

# Annual Well-being Report 2022/23

DRAFT

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.  
This document is also available in Welsh.**

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## About This Report

### What is the Annual Well-being Report?

The purpose of the Annual Well-being Report is to provide a self-assessment of Council performance in delivering its Well-being Objectives for 2022/23.

These Well-being Objectives, including the steps the Council will take to achieve them, and how performance will be measured, are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25:

- Cardiff is a great place to grow up
- Cardiff is a great place to grow older
- Supporting people out of poverty
- Safe, confident and empowered communities
- A capital city that works for Wales
- Cardiff grows in a resilient way
- Modernising and integrating our public services

This Annual Well-being Report is the product of a comprehensive self-assessment process (set out below), and draws on service performance, governance and risk, resources, and other sources of performance information provided for each Well-being Objective. Each chapter of this report provides a strategic assessment by Well-being Objective, along with a summary of successes, challenges, and priorities for the future.

In creating and publishing this report, the Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

### Statutory Requirements

The Annual Well-being Report fulfils the Council's following statutory requirements:

- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** requires the Council to set and publish Well-being Objectives, take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives and publish a statement about Well-being Objectives. These duties are fulfilled through the Council's Corporate Planning process. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also requires the Council to publish an annual report of progress, which is done through the Annual Well-being Report. A core element of the Act is the **Sustainable Development Principle** and the **Five Ways of Working**. These are: long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration, and involvement. This report assesses the extent to which the Sustainable Development Principle and the Five Ways of Working have been applied in the delivery of the Council's Well-being Objectives.
- **The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** established a new legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance, and performance. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review, through self-assessment, the extent to which it is meeting its "performance requirements" and publish a report

setting out the conclusions of their self-assessments once each financial year. Specifically, the Council must ***review its ability to use its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively.***

This Annual Well-being Report, produced through the self-assessment process outlined below, sets out the Council’s conclusions as to the extent to which it has met the performance requirements (that is, exercising its functions effectively, using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively, and that its governance is effective for securing the above) during the financial year.

### Meeting Our Statutory Requirements

A summary of the legislative requirements relating to planning and delivery is set out below.

<b>Act</b>	<b>Planning and Performance Requirement</b>	<b>Compliance Arrangement</b>
Well-being of Future Generations Act	Set and publish Well-being Objectives	Completed through the publication of the <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a>
	Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives	Completed through the publication of the <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a>
	Publish a statement about Well-being Objectives	Completed through the publication of the <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a>
	Publish an annual report of progress	Completed through the publication of the Annual Well-being Report 2022/23
	Publish its response to any recommendation made by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales	None received, as yet.
Local Government & Elections Act	Keep performance under review: the extent to which it is exercising its functions effectively; using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively, and; its governance is effective for securing the above.	Completed through the publication of the Annual Well-being Report 2022/23
	Consult on performance: with local people, staff, trade unions and partners	Completed, with reference to key findings included in the Annual Well-being Report 2022/23
	Report on performance: produce a self-assessment report every year, containing assessment of performance (service, finance, governance) and improvement actions identified	Completed through the publication of the Annual Well-being Report 2022/23

	Arrange a panel performance assessment and respond to a panel performance assessment report	To be completed during the 2022-27 local government cycle
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The Council considers that, through the publication of its Well-being Statement, **it has met the relevant statutory duties listed above.**

### **How is the Annual Well-being Report developed?**

The assessment of performance contained within the Annual Well-being Report is developed through a thorough process of self-assessment involving the political and managerial leadership of the Council, drawing from a wide range of sources of performance information.

#### Sources of Performance Information

Sources of performance information which contribute towards the performance assessment contained within the Annual Well-being Report include:

- **Performance against the Council’s Key Performance Indicators** – The Council’s [Corporate Plan](#) contains a suite of performance indicators which measure progress made in delivering the Well-being Objectives. Where applicable, targets are set against these performance indicators to demonstrate the desired level of achievement. Performance indicators are assigned a RAG status: **Green** where the indicator is on or above target, **Amber** where the result is within 10% of the target, and **Red** where the result is more than 10% from the target.
- **Progress against the steps in each Well-being Objective** – Each Well-being Objective within the Corporate Plan also contains a set of ‘steps’ or actions. Monitoring the progress of these steps provides an understanding of what has been achieved and where further work is required. The Year-End Performance against both the Corporate Plan indicators and steps can be found on the Council’s [Corporate Performance Dashboard](#).
- **Consultation and Engagement** – The Council has a number of established consultation and engagement mechanisms such as the annual Ask Cardiff Citizen Survey, the Budget Consultation, the Child Friendly City Survey as well as other surveys and consultation exercises which take place over the course of a year that provide residents, businesses, and other city stakeholders an opportunity to share their views on a wide range of the Council services. The Council, in collaboration with partners on the Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB), produced a [Consultation Overview Report](#), which was published in February 2023.

In addition, the Council’s [Annual Compliments and Complaints Report](#) provides valuable insight into where Cardiff’s citizens feel the Council needs to improve. The Corporate Plan contains a number of ‘qualitative’ Key Performance Indicators that relate to citizen satisfaction with services, and the findings of the consultation and engagement work

forms an important part of the Council's self-assessment process, policy development and budget setting process.

- **Finance Monitoring** – The Council's [Outturn Report 2021/22](#) serves to inform of the Council's financial position in respect of the year ending 31 March 2023 and its findings contribute to the assessment contained within the Annual Well-being Report.
- **Good Governance** – The Council's Governance Framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed, controlled, and the means through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. The Council's [Annual Governance Statement](#) sets out an assessment of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control.
- **Risk** – Delivering objectives requires frequent management of risks at both operational and strategic levels, particularly in the dynamic external environment in which the Council is operating. The Council's Year End [Risk Report](#), and its Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, provides an overview of the current risks and the actions in place to mitigate them.
- **Scrutiny Committees and Governance & Audit Committee** – The Council responds to the issues raised and recommendations made by the Committees, which help inform policy development and performance improvement.
- **Inspection Reports** – The Council is subject to a number of inspections from regulatory bodies including Audit Wales, Estyn (Education) and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Their findings help the Council to assess areas of strong performance, as well as identifying areas that require improvement.

### Self-Assessment Process

The Annual Well-being Report is developed through engagement with directors and a self-evaluation, assurance, and challenge process. The process features enhanced roles for both Scrutiny Committees and the Governance & Audit Committee. This process includes:

- A directorate self-evaluation of service performance, resourcing, and governance challenges and priorities, answering the following questions:
  - What is going well?
  - What are the key risks and challenges facing your services?
  - What are the next steps?
- Performance and budget challenge and assurance sessions convened by the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer with each Director considering the findings of their directorate self-assessment;
- A progress and performance session with Cabinet and the Council's Senior Management Team where the Chief Executive provides a strategic assessment of organisational performance.

- Consideration of the draft Annual Well-being Report by:
  - The Performance Panel, convened by the Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee, and involving the Chairs of each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees (The letter from the Chair of the Performance Panel, the Panel's recommendations and Cabinet's response are included as Appendices 3a, 3b and 3c of this report.)
  - Governance & Audit Committee (The letter from the Chair of Governance & Audit Committee and the response are attached as Appendices 4a and 4b).
  - Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee (The letter from the Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the response are attached at Appendices 5a and 5b).
  - Cabinet, having received and responded to the recommendations of each Committee.
  - Council.

Performance improvement and evaluation isn't something that only takes place at the end of the financial year. A mid-year self-evaluation report is considered by Cabinet drawing on performance information at month 6 and performance is monitored quarterly through updates to the steps and measures in the Corporate Plan, and the areas of risk, budget, audits, consultation, and performance are all considered holistically throughout the year to drive improvement.

## Overall Assessment

This Annual Well-being Report contains the Council's assessment of performance against the seven Well-being Objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25.

Overall, the Council considers that it has made good progress across all Well-being Objectives, evidenced by an overall pattern of good performance across the Council services and Corporate Plan commitments, the effective, efficient and economical use of resources and the use of its governance infrastructure to secure improvement. However, the report also identifies performance challenges and risks in each Well-being Objective which will require improvement action over the year ahead, including a small number of cross-cutting strategic challenges which are impacting all services, which are outlined below.

The analysis contained within Annual Well-being Report (and the mid-year performance assessment) form a central component of the setting of Council's priorities and actions for improvement for the year ahead, which are set out in the [Council's Corporate Plan 2023-26](#).

### Areas of Progress

Area of progress identified in this report include:

- Education outcomes are positive with attainment above the Welsh average and school inspection results generally positive.
- The Council's strategy of 'shifting the balance of care' is having a demonstrable impact in Children's Services.
- Within Adult Social Services, the care market has been stabilised and pathways out of hospital have been improved through more effective joint working with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.
- Rough sleeper numbers have been maintained at low levels, with multi-agency wrap around support leading to improved outcomes, and continued progress in the Council's housebuilding programme.
- Continued progress in the city development and major projects despite more challenging market conditions.
- Developing an extensive pipeline of One Planet Cardiff projects - including the District Heat System and securing £100m to deliver the first phase of Cardiff Crossrail.
- Responding effectively to emerging risks and issues including the cost-of-living crisis and the Ukraine refugee crisis.
- Working towards being a Council that reflects and responds to the city's diversity. including accepting all the recommendations of the Race Equality Task Force and receiving recognition as the highest placed Local Authority in the UK Stonewall Index.
- Continued successful operation through hybrid working, with the new way of working informing the development of new core office strategy and workforce strategy, unlocking efficiencies and offering greater flexibility for staff.
- Greater ability for citizens to access Council services via online platforms and improvements to its citizen engagement practice, informing the upcoming Participation Strategy.



Over the past year a focus has been placed on translating the new administration's 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' priorities into the Council's Planning and Performance Framework, including the development and agreement of a new Corporate Plan and Public Services Board Well-being Plan, which also respond to the strategic and service challenges identified in this report.

## Strategic Challenges

The Annual Well-being Report 2022/23 highlights a range of performance challenges, which need to remain the subject of corporate focus over the year ahead:

- **Managing sustained increase in the complexity and scale of demand across Council services:** The fundamental changes in the scale and complexity of service demand post-Covid look likely to be long lasting and are being felt across multiple services. This can be attributed to the lasting impacts of the pandemic, as well as the cost-of-living crisis, which has placed pressure on households across the city – particularly vulnerable individuals and families – with increasing numbers of individuals relying on council services.

Demand challenges are particularly evident in services for children and young people, with children's services facing a significant rise in both the number and complexity of cases. In addition to this, acute workforce supply challenges and a shortage of accommodation places have resulted in serious service and budgetary pressures. In the Education system intermittent attendance and persistent non-attendance represents a significant concern in many parts of the city which will require concerted focus from the Council and school leaders over the year ahead.

Similarly, the adult social care sector continues to face ongoing pressures through rising demand and increasingly complex service requirements. Though the supply of care in Cardiff has improved significantly, unlike in many other local authority areas, the fragility of the care market remains a concern due to an ongoing shortage of care workers. Given the ongoing pressures on the health and social care system, this will continue to be a strategic priority for the Council and its partners in 2023/24.

The number of people who are becoming homeless and the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation has increased substantially, with high waiting lists across all homeless gateways. Around 8,000 people are on now the Council House waiting list and the rental rate in the private rented sector is at unprecedented levels. The shortage of housing of all tenures is creating pressure across many Council Services, and the need to rapidly extend access to housing, through building and securing additional affordable housing, represents a corporate priority.

- **Responding to new risks and issues:** In addition to the sustained rise in demand on services the Council has, alongside its partners, responded to several un-anticipated yet substantial risks and issues during the year. These include the response to the cost-of-living crisis which has disproportionately impacted some of the city's most vulnerable

people and communities, as well as the wider economy. The emergence of the energy crisis brought severe cost pressures that seriously impacted the cost of running Council venues and have had clear implications for the Council's capital programme. The Ukraine refugee crisis also represented an emergent challenge which necessitated the rapid mobilisation of a cross service-area response. In each case, the Council convened an effective response, often involving cross service-area working and collaboration with public service partners, the private sector and the third sectors. Looking ahead, the Council must continue to anticipate and respond, at speed and in partnership, to new risks and issues as they emerge.

- **Workforce pressures now impacting on all council services:** Over recent years the Council has identified challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of staff in children's social services and adult social care. Whilst these challenges remain, the Council is now facing workforce challenges which are having an impact across all directorates. The primary concern relates to the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled individuals with the Council facing competition from other sectors in attracting professionals, making it difficult to fill key positions. As is the case nationally, workforce challenges are having an impact on the Council's capacity to deliver services, as well as key projects. In response, the Council's new Workforce Strategy (2023-27) sets out an enhanced approach to proactive workforce planning, which includes the further development of a supportive work environment, fostering employee engagement and continuing to develop new, tailored approaches to recruitment and retention in areas where the Council has skills and capacity gaps.
- **Ensuring continued financial resilience:** Despite a more positive than anticipated financial settlement for 2023/24, the Council faces significant immediate and medium-term budgetary challenges. The Budget Update Report presented to Cabinet in July 2023 set out an indicative Revenue budget gap of £36.7 million for 2024/25 and a £119.2 million budget gap across the period of the Medium- Term Financial Plan. These pressures are due to a combination of increased complexity and scale of demand on services (particularly in Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Additional Learning Needs and Homelessness), inflationary pressures driven by employee related costs, the costs of goods and commodities purchased by the Council (such as energy, food and fuel) and the cost of construction, materials and commissioned services. Continued post-pandemic pressures in income recovery in some services also remains an issue. To ensure the Council's ongoing financial resilience, a proactive approach to identifying and implementing savings will continue. This includes a review of all directorate budgets and the identification of baseline efficiencies across all services. Given the wider economic environment characterised by high inflation, rising interest rates and labour and supply chain challenges, a sharp focus will also need to be placed on the Council's capital position and the development of its medium- and longer-term programme.

# Well-being Objective 1:

Cardiff is a great place to grow up

## Our priorities in 2022/23 were:

- Supporting a child-friendly recovery
- Continuing to deliver the Cardiff 2030 vision for education and learning
- Protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people, and families

## Strategic Assessment

The Council has made good progress against this well-being objective, particularly in relation to the quality of education, overall attainment and in improving the quality of care for children and young people. However, there are a number long-standing and newly emerging challenges which will impact on young people responding to which will require concerted effort from the Council, the city's education system and public service partners.

There has been sustained improvement in the quality and effectiveness of Cardiff's education services. School inspection outcomes are mainly positive and GCSE outcomes for 2022 were higher than 2019 – the last time comparator results were available – with results in Cardiff above the Welsh average. The governance and quality assurance arrangements for monitoring the progress of schools has been improved and the School Organisation Programme (SOP) is responding to the inspection recommendation to ensure strategic oversight of the development of Welsh-medium education. The Council's programme of investment in schools continues to be delivered to ensure learners in Cardiff benefit from high quality learning environment and schools have been effectively supported by the rapid roll-out of a comprehensive digital transformation agenda.

Areas of challenge remain, however. Although inspection outcomes are mainly positive, there are 4 schools in a category of follow-up with 1 school in the statutory category of significant improvement. More must be done to support re-engagement in education following the Covid-19 pandemic, with intermittent attendance and persistent non-attendance below target and representing a significant concern in many parts of the city which will require concerted focus from the Council and school leaders over the year ahead.

