwich, Port Eynon and Llangennith face change through ‘Managed Realignment’, allowing the shoreline to move backwards in a controlled way, with remaining sections being flagged as ‘No Active Intervention’ meaning that once any existing defences have failed there will be no further investment in coastal defence or operations, with inshore areas being at risk of flooding and coastal erosion in the future. These sections

of coast will lose current protection and decisions will be required to prepare for coastal adaptation requiring local authorities to work with relevant stakeholders and communities in advance to address these emerging challenges. The Lavernock Point to St. Anne's Head SMP provides further details (7. Swansea and Carmarthen Bay Engineering Group; 2012)

This raises questions of how to:

- plan our future shoreline on the open coast and along estuaries, and
- deliver practical portfolios of adaptation options that are technically feasible, balance costs and benefits, can attract appropriate finance, and are socially acceptable.

NRW's Flood Map for Planning (8. NRW webpages, 2021), released in October 2021, considers impact of climate change over the next century and, alongside Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 15, directs new developments at areas of minimal risk. Development decisions made now must not put more people at risk in the future (1. WG; 2020)

Integration

- Non-residential properties are at risk from flooding, impacting the local economy, jobs, and future business development.
- Increased risk of flooding of domestic properties has consequences for housing and planning, and the physical and mental health impacts on people has knock-on effects for health, social, and wider support services.
- Impacts on infrastructure, community facilities, and tourist destinations / attractions should also be considered.
- Flooding has implications for all seven goals e.g. Reducing flood and coastal erosion risk helps to create attractive and safe communities to live, work and travel through. (1. WG; 2020)

Improvement

In line with the National Strategy's aim and objectives, improvement will reduce the risk to people and communities from flooding and coastal erosion, through: improving understanding and communication of risk; preparedness and building resilience; prioritising investment to the most at risk communities; preventing more people becoming exposed to risk; and, providing an effective and sustained response to events. Locally, this will include resourcing the implementation of the Flood Risk Management Plan for Swansea along with the development of initiatives to not only reduce the level and extent of risk but to also adapt and prepare our communities and infrastructure for the future are needed. This may involve improving defences, intelligent planning and retrofitting of urban areas - in some cases 'creating space for water'- and better, integrated management of land and water across catchments. Also, recognising the need to move out of harm's way.

General awareness and responsiveness across service providers and the general population would be beneficial. It would help if primary care providers, community and mental health services, and emergency planners are more alert to and plan for an increased need for services in areas affected by flooding. Also, to increase the number of properties signed-up

to NRW's flood warning system and support communities to take greater collective responsibility.

The recently published third Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales (CCRA3) (9. Netherwood, A.; 2021) identified the following climate risks specific to Flooding and Coastal Change where more action is needed to address impacts of:

- coastal flooding, erosion and climate factors on coastal species and habitats
- river and surface water flooding on infrastructure services
- slope and embankment failure across transport networks
- flooding on people, communities and buildings
- sea level rise on the viability of coastal communities
- increase in flood risk (all sources), extreme weather, coastal erosion and sea level rise on business locations and infrastructure.

CCRA3 also identified the following risks that are specific to flooding and coastal change that require further investigation:

- sea level rise, saltwater intrusion on aquifers and agricultural land
- flooding and erosion on infrastructure services, bridges and pipelines

Further research is needed to ascertain quite how these risks will affect well-being in Swansea, and what resource will be needed to adapt / mitigate for them.

About the evidence

The evidence referred to is comprehensive and robust although understanding climate change risks in a local context will benefit from further investigation and stakeholder engagement.

More research could be carried out on the socio-economic inequalities of flood risk and impacts on vulnerable communities in Swansea.

Conclusions and key messages

Almost 12,000 properties in Swansea are at risk of flooding, with surface water being the most frequent and widespread source. Future number of properties, services and infrastructure at risk of flooding in Swansea is almost certain to grow as a result of climate change, and the risk to flood defence assets and the costs to maintain them will also increase. It is unlikely that we will ever be able to fully manage and mitigate against all flood events.

A catchment level approach to managing water and the land over which it flows is needed, with consideration of nature-based solutions to slow down water flow, enhance flood attenuation, and provide multiple other benefits for well-being, including water quality and quantity, whilst addressing the nature and climate emergencies.

Climate adaptation policy needs to address a broader range of concerns and include areas of social policy not normally associated with climate change (JRF; 2011). Effective adaptation planning includes thinking about different groups of people and how they will be impacted

to ensure resources are directed to areas of highest risk / need. Bodies responsible for flood risk and coastal erosion management will need to take more ambitious and collaborative approaches to adaptation, working with communities to inform and empower them for current and projected impacts, and development decisions made now must not put more people at risk in the future.

Soils, land use, and food

Soil is an essential and finite resource that supports every aspect of the natural and built environment on which well-being depends (1. NRW; 2020a). Healthy soils are vital for the cycling of nutrients, provide rich biodiversity, reduce flood-risk downstream by slowing the flow of water, help regulate the climate, air and water quality, and produce a sustainable supply of food, fibre and timber. Soils are also a significant carbon store making them important for mitigating climate change, particularly those with high carbon and organic matter content, such as peat - however, the majority of the peat resource in Wales is in poor condition. 'Concentration of carbon and organic matter in soil' is one of Wales's National Well-being Indicators, and many Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without healthy soils and sustainable land use (1. NRW, 2020).

Our primary production sectors - agriculture, forestry and fisheries – support livelihoods and communities, provide us with food and other goods or services, and the way in which they manage land may sustain, regenerate, or deplete the natural resources we rely on. Competing demands for land use, such as food production, housing, economic development, roads and other infrastructure, place pressures on the land resulting in environmental, social, economic, cultural impacts. Globally, land use has been identified as one of the big drivers of the nature emergency (2. NRW; 2022b).

Food is essential for life, and our natural resources are essential for food production. However, our modern, intensified and industrialised food systems are responsible for impacting the environment including through emissions of pollutants, depletion of resources, loss of biodiversity, and compaction and erosion of soils, and impacting water quality. It has been identified as one of three core systems that are placing the most pressure on ecosystems (3. NRW; 2020c). It has been estimated that for every £1 consumers spend on food, another £1 of costs are borne by society in terms of health impact and water pollution (Fitzpatrick et al., 2017).

However, there is increasing demand and awareness of the need for more local and regenerative methods of food production, for example, with an expansion of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and similar enterprises in Wales, and beyond.

The climate and nature emergencies necessitate that land management practices become more sustainable and regenerative, and are shaping government policy around land, soils, and food. Indeed, Welsh Government's emerging Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) will reform the way in which agriculture is supported. A sustainable land management approach will provide the overarching framework, enabling current and future generations of farmers to be rewarded for sustainable production of food and their contribution to our wellbeing.

through additional “non-market” goods – such as soil health, clean air and water, improved biodiversity, actions to reduce global warming, and better population health from high quality, nutrient dense food.

Regionally, the Area Statement for south west Wales has ‘Enabling Sustainable Land Management’ as one of its 4 key themes.

Strengths and Assets

The county’s Local Development Plan (LDP) notes the important role of soils in mitigating the effects of climate change at a local level. The policy promotes that land should be “kept as functioning vegetated soil open to the fall of organic matter...”, adding, with reference to flood risk, “Open vegetated soils absorb rainfall and runoff.” (4. Swansea Council LDP 2010-2025; 2019).

Swansea’s land use can be broken down by land use ‘type’. Indicative data suggests that grassland (mostly agricultural, including common land at ~30%) is predominant at 71%, settlements 18%, forest land ~8%, and wetlands, ‘other’, and cropland ~3%. Many of Swansea’s commons are underlain by peaty soils but are subject to neglect or inappropriate management including over- or under- grazing and illegal burns (which can lead to large amounts of carbon being released into the atmosphere), impeding their functioning and capacity to mitigate against climate change.

With still a substantial area of farmland in the county, there is opportunity to embed sustainable land management through the current Glastir and, in future, the SFS scheme. Graziers, farmers and landowners should be given appropriate local support to benefit from these national schemes. Across Wales, where there has been participation in agri-environment schemes, soil analysis has been one of the most popular undertakings that has led to a change in land management such as a reduction in application of fertilisers (5. Business Connect; 2019). In urban centres, green infrastructure will play a key role in creating and maintaining healthy land and soils.

The current strategy for the Swansea Rural Development Programme (SRDP) is based on One Planet principles, seeking to reduce the area’s ecological footprint including through local, sustainable, and shorter food supply chains. One SRDP project led by Swansea Council’s Economic Regeneration team aimed to map local produce, identify opportunities for new start-ups and existing businesses, and shorten supply chains. Subsequently, a Local Food Coordinator post has been created within Swansea Council to further this work.

At the time of the last well-being assessment (2017), just one CSA existed in Swansea. In the 5 years since, a further four have been established now providing fresh, organic produce to over 300 local households and businesses on a weekly basis. A fifth CSA is being developed in collaboration with the Health Board at Morriston Hospital, and there is clear demand for more. Together these CSAs contribute to a thriving local economy, abundant local ecology, and provide the healthiest possible food.

There are many other examples of successful small-scale, community-led food and growing projects, for which there is increasing need and demand. Swansea Community Growing Network promotes and provides support to improve access to affordable and healthy produce, food security, and community resilience. The Swansea Growing Spaces Map lists over 50 projects, resources and organisations - a further illustration that local growing is important to people across the county. Many projects, such as Vetch Veg and Seaview Community Green Space combine sustainable and cooperative food production, social justice, health and well-being, with improving the land for biodiversity, demonstrating proven good practice that is replicable in more communities – subject to availability of land!

In response to COP26, a food resilience group formed earlier this year, including representation from Swansea Council's Tackling Poverty team. A sub-group - Bwyd Abertawe - is now considering the designation of Swansea as a Sustainable Food Place, working with a UK network to drive forwards the transition to a healthy, sustainable and more equitable food system and making it a defining characteristic of where people live.

Changes over time

Although the importance of agriculture to Swansea's economy has declined in recent decades as farms have diversified away from traditional farming practices towards other income streams, small-scale growers and producers, particularly those also with community and social interests, are increasing in number, as are opportunities to increase farm income through developing local markets selling direct to consumers and shortening procurement supply chains. For example, Farm Co, based in Gowerton, provides a digital marketplace for regional produce and is working with growers to increase the proportion of its offer from Swansea and Gower helping to further reduce 'food miles'.

Comparisons with other places

- Welsh soils are estimated to contain 410 million tonnes of carbon (6. NRW, 2016); UK NEA, 2011). The equivalent data for Swansea was not available at time of writing but will be useful when reporting on progress to Swansea as a county being net carbon zero by 2050.
- Peatlands are widely distributed across Wales covering an area of over 90,000 hectares (ha). A large proportion of these habitats are in unfavourable condition, largely due to issues such as artificial drainage, afforestation, or inappropriate grazing regimes, leading to drying and erosion of peat soils. NRW is leading on the 5-year National Peatlands programme that will restore around 3000 ha across Wales, including 490 hectares of this habitat in NPT and RCT.
- In Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons, the '1200 Group' (7. Our Food website) - made up of local entrepreneurs, food professionals, farmers and growers - has set out an ambitious plan to transform the local food economy through small-scale, regenerative, carbon negative farming, creating a commercially viable cooperative that will provide high employment, at 1 job per acre, and revitalise the region.
- In west Wales, a WG-funded Wales Community Food Distribution pilot programme is connecting people to where food comes from and will facilitate volunteers to link with

local food producers and suppliers to have easy access to healthy and great value food.

- Gwent PSB is undertaking a 'Food Futures' pilot project and research programme to understand and identify challenges and opportunities to transform the food system in SE Wales.

Differences across Swansea

- The four existing CSAs are based in and supply produce to the west Swansea, the fifth CSA that is currently being developed will be based in and target provision to north and east Swansea.
- Access to healthy and / or locally grown food is not equal across the county and is often limited by cost and availability. Some people in low income households live in food poverty / insecurity which, along with eligibility for free school meals, is increasing – see Poverty topic in Social chapter.

Perceptions and perspectives

In urban areas, soil and productive land has been lost to development and the sealing of soil when covered by roads, pavements, driveways and patios. The soil in green infrastructure acts as a sponge, storing water that would otherwise go straight into drains, which may be overwhelmed during extreme rainfall events causing surface water flooding. This stored water can also provide evaporative cooling, which will be beneficial as summer temperatures increase with climate change (8. Swansea Council: 2021).

There is increasing demand and awareness of the need for more local and regenerative methods of food production, for example, with an expansion of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Wales, and beyond. (CSA is a sustainable, sociable, and profitable way to link land and community, where producers and consumers take shared responsibility for how food is produced. Public bodies are also looking at how and from where they procure food, and how management of their land can be used to enhance biodiversity and other aspects of well-being). Sustainable methods not only provide healthier food but also considerably improve farmers' incomes. Studies show that throughout Europe, systems employing a range of more sustainable practices delivered between 10 and 110% increase in farm income (9. van der Ploeg et al., 2019 in NRW; 2021).

A survey carried out in Swansea found that 172 (94%) of 183 respondents would consider joining a CSA veg box scheme. A 2020 report on CSAs in Wales (10. Community Supported Agriculture; 2020) highlighted that there are also wider benefits including that 62% of CSA members made healthier food choices as a result of being a member; 74% said their awareness of their communities (activities, projects, different cultures) had increased; and, over 90% of members said CSA had a positive impact on their mood and general happiness.

The 'Food for the Region' conference, led by 4theRegion in October 2021, facilitated discussion between diverse participants around co-creating a healthier and more regenerative food system in south west Wales. Key messages included: making land available for growing, lead through procurement, connect hospitality with local suppliers,

champion regional produce, collaboration among small producers, connect schools with farms and career opportunities, establish Sustainable Food Places.

Public Health Wales (PHW) states that more action is needed to develop resilient food systems to protect health in Wales in response to climate change, with more investigation and improved data needed to plan for present and future climate risks to food systems to ensure vulnerable groups are protected and the impacts to health are minimised. They add that food security for health and wellbeing can only be achieved by a wide range of sectors including health, environment, government, civil society, farmers, trade and food producers / retailers working together (11. PHW; 2021).

“There needs to be greater emphasis on food, changing the food environments to healthy; ensuring local, fresh, short, seasonal, regenerative, high quality, nutrient dense food supply chains; increasing access to land for regenerative agriculture/agroecology...” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The biggest threat to soils is climate change. More intense and frequent rainfall and flooding increases the challenge of preventing soil erosion and run-off, and subsequent impacts on water quality, and greater instability on slopes (12. NRW; SoNaRR 2021, Aim 1). By 2050 (high CO₂ emissions scenario) the best and most versatile agricultural land area (in Wales) may decrease substantially from 22% to 9% by 2080, which has implications for the food grown and accessed locally, regionally, and nationally. Soils with high organic content and good soil structure will be more resilient and better able to retain and store more water and nutrients for plant growth.

Rising demand for food is driven by population growth, changes in dietary preferences, and income growth. The Future Trends 2021 report tells us that world population is projected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, and to meet this increasing demand for food it is predicted that global agricultural production will need to increase by 50 per cent from the 2012 baseline by 2050. However, as with the rest of the UK, Wales is currently reliant on food imports from other countries including those that are often vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with food production at particular risk.

Responding to the climate and nature emergencies is also likely to lead to trade-offs between competing land uses; for instance, setting aside land for biodiversity protection, ecosystem restoration or bioenergy could take space away from agriculture. Tree planting on agricultural land may involve excluding grazing in the short to medium term as mature trees take decades to develop. Swansea’s population continues to grow, increasing by 3.2% to 254,400 people in the period 2018-2028. It can be expected that an increase in the demand for housing, food, and other services, will follow with possible additional pressures on land use. Indeed, a significant element of future growth in Swansea will be delivered on greenfield sites albeit in a sustainable manner.

Integration

The soil, land and food theme has links to all topics in the environment dimension, from impact on ecosystems and water quality / quantity, to food waste and transportation (food miles) and climate change, for example - regenerative agriculture can increase the water holding capacity of soil to replenish aquifers, and nutrient dense food can improve soil structure. There is also integration with numerous topics across all other well-being dimensions, including health, poverty, education, volunteering, skills, jobs, tourism, heritage and Welsh language that brings opportunity for a more sustainable Swansea.

Improvement

As reported in SoNaRR, maintaining the carbon content of soils is a key priority in limiting overall greenhouse gas emissions in Wales as well as managing water resources in the face of inevitable climate change. Restoration of peat areas would achieve multiple gains for biodiversity, carbon storage/ sequestration and flood-risk mitigation. Locally, the Crymlyn complex is internationally important and the top priority for restoration in Swansea (11. NRW; 2017), now a key site included in the EU-funded LIFE Quake project, 2022-2026, led by NRW.

Increasing and enhancing soil resources in and around urban areas would help mitigate climate change and associated impacts from flood risk and rising temperatures. Noting that central Swansea is one of 33 areas identified as being most at risk of flooding in Wales (see Flood Risk section), implementation of the GI strategy will help reduce impacts as well as provide multiple benefits and reverse biodiversity losses (see GI and Placemaking section).

To tackle the climate and nature emergency there are clear areas identified as important to improve land management and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources. These include:

1. Payments for sustainably managing land
2. Connecting communities to their food and timber
3. Management of common land
4. Taking a catchment-based approach

Demand for locally grown produce currently outstrips supply in Swansea and across Wales / UK. There is opportunity, then, to support further expansion of small-scale growing across Swansea and regionally. Consideration needs also to be given to ensuring food produced is nutrient dense as doing so can reduce food loss and waste.

About the evidence

More data is needed on the health, functioning, and loss versus formation of soils in Swansea, and the potential for soil and peat regeneration to increase resilience to multiple threats, including climate change. This would help better understand environmental as well as economic risks and opportunities.

We also need to better understand the current and likely future challenges around food production and consumption as well as food poverty in Swansea and how these will be addressed in a way that doesn't compromise environmental well-being.

Conclusions and key messages

There is much scope to improve all aspects of well-being through soils, land use, and the food system.

The importance of soil for a sustainable, resilient, and healthy life for us all is clear, and it is encouraging that Swansea LDP recognises the significance of soil as a natural resource that should be safeguarded. However, there is a potential gap in the evidence regards, for example, the condition of the soil resources in Swansea that should be better understood to make well-informed management decisions.

Land use change to increase tree cover, protect and improve soil health and functioning, restore peatlands, and increase renewable energy generation have been identified to contribute to decarbonisation policies, nature recovery, flood and drought mitigation, and the supply of clean air and water. Responding to the climate and nature emergencies is likely to lead to trade-offs between these and other competing land uses, e.g. food production, housing, climate mitigation.

As is reflected in the Area Statement for south west Wales, there are clear topics identified as important to improve land management and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources. These include:

- Payments for sustainably managing land
- Connecting communities to their food and timber
- Management of common land
- Taking a catchment-based approach
- Improving understanding of soil stocks and capacity for carbon capture and storage locally

In Swansea there are numerous projects and organisations already working towards and delivering the above outcomes, with further appetite and need to expand, replicate good practice, and pilot new approaches. This is a key strength in the area and could be built on to transform, in particular, how food is produced and accessed. However, sometimes, availability of land and political support to work in new ways can be a limiting factor.

Climate change and global instability are already impacting food security and the food we can access. It is recommended to pursue a food strategy for Swansea and with it the designation of Swansea as a Sustainable Food Place, to work collaboratively and co-productively across all aspects of the food system to solve some of today's most pressing social, environmental, and economic issues, including food poverty, food / nutrition security, and population health. It is imperative that the above be informed by a better and comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within food the system in Swansea and across the Swansea Bay region.

Managing Green Infrastructure and Placemaking

Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined by the UK government as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. This includes, for example, streets trees, green roofs and walls, natural play spaces, wildlife / nature gardens, pollinator corridors, landscaping, drainage and air quality management solutions. Green infrastructure can be an effective means of enhancing health and well-being, through linking dwellings, workplaces and community facilities, enhancing active travel routes and providing high quality, accessible green spaces.

Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense (Welsh Government, 2021: Planning Policy Wales, edition 11).



Figure En5: Themes Collectively Contributing to Placemaking
(Welsh Government, 2021: Planning Policy Wales, edition 11)

There is clear evidence that the quality of the built and natural environment can support and impact on physical and mental well-being. The presence of specific characteristics such as access to green open spaces, healthy food, opportunities to be active, clean air, well-designed buildings that promote well-being, and supportive services delivered from local facilities have all been shown to help people thrive. Conversely, where these characteristics are missing or limited, for example, a lack of open green spaces, there is likely to be a negative impact (Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 2018: Public Health Wales Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for our Present and Future Generations).

This has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic where the quality of our local areas and accessibility to services and facilities has been hugely important for people's health and well-being (Welsh Government, 2021 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040). There has been a collective appreciation of the value of parks and green spaces, walking and cycling routes, local shops and amenities, and the cleaner air that emerged during the lockdown.

As a consequence of climate change, Swansea will experience more extreme weather events such as periods of intense heavy rainfall and high temperatures. Planning for these scenarios is essential if we are to minimise the impacts: and the benefits and cost-effectiveness of green infrastructure (GI) in relation to this are well documented.

Strengths and Assets

80% of the City and County of Swansea's total area is made up of significant ecological importance ranging from international designated habitats to city wildlife corridors and parks. There are over 900ha of Fields in Trust provision (equating to 3.9ha per 1,000 head of population); over 15,000ha of Accessible Natural Greenspace (over 66.7ha per 1,000 head of population); and over 400 miles of public rights of way.

There are strong multi-disciplinary and cross-sector GI partnership working and networks with training and awareness activities related to GI across different sectors. There is a good level of engagement with communities about GI and community interest groups are also well engaged. GI has also been prioritised in the Swansea Local Wellbeing Plan's Working with Nature objective and supported by the Working with Nature Task Group.

