

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A meeting of the CABINET will be held at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX
Wednesday, 3rd October, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

Contact: Emma Wilkins - Council Business Unit - Democratic Services (Tel No. 01443 424110)

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Monday, 1 October 2018 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they **must** notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

To receive the report of the Chief Executive advising Members of the 21st Century School proposals in respect of improving education provision in the Greater Pontypridd area.

3. SEN - ALN SUPPORT CLASS REVIEW

To receive the report of the Director, Education & Inclusion, providing Members with an opportunity to consider proposals for the realignment of mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

(Pages 85 - 136)

4. CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing Cabinet with the Annual Report for 2017/18 for the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (Children, Adults and MASH).

(Pages 137 - 194)

5. A465 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS DUALLING SECTIONS 5 AND 6 DOWLAIS TOP TO HIRWAUN

To receive the report of the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services updating Cabinet on the current situation regarding the A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Sections 5 and 6 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun.

(Pages 195 - 214)

6. REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT.

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.

(Pages 215 - 232)

7. DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

To receive the report from the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing Cabinet Members with the final Director of Social Services Annual Report prior to its publication.

(Pages 233 - 272)

8. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.



Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Vice-Chair)
Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Chris Jones, Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Christian Hanagan, Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services
Chris Lee, Group Director Corporate & Frontline Services
Gio Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Colin Atyeo, Director of Corporate Estates & Procurement
Esther Thomas, Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Jane Cook, Director, Regeneration, Planning & Housing
Nigel Wheeler, Director of Highways & Streetcare Services
Paul Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Simon Gale, Service Director, Planning
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd OCTOBER 2018

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER.

Authors: Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools and Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultations for the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, investing £10m in new sixth form provision at Bryncelynnog;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in these areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources, investing £16.7m in improved educational facilities;
- Improve and increase Welsh medium primary provision by investing £10.7m in a new school to replace Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members note the information contained within this report and give formal approval to commence consultation on the specific proposals to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. It is proposed to invest

£10m in improving the sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. Those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, can apply for sixth form provision at St David's College, Cardiff, and home to school transport will be provided by the Council;

- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School site, investing £4.7m in improved facilities;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, investing £12m in improved facilities. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located at Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and construct a new £10.7m Welsh Medium Primary School building on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils attending YGG Pont Sion Norton, together with those educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference. The Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, again subject to parental preference.

All the proposals will be implemented by 2022.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To improve the quality of the education provision available in the Greater Pontypridd area of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The rationale for the proposals for change in the primary, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Greater Pontypridd area of Rhondda Cynon Taf is set out in the consultation document attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

- 4.2 Over the past few years secondary schools have sought to collaborate to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 and to offer a good quality post 16 learning experience to their pupils. Despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms in the County Borough and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and

ensuring a better quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; in January 2018 Hawthorn High School had 114 sixth form students on roll and Pontypridd High School had 131, a total of only 245 between the two schools. Bryncelynog Comprehensive School had 147 sixth form students in January, whilst Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School had just 80, less than a third of the recommended educationally and financially viable number.

- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary duplication of post 16 provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the Greater Pontypridd area are projected to be over 775 surplus places in 2023, which equates to the same pupil numbers in Hawthorn High School. Effectively, in 2023 the Council will be funding one too many secondary schools in the Greater Pontypridd area. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £600 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of over £600 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800. As a result the combined financial deficits of Cardinal Newman, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are predicted to be at 31st March 2019 in excess of £1.6m, the majority of which is a direct result of the decision of the schools to maintain small, expensive sixth forms at the educational detriment of pupils in years 7-11.
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Across the four secondary schools, 44 post-16 courses were delivered in 2017 with less than 5 pupils per course. This poor learning experience for students is impacting on the numbers of students continuing their post 16 education in the four schools. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2017, was very low, being 31% in Cardinal Newman, 36% in Pontypridd HS, 46% in Hawthorn and 51% in Bryncelynog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.

- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales. However, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision. Across all four secondary schools a step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.

4.3 To address these issues, we are proposing to create a larger sixth form provision at Bryncelynnog, with an investment of £10m to improve and expand facilities; together with the existing comprehensive post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd this creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

- Standards and Achievement – raising standards of success and achievement and increasing progression to Higher Education and employment.
- Choice – improving the breadth and depth of curriculum creating greater choice for all young people to choose learning pathways that best enable them to mix and match vocational, academic and occupational qualifications and experience.
- Participation – increasing participation and attendance rates.
- Equality – to ensure every sixth form student in the Pontypridd area is able to access the curriculum of choice.
- Ability to respond to future learners, community and business needs – Re-skilling and up-skilling the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf as the commercial environment changes, to allow people to compete effectively in the job market.
- Financial viability and effectiveness – providing a cost effective and efficient model for delivery, removing unnecessary duplication, aligning capacity with demand (in light of demographic change), generating economies of scale and expanding economies of scope. This will result in the removal of surplus places, the reduction in the number of small sixth form classes, and the duplication of provision between providers.

4.4 The opportunity exists therefore to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities.

4.5 In bringing schools together whether that is through amalgamation, federation or informal clustering, the purpose has to be to improve

teaching and learning and pupil outcomes. The benefits of 3-16 schools can be summarised as follows:

- A common ethos means pupils do not have to adapt to a new culture on moving schools;
- Coherent and consistent styles of teaching and learning progressing through the years gives stability to pupils' learning experiences;
- A comprehensive and common system for assessing, recording and tracking pupil progress throughout his/her schooling;
- Flexibility to provide the appropriate curriculum for individuals regardless of age;
- Increased access for pupils to a range of specialist accommodation, facilities and learning resources;
- Pupils with additional needs can maintain relationships with supporting agencies throughout their school career if required;
- A common attendance and behaviour policy means that routines are established and values understood from an early age;
- Parents/carers may remain more involved in their children's education as they do not have to establish new relationships with staff.
- The all through setting provides a context where teachers know their pupils well as they progress through school.
- The visibility of all ages in all through schools supports the sense of continuity and reinforces the concept of a learning journey and a sense of authentic progression.
- Mentoring between year groups and older children provides excellent role models for younger pupils.
- Best practice can be shared between phases. Bringing together different groups of practitioners in cross phase training providing 'collective opportunity for staff'.

4.6 Part of these proposals involve the closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg, Pont Sion Norton and relocation of its education provision from its current site near Cilfynydd, Pontypridd, to a new, purpose built school building that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is a dual language school and it is proposed that the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in the school shall transfer to the new Welsh Medium Primary School; the pupils educated through the medium of English in the school shall transfer to the new 3-16 School at Hawthorn. Heol-Y-Celyn Primary will subsequently close.