Within schools, budget pressures persist despite the prioritisation of funding for delegated school budgets, and despite record levels of investment in the school estate, significant levels of capital funding are still required to maintain safe learning environments. The projected decline in pupil population numbers is a real area of concern given that surplus places translate into significant budgetary pressures. The increasing cost of school transport persists as an ongoing concern whilst the growth in Additional Learning Needs also bring with it both demand and cost pressures. Taken together these pressures will present a significant challenge to the financial resilience of the city's education system and so will be an area of corporate focus for 2023/24.

Within Children's Services, excellent progress has been made in delivering the Children's Services Accommodation strategy, with a number of properties purchased, a significant number of staff employed, and regulatory accreditation secured. These represent important developments in ensuring the sufficiency of placements and supporting the Welsh Government's policy directive of removing profit from the care sector. The challenge in this area, however, remains significant.

Children's Services continue to face high demand and increases in case complexity. This demand pressure is reflected throughout the child's journey, including services to address children's mental health and emotional well-being. At the same time, insufficient placements in a provider dominated accommodation and support market will continue to account for major costs pressures and, in exceptional circumstances, an increasing need to use unregistered placements. The service is also facing challenges with the recruitment of social workers. Whilst an extensive body of work has been undertaken to dampen cost pressures in year, it has accounted for a major budgetary over-spend. Delivering the Children's Services Strategy, preventing demand through shifting the balance of care, will therefore remain a corporate priority going forward.

Other areas of notable improvements include the Youth Justice Service and, though further work is required, the progress made was acknowledged in the August 2022 follow on inspection report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

## **A Child Friendly City**

Cardiff's ambition to be recognised as a city where all children and young people have an equal chance to thrive and reach their potential is one step closer to realisation as the submission to gain UNICEF Child Friendly City status was completed in September 2022. If successful, Cardiff will be the first city in the UK to gain UNICEF accredited status. The final stage of the UNICEF assessment began in April 2023, and the outcome will be decided by Summer 2023.

Work has continued throughout the year to promote children's rights through workforce development. As part of the Rights Respecting Schools Approach, 70% of schools have now been accredited, up from 63% at the end of 2021/22. While this is a positive improvement, this is just short of the target for 2022/23 of 75% of schools. Of those accredited, 44 schools have achieved Bronze status, 31 have achieved Silver, and 14 have achieved Gold.

The Children's Rights Online Module has been launched for Council staff, with a target completion rate of 85% - in line with other mandatory modules. However, at the end of 2022/23, compliance for the Children's Rights Online Module was only 63%. To address this, the completion of Children's Rights Training has been linked to each staff member's personal review, supported by enhanced data for managers to target compliance within their services.

The Council's Child Friendly Cities Survey was issued in Spring 2022, with 7,660 responses (up from 6,500 on the previous survey). The survey has provided valuable insights into the experiences of children in Cardiff, with a cross-analysis by characteristic, including by age, gender, minority ethnic group, those living in the 'Southern Arc', young carers, and those with a disability. The survey demonstrated that 90% of respondents felt that they are able to 'do their best to learn and progress at school' with 86% of respondents stating that they were aware of their rights.

## **Delivering the Cardiff 2030 Vision for Education and Learning**

Despite the disruption of the pandemic, the Council has demonstrated good progress in the delivery of its 2030 vision for Education.

In May 2023, Estyn recognised the strong corporate and political leadership of education in Cardiff, highlighting assurances that the quality and effectiveness of education services has improved, and noting the strengthened governance around monitoring schools causing concerns. In their assessment, Estyn highlighted several areas of strength, including the reduction in fixed-term exclusions to below pre-pandemic levels, an overall sustained improvement in the quality and effectiveness of services, and the success of the digital transformation agenda. In the [2022 Estyn Report](#), Estyn acknowledged the Council's high level of support provided for asylum seekers and refugees, including the large groups of children arriving from Afghanistan who were hosted and supported in Cardiff prior to their relocation in other parts of Wales.

The new Curriculum for Wales was introduced in 2022 and has now been rolled-out to all primary schools, with secondary schools to begin rollout from September 2023 on a phased transition, up to Year 11 in 2026. Regarding attainment, schools in Cardiff saw good outcomes for pupils across the city. In 2022, pupils sat GCSE exams for the first time since 2019. The 2022 results were higher than 2019, and the results for Cardiff were well above the Welsh average, with 31.9% of pupils achieving an A\* or A grade.

In line with the trend over the last four years, the percentage of children securing one of their top school choices has met its target for both primary school and secondary school admissions, at 99.6% and 93.8% respectively.

There is a comprehensive and ambitious digital transformation strategy which is highly regarded by school leaders and is moving forward at pace, as recognised in their assurance work by Estyn. Throughout the year, 35 schools had a complete device refresh, achieving a pupil-to-device ratio across all schools at year-end of 1:0.7 (or 7 devices for every 10 pupils). Processes have also been established to ensure all pupils have broadband access at home, with a central stock of routers ready to be deployed when needed.

The 'Passport to the City' model, which aims to provide extra-curricular opportunities for children and young people across Cardiff, has continued to progress, with 32 schools and youth groups signed up to the programme at Quarter 4, up from 10 schools at Quarter 2, with 6,300 total registrations to date.

Attendance at both primary and secondary schools has decreased year-on-year since 2019. At the end of the 2021/22 academic year, overall attendance for primary schools was 89%, and for secondary schools it was 86%, compared to 95% and 94% respectively prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Emerging trends in persistent absence (where attendance falls below a 50% threshold) have also been identified following the pandemic, with schools now closely monitoring these patterns, and persistent absence being introduced as a corporate KPI from 2021/22. Persistent absence affected around 1-4% of pupils in the 2021/22 academic year, with the trend more prominent in secondary schools than primary schools.

An increasing trend seen in permanent exclusions has been evident over the last two years since normal operating of schools resumed following the Covid-19 pandemic. This is largely attributed to the residual effect of the pandemic and the impact of successive lockdown periods which in turn resulted in social, emotional, and community issues with children and families which has impacted their behaviour at school. Concerningly, the most common cause of exclusion has been assault directed against other pupils. There has, however, been a 15% decrease in permanent exclusions in the current academic year to date when compared to last year, along with a 40% decrease for the Spring term 2023 when compared with the Spring term 2022. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is also beginning to slow as the academic year progresses, suggesting that, overall, exclusions are on track to return to pre-pandemic levels. Fixed-term exclusions were a particular concern in secondary schools in the 2021/22 academic year, where the fixed-term exclusion rate was almost double its pre-pandemic figure. As with permanent exclusion, the most common cause for fixed-term exclusion was assault and violent behaviour, directed towards both pupils and staff. Work continues as part of the 'Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-Being'

(WSAEMW) to support learners through support and counselling, which will contribute toward improving both exclusion and attendance rates.

Aligning to the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code, the Education Directorate is working in partnership with the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (UHB) to ensure that the required provision will be in place, while work to transition from the previous system of 'statements' to the new Individual Development Plans (IDPs) is ongoing. The aim is to have this transition completed by the end of the current academic year, in line with the timescales set by the Welsh Government. There are, however, a number of challenges associated with meeting the growing demand for children with ALN – specifically, being able to forecast and plan for demand in the right areas of the city. In 2022/23, the Council set a target of delivering 290 ALN places, although was only able to deliver 250. Knock-on effects of insufficient capacity include increased costs of out-of-county provision, and increased school transport costs. Moving forward, the immediate priority is ensuring that the right support is provided in the right places, in the first instance extending provision for the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and other specialist resource bases around the city.

Recruitment, retention and staff absence remain areas of challenges for schools, particularly the recruitment of catering staff, Welsh speaking teachers and roles within specialist education. Schools have been supported throughout the year by the Education directorate to backfill both teaching and non-teaching vacant posts. Welsh Government grant funding has also enabled the Council to recruit temporary Education Welfare Officers and School Attendance Officers who will start work in summer 2023, increasing the capacity to deliver the Council's 'Back on Track' school attendance campaign.

Though there were some delays to the delivery of the Band B schools programme through the pandemic, work is still underway, with several projects well developed and/or on-site and others planned for the coming year. The new School Organisation Planning and Investment Strategy is due to go to consultation in summer 2023. As part of the above consultation, the Council will be seeking views on a range of key areas including Community-Focused Schools. The delivery of the first Local Development Plan (LDP) schools has also begun, with two primary schools due to start operating in their new buildings from September 2023. Long-term planning and forecasting up to 2026 is also being undertaken in response to the pressure that acute inflation will have on the education capital programme. Due to the potential impact, this issue is recorded and monitored via the Council's Corporate Risk Register. An emerging challenge, highlighted by the 2021 National Census, is the significant drop in birth rates in Cardiff. This will have implications for both planning and school funding.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken throughout the year to maintain and improve the school estate, including a £25 million programme of condition, suitability, and sufficiency works. Further improvements are planned for the coming year, including the Early Years Unit at Moorlands Primary, development options for primary schools in Cathays, and the creation of additional secondary capacity at Eastern High, Radyr Comprehensive, St. Teilo's, St. Illtyd's, Corpus Christi, and Mary Immaculate. Moving into 2023-24, the value of the asset renewal spend on schools will continue be monitored corporately as a key performance indicator, with a target for the coming year of £22 million, up from this year's

target of £20 million. The key challenge in this area is managing the balance between capital investment in new buildings and repairs to existing buildings, with some sites suffering from ageing infrastructure where funding needs to be spent on essential and emergency repairs.

Schools are also in the process of adapting to meet the capacity requirements of Universal Free School Meals for primary school children. Aligned to the target timescales set by the Welsh Government, Universal Free School meals will roll out to Year 2 pupils from June 2023, and Year 3 and 4 pupils from September 2023 onwards. A substantial programme of capital-funded works is being undertaken to support this change, including making adaptations in schools to accommodate a greater capacity for school-provided food. As mentioned above, the recruitment of catering staff to support this roll out remains a challenge.

Despite the improvement in the financial position for Education, there continues to be significant pressure in some areas, including pay award costs, Home to School Transport, Catering and Out of County Placements. In Home to School Transport, rising costs in fuel and driver supply, combined with the increased number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs requiring transport are the key contributors to the pressures. There are also significant pressures in respect of out of area placements and school catering services, the latter being impacted by price increases for food and transport costs, combined with reduced income from paid school meals.

### **Protecting the Well-Being of Vulnerable Children, Young People, and Families**

Children's Services is moving into 2023-24 with a suite of revised and complimentary strategies, all aligned to the Striving for Excellence in Children's Services Strategy 2023-26. The supporting strategies and frameworks cover areas including workforce, accommodation, commissioning, performance, corporate parenting, trauma, disabilities and additional learning needs, and youth justice. The three key areas of focus underpinning these strategies are place, ensuring there is support within the community, people, developing the permanent workforce, and practice, establishing policies and procedures to promote learning and continuous improvement.

Areas of success for Children's Services include the ongoing development and implementation of a number of strategies, including the Accommodation Strategy, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, and the Recruitment & Retention Strategy. Over the year, developments within the service have been characterised by strong cross-service, multi-disciplinary working, and long-term strategic planning.

The 'Right Place' model for children being looked after and on the edge-of-care was a focus over the course of the year. To deliver the model, a number of sites have been identified across Cardiff, including a main hub site, a site for emergency provision, and a site for skills development to support young people to live independently. Though there have been some delays in implementation, work continues to determine the best resourcing options and role types needed to support the model. Extensive review work has also been undertaken by the Reviewing Hub, which has reviewed over 850 children. Over 200 children were safely stepped down to a lower level of intervention, while the Reunification Team works to assess



and reunify looked after children with their families where it was safe to do so. To support this approach the Quality Assurance Team worked to promote and improve practice standards across Children's Services.

An integrated approach to emotional and mental health support for children and young people has been developed across Council services and in partnership with the Cardiff & Vale UHB. Progress during the year includes the rollout of specialist emotional distress training to partnership staff, and the development of a specification for an accommodation solution to provide suitable placements for children and young people with emotional and mental health support needs. Recruitment has also taken place to appoint specialist psychologists to support children and families through Early Help services. Work has also continued, led by Early Help, to reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences by developing Thinking Together Conversations training and video guidance for practitioners, and working with third sector partners to ensure that there are clear referral pathways into early intervention and preventative services.

The most significant challenge faced during the year has been the lack of sufficiency of placements for children looked after, resulting in an overspend at year end of £6.6 million. The lack of local supply has resulted in more costly, further afield and unregistered placements. At Quarter 4, the percentage of children looked after in regulated placements in Cardiff was 56%, just below the target of 60%, and the number in regulated placements within a 20-mile radius of Cardiff was 76%, just below the target of 80%. Unregistered placements lack strengthened oversight arrangements and are unlawful under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act 2016. However, Children's Services has been working closely with the Care Inspectorate Wales to support the process to register these homes. The pressures on placement provision have been driven by changes in the market and exacerbated by an increase in complexity of the Children's Services caseload which has resulted in more high-cost placements. Another contributing factor to the placements challenge is the Welsh Government's agenda to eliminate profit from the care sector. This has caused some providers to withdraw from the market, shrinking supply, and driving costs up. Cardiff is also home to most Welsh Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), making it more difficult to attract local authority foster carers – although improvements have been achieved in this area. While still below target, at Quarter 4 the number of children looked after by local authority foster carers was at a high of 129, (against a target of 150) with the number of children looked after by external foster carers reduced to 308. Although it is important to note that both types of provision will likely always be needed, this demonstrates a shift away from the historical reliance on external foster carers. However, the reduction in external foster carers could signal an increased reliance on costly residential placements if this trend continues. Though the challenge of placement sufficiency remains in 2023/24, the Accommodation Strategy and the Right Place Model represent a major component of the approach within Children's Services to adapt to the pressures on placements moving forward.

Children's Services have faced ongoing challenges in relation to the recruitment and retention of social workers. This is a national issue affecting local authorities across the country. At Quarter 4, the percentage of permanent social work posts filled by agency staff in Children's Services was 27%, missing the target of 18% and is an increase of 3% from the

position at the end of the previous financial year (24%). In response, a Recruitment & Retention Strategy and Workforce Action Plan have been agreed. The strategy includes plans to attract more social workers to Cardiff through outreach and engagement, a clear induction process for new starters, and promoting the offer of training, mentoring and support from Practice Leads. The Council aims to bring in social work students on placements, and support individuals to complete their social work degrees, while also reaching agreements with recruiting agencies to offer incentives for agency staff to join the workforce on a permanent basis.

When HMIP undertook an inspection of Cardiff's Youth Justice Service (YJS) in 2020<sup>1</sup>, it found the service to be 'Inadequate', granting the lowest possible inspection score to the service (0 of 36). Over the following two years an extensive programme of reform and improvement has been led by the service, with the support of the Cardiff Youth Justice Board.. The result of the improvement work is clearly demonstrable in the service area's performance indicators, including the falling re-offending rate (currently standing at 13% against a target of 40%) and the reduction in the number of first-time entrants (11 against a target of 18). Equally, the HMIP inspection report of August 2022<sup>2</sup> commended the improvements made and the distance the service had travelled since the 2020 inspection. While further areas of improvement were identified through the report's recommendations, some specific areas of work, including planning, implementation, and delivery of out-of-court disposals, and resettlement policy and provision were given 'Good' ratings.