GI and Placemaking is underpinned in Swansea by good policies, the application of national legislation and the provision of guidance documents. Examples include the adopted Placemaking Charter; the GI policy in the Local Development Plan; Supplementary Planning Guidance for Biodiversity, Trees and Placemaking; the development of the Swansea Central Area GI Strategy – Regenerating Our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife; the Swansea Bay City Deal; and the South West Wales Area Statement produced by Natural Resources Wales.

The Swansea Green Space Factor Tool, which is designed to increase the quantity and functionality of GI schemes, is now being applied to Swansea Central Area developments.

Changes over time

Post war reconstruction around the city centre has left a legacy of spaces dominated by sealed surfaces with very little semi-natural vegetation. Swansea's urban tree cover was estimated to be 17.4% in 2013 and had reduced from 18.8% in 2009 (Natural Resources Wales, 2016:Town Tree Cover in the City and County of Swansea: Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage out urban trees). More recent data on urban tree cover is not available.

In recent years, Swansea has experienced increased extreme weather events with flood events damaging homes and built infrastructure and changing coastal systems in Gower

(Natural Resources Wales, 2020: February 2020 floods in Wales: Flood Event Data Summary)
– see also section on flooding.

GI has been integrated into the Planning Policy ER 2 Local Development Plan (LDP) and Placemaking has been integrated into policies and land allocations of the adopted LDP. This has helped lead to an increase in the number of planning permissions granted for development which deliver quality, healthy, sustainable places, including the integration of multifunctional GI. There has also been an increase in GI specific funding from various sources such as Welsh Government.

There has been an increase demand for and valuing of high quality green spaces and access to nature (accelerated by Covid), and an increased awareness of the impacts of mental health and the positive relationship between mental health and access to nature. The UK Government’s Build Back Better: our plan for growth plan has a focus on the green economy and a net zero carbon future. The Welsh Government’s Building Better Places policy document highlighted the role of the planning system in delivering Placemaking and post-Covid recovery.

The adoption of the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter in Swansea will ensure the six “placemaking principles” inform decision making across the Council. There is a requirement for Swansea Council’s Planning Department to deliver Placemaking and GI through decision-making processes, in line with WG planning policy (Future Wales 2040 – The National Development Plan, PPW 11), which will secure quality multifunctional GI and distinctive places.

Comparisons with other places

GI is being addressed by a number of local authorities in Wales through planning policies and guidance, well-being plans and actions. For example, Cardiff’s GI Plan, Newport’s Wellbeing Plan and Monmouthshire’s GI Supplementary Planning Guidance. There are also good examples of the installation of GI such as the Dŵr Cymru rainscape schemes in Llanelli.

The Green Space Factor Tool has been in use since the 1990’s and is applied in various ways in other UK cities and around the world including London, Southampton, Seattle (USA), Malmö (Sweden), Berlin (Germany) and Singapore (Swansea Council and Natural Resources Wales, 2021: Swansea Central Area: Regenerating Out City for Wellbeing and Wildlife).

Differences across Swansea

Access to green space across the county as a whole is 1.5ha above the Fields in Trust (FIT) recommended target. However, rural wards in the north and coastal wards to the south west have deficiency and there is a correlation between high levels of deprivation and lack of FIT provision (Swansea Council 2014: City and County of Swansea Council Open Space Assessment Report).

The distribution of Accessible Natural Greenspace is very uneven across Swansea. Whilst most of the wards in the county have over 80% provision, with three wards having 100%

provision (Newton, Oystermouth, Mayals), in contrast two wards (Kingsbridge and Upper Loughor) have less than 50% provision (Swansea Council 2014: City and County of Swansea Council Open Space Assessment Report).

Tree cover in deprived areas tends to be lower – 63% of Swansea’s more affluent wards have greater than 15% tree cover but only 23% of Swansea’s less well-off wards have more than 15% tree cover (Natural Resources Wales, 2016:Town Tree Cover in the City and County of Swansea: Understanding canopy cover to better plan and manage out urban trees).

Perceptions and perspectives

The development of the GI Strategy Swansea Central Area: Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife involved extensive stakeholder engagement, including 634 face to face conversations with members of the public (residents and visitors) about what nature in the city means to them. There were also workshops with businesses, developers, schoolchildren, architects, landscape architects, public sector staff and Swansea Councillors, and a social media campaign. The overwhelming message from this engagement was that #citynature is very important to people and will increase their enjoyment and, therefore, their dwell time in the city centre.

The principles of GI and Placemaking have been embedded in policies of the Adopted Swansea Local Plan which was the subject of an extensive statutory consultation process and founded on a comprehensive evidence base (including open space assessment, transport assessment, population assessment, health impact assessment, habitats regulations assessment, sustainability appraisal). As a result of implementing these policies and principles, there is an increase in GI and Placemaking knowledge, skills within and outside the Council.

“More needs to be done to make local nature community spaces in walking distance. Opening up spaces like school grounds and sports fields would support the local community to use these spaces when they are not being used” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The trend in WG planning guidance is to continually increase the focus on the role of planning in delivering Placemaking and GI. The consequence will be a clear improvement in the quality of places negotiated with the development sector by Swansea planning services. This should in turn result in improvements to health and wellbeing.

Swansea Council’s Planning Department have already begun to work with major house builders to integrate placemaking into schemes that are granted planning permission in order to deliver quality, healthy and sustainable places for our communities. This improvement is anticipated to continue as policies and principles become more mainstream.

Delaying actions to adapt to and reduce the causes of climate change will be costly in terms of the impacts on social, environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing.

“Having lived in both the better and also not so pleasant areas of Swansea it's easy to see how the surrounding environment effects health and well being” – survey respondent.

Integration

Some of the links between GI, Placemaking and other environmental topics and other strands covered in this wellbeing assessment are clearly demonstrated above, including links to health, economic regeneration, poverty, biodiversity, air quality, etc.

Improvement

The benefits and cost effectiveness of GI as a solution to reduce flood risk, provide summer cooling, cleaner air and water, noise reduction, better mental and physical health, gains in biodiversity, carbon sequestration and a strengthened economy are significant and will help us to adapt and mitigate for the impacts of climate change and future-proof Swansea communities.

To maximise Placemaking and GI benefits in urban and suburban areas of Swansea, we need:

1. Better data on the quantity and quality of GI across the county
2. To understand opportunities for developing new and retrofitting multifunctional GI solutions
3. A local, cross-sector approach to installing GI
4. To develop a skilled and knowledgeable local economy to deliver and maintain GI.

About the evidence

There is a lot of national and regional evidence around the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss; social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing and the need for and value of high quality GI to address these impacts. But there are some gaps locally especially at a landscape scale both in terms of the current provision and opportunities for improving GI.

The focused engagement in the Swansea Central Area has demonstrated the importance for city nature, and this is supported by findings following the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic. However, there is currently less evidence at a county-wide level.

Conclusions and key messages

Work should continue in partnership with the development sector to improve the quality of new developments to deliver healthy, distinctive, quality places. There are also opportunities for retrofitting GI installations (i.e. green roofs / green walls/ rain gardens) in urban and suburban areas. A cross-sector approach to installing GI should be maintained and there is a need to create a skilled and knowledgeable local economy to deliver and maintain GI.

Up-to-date data on the quality and quality of GI in Swansea is required at a county level, including connectivity across urban and suburban spaces. This should be used to develop a county-wide GI Strategy which will identify both issues and opportunities for addressing GI at a landscape level.

Air Quality

The quality of the air that we breathe is fundamental to well-being but is affected by pollutants from a variety of sources including industrial processes, energy generation, transport, agriculture and domestic fires. The air pollutants of primary public health concern are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}). In the UK, the equivalent of around 29,000 and 23,500 deaths are attributed to exposure to PM_{2.5} and NO₂, respectively. Government statistics estimate that air pollution in the UK reduces life expectancy by an average of 7–8 months with an estimated cost to society of around £20 billion per year. (Welsh Government: Air Quality in Wales website)

Research in Wales has also found that those living in more deprived areas may be at greater risk. The study, that linked local-level air pollution, income deprivation and health outcome data, found that annual mean air pollution concentrations were high in both ‘most’ and ‘least’ deprived areas, but highest in the former. This pattern was most pronounced for NO₂ air pollution. (Welsh Government: Air Quality in Wales website)

All local authorities are required to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas and to determine whether or not air quality objectives are being achieved. Where the level of pollutants exceeds certain limits, or exceedances are likely to occur, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The air quality objectives applicable in Wales set limits for specific pollutants and state the number of exceedances that are permitted e.g. for NO₂ a limit of 200µg/m³ must not be exceeded more than 18 times a year in any 1-hour period and must stay below a 40µg/m³ annual mean.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea Council has an enhanced air quality monitoring network to enable quantification of relevant pollutant concentrations. This includes continuous air quality monitoring stations at 13 sites across Swansea (see table below).

Table En3: Air Quality Monitoring Locations in Swansea

Site ID	Site Name / Location	Pollutants Monitored
CM1	Swansea Roadside AURN Carmarthen Road	NO ₂ , PM ₁₀ , PM _{2.5}
CM2	Morrison Groundhog	NO ₂ , PM ₁₀ and Ozone
CM3	Cwm Level Park	NO ₂ and Ozone
CM4	Hafod DOAS	NO ₂ , Ozone and Benzene

Site ID	Site Name / Location	Pollutants Monitored
CM5	St Thomas DOAS	NO ₂ , SO ₂ , Ozone and Benzene
CM6	Fforestfach Cross	PM ₁₀
CM7	Uplands Crescent	PM ₁₀
CM8	Sketty Cross	PM ₁₀
CM9	Westway Quadrant Bus Station	PM ₁₀
CM11	Station Court, High Street	NO ₂
CM12	Morfa Road	NO ₂
CM13	SA1 Junction, Port Tennant	PM _{2.5} and NO ₂

In addition to these permanent monitoring sites, Swansea Council also undertakes non-automatic (passive) monitoring of NO₂ using diffusion tubes at a large number of locations across Swansea. The number and location of these temporary monitoring points changes from time to time in response to regular reviews which may determine that compliance is consistently being met in some locations or that the monitoring of NO₂ concentrations may be needed in other areas where changes have been made e.g. to road junctions, or where concerns have been raised by the public. There were 211 monitoring sites in 2018 and 185 sites in 2021.

Rural and coastal areas of the county continue to have good air quality and the data collected in recent years indicates a downward trend in NO₂ concentrations across the county. However, this is not the case for particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) – see data below.

Collaborative research regularly takes place involving Swansea Council and academic bodies e.g. with Swansea University on the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic upon air quality measurements (Centre for Health and Environmental Management Research and Innovation, 2021: Estimation of ambient NO₂ and PM_{2.5} concentration change in Wales during COVID-19 outbreak). Swansea Council Pollution Control officers also collaborate with appropriate companies on R&D related to monitoring and addressing air quality and have strong links to national committees involved with air quality, ensuring timely access to developing policies and practices.

As part of its green infrastructure work, Swansea Council's Nature Conservation and Pollution Control teams are collaborating on the use of green screens (hedges) in Port Tennant to reduce air and noise pollution.

Changes over time

There has been a continued downward trend in NO₂ concentrations recorded in Swansea for several years. For example, at site CM4 (Hafod), the NO₂ Annual Mean Concentration fell from 49µg/m³ in 2014 to 37µg/m³ in 2018. The reasons for such improvement is likely to be the changing age of vehicles on the roads, changes to road management infrastructure

and changes in traffic flows at certain times. For example, the opening of the Morfa Distributor Road and the implementation of the Nowcaster system within the Hafod area led to reductions in NO₂ being recorded along this road link since 2017. Junction improvement works carried out on Gower Road, in Sketty, have also potentially had an effect upon concentrations of NO₂ recorded. There are currently only exceedences of the annual mean NO₂ Objective at locations within existing Air Quality Management Areas.

The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic clearly evidenced how a reduction in road traffic results in a reduction in NO₂ concentrations. (Centre for Cities, 2020: How have the Covid pandemic and lockdown affected air quality in cities?)

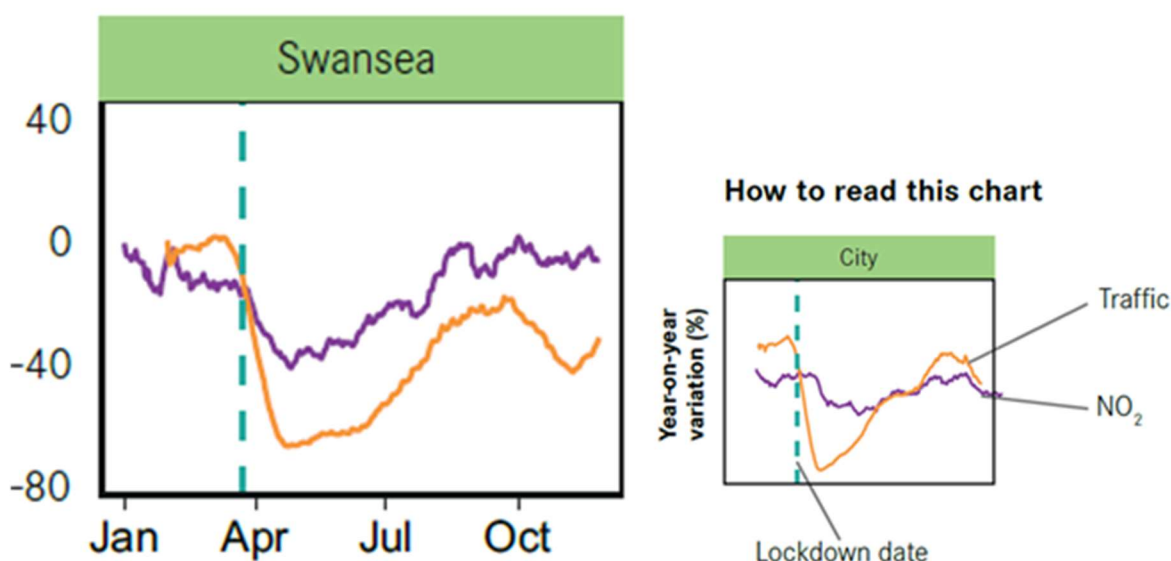


Figure En6: Traffic and NO₂ concentrations, Swansea

However, this is not the same for particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) which have generally plateaued in recent years. For example, whilst the annual mean concentrations of PM₁₀ measured at site CM1 (Carmarthen Road AURN) fell from 20µg/m³ in 2015 to 18µg/m³ in 2018, the measurements at other locations fluctuated inconsistently over that same period. Similarly, the data for PM_{2.5} at site CM1 fell from 13µg/m³ in 2015 to 8µg/m³ in 2018 but rose a little elsewhere. These results reflect the fact that particulates are not just linked to traffic but other forms of combustion too, and they travel much further, even across countries, hence are subject to a wider range of variables.

Whilst air pollution from industry, energy generation and transport has decreased in recent decades, concentrations of ammonia and ozone continue to steadily increase causing harm and impacting the natural balance of our ecosystems. Ammonia is released from livestock manure and urine and the overuse of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers. The gas drifts into cities and reacts with other air pollutants to form PM_{2.5} which is the deadliest form of air pollution. More than half of Wales, including some parts of central and northern Swansea, now experiences ammonia concentrations that are too high for certain ecosystems to function properly.

Wildfire incidents threaten public safety and have air pollution, water quality and biodiversity impacts. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have recorded an increase in the scale and frequency of wildfires. Swansea is one of the worst affected areas in the region with Kilvey Hill and the Gower Commons of particular concern.

During Bonfire night, particulate monitors in Swansea often record elevated concentrations as a result of firework displays in the city.

Comparisons with other places

It is difficult to effectively compare Swansea's air quality with other areas in Wales because of the complexity of variables such as topography, population density, location of industries, weather patterns, road layouts, etc. and the impact these have on air quality at a very local level.

Within the last four years Swansea has had the highest number of wildfire incidents in the region amounting to 1,365 mobilisations of the fire service. In comparison, NPT had 1,025 and Carmarthenshire had 408 over the same period.

Differences across Swansea

Whilst rural and coastal areas of the county continue to have good air quality, the air quality in some urban areas is at times poor, primarily due to heavy traffic flow.

Three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) remain in place in Hafod, Fforestfach and Sketty. In the case of Hafod, which was initially designated in 2001, the area is quite extensive but the other two areas, which were included from 2010, are much more focused on stretches of arterial routes and road junctions. Datasets will be reviewed in the coming years to look at the potential for amendment or revocation of the AQMAs, though this may be influenced by future changes to national policy, regulations and guidelines.

Ozone is monitored at four sites within Swansea and compliance with the UK objective (not set in regulation) is generally met except the St. Thomas DOAS. The impacts of reduced travel during Covid restrictions may have had an impact on the levels of ozone as this pollutant has photochemical reactions with other gases in the atmosphere and so the reduction in NO₂, for example, may have resulted in an increase ozone.

"Air quality is badly affected by traffic congestion along Fabian Way - Mumbles Road. Opening Langdon Road to through traffic means traffic pollution now on both sides of us" – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The decreasing age of vehicles on the road will continue to contribute to a reduction in NO₂ concentrations and the switch to electric vehicles will have a significant effect – though this will not be the same for particulates, as these are not all linked to exhaust fumes.

In recent years, there is anecdotal evidence of an increase in wood burning, both indoors and outdoors, which has impacts on air quality. It is anticipated that the Welsh Government's recent consultations on domestic combustion and the White Paper for a Clean Air (Wales) Bill may lead to a change in air quality objectives and actions taken by local authorities and others.

Climate change will increase the risk of more severe wildfires and may combine with changes in weather and temperature to increase the risks to human health and wellbeing and to habitats.

In 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) cut its recommended limits for air pollution its first update for 16 years and this may influence the limits and guidelines applied in Wales. For example, the WHO guideline limit for NO₂ has been reduced by 75% from 40µg/m³ to 10µg/m³.

Integration

There are clear links between air quality and transport, combustion (for energy generation and other industrial processes) and health. Impacts on health can lead to obvious knock-on effects for education and the economy. Many sources of air pollution that impact on local air quality also contribute to global warming and climate change – tackling these can have multiple benefits, including helping us to meet the Zero Carbon targets.

As highlighted earlier, there are clear interactions between air pollution, deprivation status and health outcomes, especially in the most deprived areas where the most-vulnerable people live.

Implementing Green Infrastructure measures, such as tree planting and hedge laying, can help to improve air quality.

Taking these examples into account, it is clear that improving air quality will contribute to most of the well-being goals of the Future Generations Act.

"I am on a busy road where, if I leave my windows open daily, by the end of the week my bathroom has a light dusting of the pollution from cars, and even though a new road was built to filter cars I do not believe enough cars choose that route" – survey respondent.

Improvement

Air quality will be improved by the reduction in pollutants being emitted to the air from burning fossil fuels and from other processes. In term of transport and travel, this would involve a reduction in use of petrol and diesel vehicles, improvements to public transport, increases in active travel and improved connectivity to reduce the number and length of journeys taken. Reducing engine idling, e.g. by motorists at traffic lights and by taxi drivers outside schools, will also be beneficial.

Limiting the impact of domestic burning may be driven by new regulations and improvements to design standards. The deployment of green infrastructure measures and nature-based solutions, such as tree planting, especially when this is integrated at the design stage of new developments, could also have a positive impact on improving air quality.

About the evidence

Swansea Council has a comprehensive monitoring network in place which provides extensive and ongoing data on key air pollutants. This data can be accessed via the Council's website and is also used on the Welsh Government's air quality website (<https://airquality.gov.wales>). Air quality reporting requirements in Wales oblige local authorities to produce annual updates on AQMAs.

Public Health Wales Health Protection created an online Air Quality in Wales Health Impact Assessment Tool which provides access to a huge amount of data related to air quality and health impacts at a local authority level but this currently only includes data up to the end of 2018. It is hoped that resources will be identified to update this.

Conclusions and key messages

- Swansea Council has an extensive air quality monitoring network to enable quantification of key pollutants and data on air quality and health impacts is readily available.
- Rural and coastal areas of the county continue to have good air quality but air quality in some urban areas is at times poor, primarily due to heavy traffic flow.
- Data collected in recent years indicates a downward trend in NO₂ concentrations across the county but concentrations of particulates are not on a downward trend.
- It is anticipated that air quality will improve with the transition towards a low-carbon society, with more sustainable transport practices, technological improvements, decarbonisation of industry and regulation of domestic burning.
- Wildfire incidents may increase due to climate change and become a more significant contributor of poor air quality.
- Green Infrastructure and nature-based solutions could play an increasingly important role in maintaining good air quality.

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

The way we currently travel and transport people and goods has a significant impact on environmental, social and economic wellbeing. Moving away from car dependency, reducing the frequency and distance of journeys we take and supporting more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking can reduce air pollution, carbon emissions and congestion and the associated social and health problems. Increasing active travel can have positive impacts on physical and mental health, and reducing car use can lead to safer roads and more pleasant urban environments.

The trend towards out-of-town shopping, leisure facilities and workplaces over previous decades has contributed to the increase in car use and also made access to essential services and employment difficult for those that cannot afford the transport options available – a significant proportion of citizens do not have access to a car and cannot afford or have limited access to public transport.

The latest State of the Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) published by Natural Resources Wales in 2020 identifies transport as one of three key areas, alongside food and energy, that require societal and system transformation in order to address the climate and nature emergencies. The proposed push towards electric and hydrogen-fuelled vehicles may address some of the environmental impacts but greater transformation of the transport system will be necessary to tackle other issues.