4.7 The 4 primary schools and the 4 secondary schools subject to closure or significant investment within this proposal have significant issues that need to be tackled:

- All 4 secondary schools had less than 150 pupils in the sixth form in January 2018, one of which had only 80 pupils;
 - 3 of the 4 secondary schools have significant financial deficits primarily due to maintaining unviable sixth forms;
 - The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools consistently being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance;
 - In 3 of the 4 secondary schools, the majority of pupils at the end of Year 11 do not opt for the sixth form provision offered by their school, they choose an alternative. The lowest retention rate of Year 11 pupils is at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School where only 30% of pupils returned to the sixth form in 2017;
 - 1 primary school and 2 secondary schools have surplus places in excess of 25%, and across the 8 schools, there will be 1,138 surplus places in 2018;
 - The 4 primary school buildings and sites are a limiting factor on the development of the curriculum and therefore have an adverse impact on further improvements in educational standards.
- 4.8 The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. This proposal seeks to achieve this.
- 4.9 The Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £37.4m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality 21st Century learning environment.
- 4.10 This investment will include:
- A new sixth form block and improved facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School;
 - New and refurbished buildings at the Hawthorn and Pontypridd secondary school sites to create two 3-16 schools;
 - A new Welsh Medium Primary School to replace YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary on the Heol Y Celyn site.
- 4.11 The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and, if required, road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.
- 4.12 To achieve these proposals, the Council is seeking to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. It is proposed to invest £10m in improving the sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. Those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, can apply for sixth form provision at St David's College, Cardiff, and home to school transport will be provided by the Council;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School site, investing £4.7m in improved facilities;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, investing £12m in improved facilities. The local authority designated ALN specialist classes located at Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school with future provision for expansion being included in the proposal.
- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and construct a new £10.7m Welsh Medium Primary School building on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils attending YGG Pont Sion Norton, together with those educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference. The Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, again subject to parental preference.

4.13 The catchment areas of several of the schools included in these proposals will also be amended; full details of the proposed changes are outlined in the attached consultation document at Appendix 1.

4.14 The proposal is focused on raising educational standards at all key stages and ensuring that the limited financial resources are targeted at improving the learning environments for the pupils. The proposal will remove 1,300 surplus places, remove a maintenance backlog in excess of **£4.3m**, and address the educational and financial viability of sixth forms in the area.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Welsh Language, Equality and Community Impact Assessments are being prepared in respect of these proposals and will be published on the Council's website together with the consultation documents that outline the proposals in detail.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The consultation processes in respect of these proposals will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (006/2013). These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that consultation documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.
- 6.2 The consultation document for the proposal outlined in this report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report; the proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter will run from 15th October to 31st January 2019. Details of meetings that will be organised will be added to the draft consultation documents once they have been confirmed with the respective schools.

7. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 7.1 The process for closing schools is set out in the Welsh Government statutory code document 006/2013 – the School Organisation Code. The Code sets out the policy context and general principles for reviewing the supply of school places and sets out the factors that need to be taken into account by those bringing forward proposals. It also outlines the format of the consultation process and identifies the key stakeholders that must be consulted.
- 7.2 The Welsh Government has recently conducted consultation on revisions to the above Code and it is expected that a new statutory document will be put in place by 1st November 2018. The attached consultation documents and the consultation processes will therefore be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this revised Code.
- 7.3 The initial consultation on all proposals outlined in this report will involve all key stakeholders as outlined in the revised Code. This consultation will take place over a 12-week period (not including school holidays) and the proposed timetable for the whole process is as follows:
- Consultation period 15th October 2018 – 31st January 2019
 - Report back to Cabinet on outcome of consultation – February 2019
 - Statutory Notices published (if approved by Cabinet) for a 28 day period – March 2019

- Report back to Cabinet on outcome of statutory notice period and details of objections received, with appropriate recommendations – April 2019.
- 7.4 The School Organisation Code now makes provision for local authorities to determine their own statutory proposals; under the former arrangements, if just one objection was received following publication of the statutory notice, the proposals had to be forwarded to the Welsh Ministers, who would make the final decision as to whether the proposal could be implemented or not. This only now occurs when specific circumstances exist, e.g. if the proposal involves the removal of 6th form provision from a school.
- 7.5 The specific proposal that is not a closure of a school but relates to the removal of the 6th form at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School will therefore be referred to the Cabinet Secretary for Education for determination, should this proposal progress to this stage.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 These proposals require a significant capital investment of £37.4m, of which it is proposed that 50% will be funded by the Council and 50% by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme. Welsh Government has approved the Council's 21st Century School's Strategic Outline Programme which sets out an indicative level of capital funding available over the period 2019-2026. The next steps are to undertake the statutory consultation on the proposals set out in this report and to submit financial business cases to Welsh Government. This is the process required before Welsh Government makes any financial funding commitment to specific projects.
- 8.2 During the course of the consultation period any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the consultation and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND THE WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have the learning environment fit for the 21st Century." The proposals considered in the report have taken into account the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This is a very ambitious proposal that seeks to transform education provision in the Greater Pontypridd area, with an investment of £37.4m in new and improved facilities. Education standards in the area are improving but significant resources that should be released to improve educational opportunities for children are tied up in school sites that need to be significantly upgraded for 21st Century learning and unviable small sixth forms.
- 10.2 This proposal seeks to provide learning environments and learning experiences that are as good, if not better than those experienced across the best schools in the UK.
- 10.3 Members may have already seen the results of the Council's investment in new and improved schools across the Cynon and Rhondda Valleys, and in Taf Ely in Pontyclun, and Tonyrefail. These investments have been well received with parents and the local community. This proposed investment in Greater Pontypridd provides the opportunity for over 4,000 children to benefit from improved educational facilities.
- 10.4 It is recommended, therefore, that Members give approval to officers to commence the consultation processes necessary to achieve the proposal outlined in this report.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd OCTOBER 2018

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING, COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER.

Item: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

Background Papers

The background papers included as appendices to the report are:

- **Consultation Document**
(The various Impact Assessments that are required are being prepared and will be published together with the consultation document)

Contact Officer

**Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager
01443 744227**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CONSULTATION ON THE REORGANISATION OF
PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE PONTYPRIDD
AREA**

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Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG, Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and open a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school (the Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School) to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently part of the Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School catchment).

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, is planning to invest £37.4m in new or refurbished/remodelled school buildings and facilities.

The proposals are inter-dependent projects and it is proposed that the changes will be implemented over the period to 31 August 2022. Given the number of schools affected by the proposals, the consultation document has been set out in the following five sections, encouraging consultees to provide feedback on specific school proposals:

- **Section 1** – Overview of the Proposals;
- **Section 2** – The proposed sixth form changes
- **Section 3** - The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Hawthorn;
- **Section 4** – The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Pontypridd;
- **Section 5** – The closure of YGG Pont Sion Norton and the creation of a new Welsh Medium Primary school at the current Heol-Y-Celyn site. The Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school also. This will increase capacity and improve Welsh Medium provision and will also remove dual language provision.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Pontypridd High School, Cilfynydd Primary School, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and YGG, Pont Sion Norton.
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Abercynon Primary, Cefn Primary, Coedpenmaen Primary, Coedylan Primary, Craig yr Hesg Primary, Ffynnon Taf Primary, Gwauncelyn Primary, Gwaunmeisgyn Primary, Llanilltud Faerdref Primary, Llantrisant Primary, Llwynocrwn Primary, Maesybryn Primary, Maesycod Primary, Parclewis Primary, Penygawsi Primary, Trallwng Infants, Trehopcyn Primary, Trerobart Primary,
- The Governing Body of St David's College
- The City and County of Cardiff Council
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd, Ogmore and Cynon Valley constituencies
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and support staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare

Ynysboeth Primary, YGG Abercynon, YGG, Evan James, , St Michaels RC Primary, Our Lady's RC Primary, SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary, St Helens RC Primary (Caerphilly) Mountain Ash Comprehensive, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Ysgol Ty Coch.

- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd

Partnership

- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- Community Councils : Pontypridd Town Council, Llantwit Fardre Community Council, Llantrisant Community Council, Ynysybwl/Coed y Cwm Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on Monday, 15th October 2018 and will be completed at 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in February 2019. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 8 of this document.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the report and will consider, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposals, make changes to the proposals or not proceed with the proposals. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposals for the foreseeable future.