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<sup>1</sup> HMIP YJS Report 2020: [An inspection of youth offending services in Cardiff \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmip-reports-and-inspection-summaries/hmip-yjs-report-2020/)

<sup>2</sup> HMIP YJS Report 2022: [An inspection of youth offending services in Cardiff \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmip-reports-and-inspection-summaries/hmip-yjs-report-2022/)

## Well-being Objective 2:

Cardiff is a great place to grow older

### Our priorities in 2022/23 were:

- Supporting older people to stay active and connected in an age-friendly city
- Supporting older people to live independently at home through strengths-based preventative services
- Working in partnership to deliver high-quality sustainable care and support
- Supporting informal carers and valuing their role
- Ensuring our services meet the needs of the most vulnerable
- Proactively modernising our services

### Strategic Assessment

The Council has made good progress against this Well-Being Objective in the context of a national picture where the social care sector faces severe and ongoing pressures through rising demand, increasingly complex service requirements and a shortage of skilled staff.

The supply of care in Cardiff has improved significantly, unlike in many other local authority areas, however the fragility of the care market remains a concern due to an ongoing shortage of care workers. Though good progress has also been made in increasing resilience within the service, through innovative initiatives such as the Cardiff Cares Academy, recruitment and retention of social workers and occupational therapists remains a significant issue, as do the high levels of staff sickness which has resulted in a backlog of assessments. There is also a need to refocus the care market towards the delivery of services for those with higher levels of care and to address the increasing complexity of service user needs. Taken together, these issues are continuing to place severe pressure on an already stretched social care system.

In response the Council has continued to work in close partnership with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and the care sector to support older people live independently at home for as long as possible and to ensure that people are discharged from hospital as soon as it is safe to do so. Given the pressures on the health and social care system, this will continue to be a strategic priority for the Council and its partners over throughout 2023/24 and beyond.

## **Supporting older people to stay active and connected in an age-friendly city**

Loneliness and social isolation have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of older people which is why enabling older people to connect digitally and stay active in the community represented a priority for the Council. In June 2022, Cardiff was accepted into the World Health Organisation's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. In consultation with older members of the community, an action plan – with an overall ambition of Cardiff becoming an Age Friendly City – has been developed, including a series of commitments to older people on issues such as housing, transport and participation in valued activities.

The Dementia Friendly Volunteer Programme, which was launched on World Alzheimer's Day, recruits and trains Dementia Friendly Ambassadors to support local shops, businesses, and organisations to work towards becoming Dementia Friendly. Despite a slow start to the year, progress was seen in Quarter 4, with 64 businesses signing up to the Dementia Friendly Pledge, against a target of 40. Additionally, to raise awareness and promote the support available, 2,616 Dementia Friendly City events were held throughout the year, against a target of 600. The percentage of staff completing the Dementia Friendly training module remains low, with only 54% of staff completing the training, against a target of 85%. Moving forward, completing the training will become a mandatory requirement and linked to staff performance reviews.

Other areas of progress include the expansion of the city's Care Hub (Day Centre) activity programme, as well as the widening of age-specific activity provision within Community Hubs. The Rhiwbina Hub has been officially launched as a fit-for-purpose community facility, as well as a Wellbeing Hub at Maelfa. During the year, intergenerational projects have also continued to be delivered across Care Homes with young people – who engage with the Council through Into Work Services – providing older people with one-to-one digital training.

## **Supporting older people to live independently at home through strengths-based preventative services**

Enabling older people to live independently at home improves their sense of wellbeing as well as reducing pressures on the public purse. The Council's preventative services are vital to ensuring that people can remain living at home for longer and, in 2022/23, 96% of the Council's Independent Living Service (ILS) clients reported that they felt able to live independently in their homes following support from ILS. Additionally, Ask Sara, an online self-help tool for citizens, carers and providers, was successfully launched in May 2022 to help identify the solutions needed to support independence.

The Community Occupational Therapy (COT) team offers practical support to enable people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible through "right sized" support packages. The service is now working on the development of a Trusted Assessor model, a collaboration between Occupational Therapy (OT) and Social Work, to enable the completion of care plans by Occupational Therapists. Following difficulties in the recruitment of Occupational Therapists, a shift to recruiting non-qualified staff has proved

successful with the service now bringing forward proposals for developing its own qualified staff, providing a career path for carers and Occupational Therapist assistants.

The Community Resource Team (CRT), a partnership between Cardiff Council and Cardiff & Vale UHB, was inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) during Quarter 1 of 2022/23, with assurance provided that there is good management oversight of the service, as well as compliance with regulatory requirements. Due to recruitment challenges and sickness absence, the number of people accessing support from the community resource team (1493 people against a target of 2000) and the total hours of support provided by the community resource team (35147 hours against a target of 5,000) fell short of the Corporate Plan target. This is also partly attributable to new pathways of care being introduced and the number of ward referrals being received via the Integrated Discharge Hub.

Good work is also evident in relation to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The means test for eligible adaptations has been removed, leading to a substantial decrease in the average time applicants have to wait for approval. The average waiting time in March 2023 was 12 weeks, compared to 19 weeks in March 2020.

The development and upskilling of the First Point of Contact (FPOC) team is continuing; however, progress has been impacted by high demand, particularly over the winter period. The percentage of new cases dealt with directly at FPOC with no onward referral to Adult Services is also lower than in previous years and below target for the year (63% against a target of 75%). However, the way in which the FPOC Community Contact team and the FPOC Social Work team manage the assessment process has changed, and as a result direct comparisons with previous years' figures is not possible. The measure and target will be amended for 2023/24.

### **Working in partnership to deliver high-quality sustainable care and support**

In August 2022, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out an inspection of the Council's domiciliary care services. The report highlighted that people appear happy with the support they receive, and their physical, mental, and social needs are recognised and supported. The inspection found that services showed commitment to achieving positive outcomes for their service users. The Inspector also described interactions between people and staff as warm and positive, and recognised that staff are familiar with the needs and likes of the individuals they support.

Work is ongoing to develop integrated local Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) that prevent hospital admission and facilitate hospital discharge. The Independent Living Service (ILS) now forms part of MDTs covering South West, North, South East and East Cardiff. A visiting officer attends all MDTs within these clusters and supports the non-medical needs of patients. In addition, an intermediate care work stream under the @home programme has been established to expand and deliver additional cluster MDTs. Despite good progress at the start of the year, proposals to develop an MDT locality hub in the North West of Cardiff have been put on hold due to the planned location, St. Isan, sustaining substantial flood damage during Quarter 3. The escalating demand caused by winter pressures and the need

to focus on hospital discharge has further impacted delivery, meaning that the pilot will need be progressed during the 2023/24 financial year.

The new Integrated Discharge Hub (IDH), with a hospital-based MDT, is now up and running in the University Hospital of Wales (UHW), with a focus on enabling the safe and timely discharge of citizens back to settings in the community. A new 'Discharge 2 Reassess' (D2RA) pathway was implemented in November 2022 which has supported 51 patients to leave hospital with domiciliary care, with 38 having their package of care right-sized. The average time from triage to D2RA is 72 hours which has reduced the length of stay by a minimum of 13 days. Two partnership reviews have been undertaken on the IDH triage process, and moving forward, further improvements to enhance outcomes for patients have been identified.

Welsh Government has recognised the complexity of the hospital discharge process and reporting on delayed transfers of care have been suspended nationally while new indicators are developed. Therefore, limited overall information is available for 2022/23. Good progress has been made locally in the detailed monitoring of hospital discharge; there are no substantial delays caused by people waiting for care. On average between 40 and 50 discharges with care are facilitated each week. A set of IDH performance indicators detailing pathway, time in triage, time to discharge and outcome pathways are being developed with IT and Care First leads to measure the success of pathways out of hospitals.

Cardiff has participated in national discussions on the potential development of Micro-Enterprises for Personal Assistant roles, which would help increase care capacity in the city. Following a comprehensive options analysis, the Council partnered with Community Catalysts CIC to develop a network of Micro-Enterprises in Cardiff. The project will increase the amount of choice and level of care personalisation for service users and offer improved working conditions for those providing care and support.

During the first half of the year, a pilot of the "Trusted Partner" model – which enables commissioned providers to adapt care to meet individual needs – became operational across the care sector. More sophisticated contractual arrangements are being put into place which allow a more graduated approach to care management at the judgement of providers, although more work is needed to ensure optimal cost effectiveness and flexibility.

The workforce challenge within the sector in Wales has been compounded by the need for all domiciliary care staff and care home staff to formally register with Social Care Wales. Concerns remain that this may impact recruitment and retention in a sector already facing acute workforce challenges. To mitigate this risk, the Council is actively promoting social care as a positive career choice, working with providers to grow the workforce and implementing the Real Living Wage (RLW) for care workers in Cardiff. The Cardiff Cares Academy continues to grow and evolve, with additional measures established to support carer recruitment. Progress has been encouraging, resulting in good job outcomes for those who participate in the scheme.

## Older persons housing

The Council is committed to delivering modern, fit for purpose older persons housing that supports independent living. The Addison House development, which will deliver 44 care-ready apartments in Rumney, is progressing well and is expected to open in November 2023. In March 2023, a contract was entered into for the development of 44 apartments for older people on Bute Street. In addition, a contractor has been chosen for the development of 35 older person apartments on the site of Canton Community Hall. It is anticipated that work will commence during Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

The construction market continues to present challenges with supply shortages and rising material prices resulting in cost inflation and delays. Progress on the development of 101 care-ready apartments at the Maelfa and St. Mellons, for example, has been impacted as a result of the appointed contractor falling into administration. Alternative options to ensure the sites are re-started are being considered.

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## Well-being Objective 3:

### Supporting people out of poverty

#### Our priorities in 2022/23 were:

- Supporting those most impacted by the economic crisis into work, education or training
- Continuing our Living Wage City ambition
- Embedding our new approach to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping

#### Strategic Assessment

The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on many households with inflationary pressures making essential day-to-day items more expensive. During 2022/23, 5,989 customers were helped with Covid-related and Universal Credit financial support, almost exactly double the number expected at the start of the year. Coming so soon after the Covid-19 pandemic, this crisis has compounded the pressures that many people face and deepened existing inequalities.

In response, the Council has established an enhanced programme of advice and support for citizens, supported by a communications and engagement campaign. Despite seeing a very significant increase in demand the Council's Advice Services and Into Work services are continuing to be delivered effectively, supporting citizens to access funding, advice and routes into employment and training. Concerns remain however regarding the volume of demand and the scale of challenges individuals and households face, and the lasting impact this could have through deepening already significant inequalities in the city.

The number of rough sleepers remains far lower than the pre-pandemic position with the multi-agency preventative approach to supporting people off the streets and into a sustainable home continuing to have an impact.

The number of people who are becoming homeless and the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation has increased substantially, with high waiting lists across all homeless gateways. The demand challenges have necessitated the use of hotels for families to provide interim accommodation for those at risk of homelessness; over 100 families are currently being housed in hotels. Around 8,000 people are on now the Council House waiting list and the rental rate in the private rented sector is at unprecedented levels. The shortage of housing of all tenures is causing intense pressure across many Council Services, and the need to rapidly extend access to housing is a corporate priority (see Well-being Objective 4).



## **Responding to the Cost-of-Living Crisis**

The Council committed to supporting households affected by the cost-of-living crisis. This included an enhanced programme of advice and support, and, despite effective delivery, all support services experienced unprecedented levels of demand. Around £21m of additional weekly benefit were identified for clients of the Money Advice team during the year, far exceeding the target of £14.5m. Similarly, over 1,440 tenancies were saved through the rent arrears pathway, a support scheme open to all tenants regardless of their tenure or income type. The Hubs and libraries provided warm welcome spaces from October, supporting almost 12,000 people during the winter months. Youth Services also offered a warm space with hot food and drink to young people at seven centres and pop-up tents during the colder months. The Cost-of-Living Discretionary Support Scheme, which ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, supported 15,388 receive payments totalling over £2.1m.

To ensure it remained well positioned to respond to the Cost-of-Living crisis, a Taskforce was established to identify the priorities for those affected and a wide-reaching publicity campaign was undertaken to promote the support on offer with designated cost-of-living information stations placed in every Hub across the city.

Moving forward, the Council is seeking to work with Welsh Government to ensure that any new financial support schemes are designed through a consultative process. As demand continues to increase, Advice Services will be constantly reviewed to ensure that there are adequate resources to support all residents who need help and bids for external funding will continue to be made as and when it becomes available. Council tenants who accessed the Cost-of-Living Discretionary Support Scheme will be offered further support, if needed, ahead of winter 2023 to ensure they are not at risk of falling back into debt. The rent arrears pathway will continue to be promoted, using the most appropriate financial support to prevent homelessness.

## **Supporting those most impacted by the economic crisis into work, education or training**

The Council continues to do all it can to support residents into work, education or training. 4,227 Council posts have been filled through placements from Cardiff Works, the Council's in-house recruitment agency. The Council also provides numerous opportunities for apprentices and trainees in a range of services – 173 placements took place during 2022/23 and 65 new placements were created. The number of new apprentice and trainee placements created is lower than expected due to significant in-year financial challenges across the Council, which resulted in a need to restrict the creation and advertisement of posts.

The number of people who received into work advice through the Employment Gateway is 77,102, exceeding the target of 51,000. Additionally, at least 1,115 clients have been supported into employment having received tailored support through the Gateway. 347 employers have been assisted by the Into Work team which has again exceeded the target set of 275 for the financial year.

The Job Club has expanded their provision by providing additional sessions in RISE (the Council's specialist support service for victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence), Job Centres, Grange Pavilion and the Ukrainian Welcome Centre. Tailored into work programmes have been also delivered for specific groups such as young people not in education, employment or training, and care-experienced young people.

In response to recommendations made by the Race Equality Taskforce, the Into Work Advice Service delivered a significant programme of outreach and engagement events, specifically targeting Cardiff's ethnic minority communities. This has included events such as an Emergency Services Event in Grangetown and a Butetown Careers Fair last July, which attracted over 200 attendees. Community champions have also been appointed to disseminate information, promote events and opportunities to ethnic minority jobseekers. The service also developed new training resources to respond to the specific employability support needs of some ethnic minority jobseekers who the service supports, such as recent arrivals to the UK who need to prepare for entry to the UK labour market. The access and visibility of Cardiff Works for ethnic minority groups has also been improved through actions such as community-based engagement, including attending schools with a high percentage of children from an ethnic minority background to engage families and the wider school community. Around 41% of those using Into Work services are from an ethnic minority background, while around 46% of Cardiff Works clients are from an ethnic minority background.

Cardiff Works Ready also began operating in 2022/23. The team provide training and mentoring to people in our communities who are looking for work in the Council. This helps the Council to be more representative of the communities we serve. In the first year of the programme over 130 people were supported by mentors, with over 50% achieving a positive outcome through completing role specific training, successfully passing the Cardiff Works assessment and securing a Cardiff Works placement.

The Into Work Service was successful in a bid to the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver a three-year local supported employment programme supporting individuals with learning difficulties and autism.

The Onsite Construction Academy provide training and work experience for individuals wanting to join the construction industry, and once training is completed, connect job seekers with employers to offer employment and apprenticeship opportunities across south-east Wales. In 2022/23, 124 unemployed people have become site-ready with the help of the Academy, with 31 site-ready individuals sustaining employment or apprenticeships for over 12 weeks.

During 2022/23, 5,989 customers were supported and assisted with their claims for Universal Credit. This is well above the target of 3,000 set but understandable given the economic pressures. The impact of Welfare Reform continues to be regarded as a risk to the Council. The migration of ongoing Housing Benefit claims to Universal Credit has been delayed again. There are currently no plans for the migration to start until 2024.