In relation to impacts on climate change, the transport sector in Wales has seen a reduction of only 4.5% emissions since 1990, much less than other sectors of the Welsh economy such as industry and housing where there have been significant cuts. As a consequence, the share of total emissions that are from transport has risen over that time from 12% to 16% (including aviation and shipping). (A Wales Transport Policy Fit for the Climate Emergency' by Ian Taylor and Lynn Sloman, Friends of the Earth & Transport for Quality of Life, July 2020)

Strengths and Assets

Swansea Council has a detailed transport model in place for the whole city and county which gives excellent detail on travel movements. The modal, developed by Transport for Wales, is multi-modal, considering private and public transport modes base.

Swansea Council's strategy is to promote sustainable transport – encouraging more cycling and greater use of public transport. The Council has introduced traffic slowing measures in the city centre to encourage use of alternative routes and modes of transport.

Swansea Council and several other organisations in the Swansea area have been investing in electric vehicles and charging points and there are local and regional partnerships in place for organisations to share knowledge and collaborate on sustainable travel planning and the transition to low emission vehicles. For example, Natural Resources Wales facilitates a South West Wales Regional EV Network Group to encourage collaboration on the use and development of EV charging infrastructure across public bodies.

There are a growing number of local community-led initiatives in Swansea that support active travel and sustainable transport, and Swansea has a notable number of groups and individuals that actively promote cycling and improvements to the cycling infrastructure.

Changes over time

Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) data on arterial routes in Swansea show decreases in vehicular traffic from 2016 to 2019 and then a significant fall in 2020, due to the pandemic. Figures for 2021 indicate that the levels of vehicle use along these routes are recovering towards pre-

pandemic levels. However, the peak hours are significantly less pronounced, indicating less commuter traffic.

Table En4: Traffic counts on main arterial routes, 2016-2020

Year	Mumbles Road	Pentreguinea Road	Carmarthen Road	Sketty Road
2020	23,423	14,333	8,121	10,265
2019	31,842	18,912	20,499	13,630
2016	33,332	21,487	21,296	14,831

The recently completed Kingsway scheme had a strong focus on cycling and walking and introduced a 20mph design speed. Anecdotally, there does seem a reduction in private car usage along the corridor but this is difficult to statistically quantify at the moment due to significant fluctuations in levels and peak hours due to the pandemic.

Total figures for Park & Ride use dropped significantly after the closure of the Fforestfach site in May 2016 but had been generally falling year on year since a peak in 2008/9. Patronage of the two remaining sites, Fabian Way and Landore, has continued to fall, as can be seen in the table below. It should be noted, however, that the figures for 2019/20 were impacted by technical problems and the 2020/21 figures were heavily impacted by the Covid pandemic.

Table En5: Swansea Park and Ride site usage, 2016 to 2021

Year	Fabian Way	Landore
2020/21	1,125	1,007
2019/20	37,400	32,600
2018/19	41,450	41,200
2017/18	58,800	58,800
2016/17	64,000	67,600

As part of the work to improve public transport infrastructure, a contract has been awarded for the supply of over 100 new advertising bus shelters on key bus corridors across the Swansea area from January 2022. These will replace life-expired shelters and will feature energy efficient lighting, with at least 10 of the shelters being fitted with green roofs.

In terms of measurable improvements to public transport journey times and reliability, overall traffic levels are broadly back to pre-pandemic levels, albeit without the same defined morning and afternoon peak hours – the new peak is around 3-4pm. Journey times across motorised modes of transport have fallen due to the pandemic, with the exception of some very busy tourist routes accessing Mumbles and Gower, which since the relaxing of lockdowns have seen significant increases. These changes should equate to improved journey times and reliability for commuter trips, but a reduction for leisure trips.

In 2020, a new Community Rail Partnership was established by Transport for Wales for the south-west Wales region. South West Wales Connected is hosted by 4theRegion and aims to encourage greater use of rail services through increased participation of local communities in their rail line and by supporting a range of activities at and around stations to provide economic, social and environmental benefits to residents and visitors.

Over recent years, considerable work has been undertaken on the development of plans for a Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro which offers an opportunity for a step change in transport choices.

Swansea Council currently has 12 cycle counters sited at points across the cycle network e.g. alongside Fabian Way, by the sail bridge over the River Tawe, adjacent the Civic Centre, in Clyne Valley and on the track in Kingsbridge. These provide continuous live figures on cycle numbers across the active travel network and were put in place in 2019/20 replacing legacy counters that these were decommissioned prior to the installation of the new counters. Whilst some data is available for the previous counters, there are only data for two years from the new counters.

According to data from cycle counters, there has been an overall upward trend in usage across the cycle network from 2014 to 2021. In the graph below, it is expected that the 2021 figure will increase with the inclusion of data for the summer months. (2019 is not included due to lack of data sources across the network for that year). In many areas, the numbers in the 2020 and 2021 counts are lower than in previous years as the lockdown had a significant effect. However, overall there was clearly an increase in the usage of the cycle network and cycling in general during the pandemic due to more localised exercise and shorter journeys being taken because of the restrictions in place.

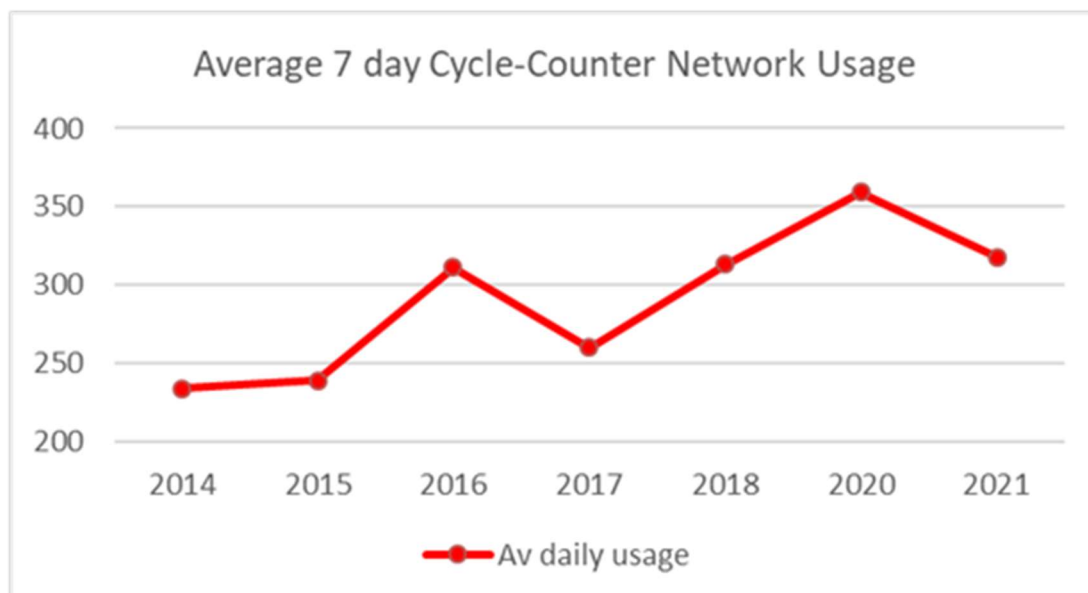


Figure En7: Cycle Network Usage, 2014 to 2021

University cycle levels appear relatively stable, this would seem to indicate that there has been a general increase in the uptake due to the University switching to predominantly on-line learning for the majority of 2020 and 2021 so effectively removing the student cyclists

from previous years and replacing with others. Cycle counters on the foreshore path show on average 420 cyclists on weekdays in 2020/21 and the Fabian Way cycle counter shows an average of 407 cycle users per day. Both counters may be impacted by the closure of the University during Covid.

In recent years, Swansea Council has secured significant resources through the Local Transport Fund and Active Travel Fund (over £16 million) to create and improve active travel routes. This included constructing the Kingsbridge Link and links to the cycle network within the city centre in Townhill, Sketty, Mayals and other locations; widening the path on Loughor Bridge; creating a shared use path on Gors Avenue; a shared use path and new controlled crossings for both pedestrians and cyclists as part of the new Broadway Interchange scheme; and improvements to junction crossings in various other locations.

The growth of the cycle network over recent year is illustrated in the map below.

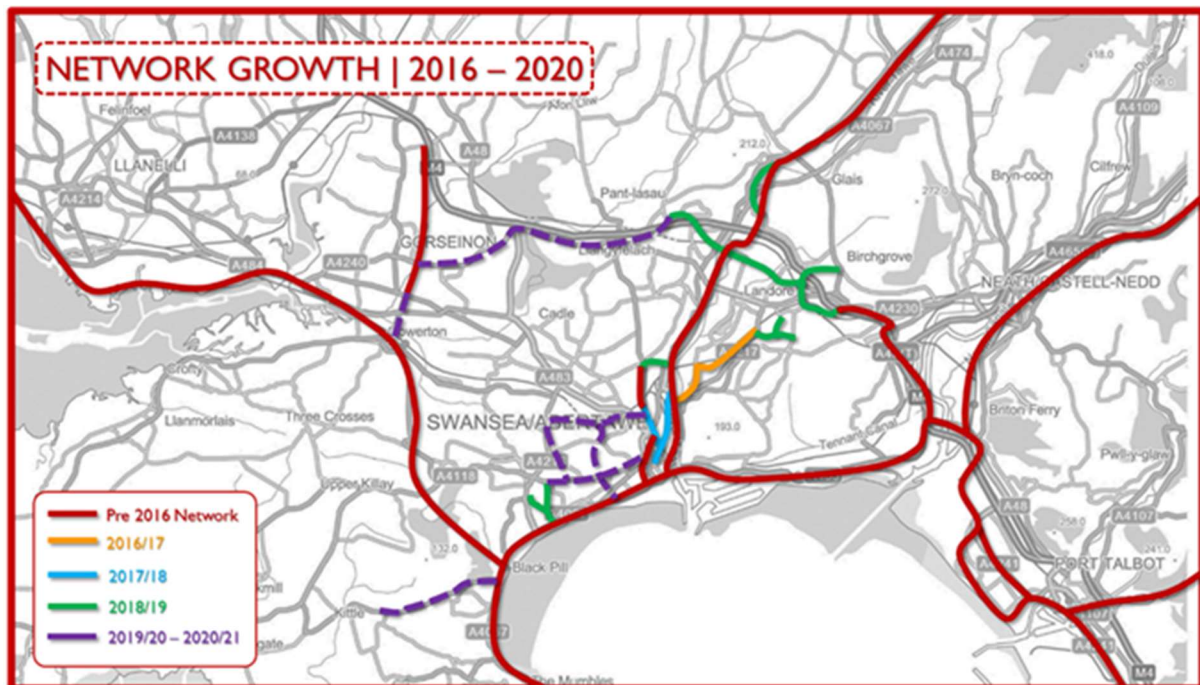


Figure En8: Cycle Network Growth around Swansea, 2016 to 2020

A number of additional secure cycle parking facilities have been introduced across the city to incentivise active travel by commuters and the local authority is in discussion with major employers about supporting the use of the new active travel infrastructure.

The Santander cycle scheme has been expanded and now has six hire hubs at key points around Swansea. In April 2021, the scheme reached a landmark 50,000 journeys being made since its launch in 2018.

There are several voluntary groups in the Swansea area that promote active travel, campaign for better cycling provision, offer cycle training and organise maintenance workshops. For example, BikeAbility, based in Dunvant, has a large range of adaptable cycles to enable people of all ages and abilities to access cycling. They provide cycling and road safety

training, offer accompanied 'companion rides' and bike maintenance sessions. The Environment Centre also hosts bike maintenance workshops and has installed cycle repair stations at a number of locations across Swansea to support and encourage cycling.

There are several local community transport schemes, often community-led, that seek to enable access to services, facilities, work and leisure for those that are unable to afford or have difficulty using mainstream transport options. Swansea Council recently established a Wheels 2 Work scheme whereby scooters are loaned to job seekers and people who are just starting work to enable them to access employment opportunities. There are 12 scooters available, but during the pandemic take up was significantly reduced. As restrictions ease and workplaces open up for staff then the scheme is to be relaunched and the hire fees reduced to encourage take up. The Council also has a community minibus available for hire by community groups.

Swansea CVS has secured funding through the Community Renewal Fund for a project to support and help expand the community-led transport sector in Swansea.

Comparisons with other places

According to the 2011 Census, just under 75% of households in Swansea owned a car or van, slightly lower than the average across Wales (77%). Estimates from more recent National Survey for Wales data suggest that the proportion of households without access to a car or van has fallen steadily since the 2011 census e.g. 21% of households in Wales did not have access to a car (for activities such as visiting local shops or going to the doctor) in 2013/14 then 15% of households in Wales did not normally have a car available for use in 2017/18, falling to 14% in 2018/19 then 13% in 2019/20.

The Transport Statistics Great Britain report published in 2019 suggests that the modal split for people travelling to work in Wales was 80% by car, 12% by walking or cycling and just 7% by public transport whereas the average across Great Britain in the same year was 68% by car, 12% walking or cycling and 18% by public transport. The equivalent statistics for the past decade show very little difference in these proportions both in Wales and Great Britain. The most recent data available on modal split for travel to work in Swansea comes from surveys conducted in 2012/13 which suggested 14% used public transport and 14% walked or cycled.

Assuming the modal share for cycle commuting in Swansea is similar to that across Wales it is around 2%, although this has shown signs of increasing with the new paths being installed and as a consequence of behaviour change during Covid restrictions. This is one of the lowest figures in the UK, perhaps not helped by Swansea's hilly topography and plentiful rain. This is in contrast to places such as Oxford and Cambridge where the figure is over 20%.

Differences across Swansea

Bus network coverage across Swansea is generally good but frequency is different in different areas across the City. Most notably, rural services are not as good as in urban areas. There are also less services on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Car ownership or access to a car is known to be lower in more deprived areas of Swansea.

“Due to the poor service many of my neighbours drive instead of taking the bus. Public transport needs to be improved so that more people use the service and reduce reliance on cars” – survey respondent.

Perceptions and perspectives

As mentioned earlier, NRW highlighted in their SoNaRR2020: Bridges to the Future report that the transformation of our transport systems is necessary to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

Both Swansea Council and Swansea Environmental Forum (SEF) have also identified transport as a key priority in their shared efforts to address climate change and meet the target of a net zero carbon Wales.

In February 2021, SEF collaborated with 4theRegion and other partners to organise a regional transport conference, Moving Forward Together. This intensive, two-day, co-productive, online event, brought together 160 citizens from communities, businesses and organisations from across South West Wales. One outcome from this event was a manifesto for the transition to a greener, healthier, more equal, more integrated, more accessible and more affordable transport system for the region. This Transport Manifesto for South West Wales captured the key messages from the event and included recommended actions for different stakeholders such as local authorities, transport operators, employers, educational establishments, tourism destinations, communities and individuals.

The many comments and suggestions raised in the conference included:

- “Stop building hospitals, homes and office parks that can only be reached by car!”
- “You can’t penalise people for using a car if the alternatives aren’t there.”
- “Let’s create a generation of confident cyclists and bus users.”
- “It’s not just about visitors. Poorer people can’t access local beaches and green spaces if they don’t have a car.”
- “Lockdown taught us that we can make huge lifestyle changes when we need to.”
- “Transport should be regarded as a universal basic service - like healthcare and education. Free or low cost public transport is central to the vision of a healthier, more equal, more prosperous Wales and achieving our climate emergency commitments.”
- We need to involve people who use public transport, people in communities and those from seldom heard groups, at the start of transport design and ongoing. People who use the transport systems have got the answers, and sometimes these are cheap and simple things to implement. Treat service users as the experts!

(Moving Forward Together Regional Transport Manifesto for South West Wales, April 2021, 4theRegion)

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Swansea Council, local transport operators and other partners are progressing several new sustainable transport initiatives in Swansea including:

- Plans for the Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro are progressing with proposed local rail improvements and the creation of a new urban area metro with new rail stations.
- Sustainable transport hub proposals are being developed for Pontarddulais and Gowerton Railway station to support multimodal provision.
- Transport for Wales (TfW) have identified improvements to the South Wales Mainline and will be looking addressed these.
- Options for a new park and ride site for Landore are being assessed to provide a location that is more accessible to the M4 but further from the city centre, which will support a wider area and multi-modal usage.
- The Mumbles Coastal Defence Scheme includes an ambition for a 6m wide shared route.
- Swansea Council is working closely with partners to finalise late bus signalling at junctions with a view to this being operational 2021/22

Integration

Transport systems are a fundamental part of our economic infrastructure enabling the movement of materials, products, employees and customers but there are many social and environmental impacts depending on the types of systems put in place and the wider economic context within which these function. Transport is a key component of international trade and tourism so decisions and changes made at a local or regional level e.g. supporting more local production and markets, can have a range of economic and social impacts in other parts of the world, not only in relation to carbon reduction and climate change but in livelihoods.

Transport cuts across all of the Well-being Goals of the Wales Future Generation Act e.g. the transition to a low carbon economy (Prosperous Wales), ensuring healthy and functioning ecosystems (Resilient Wales), enabling people to fulfil their potential with fair access to services and work (More Equal Wales), maximising physical and mental wellbeing (Healthier Wales), creating safe and well-connected communities (Cohesive Communities), encouraging participation in the arts, sport and recreation (Wales of Vibrant Culture) and making a positive contribution to global well-being (Globally Responsible Wales).

"...cleaner, sustainable transport that aids in reducing congestion, or clean air toll's as introduced in cities such as Bath to alleviate heavy traffic flow and utilise the money to help with programs that reduce emissions and create a 'greener' Swansea are needed" – survey respondent.

Improvement

The Welsh Government has recently published a new strategy to develop an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system in Wales and address the negative impacts it has on the environment, health and wellbeing. This strategy highlights three key priorities:

- Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel e.g. better physical and digital connectivity, more local services, home and remote working, active travel and multi-modal hubs
- Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure e.g. public transport services that

everyone can use, wants to use and does use with safe, accessible and well maintained transport infrastructure

- Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport e.g. making low-carbon, sustainable transport more attractive and affordable, and adopting innovations that make it easier to use.

Regional Corporate Joint Committees will also prepare Regional Transport Plans for transport in their area. These will be shaped by the Wales Transport Strategy Llwybr Newydd and will include both policy and supporting regional transport delivery plans.

About the evidence

Automatic traffic counters and cycle network counters provide useful data along long key routes to help monitor changes in traffic flow and cycle use.

There is a lack of up-to-date local data on both modal split and public opinion on ease of access to services and facilities. The City Centre User Surveys and Swansea Voice Surveys organised by Swansea Council and the Household Travel Surveys previously conducted by the regional transport partnership no longer take place.

Conclusions and key messages

- Car use remains the dominant mode of transport in Swansea for commuting and other journeys with low levels of cycling and public transport use.
- Several sustainable transport initiatives are progressing in and around Swansea such as new transport hubs, improvements to the cycle network and the Metro scheme.
- Improvements to the quality, accessibility and affordability of public transport may require a major reform of the bus industry.
- A switch to ultra-low emission vehicles will have a significant positive impacts on air and water pollution and reduce the contribution that transport makes to climate change. But will not lessen traffic jams, accidents or the sedentary lifestyle that car use encourages.
- Supporting an increase in Active Travel will bring significant multiple environmental, community and health benefits.

Sustainable Waste Management

The way we manage our waste can have detrimental impacts on health and well-being, and can contribute to longer-term issues such as climate change. Minimising waste and the unnecessary consumption of natural resources and energy reduces these impacts. Improvements to waste management across Wales, and in Swansea, over the past decade have been significant with large increases in recycling and composting rates and reductions in waste going to landfill. These changes have been driven largely by legislative pressures, such as the European Landfill Directive, and progressive national strategies and targets.

At the heart of national and local strategies is the waste hierarchy, which prioritises minimisation, reuse and repair over recycling and disposal, and the proximity principle,

which suggests that waste should generally be disposed of as near to its place of origin as possible. These principles recognise the wider implications of energy use and transportation. In recent years, the concept of a circular economy has gained traction – a holistic and sustainable approach to production and consumption which seeks to eliminate waste, minimise energy use and regenerate natural resources.

Welsh Government requires local authorities to provide detailed information on the waste they collect and how it is disposed of. This includes not only the amount of different materials segregated for recycling, composting or landfill but where the waste is sent. This information is made publicly available on the Welsh Government website, My Recycling Wales. The monitoring of litter and street cleanliness is undertaken in each local authority in Wales using both the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) and the Wales Cleanliness Index.

Whilst local authorities play a leading role in managing waste, the voluntary sector and local partnerships play an important role too, particularly with reuse and repair initiatives, and community engagement. Commercial waste operators are also involved.

Strengths and Assets

Swansea Council has established a solid recycling strategy and system with residents and Council staff demonstrating a generally high commitment to recycling. The Council's overall recycling performance continues to meet Welsh Government's (WG) statutory targets and reached approx. 65% in 2019/20 and maintained a similar level in 2020/21 despite the difficulties posed by Covid.

Swansea Council provides residents with a fortnightly recycling and waste service, with food waste collected each week. On 'green' weeks, residents use green plastic bags for cans, glass, paper and card, and reusable white bags for garden waste, as well as the food waste. On 'pink' weeks, residents use pink plastic bags provided by the council for plastic bottles, tubs and trays, and up to three black bags for residual waste, as well as the food waste bin. The Council also runs five household waste recycling centres (HMRCs) across the county at Llansamlet, Clyne, Garngoch, Penlan and Tir John.

“One service that Swansea Council offer which I always feel is good and hassle free is the weekly waste collection. Always pleasant and with a smile” – survey respondent.

There has been significant investment by Swansea Council in waste minimisation, primarily through repair and reuse projects. Swansea Council's recycling team has a long history of partnership working and has developed strong links with the Environment Centre and other charity organisations, particularly in relation to waste minimisation, repair and reuse.

Swansea Council has a good level of procurement expertise and is currently procuring an Energy from Waste (EfW) solution to replace its current landfill for the majority of its residual waste. The vast majority of material collected by Swansea Council for recycling and composting is dealt with in Wales or England.

The Council's Tip Treasures Reuse Shop is seen as an exemplar reuse shop and visited by many other local authorities.