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposals Statutory Notices will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notices are published.

As the proposals include changes to sixth form education, the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills will determine the outcome of the Statutory Notice in respect of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposals. The outcome of the Statutory Notices in respect of the creation of the two 3 – 16 schools and the closure and relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton will be determined by the Council's Cabinet.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and her response to them within 7 days of the determination decision of the proposals by the Council's Cabinet, for the

proposals Cabinet are responsible for. Any objections received in respect of the Cardinal Newman proposal will be sent to the Welsh Ministers for consideration within 35 days of the end of the objection period. The objection report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 8 of this document.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed changes to Welsh and English primary, secondary and post 16 education provision in the communities within the catchment areas of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools, and YGG Pont Sion Norton. We would like you to consider the information contained within this document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposals as outlined in the Introduction section of this document on page 3.

How do you make your views known?

Consultation events will be held locally and you are welcome to attend the appropriate meeting.

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Hawthorn High School	High Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	High Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Primary Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Primary Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	Primary Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 19 th November 2018, 4pm	Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Primary Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 4pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	High Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	High Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	High School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	High School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Primary School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Tuesday, 15 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Wednesday, 16 th January 2019, 3 – 6pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary Welsh Department – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 17 th January 2019, 4 – 6pm	Rhydyfelin Children’s Centre (tbc)
Hawthorn High, Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary– all three schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 22 nd January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 24 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Pontypridd High School

Consultation questionnaires are attached. These will also be available at the drop-in sessions detailed above and on the Council’s internet site at www.rctcbc.gov.uk

You are also welcome to put your views and any questions you may have in writing to:

Director of Education
21st Century Schools team,
Ty Trevithick,
Abercynon CF45 4UQ Telephone (01443) 744227

E-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received no later than 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019.

Please note that responses to the consultation **will not** be treated as objections to the proposal. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the Statutory Notices.

The majority of the schools affected by this proposal are English medium schools and therefore the consultation documents have been distributed in English based on the chosen language medium for education. Welsh language copies of the consultation document have been provided to the Welsh medium schools and to the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. If a Welsh language copy of the consultation document is required, please contact the address overleaf.

SECTION 1 – Overview of the Proposals

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by creating new school provision to replace Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs.

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £37.4m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

This investment will include:

- New and refurbished buildings at Hawthorn Primary and High School sites and Pontypridd High School site to create two 3-16 schools;
- New and improved sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School;
- Construction of a new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The capacity of the building will be sufficient to incorporate YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School;
- A review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What is the basis for the proposals to create 3 – 16 Schools?

Successful Futures

In March 2014, the Welsh Ministers commissioned Professor Graham Donaldson to undertake an independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. His report, entitled 'Successful Futures' was subsequently published in February 2015 and was adopted by the Welsh Government as

policy shortly afterwards. It is now the Welsh Government's position on curriculum reform across Wales. This document can be viewed online using the following link <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>.

The key recommendations from Successful Futures for all-through schools are:

- The curriculum 3–16 should be organised into Areas of Learning and Experience.
- The new national curriculum in Wales should have six Areas of Learning and Experience: Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; and Science and Technology.
- Children and young people should have their learning developed across the curriculum through three cross-curriculum responsibilities that should be the responsibility of all teachers: literacy; numeracy; and digital competence.
- A digital competence framework and an accompanying 'Routes to Learning Digital Competence' should be developed and be included as a cross-curriculum responsibility.
- The expectations for the three cross-curriculum responsibilities and wider skills should be embedded within the Areas of Learning and Experience
- The new national curriculum should be organised as a continuum of learning from 3 to 16 without phases and key stages.
- Progression should be described in relation to a continuum of learning in each Area of Learning and Experience from when a child enters education to the end of statutory schooling.
- Progression should be signalled through Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16
- All teaching and learning should be directed to achieving the four curriculum purposes.
- Teachers should apply the pedagogical principles identified in this report when planning their teaching and learning, to ensure that the activities relate directly to the curriculum purposes.
- Children and young people should have opportunities to learn from expertise and experience from outside the school.

The first and most obvious change to the curriculum is the reorganisation of what pupils learn into six Areas of Learning and Experience and three Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities. Adopting this approach at national level will give schools more freedom to teach a wider range of things in different ways. Letting teachers make more decisions about what is taught will give schools and teachers much more freedom to work on subjects and topics that are relevant to their learners, so it will be possible for any two schools in Wales to teach and assess different things to measure progress of learners. This will affect how schools can be organised, so that all-through schools will be able to organise a wider range of staff to do things in different ways.

The removal of phases and key stages will give teachers more freedom to work by accommodating the needs of their pupils. This breaks down the distinctions between what happens in a primary and secondary school and especially between the key stages – clearly this puts an all-through school in an advantageous position when thinking about deciding

what pupils learn and how they learn it across a whole-school continuum. In turn, this ability to work with a wider range of colleagues will help all teachers develop their practice. A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices that a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider.

These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools. They do, though, bring significant challenges as well as opportunities to leadership and practice. The more flexible workforce with greater capacity and flexibility, and the ability to play a role as part of a professional learning community are all likely to be enhanced by the all-through model. Simply by increasing the number and widening the variety of staff, the all-through model enjoys an advantage over the single-phase in the Successful Futures vision of learning.

Similarly, there are implications of the new reforms for buildings, for spaces within building for working, teaching and learning, and for access to technology across the whole learning age-range. All-through schools provide a wider range of physical spaces for teaching and learning, and a better range of specialist spaces, resources and materials that can be accessed by a wider age-range than in a single-phase setting. This includes digital, information and learning technology, which is critical to several of the recommendations and which is difficult to afford, maintain and refresh in single-phase schools.

Finally, all-through schools and the reforms in the curriculum carry implications for the role of parents, the local community and the local economy in supporting pupils' progress. The need for transition between Primary and Secondary phases is removed and this can also lead to more continuous and therefore better relationships with parents and carers. Successful Futures is very clear that not all learning that happens to young people happens in a classroom and because of a teacher.

Criteria for the Review of School Provision

In recent years, Estyn has sharpened its approach to inspection of schools and local authorities and has raised the bar in respect of what it considers to be good and excellent provision. Furthermore, Estyn has taken a very hard line on local authorities in Wales that have weaknesses in key areas such as corporate governance, educational standards, attendance levels, surplus places and safeguarding.

Following the last formal inspection of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Education Service in 2012, Estyn also highlighted that the Council had the highest number of surplus places in Wales and that action had to be taken to address this issue. This was followed up by a letter from the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills in November 2012 that instructed the Council to take action in respect of surplus places or the Welsh Government would take responsibility for removing the surplus places.

The Elected Members accepted Estyn's recommendations and have been continually reviewing school provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf ever since. The criteria that has been used for selecting schools for review is one or more of the following:

- Surplus places in excess of 25% of published capacity;
- Buildings that are beyond economic repair/not fit for purpose;
- Financially unviable (usually due to a sharp fall in pupil numbers);
- Schools considered to be 'small' schools, i.e. schools with 90 or fewer pupils;
- Separate infant and junior schools in close proximity;
- 'Paired' schools, i.e. where children progress from one of the schools to the other;
- Mixed aged classes where there are more than two age groups in one class;
- Schools considered to be at risk, based on their academic Key Stage data and the quality of the leadership, of meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

The 3 primary schools and 2 secondary schools included within these 3-16 proposals have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 4 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 5 schools is £4,352,000 which equates to £1,804 per pupil;
- The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales;

In addition Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance. Please refer to the data contained in sections 2 and 3 of this document for the evidence to support this statement.