## **Continuing our Living Wage City ambition**

Continued progress has been made in Cardiff's Living Wage work, with the city's status as a Living Wage City renewed for the next three years. Forty more Cardiff organisations have become accredited Living Wage employers in the past year, including the city's 100<sup>th</sup> private sector organisation, and by the end of March 2023, there were 199 accredited Real Living Wage employers in total. Just over 66,000 people are employed by accredited Living Wage employers in the city and almost 11,000 of them received a pay rise as a result of the accreditation. Cardiff has the lowest percentage of jobs which pay below the Living Wage in Wales (11.6% of all jobs; 24,000) and is amongst the lowest of the Core Cities. Recognising this progress, the Council's Real Living Wage initiative won the 2022 Local Government Chronicle award for Best Public/Private Partnership. Cardiff University has calculated that an additional £50m has gone into the Cardiff economy since 2012 as a result of employees being uplifted to the real Living Wage.

One of the key procurement objectives identified in the new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2022-27 approved by Cabinet in October is "Improving Fair Work and Safeguarding practices adopted by suppliers", which includes payment of the Real Living Wage. The Cardiff Living Wage City Steering Group has set new targets for 300 accredited Living Wage employers in Cardiff, employing 95,000 staff of whom 13,900 have seen their pay uplifted to the Real Living Wage. These targets are to be achieved by November 2025.

## **Embedding our new approach to tackling homelessness**

The Council's primary focus remains in providing timely support at an early stage so that people are prevented from becoming homeless in the first instance. Homelessness was successfully prevented for 79% of households where the Council had a duty to help. Prevention services have been moved into Community Hubs across the city so that residents can receive straightforward access to help, whilst also linking up with the wider support available in our hubs from teams such as Money Advice and the Into Work Advice Service. Prevention services will be expanded again in 2024 to increase accessibility whether people want to interact with the Council online, over the phone, in community settings or through a home visit.

Despite good levels of homeless prevention, there are increasing numbers of households becoming homeless and requiring temporary and permanent rehousing. Over 60 single people are seeking emergency accommodation every night. There are high waiting lists across all homeless gateways; 73 people are waiting to enter the Young Persons Gateway.

The significant demand challenges have necessitated the use of hotels for families to provide interim accommodation for those at risk of homelessness; over 100 families are currently being housed in hotels. Plans are already in place to reduce the use of hotels and increase temporary accommodation capacity such as increasing the number of home purchases made by the Council.

During autumn and winter 2022, around 190 new demountable modular homes were installed on the former Gasworks site in Grangetown with the Council's partner developer, Wates, to rapidly provide short-term warm, safe and secure accommodation for homeless families. There are plans in place to further expand the Gasworks site by an additional 154 units during 2023. Once the long-term development scheme for the site has been through the design and planning process, the homes can be relocated to other sites elsewhere meaning that the Council can make use of what would otherwise be an empty site.

The Single Assessment Centre supports single people with complex needs, including rough sleepers. Multi-agency services are provided on site including health inclusion services, together with good-quality self-contained accommodation. The Centre provides the homeless individual with a period of stability, and the right professional support to fully understand their ongoing support needs. In 2022/23, 779 presentations were made to the Assessment Centre with 246 individuals completing a Wellbeing Assessment.

A review on the effectiveness of the Single Assessment Centre on the cycle of homelessness was undertaken during 2022/23. On the whole, the service has been a success and gains have been made in breaking the cycle of homelessness for many clients. There have, however, been challenges associated with the demand for services and issues with a lack of move-on accommodation. There is potential for further expansion of the service which may require a search for a larger building in the future.

Due to the increasing challenges in finding move-on accommodation for single homeless people, two 'managed blocks' schemes have been developed totalling 111 flats. These are fully self-contained flats that allow people to move on from homeless accommodation with on-site support staff. More blocks are planned in the future to meet the demand. Whilst there has been some progress in introducing women-only provision in existing schemes and an expansion of the core and cluster model of housing for people with learning disabilities, more is needed. Therefore, work has commenced to scope and develop bespoke housing and support solutions, including identifying suitable sites for a woman-only schemes and the development of a capital build strategy based on current and future demand for specialist housing. Work is also planned to engage with members of the LGBTQ+ community to better understand how we can develop a more responsive and inclusive housing response.

Spending long periods in temporary accommodation is unsettling for families and can affect children's education, the Council is therefore committed to help deliver the Welsh Government's vision of rapid re-housing. Work is ongoing with partners to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, supporting individuals and families into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible. A high proportion of social housing properties are allocated to homeless clients; since April 2022, 74% of allocations for 'general needs' properties (excluding management lets / lets to immediate priority) have been made to homeless clients which has helped alleviate some of the pressure on temporary accommodation. However, to truly deliver the rapid re-housing vision, the city will need to significantly increase the supply of affordable housing, while the Council has ambitious new build plans, far more affordable homes need to be delivered than are currently planned if this goal is to be achieved.

## Ending rough sleeping

Rough sleeping remains at historically low levels within Cardiff, far below the levels seen before the pandemic. The average numbers ranged between 11 and 16 for the first three quarters of the financial year before a spike in Quarter 4 increased the average to 26. Council teams continue to engage with every rough sleeper and are there to provide help and support whenever the person is ready to accept it.

As a result of the relatively low numbers of rough sleepers in Cardiff, the number of rough sleepers supported into accommodation was below target in 2022/23, with a year-end figure of 92 against a target of 160. Due to the complex need of many of those seeking accommodation, supporting rough sleepers can often prove demanding, with the numbers supported into accommodation representing excellent multi agency working. To support clients with higher needs into permanent housing as quickly as possible, the Housing First scheme has been expanded. This scheme offers direct placement into Council, Housing Association and private rented sector tenancies with intensive wraparound support. It gives people who have experienced homelessness and have complex needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. There are currently three Housing First schemes in Cardiff, two operated by the Council, one for rough sleepers and one for prison leavers. A further scheme is operated by the Salvation Army. Housing First is very successful, with 94% of clients who have utilised the service having broken the cycle of homelessness.

The work to transform Adams Court in Adamsdown into a new supported accommodation unit was completed in January 2023. Delivered in partnership with United Welsh Housing Association the accommodation is now able to offer 103 self-contained one-bed flats for single homeless people with complex needs. In addition to the flats, work has been undertaken to provide medical facilities, spaces for diversionary activities, multi-purpose rooms and a counselling room.

A review on the effectiveness of the Single Assessment Centre on the cycle of homelessness has been undertaken. On the whole, the service has been a success and gains have been made in breaking the cycle of homelessness for many clients. It is now an established service with health inclusion services being widely accessed. There have, however, been challenges associated with the demand for services and issues with a lack of move-on and further work is needed here. There is potential for further expansion of the services on site which may require a search for a larger building in future years.

## Well-being Objective 4:

### Safe, confident and empowered communities

#### Our priorities for 2022/23 were:

- Building new Council homes and investing in community facilities
- Ensuring children and adults are protected from risk of harm and abuse
- Creating safe and inclusive communities
- Promoting the Welsh language
- Working together to support a healthier and more active population

#### Strategic Assessment

Cardiff is a safe city with a strong sense of belonging and pride within communities. There are, however, substantial differences in people's experiences of Cardiff depending on where they live. Respondents to Ask Cardiff 2022 living in the least deprived areas of the city were notably more satisfied with their local community as a place to live than those in the most deprived areas – with the former twice as likely to describe themselves as 'very satisfied' than the latter (22.7% compared with 11.9% respectively).

The Council is therefore continuing to invest in all our communities, with a focus on those living in the city's most deprived areas. Initiatives completed over the course of the year include the first Health & Well-being Hub opened in Llanedeyrn in July 2022, the refurbishment and creation of a new Community Well-being Hub in Rhiwbina, the £5million transformation of Tudor Street is complete and a new 3G sport pitch in Splott. The Council continues to invest in new affordable homes, with 843 now delivered over the past five years and a further 362 new homes currently being built on site. The Council's updated development programme commits to building 4,000 new homes by 2030.

The pressure on the housing market, especially the cost and lack of availability of homes in the private rented sector, is causing significant demand and cost pressures in housing and homelessness services (see Well-being Objective 3) and across numerous council services, including social services, advice services and refugee and asylum seeker support. Waiting lists to enter temporary accommodation have doubled over the past year and hotels are now being used as temporary accommodation for some families. A programme of immediate actions has been put in place, including additional support packages to support those at risk of becoming homeless and for those struggling to pay their rent or mortgage. The Council is using all available levers to make more homes available and affordable, through bringing empty homes back into use, managing the Leasing Scheme Wales and building new properties. Collectively, these initiatives are having an impact, but such is the scale of the demand they will not enable the Council to meet the demand. Given the scale of the challenge and the cross-service and cross-city impacts of the issue, this is likely to remain a strategic priority for the Council for the remainder of 2023 and beyond.

Over the course of the spring and summer 2022, the Council led a city-wide response to the Ukraine refugee crisis, ensuring that refugees were welcomed, given a place to stay and that the city's wider public services were available and ready to support them. The number of arrivals, and the often-complex nature of their needs, meant that demand pressures were felt across the public service system. It is anticipated that this will be the case for a number of years to come and so this area will continue to be a priority for the Council and its partners in 2023/24.

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## Delivering affordable homes

The Council continues to do everything in its power to maximise the amount of affordable, energy-efficient and low-carbon housing in the city. Cardiff Living, the Council's house-building programme, is recognised as an innovative development programme identified as good practice by the Welsh Government. The partnership approach has reduced delivery risk and improved the speed taken to get projects on site. The programme has also unified the standard of the council homes and homes built for sale by adopting a 'tenure blind' approach. Over the past five years, 843 new Council homes have been built against a target of 1,000 by December 2022. This is slower than anticipated due to the difficulties facing the construction industry as a whole which have resulted in delays in tendering for contractors and the completion of schemes. When schemes are on site, contractors are also struggling with material price increases and a shortage of labour as well as delays with the supply of materials. Despite the challenges, this remains the largest Council home building scheme in Wales and one of the most ambitious in the UK.

The programme continues to be commended for its innovative and environmentally friendly approach, winning awards for the Aspen Grove net zero, carbon-ready development in Rumney at the RESI Residential Property Awards and for the Crofts Street development in Cathays, which won the Modern Methods of Construction Award at the Constructing Excellence in Wales Awards 2022. The housing development programme also delivers wider benefits to the city and to the Cardiff Capital Region. With an estimated Capital investment of over £950 million, the programme provides significant social value and local investment by supporting local supply chains and contractors, as well as developing training and employment opportunities over the longer-term.

In November 2022, a proposal to implement a second housing partnership was approved to enable new housing developments to be delivered at scale and at pace with the aim of building at least 4,000 new homes overall, including the delivery for rent or sale to keyworkers. Another option the Council is exploring aims to address the issue of overcrowding in Council housing stock. The Council has undertaken a pilot where innovative solutions have been carried out to create more rooms for families, such as extending existing properties where possible, converting the loft space or fixing a modular unit in the garden. If the pilot proves successful, this will be rolled out further. Work is also planned to provide more support to those who wish to downsize to release family housing and to help tenants to resolve their housing need through promoting and supporting mutual exchanges.

Bringing empty homes back into use is another way to increase the available housing stock. 91 properties were returned to use or new units created as a result of work carried out by Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) during 2022/23. The Welsh Government has approved the Council's Empty Homes Action Plan, which identifies empty properties in the city for targeted action. This will enable the Council to draw down funding to indemnify the service against the financial risk involved in taking appropriate legal action to help bring these properties back into use.

In addition, significant resources continue to be invested in the new Landlord Enquiry Tenant Support (LETS). The team manage the Leasing Scheme Wales, a Welsh Government



initiative which aims to increase access to, and the affordability of, renting privately in Wales. The scheme allows landlords to lease their properties to the Council for five years and to claim up to £5,000 for repair works to the property. The Council has secured 22 properties as a result of this scheme during 2022/23 with a further 10 properties undergoing works/ pending agreement for lease which will be occupied in the 2023/24 financial year.

There are currently around 8,000 households on the waiting list for a Council or Housing Association property in the city and on average over 400 new applications to join the list are received each month. During 2022/23, 1,528 properties were let in total. Rent levels in the private rented sector are at an unprecedented level with only a small proportion within the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, the maximum amount that can be claimed in benefit. Tenants need to make up any shortfall from their other income and this is putting the option of renting privately out of reach for many. In a sample of the market taken during Quarter 2, 98% of properties were being let at least £100 per month above the LHA and the average shortfall across all property types is £318 per month. The inability to secure housing is therefore impacting outcomes for individuals and families, creating major delivery challenges and impacting on budgets across Council services. Taken together, this points to the critical and urgent need to fully leverage all policy options to deliver further affordable housing.

### **Investing in communities**

During 2022/23 over 4.5 million people visited the Council's Hubs and libraries, either in person or virtually, and 97% of customers agreed that the Hub or library had met their requirements, surpassing the target set. Rhiwbina Community Wellbeing Hub welcomed customers back in January 2023. Funding from Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund, Integration and Rebalancing Care Fund, and the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division enabled the building to be fully refurbished and transformed into a fit-for-purpose community facility that will support the co-location of library services with new advice, housing and social care services.

The first of its kind in the city, the new Health & Wellbeing Hub @ Maelfa opened in July. Delivered in partnership with Cardiff & Vale UHB and Llanedeyrn Health Centre, this new Hub approach enhances existing services already available by integrating a range of specialised health clinics providing a 'one-stop approach' to the health and wellbeing of our residents. Plans for a second Wellbeing Hub in Ely and Caerau are being progressed and options for new Hubs on strategic planning sites will be explored. Plans for a Youth Hub in the city centre are also progressing with a preferred option due to be agreed in the autumn of 2023.

As part of the investment in the South Riverside Business Corridor, Tudor Street has been regenerated to appeal as a shopping destination for both local residents and the wider community. The £5 million scheme has delivered improvements to the public realm, business environment, transport infrastructure and the shopfronts of 30 business premises. Work has now moved onto Cowbridge Road East in Riverside. The Neighbourhood Regeneration Team held a series of engagement sessions with residents and traders during

March 2022 where over 130 people provided feedback, and thoughts and ideas for improvements. Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes for a 3G pitch at Splott Park and for improvements to Old St Mellons village centre were completed in March 2023. Two estate regeneration schemes at Pennsylvania and Lincoln Court in Llanedeyrn have also been completed. The percentage of residents satisfied with completed regeneration projects has decreased to 79% – this was primarily due to one neighbourhood renewal scheme receiving a low satisfaction rating. Work has been undertaken to try to understand the reasons for this and use the lessons learnt on subsequent schemes.

Following the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower, the Council reviewed fire safety in all its high-rise blocks and decided to replace the cladding on blocks which had it. Although the cladding was not the same as that used at Grenfell and had met all safety requirements when it was installed, it no longer met today's more stringent fire safety standards. Re-cladding work at Lydstep flats, which began in March 2021, is progressing well and is expected to be completed in the autumn of 2023. Project consultants for the re-cladding work at Nelson House and Loudoun House in Butetown are due to be appointed in May 2023; procurement for a scheme contractor can then commence.

### **Ensuring children and adults are protected from risk of harm and abuse**

Recruitment of staff remains an ongoing issue in Adult Services. Work has begun on a refresh of the Social Worker Cardiff website to improve Adult Services' presence and a Social Worker recruitment film has been produced to support recruitment activity. An increased market supplement for qualified staff has been agreed and this has been increased for 2023/24. Job adverts have been reviewed and work undertaken to refresh and improve them. Positive feedback has been received from attendees at job fairs regarding Adult Services' presence and the recruitment materials have been made available to prospective candidates. Work has also been undertaken to develop the workforce strategy for 2023/24.