Changes over time

Recycling performance in Swansea has increased steadily from 48% in 2012/13 and 60% in 2015/16, when the last wellbeing assessment was made, meeting each Welsh Government recycling target – the most recent being 64%. The increase in recycling and composting at the Household Waste Recycling Centres in Swansea has also increased significantly in recent years from 56% in 2012/13 and 61% in 2015/16 to 92% in 2020/21. These improvements have been made through various initiatives over the years including the introduction of the 3 black bag limit, prohibition of recyclables from residual waste at recycling centres, and prohibition of recyclables from residual waste (black bags) at the kerbside.

The 2019/20 total figure of 65% was made up of approx. 42% dry recycled materials and 23% compostable materials from the kerbside collection scheme, commercial waste collections provided by the Council and from materials deposited at the recycling centres.

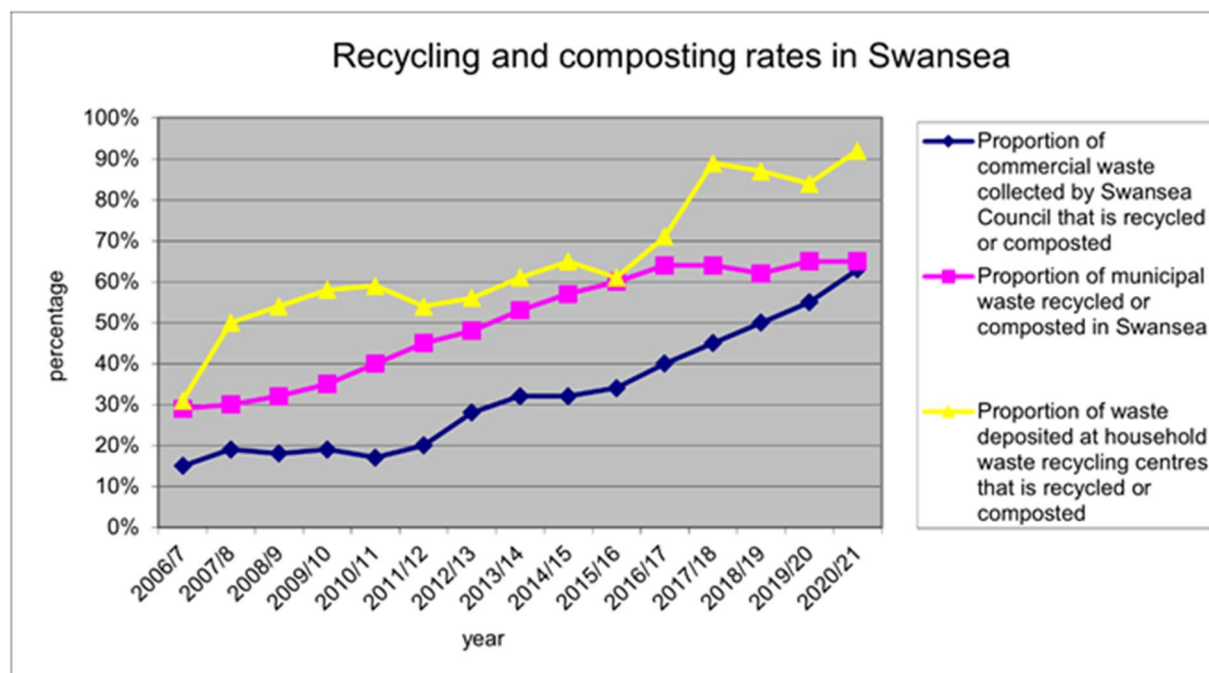


Figure En9: Recycling and composting rates, Swansea, 2006 to 2021

The average total amount of waste generated by each resident in Swansea has been on a downward trend over the last decade but has recently levelled off (473kg in 2013/14, 443kg in 2017/18 then 442kg in both 2018/19 and 2019/20). This drop in waste generated by households coupled with the improvement in recycling rates has resulted in a significant fall in the amount of residual waste that has to be disposed of through landfill (from 223kg in 2013/14 to 165kg in 2017/18 and 155kg in 2019/20).

Swansea Council provides a commercial waste collection service for approx. 1,500 businesses and other organisations. This includes recycling of food, paper, card, glass and

cans. The percentage of commercial waste collected by the Council that is recycled or composted was 63% in 2020/21, up from 28% in 2012/13. This includes a significant amount of recycled material from one particular contract and when this is removed the percent across all other customers is 58%. Data is not available on the level of recycling attained by other commercial waste contractors.

Opportunities for reuse and repair in Swansea have increased in recent years with an upsurge in community-led schemes including charity shops and the introduction of repair cafes. Though these were disrupted by Covid restrictions. The Council's Tip Treasures Reuse Shop has grown from a small unit and a couple of tents, to a sizable and professionally run outlet. The Council has also recently incorporated a 'library of things' to enable the loan of household tools and equipment, and has set up a repair café mobile unit.

The Beyond Recycling Swansea project, managed by the Environment Centre, has provided a focus for supporting various community and partnership initiatives for recycling, reuse and repair. It hosts a monthly repair café, regular cycle maintenance training sessions and, in partnership with Swansea Council, has installed a number of cycle repair stations across Swansea.

In 2019, The Environment Centre and Swansea Council partnered with London-based charity Hubbub to increase on-the-go recycling and pilot coffee cup recycling. This project saw the reskinning of recycling bins across the city centre and the introduction of additional bins.

There has been an expansion of collection points and participation in the Terracycle scheme across Swansea, which collects packaging that isn't collected through the local authority recycling schemes. There has also been an increase in the number of community litter picks and beach cleans.

Swansea achieved Grade B or above for 96.4% of streets assessed through LEAMS in 2018/19 (up from 91.8% in 2016/17). Swansea scored 70.1 in the Cleanliness Index that year (up from 69.3 in 2016/17). No figures are available for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as assessments were not undertaken due to Covid.

The number of flytipping incidents recorded for Swansea has dropped significantly in the past four years from an all-time high of over 6,000 in 2015/16 to 1,450 in 2019/20 – though this is due to changes in operational practices and corresponding different recording criteria.

Comparisons with other places

Swansea is one of the highest performing urban local authorities in terms of recycling and the recycling rate is about the same as the national average (Swansea 65%, Cardiff 58%, NPT 62%, Newport 66%, Wales 65%).

The average total waste generated by each resident in Swansea is lower than the average across Wales (Swansea: 443kg per person in 2019/20, Wales: 480kg). Similarly, the residual waste generated by each person in Swansea is lower than the Wales average (Swansea: 155kg per person in 2019/20, Wales: 167kg).

Whilst Swansea generally scores lower than the Wales average on the Cleanliness Index and through LEAMS, it seems that there is a general distinction between the results of the larger urban authorities compared to the more rural ones. Swansea fairs quite favourably when compared to similar counties (e.g. for LEAMS graded B or above in 2018/19: Swansea 96.4%, Cardiff 96%, Newport 89.6%, NPT 93.8% and for the Cleanliness Index in 2018/19: Swansea 67.1, Cardiff 67.3, Newport 64, NPT 65.9).

The number of flytipping incidents across Wales has reduced in the past four years but this has been marginal compared to the significant reduction in Swansea (see above).

Differences across Swansea

On the whole the Keep Recycling Out (KRO) scheme was effective in broadly increasing participation in the kerbside recycling scheme across Swansea with no notable issues in specific areas. There are obviously still some individual properties where participation is low and the KRO team work to engage these properties as they are identified. The exception to this generalisation is flats and high rise properties where there seems to be less recycling produced by this type of property than there is at a typical kerbside property. The KRO team are working with flat management companies to seek to understand and improve this.

In terms of recycling, there are hard-to-reach non-participants right across the area.

Perceptions and perspectives

The local authority conducted public consultations in 2018/19 about the Keep Recycling Out proposals for the kerbside collection scheme– the public were largely in favour of taking action against those that didn't recycle (89% strongly or tended to agree) – with 62% supporting enforcement action as a last resort against persistent non recyclers. There was also consultation undertaken in 2015/16 about proposed changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. The public supported the Council's proposals to keep three open for recycling only, with staff challenging non-recyclable waste at the other two sites (59% supported).

"There are nowhere near enough bins in Swansea and going to the dump is difficult and it's expensive to get items collected and disposed of too so no surprise the fly tipping is so bad" – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

A revised waste management strategy is being prepared by Swansea Council to increase recycling performance to 70% by 2024/25, though there is a potential that further increased targets may be set by Welsh Government for post 2025.

The Welsh Government's new Beyond Recycling strategy is likely to result in new regulations and guidelines and drive segregation and recycling of additional materials such as nappies or filmy plastic. Once larger scale recycling facilities are developed and viable, Swansea

Council will probably adapt their kerbside collections and HWRCs to accommodate this. There will also continue to be a focus on repair and reuse in line with the waste hierarchy and the principles of a circular economy.

It is also possible that Welsh Government will introduce legislation stating how recyclable materials must be separately presented for collection, and banning recycling material from commercial residual waste. Currently, Swansea Council has to insist commercial customers recycle in order to contribute to the recycling targets, whereas commercial companies can accept waste collection contracts without the insistence on recycling to the same level. If new rules are implemented then it would level the playing field between the Council and commercial operators and help drive waste minimisation and recycling rates.

Swansea Council's new Energy from Waste solution to deal with residual waste is due to be in place by February 2022. Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) options for the waste collection fleet are also being explored by the Council.

Integration

The way waste is managed is linked to several environmental themes and the other strands in this assessment. For example, the distance that waste is transported to processing or disposal and the type and number of vehicles used for collection and transportation will determine the impact these operations have on air quality and climate change. Disposal of residual waste in landfill or by incineration emits climate changing gases and can also have localised impacts on health and well-being. The move towards a circular economy could bring many opportunities and benefits to the environment, society and economy in Wales. This theme therefore links strongly to four of the well-being goals in the Future Generations Act: a Prosperous Wales, a Resilient Wales, a Healthier Wales and a Globally Responsible Wales.

Improvement

The key driver for future improvements in waste management in Wales will be the Welsh Government's Beyond Recycling strategy which sets out new targets and a plan to transition to a circular economy in Wales by keeping resources and materials in use for as long as possible and avoiding all waste. The headline actions proposed in the strategy include:

- Supporting businesses to become more resource efficient.
- Working with citizens to support local initiatives and resource efficient actions.
- Phasing out unnecessary single-use items, especially plastic.
- Sending zero plastic to landfill and reducing the amount sent to energy recovery.
- Eradicating avoidable food waste at different stages – production, distribution, processing, consumption, disposal.
- Achieving the highest rates of recycling in the world.
- Reducing the environmental impact of waste collection from our homes and businesses.
- Taking full responsibility for our waste.

Swansea Council is due to scope out the next 3-4 years of its Waste Management Strategy and, along with other local partners, will play a part in achieving these national objectives.

About the evidence

Comprehensive data on recycling performance by local authorities across Wales is captured and reported through Wastedataflow and presented on the Welsh Government website, My Recycling Wales.

It may be beneficial for data from commercial waste contractors' operations to be collected and reported in a similar way. Mechanisms for measuring the impacts of community reuse and repair schemes could also be explored.

Conclusions and key messages

- Swansea Council's overall recycling performance continues to meet Welsh Government's statutory targets.
- Whilst recycling and composting rates of household waste continue to rise, the total waste arisings and levels of residual waste in Swansea continue to fall.
- The Welsh Government's Beyond Recycling strategy is expected to drive further improvements.
- There is strong partnership working within waste management in Swansea between the local authority, the Environment Centre and other local groups, particularly in relation to waste minimisation, repair and reuse.
- Community-led and partnership projects can make a notable contribution to pushing waste management higher up the waste hierarchy and for dealing with litter and fly-tipping.

Energy Generation and Use

The production and consumption of energy, particularly from fossil fuels, is one of the main drivers of global warming which has led to the climate emergency, created pressures on natural resources and impacted negatively on our health and well-being. The transition to a low carbon economy through greater energy efficiency and generating the energy we need from sustainable, renewable sources will enable us to reduce these impacts.

Wales is a net exporter of electricity, having consumed approximately 15TWh of electricity, while generating approximately 30TWh. About 27% of electricity generation in Wales is from renewables, with much of the rest generated by gas fuelled power stations. In 2018, 29% of greenhouse gas emissions in Wales came from energy supply sector but the Welsh Government plans to virtually eliminate emissions from power stations by 2035.

The generation of renewable energy in Wales has been increasing rapidly in recent years, particularly through the installation of photovoltaics panels and onshore wind turbines, and many plans are developing to expand renewable energy generation both at an industrial and community level. Though it should be noted that renewable technologies still contribute to

environmental pressures on land availability, ecosystems and human health, and the use of resources.

The latest State of the Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) published by Natural Resources Wales in 2020 identifies energy as one of three key areas, alongside food and transport, that requires societal and system transformation in order to address the climate and nature emergencies. The SoNaRR2020: Bridges to the Future report suggests that reducing energy consumption, increasing efficiency, renewable energy development and decarbonisation are all necessary to deal with carbon emissions and air quality, and will involve a joined up approach between the public and private sectors.

This transformation of the energy system will not only help address environmental concerns but bring social and economic benefits too. Reference is often made to the ‘energy trilemma’ with three core dimensions of energy sustainability – energy security (moving towards greater localisation and self-sufficiency in energy generation), energy equity (tackling energy poverty) and environmental sustainability (decarbonisation and efficiency of energy systems).

One of the key uses for energy is in heating, lighting and cooling our homes and other buildings, accounting for around 1/3rd of carbon emissions in Wales. A report from the Committee on Climate Change in 2019 suggested that if the UK’s legally-binding climate change targets are to be met then the greenhouse gas emissions from buildings will need to be almost completely eliminated. This would be achieved primarily through energy efficiency measures, onsite generation of low carbon electricity and use of low carbon heating systems.

Strengths and Assets

Several community renewable energy projects have developed in Swansea including Wales’ first community-owned solar farm which was established in Swansea in 2017. The award-winning 1MW ground mounted solar farm in Dunvant was set up by Gower Power, a local social enterprise, and generates enough clean electricity to power over 300 houses. All the profits go to supporting community and educational projects. Gower Power has subsequently installed energy storage facility enabling local businesses and households to switch to local green energy supply.

Gower Power also collaborated with Swansea Council and the Energy Saving Trust to set up the Swansea Community Energy & Enterprise Scheme (SCEES) another community-owned solar project which installed solar PV panels on 9 schools and 1 care home in and around the wards of Townhill and Penderry in Swansea. These installations provide cleaner and more affordable electricity for each building and a valuable educational resource for the local community, with any surplus funds supporting energy and skills projects in some of the poorest communities with Swansea.

“I would like to see more solar panels being provided for homeowners as opposed to landowners. This would be cheaper more efficient green energy” – survey respondent.

The Egni Co-op, set-up by Ammanford-based charity Awel Aman Tawe, has installed over 4,400KW of community-owned rooftop solar panels on 88 schools, small businesses and community buildings across Wales including over 350KW of solar energy on several schools and community centres in Swansea.

In 2019, the Mynydd Y Gwair wind farm was commissioned. This 16-turbine development, located between Ammanford and Clydach, has a capacity of 33MW, making it the ninth largest wind farm (by capacity) in Wales, expected to produce electricity to power the equivalent of 22,600 homes.

The tidal range within Swansea Bay lends itself to potential tidal energy schemes and there have been a string of proposals for a pioneering tidal lagoon project for Swansea. The latest iteration, Dragon Island, is backed by Swansea Council and included proposals for floating energy efficient homes and a floating solar farm.

“We should build the barrage [tidal lagoon] to help provide clean energy. It would provide jobs, recreation and improve the climate” – survey respondent.

Swansea Council and housing associations operating Swansea have a strong track record of making energy efficiency improvements to their housing stocks and building new social housing to high energy efficiency standards and with renewable energy technologies. For example, 18 homes built on Colliers Way in Penlan, opened in 2018 and the first council houses to be built by Swansea Council for over 50 years, were constructed to Passivhaus standard. From the experience gained through this development, working with in-house contractors, the Council devised a Swansea standard for all its new housing which aims to achieve a 25% improvement on current building regulations. This was applied to 16 new homes in Birchgrove completed in 2020 and the second phase of the Colliers Way scheme in 2021. These were developed as part of the Innovative Housing Programme and are designed as mini power stations with solar roofs, Tesla storage batteries and ground source heat pumps.

Swansea Council and other registered social landlords have often been able to secure funds to support measures to improve energy efficiency in existing social housing, such as insulation and boiler replacements. Since January 2020, Swansea Council has also supported the UK Government’s ECO Flex scheme aimed at owner-occupier and privately rented homes that are energy inefficient or where households are most likely to experience fuel poverty. In the past two years, over 100 private properties in Swansea have received this help.

Many public bodies and other organisations and businesses in Swansea have been collaborating for many years to reduce their carbon emissions and energy costs through the unique Low Carbon Swansea Bay network.

Swansea University is home to the SPECIFIC project at the forefront of innovation in energy technology research and full-scale demonstrations. Research projects include cutting-edge

solar capture and energy storage systems and fully-operational demonstration energy positive buildings have been created.

The Swansea Bay City Deal portfolio of projects and programmes has a major focus on renewables and clean energy, decarbonisation of industry and low carbon growth. Whilst many of these projects are located in other counties, with key energy initiatives clustered around Neath Port Talbot and Pembroke Dock, the Homes as Power Stations project is being delivered throughout the region. This initiative is introducing state-of-the-art design and energy efficiency technologies to thousands of properties, including in Swansea, and utilising some of the innovations developed at Swansea University.

As part of the Institute of Welsh Affairs' Re-Energising Wales Project, an independent energy specialists organisation, Regen, conducted an analysis of the future energy demands and potential sources of energy generation in the Swansea Bay City Region and published a comprehensive report in 2018 which provides a vision and set of possible pathways to create a low carbon energy system for the region by 2035.

Changes over time

Renewable energy generation in Swansea has been increasing over recent years and the Energy Generation in Wales reports, published by Welsh Government, showed that it almost doubled from 87GWh in 2018 to 162GWh in 2019.

Along with most public sector organisations, Swansea Council has been reducing its energy consumption as a major component of its Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC). In 2019/20, the local authority reported a 55% reduction of emissions against a 2010 baseline. Amongst the policies that have helped deliver this reduction is the upgrading of over 21,000 street lights to LEDs. Swansea Council also procures all its electricity from renewable sources and the Swansea Council Pension Fund has announced plans to move away from investments in fossil fuel companies.

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating is the system used for monitoring and reporting on energy efficiency of buildings. The average SAP rating for Swansea council housing stock has been on an upward trend for a number of years and has reached 69, where the WHQS requirement is 65.

Comparisons with other places

Energy generation capacity in Swansea is relatively low with fossil fuel based electricity generation accounting for just over 1% of the total capacity across Wales and energy generation from renewables in Swansea being under 2.5% of the Welsh total.

Whilst there have been some notable community-led renewable energy projects in Swansea, there are few commercial schemes and Swansea currently has one of the lowest levels of renewable energy generation compared to other counties in Wales. The neighbouring counties of Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire are amongst those with the highest levels of energy generation.

Renewable energy generation by local authority

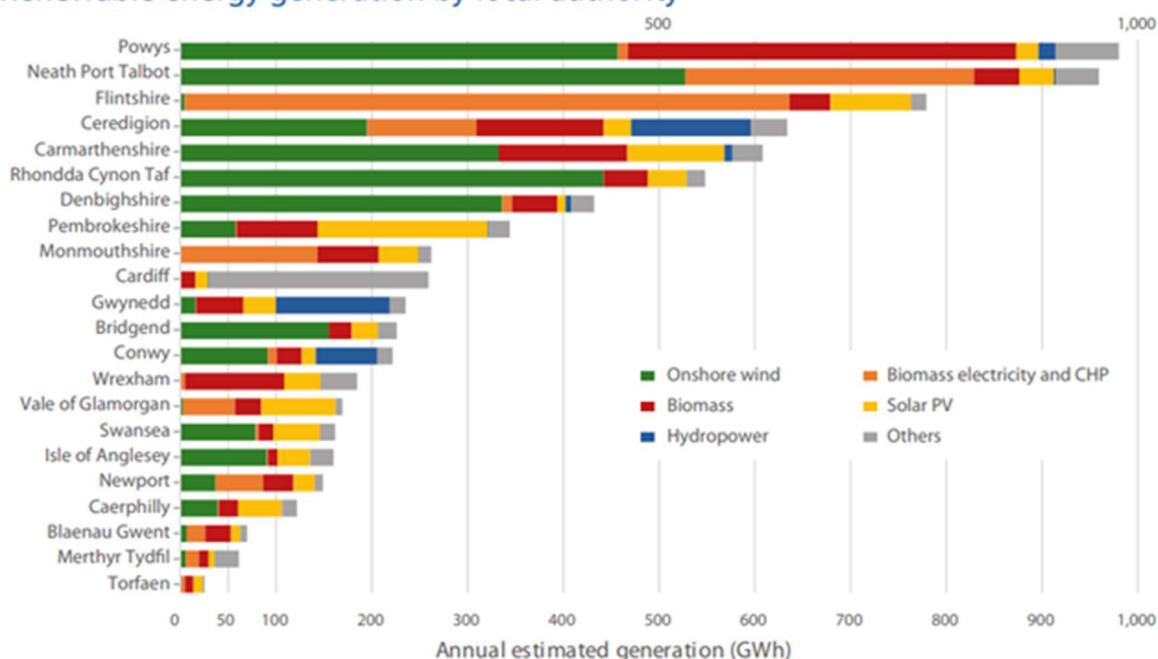


Figure En10: Renewable energy generation in Wales, 2019

The Welsh Housing Conditions Survey (WHCS) 2017-18 indicated that approx. 10% of households in Swansea were experiencing fuel poverty. Whilst this is just below the average for the whole of Wales, it does equate to a significant number of households (approx. 11,000).

Differences across Swansea

Swansea Council secured substantial funding and delivered the Sandfields Renewal Area scheme which included energy efficiency improvements to both social and private housing and followed on from a similar scheme in Hafod. Other grant schemes and improvement programmes often focus on social housing or on private households that are experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty.

“Build energy efficient homes, this would help with poverty as there would be less energy bills” – survey respondent.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The Welsh Government’s Net Zero Wales Plan (Carbon Budget 2,) published in 2021, sets out an aim to virtually eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from power stations by 2035 and ensure power supply is met through decarbonised sources as soon as possible and from 2035 at the latest.. It intends this to be achieved by reducing overall power generation from fossil fuels; increasing the deployment of renewable energy so that Wales generates 70% of its electricity consumption from renewables by 2030, and by supporting innovation in the power sector.

Welsh Government has set ambitious targets for the generation of renewable energy, including the promotion of community ownership. As well as the above 70% target for overall renewable generation, it also aims for one gigawatt of renewable energy capacity to be locally owned by 2030 and for all new renewable energy projects have at least an element of local ownership from 2020.

The Welsh Government's net zero carbon commitments, including a net zero public sector by 2030 and a net zero nation by 2050, will have a significant impact on energy generation and consumption right across Wales, led by local authorities and other, public sector bodies.

There are several social housing developments and retrofits being delivered or planned in Swansea by the local authority and local housing associations, in some cases in partnership with commercial or voluntary sector partners, to high level energy efficiency standards or with renewable or innovative building technologies.

In the Welsh Government's Future Wales National Plan 2040 Swansea has been identified as a Priority Area for District Heat Networks. This means that large scale mixed use developments should, where feasible, have a heat network with a renewable / low carbon or waste heat energy source.

Fuel poverty is likely to become an increasing concern in the near future as a consequence of rapidly rising costs but the transformation of the energy system will seek to address this in the longer term, along with environmental and economic issues.

Integration

As mentioned earlier, the energy trilemma highlights the strong links that energy production and consumption has not only with many environmental issues but also economic and social issues too. The transformation and decarbonisation of the energy sector offers opportunities for business development, employment in highly skilled jobs, the eradication of fuel poverty and improvements to health and well-being of citizens, both in our region and across the world. As such, this theme cuts across most of the well-being goals of the Future Generation Act.

Improvement

- The decarbonisation of the energy sector through an increase in energy generation from renewable sources, including an increase in community-owned and local energy generation and, potentially, the switch from natural gas to hydrogen.
- An increase in energy efficiency measures in homes and other buildings, including the use of sustainable and renewable energy technologies.
- A transition to more sustainable energy generation and consumption that enables everyone to meet their energy needs.

About the evidence

Mechanisms are in place for measuring and monitoring data on energy generation and capacity at a national and local level. Public bodies and larger organisations are required to monitor energy consumption as part of their carbon reporting. Data on the energy efficiency of homes is gathered as part of Housing Condition Surveys undertaken by local authorities and Welsh Government, and through use of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs).

Conclusions and key messages

- Policies, targets and plans are in place within Wales to drive down the use of fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy technology.
- Swansea currently has a relatively low level of energy generation, but a strong and growing community-owned renewable energy sector and the proposed development a tidal lagoon would make a significant difference to the ration between generation and consumption in Swansea.
- There are strong local commitments to developing energy efficient homes and other buildings but meeting the costs of this in both social and private housing is extremely challenging.
- The public sector in Swansea is leading on the decarbonisation agenda, the reduction in energy use and the switch to low-carbon and renewable technologies.
- There are strong partnerships in Swansea and the wider region supporting collaboration and knowledge sharing between organisations and sectors.
- The transformation of the energy system should focus not only on environmental and economic benefits but also the eradication of fuel poverty.

Cultural well-being

Introduction

The Well-being of Future Generations Act recognises culture as an integral part of well-being for the first time. Cultural Well-being is a holistic term covering a multitude of topics from Tourism to Volunteering and Welsh Language to Sport & Health. As Cultural Well-being is not clearly defined within the Act, we have taken into account the following definition from New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage (*'Cultural well-being - what is it?'*); "The vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through participation in recreation, creatives and cultural activities [and] the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions."

A number of National Indicators are associated with Cultural Well-being including those focusing on participation in arts, culture, sports & heritage activities, Welsh language abilities, and sense of belonging to the local area.

One of the seven well-being goals of the Act is for "A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language". The vision for Wales is that by "2050, culture and language will continue to be part of our day-to-day lives and valued as an intrinsic feature of our social, environmental and economic well-being. The Welsh language will be thriving, with over one million Welsh speakers using it in all aspects of daily life and work, and Welsh medium education available for everyone. Creativity will be recognised as an essential and valuable skill and everyone will be able to access and participate in culture, regardless of their background or where they live."

This chapter identifies the following as Key Topics:

- Cultural Assets;
- Arts, Culture, Heritage & Events;
- Sport & Health;
- Welsh Language; and
- Community Participation.

Areas within the key topics of Cultural Well-being were hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic, with cultural venues and services closing across the city. A study by the University of Sheffield has stated that "The broad sector of Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (which includes culture, but also sport and gambling) saw a 60% decline in output (Gross Value Added) and 450k jobs furloughed.

This represents 55% of the total jobs in the sector (second highest behind Accommodation and Food at 56% and way above the national average of 16%). 80,000 claims were made under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) in the same sector, 68% of the eligible population." Some of this was mitigated using digital technology, whilst others are still not able to operate.

Cultural Assets

Strengths and Assets

Cultural assets can include arts, natural heritage resources, public art, cultural venues, leisure facilities and events.

In recent years, the number of cultural venues in Swansea has grown, with in particular the re-branding of the High Street as an 'urban village' leading to the opening of the Volcano Theatre and Elysium Gallery. Important cultural venues in Swansea include Glynn Vivian Art Gallery (GVAG), Brangwyn Hall, Dylan Thomas Exhibition (DTE), Swansea Museum, the National Waterfront Museum, Taliesin Arts Centre, Egypt Centre, and the Great Hall on Swansea University's Bay Campus.

There are 17 libraries across Swansea which provide access to historic collections, publications, books, maps and newspapers, other media dating back to before the founding of Swansea Central library in 1887. The resources assist the service in creating small exhibitions of locally relevant materials to support local cultural and heritage themes, and celebrate historic achievements.

The Library Service celebrates and reflects the history of its communities through literature, archive material, photographs and shared stories.

Swansea's leisure facilities deliver a quality, recreation and fitness experience that aims to create a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents and communities of Swansea; providing opportunities, reducing barriers and improving accessibility for all.

The breadth of services are sustained through strong partnerships, and a mixed economy of varying operating models as suits the facilities. Publicly funded facilities are complemented by an array of privately owned and operated facilities, alongside community run and self-managed assets, resulting in a diverse offer, geographically and economically, catering to a range of customers and markets.

Oystermouth and Weobley castles are good examples of Heritage buildings and scheduled ancient monuments, which are popular visitor attractions. Cadw is responsible for the ruins of Swansea, Weobley and Loughor Castles; and Swansea Council for Oystermouth and Morris Castles (the latter is an early example of workers' housing). In addition, there are many historic churches in the area, particularly noteworthy among them are the many ancient parish churches on Gower. Swansea's Victorian parks also contain historic buildings of interest, such as the Swiss Cottage in Singleton Park.

"We should maintain our historic buildings and monuments and promote them all over the world. When I was working abroad everyone was fascinated by our castles, dragon folklore etc." – survey respondent.

Swansea is known as a City in a park, with:

- 163 parks and green spaces including sports pitches, specialist botanical and Clyne gardens;
- Circa 120 play facilities including 86 playgrounds, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), Skate park facilities, Trim Trail's and BMX tracks;
- Year on year awarded green flag status for numerous parks; and
- Wildflower Planting Scheme with over 41,000 square metres of wild flowers in bloom every year across the city.

Swansea currently has 40 community buildings across the city, these include community centres, memorial halls and pavilions. They are run by voluntary management committees made up of people from their local communities and supported by a Community Development Team to ensure that they remain vibrant, inclusive and responsive to the needs of their communities. They provide a much needed social space and an affordable venue to promote social, cultural and financial inclusion, and to maximise community involvement and participation.

“Community participation and volunteering is the most important area as they contribute towards community resilience and improve wellbeing” – survey respondent.

A range of assets are currently leased to Community groups across Swansea, including; 16 Allotments alongside a number of Playing fields, Sports Pavilions, Bowling Pavilions, Green Space and, in some cases, designated areas of specific parks are managed by ‘Friends of’ groups.

Changes over time

The 2017 Assessment identified that, while there is a high regard and positivity felt for the cultural offer across Swansea with high take-up, availability and diversity in the offer, community involvement could be further developed in some areas.

Fusion is a Welsh Government supported programme designed to tackle poverty through better understanding of our communities and their needs; consultation and improved partnership work; mapping our work and recognising areas for development; tackling barriers to engagement – financial, geographical and psychological – in order to support people to improve their own wellbeing whilst gaining skills for life and employment. The programme in Swansea is coordinated through a networking partnership called the Swansea Creative Learning Partnership and is regularly cited as an example of best practice, and successful delivery, by colleagues in Welsh Government.

The investment in the restoration of parts of the Hafod-Morfa Copperworks site has been achieved through National Heritage Lottery Funding and private investment in part for the creation of a new enterprise and extension to the Penderyn distilleries – and work continues to restore and bring back to commercial and community use this aspect of Swansea’s cultural history. The buildings and surrounding landscape provide a ‘living museum’, helping illustrate and understand the evolution of the city from its days being known as Copperopolis, importing and exporting industrial innovation globally, to the impact of the industrial revolution on the present shape of the city centre, historic building and public art

and heritage collections. 2014 also saw the repurposing of the literature centre as the Dylan Thomas Centre and Exhibition, as part of the Dylan 100 celebrations, alongside the restoration of the Grade I listed Guildhall and Brangwyn Hall complex. 2015 was punctuated by the reopening of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery following extensive investment, with a new extension and fit for purpose exhibition halls and conservation rooms and more recently, the Grade II listed Palace Theatre and Albert Hall, both of which will offer scope for creative and tech industries, live arts, conferencing and performance space, are in receipt of £20m investment, adding to the overall offer of the city as a place for creative and cultural development. Additionally, along this same timeline, the woods and landscape around the former Penllergare house is being restored by a Trust, along with many of its historic garden features, adding to the considerable historic parkland and natural assets of the area.

“Creative industries - arts, music architecture - have huge economic benefits as well as creating a sense of pride and belonging in the community” – survey respondent.

Sustainability of the portfolio is a key consideration and between 2015 and 2018, a significant review of Council run assets was undertaken to ensure best value and long term prospects for this portfolio. As a result, a Leisure Management contract for 19.5 years was awarded to Freedom Leisure Ltd to operate Leisure Centres (from 1st October 2018), entailing job protection and a £5.16M Capital Investment in these assets. Other facilities are maintained through community or public sector partnerships, whilst the cultural venues are maintained in-house, subject to continuous improvement and innovation. For example, the Grand Theatre and Brangwyn Hall are merged as a cohesive performance and community space; and in recognition of the opening of new performance venues, including the Swansea Arena, have a new direction for events planning, Swansea based productions and a commitment to diversifying audiences. This is being realised through partnerships with the private events and catering sector, local producers and the national umbrella organisation Race Council Cymru. A commitment to diversification of audiences, and support to ensure communities with protected characteristics had fair and equal representation and access to our programming, was illustrated just prior to the Covid Pandemic through a new Diversity Pledge for Culture in the city. The pledge was the result of a pilot work programme for Agenda21: Culture in Sustainable Cities, with United Cities and Local Government.

This work explored factors and priorities for culture in European cities, including policy commitments to nine principles including Cultural Rights; Culture and Education; Place Making; Governance; access to information; planning policy and distribution alongside social and economic factors. Supported and complemented by similar programmes such as Learning City, City of Culture, Intercultural cities and a more recent commitment to Human Rights, the principles are threaded through the strategic planning of the cultural offer.

The Pandemic placed a different slant on the emerging cultural strategy, including the need to rethink how we operate during and ‘post-Covid’, to aid recovery of the city and rebuild confidence, skills and improving access and progression, universally. The lockdown period had a significant impact, as in March 2020 all the cultural venues, leisure buildings and free to access recreational and play areas as well as community buildings were closed due to the pandemic. Four main community buildings were changed into Food Distribution Hubs to

supply and support local food banks and in the area. Throughout the year there was limited access in line with Welsh Government advice and at times only foodbanks and childcare were permitted.

An assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on play carried out by the local authority in May 2020 highlighted that for many there were actually enhancements to play opportunities but, if anything, the gap in play opportunities had increased between the 'haves and have nots'. It was noted, during lockdown, that for those with indoor and outdoor play space, parents around more often and the freedom to get out into their local area, opportunities to play have increased. However, those with limited indoor and outdoor space – particularly little or no gardens – will have seen a reduction.

Usage figures are collected on a monthly basis from cultural venues and services. Usage from 2017 to 2021 has fluctuated based on external conditions. An example of this is the impact of COVID-19 which saw a number of venues and services closed.

This resulted in an 87.4% drop in usage from the 2017 level (6,942,639 to 681,613). The overall usage in these years were:

2016/17 - 6,942,639
2017/18 - 6,993,874
2018/19 - 7,283,126
2019/20 - 6,215,561
2020/21 - 681,613
TOTAL - 28,116,813

The 17 libraries remain the most utilised cultural venue with 4.2million users within the period (15% of the total asset usage).

Following the commissioning of Leisure Centres to Freedom Leisure, a drop in usage was caused by improvement works taking place resulting in the closure of some facilities whilst this scheme was undertaken.

Comparisons with other places

The model used by Swansea Council for the running of community buildings is seen replicated fully, or in part, in other areas. Newport has a mix of buildings run by paid staff and volunteers, whilst Glasgow's buildings are run by a charity called Glasgow Life on behalf of Glasgow Council.

Alongside financial sustainability, quality assurance remains a priority. The Green Flag Award is an international mark of a quality park or green space. Delivered in Wales by Keep Wales Tidy, with support from the Welsh Government, it's judged by green space experts who volunteer their time to visit applicant sites and assess them against criteria including horticultural standards, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. Swansea is one of the lead counties in achieving the award with 18 Green Flag and Green Flag Community Awards out of 248 in Wales. Similarly, we have achieved 4 Blue Flag awards within the county (Caswell Bay, Llangland Bay, Port Eynon & Swansea Marina), which remain

much loved community and visitor assets. The Blue flags are world-renowned eco-labels that highlight the pledge to improve water quality, safety and environmental management as well as promote environmental awareness and social responsibility. All three beaches are also sections of the Wales Coast Path that promotes health and wellbeing through our natural coastline.

The two Archives and the four Museums/Art Galleries in the City have all achieved the UK Accreditation Standard in line with National Indicator 39.

Many Councils across the UK either have entered into partnership or contracted out facilities, although some are still operated in house. It is critical that we now address the perfect storm of systemic fault-lines in how we view the contribution of sport and leisure services, the impact of long-term funding pressures and the immediate and long-term impact of the health pandemic on cultural, heritage, sport and leisure provision.

In their 2020 study 'Mapping Community Asset Transfers in Wales' Building Communities Trust reported that Swansea had the least number of CAT in Wales (9) and Gwynedd had the most (42). It was also apparent that the type of asset most commonly transferred are Community Halls.

Differences across Swansea

Swansea's major cultural venues are concentrated in the City community area, with the exception of those owned, operated and maintained by Swansea University which are on one of their two large campus estates. The concentration of cultural attractions in a tightly drawn area draws in visitors to the city centre, not just from Swansea but from much further afield, thus boosting the visitor economy and limiting the need to travel by car or public transport between venues.

By contrast, its heritage buildings, relatively scarce in the city centre through wartime bombing and post-war redevelopment, are spread out across the local authority area reflecting their variety, from medieval to Victorian and agricultural to industrial. Remnants of the industrial era are primarily to be found in Cwm Tawe, Penderi and Llchwyr community areas and are mostly sites of ruins. Pre-industrial buildings are to be found mostly in Bay West, most notably on Gower and form part of the national visitor attraction of this area (particularly the Gower Heritage Centre and Weobley Castle).

"Arts and heritage is a way to engage and promote culture, Welsh language and cultural assets, it all has a knock on effect on each other" – survey respondent.

Activities vary slightly in areas depending on deprivation. An example is there is more focus on tackling employment and poverty in Penderry Ward with links with Local Area Coordinators and Communities for Work than Swansea West wards.

Swansea publicly funded facilities such as leisure centres, sports centres and 3G pitches throughout the City, with plans to deliver some new 3Gs in Penderi and Cwm Tawe currently under construction.

Across the public offering, operators Freedom Leisure Ltd ensure there is a consistent leisure offer across their portfolio and have ensured all facilities are of similar standard. A “City Wide Membership” has been introduced that allows users access to all facilities under one membership.

Swansea is home to facilities such as the Tennis Centre in Cwm Tawe, and Wales National Pool and Swansea University facilities in Bay West that deliver a diverse portfolio of sport that cater for those ranging from absolute beginners to international standard.

Community Asset Transfers have been successfully undertaken in all three electoral constituencies across Swansea; Swansea East (Jersey Park Bowling Pavilion; Trallwn Sports Pitch and Pavilion), Swansea West (Gwent Amateur Boxing Club; Green Space at Y-Llwyni) and Gower (Graig Y Coed Playing Fields; Underhill Park).

Perceptions and perspectives

The NHS relies on leisure facilities to provide exercise on referral schemes, social prescribing activities and rehabilitation services, with 66 per cent of cancer rehabilitation taking place in leisure facilities. Research by the District Councils Network demonstrates that 94 per cent of council's leisure centres had been utilised in schemes to tackle health inequalities over the last 5 years. 84 per cent confirmed that their leisure centres had been utilised in projects aimed at ‘hard to reach’ community members over the last 5 years and 79 per cent of leisure centres are used in social prescribing programmes. Voluntary groups like the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) rely on public swimming pools to train their lifeguards during the winter months and 72 per cent of primary schools rely on publicly provided pools to deliver their statutory responsibility for children to learn to swim. The social value created from participation in leisure centres totalled almost £262 million in May-June 2019.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The opening of Swansea Arena represents probably the most significant single boost for the city's cultural venues in a number of years and offers opportunities to re-orientate a whole section of the city centre towards cultural and leisure activity within Copr Bay; a neighbourhood which already includes two museums, a small amateur theatre and a leisure centre. The re-opening of the Albert Hall as a significant independent cultural venue will also bring audiences to the northern part of the city centre. The proposed relocation of the Central Library to a more central position, within a Community Hub offer on Oxford St, alongside other community services brings the prospect of attracting a wider audience to use its services and extending the cultural offer, creating a link building along the axis of the city centre, from the Brangwyn Hall, to the Grand Theatre, and the Community Hub – opening up the city centre and pedestrian links with the public transport nodes and Copr Bay.

The investment in new buildings should not underplay the contribution made to Swansea's cultural vitality by the many existing smaller and independent cultural venues dotted across

the city centre. These venues need to be supported and well-marketed in order to regain their audiences post-pandemic.

With regard to its heritage buildings, a significant development, chronologically parallel to the construction of the Arena, is the long-anticipated restoration of the Hafod-Morfa Copperworks site and the nearby bascule bridge over the River Tawe. When the site is open, this will bring a much needed economic boost to the Cwm Tawe community area, incorporating a new distillery with visitor centre. There are opportunities here for diversifying the site's offer to bring a range of other independent visitor attractions to this area.

Some of the current restoration projects are creating new cultural and recreational destinations in outlying parts of the urban area, such as Penllergare Woods and Mumbles Pier.

A more joined-up approach to the city's heritage collections would benefit both the local sense of well-being and through increased activity in the visitor economy bring a small uplift to the economic prosperity of the area. This would be achieved by closer cross-sector working (museums, archives, libraries) and more co-operation between agencies (University, Council, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales) to market their services jointly.

Improvement would also be represented by the resolution of accommodation/location problems for those collections which are unable to grow, or which are held in properties that form part of a wider regeneration strategy for repurposing/alternative use. A mature approach to this would see heritage institutions and their parent agencies co-operate to create a better user experience and a stronger narrative for the 'Swansea Story'. This would involve a greater emphasis on the importance of cultural heritage in place making and driving the visitor economy and sustainability of the city centre.

Integration

The topic of Swansea's cultural venues and historic buildings is part of the dimension of cultural well-being and is closely linked to the status and condition of the city's other cultural assets such as its heritage collections and its intangible cultural heritage. In a eudemonic definition of well-being, the health of this subject area adds a sense of collective meaning and purpose to a community, along with its other cultural assets such as its statues, monuments and street names. There are no perceived gaps in the assessment.

Community asset transfers link with a number of cultural strands to improve the wellbeing of volunteers who sit on committees and the wider communities they serve.

Overlaps exist with cultural strands, including community buildings/ parks, open spaces, leisure facilities, arts strategy, access and participation, tourism, active young people, active adults, community sports, physical well-being, intervention, welsh language, celebrating Welsh culture, volunteering, democratic engagement, intangible cultural heritage, community cohesion and sense of place.

"I think Arts and Heritage and Cultural Identity are inextricably linked - in order to make arts and heritage relevant it has to involve local culture" – survey respondent.

Crime and Safety – Community involvement in running and maintaining Council owned property, also reduced anti-social behaviour and crime. Vandalism and fly tipping for example, are more readily reported, where the community are actively visiting and using facilities.

Improvement

Improvement would be represented by an increasingly diverse user/customer base, benefiting from a thriving sector of cultural venues and conservation/restoration of heritage buildings/sites which attract both residents and visitors alike across all parts of the City and County of Swansea.