Pupil numbers attending the sixth form at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School have also fallen dramatically in the last three years; in September 2015 there were 195 pupils in the sixth form, this fell to just 80 in January 2018, a reduction of 60%. Having such small post 16 numbers has a significant impact on the post 16 provision available and on the wider sixth form experience for the students. Numbers are forecast to fall even further in September 2018. This reduction in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has meant that the Cardinal Newman School budget is predicted to fall into a deficit balance of over £700k.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools, including post-16 provision to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. These proposals seek to achieve this.

What is the educational case for the proposals?

School organisational change should point to the educational benefits that any change will offer, particularly in relation to overall improvements in standards, but also in terms of the social and emotional development of children, which would usually impact beneficially on their overall achievement and outcomes.

It is the Council's view that creating larger sixth forms and 3-16 schools will:

- **Improve educational outcomes;**
 - Create larger school departments or faculties that will promote the sharing of skills and expertise across more viable teams;
 - Provide teaching and support staff with more opportunity to develop professionally;
 - Enable greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes;
 - Reduce the anxiety caused by transition

- **Improve educational provision;**
 - Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
 - Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
 - Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
 - Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to a larger school;
 - Broaden the range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities and develop them in ways that are sustainable over the longer term;
 - Deliver the future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of a small number of institutions rather than many;
 - Create schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity, providing greater educational and financial stability;
 - Release resources that will be reinvested in improving the buildings and in improving standards of teaching and learning, which otherwise would not have been available;
 - Enable schools to build better relationships with parents and carers.

- **Improve leadership and management;**
 - Provides the opportunity for the headteacher to distribute key leadership tasks such as child protection, literacy, numeracy, special educational needs etc to a greater number of staff. Often in a small Primary school, the headteacher takes responsibility for the vast majority of these tasks;

- Creates leadership opportunities for other staff, and for others to specialise in key areas, which will enhance educational provision and outcomes and improve succession planning;
- Allow teaching and support staff access to a wider range of responsibilities:
 - Improved career prospects;
 - Improved curriculum co-ordination;
 - The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;
 - An increased range of expertise;
 - Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination.

These benefits apply equally to the mainstream and the pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in the schools. This argument is supported by Estyn in its report “School Size and Educational Effectiveness” (Dec 2013), which stated:

- *“Pupils’ standards are good or better in a higher proportion of large primary schools than small and medium-sized primary schools. This may be because large schools tend to have more expertise and capacity to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils and the more able and talented pupils.”*
- *“Examination results for large secondary schools are better than those for small and medium-sized secondary schools for nearly all measures”;*
- *“In general, curriculum provision is broader and better balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils. Large secondary schools are able to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale”.*

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

Over the past few years secondary schools have sought to collaborate to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 and to offer a good quality post 16 learning experience to their pupils. Despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynog Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time. Numbers at Cardinal Newman have fallen from 195 in 2015 to just 80 in January 2018, a fall of almost 60%.
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be

almost 3,500 by 2022 and over 775 in the Pontypridd area alone. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £600 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of over £600 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800.

- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Across the four secondary schools, 44 post-16 courses were delivered in 2017 with less than 5 pupils per course. This poor learning experience for students is impacting on the numbers of students continuing their post 16 education in the four schools. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2017, was very low, being 31% in Cardinal Newman, 36% in Pontypridd HS, 46% in Hawthorn and 51% in Bryncelynog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 4 (in relation to the Average Capped Wider Points Score) and Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough are below Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.

Creating a larger sixth form at Bryncelynog, together with the existing comprehensive post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

- **Standards and Achievement** – raising standards of success and achievement and increasing progression to Higher Education and employment.
- **Choice** – improving the breadth and depth of curriculum creating greater choice for all young people to choose learning pathways that best enable them to mix and match vocational, academic and occupational qualifications and experience.
- **Participation** – increasing participation and attendance rates.
- **Equality** – to ensure every sixth form student in the Pontypridd area is able to access the curriculum of choice.
- **Ability to respond to future learners, community and business needs** – Re-skilling and up-skilling the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf as the commercial environment changes, to allow people to compete effectively in the job market.

- **Financial viability and effectiveness** – providing a cost effective and efficient model for delivery, removing unnecessary duplication, aligning capacity with demand (in light of demographic change), generating economies of scale and expanding economies of scope. This will result in the removal of surplus places, the reduction in the number of small sixth form classes, and the duplication of provision between providers.

Further information on this part of the proposals can be obtained in Section 5 of this document.

What is the educational case for creating 3-16 schools?

The great strength of all-through education is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition “dips” in pupil performance. A 3-16 school provides the opportunity to provide a “bridge” between key stages in order to create a seamless transition for pupils in terms of curriculum planning, learning and teaching. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across key stages 2 and 3.

In 2012, the Council established a new 3-19 school at Ysgol Llanhari and to date the school is making excellent progress, with pupil attainment and development outcomes improving year on year. The cross phase learning and communication with staff is having a positive effect on pupils.

The all through school eases the transition process between the key stages and staff and teachers know the children well as they progress through the year groups and this enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.

The School has strong leadership, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists pupils learning progression.

Another important benefit of all-age schooling is being able to achieve greater effectiveness through the sharing of resources, and being able to target these resources, whether financial, physical or human, at key areas of school improvement. Some reported benefits include:

- Provision of specialist teaching in KS2 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into KS3;
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils;
- Joint Professional Development;
- Directing resources at early intervention;
- Planning a joint curriculum;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;
- Creating common administrative appointments.

Will primary and secondary pupils have to share facilities and resources?

It needs to be stressed that a 3-16 school would not result in young children sharing playgrounds or break times with much older pupils. There are already strict safeguarding protocols which are observed when any primary aged pupils visit a secondary site (walking in pairs in line with teachers or adult helpers at the front and rear).

The primary aged pupils will receive the majority of their lessons in a specialist remodelled primary school building. Nevertheless, the pupils will have the opportunity to be taught in the secondary school to develop their curricular skills through the use of specialised facilities e.g. science and technology. Secondary phase pupils will also be able to have learning opportunities in the primary phase especially around any care related vocational activities and meeting some of the requirements of the Welsh Baccaalaureate. These learning opportunities will also provide support to the primary phase staff through such activities, for example year 11 pupils assisting primary school pupils with their reading. This is the case in Ysgol Llanhari, the first 'all through' age school in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

What will be the impact on the other “partner” primary schools in the community?

Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.

Benefits of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School

This proposal is outlined and explained in detail in Section 5 (starting on Page 58) of this document. Please refer to this section for more information on this particular proposal.

To comply with Welsh Government guidance and its initiative to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which includes an expectation on local authorities to promote Welsh Medium education, the Council is reviewing its Welsh Medium school provision, to ensure that evidenced demand for places is met and that wherever possible, provision is expanded and improved to encourage parents to select a Welsh Medium education for their children. The proposal is to construct a brand new, purpose built school, that will have sufficient pupil capacity to cater for the current pupils of both YGG, Pont Sion Norton and those attending the Welsh Medium stream at Heol y Celyn Primary School; this is one of the schemes being planned to assist in achieving this aim.