Following the publication of best practice by the Welsh Government, a new Corporate Safeguarding Policy 2022-25 was published in December 2022, which sets out the arrangements in place across all Council services to safeguard and protect children and adults. To ensure high levels of staff awareness of safeguarding risks and response a focus has been placed on raised training levels, with 84% of Council staff now having completed safeguarding awareness training, up from 65% at Quarter 4 2021/22, with 97% of elected members also having completed training.

The pressures on mental health services have continued during the year, in line with the ongoing pressures on health and social care services generally. Work to develop a non-emergency response service is progressing with the University Health Board; this service will provide support to people with lower-level mental health issues and reduce demand on the system. Work is also underway to understand issues relating to the availability of mental health hospital beds and the Council will continue to work with colleagues in Health to address this.

Health inequalities are present across Cardiff, particularly when comparing northern areas of the city to more deprived areas, such as Cardiff's 'Southern Arc'. In 2020/21 the Cardiff Director of Public Health's report on health inequities identified a small number of priorities for action as the city emerged from the pandemic, including: childhood obesity; vaccine uptake among children, and health screenings (particular for bowel cancer). In response the Amplifying Prevention Delivery Group has been established under the auspices of the Cardiff Public Services Board. This group oversees the planning and delivery of additional targeted interventions across the priorities identified above. These have included:

- **Childhood Immunisation:** Development of new materials and communication campaign on childhood immunisation in a range of community languages; Test Trace Protect contact tracers utilised to contact families missing vaccinations, with demonstrable impact on uptake.
- **Bowel Cancer:** The bowel cancer screening project working with Cancer Research UK, Public Health Wales, the Welsh Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS), and the Council's Film Unit has been completed. Bowel cancer screening information videos have been translated into Urdu, Arabic, Somali and Bengali. The videos have been made available on GP screens within the South of the city and within Community Hubs on new digital screens which are being installed. Community Health Connect YouTube channels have also been set up to host the videos. Promotional materials outlining the project include QR codes to support easy access for customers to the language of their choice. The videos have also been made available to Public Health Wales who will include them on their website, and to Cancer Research UK who are able to access and utilise the videos.
- **Childhood Obesity:** Mapping of high fat, sugar and salt advertising sites across Cardiff, with a focus on those in proximity to schools and hospitals, and revision of bus stop advertising contract in Cardiff aligned to healthier advertising principles.

## **Creating safe and inclusive communities**

Cardiff is a safe place to live. Crime has fallen over the last 20 years and it has the second lowest crime rate of comparable cities in England and Wales. Although recorded crime continues to fall, perceptions of crime and safety amongst citizens remains a concern. In the Council's Ask Cardiff Survey in 2022, only 21% of citizens agreed that local public services are successfully dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime in their local area. Respondents reported feeling least safe when travelling or walking in the city centre after dark and those living in the most deprived areas of the city were more likely to feel unsafe compared to those living in the least deprived.

In response, the Council has worked with partners to expand a targeted multi-agency problem-solving approach to localised complex anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspots. This approach involves working in collaboration with public sector partners, such as South Wales Police, third sector organisations, community groups, and local businesses to identify and address local issues. Successful project work with partners has taken place in locations such as Lydstep Flats and Park in Gabalfa where a year of problem-solving focus in the area resulted in a sustained reduction in youth anti-social behaviour. This is evidenced by a reduction from 101 youth-related ASB incidents to just 22 incidents measured over two six-

month periods in 2021 and 2022. Interventions are also underway in Clifton Street in Adamsdown which, to date, has led to a significant decrease in public order, harassment, anti-social behaviour and theft incidents. Measurements over two six-month periods in 2021 and 2022 show a decrease in both ASB reports (20 compared to 65) and crime incidents (55 from 158) in the targeted area. Following the successful Safer Streets Fund bid for £750,000 in July 2022, planned initiatives with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, and to improve women's safety have been taking place in the city centre and some residential areas of Cathays where eight CCTV cameras have been installed. Looking forward to 2023/24, the Community Safety Partnership has an evidence-led work programme which includes indicators of success that have been developed specifically to measure the effectiveness of local interventions.

Following the successful Safer Streets Fund bid for £750,000 in July 2022, planned initiatives with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, and to improve women's safety have been taking place in the city centre and some residential areas of Cathays where eight CCTV cameras have been installed.

Over the course of the spring and summer, the Council led a city-wide response to the Ukraine refugee crisis, ensuring that 1,000 refugees were welcomed, given a place to stay and that the city's wider public services were available and ready to support them. The number of arrivals, and the often-complex nature of their needs, meant that demand pressures were felt across the public service system. A dedicated in-house team was quickly established to support the Ukraine response, including a move-on team to deliver transition to long-term housing arrangements. 120 Ukrainians have been supported into training by the Into Work Advice Service, 14 have signed up with Cardiff Works and 26 are accessing volunteering opportunities. Housing support workers have been continuing to support Ukrainian families with a total of 32 families moved into private rented sector properties at the end of March 2023. The Council has also continued to support refugees arriving under the Afghan resettlement scheme and through other routes. Over the course of 2022/23 this area has been one of rapidly increasing demand which has required concerted partnership action, one whose impact will be felt across multiple services, and which is likely to remain a strategic priority for the Council over the years ahead.

The Council has continued to work with partners and communities to tackle the threat of extremism, with the Home Office recognising that Cardiff Council's Prevent Programme is exceeding the requirements of the Prevent Duty in most areas, with strengths identified in partnership working, training and community engagement.

A new regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan was approved by Cabinet in May 2023, with significant progress being made in relation to levels of staff training and awareness. 84% of staff have now completed the Level 1 online module of the National Training Framework up from 51% at year-end 2021/22. The percentage of referrals regarding high-risk abuse victims where contact has been attempted by the specialist services within one calendar day of receiving the referral has increased from 78% to 84% over the past year but remains below the 90% target.

In December 2022, the Cabinet responded to the final report of the Race Equality Taskforce, accepting all recommendations and updating on progress made across the five priority areas identified: Employment & Representative Workforce; Education and Young People; Citizens Voice; Health; and Criminal Justice. The Council has established robust monitoring and oversight arrangements, which will update on progress before the end of 2023/24. As part of this approach the Race Equality Taskforce will be invited to reconvene to consider and report back on progress made by the Council and its partners. Areas of immediate progress include:

- Enhanced outreach and engagement with the city's ethnic minority communities, by the Council's Into Work team, to improve access to Cardiff Works (see Well-being Objective 3)
- The launch of a pilot leadership development programme for Council employee networks focussed on increasing the diversity of our future managers and senior managers (see Well-being Objective 7)
- Increasing the visibility of Black and Ethnic Minority role models through sponsoring the Annual Betty Campbell Monument Lecture.

Monitoring of the agreed actions will be undertaken in line with the Council's Planning and Performance Framework with the Taskforce invited to reconvene to assess progress in 2023/24.

### **Promoting the Welsh language**

Work continues to achieve the vision of Cardiff being a truly bilingual capital city, where the Welsh language is embedded in the fabric of everyday life. The number of Welsh speakers in Cardiff has increased over the last ten years. The 2021 Census showed that the number of people who could speak, read and write Welsh has increased by almost a quarter – 23.0% or over 6,500 people – which is the largest numerical and percentage increase across all Welsh Local Authorities.

The Council remains committed to making the organisation an increasingly bilingual workplace and remains on track to achieve a 20% increase in the number of staff with Welsh language skills by 2026/27 – currently 20.6% of staff report having some skills in the language. The number of staff attending Welsh courses has seen the biggest single-year increase with over 500 staff receiving training during 2022/23, although this is slightly below the increase required to meet the five-year target of a 50% increase.

Education is a crucial driver in growing the number of Welsh speakers in the city. The Council's 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was presented to the Welsh Government for approval in December 2022. This Plan sets out a series of ambitious commitments to build on the progress achieved to date which will ensure that every child in the city can receive a Welsh language education; that the number receiving a Welsh language education will increase; and that, through the significant use of Welsh in English-medium education, all children will feel confident speaking Welsh. Construction work also started on Ysgol Gynradd Groes-wen Primary School in October 2022. This is the first dual-stream school in Cardiff; a school with one form of entry for Welsh-medium education and

one form of entry for dual-language education in English and Welsh. The new school will admit its first pupils in September 2023.

Other work with young people includes a new partnership called CFTi (CF 'you') to engage young people and develop Welsh language services with young people. The partnership is made up of the Council's Youth Service, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Menter Caerdydd and is supporting new youth officers to work across each of the three Welsh-medium secondary schools in the city. In March 2023, a new Welsh youth club started for pupils in school years 7, 8 and 9, and the new Bilingual Cardiff Youth Forum for 11–18-year-olds also held their first meeting in the Old Library.

## **Working together to support a healthier and more active population**

The new Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27, *Move More Cardiff*, was launched at an event in June at the SWALEC Stadium with over 100 key partners and stakeholders. Developed in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff & Vale UHB and Public Health Wales, with the work being led by Sport Cardiff, the strategy will aim to reduce sedentary behaviour and make being active the norm. Good progress was made in accessing available data sources to benchmark current physical activity levels in the city and the team worked closely with Cardiff Third Sector Council to develop the most effective way to engage with communities. It was agreed at the start of 2023 to continue developing the model in the two pilot areas (Llanrumney and Riverside) for a further 12 months to effectively measure the impact and grow the sustainable model with key partners. Grant funding of £1.2m was also awarded by Sport Wales during 2022/23 to deliver sports and physical activity programmes through schools, clubs and voluntary organisations in Cardiff, with specific targeted work planned for women and girls, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and some of the most deprived areas of the city. The Council will also work with others to ensure that arrangements for the Regional Sports Partnership will have a positive impact on grassroots provision and development opportunities.

Easy access to green spaces is vital to improving people's wellbeing, both physical and mental. More respondents to the Ask Cardiff survey 2022 were satisfied with the parks and open spaces in their neighbourhood than any other neighbourhood amenity (74%) with 33.1% of respondents reporting that they were very satisfied. The number of hours volunteers spent working in the city's green spaces returned to pre-Covid levels for the first time during 2022/23. Volunteers carried out 19,385 hours of work in the city's parks and green spaces in the last 12 months – 274 hours more than were carried out in 2019/20 prior to the pandemic. The Council recognises the value of such engagement and as a consequence, policy revenue growth funding was allocated in this area in 2022/23 to meet the increasing demand and interest that emerged during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

16 Council parks and green spaces in the city received the prestigious Green Flag this year, meeting the target set, including Hendre Lake Park in Trowbridge which received the award for the first time. In November, the Council's team at Bute Park won the Team of the Year award at the UK Green Flag 'Best of the Best' Awards managed by Keep Britain Tidy. Grow Cardiff's 'Grow Well' project also won the Best Health Initiative award for the positive impact that their therapeutic community gardening has made on the health and wellbeing

of local individuals. Parc Tredelerch in Rumney has been identified as the new submission for Green Flag status in 2023 alongside all parks which already have the status. Work by Welsh Water is also almost complete on the Llanishen Reservoir site; both the site and new visitor centre are due to open in summer 2023.

During 2022/23, the Coed Caerdydd tree planting programme saw over 30,000 trees planted, with activity taking place in all wards across the city. The contribution from the volunteer workforce has been significant, resulting in over 1,300 hours worked. In addition, 88 public, 35 community group and 29 school events have been held during the year. Recognising the Council's commitment to tree management and development, Cardiff has been designated as a 'Tree City of the World' by the Arbor Day Foundation. Cardiff now joins 19 other cities/areas within the UK and 119 other cities/areas worldwide to hold this status. The designation opens up further opportunities for collaboration and development with other cities/areas in the UK and worldwide.

To mobilise a National Park City (NPC) movement for Cardiff, a management committee was elected in spring 2022. The committee has made a formal application for NPC Cardiff to be registered as a charity and is awaiting the outcome of that application. The National Park City Foundation is incorporating the emerging Cardiff movement in a National Heritage Lottery-funded bid, along with NPC Glasgow for the purposes of securing resources to mobilise.

The number of visits to Council leisure centres during the year has continued to show an improvement. While not yet at pre-Covid levels, the number of visits per 1,000 population increased to 6,315 in 2022/23 from 5,008 in 2021/22. Despite significant budget pressures, the Council has remained committed to keeping all its leisure centres open and to retaining and enhancing the level of service. Following a review of the Leisure Services Contract with GLL, the social enterprise which has the contract to operate eight Council leisure centres, a number of variations to improve the financial performance of the contract were agreed by Cabinet in October 2022. This included an agreement in principle to upgrade the energy infrastructure at each leisure centre to provide lower cost renewable energy. The Leisure Services Follow-up Review published by Audit Wales in October 2022 noted that there was a "a clear leisure vision for the city supported by a five-year strategy" and that the Council has strengthened its governance and oversight arrangements of the GLL contract.

# Well-being Objective 5:

## A capital city that works for Wales

### Our priorities for 2022/23 were:

- **Leading the economic recovery in Wales**
- **Leading a recovery programme for the City Centre and Bay**
- **Supporting innovation and business development, with an enhanced package of interventions to help the sectors worst affected by the pandemic**
- **Supporting the recovery of the cultural sector and major events programme**

### Strategic Assessment

Building on the close partnership with the private sector, the Council continues to make good progress supporting the city's economy through the delivery of business support, a cultural and events programme, and a portfolio of regeneration activity. The economic conditions are challenging, impacting on business confidence and investment and on the delivery of the Council and partner's regeneration and development projects.

Cardiff's economy remains the driver of employment growth in Wales and is strong performer compared to other UK Core Cities. Unemployment in the city, whilst just above the Welsh average, is decreasing, with only two core cities, Edinburgh and Bristol, performing better than Cardiff (based on the latest figures from 2022). In addition, the Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population is increasing, and whilst consistently the highest in Wales, is also higher than most core cities, with only Edinburgh, Manchester, Glasgow and Bristol ahead of Cardiff (based on the latest figures from 2021). To drive up productivity, a focus on delivering more, and better jobs continues, with the Council playing an active role in creating and safeguarding 1,375 jobs during the year, well above target.

Work continues in taking forward the Council's portfolio of major projects, including Central Square, Central Quay, Canal Quarter, the Indoor Arena, Atlantic Wharf, and the International Sports Village. The Council's capital programme has, however, been exposed to risk from significant cost inflation, particularly in the price of construction materials and labour, and increase in lead times caused by availability issues resulting in delays to some project delivery timelines.

The city centre economy has rebounded; footfall has recovered to just under pre-pandemic levels with figures at almost 43m for the year, and live and cultural events, as well as the music scene, have returned. The focus on rebuilding the city's event and cultural offer continues, ensuring that the impact of its creative and cultural assets is maximised, though income recovery at Council venues remains a challenge. The cost-of-living crisis is impacting local businesses, with energy costs, staff shortages and reduced consumer confidence representing major challenges. As ever, the Council will continue to work alongside the city's private sector organisations to develop a co-ordinated response.



## Leading the economic recovery in Wales

Cardiff has worked alongside the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) to develop a Regional Investment Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the UK Government's new regional development funding programme. The regional allocation was confirmed in January 2023, with Cardiff being allocated £42 million over two and a half years from the Shared Prosperity Fund, which is funding a range of local business support, transport, skills and community safety initiatives. An initial amount of £3.34m has been claimed for 2022/23.

In addition, Cardiff Council secured £50m funding from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund for the Cardiff Crossrail Phase 1 Metro link between the city centre and Cardiff Bay. This project will be match funded by a £50m Welsh Government grant, meaning that a total of £100m has been secured for the implementation of Cardiff Crossrail Phase 1.

