



NEATH VALLEY

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INTRODUCTION



The Neath Valley community area includes the electoral divisions Glynneath, Blaengwrach and Resolven. The Neath Valley is well placed in terms of infrastructure with the A465 creating access throughout the Valley, which runs through into neighbouring Rhondda Cynon Taff.

There are an array of attractions to visit in the Neath Valley, such as the Neath & Tennant canals and the gateway to waterfall country at Pontneddfechan, which leads to numerous waterfalls.

The Neath Valley has dramatically changed from being an area of industrial activity to being a serene natural escape offering many activities. There are walks, cycle tracks, waterfalls, woodlands and an abundance of wildlife, flora and fauna to discover.





KEY FINDINGS FROM OUR ENGAGEMENT AND
RESEARCH EXERCISES:

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SOCIAL



Social well-being was defined by one survey respondent as “The ability to meet and interact with other groups frequently, with ease and without any stress”.

Contributory factors were identified as being healthy, active and able to participate in social activities with friends. Survey respondents felt that well-being could be developed by improving transport and increasing local access to entertainment and services. Older people spoke of the need to attend social groups, such as those run by Age Connect, to connect with others and provide mental and physical stimulation that they otherwise lacked. Several were concerned about maintaining cost-effective spaces for meetings at a time of austerity.





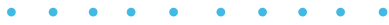
ECONOMIC



Survey respondents from the Neath Valley defined economic well-being as having sufficient finances on which to live and support a family, and having access to secure employment. Factors that could enhance economic well-being included more local services and facilities, improved public transport and increased earnings.

The latest census information (2011) shows that there was 5.8% unemployment in the Neath Valley area and of those aged 16 and over, 34.9% have no qualifications, which is higher than the all Wales figure of 25.9%.

Of the 3,696 homes in the area, 2,528 (68.4%) were identified as being deprived using one or more of the following 4 dimensions of deprivation; employment, education, health/disability and household overcrowding (Census 2011).





The area is comprised of a heavily wooded steep valley of mainly conifer plantation with some ancient woodland. The forested area supports various rare and protected species including the crossbill, goshawk and honey buzzard. The area along the river Neath, which is generally of good quality, also supports important habitats, including riparian and ancient woodland along with alluvial meadows.

The Neath Valley has over 16 local wildlife rich areas, three Sites of Special Scientific areas and three Wildlife Trust Reserves. These are areas that have been selected for their local biodiversity value.

The natural environment offers amenity and recreational opportunities, with the waterfalls at Melincourt and Pontneddfechan, as well as routes such as the Sarn Helen on the high ridge between Neath, Dulias Valleys and St Illtyd's Way. The Neath canal has been restored north of Resolven and is used for kayaking and informal recreation.

Unsurprisingly, flooding has been an issue in the Valley. Major Flood schemes have been completed at Glynneath and Resolven but the latter remains one of the top ten communities at risk in South West Wales

Survey respondents described environmental well-being around having good housing, clean streets and access to pollution-free open spaces. As in many other areas, residents wanted more recycling facilities in their area.

Survey respondents from the Neath area defined environmental well-being in terms of:





Cultural well-being was defined by survey respondents in this area as taking part in or organising artistic or social events in the area. Older people who spoke to us emphasised the strength of community in many of the villages within the area, with several of those consulted having lived in the same place all of their lives.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council manages one library in the area, located in Glynneath. Also, there is one community managed library, located in Resolven. In the area, there are 43 listed buildings and a number of ancient monuments in the area, the majority of which are located in Glynneath.

There are currently 11 playgrounds in the Neath Valley area. 10 of these have fixed play equipment; six parks have green spaces (ranging from informal amenity areas to woodland) while two of the parks are equipped with a Multi-Use Games Area. There are also a number of rugby and football pitches.

The site of the Glynneath Woollen Mill in Glynneath is a registered Conservation Area and Rheola is a designated Historic Park and garden. In addition, the area has many walking and cycling routes, which allow access to the countryside. The area has hosted the World Rally Championships.

With regards to the Welsh language, 15.8% (1,317) of residents in the Neath Valley can speak Welsh.

The number of people from black and minority ethnic groups in the Port Talbot community area is small, and is reflected in the position in the County Borough as a whole.

Information from the Census shows a decrease in the percentage of people who identified themselves as Christian, from 69% in 2001 to 57% in 2011. During the same period, there was also a noticeable increase in people declaring that they had 'no religion', from 21% to 34%.

Things that would improve cultural well-being included more opportunities for sport and improved local amenities.





NEATH PORT TALBOT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD
WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT