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government's target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050. The WESP for RCT can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via this link

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>.

Included among the list of actions and outcomes the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP, by increasing the number of seven year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh are the following:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for WM provision in their catchment areas
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools in to full WM schools

This part of the overall proposal, which is to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary and open a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 480 pupils plus Nursery provision, which will in turn incorporate a dual language provision, will work towards the achievement of these targets in this area of the County Borough.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on the school pupils?

In making the proposed changes, many things will be different for the pupils from the Pontypridd area, depending on parents' exercising their right of choice, but some things will remain the same:

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus. Some children may lose their entitlement to free transport, but others could gain entitlement;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there will be less, probably no travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling can also be used to focus on studying or completing course work;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc. The children attending the ALN Classes will also have the opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority (LA) to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe “walking distance” to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe “walking distance” is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure;
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to children who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 2 mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education as required by the Measure. This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner’s home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided to learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

With regard to the proposed alternative sixth form centres for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School pupils at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd being put forward for post - 16 provision, students will receive free transport, providing they meet the qualifying criteria (2 miles walking distance from home to school/college), to the **nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require**. If they choose a centre that is not the closest to their home address, they may of course attend but will not receive any assistance towards the cost of transportation from the Council.

Pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf attending Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, will be able to select the most appropriate sixth form provision that offers the choice of courses that they require or if they choose a Roman Catholic post 16 provision this

will be made available at St David's College, Cardiff. In doing so they will receive free transportation, providing they meet the distance criteria to the nearest provision that meets their subject choices. Students resident in Caerphilly County Borough will need to check this issue with their local authority.

The Welsh Government and the Council has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is expressed in seven core aims that all children and young people:

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

We consider that this proposal benefits the children in the Pontypridd community in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the schools?

For the English Medium school changes in Hawthorn and Pontypridd, and for the creation of the new Welsh Medium Primary School, all the schools involved in the proposals will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body. Should the proposals proceed, the new 3-16 schools for Hawthorn and Pontypridd and the new Welsh Medium Primary School will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open. These temporary governing bodies will be responsible for establishing the schools, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all the staffing posts.

The temporary governing bodies will firstly need to appoint new headteachers, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new schools. The staffing structure for Hawthorn and Pontypridd 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the school taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum without sixth form provision. The staffing structure for the new Welsh Medium Primary School will need to reflect the increased pupil roll.

The Council recommends that if the proposals are accepted that the temporary governing bodies of new schools "ring fence" the appointment process for all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

No changes will be required to the governing body of Cardinal Newman, but a revision to their staffing structure will be required due to the loss of the sixth form provision.

The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change, as illustrated by the recent school organisation changes in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas.

What are the disadvantages of the proposals?

School reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for a period of time, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum and the children's education does not suffer. The disadvantages of the proposals and how these risks can be managed by the Council and the schools are as follows:

Disadvantages	Risk Management
Sixth form students will be required to travel further for sixth form provision.	Sixth form students already study courses at alternative establishments as part of the Taff Ely Post 16 Consortium of schools and have to travel at the beginning, middle or at the end of the school day.
There will be increased costs of home to school transport.	The increased costs of transport due to the need to transfer post-16 students to the new centres will be significantly less than the cost of continuing the inefficient post 16 provision in the two secondary schools. Additional transport provision will also need to be considered for YGG Pont Sion Norton pupils if the distance they will have to walk to the relocated school exceeds 1.5 miles.
Some parents may prefer to send their child to two or three schools rather than to one all through school. 3-16 schools are a new concept of education provision to many parents and there may be concerns.	Factors such as the appeal of a modern 21 st Century School with the latest education facilities and the availability of free transport (where eligible) could be important considerations for many in making their choice. The 3-19 pilot in Lampeter has been independently evaluated and it is considered to be a success. Ysgol Llanhari is also a 3-19 school and the feedback from parents has been very positive. Other local authorities are adopting a similar approach across Wales, England and Scotland.
There will be staffing implications in that, for example there will be need for only one Headteacher. Staff will be concerned about the security of their jobs.	The respective governing bodies will, as soon as possible, once the statutory procedures are completed, address the staffing issues. In practice governing bodies seek to ensure as much continuity in the staffing as possible in these situations.

Despite these disadvantages, the Council considers that the educational advantages of the proposals outweigh the short-term impact of the changes for pupils and parents.

What alternative options have been considered?

The current position is that we have too many schools, too many schools with small sixth forms, too many surplus places, and too many schools housed in Victorian or CLASP

construction buildings that are expensive to maintain, with limited specialist and outdoor facilities, all of which result in educational standards being too low and limited financial resources not being used efficiently and effectively.

The options available to the Council to improve educational performance and ensure the provision represents value for money are as follows.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
(i) - Retain the status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff; • No impact on home to school transport; • The schools have a strong tradition and are well supported in the local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Educational performance continues to be at best adequate in some schools.
(ii) – Federate groups of schools, maintain the school buildings but with fewer headteachers and governing bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • Opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice; • Minimum disruption to pupils, parents and staff; • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
		<p>resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited in the 3 schools.
<p>(iii) – Further development of the Taff Ely post 16 Consortium working through greater collaboration between schools and the Further Education College, including better use of video conferencing facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling highly difficult-possible permutations may arise whereby a pupil might study 3 or more subjects on 3 or more sites; • Increased transportation of learners during the school day, which is difficult to manage and a poor experience for the pupils; • Post 16 funding does not pay for travel between school sites. As a result, the travel is paid for by resources allocated to 11-16 provision; • Limited personal, social and educational interaction between the pupil cohorts.
<p>(iv) - Retain the secondary school sixth forms but close one of the secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the secondary schools and the sixth form provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post 16 funding is still insufficient to support post 16 curriculum offered in the remaining secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited. • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the primary sector not addressed.
<p>(v) Model being proposed for the Welsh medium primary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space in some communities to build new

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>provision in the area – Merge the primary schools onto existing or new sites, refurbishing existing or building new primary schools.</p> <p>This could include building new primary schools on the sites of secondary schools but the primary schools would be under the control of a separate governing body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the size of some primary schools; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools. • Given there are only 4 Welsh medium secondary schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf, it is not feasible to develop a 3-16 or 3-18 Welsh medium school for Pontypridd, and this option offers the best local solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary schools or to expand existing schools; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the secondary sector not addressed; • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not addressed.
(vi) – (iv) & (v) above combined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other primary and secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools and the sixth form provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not fully addressed; • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities.
<p>(vii) – Model being Proposed for the English medium schools –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop post 16 centres of excellence at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw with Roman Catholic faith based provision available at St David’s College, Cardiff; • Create two new 3-16 schools; • Improve the learning environment for pupils who require Welsh Medium education • Revise English Medium catchment areas to utilise surplus capacity that currently exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of sixth form provision and included primary schools • Retains local schools in the community; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools, the sixth form provision and the College; • Enables the primary and secondary pupils to share specialist facilities, such as sporting facilities; • Improves the transition between KS2 and 3; • Better enables schools to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils; • Financially the most cost effective approach and enables the Council to fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-16 schools are a new concept in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parents will have concerns; • Many sixth form students will have further to travel to access the provision; • Amending catchment areas may not be popular with parents who have an affinity with the school that has served their area in the past; • Increases the home to school transport costs in some cases.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
	its proportion of the investment required; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimises the increase in home to school transport costs in some cases. 	

For the changes to the English medium provision options (i) – (vi) above have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (vii), is that proposed in this consultation document.

For the changes to the Welsh medium provision options (i) – (iv) and (vi) – (vii) have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (v), is that proposed in this consultation document.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to publish Community Impact, Welsh Language Impact and Equality Impact Assessments. These have been produced as separate documents and are available on the Council’s website. The overall impact of all the proposals outlined in this document will be neutral; any facilities currently offered in the schools, such as after school and breakfast clubs will be retained in the new provisions and hopefully enhanced and extended.

The Timetable for the proposed changes

Project	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
Hawthorn 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Pontypridd 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Cardinal Newman 11 – 16 School (no 6 th form)	September 2021	September 2022
New Welsh Medium Community Primary School	September 2020	September 2022

Admissions Arrangements

Admissions to all schools, for pupils aged between 3 – 16, outlined in this document will be managed by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as the Admissions Authority in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code. The Council’s Admissions Policy for all maintained schools is outlined in the Council produced “Starting School” admissions booklet. Admissions to sixth forms are managed by the individual schools, with Coleg Y Cymoedd and St David’s College, Cardiff managing their own post 16 admissions. All schools included in these proposals are Community schools, maintained by Rhondda Cynon

Taf County Borough Council, except for Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, which is a voluntary aided school.

Admission numbers for the proposed new schools will be calculated and published once the design and planning work for the buildings is completed. It must be stressed that admission numbers will ensure that sufficient school places are made available to meet the current and forecasted demand for school places in the catchment areas of the schools included in these proposals.

Land and Buildings

If the proposals outlined in this document are implemented, there will be some redundant school sites and buildings. As this is an initial consultation process, no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of these sites and buildings. This issue will be managed in accordance with the agreed Council Policy on Surplus Land and Buildings.

Accommodation

It must be stressed that this is a consultation process and that all design and planning work for the new school buildings is at an early stage of development. However, all works planned are included as part of the Council's 21st Century Schools proposals and any work undertaken, whether this is new build accommodation or refurbishment/remodelling of existing school buildings will be of a high quality, with flexible and sustainable learning environments fully conforming and complying with the standards outlined by Welsh Government for 21st Century Schools.

Section 2 – The Proposed Changes to Sixth Form Provision

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Beddau and Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places.

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools.

This proposal will create a school based sixth form at Bryncelynog of over 350 students (this will depend on student choice) and further enhance the sixth form and vocational offer at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nantgarw Campus that already has 350 post 16 students studying traditional A Level subjects and over 1,000 post 16 students studying vocational subjects.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £ 26.7m across this element of the programme, an estimated breakdown is indicated below:

- £10m at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School to improve the sixth form facilities and other infrastructure;
- £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school;
- £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High School to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School's Sixth Form admission criteria states that access to the sixth form is open to all children of any faith or religion and it is not exclusive to the Christian Faith. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff.

Background to the Proposed Post 16 Changes

Since 2009, the Council has been exploring ways to improve post 16 provision with the secondary schools, the FE College and Welsh Government, in a financial climate of decreasing post 16 funding and falling pupil numbers. In September 2011 the Council's Cabinet agreed a way forward which was accepted by the secondary schools that sought to:

- Improve the quality of provision;
- Improve the education outcomes; and
- Be financially viable.

Over the following three years, action was taken to:

- Enhance the 14-19 post 16 consortia of schools, by consolidating the consortia, from 5 to 4 from September 2012. The Welsh medium schools remained as a separate consortium, but only due to the geographical difficulties of sharing minority subjects/courses;
- All the post 16 funding, including the 14-19 Grant, was delegated to each school and/or consortium, with specific targets being set and agreed between the parties;
- Each consortium had a separate governance structure, with a consortium manager;
- The consortium governors were encouraged to determine the curriculum offer and where the curriculum is delivered;
- Ensure the quality of provision is of paramount importance. Schools in each consortium will only be able to offer sixth form provision for those subjects where the quality of teaching and learning is high;
- Specialist vocational provision was to be provided by FE Colleges.

Progress was made in delivering these actions, however with further decreasing student numbers and post 16 funding from Welsh Government, the issues of quality and financial viability of the post 16 provision remain.

As a result, despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. Other than Coleg Y Cymoedd, none of the sixth form provisions in the Pontypridd area have more than 250 pupils, and have not done so for many years;
- The delivery of post 16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the three secondary schools considered within this proposal are projected to be over (725 + Newman) by 2018. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the

learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf funding amounting to £300 per pupil that was originally provided to educate 11-16 aged pupils is being redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of £600 per pupil in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools and almost £800 in Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School;

- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement across the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.
- In 2017, in all 3 of the secondary schools included in this proposal, less than 60 students were entered for 2 or more A Levels or equivalent. Providing an educationally and financially viable curriculum in the three of the four schools is evidently not possible.

In 2014, the Council's Cabinet recognised that the financial position for post 16 provision had significantly worsened and, if the provision was left unchanged, the foreseeable future looked bleak. Therefore, the Council began a rationalisation of post-16 provision, starting with the post-16 provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail. In September 2018 the post 16 changes to the schools in the area will be fully implemented, with three sixth forms closing, and only two of the five secondary schools in the area providing post 16 provision. These changes were made to ensure the schools and college provide a suitable and viable post 16 curriculum offer that meets the needs of the students, the local community and the needs of employers.

In the East Taf Ely area of the County Borough, the sixth form position has deteriorated since 2014. Despite two of the three schools collaborating on sixth form provision, the class sizes are too small and uneconomic, particularly when you consider that a Key Stage 5 class requires 18 pupils per teacher to break even. As a result, the small sixth form class sizes, are financially subsidised by funding allocated to the pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4.

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past five years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	Secondary	11-19	1,442	1034	1046	1044	1088	1126	21.9
Cardinal Newman RC	Secondary	11-19	957	732	761	777	790	770	19.5
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11 - 19	1,098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11-19	1,338	1,003	1,031	967	945	910	31.9

The sixth form numbers are shown below.

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	196	170	153	135	147
Cardinal Newman RC	174	199	191	153	80
Hawthorn High	168	136	111	115	114
Pontypridd High	124	150	139	133	131
TOTAL	662	655	594	536	472

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the four schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1442	1146	1174	1200	1224	1236	14.3
Cardinal Newman RC	957	802	841	884	914	913	4.6
Hawthorn High	1,098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4
Pontypridd High	1,338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6

The sixth form projections are as follows.

School	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	152	167	174	172	178
Cardinal Newman RC	65	70	73	83	93
Hawthorn High	98	107	100	92	105
Pontypridd High	111	112	112	108	105
TOTAL	426	456	459	455	481

Schools manage their own admissions for sixth form provision and determine the entry criteria. The Council sets the catchment areas for the sixth form provision in order to determine which students will be eligible for home to school transport. As is the case at present, students have the choice of continuing to study in their catchment sixth form or studying at Coleg Y Cymoedd that offers a wide academic and vocational curriculum. If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and students that would have ordinarily opted for their catchment sixth form school, and not opted for the FE provision, the three year forecasts from the first year of the new sixth form provision will be as follows.