The Council has continued to work with neighbouring local authorities through the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) on a range of economic development and investment initiatives and on strategic transport and planning. Cardiff has played an active role in the development of the CCR since its inception and the Council has been recipient of support from both the City Deal and SPF, including direct investment in life sciences, fintech and the creative industries. The city is also benefiting from established funding schemes such as the Housing Investment Fund, the CCR Graduate Scheme, and the Metro Plus scheme. In addition, the project is also supporting the redevelopment of Central Station as part of the Metro Central scheme. Over the year ahead the Council will continue to work closely with the CCR as it transitions to a Corporate Joint Committee model.

## Leading a recovery programme for the City Centre and Bay

The regeneration of city centre as a location for business and investment has continued successfully. Cardiff's city centre footfall has recovered well this year, with figures approaching pre-pandemic levels (42.95m in 2022/23 compared to 44.86m in 2019).

Progress on the Central Quay development continues at pace. During the year, planning permission has been secured for Phase 1 Residential consisting of 715 homes. Detailed discussions have taken place with the Welsh Government, Rightacres and Transport for Wales (TfW) in order to reach an agreement to deliver the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) with terms being negotiated during Quarter 4. The delivery of the MSCP will be a key milestone that will unlock the remaining areas of the site for development.

The Council has also engaged constructively with developers to advocate high quality office units within redevelopment proposals, particularly the opportunities afforded by ground level space. The amount of office space committed to over the two-year rolling period of the target, at just under 250,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, is slightly below the target of 300,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. The impact of construction cost inflation is likely to impact in the short-term in terms of levels of development, however, the office market remains buoyant in Cardiff, with the latest Savills Cardiff Occupational Office Data citing, "total take-up in Quarter 1 was 78,000ft<sup>2</sup>. Take-up

*was spread across 26 completed transactions which was the largest number of completed Quarter 1 transactions since 2019 and 24% above the five-year average for the market.”*

As part of the City Centre Recovery Action Plan, the Council continues to engage with businesses on issues such as return to work strategies and the cost-of-living crisis. Moving forward, the Council will share best practices amongst businesses in the city centre, as well as explore the establishment of new retail models – involving charities and community businesses – to further raise footfall levels. Furthermore, progress is being made in terms of ensuring that the city centre is cleaner, safer and better maintained, with the city centre management team effectively co-ordinating activity with public and private sector partners, supported by a £0.5 million allocation via the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Work has progressed on the Full Business Case for the Metro Central Programme, including signing of the legal Co-operation Agreement between Transport for Wales and Cardiff Capital Region in Quarter 3. The Full Business Case has a target date of May 2024 for completion. Work associated with station improvements are progressing including master planning of the south side of Cardiff Central train station.

The opening of the Dock Feeder canal on Churchill Way represented an important milestone in the creation of the new Canal Quarter, though design issues and product lead-in times have added time on to the construction, with the scheme now forecast to open to the public in late summer 2023.

The multi-purpose Indoor Arena has continued to progress with the Council aiming to enter a Development Funding Agreement (DFA) this year, following Cabinet approval. Due to the economic conditions the project has been impacted by a significant increase in construction costs, leading to the need for a comprehensive review and amended designs which have resulted in a delay in entering the Development Funding Agreement (DFA).

Good progress has been made on the next phase of the International Sports Village, including the acquisition of land and the Ice Arena from Greenbank in December 2022. A report will be presented to Cabinet in July 2023 to approve the final disposal strategy and infrastructure investment.

The Council continues to champion the protection and revitalisation of historic culture and buildings in the Bay, including future development opportunities for the Coal Exchange and the erection of a statue to celebrate the lives of Cardiff Bay Rugby Code Breakers.

As with all projects within the Council’s capital programme, cost inflation, particularly construction materials and labour, have represented a key risk that has needed to be proactively managed over the course of the year. In addition, volatility of the construction market in terms of the availability of labour and materials has also posed a major threat. Despite these challenges, the Council is working to ensure that sufficient capacity and resource is allocated to projects to ensure that delays are minimised.

## **Supporting innovation and business development, with an enhanced package of interventions to help the sectors worst affected by the pandemic**

The Council continues to support the development of small business infrastructure, helping Tramshed Tech during the first half of the year to expand its co-working space in the city centre through the Transforming Towns scheme. This will provide additional space for knowledge-based businesses in Cardiff, helping to provide a platform for some of the most innovative new enterprises in the city to succeed. The Council is also working with a major company in digital media to repurpose secondary office space in Callaghan Square and will create up to 500 jobs. More recently, The Council has been working with FinTech Wales on a new incubator and start-up space in the city centre for FinTech businesses, with plans for further workshop space in the east of the city being developed.

Overall, performance has been encouraging on the number of new jobs created and safeguarded where the Council has played an active role, with 1,375 new and safeguarded jobs against an annual target of 1,000.

Work continues to support the growth of creative enterprises in the city, including support for the new Media.Cymru Strength in Places project, a £50m collaboration advancing research and development in Cardiff's creative and media industries.

The Council has been working with the owners of the Science Park Campus at Coryton to attract investment to the location and in support of their planning application. In addition, the Council is working alongside the Welsh Government, NHS Wales and the Cardiff Capital Region on the attraction of investment into biosimilars to the region.

The planning application for the Cardiff Parkway development has also been called in by Welsh Government, causing a delay to projected delivery timescales. The Council is supporting the proposal by identifying Council owned land that can potentially provide mitigation for the lost Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A Statement of Case, prepared by Council officers in consultation with legal advisers, was submitted to Planning Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) in April 2023, with an inquiry date set for July 2023.

Progress on the Smart City Roadmap has been limited, with extensive cross-departmental scoping work required. The Council aims to adopt the new Smart City Roadmap by March 2024. The roadmap will act as a catalyst for collaboration, innovative thinking, better designed services and will allow the city to exploit advances in technology.

## **Supporting the recovery of the cultural sector and major events programme**

The cultural sector was particularly impacted by the pandemic with venues having to close their doors and Cardiff's major events programme suspended. The city has worked hard to rebuild its event and cultural offer, maximising the impact of its creative and cultural assets. Throughout the year, the Council has supported the city's Music Board, and during Quarter 4 funding was successfully secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund to support the delivery of the Cardiff Music Strategy.

The continued impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality sector remains apparent which, alongside skills shortages, is impacting the availability of staff to support shows and projects. Customer numbers and business confidence in this sector have not returned to the levels seen pre-pandemic. Additionally, the cost-of-living crisis has reduced the amount of disposable income many have to spend on events and culture. The impact of this can be seen in a decrease in attendance at Council venues, with 539,998 attendees compared to 587,757 during 2021/22 (direct comparisons with previous years' figures is not possible due to the transfer of certain venues to third parties). At the end of the year, Culture, Venues and Events reported a final outturn deficit of £1.232m. This is made up largely of income shortfalls at Cardiff Castle, City Hall and County Hall Functions, Catering and St David's Hall. Larger functions that have a longer lead in time have not all re-materialised at City Hall. In addition, retained box office income at St David's Hall is lower than expected due to the late cancellation of some shows. At Cardiff Castle, paid admission visitor numbers were down by 36% from 277,000 to 178,000 compared to 2019/20. Increasing attendees and income generation across the service at Cardiff Castle, City Hall, and Cardiff International White Water Rafting Centre remains a key priority moving into the new financial year.

In Quarter 3, Cabinet agreed in principle to the transfer of St. David's Hall to a private operator. A further report will be presented to Cabinet in July 2023 to determine the future operation of the venue. The Council is also in the process of developing a bid to be a host city for the 2028 UEFA European Football Championship, which will be submitted to UEFA in 2023/24. This represents a significant opportunity to put Cardiff on the sporting global stage.

Following the launch of the Welsh Government's National Events Strategy over the summer, the Council will begin developing its own Events Strategy to be informed by the Welsh Government's approach. To ensure alignment with the national strategy and action plan, this action is being carried over to next year. Alongside this, a strategic outline business case for an annual international music festival in the city has been submitted to the Welsh Government and work with partners will be taken forward. It is hoped that the event will be held during 2023, with a view to becoming a firm fixture on the city's events calendar.

# Well-being Objective 6

## Cardiff Grows in a Resilient Way

### Our priorities in 2022/23 were:

- Delivering One Planet Cardiff to decarbonise the city and lead a green recovery
- Transforming Cardiff's public transport and active travel systems
- Putting sustainability and well-being at the heart of the city's growth
- Enhancing Cardiff's flood defences
- Building resilience into our highway network
- Making Cardiff a world-leading recycling city
- Working as one team to keep our streets clean

### Strategic Assessment

Significant progress has been made in delivering the One Planet Cardiff Strategy with demonstrable reduction in the Council's carbon footprint though reaching the goal of being a Carbon Neutral Council and city by 2030 remains challenging.

At a city level, Cardiff has the second highest CO2 emissions per capita out of the UK's Core Cities, with emissions from transport and homes making up the majority of the city's carbon footprint. In response, the Council is taking forward a series of transport, renewable energy, housing retrofit and flood mitigation projects with partners which have made good progress over the course of the year. As with all capital projects, they are subject to a range of pressures, including delays due to the availability of materials and cost inflation pressures. Coastal defence projects have been particularly impacted, with costs increasing by over 75% against original estimates.

Nonetheless, at a Council level, a 13% reduction was seen in direct operational CO2 emissions between 2019/20 and 2021/22, largely due to reduced electricity consumption. Additionally, improvements have been seen in air quality across the city, with data collected in 2021 from monitoring stations across Cardiff showing compliance with all 'limit values' for pollutants<sup>3</sup>, and monitoring of Castle Street showing continued compliance with legal air quality limits.

Whilst recycling performance is showing a positive, upward trajectory, the annual figure for 2022/23 of 61.57% (unverified) is still below the 64% target and much work remains if the Council is to meet the 70% target by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. A new Recycling Strategy 2022-25 was approved by Cabinet in September 2022, which outlines a programme

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<sup>3</sup> This is the latest available data. The results will have been impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions, which were in place in the first part of 2021.

of change which the Council will undertake to meet statutory recycling targets going forward.

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## Delivering One Planet Cardiff

The Council published its strategic response to the climate emergency – the One Planet Cardiff Strategy and Action Plan – in October 2021. Since then, significant progress has been made by the Council and its partners in identifying the key high impact priorities for action, developing a robust programme for change, and starting to make tangible carbon reduction improvements.

In December 2022, the Council published the first annual Operational Carbon Analysis. Excluding ‘indirect’ emissions (associated with procurement), the analysis revealed a reduction in the Council’s direct operational emissions from 26,118 tonnes to 22,695 tonnes between 2019/20 and 2021/22<sup>4</sup>. This represents a 13% reduction, with the majority achieved through reduced electricity consumption. Nonetheless, whilst the Council has reduced its direct operational emissions, carbon emission associated with procurement remains the biggest and most challenging source of emissions. Progress has also been made in establishing more robust methodologies to model the impacts of carbon reduction activities. The methodology used for assessing carbon needs further development, however, and this is a recognised national issue.

Throughout the year, key decarbonisation projects have continued to be progressed. Work to deliver the Cardiff Heat Network, which will provide low-carbon heat for a range of building in Cardiff Bay, is now underway and work has started inside customer buildings. In year delays, largely due to supply chain issues, have resulted in an additional six months being added to the completion date. Nonetheless, these issues are manageable, with no immediate cost implications. Uncertainties are arising, however, regarding the detailed design of the Network, particularly interfaces with linked Council projects, such as the Indoor Arena. Scenario planning has been undertaken to assess potential impacts for the project’s approved Business Plan.

Additionally, the Council’s Housing Energy Efficiency Retrofit programme has been impacted by limited staff resource and difficulties recruiting. This has necessitated project prioritisation and targeted deployment of workforce capabilities given the limited staff resource currently available.

A delivery options analysis has been completed for other large-scale renewable energy projects on Council land and a detailed implementation programme has been developed for two potential schemes which has the potential to generate almost 25MW of clean, renewable power for the city.

Furthermore, due to a combination of budgetary and resource challenges, as well as supply chain issues across the sector affecting the procurement of Electric Vehicles (EVs), the

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<sup>4</sup> **Please note:** This is based on the original carbon reporting methodology utilised in the published One Planet Cardiff Strategy. Since publication, the Welsh Government carbon reporting framework has been amended, shifting the focus to ‘activity’ based reporting. The changed methodology means that direct comparison between the current reporting year and the Council’s published baseline is difficult. [Please see here](#) for an analysis based on the new methodology.

Council did not meet its annual target of 100 EVs in 2022/23; 60 vehicles were secured by year end.

Overall, climate change remains an area of significant public concern, with 81.4% of respondents to the 2022 Ask Cardiff survey expressing concern about the Climate Emergency. Many of the initial 'quick win' options to reduce Carbon have already been realised and it is recognised that a carbon gap needs to be closed if the Council is to achieve net zero by 2030. Key challenges moving forward include large-scale, estate-wide refit and insulation, the removal of fossil fuels from heating systems, and the need to increase renewable electricity supplies in line with growing electric heat demands. All interventions are likely to represent capital intensive projects at a time when the Council's medium-term budget outlook remains challenging.

## **Air Quality**

Improving air quality is a key priority for the city, with air quality targets committed to in the Council's 10-year transport and One Planet Cardiff strategies. In 2018, the Council received a legal direction from the Welsh Government to ensure that air pollution levels in Cardiff – specifically Nitrogen Dioxide – were below the EU limit value<sup>5</sup>. In response, the Council undertook a detailed analysis of air pollution levels across the city, which identified Castle Street, one of the most significant and focal streets in the city centre, as the sole non-compliant street.

Following detailed assessment, including a Clean Air Feasibility Study, a package of measures to improve air quality in the city centre – and on Castle Street specifically – were agreed and published in a Clean Air Plan for Cardiff. The measures identified included a range of transport improvement schemes that, if successfully implemented, would improve air quality and ensure compliance with legal limits in the shortest possible time.

The Covid-19 pandemic effectively fast-tracked implementation – with a series of interim transport measures implemented in the city centre, to ensure safe public access and ultimately support recovery, replicating proposed schemes in the Clean Air Plan. As expected – given the national lockdowns resulting in subsequent reductions in traffic volumes – data collected in 2020 showed compliance with legal limits across all monitored stations. Compliance has continued each year since, with significant improvements, particularly on Castle Street. An annual average of 33.8µg/m<sup>3</sup> was recorded on the street in 2022, whilst data collected between January and March 2023 indicates continued compliance, with a projected annual average of 33µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 2023.

In order for the Council to identify a permanent transport scheme to ensure that long-term compliance is maintained on Castle Street, further detailed transportation and air quality modelling - using post-Covid data - has been undertaken for the area and the surrounding network. The results have ultimately led to the decision that the road is kept open for

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<sup>5</sup> The legal limit of Nitrogen Dioxide is set as an annual average of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.



general traffic as part of an overall approach to improve air quality and enabling traffic to flow into and out of the city centre.

To ensure city-wide compliance continues, air quality monitors have been installed across the city, to better identify pollution trends, allowing further interventions to reduce pollution to be identified. Recognising that transport remains the predominant source of pollution across the city, and there are no safe levels of air pollution, developing an effective public transport system to offer a viable alternative to Car travel represents a major priority. To accelerate the transition to sustainable travel and deliver the mass public transport system commensurate with a front ranking European capital the Council has announced it will consider a range of road payment schemes. These may include road user payments; congestion zones; clean air zones; and workplace parking charges. Such schemes will be assessed on their ability to deliver long-term improvements to levels of air quality across the city. This work will be progressed in consultation with the public, to ensure that any form of potential payment is fair and equitable, with a commitment to minimising the charging impacts on residents, the most economically disadvantaged, and regular users of the city and region.