Going forward Community Buildings need to be sustainable with a range of operating models/mixed economies of shared and devolved management (e.g. supporting management committees in a Community Asset Transfer). This will give the opportunity for committees to access more grants to improve the building and look at tackling climate change with super-energy-efficient buildings.

Encouraging more community involvement with active residents and community groups engaged in designing and managing services.

We need further support to ensure a balanced programme of locally based, affordable activities targeting the communities with protected characteristics and vulnerable groups whilst improving the social, economic and environmental conditions alongside cultural well-being. Encouraging and facilitating more intergenerational activities, contributing to the early years as well as transitional stages, through to the ageing well priorities in a visible, effectively resourced way.

The immediate aim for all operators and their facilities is to adjust to the new normal following the pandemic, increase income back to baseline and develop customer confidence in order for customers to return and partake in their activities, as they previously would have. Current links with the research schools at Swansea University on how place and community is shaped by the impact of COVID-19 can better inform future programming and enrich the use of our parks, public spaces and venues through arts and culture.

About the evidence

Welsh Government recommends that a community needs-based approach is adopted by Local Authorities and that transferees undertake an audit of gaps in their expertise and training needs to understand where support is required.

Data for Community Buildings is collected in the form of usage, this covers activity type, age ranges and number of attendees. The data gaps are:

- Ethnic backgrounds
- Gender
- Disabilities
- Financial costs

Data development:

- Local surveys to collection suggestions
- Feedback and comments

While data is available on individual cultural venues, more work could be done on the overall use of the city's heritage collections.

Conclusions and key messages

Swansea is particularly strong in the diversity and range of its cultural offer, both from large institutions such as the Council and the Universities, elite and community sports providers, and from small independent concerns. Awareness and enjoyment of some of the venues is not as widespread as it could be across all sections of the community, particularly in the areas experiencing demographic growth such as ethnic minority groups and younger people. The sector and community alike has been hard hit by closure during the COVID lockdowns.

Many of the existing cultural venues are however already engaged in dynamic and innovative work to bring them to a wider audience, including working with traditionally hard-to-reach groups. This needs to continue to be nurtured and supported going forward by Welsh Government and the local authority.

The Council's land and buildings are used for a wide variety of purposes and for some of these assets community management and ownership could deliver benefits to the local community and benefits to the authority and other public sector service providers. Community-led ownership offers additional opportunities to secure resources within a local area and to encourage use by local people and communities.

There could be closer co-operation between agencies holding cultural collections so that the end user experience is improved.

We must continue to support access within the current buildings and work with the volunteers to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by providing more activities and services within the community.

Whilst some changes may require a longer-term invest to save approach, many of these are of no cost or cost-neutral. Where investment is required, this will save money in the long term by reducing energy usage or demand for costly NHS operations or social care support.

The facilities available across Swansea provide a range of services to all groups of society and the general public which support their wellbeing, health, cultural and social experiences

in a variety of ways. The facilities provide engaging and welcoming spaces and places for all groups to use and feel comfortable, safe and allow the opportunity to prosper.

A shared vision and new, refreshed Cultural Strategy for the city – within the regional boundaries – would be a good start to help coordinate and direct a new action plan for culture, as a legacy of the current regeneration, social, economic, educational and environmental priorities.

Arts, Culture and Tourism

Strengths and Assets

Two schemes are in place to support access to arts, culture and heritage within Swansea; Passport to Leisure (PTL) and HYNT. The Passport to Leisure scheme is administered by Swansea Council and is available to those who qualify for means-tested benefits along with families in the care system, such as foster families, allowing for concessionary rates at a range of cultural and sporting venues. The HYNT card is administered by CREU Cymru and is a Wales-wide scheme to allow disabled persons the opportunity to take a carer with them, free of charge, when attending events. The financial adjustments necessary for both schemes in terms of income are borne by Swansea Council.

2018 saw the return of Pride to Swansea in an event which comprised a parade and community event at the National Waterfront Museum. In 2019 Swansea Pride was a week-long event and culminated with the biggest parade yet and a festival at the National Waterfront Museum and Museum Green. Unfortunately both 2020 and 2021 saw the cancellation of the Pride event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Swansea Pride work with local cultural venues, such as the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery (GVAG) to celebrate LGBT+ History Month.

The Fusion Programme encourages collaboration between culture and heritage organisations and bodies such as local authorities, to increase opportunities for those in areas of economic disadvantage. These opportunities include:

- access to volunteering;
- working together with communities;
- work experience;
- improvement of digital skills;
- early years;
- family learning; and
- improve approaches to learning and wellbeing.

The Events programme in Swansea has continued to grow with more and more events taking place throughout the City. Singleton Park has seen BBC Radio 1's Biggest Weekend, The Stereophonics, Olly Murs and Proms in the Park. The ever-popular Wales Airshow has continued and Swansea Fringe was established in 2017 and has grown year-on-year. Such is the popularity of special events, Singleton Park required a new license to have a capacity of 40,000 attendees (up from 30,000).

“Places and activities, personal experience is that Swansea continues to grow as an event location which is great for the city, our culture and the economy” – survey respondent.

The Dylan Thomas Centre works in partnership with West Glamorgan People First – a user-led organisation of adults with a learning disability – to co-produce projects and interpretation. Prior to lockdown, the group met weekly at the Centre, and these sessions will resume when guidance allows.

The Dylan Thomas Centre’s Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund project is working in partnership with National Autistic Trust to deliver a ground-breaking new accredited Museums qualification for autistic people. The Dylan Thomas Centre is developing sensory bags in partnership with West Glamorgan People First and local SEN schools. The Council regularly works with Ysgol Pen-y-Bryn on projects, including World Book Day, development of materials for the New Curriculum for Wales, and film and animation projects.

The GVAG learning and engagement programme includes activities and long term projects with groups across the protected characteristics. The programme is developed to help participants combat feelings of isolation and loneliness, inspiring them to create and be creative. The gallery team are in the process of developing a funding bid that will seek to extend this reach and share the wellbeing benefits of our community-centred programme with people from the most deprived areas of the city who do not already attend the gallery.

Swansea was accepted into the UCLG/Agenda 21 for Culture programme of Pilot Cities for the period 2016-2019. A self-assessment exercise involving local arts practitioners resulted in a number of conclusions, including that a: “...lack of connectivity, limited innovations, diversity of voices and risk-taking; as well as poor legacy planning are a threat to the city’s future as an evolving and sustainable cultural centre. The city must work harder at supporting new diverse voices and integrating them within its planning practices.” The process determined that the question of ethnic diversity was “a weakness within Swansea’s formal cultural sector, as evidenced by the lack of diversity in the appointed stakeholder group. The group felt they did not have enough knowledge of the ways other minorities in the city experienced cultural provision.”

Since 2017, a number of initiatives have been developed to redress the historical imbalance in cultural provision that is of, and reflects, the interests of Swansea’s diverse communities and that promotes cultural dialogue and exchange. In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, these initiatives take a collaborative approach and consider and involve people of all ages and diversity. The primary initiatives are: a Diversity Pledge; a partnership with Race Council Cymru to establish a Cultural and Digital Hub; and the Council’s Black Lives Matter motion.

The Arts Strategy relates to the city centre and the significant regeneration taking place within this locality. The purpose of the strategy is to encourage businesses, visitors, residents, professionals and investors to reimagine the city, encouraging a new perspective, over a phased period, leading up to and beyond the regeneration programme. The intention

has been for creative intervention to be integrated in an authentic and sustainable way, thereby supporting national wellbeing goals of a place of vibrant culture and prosperity. In all respects the focus is on promoting the democracy of and sustainable use of the public realm, creating safe, creative and engaging public spaces, events and streetscapes.

The services offer outreach programmes which encompass special events, a regular service to schools and young people, and specific work with vulnerable and difficult-to-reach groups. Particularly strong in the last category are the Dylan Thomas Exhibition, the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery and the National Waterfront Museum teams. In 2020, for example, the Dylan Thomas Exhibition's Literature and Trauma initiative won a prize in the Museums Association's Museums Change Lives awards. With a target audience of refugees and asylum seekers living in Swansea, this creative writing scheme was named the best small museum project that delivers social impact. The service was also invited to write a Good Practice Guide for the Agenda 21 Pilot Cities programme. The Guide details the Centre's sustained work with refugees and people seeking asylum. The Egypt Centre is noteworthy in that it operates the only permanent museum volunteer programme in the UK for children and young people. In 2021, Swansea Museum was included in a report by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales as one of the museums in Wales excelling at collecting stories from their communities.

Tourism is a vitally important industry to Swansea. It creates and safeguards thousands of jobs, secures investment and generates hundreds of millions of pounds for the local economy. Tourism Marketing attracts a market to the city, which creates demand for improved facilities, which in turn provide an enhanced landscape, natural assets and community facilities for businesses and residents. The work of the team enables both residents and visitors to benefit from unique experiences through events, tours, activities, attractions, places to stay and eat and a range of factors that feature in quality of life/happiest towns to live indices. This has the mutual benefit of improving well-being and foster a sense of pride within communities, whilst providing visitors with an enjoyable experience.

Swansea's key strength is its unique mix of city, coast and country offer within one destination. With award winning and globally recognised beaches, parks with green flag status and Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is important to recognise the vital role the natural environment plays in boosting residents and visitors wellbeing.

97% of visitors surveyed in 2019 strongly agreed or agreed that 'Holidays and short breaks are important to a person's health and well-being' and 98% of those visitors surveyed enjoyed their visit.

In 2020, coronavirus had a devastating effect on the tourism and hospitality industries, being one of the first to close and the last to re-open. The tourism industry faces significant challenges including (but not limited to) seasonality, skills shortages (more prevalent post Covid) and poor perception of low wages, unsociable hours, etc.

Changes over time

2,451 HYNT cards have been issued in Swansea out of 20,526 Wales-wide. Since 2017, over 10,000 HYNT tickets have been utilised at the Grand Theatre and Brangwyn Hall at a cost of over £250,000. The cards encourage disabled audience members to attend cultural events.

Since 2017 PTL has undergone a massive change in the way it is administered. The application process was streamlined, and for the first time, was available online.

There are currently 1,255 active PTL cards as the Pandemic dealt a massive blow to the scheme as there was a drop in applications whilst venues were closed, but this has begun to pick up once again.

The Swansea Diversity Pledge adopts the broadest concept of diversity to include all people with Protected Characteristics under equality legislation, as well as Welsh speakers and those living in economic disadvantage. The Pledge is values-based, asserting that all people have an equal right to benefit from, and express themselves through culture and that Swansea Council must be proactive in facilitating this. The Pledge is very practically orientated. It challenges the Service through asking new questions and seeking new solutions through the formation of new relationships often beyond its traditional remit.

The most ambitious initiative is the development of a Digital and Cultural Hub at Swansea's Grand Theatre. Working with 24 ethnic minority organisations in the city, the partnership, led jointly by Swansea Council and Race Council Cymru, is pioneering a model to provide services and cultural programming for these communities. Whilst recognising the separate needs of some, the Hub also supports intercultural and cross-sectional engagement whereby all parts of the community are encouraged to come together to foster a culture of diversity, dialogue and exchange that promotes community cohesion. The most innovative and challenging element of this initiative is the creation of an artistic programme which will be both diverse and inclusive. In its scope it has few parallels in Britain or elsewhere.

In July 2020, Swansea Council passed a motion expressing its solidarity with BAME communities in Swansea and across the world in their fight for justice. Furthermore, Swansea Council acknowledged that symbols of Britain's colonial past exist in the form of statues, street names, etc and that these serve as a painful reminder to BAME people of the historic subjugation and ongoing inequalities. The Council, therefore, pledged to undertake a review of the city's places and institutions and assess whether any changes should be made, the aim being not to erase history but to learn from and represent it sensitively. The motion also committed the Council to celebrating and memorialising a greater range of Swansea's citizens of the past, particularly women, BAME, disabled, LGBT and working-class people.

In 2021 Swansea Council became a partner in The World Reimagined, a UK-wide art education project working to transform our understanding of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its impact on all of us to help us make racial justice a reality. The project will see communities explore a range of themes and cultural influences that will unite participants and audiences to positively understand our cultural influences, and celebrate the present and future opportunities for us all, through a deeper understanding of history and what connects us as communities.

There is no baseline for demonstrating change due to the Arts Strategy as this was not in place in 2017. The strategy, produced in 2019, was developed to meet the planning requirements for the city centre regeneration – specifically for what was known as Swansea Central, now termed Copr Bay South and North. The strategy supports the visibility of existing and planned cultural assets and communities and seeks fulfilment of Swansea’s vision to re-present the cityscape as a cultural landscape, promoting cultural tourism, developing and sustaining the eco-system for creative industries, building audiences, skills and employability.

The initial phase of the Arts Strategy implementation looks at a plan for ‘reoccupying’ the city-centre and learning new ways of working with our digital assets and new public spaces. An empty building has been identified at the heart of the city’s regeneration area in which to grow a Creative Hub, supported by Creative Wales, operating as a Meanwhile Use titled Arts Arkade. This temporary space will be used to bring artist networks, practitioners and community groups into a space to experiment with visual and applied arts, in order to create new work for the emerging public spaces and online learning tools for schools.

During the period 2017 – 2019, the economic impact generated from tourism to the area grew by over £55m from £421.83m to £477.22m. During this time, visitor numbers grew by 140,000 from 4.65m and 4.79m and total employment (FTE) supported by tourism grew by 267 from 5,731 to 5,998.

Accommodation businesses within the area have also seen a growth in occupancy levels. Non serviced accommodation occupancy has seen a 5% growth over the two year period and above the Wales average by almost 10%. Serviced accommodation occupancy has remained consistent and above the Wales average by approximately 10%.

The Fusion Partnership Projects, in partnership with Swansea Museum, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Dylan Thomas Centre, and National Waterfront Museum, engaged with over 25,000 people between April 2019 and March 2020, with 464 unemployed individuals, 2,683 older people, 2,389 individuals from BAME groups and 1,879 asylum seekers attending activities/sessions. Sessions supporting improved mental health were attended by 1,942 individuals and 3,190 individuals attending autism friendly/relaxed sessions or activities.

The table below shows examples of the recent GVAG Learning & Engagement Programme focussing on protected characteristics.

Table C1: Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Learning & Engagement Programme workshops

	Free Workshops	Name of session	Participants July 2020-Oct 2021*	Description
Refugee & Asylum Seeker Programmes	59	Welcome	576	Working with families and adults on virtual drop in craft session and long term projects for adults - namely the Welcome banner, which drew in a range

	Free Workshops	Name of session	Participants July 2020-Oct 2021*	Description
				of ages and demographics to work together.
Age	139	Wednesday Adult Workshop / Art Café / Threads / Community Gazette	2501	Regular Wednesday art and craft sessions for people over the age of 55, including art café (an informal discussion group on Mondays, the practical class on Wednesdays and a community gazette that was devised during lockdown to combat isolation for those who were unable to connect online with their peers).
Race	8	Partnership project / associate artists x African community centre	93	Partnership project with African community centre offering healthy advice and creative mindfulness session for their clients.
Disability	24	Sightlife art group	79	During the pandemic we devised group discussion topics and called the members of the group every week, later on we worked with Sightlife to offer conference calls so everyone could talk to each other. We are now back at the gallery and looking forward to working in person with the group again.
Sexual Orientation	3	Associate Artist's project - GoodVibes	33	Artist worked with YMCA's Goodvibes group over the course of the past 18 months.
Gender	1	Kathryn Ashill / King Len Blanco	150	Discussion on gender
Pregnancy and Maternity	3	Art Babas / Babanod Celf	28	Online content created for pre-school parents in English and Welsh, with activities and themed session.

Note: * Mar – June 2020 affected by pandemic.

Comparisons with other places

Swansea residents have 11.9% of all HYNT cards issued in Wales, whilst having 7.8% of the population of Wales.

Cultural strategies in comparable coastal cities that have suffered post-industrial decline focus on employing culture to improve the wellbeing of individuals and the social and economic prosperity of these cities.

In its scope the Swansea Cultural and Digital Hub has few parallels in Britain or elsewhere. However, RCC is establishing Cultural and Digital Hubs in Newport, Carmarthen and North

Wales based on the Swansea model, although these are likely to focus more on community and cultural services rather than artistic programming.

Swansea is above the national average for people attending and/or participating in arts culture or heritage activities. (National Indicator 35)

Table C2: Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts culture or heritage activities three or more times a year by local authorityⁱ

Percentage of adults (16+)	2017-18	2019-20
Wales	74.92	70.84
Carmarthenshire	71.91	64.22
Swansea	78.45	70.90
Neath Port Talbot	70.77	63.85
Cardiff	83.32	84.28

Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government.

Whilst Swansea hasn't seen the highest growth in economic impact, visitor number and employment figures for Tourism in comparison to other areas in Wales, it is still a positive growth trend.

Table C3: STEAM Unitary Authority Summary 2018-19

	Economic Impact £M 2019			Visitor days 000's		
	2019	2018	% Change	2019	2018	% Change
Swansea	477.22	467.11	2	8,549	8,427	1
Carmarthenshire	513.25	477.51	7	7,023	6,628	6
Neath Port Talbot	129.30	127.62	1	2,067	2,066	0
Cardiff	1,432.84	1,469.25	-2	24,101	24,716	-2

	Visitor Numbers 000's			Total FTE employment		
	2019	2018	% Change	2019	2018	% Change
Swansea	4,793	4,802	0	5,998	5,801	3
Carmarthenshire	3,436	3,330	3	6,645	6,272	6
Neath Port Talbot	1,506	1,516	-1	1,626	1,575	3
Cardiff	21,488	22,254	-3	14,719	14,549	1

Source: Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM), 2018-19.

Differences across Swansea

The Arts Strategy relates to the city centre and, therefore, differences across Swansea community areas are not applicable.

Almost all Gower visitors surveyed in 2019 (98%) agreed that 'holidays and short breaks are important to a person's health and well-being'. The figure was 97% amongst visitors to Swansea and Mumbles.

In terms of overall enjoyment, Gower visitors were particularly likely to have enjoyed their visit – 80% found it ‘very enjoyable’ (compared with an average 68% for Swansea, Mumbles and Gower combined).

Visitors to Gower rated numerous aspects of their visit. Aspects rated highest were the ‘feeling of safety and security from crime’ and ‘quality of accommodation’. For Mumbles, ‘feeling of safety and security from crime’ was second on the list, and for Swansea it was third.

Perceptions and perspectives

Welsh Government and Visit Wales’ ambition is to deliver wellbeing benefits for all through tourism.

Their focus is on the three pillars of the core offer: landscape, culture and adventure. These three themes align directly with Visit Wales’ vision to deliver and promote environmental, social and cultural, and health and wellbeing benefits across Wales.

Swansea Council’s latest Destination Management Plan (DMP) was created in partnership with internal departments, private and third sectors to address the important role tourism plays and continue to set a strategic direction for Swansea Bay as a visitor destination. Within this plan, The DMP works towards the 7 goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

The DMP will work towards the 7 goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

A Prosperous Wales
A key action of the DMP is for the tourism industry to be in a position to employ local people throughout the year.

A Resilient Wales
Managing and preserving our natural environment, which is a key reason to visit, versus the need for development, will continue to be a tough ask.

A healthier Wales
Investing in and maintaining our walking / cycling infrastructure, beaches, parks and promenade provide local people and visitors free and direct access to facilities, which can help improve their physical and mental well-being.

A more equal Wales
Many international students work in the sector to improve their linguistic skills, whilst the free movement of labour over the last decade has seen the sector employ people into roles, which have often proved difficult to fill.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

This is at the heart of what makes the destination unique and our commitment to promoting and encouraging our residents and visitors to participate in the Arts, Sport and Recreation.

A Wales of cohesive communities
The DMP aims to create attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities for residents and visitors alike.

A globally responsible Wales
The DMP recognises the principles of sustainable development and how tourism impacts upon the built and natural environments. When doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being and future generations.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



Figure C1: Links between Swansea’s Destination Management Plan and the national goals

The DMP is currently under review and has been replaced in the interim period, post Covid, by the Tourism Recovery Action Plan (TRAP) to assist in the recovery of the tourism industry during this challenging time.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The Strategy complements regional priorities developed by joint working - Regional Plan for Regeneration and the South West Regional Town Centre Action Plan, and meets local priorities, outlined in regeneration and economic recovery plans. The Creative Hub (Arts Arkade) activities are in line with Creative Wales priorities for supporting digital platforms and creative content creators, reflecting the increase in this area of work, and bringing artists into the sector as well as providing creative learning opportunities for community groups and schools.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the review of the DMP was put on hold, whilst the TRAP was developed for 2021/22. It is the intention to review the DMP in 2022/2023 and this will align with future national tourism strategies produced by Welsh Government/Visit Wales.

Within the new DMP, there will be a strong strategic focus on City Centre Regeneration, with the new Digital Arena and Copr Bay development leading this regeneration; attracting more and larger events, which will have a positive impact on other investments within the tourism and hospitality industry, including new hotels and attractions to improve the overall visitor and resident experience.

The coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on overseas travel has resulted in a rise in UK staycations. Swansea Bay is the fifth most popular destination in Wales for those planning a trip to Wales during Sept – Dec 2021.

Integration

The Arts Strategy links to the following topics:

- Access and participation: the Arts Arkade project will provide opportunities for young people 14-21 to participate in creative learning activities.
- Tourism: through delivery of arts activities and interventions that will promote cultural tourism and spend in the city.
- Sense of place: by enhancing people's perception of the city, sense of ownership and providing new levels of enjoyment.

Growing tourism for the good of Wales means economic growth that delivers benefits for people and places including environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits.

Improvement

Improvement would be achieved through a Cultural Strategy for the whole of the city and county of Swansea that would provide a framework for decision making and enable resources to be directed to identified priorities in order to improve the lives of individuals, and the social and economic health and prosperity of the city.

A requirement of the Cultural Strategy would be to address the different levels of participation and engagement in culture that exists between the East and West of the city in order to drive culture led regeneration and tackle inequality and disconnection in the city and its hinterlands.

In order to develop tourism sustainably, Swansea (in line with Visit Wales) needs to address three key challenges:

- Seasonality – extend the season and grow off peak tourism during the shoulder months
- Spend - encourage visitors to spend longer and spend more in Swansea
- Spread – encourage visitors to explore other parts of Swansea (e.g. Mawr) as well as the traditional honey pot areas, to reduce pressures and impact on the environment and communities.

Improvements in relation to providing a more varied and better quality tourism offer is underway, with:

- More quality visitor attractions – Swansea Arena, Penderyn Distillery (opening 2022) and other proposed major attractions (at advanced stages).
- Better quality tourism product – grants for improvements to accommodation (Tourism Support Fund underway), improvements to cycle paths and public transport services.

About the evidence

Due to its relative recent development, there is currently no evidence or data development relating to the Arts Strategy. The Arts Arkade project has specific outcomes which will be monitored and evaluated throughout and on completion of the project.

The primary outcome is increased presence of cultural and creative activities in Swansea city centre, leading to:

- increased vibrancy
- opportunities for local artists/creatives to become involved in building activities
- more footfall
- reconnection of residents with their much changed city centre, allowing them to rediscover it
- enabling local businesses to increase their turnover, supporting local employment
- increased digital skills through involvement with cultural activities
- increased appreciation and involvement with creative and cultural activities, enhancing public experience

There are some gaps in data about the impact of tourism on local communities, including general pressures during peak seasons such as parking, traffic and additional concerns as a result of the coronavirus pandemic including crowds, access issues etc.

Tourism Business Data will be addressed by the Trade Survey 2022.

Conclusions and key messages

Swansea Council will continue to align with Visit Wales' ambition to deliver wellbeing benefits for all through tourism.

This will be achieved through the reviewed Destination Management Plan, working towards the 7 goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This DMP must ensure that tourism continues to be a significant contributor to the Swansea Bay economy. The main focus of this DMP will be a streamlined Action Plan only including actions that show strong potential for delivery and link to the 4 strategic themes of:

- 1) Partnership working
- 2) Quality
- 3) Seasonality
- 4) Sustainability

The outcomes for the DMP are:

- A well-managed tourism destination which delivers a world-class visitor experience in a pleasant and clean environment;
- An effective working partnership between public, private and third sectors; and
- A well-informed tourism industry with easy access to relevant training and funding.

Sport & Health

Strengths and Assets

The Sport and Health service works with partners to deliver sport and physical activity projects across the City and County of Swansea. Developing positive social interaction and community cohesion within, and between, communities through formal and informal adult participation in sport, and to ensure adult participation opportunities are enjoyable and designed in consultation with all sectors of the community in order to meet their needs.

Investment from Sport Wales, Disability Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Street Games to Swansea Council has enabled Sport and Health to take local decisions, identifying key priorities to make the biggest difference and support the health and well-being of citizens who most need it through sport and physical activity. Physical interventions include:

- National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) is an evidence-based health intervention incorporating physical activity and behavioural change to support referred clients to make healthy lifestyle changes to improve their health and wellbeing.

- Doorstep Sport / StreetGames - Provision of exciting and informal opportunities that are responsive to trends and forward thinking, delivered in Swansea through the StreetSports Swansea project.
- Us Girls is designed to increase and sustain young women's participation in sport and physical activity in most disadvantaged communities. Us Girls Swansea has made a major contribution to promoting sport for disadvantaged young women, winning the Engaging Women and Girls Award at the National StreetGames Awards in 2020.
- Disability Sport (Transforming Lives through the Power of Sport) creates a more inclusive sports sector in Swansea.
- Sports Diversity Cymru (SDC) (BME Sport Cymru - WCVA), formerly BME Sport Swansea, helps increase BME participation in sport by supporting organisations to work with minority ethnic communities.

Local, free, or low-cost sport and physical activity has been delivered across Swansea by the Sport and Health service. The aim of these programmes is to encourage individuals, from early years to older adults, to get active in ways that deliver the most for their physical well-being and meet current government guidelines for adults and children and young people.

Sport and Health supported, with Best Start Swansea, the development of the SKIP (Meithrin) programme which applies University of Wales Trinity St David research on the importance of supporting children's motor development in early years in a practical way in early years settings across Swansea.

The Sport and Health service has continued to interact with community groups, professional organisations, and individuals in terms of our planning and delivery. This may be in the form of volunteering and support of volunteers or partnership delivery and sharing of resources within the sport and physical activity network of Swansea.

The Community Sport service aims to both increase participation and improve the standard of experience of sport and physical activity in Swansea. It aims to build capacity within communities and build a sporting infrastructure of clubs, facilities and volunteers to offer as wide a variety of opportunities as possible.

Community Sports has facilitated a number of improvements including sporting infrastructure (developing a network of natural and built environments which facilitate formal and informal participation in sport), recreational/competitive infrastructure and facility infrastructure (enabling inclusive opportunities for increased and sustained participation). The service works with clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to create a stronger sporting pathway from entry level sport through to competitive and performance sport. It helps access to funding, workforce development, school links and cohesive/sustainable communities. Opportunities are designed in consultation with the community, to introduce, sustain or expand opportunities, to reduce crime/anti-social behaviour and social isolation; and increase employability, skills attainment (in formal and informal education) and asset transfer (supporting clubs to become more self-sufficient).

The Active Young People (AYP) programme provides sport and physical activity sessions in a safe, fun and non-competitive environment and aims to create a generation of children and young people who are 'Hooked on Sport for Life'. Operating in four cluster areas in Swansea, the programme has delivered physical activity opportunities for young people in primary and secondary schools and their local communities which are engaging, inclusive and promote lifelong physical literacy. There are targeted interventions for specific vulnerable groups including Early Years, Women and Girls, Areas of deprivation and Diversity groups. It supports holidays programmes throughout the city (e.g. Parklives, Us Girls) and contributes to the Sport Wales School Sport Survey.

To support local sports clubs recover from coming out of the pandemic, the lease fees for Council-owned pitches have been waived.

Changes over time

National estimates of adult participation in sport are available from the National Survey for Wales 2018-19:

- Participation in sport three or more times a week: 23%; 259,000 people
- Participate in sport less than once a week: 62%; 708,000 people

Welsh Adult participation (three or more times a week) by ethnicity:

- White (Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, British) 32% (739,000 people)
- White other (Irish, other European and other) 40% (30,000 people)
- Any other ethnic group (e.g. Asian, Black, Mixed, Arab, Other) 31% (35,000 people).

Due to the pandemic overall community sport usage in Swansea dropped by 90.6% (47,000 in 2017/18 to 4,400 in 2020/21).

Wales figures from the Sport Survey 2018 revealed:

- 48% of pupils in Years 3-11 participate in extracurricular or community sport three or more times per week. This is an unchanged since 2015.
- Similar proportions of primary and secondary pupils participate in extracurricular or community sport three or more times per week – 47% of primary pupils in Years 3-6 and 48% of secondary pupils in Years 7- 11.
- There remains a gender difference in participation levels, with 50% of boys and 46% of girls participating in extracurricular or community sport at least three times per week.
- Participation levels also vary according to pupils' age, ethnicity, disability and relative level of deprivation.
- 63% of pupils enjoy PE lessons 'a lot' and 48% of pupils enjoy doing sport in after-school or lunchtime clubs (extracurricular sport) 'a lot'.
- 56% of pupils think PE lessons and school sport help them 'a lot' to have a healthy lifestyle.

Swansea Council was the lead authority for the ParkLives programme in South Wales from 2016. It strengthened partnership with local authorities Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend Council by collaborating to deliver outdoor sport and physical activity opportunities in local

communities in each area. The partnership with Coca-Cola Great Britain and UKActive ended in 2019 as funding ceased; however insight and learning from the programme has enabled the development of a successful Sport and Health outdoor programme.

The School Sport Survey 2018 (the most recent survey) revealed that 63% of pupils in Swansea participate in sport at least once a week in a community club (Welsh average = 65%).

Popular activities:

- Boys – football 37%; rugby 24%; swimming 23%; running/jogging 15%
- Girls – swimming 30%; dance 27%; gymnastics 20%; running/jogging 16%

In terms of volunteering and sports club membership (2018)

- 60% pupils said that they were a member of a sports club.
- 29% of pupils stated that they volunteer within or outside of school in some way (Boys: 30% / Girls: 28%). The overall Welsh average was 30% (Boys: 31% / Girls: 30%).

Swansea has consistently met referral outcomes (NERS) demonstrating health improvement since the last assessment in 2017. The 2019/20 report indicated significant health improvements through increased time being active (Swansea NERS 92%; Wales 76.3%). Many of those referred continue to engage in physical activity after 12 months, and indicate health improvement.

Since 2017 the Council has worked with Swansea Bay University Health Board on preventative and holistic programmes. This has expanded the offer and includes Exercise Lifestyle Programme (ELP), and NERS support to the pulmonary rehabilitation service (patients with COPD, Asthma, and more recently long Covid patients).

Comparisons with other places

In Swansea 35% of adults participated in sporting activities three or more times a week in 2019-20 (Wales average 32%).

- Cardiff 38%
- Newport 36%
- Carmarthenshire 35%
- Neath Port Talbot 26%
- Bridgend 31%

Taking Part in Community Sport at least once a week – 2018

- Swansea 63%
- Cardiff 65%
- Neath Port Talbot 69%
- Carmarthenshire 65%
- Bridgend 66%
- Mid & West Wales 66%
- Metropolitan Wales 66%
- Wales Average 65%

Any participation in sport at a club outside of school in the last year – 2018

- Swansea 71%
- Cardiff 72%
- Neath Port Talbot 78.7%
- Carmarthenshire 74.7%
- Bridgend 72%
- Mid & West Wales 74.9%
- Metropolitan Wales 72%
- Wales Average 72%

Differences across Swansea

The AYP team are present across every community area and participation levels continue to grow in every area.

Sports clubs are more concentrated in the City Centre and Llchwyr areas of Swansea whilst the Bay area is more rural and affluent, therefore people tend to travel to participate.

Interventions are delivered across all community areas. There has not been a noticeable difference in the number of children with motor development delays in different geographical locations. We have found children in all areas of Swansea benefit from intervention programmes to improve their motor skills.

A healthy weight status is more noticeable in higher socio-economic areas whereas cognitive and language delays are more common in lower socio-economic areas and areas of deprivation. Sport and physical activity leads to a healthier weight status and improves all aspects of growth and development improving health and well-being and improved academic performance.

In Swansea:

- 49% of disabled/impaired pupils take part in sport three or more times a week
- 35% of pupils in lowest Free School Meals (FSM) Band take part three or more times a week compared to 58% in the highest FSM band.
- There remains a gender difference in participation levels in Swansea, with 49% of boys and 44% of girls participating in extracurricular or community sport at least three times per week.

In 2018/19, research showed that those living in the 20% of least deprived areas in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation) were more likely (62%) to be active for 150 minutes in the previous week compared to those in the most deprived areas (42%).

In 2018/19 data showed a difference between men (58%) and women (47%) who are 16+ years meeting the recommended guidelines of MVPA 150 minutes per week.

Perceptions and perspectives

The 2019 Play Sufficiency Assessment identified the following:

- Overall, children feel they have sufficient play opportunities in their local area
- Their favourite place to play is the local park or play area.

ParkLives evaluation of project 2016-2020 highlights the success of the project with 28,369 participants over 2078 activities, positively impacting on physical well-being.

Sport and Health have consulted with the community on Active Older adult and Return to Sport, both have supported delivery of programmes across Swansea.

Active Adult outcomes are collected in “Action Snapshots’ which highlight qualitative performance based on key priorities including the national well-being goals and the Council’s Corporate Plan.

Sport Wales’ Vision for Sport in Wales is “an active nation where everyone can have a lifelong enjoyment of sport.” Further information is available at the Sport Wales website .

Intervention, AYP, and Community Sport outcomes are collected in “Action Snapshots’ which highlight qualitative performance based on key national and local priorities.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

- Increase in physical sporting infrastructure through ongoing asset transfer and empowering local communities.
- Funding available to support facility improvement.
- Development of facility infrastructure for performance sport.
- Added emphasis on digital transformation
- Development of new Creating an Active and Healthy Swansea Action Plan (CAHSAP).

The vision for sport and physical activity is that “Swansea will continue to be one of the healthiest cities in the UK where everyone has a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and sport.”

Research from the International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA) has steered our work with more focus on the holistic development of young people and a physical literacy focus.

An increase of children with motor development delays will increase best practice interventions and training for practitioners to target vulnerable groups and improve motor competence in young people.

There will be an added emphasis on digital transformation, with virtual physical activity sessions, challenges and training opportunities.

A regional research project has been set up (2021) to explore the perceptions of young people regarding physical activity in different geographical areas.

The pandemic appears to have widened inequalities in participation across gender, socio-economic status, long standing illness or conditions, and age.

Consideration for other areas of work that may arise across the sector, for example Welsh Government's consultation on the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

As part of the Welsh Government's Healthy Weight Healthy Wales (HWHW) Action Plan 2020-2022, a new Active Older Adult Programme in Swansea was launched in January 2021. Sport Wales has invested in Swansea until 2022 to deliver a local leisure offer for over 60s which will encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. This is a targeted approach to reduce health inequalities and social isolation. The initial phase of the programme has seen consultation work, theory of change development, coffee mornings, and virtual and face to face physical activity opportunities. It is anticipated that through the insight and learning developed this year the programme will continue to develop across Swansea, working closely with the Ageing Well Forum.

Looking to the future, we know that because people are living longer, the numbers of older people in Wales will continue to rise. It is important these years are lived in good health. The Active Older Adult Programme in Swansea has confirmed future funding to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. This is a targeted approach to reduce health inequalities and social isolation.

It is important to retain the interest and enthusiasm for local outdoor activities to drive local initiatives forward, supporting and strengthening physical well-being and local communities through sport and physical activity.

The Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales Strategy will have implications for the development of Active Older Adult programme in Swansea.

Integration

The sport and health topic closely links to the national goals:

- A healthier Wales;
- A more equal Wales; and
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

This topic links closely to community participation and to Welsh Language and culture – delivery of physical activity and sport through the medium of Welsh and links with partners within the URDD.

Early Years and Play – Collaborative work in the development of SKIP Meithrin programme in early years settings in Swansea and physical play projects such as park markings in 2020.

Development of CAHSAP directly influenced by Sustainable Swansea, National Well-being Goals and Sport Wales' Vision for Sport.

PSB Local Well-being Plan – Live Well, Age Well and Strong Communities themes

The Sport & Health Service aim to meet the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines for infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and children and young people delivering physical activity throughout Swansea

Close work with Physical Education Departments and Well Being Leads in schools and the local community takes place in order to meet national standards of well-being.

Improvement

The vision for sport and physical activity is that “Swansea will continue to be one of the healthiest cities in the UK where everyone has a lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and sport” and for Swansea to be a place where:

- Sport and physical activity helps build stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities
- There is safe and easy access to Swansea’s vibrant and diverse sporting services and facilities both built and natural.
- Sport and physical activity is enhanced by a thriving voluntary and professional workforce.
- Swansea’s talented performers are supported to become the best they can be and are recognised for their achievements.
- Communities are given a voice and involvement in decisions about their health and well-being
- Sport and physical activity will emerge stronger and more valued following the pandemic.
- Every child can swim to a safe standard and are taught the vital skills of water survival in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Individual's value and take responsibility for their own health and well-being; and have the knowledge and understanding of how to maintain and enhance it.
- People of all ages and abilities will enjoy a lifelong physical literacy journey
- A high value is placed on the health and well-being of citizens
- Health inequalities are addressed from birth and throughout life.
- Share insights and learning of how interventions have engaged communities to address inequalities associated with sport and physical activity.

The intention is for the whole of Swansea to benefit from the delivery of CAHSAP, though focusing on the following:

- People living in areas of poverty
- Women and girls
- People with disabilities
- Diverse communities (BAME)
- Older adults

This focus aims to lead to the following outcomes:

- People exercising more often
- Access, equity and fairness
- Improved levels of physical and mental well-being
- Increased life expectancy and quality of life.

“Getting together for arts, culture or sport is a way to develop ourselves and our society. Covid has shown how we suffer mentally if these are not available” – survey respondent.

Baseline data suggests that there are vastly differing levels of participation in sport, physical activity and other health related activities in our area. There is also a statistical divide between various geographical locations which show inequalities in health closely correlated to lower levels of physical activity. Therefore a strategic approach where resources are aligned and maximised is critical.

With this consideration at the forefront of planning and to deliver the vision, there will be a focus on the following strategic priorities:

- Building Stronger Communities
- Tackling Health Inequalities
- Developing Sporting infrastructure
- Support Learning and Develop Skills for Life

About the evidence

There is a lack of physical wellbeing data for young people across health clusters / community areas.

Stronger links and dialogue with researchers could support and develop programmes in this area.

A survey engaging wider partners would be welcomed to gain further insight to creating a healthier city through increased physical activity.

Data is available on the age range and number of children participating in programmes through area trackers, including quantitative and qualitative data on detailed interventions, snapshots, feedback and compliments, Continuous Professional Development for staff, number of volunteers, partnership agreements, sports club Information, funding and grants, numbers trained and learning and insight information.

However, there remain evidence gaps such as satisfaction surveys and sustainability information.

More data will be gathered by getting as many schools as possible involved in the 2021 School Sport Survey to update the current data from 2018. This will be used to guide programmes and help delivery of projects where they are most appropriate.

Conclusions and key messages

A published WLGA paper reports that leisure and culture facilities provide vital health, leisure and wellbeing services to local communities and will be a key re-engagement service for those communities after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The intention is for the whole of Swansea to benefit from the delivery of CAHSAP. However, resource will focus on the sectors of the population where access to healthy lifestyle opportunities will make the biggest difference.

Tackling health inequalities remains a priority area across Sport and Health. Collaboration, partnership and involvement is important in the development of interventions that contribute to improving health and wellbeing, and the community needs to be engaged. Additional resources and connections across programmes highlights the collective support that can be provided across services. The Exercise Lifestyle Programme and the NERS Pulmonary Rehabilitation Support Service are good examples across the Swansea Bay Health Board area.

The importance of physical well-being has become more apparent in recent times, but there is a need to develop this across the lifespan. This is evidenced by the breadth of delivery across Swansea and there is a need to continue to build on this to make the biggest difference.

Welsh Language

Strengths and Assets

The Welsh language owes much to the history of Swansea; the deep roots of the language and its literature can be traced back beyond the medieval period through Welsh language poets and their patrons (such as Casnodyn and Hopcyn ap Tomos), forward into the 19th century (Gwrysydd, Daniel James, who wrote Calon Lan) to the present day. Swansea has helped mould Welsh cultural traditions.

Swansea is South West Wales' premier economic/cultural hub, and half of Wales's Welsh-speakers live within an hour's drive of the City. Bodies such as Menter Iaith Abertawe (Swansea's Welsh Language Initiative) seek to encourage take up and use of the language across Swansea.

Menter Iaith Abertawe was established in 2001, with an aim to promote and expand the use of the Welsh language in the City and County of Swansea. Their mission statement is "to facilitate Welsh language medium opportunities for the people of the county of Swansea and to enjoy Welsh culture in their everyday lives".

2021 saw the establishment of Tawe Festival, a new Welsh Language festival for Swansea, held in September. This free festival was open to Welsh speakers, learners and non-Welsh speakers alike with live music and DJs, food and drink. As part of Swansea Fringe 2021, a Welsh-language Comedy show was put on within Ty Tawe, Menter Iaith's shop. Tŷ Tawe in Swansea was established in 1987, and remains busy, holding regular social evenings and gigs. The Tŷ Tawe Choir comes together to practise at Tŷ Tawe on a weekly basis, conversational sessions – that continued online during the COVID-19 period – are held, and the Tŷ Tawe shop is a window for the centre.

Since March 2016 all public bodies in Wales have had a statutory duty to comply with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) and with the Welsh Language Standards imposed by the Measure through sub-legislation (Welsh Language Regulation Standards). The intention of the standards is:

- to ensure that organisations treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language; and
- to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language (making it easier for people to use in their day-to-day-life).

The Welsh Government launched Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers in July 2017. This is its 'long-term approach [...] to achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050'.

Croeso, a celebration of the area and its Welsh and Welsh-language heritage, has taken place since 2018 and promoted Welsh language and Culture in the City Centre. Croeso is a two-day festival held in Swansea's city centre on the weekend nearest to St David's Day.

The event features the best of local Welsh culture including:

- Food and drink stalls
- Cookery demonstrations (presented bilingually)
- Live music - The live music content has a mixture of Welsh language performance (more than 50%) and those covering iconic Welsh bands/artists (presented bilingually by stage MCs).
- Performing arts
- Parade
- Children's activities - The arts and crafts activity bus and activities coordinated by Menter Iaith Abertawe are presented bilingually
- Fringe live music events at city centre bars

With its strong focus on Welsh culture, Croeso gives people the opportunities to experience the Welsh language and engage with people using it in their everyday lives. The last Croeso event held on 29th February and 1st March 2020 reported visitor numbers of between 14,000 and 24,000 per day to Swansea City Centre.

Changes over time

The 2011 Census figures indicate a fall in the number of Welsh speakers of 2,606 since 2001 (down 2.0%), compared with falls of 20,352 and 1.8% across Wales.

However, Welsh medium education has been widely promoted with the result that the number of pupils educated in this sector has increased from 5,142 in 2017 to 5,426 in 2021, a rise of 5.5%.