School	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025
Bryncelynnog Sixth Form	388	408	428

The 11-16 forecasts for the first year of the new school provision will be as follows:

School	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1058
Cardinal Newman RC	820
Hawthorn High	670
Pontypridd High	831

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School would be an 11-16 school and will have 80 surplus spaces. Some of the school buildings could be removed to reduce the surplus or the Archdiocese of Cardiff could use the space to develop or transfer primary school provision on the site.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	C+	B
Cardinal Newman RC	C-	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools and further education colleges in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the five secondary schools during their last inspections is as follows:

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	February 2016	Adequate	Good
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good
Coleg Y Cymoedd	November 2017	Adequate	Good

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School was inspected in May 2018 under the revised framework, the outcome of the inspection is summarised below:

Inspection Area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

As a result of receiving ‘adequate’ ratings, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following Estyn follow up procedures, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were all deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in November 2016, October 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Coleg Y Cymoedd despite receiving an adequate grading for performance was not placed in a category requiring Estyn monitoring. St David’s College, Cardiff was last inspected in 2010 under the former inspection methodology and its overall performance was judged as excellent with excellent prospects for improvement.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point ‘traffic light’ system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a ‘green’ school having the highest rating and a ‘red’ school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school’s Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 performance as appropriate, based on publicly available data and the school’s own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve. The National Schools Categorisation does not take into account Post 16 provision and its respective examination outcomes.

Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools have been categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'. Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School has been categorised as a **green** school.

FE Colleges are not subject to categorisation.

Key Stage 5 Outcomes

The table below sets out the performance of the sixth form pupils over the past four years for each of the main qualifications undertaken in KS5.

School	2014				2015			
	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	83	71	97.2	663.9	80	72	98.6	670.2
Cardinal Newman RC	40	35	91.4	804.2	87	79	96.2	832.4
Hawthorn High	71	65	89.23	758.5	60	57	98.25	772.7
Pontypridd High	40	39	87.18	820.1	66	63	95.24	856.8

School	2016				2017			
	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	63	58	100	823.8	54	53	94.3	787.5
Cardinal Newman RC	79	75	98.7	812.1	74	68	95.6	774.8
Hawthorn High	47	42	97.62	772.3	48	Not available	100	739.9
Pontypridd High	52	51	100	928.4	57	Not available	100	820.9

The Level Three Threshold is achieved by pupils through passing the equivalent of two or more A Levels and this includes BTEC qualifications.

Of those sixth form students who studied A Levels, the examination performance over the past three years is set out below: Source - All Wales Core Data Sets

School	% A* to E grades at A Level			% A* to C grades at A Level			% A* and A grades at A Level		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Hawthorn High	98.2	97.6	100	59.6	61.9	41.7	1.8	0	2.1
Pontypridd High	95.2	100	100	68.3	64.7	42.6	3.2	5.9	5.6
Cardinal Newman	96.2	98.7	95.6	73.4	68	58.8	3.8	2.7	4.4
Bryncelynnog	98.6	100	94.3	34.7	67.2	52.8	5.6	8.8	18.9
Highest performing RCT	100	100	100	74.2	89.5	76.9	5.6	9.2	18.9
Lowest performing RCT	89.2	92.2	86	27	40.2	16.3	0	0	0
RCT average	97	97	96.3	57.9	65.2	45.1	3.1	4	5.5
Welsh average	97	98	97.1	68.1	70.6	54.7	7.9	6.7	10.5

The table shows that the A Level results for two of the schools are consistently well below the RCT and Welsh averages.

The tables above do not contain information in respect of Coleg Y Cymoedd or St David's College, Cardiff as the current arrangements for measuring performance in sixth forms and in further education colleges are entirely separate. They are derived from different data systems, which means that Welsh Government, Estyn, or individual organisations are unable to measure outcomes in a meaningful way across learning settings. As a result, learners and parents do not have access to transparent information to inform their choices. Welsh Government recognises this and in January 2018 committed to developing a set of consistent measures for further education institutions and sixth forms to enable them to publish headline and provider level information on an annual basis.

Financial Information

Sixth forms and all post 16 provision are funded directly from Welsh Government based on the mix and type of qualifications being studied by each student. The more subjects a student studies the greater the funding. For a school to ensure that its sixth form funding covers the costs of delivering the respective subject, it requires an average of 18 students per the course provided.

If you consider that most schools provide greater than 12 A Level courses, most students would be expected to enter 2 A Levels, and a minimum number of students in each subject should be at least 18, you would need at least 90 students in each year group. All the schools were significantly below this figure and it is evident that class sizes are very small, and inefficient.

The table below shows that there are insufficient students opting for post 16 provision in each school.

School	Post 16 students on roll (September)			Number of A Level courses offered			Number of courses with 5 or fewer students		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Bryncelynnog	162	142	150	18	20	16	8	9	8
Cardinal Newman	195	154	78	24	20	22	13	8	11
Hawthorn High	119	118	123	17	19	19	10	13	14
Pontypridd High	141	134	135	20	23	20	9	15	11

The table also shows that student numbers are falling with students choosing alternative provision at Coleg Y Cymoedd or one of the other neighbouring FE colleges which offer a wider post 16 offer and by having greater numbers, offer a different student experience. This in turn has had a significant impact on the finances of three of the four schools as illustrated in the table below.

School	Average Class Sizes, A Level courses (rounded to nearest whole number)			Cross-phase subsidisation per 6 th form pupil	Current budget deficit	Projected budget deficit
	2015	2016	2017	April 2017	April 2018	April 2019
Hawthorn High	5	5	4	£680	£400k	£415k
Pontypridd High	7	6	6	£790	£520k	£518k
Cardinal Newman	6	9	7	£799	£324k	£707k
Bryncelynnog	8	8	6	£776	£215k surplus	£104k surplus

If the proposal was to proceed, the post 16 funding would be removed from Cardinal Newman RC, Hawthorn and Pontypridd secondary schools. Revised funding would be provided to the sixth form in Bryncelynnog and Coleg Y Cymoedd or any other post 16 provider according to the Programmes of Study being undertaken by the students.

Proposed Changes to the Catchment Areas

Secondary schools are responsible for admissions to their sixth forms and can accept students from across the County Borough. However, the Council applies notional catchment areas for post 16 provision for the purpose of managing home to school transport. Students that attend sixth form outside their catchment area are not eligible for home to school transport unless the Programme of Study of their choice is not available in the catchment school. For example, some students travel to Bridgend College to study Agricultural Studies which is not available locally and the Council provides suitable transport.

If these proposals are agreed, we would amend the catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post 16 provision, to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau. Bryncelynnog is located just over 5 miles from Hawthorn High and 6 miles from Pontypridd High. The post - 16 facilities of Bryncelynnog would be improved and upgraded as part of these proposals.

Students from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will have the option of attending another school's sixth form provision of their choice, or the local college, Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, for their post 16 education. Pupils who wish to continue their post 16 education through the Catholic faith could choose to attend St David's 6th Form College, Cardiff. The Council will provide free transportation to the nearest provision that offers the chosen selection of courses for RCT-resident students, providing that they meet the initial qualifying distance criteria of residing more than 2 miles from their provision of choice.

It is proposed that the 11-16 catchment areas will also change. The changes all directly relate to the new 3-16 School at Hawthorn which will:

- Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive).
- Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 91% of the 11-16 aged pupils in this area choose to go to Pontypridd High School;
- Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 54% of the 11-16 aged pupils in the area choose to go to Hawthorn High School and 46% choose Pontypridd High School. With surplus places in both new 3-16 schools for the foreseeable future, the choice of both schools will remain for pupils and parents.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

The timetable for the Sixth Form changes and the management of the transition

In September 2022 it is proposed that the sixth forms of Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will close. Prior to September 2022, the Council will ensure that the Year 12 students, who will be most affected by the change, will be undertaking Programmes of Study that will be continued in the new sixth forms. This approach has been adopted by the Council recently in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail, where three sixth forms closed and two sixth forms extended.