### **Transforming Cardiff's public transport and active travel systems**

Road traffic emissions is one of the biggest contributing factors to climate change, as well as air pollution. In response, the Council's transport vision sets out a transformative programme of investment in public transport and active travel. Progress over the past year has included securing £50 million of Levelling Up Funding from the UK Government for the Phase 1 section of Cardiff Crossrail from Cardiff Central to Cardiff Bay, which has been match funded by the Welsh Government. Work associated with station improvements is developing, including the master planning of the south side of the Cardiff Central train station, and the outcome of the Welsh Government Road Review Panel has enabled the Eastern Corridor study work to progress. Additionally, the transport scheme at Central Square is now complete, as well as the WelTAG study 1 for the Northern Bus Corridor. A number of cycleways have also been delivered, including the Cross City Centre and Bay pop up cycle lanes and cycleway 1 to the University Hospital of Wales. Improvements are also complete for the cycleway at Tudor Street and approximately 120 schools now have bike fleets.

Several schemes have already been subject to delays, with timescales for delivery revised. This includes the Crossrail, City Centre East Phase 1, and Castle Street, as well as the delivery of new stations. Robust programme governance has therefore been established to ensure continued progress, including the ongoing preparation of study work, business cases and funding bids with key partners. The Council's two 'Healthy Streets' projects have been particularly impacted by capacity and capability issues. As a result, the schemes have been reprofiled and will be progressed in an adapted format.

The decision by the Welsh Government to end Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) funding in Wales in July 2023 has emerged as a significant risk which, unless mitigated, will result in a gap in bus service provision across the city where operators do not expect routes to be commercially viable. In response, the Council is working with partners to facilitate a

transition to a new bus network and undertaking a broader programme of work to help ensure the sustainability of municipal bus companies moving forward.

A delay in the publishing of the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Strategy consultation, which closed in January 2023, has resulted in the timescale for preparation of the final Strategy to be under review. Improvements through ITS initiatives are continuing to be progressed; however, this is subject to funding.

The delivery of strategic transport projects is often dependent upon successful partnership working with the Welsh and UK Governments, as well as successfully securing external funding. The levels of structural transport funding currently provided on an annual basis is approximately only 10-15% of the levels required to deliver the step change in train, tram, bus and cycle network quality required to deliver the city-wide low carbon and healthy transport environment envisioned. Without substantial levels of infrastructure support – beyond that already made available – the Council will find it challenging to meet its modal shift targets.

To progress the programme of strategic transport projects and improvements at pace and scale, a step change is required that can only be achieved by developing a new source of long-term infrastructure funding. To achieve the substantial levels of funding required, as highlighted, the Council has resolved to consider a range of road payment schemes moving forward.

### **Putting sustainability and well-being at the heart of the city's growth**

A key ambition of the city is the delivery of new, high-quality, well-designed and well-connected communities. Since the Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in 2016, over 6,000 new homes – including 1,500 new affordable homes - have been delivered and 8,000 new jobs created. Furthermore, the LDP has facilitated sustainable transport and active travel across the city and protected the Green Wedge from inappropriate development.

Over the past year, delivery of Local Development Plan (LDP) strategic sites has continued through the completion of planning applications and the implementation of new homes, facilities, and essential infrastructure, in line with good master-planning and placemaking principles. Coinciding with this, a full review of the LDP continues to be progressed, as the Council works to develop a replacement LDP, which will help shape development in Cardiff to 2036. Whilst significant work has been undertaken, preparation of the Preferred Strategy, and subsequently consultation on the Preferred Strategy has been delayed from January to June 2023. This is to allow the full consideration of the latest evidence relating to housing need based on the revised populations figures following the release of the 2021 Census and the updated Local Housing Market Assessment. Looking ahead, a revised timetable for the review of the LDP has been agreed and published, with an aim for adoption in November 2025. The revised timescale will enable the Council to fully consider how the Plan can effectively deliver corporate priorities and respond to both the Council's declared climate and nature emergencies.

There has been a drop in the percentage of householder planning applications determined within agreed time periods; the year end position was 77.69% against a target of 85%. A number of contributing factors account for the drop in performance, which include staff vacancies and unprecedented workload demands. New technology is being deployed which will assist Officers with the timely completion of applications.

The review of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (BRED) Forward Plan, which the Council is required to produce under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, has been delayed until 2023 due to difficulties in resourcing a suitably qualified ecologist. A Principal Ecologist is now in post and will be working with the Green Infrastructure Officer Group and the One Planet Cardiff Team to develop the BRED Forward Plan, which is anticipated to be updated by September 2023 and presented to Cabinet in November 2023. Protecting biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems remains a key priority for the Council and its partners, with the preferred strategy moving forward focusing on ensuring all developments achieve a net gain in biodiversity, and that they have a minimal impact on Cardiff's environmental assets. For example, the strategically important ridge to the north of the M4 will be protected and continue to form a highly important green backdrop to the city along with other areas of countryside around the city. Importantly, open spaces and river valleys within the urban area are protected. In total, well in excess of 5,500 hectares of countryside and strategic river valleys running through the urban area will be protected from development.

### **Flooding and coastal erosion**

The intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC), within its sixth assessment report (2023), stated that the risk related to sea level rise is expected to significantly increase by the end of the century in the absence of any major protection or adaptation efforts. Cardiff Council's shoreline management plan dictates a 'hold the line' scenario is required, and the city's new coastal defences will provide an increased level of protection to over a thousand homes. The Council has also set out a comprehensive flood defence programme which has included initiatives such as Greener Grangetown and a range of other Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes. As well as mitigating and adapting to extreme weather incidents, this is helping to reduce power demands otherwise placed on the sewage system and bring enhanced biodiversity opportunities to Cardiff's urban areas.

In terms of coastal defence improvements in Cardiff East, whilst a decision was taken to not move forward with the east side of the scheme, a reduced scheme went out to tender in Quarter 3 of 2022/23, with a successful assessment process leading to a contractor being selected. Subject to Welsh Government approval of the Full Business Case, construction is expected to commence in 2023/24. Progression of this project has been subject to a range of pressures, which means that the commitment to complete the coastal defence improvements by 2024 is unlikely to be met. This is due to factors including delays associated with Covid-19, a cost increase of over 75% against original estimates and capacity challenges within the Flood Risk Management Team.

Pressures have also resulted in delays in developing the Sustainable Water, Flood and Drainage Strategy for Cardiff, as required by the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)

and the Flood Risk Regulations (2009) respectively. Limited staff resource in the Council's Flood Risk Management Team – compounded by recruitment issues due to a shortage of expertise in the current labour market – means that the timescale for completion of the strategy has been extended to March 2024. The first stage of consultation on the strategy has been undertaken and the results will be analysed in Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Furthermore, work is ongoing to progress the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment for the region. The Welsh Government originally asked all local authorities to complete their assessments by November 2022; however, it was agreed by the region's Local Planning Authorities that the assessment be delayed to ensure that it is informed by new Flood Risk guidance that is due to be issued shortly by the Welsh Government.

### **Making Cardiff a world-leading recycling city**

The Council has implemented a major programme of reform to its waste and collection services to improve the efficiency and resilience of the service. This has included transitioning to a 4-day collection model, which has reduced the amount of time waste is on the streets and eliminating the disruption previously caused by bank holidays. In September 2022, the Council published a new Recycling Strategy 2022-25 setting out a programme of reform to achieve the statutory recycling targets. This has included the expansion of a new kerbside-sort recycling scheme, to improve the quality of the recycling collected from residents' homes.

Recycling performance fluctuates throughout the year as the tonnage of waste collected varies monthly. On an annual basis, however, recycling performance is showing a positive upward trajectory, indicating that the programme of reform is beginning to impact. Nonetheless, the annual figure for 2022/23 of 61.57% (unverified) remains below the target and further work is needed to meet the 70% target by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. Failure to meet statutory targets can result in fiscal penalties being issued by the Welsh Government; however, the improved recycling performance means the potential fiscal penalty has reduced from £2M to £750k. The Council remains in regular dialogue with the Welsh Government and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) as it works towards achieving the 70% recycling target in 2024/25 and the new Recycling Strategy represents a significant step towards the Welsh Government blueprint for recycling in Wales. Furthermore, communication of the programme of reform remains a crucial aspect of this work - only around one in three (35.5%<sup>6</sup>) currently feel that the Council does enough to inform residents about how and what to recycle, and therefore work is needed to improve this.

Recycling and Neighbourhood Services reported a net overspend of £2.213 million at 2022/23 outturn; this was attributed to an increase in costs in relation to staffing and vehicles, with the position partly mitigated by the retention of a proportion of the surplus generated in the Trade Waste Service.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Ask Cardiff 2022

Moving forward, a focus will be placed on delivering the programme of recycling and re-use improvements detailed within the Recycling Strategy. This includes expanding segregated recycling to households – excluding flats and HMOs – using reusable sacks and caddies to reduce the need for single use plastic bags, reviewing the expansion of kerbside collection services to cover items currently not collected at the kerbside, as well as reviewing approaches to reduce residual waste. Supporting this work will be a communication and information campaign, designed to support residents to understand the changes they will need to make, and the reasons for them.

## **Street Cleanliness**

Work is ongoing, in partnership, to improve street cleanliness in Cardiff, with increases in overall cleanliness recorded over the past year. Aligned to a programme of service reform and to improve street cleanliness in Cardiff, Love Where You Live 'Blitz' teams have been deployed across the city, specifically targeting problem areas – including Cathays, Plasnewydd, Splott and the Southern Arc - resulting in higher standards of cleanliness.

Year-end results show that 92.98% of highways land inspected by the Land Authority was of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness in 2022/23. Nonetheless, two fifths (39.8%) of respondents to the Ask Cardiff survey reported that the cleanliness in their local area had declined over the last year, compared with just 3.4% who felt it had improved<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, the Council was below target in 2022/23, in terms of the number of wards in Cardiff where 90% of the highways land inspected was of a high or acceptable standard. At year end, 21 out of 29 wards passed the 90% threshold, although the target was for all wards to be above 90%. The number of Environmental Street Scene Legal Enforcement Actions was also below target at year end, with 10,118 actions against a target of 12,500.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Ask Cardiff 2022

# Well-being Objective 7

## Modernising & Integrating our Public Services

### Our priorities in 2022/23 were:

- Developing a comprehensive programme of organisational recovery and renewal
- Building upon our digital agenda, incorporating technology into service delivery and exploiting data to drive performance.
- Delivering leaner and greener Council buildings
- Supporting a highly skilled and productive workforce with the well-being of staff at its core
- Using the power of the public purse to support the city's recovery
- Making sure that the Council better talks to and listens to the city that it serves

### Strategic Assessment

The Council considers that the services and arrangements in place to support the modernisation and integration of Council services are sound, with good progress made in relation to digital services and the use of technology, supporting staff wellbeing and maintaining the approach to Hybrid Working. However, the Council is facing a number of cross-cutting challenges, notably in relation to financial resilience and workforce, which will need to be the subject of corporate focus over the year ahead.

Despite a more positive than anticipated financial settlement for 2023/24, the Council faces significant immediate and medium-term budgetary challenge due to a combination increased complexity and scale of demand on services, energy pricing, pay pressures and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and continued post-pandemic pressures in income recovery. To continue to ensure the Council's ongoing financial resilience, a proactive approach to identifying and implementing savings will continue. This includes the review and challenge of all directorate budgets and to require baseline efficiencies from all services. Given the wider economic environment including high inflation, rising interest rates and labour and supply chain challenges a sharp focus will need to be placed on the Council's capital position.

The Council faces several workforce challenges. Difficulty recruiting and retaining staff – ensuring sufficient capacity and appropriate skills – is particularly acute in Children's Services and in Adult Social Care, but it is also having an impact across all directorates and is impacting the delivery of all Well-being Objectives. Discrete initiatives are in place to respond at a service level and through the new the Council's new Workforce Strategy (2023-2027) approved in spring 2023. This will remain a strategic risk for the Council over the course of 2023/24.

## Reviewing the planning and delivery framework

Following the Local Government Elections the Council agreed a new policy statement in July 2022 - Stronger, Fairer, Greener – which set out the Administration’s priorities for the next five years. These policy priorities were translated into deliverable organisational objectives as part of the Corporate Planning process for 2023-26. This ensured that the Administration’s priorities were embedded in the Council’s planning and delivery framework in an approach that was consistent with all the performance requirements set out by both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. Audit Wales observed this process and concluded that “the Council has used the Sustainable Development Principle to drive the setting of its Well-Being Objectives including good use of data and a strong collaborative approach”. Audit Wales also concluded during the year that the Council had [\*“made good progress in putting in place arrangements to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act”\*](#)

The Council has also worked with public service partners on the development of the [Local Well-being Plan](#), the Cardiff Public Services Board’s strategy for the next five years, which identifies priorities that fundamentally require joint working between public services. This has included undertaking a review of partnership governance and delivery arrangements to ensure that the complex statutory partnership arrangements in place are aligned behind the delivery of the Well-being Plan, reporting to the Public Services Board.

Audit Wales observed the Council’s process for setting Well-being Objectives for 2023/24, assessing the extent to which Cardiff Council applied the Sustainable Development Principle when setting their Well-Being Objectives. Audit Wales concluded that [\*“the Council has used the sustainable development principle to drive the setting of its well-being objectives including good use of data and a strong collaborative approach.”\*](#) In relation to performance reporting the examination concluded that *‘the Council has robust arrangements for monitoring its Corporate Plan and wellbeing objectives throughout the year.’* Furthermore, a corporate level internal audit of Performance Management gave assurance on the corporate framework for performance management which was considered sound.

Each year the Council publishes its Annual Governance Statement which considers the systems and processes by which the Council is controlled and identifies any improvement action considered appropriate. The latest Governance Statement will include the judgement of the Governance and Audit Committee who had, in 2021/22, agreed that the Council has sound internal controls and governance arrangements in place, with the areas of concern built into the Committee’s work programme. An Action Plan responding to any significant governance issues identified within the Annual Governance Statement is overseen by the Council’s Senior Management Team (SMT) and is formally reviewed and updated on a bi-annual basis. Three actions were identified as areas of focus for governance improvement during 2022/23, which related to:

- Extending and deepening the areas of SMT investigation in respect to compliance, risk and outcomes

- Extending the assurance on the quality of performance reviews through evidence gathering at Directorate level
- Embedding assurance that the Council is acting in accordance with the Five ways of Working into the Council's assurance framework.

Corporate practice has been strengthened in relation to each of these areas of action to the extent that these actions can be closed as completed. Looking forward to 2023/24 Action Plan, it is anticipated that additional arrangements will be established to allow officers responsible for corporate systems and processes to engage directly with directorate management teams on specific areas of practice where governance arrangements may need to be improved or extended. This is particularly relevant in the context of a constantly evolving and increasingly complex delivery environment, as has been outlined throughout this Well-Being Report.

## **Financial resilience**

[The Council's arrangements to manage its financial position are generally sound](#) but it is facing significant cost pressures, which will continue to test its financial resilience.

A budget gap of £23 million was identified for the 2023/24 financial year. Following a period of extensive public consultation which received over 6,000 responses, significant levels of savings – through back-office efficiencies, as well as changes to frontline services - have been identified and agreed in order to close the gap.