In GCSE Welsh First Language, over 80% of students attain the higher grades (A*-C), and numbers entering this subject have increased steadily to 254 in 2016. Results for the GCSE Welsh Second Language full course show that over 90% attain grades A*-C and that numbers

entering the subject have increased – a 17.7% entry rate (426 entries) in 2016 compared to 9.2% (239 entries) only four years earlier.

Comparisons with other places

- The 2011 Census shows that, with 26,332 Welsh speakers, Swansea has the 8th highest total of the 22 Welsh local authorities.
- The percentage of Welsh speakers (11.4% of those aged 3 and over) places Swansea 13th of 22 authorities. This compares with 19.0% for Wales overall.
- In 2011, our two neighbouring local authorities – Carmarthenshire and Neath Port Talbot – recorded 78,048 (43.9%) and 20,698 (15.3%) Welsh speakers respectively.

More recent estimates are available from the Annual Population Survey.

Table C4: Ability to speak Welsh by local authority (year to June 2021)

	All aged 3 or over (1)	Yes, can speak Welsh	No, cannot speak Welsh	Percentage of people who say they can speak Welsh (2)
Wales	3,034,400	884,300	2,147,800	29.16%
Pembrokeshire	122,400	39,300	83,000	32.14%
Carmarthenshire	178,700	93,900	84,800	52.55%
Swansea	239,200	49,300	189,600	20.62%
Neath Port Talbot	136,300	29,900	106,200	21.97%

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS.

Table C5: Ability to read/write/understand Welsh by local authority (year to June 2021)

	Read Welsh	Write Welsh	Understand spoken Welsh
Wales	25.87%	23.70%	33.59%
Pembrokeshire	26.46%	23.99%	38.46%
Carmarthenshire	48.72%	44.47%	61.53%
Swansea	18.06%	15.41%	25.75%
Neath Port Talbot	18.51%	16.63%	26.16%

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS.

Table C6: Frequency of use of Welsh by local authority (year to June 2021)

	Daily	Weekly	Less Often	Never
Wales	15.38	5.01	7.04	1.73937
Pembrokeshire	16.20	5.23	9.04	*
Carmarthenshire	35.44	6.80	8.86	*
Swansea	8.65	3.36	6.40	*
Neath Port Talbot	9.88	4.49	6.42	*

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS.

However, data from the Annual Population Survey suggests a significant increase in Welsh speakers between 2011 and 2021 (a 32.9% increase over the 10-year period in Swansea; +12.6% in Wales), although caution should be applied here as the Census and Annual Population Survey sources and methodology are different. The 2021 Census results when available may give a more accurate picture of change.

Differences across Swansea

The number of people able to speak Welsh (2011 Census) within each of Swansea's six community areas ranges from 7,823 (18.4%) in 'Llwchwr' and 6,957 (12.6%) in 'Cwm Tawe', to 2,426 (7.1%) in 'City' and 2,234 (7.5%) in 'Penderi'.

The percentage of Welsh speakers by electoral ward in Swansea varies between 5.8% in Townhill (10.5% with some Welsh skills) and 38.3% in Mawr (52.1%). In terms of numbers, Pennard ward has the smallest number of Welsh speakers at 264 (10.1%) with Morriston at 1,931 (11.8%) the highest. Llansamlet and Pontarddulais also have over 1,900 people who can speak Welsh (2011 Census).

The North and North-West of the authority are considered as traditionally more Welsh-speaking, but populations in some of these areas are relatively low.

Perceptions and perspectives

There is a perception that the public sector in Wales is English-centric. Positive action is required from public bodies to address this in line with the Welsh Language Standards.

The relatively higher numbers but lower percentage of Welsh speakers in areas of higher population may mask cases of social isolation and lack of Welsh language service provision for individual Welsh speakers – particularly in comparison to those areas with a higher percentage and more conspicuous Welsh language presence.

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

The increasing take-up of Welsh language education in schools would suggest that there is a pool of Welsh speakers who (after leaving school) will realise a projected future growth of Welsh language demand.

Cymraeg 2050 is the Welsh Government's long-term strategy for the language, that by 2050 "culture and language will continue to be part of our day-to-day lives and valued as an intrinsic feature of our social, environmental and economic well-being. The Welsh language will be thriving, with over one million Welsh speakers using it in all aspects of daily life and work, and Welsh medium education available for everyone." The extent to which this is realised will have national and local implications.

Improvement

A national and local increase in the number of Welsh speakers with the confidence to use Welsh in their daily life and in their dealings with public and private bodies and the expectation that they can receive a Welsh language service as a matter of course.

Conclusions and key messages

There has been a potential dramatic rise in Welsh speakers since the Census of 2011 within the City and County although the publication of 2021 Census results in 2022 will provide a more complete picture.

Welsh medium Primary and Secondary school places have risen 5.5% throughout Swansea.

Welsh cultural events have been established in Swansea by the public and third sectors, giving citizens the opportunity to celebrate both Welsh Language and culture.

Community Participation

Strengths and Assets

“Community participation and volunteering are important and this has been clearly evidenced with the pandemic. If it wasn't for the support of people in communities and the many volunteers across Swansea, many people would have been without help and support” – survey respondent.

Community participation is a cornerstone of any democracy. As stated by Involve, “the benefits of participation are often considered to be:

- Improved governance: including increased democratic legitimacy for institutions because of close links with citizens, improved reputations for public bodies, increased opportunities for active citizenship, and greater accountability of public bodies because of more effective information dissemination and better dialogue.
- Greater social cohesion: including bringing diverse and sometimes hostile communities together, bringing ‘hard to reach’ and ‘disadvantaged’ groups into discussions, building relationships within and between different communities and social groups, strengthening and creating new networks that enable different interests to work together as a result of building more positive relationships based on a better knowledge of each other, and increased equality of access to policy and decision-making processes.
- Improved quality of services, projects and programmes: including ensuring public service investment is based more on people’s expressed needs, reducing management and maintenance costs by reducing vandalism and misuse as a result of engendering a sense of ownership, enabling faster and easier decisions (e.g. on new developments or protective designations) by reducing conflict between different parties and increasing trust through better communications, and enabling people to share in the responsibility for improving their own quality of life (e.g. health and well-being, or the local environment).

- Greater capacity building and learning: including raising awareness and increasing understanding of public institutions and the way they work, enabling citizens to better access the services they need, and to understand the boundaries and limitations of different public bodies, building confidence and optimism among citizens who then go on to other civic activities or learning, supporting the voluntary and community sectors by recognising their vital role in building the capacity of community and specific interest groups (especially disadvantaged and excluded groups), and increasing the skills among the staff running participation and those taking part (especially interpersonal skills).”

Swansea is signed up to Culture 21 (Agenda 21 for Culture) within the European cohort, and were the first UK city to do so. The programme entails us working with peer cities and colleagues in United Cities and Local Government to embed nine commitments in our policies and delivery programmes in the city. As part of the pilot programme we produced a Diversity Pledge to ensure greater diversity and community representation in our programming and delivery of cultural infrastructure.

The nine commitments are:

1. Cultural Rights: Active citizenship and the full recognition of cultural rights.
2. Heritage, Diversity and Creativity: Heritage, diversity and creativity are the foundations of cultural life.
3. Culture and Education: Promote active citizenship through the construction of cultural capabilities.
4. Culture and Environment: Cultural factors as accelerators of environmental responsibility.
5. Culture and Economy: cultural responsibility is necessary for a sustainable economy.
6. Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion: Culture contributes to new social bonds.
7. Culture, Urban Planning and Public Spaces: Planning cities and regions with cultural awareness and meaning.
8. Culture, Information and Knowledge: Technology and its contributions to plurality and citizenship-building.
9. Governance of Culture: Towards a balanced and shared governance of local cultural policies.

Service provision is guided by the following Cultural Development ‘Framework’ of priorities agreed following public consultation events:

- Creative economy: exploring the distinctive strengths, opportunities and barriers for growing a strong and sustainable creative industries sector;
- Culture, community and wellbeing: delivering the Future Generations Act: examining the role of culture in supporting cohesive, prosperous, resilient and healthy communities;
- Cultural education, skills and research: establishing a coordinated knowledge landscape for CCI’s in the city which effectively harnesses innovation and delivers success;
- Cultural planning: embedding culture and creativity in development, focusing on the key regeneration schemes in Swansea City Centre and a wider Swansea Bay proposition;

- Cultural tourism: identifying ways to coordinate the cultural offer to diversify and grow tourism.

The above framework informs programming, audience development strategies and service delivery for the galleries, museums, theatres, events, sports and activity development programme and individual projects, workplans and strategies. This includes (for example) the Fusion Programme; Healthy Cities and Creating an Active & Healthy Swansea Partnership Strategy; Poverty and Prevention Strategy; Objective 6 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy (supporting young people in care or care experienced to maintain active interests in cultural activities); and contributing to the Ageing Well, City of Sanctuary, Early Years, Intercultural cities, Human Rights and Learning Cities programmes.

There are currently 938,000 volunteers in Wales who donate 145,000,000 hours of time annually. Within Swansea in 2017, 26.2% of people volunteered, which rose to 28.5% in 2020.

“I believe community participation and volunteering is the best of way of being able to involve any Swansea residents to then come together with a common interest goal. As humans we are all individual and have different interests community participation can bypass these barriers such as some people don't like or cannot participate in sport. Community participation breaks barriers or religion etc and unites people with a common goal and builds stronger healthier supportive communities the participation can include Welsh language/sport etc.” – survey respondent.

One of the key indicators of Welsh Government’s Fusion programme is “Regular volunteering as a route to work”. Within Swansea this has delivered the following:

- enabled volunteers to get involved in making podcasts and films.
- volunteers in the Waterfront Garden were able to return for 221 hours during the summer 2021
- supporting Swansea Museum with a number of small remote projects
- helping the Dylan Thomas Centre with creative projects
- supporting the GVAG in their projects online and when open in the summer.

There are currently approximately 630 volunteers who help run the 40 community buildings across Swansea East, Swansea West and the city centre. The committees are made up of passionate local people. They feel a sense of pride, purpose and achievement by providing an affordable venue to promote social and financial inclusion, and maximise community involvement and participation.

There are currently 37 constituted Friends of Parks groups registered with Swansea Council. The network of volunteers is a far-reaching and invaluable asset. Friends groups commit to promoting inclusive practice through their constitutions. Adults of all ages participate and also provide opportunities for children and youth. Vulnerable groups are encouraged to join in (e.g. City of Sanctuary working with Friends of Ravenhill Park).

The pandemic meant local democracy had to be undertaken in a new way, with online meetings becoming the norm due to social distancing requirements. All Council meetings were held remotely since 24 April 2020 via Microsoft Teams.

Swansea Council and the Community / Town Councils (C/TC) within its boundaries have entered into a Charter which sets out the way in which they aim to work together for the benefit of local communities whilst recognising their respective responsibilities as statutory bodies. This allows for cooperation at both levels of government. The Charter is designed to build on and embrace the shared principles of openness, respect for each other's opinions, honesty and our common priority of putting citizens at the centre. This Charter is based on equality of partnership.

Social media has played a part in encouraging democratic participation with the @DemSwansea Twitter account having 875 followers. It has tweeted 5,990 times since February 2010. The account has been used to promote when public meetings are being held, information regarding elections, promoting electoral registration and boundary changes as well as retweeting other relevant tweets.

Changes over time

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was passed by the Senedd on 18th November 2020, precisely a year after it was introduced in 2019 and received Royal Assent on 20th January 2021.

The Bill extended the Local Government franchise so that 16 and 17 year olds can vote in any elections within that franchise (e.g. Senedd and Local Government Elections). This allowed around 65,000 young people in Wales to enter the Local Government franchise. It also extended the local government franchise to citizens from any country provided that they meet the criteria set out in Section 4(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1983 (RPA). The Electoral Commission's 'Welcome to your vote – Wales' campaign was promoted via social media, encouraging 16 and 17 year olds and Qualifying foreign citizen's to vote at the Senedd Elections.

Since the start of the Pandemic 207 meetings have been live-streamed, and recordings of 264 meetings available to the public on Swansea Council YouTube channel. Links to these are available from swansea.gov.uk/democracy and relevant meeting pages on the Swansea Council website.

Statistics are not available for number of views of live streams. The highest noted was the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 19 January 2021 which had over 60 people watching the live stream. The YouTube recordings have logged 14,421 views in total (as of 18 October 2021)

Parks, green spaces and woodland have been used more due to lockdowns and stay local guidelines.

Residents have reported taking a greater interest and pride in these spaces and new Friends groups have emerged as a consequence.

Friends groups have expressed a renewed sense of ownership, belonging and sense of place, as well as a desire to maintain new relationships with neighbours that developed during lockdown.

Young families are contacting Swansea Council to find out about opportunities for growing projects within parks and establishing Community gardens and sensory within parks.

Comparisons with other places

Figures on the registration of Local Government Electors in Swansea show an increase from 173,300 in 2017 to 178,495 in 2019. This represents a 3.0% rise, as compared with increases of 2.6% (UK) and 3.5% (Wales) in the same period.

Statistics on volunteering in Wales are available from the National Survey. These show age breakdowns and trends over time:

Table C7: Volunteering in Wales, 2016-2020

WALES	2016-17	2017-18	2019-20
Percentage of adults (aged 16+):			
All ages	28.39	27.97	26.12
16-24	22.08	34.09	27.28
25-44	27.65	24.97	23.91
45-64	29.57	25.51	25.86
65-74	33.33	34.98	30.12
75 and over	28.69	26.56	26.26

Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government.

The National Survey also shows trends in the percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Estimates are available at a local authority level:

Table C8: People satisfied with their local area as a place to live, 2016-2021

	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21
Percentage of adults (aged 16+):			
Wales	85.35	85.33	87.43
Pembrokeshire	90.49	89.82	86.42
Carmarthenshire	88.75	88.38	88.65
Swansea	87.28	87.68	83.55
Neath Port Talbot	80.83	83.66	81.77

Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government.

National Survey estimates are also available for the percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local areas:

Table C9: People who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local areas, 2016-2021

	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21
Percentage of adults (aged 16+):			
Wales	20.32	18.75	25.89
Pembrokeshire	18.33	15.76	36.15
Carmarthenshire	18.91	18.76	32.92
Swansea	18.62	20.36	24.70
Neath Port Talbot	12.75	17.27	24.08

Source: National Survey for Wales, Welsh Government.

Differences across Swansea

Swansea as a local authority is currently represented by 72 elected councillors from a range of political groups, with each councillor elected to represent a specific area (electoral ward). They act on behalf of that community making decisions about local services, budgets and the overall level of council services. The 72 councillors represent 36 wards in total ranging from single member wards (18) to wards with five Councillors (Morrison and Sketty). Following the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' latest review, from May 2022 Swansea will consist of 32 electoral wards served by 75 councillors.

An extra layer of democratic engagement, and the smallest type of administrative area in Wales is provided by the community – the equivalent of parishes in England. Community or Town councils operate across Wales, with 870 communities in total, of which around 730 currently have a council. In Swansea, there are 39 defined community / town council areas, of which 24 are currently active as councils. These are focused on Swansea West and Gower, and mostly outside the main urban areas of Swansea. The number of Councillors serving each (excluding vacancies) ranges from 4 (Three Crosses) to 18 (Mumbles).

There are a number of factors behind differences in volunteering across Swansea including:

- Age
- Location and proximity to a Community building
- One parent families
- Working hours

There are currently 37 Friends of Parks groups; 14 in Swansea East; 12 in Swansea West and 11 in Gower. Each Friends group is distinct; Committee members developed their own constitution and bring their own unique set of skills and experiences to the volunteering process. The groups also respond to the needs of diverse communities across Swansea, as well as the environmental aspects of the Parks, Woodlands and open spaces they care for.

Established groups have successfully applied for Lottery funding to make improvements and additions to their parks, introducing spaces for nature, wildflowers and orchards.

Community-led events for families have been delivered through Summer of Fun monies. Protected characteristics are celebrated through events with partners such as City of Sanctuary.

Perceptions and perspectives

Anecdotal Evidence from Newly Established Friends Groups:

“This place was a sanctuary for us in lockdown, we don’t have a big garden so this place has been so important for our mental health want to carry on looking after it” (Friends of Birmingham Mount)

“We are all about making a positive difference and turning a run-down area, where people come to fly tip into a beautiful community garden for everyone to enjoy” (Friends of Clase Community Gardens)

“Green spaces are vital for mental and physical well-being and throughout the pandemic we have seen how important these spaces have been for local communities”. Julie James, the Welsh Government’s Minister for Climate Change (Keep Wales Tidy, Celebrating Wales’ Green Spaces, 2021)

Future Trends and Prospects for Swansea

Following a review of the electoral arrangements for Swansea by the Boundary Commission for Wales, from May 2022, there will be 32 Wards (from 36 currently) and 75 councillors (from 72 currently). The extra vacancies will be filled during the Local Government Elections in May 2022. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides that council officers and employees, other than those holding politically restricted posts, will be entitled to stand for election to their own council. They will only be required to resign their paid employment with the council if they are elected. This will widen the pool of potential candidates while ensuring there is no conflict of interest once the candidate is elected.

In terms of sensory gardens and community gardens, there is an appetite for establishing smaller designated areas within parks for specific projects (e.g. Community Garden within Hafod Park) where inclusive groups find a safe space to participate and transfer knowledge/skills.

Friends groups reported an uptake in outdoor learning / Forest School type experiences during and post-lockdown, with families using Parks and open green space for outdoor learning in summer months.

Friends groups continue to develop localised partnerships with an array of diverse organisations, this has been propelled by lockdown for instance gym instructors/ martial arts running outdoor classes and boot camps on old bowling greens, delivered with support from Friends groups, Parks Department and Special Events.

Integration

Community Safety: Friends groups act as the eyes and ears of the community and often prevent localised ASB and Crime through the early reporting of vandalism/ fly tipping/ arson.

Skills Development: Further potential for links with employability projects (Beyond Bricks and Mortar for example), also Gower College Swansea and Swansea Prison who are currently engaged in small scale wood-work projects/ donating items to Friends groups. Additionally, there's potential for further Outdoor Learning in parks with Lifelong Learning team/ mobile resources.

Environment: Lowering Carbon emissions by encouraging localised activity; Green initiatives in Parks, planting trees and encouraging biodiversity; Engaging school children in planting/ growing. Further examples of practical tasks that Friends groups assist the Council with include litter picking, planting and weeding, monitoring and reporting Japanese Knotweed, building and installation of bat and bird boxes and recording biodiversity.

Health and Wellbeing; Friends groups work closely with the Council's Walking Development Officer to promote active lifestyle choices. Local Area Co-ordinators also link with groups to encourage participation and improved mental health and wellbeing of isolated/vulnerable individuals.

The social aspect of volunteering is huge. Not only do voluntary roles provide an activity and purpose for some stay at home parent / retired / unemployed people, many committee members also run non-profit community groups like playgroups, coffee mornings and friendship groups – where people in the community can come together socially. For some of the more isolated and vulnerable members of the community this is a lifeline and sometimes the only human interaction they receive all week. If it wasn't for volunteers there would be a lot less available to community members in the way of activities but much more importantly social interaction.

Venues are affordably priced so that more activities can take place and the user groups are able to sustain themselves financially. Small business are allowed to run from community buildings as long as they are providing a service to the community e.g. community dance schools. Most would not be trading if it wasn't for the affordable venues that are available to hire. Centres are encouraged to invest the money they make back into improving the building so that the space provided is well-kept and inviting for the community to use. The current community centre model would not be viable or sustainable if the staff that run them were paid. This would almost certainly mean that the prices would have to increase therefore making the venues no longer affordable, meaning less people would use them.

Most centres have green spaces attached which are tended to by volunteers. Some have community vegetable patches which provide fresh food for the community foodbanks run from the building which again are totally managed by volunteers.

The centres provide a broad range of cultural activities from dancing to local history, photography, flower arranging, singing and creative writing.

The role of the volunteer within the community buildings is absolutely imperative and community buildings would not exist if people didn't volunteer their free time to run them. If this were to change it would have a huge impact on the community in many different ways.

Improvement

More community involvement within projects. Work with the volunteers to run coffee mornings and fun days and other events. Promote getting young people actively involved on community building committees to aid sustainability.

"Community events are good for wellbeing and self-esteem and helps combat loneliness" – survey respondent.

Recruit and retain volunteers to engage, represent and address the needs of their community, whilst ensuring there are accessible and effective opportunities.

Raising the profile of volunteers so that they feel more valued, including media, local and national awards for service to the community.

About the evidence

Candidate data is collected for Local Government Elections by the Welsh Government, but is reported at a national level without local breakdowns.

A Welsh Government survey provided data on all candidates (elected and unelected), in the 2017 local elections in Wales (Welsh Government, 2017). This was the only example identified of a consistent or uniform attempt from local government authorities to collect data on diversity. The protected characteristics analysed were age, disability, race, sex and sexual orientation. Observational data on women councillors in Wales were also used.

Conclusions and key messages

The widening of the Local Government franchise allows for more people to have a stake in local democracy. Alongside this the candidate pool will increase with the relaxing of the rules around Council officers being able to stand for election for their local authority.

Whilst coming out of the pandemic, the methodology utilised to ensure meetings could still take place allows for an opportunity to increase access to public meetings for citizens (both live streaming and available afterwards on video sharing sites).

There is still work to be done to encourage candidature from people with protected characteristics and this is centrally organised by the WLGA's campaigns. Swansea Council provide links from the 'Be a Councillor' webpage to:

- Welsh Government video on YouTube 'Ever thought about being a Welsh councillor'
- Welsh Local Government Association 'Be a Councillor, Be the change' webpages.

Swansea has a good volunteer base, however it is ageing. We need to increase the number of volunteers and look at getting young people actively involved on committees with a focus on community involvement. Voluntary roles provide an activity and purpose for local people whilst improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. We need to raise the profile of volunteers so that they feel more valued.