Despite a more positive than anticipated financial settlement for 2023/24, the Council faces significant immediate and medium-term budgetary challenges. The Budget Update Report presented to Cabinet in July 2023 provided updated the position, setting out an indicative budget gap of £36.7 million for 2024/25 and £119.2 million across the period of the Medium- Term Financial Plan.

The increased complexity and scale of demand on services particularly in Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Additional Learning Needs and Homelessness are leading to budgetary pressures. The pressures within Children's Services are the most significant and can be attributed to placement costs for the authority's children looked after cohort. Sustained demand pressures and price increases resulted in costs exceeding budget, reflecting the complexity of need and the limited spaces available in the residential market. More broadly inflationary pressures are placing upward pressure on pay awards, the costs of goods and commodities purchased by the Council (such as energy, food and fuel) as well as the cost of construction, materials and commissioned services. Continued post-pandemic pressures in income recovery in some services also remains an issue. To ensure the Council's ongoing financial resilience, a proactive approach to identifying and implementing savings will continue. This includes the review and challenge of all directorate budgets and to require baseline efficiencies from all services.



A sharp focus will need to be placed on the capital position, where there are also significant cost pressures due to supply chain cost increases, demand for investment to maintain condition, and capital receipt assumptions. The Capital Programme proposed for 2023/24 is based on known commitments, as well as new commitments outlined in the Stronger, Fairer, Greener policy programme. Implementation of capital schemes will need to be subject to enhanced governance to ensure delivery and robust business cases continues to be essential.

## **Building the Council's digital agenda**

The Council continues to explore and apply the opportunities offered by technology to deliver services more efficiently, manage demand pressures and reduce cost. The ability for citizens to access Council services via online platforms has continued to expand.

Developments this year include the ability for citizens to report graffiti and check digital parking permits via the Council's website, Chatbot and CardiffGov App. Increasing numbers of citizens are making the shift to digital as a result, with over 74,000 people registered to the CardiffGov App, exceeding the target of 69,700.

Despite there being a year-on-year increase in the number of customer contacts to the Council using digital channels, performance was slightly below target in 2022/23. This is due to changes to services using digital channels, as well as a stabilising of demand following a peak in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

Looking ahead, as the Council increasingly leverages technology and digital solutions to support service delivery, a focus will be placed on Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – utilising automation technologies to undertake back-office, repetitive tasks. The Council will also continue to expand the services available on online platforms to shift demand to lower cost channels. To support this, a focus will be placed on enabling residents to make the shift to digital and reviewing customer services to ensure that customer support arrangements operate effectively as the Council continues the transition to a hybrid working model.

While striving to make the most of the opportunities that new and emerging technologies provide, the Council remains cognisant of the associated risks regarding cyber security. The Council uses the National Cyber Security Centre's framework to continually assess our cyber security maturity level, and liaises with cyber security agencies, to implement both proactive measures to prevent attacks, and reactive measures to minimise the impact of potential incidents and manage the aftermath. In September 2022 the Council achieved Gold-Level assurance through the Cyber Security IASME Accreditation.

## **Delivering leaner and greener Council buildings**

Cardiff Council's estate, both operational and leased, is considerable. The Council owns and manages over 750 properties, with a current value of £1.6 billion. Given the extent of the Council's estate, managing, operating and maintaining it is challenging, particularly as the overall quality of the estate means that a number of properties require repair. Recognising these challenges, and to bring increased efficiency to the way in which the estate is

managed, in July 2018, the Council commenced implementation of a Corporate Landlord Programme.

The Corporate Landlord model, which centralises all estate-related responsibility – including budgets, decision-making and activities – within a central team, continues to progress well. This model ensures property assets are maintained and managed in accordance with corporate strategic priorities and standards. Moving forward, further developments will be progressed under the Corporate Landlord function. This includes the provision of additional property management support to service areas in order to progress continued estate management and planned preventative maintenance programmes. Additionally, a Job Management System will be implemented for Building Services, to improve the management and maintenance of Council building assets.

Aligned to this work, over the past several years, work has been ongoing to reduce the size of the estate to manage the rise in operational costs, as well as to mitigate the growing maintenance backlog. This work has been furthered by the adoption of a Hybrid Working Model following the pandemic, which has changed the nature of future space requirements and layouts, with less office space required moving forward. New touchdown spaces have been created, including flexible workspaces, meeting rooms with hybrid facilities and online desk booking systems in County Hall. Alongside this, work has been undertaken to support improved efficiency and service delivery in the estate, with 100% of programmed Priority 1 asset works, those defined as requiring immediate attention (including statutory obligation remedial works) commissioned in 2022/23.

The Council recognises that the built environment comprises a significant proportion of its carbon footprint and a target has been set to achieve a net zero built environment by 2030. It is likely that carbon reduction targets will shortly become a legal obligation as the emerging new Building Regulations (2025) will impose a requirement on carbon, meaning that buildings will be required to demonstrate compliance. As a result, any work that the Council undertakes in relation to its core office estate moving forward will need to meet or exceed these requirements. Progress over the past year has included the establishment of an Environment Carbon Reduction Board to strengthen oversight of progress. A Built Environment Carbon Reduction Plan is under development which will detail next steps and resource requirements.

The delivery of capital receipts also remains a critical objective of the Council's Property Strategy and the 2022/23 Annual Property Plan, approved in September 2022, set a target of £5.5 million. The target was not achieved due to a delay in the completion of two large internal appropriation transactions, which have been carried over to the 2023/24 financial year.

In 2023/24, a Core Office Strategy will be considered which sets out the long-term estate requirements, responding to changing requirements of services, the need to reduce costs, provide accommodation that meets the needs of modern working practices and to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

In Q4 Audit Wales undertook a combined review of Workforce and Assets, focussed on how the Council strategically plans to use its assets and workforce, how it monitors their use and how it reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of its arrangements. In relation to Asset Management their summary findings, published in their [Springing Forward report](#), were that *'the Council has made good progress in delivering its property strategy and has the necessary governance arrangements underpinned by improved performance data, but its approach lacks a focus on service user and longer term needs.'*

## **Supporting a highly-skilled and productive workforce with the well-being of staff at its core**

The Council faces a number of workforce challenges, including ensuring sufficient capacity, appropriate skills and in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly given the level of competition for some professions. This challenge is particularly acute in Children's Services and in Adult Social Care, but it is also having an impact across all directorates and Well-being Objectives.

To more effectively support employees and address these challenges, the Council has published a new Workforce Strategy (2023-27). The strategy sets a strengthened approach to supporting high performance, enabling a flexible, skilled, engaged and diverse workforce, as well as meeting future workforce needs. This includes ensuring that the Council has processes in place to recruit and retain talented individuals in a competitive market, as well as supporting Directorates to create pathways into their harder to fill roles.

Another workforce challenge faced by the Council relates to managing sickness absence; end of year results shows that 12.0 working days/ shifts – per full-time equivalent (FTE) Local Authority employee – were lost to sickness absence in 2022/23. This is against a target of 9.5. Covid-19 has continued to contribute to increased sickness absence, with the result dropping to 10.57 if Covid sicknesses are removed. Sickness absence is not uniform across the Council, however, with rates particularly high in Street Scene and Adult Services. A targeted approach is being utilised to improve performance, particularly through the provision of support to managers on dealing with complex long-term absence cases.

To support staff wellbeing work is ongoing to ensure that all employees, wherever they are based, have access to support services and are able to take part in associated activities including sessions on improving wellbeing and mental health and stress awareness. In Quarter 3 of 2022/23, an assessment undertaken by Public Health commended the work of the Council in relation to supporting staff health and wellbeing.

The Council is committed to becoming an organisation that reflects and responds to the diversity of the communities it serves. In responding to the recommendations of the Race Equality Task Force to create a more representative workforce the Council has launched a pilot leadership development course for staff from groups under-represented in leadership roles. A senior manager mentorship programme is also under-development, with roll out scheduled for early 2023/24.

In February 2023, the Council achieved the highest-ranking for any local authority in Wales and the UK in the 2023 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, including a commendation for the local authority's LGBT+ Employee Equality Network. Three accolades were awarded as a result: Stonewall Gold Award Employer; Top 100 Stonewall Employer; and Stonewall Highly Commended.

## **Using the power of the public purse to support the city's recovery**

The Council spends over £600 million a year procuring a diverse range of goods, services and works from over 8,000 suppliers and contractors. As well as achieving good value for public money spent on these goods, services, and works, the Council is committed to ensuring it has robust procurement systems in place. The Council's Senior Management Team continue to receive regular updates on procurement spend and compliance, including issues such as off-contract spend. The Council has also strengthened its contract management performance reporting arrangements over the year. The UK Procurement Act is expected to receive Royal assent in late summer 2023 and this will introduce further requirements around transparency across the procurement cycle and reporting of procurement spend.

The size and scale of the Council's spend affords opportunities to leverage wider social and environmental gain, with a particular focus placed on decarbonisation, fair work, delivering community benefits and maximising opportunities for local businesses and communities through Council contracts. In October 2022, the Council published a new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy (2022-2027), setting out key procurement priorities and the changes that will be made to improve the management of external spend.

A key priority relates to ensuring that the Council's procurement programme fully supports the aim of being carbon neutral by 2030 as over 80% of the Council's carbon footprint is in its supply chain. A review of the Carbon Reduction Plans of key suppliers has been completed and a pilot is currently being developed, aimed at challenging specifiers to reduce carbon across the duration of contracts. A significant limitation remains, however, in terms of the methodology used for assessing the carbon emissions associated with procurement. As a national issue, the Council is working with the Welsh Government to improve the analysis framework. It is also acknowledged that not all of the Council's suppliers – especially smaller, independent and local suppliers – will be able to move to low carbon solutions at pace and consideration is needed as to how the Council's purchasing activities can support the transitions needed moving forward.

Another key objective of the strategy is to make procurement spend more accessible to local small business and the third sector. Year end results show satisfactory performance, with the percentage of overall Council spend within Cardiff-based organisations 51.62% against a target of 52%, and the percentage of overall spend within Cardiff Capital Region-based organisations 65.61% against a target of 66%. A detailed spend analysis has been undertaken to identify opportunities to further increase local spend, with a detailed project plan to drive this forward. This analysis is being used by the Council and its partners to identify opportunities to increase local spend moving forward.

Good progress is also being made in relation to increasing community benefits and social value delivered by suppliers, particularly in expanding community benefits into contracts beyond construction. The Council is one of the leading Welsh Council's in terms of delivering community benefits through its contracts. The Council uses the Social Value Portal system to capture contractor's commitments and to monitor/manage their delivery over the period of the contract. As a result, the Quarter 4 position highlights that there are currently 33 'live' contracts which include social value commitments and will deliver over £7.6 million of social value. Nonetheless, whilst progress is being made, year-end results show that the percentage of new contracts (above £250,000) which include social value commitments is behind target (13.6% against a target of 20%). A Social Value Delivery Group has therefore been established to develop the Council's approach to maximising social value commitments and ensuring delivery. This includes adopting a consistent approach to securing and managing the delivery of community benefits and social value, which is understood by the Council and its contractors.

### **Making sure that the Council better talks to and listens to the city that it serves**

The Council values the contribution of local people in prioritising, shaping, and evaluating the services that they and their families rely upon. A high response rate continues to be seen for the Council's regular, city-wide surveys: the 2022 Ask Cardiff Survey received almost 4,000 responses, whilst the 2023/24 Budget Consultation received almost 6,000 responses and the 2022 Child Friendly City Survey received 7,600 responses. In terms of the Budget Consultation, Cardiff received more responses than all other Welsh local authorities, as well as the highest response among the UK Core Cities. To support this work and strengthen citizen voice, the Council and its partners have produced – and will continue to produce annually – a [Consultation Overview Report](#), which summarises the key findings from consultation and engagement exercises undertaken over the course of the past year, as well as highlights specific issues raised by key demographic groups.

Nonetheless, whilst the Council receives a high response rate to its core surveys, just under one in four (22.6%<sup>8</sup>) agree that they are able to have their say on local issues or how the Council services are run in their community. The Council is currently in the process of developing a new citizen Participation Strategy, which will set out actions to drive improvement in each of the areas identified and further encourage local people to participate in the decision-making process. To inform the development of the Participation Strategy a comprehensive exercise undertaken to identify areas of improvement identified several areas, including the need to ensure that: good practice – in terms of consultation and engagement – is applied robustly across service areas; 'citizen voice' features more consistently across the Council's performance framework; and consultation feedback is consistently provided to survey respondents. As part of the exercise, a demographic profile of respondents to core Council surveys was also created. This work identified that a lower response rate is evident for the following groups: lower socio-economic wards, particularly

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<sup>8</sup> Source: [Ask Cardiff 2022](#)

the Southern Arc of Cardiff; older people (+75 years old); children and young people; ethnic minority communities; and people who identify as disabled.

A particular focus will therefore be placed on engaging and involving hard-to-reach groups. Stakeholder engagement has been completed – including direct engagement with individuals and organisations who can offer insight and guidance on how to strengthen consultation practices with under-represented groups – and draft actions developed. A draft of the Strategy will be published for public consultation in the summer of 2023.

As highlighted by the [2022 Ask Cardiff survey](#), citizen satisfaction with Council services was below target in 2022 (at 47.8% compared to a target of 70%). The 2022 result was a slight increase from the 2021 result (of 47.3%) but around 20% lower than the 2020 figure. This result is consistent with the fall in satisfaction with public services in Cardiff (which dropped from 72.7% in 2020 to 52.1% in 2022). Analysis of satisfaction with individual services shows satisfaction is highest for parks and open spaces (74%), street lighting (66.2%) and Libraries/ Hubs (64.4%), whilst dissatisfaction is highest for pavement maintenance (59.8%), road maintenance (54.2%) and frequency of vandalism and graffiti (53.3%).

In 2021/22, a total of 3,633 complaints were recorded, which was a 43.2% increase from the previous year, when 2,537 complaints were recorded. The highest number of complaints were received by waste collections (2,089). This increasing trend in overall complaints was seen in public services across Wales, with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales publishing the following statement, *“It is likely that complaints to my office, and public services in general, were suppressed during the pandemic, and we are now starting to see the expected ‘rebound’ effect.”*

Data on complaints for 2022/23 points towards an improved position. A key indicator as to how satisfied complainants are with the standard of investigation, as well as the fairness of outcomes, is the number of complainants that escalate their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. There was a decline in complaints received in 2022/23, with only 142 received. This is a decrease from 182 in 2021/22. The Ombudsman has stated that, given the population size of Cardiff, 0.39 complaints are being received per 1,000 residents. In comparison to Wales’ two other large local authorities, Swansea receives 0.39 complaints per 1,000 residents, whilst Rhondda Cynon Taf receives 0.23 complaints per 1,000 residents.

Adult Services, Children Services, Education, Environment, Finance, Planning and Rent Smart Wales have all seen a decline in the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman (from 2021/22). The only increases have been to Benefits and Roads, however, this is only a slight increase – of 1-2% - which is minimal compared to other local authorities.

Furthermore, of the 142 complains received by the Ombudsman, 50% were closed after initial consideration; 21% were considered premature to consider and referred back to the Council; and 16% involved intervention – however, all achieved early resolution. There were no investigations in 2022/23. The Council also keeps a record of compliments received, which is helpful in terms of understanding good practice and sharing learning across the Council. In 2021/22, a total of 1,487 compliments were recorded, which was a 22.2% decrease from the previous year.