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Section 3 – The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Hawthorn

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Hawthorn High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice. The catchment area school for sixth form provision will be Bryncelynnog;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the adjoining sites of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. In respect of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language provision, only the pupils that are educated through the medium of English will transfer to the 3 – 16 school; those pupils that are educated through the medium of Welsh will transfer the new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current Heol y Celyn site. Details of this particular proposal can be found in Section 5 of this document;
- Provide a 1,260 capacity 3-16 School for Hawthorn, for 540 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 720 pupils aged 11-16; the local authority designated ALN class will also be accommodated in the new school.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Hawthorn for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Hawthorn High has 362 (32.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Hawthorn High are very high, with an average of only 9.25 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;
- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Hawthorn High School has a financial deficit in excess of £400,000;
- Hawthorn Primary School is currently operating almost at full capacity and has very few surplus places, there is no opportunity to expand the accommodation on its existing site. This proposal will allow the use of surplus accommodation in the Secondary school that is located next door to the Primary to cater for the demand in Primary age places;
- Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School has 72 surplus places, equating to 18.5% of its total capacity. It must also be noted that 97 children resident in the Heol-Y-Celyn catchment currently attend Hawthorn Primary School due to parental choice; this large number of out-catchment pupils represents almost 40% of the total pupil population of Hawthorn Primary and demonstrates that parents in this area are already choosing to send their children to Hawthorn instead of their designated catchment school;
- The two buildings that comprise Heol-Y-Celyn Primary are 1960's CLASP constructions, which consist of steel frames, concrete sectional walls and flat felt roofs. Both buildings are in a relatively poor condition overall and have reached the end of their useful life.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown overleaf. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The data for Heol-Y-Celyn is that for the English Medium element of the school only, that will transfer to this 3 – 16 school; the Welsh medium pupils will transfer to the new proposed Welsh Medium Primary school. Total capacity of the school is 388 pupils, the current percentage 'split' of pupils attending this school is 69% English: 31% Welsh (218 English medium pupils and 98 Welsh), capacity has been split using the same percentages.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	Primary	3 - 11	240	221	223	238	240	224	6.6
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	Primary	3 - 11	268	183	187	184	200	218	18.5
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11 - 19	1,098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending)

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	28	30	36	31	23
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	30	34	42	46	35

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the three schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Hawthorn Primary	240	215	206	200	198	194	19.2
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	268	226	238	254	259	262	2.2
Hawthorn High							
11-19 – No.	1,098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4
11-16 – No.	983	648	635	656	662	670	31.8

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Hawthorn 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	480	430	50
Secondary 11-16	720	636	84
Total	1200	1066	134

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the early years and Foundation Phase pupils will be accommodated in the existing primary school, with Key Stage 2 pupils being accommodated, with Key Stage 3 pupils in the adjacent classroom extension block, which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. The Key Stage 3 and 4 sections of the school will be remodelled and refurbished to provide modern 21st Century classrooms, which will future proof the learning environment for the new curriculum for Wales, as described on pages 9 to 12 of this document.

The dedicated ALN provision (KS3) currently accommodated at Hawthorn High School shall transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand. The Council is currently undertaking a separate consultation exercise on the proposed closure of the two ALN classes at Heol Y Celyn Primary, due to a fall in the number of pupils attending the two classes – of the 20 places available at the school, only 1 pupil is currently in attendance. If these proposals are agreed, there will be no dedicated ALN provision at the new school for pupils of either Foundation Phase, or KS2 age.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the astro turf pitch, new sports hall, playing fields, swimming pool, drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Hawthorn Primary	B	A
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	B	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Hawthorn Primary	January 2012	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving ‘adequate’ ratings, all three schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn High School were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April 2013 and October 2015 respectively.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point ‘traffic light’ system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a ‘green’ school having the highest rating and a ‘red’ school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school’s performance, based on publicly available data and the school’s own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School are both currently categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as ‘effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better’.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a **yellow** school, having previously been red and then amber.

Information and data relating to YGG Pont Sion Norton can be found in Section 5 of this document.

Primary School Standards

The tables overleaf set out the performance of the two primary schools for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for pupils attending the English department only:

Subjects	Foundation Phase Outcomes					
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	81.25 (3)	88.46 (1)	84.85 (3)	78.26 (3)	80.65 (3)	72.73 (4)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	88.46 (4)	100 (1)	95.65 (2)	87.1 (3)	81.82 (4)
Language literacy and communication skills English	81.25 (4)	92.31 (1)	87.88 (2)	78.26 (4)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)
Mathematical development	81.25 (4)	88.46 (2)	90.91 (2)	82.61 (3)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest. The figures for Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School include all the pupils in the year group whether they were educated in the English or Welsh medium.

Subjects	Key Stage Two Outcomes					
	2015%		2016%		2017%	
	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
English	88.24 (3)	76.67(4)	85.71 (4)	78.57 (4)	92.11 (1)	76.47 (4)
Maths	85.29 (3)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	92.11 (2)	76.47 (4)
Science	85.29 (4)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	82.35 (3)	76.67 (3)	80.00 (4)	78.57 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Hawthorn High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	83.7 (2)	86.81 (2)	86.96 (3)	94.33 (1)
Maths	89.6 (1)	91.67 (1)	88.7 (3)	98.58 (1)
Science	96.3 (1)	93.06 (2)	93.04 (2)	96.45 (1)
Welsh (second language)	76.3 (3)	79.17 (2)	85.22 (2)	92.2 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	80.0 (1)	84.72 (1)	82.61 (3)	92.91 (1)

The figures in brackets in the table overleaf, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Four Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold	95.09 (3)	96.58 (3)	100 (1)	94 (3)
Level 2 Threshold	92.64 (1)	93.84 (1)	97.06 (1)	65.4 (1)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	40.49 (4)	49.32 (3)	61.76 (1)	45.1 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	36.81 (4)	41.1 (4)	55.88 (2)	42.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score	348.12 (2)	362.39 (1)	373.15 (1)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score	674.57	726.21	693.79	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table overleaf compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the three schools over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Hawthorn Primary	96.14%	1	95.96%	1	95.14%	No primary benchmark

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No primary benchmark
Hawthorn High	93.02%	3	92.33%	4	93.32%	3

Figures for Heol-Y-Celyn are for the whole school

Financial Information

A move from a position of ‘three schools - three budgets’, to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not three, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Hawthorn 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out below:

	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Hawthorn 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	741	925	3,125	4,614	177

* the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £12m will be made to the existing Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary sites and buildings, to create a single site and to improve the facilities for all pupils attending the 3 – 16 school to 21st Century Schools standard.

Catchment Area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School

The catchment area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the combined existing catchment areas of Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Medium)
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Hawthorn High catchment area to:
 - Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive).
 - Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school;

- Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

In the case of oversubscription at any school, published admissions criteria are applied to all applications received for places, to determine which pupils are successful in obtaining the places available. These criteria, which are outlined in our school admission policy booklet entitled 'Starting School' and listed in priority order are:

- Category 1 – 'Looked after' children (children in public care) and previously 'looked after' children.
- Category 2 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 3 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
- Category 4 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 5 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

The term 'home' in the categories above refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives.

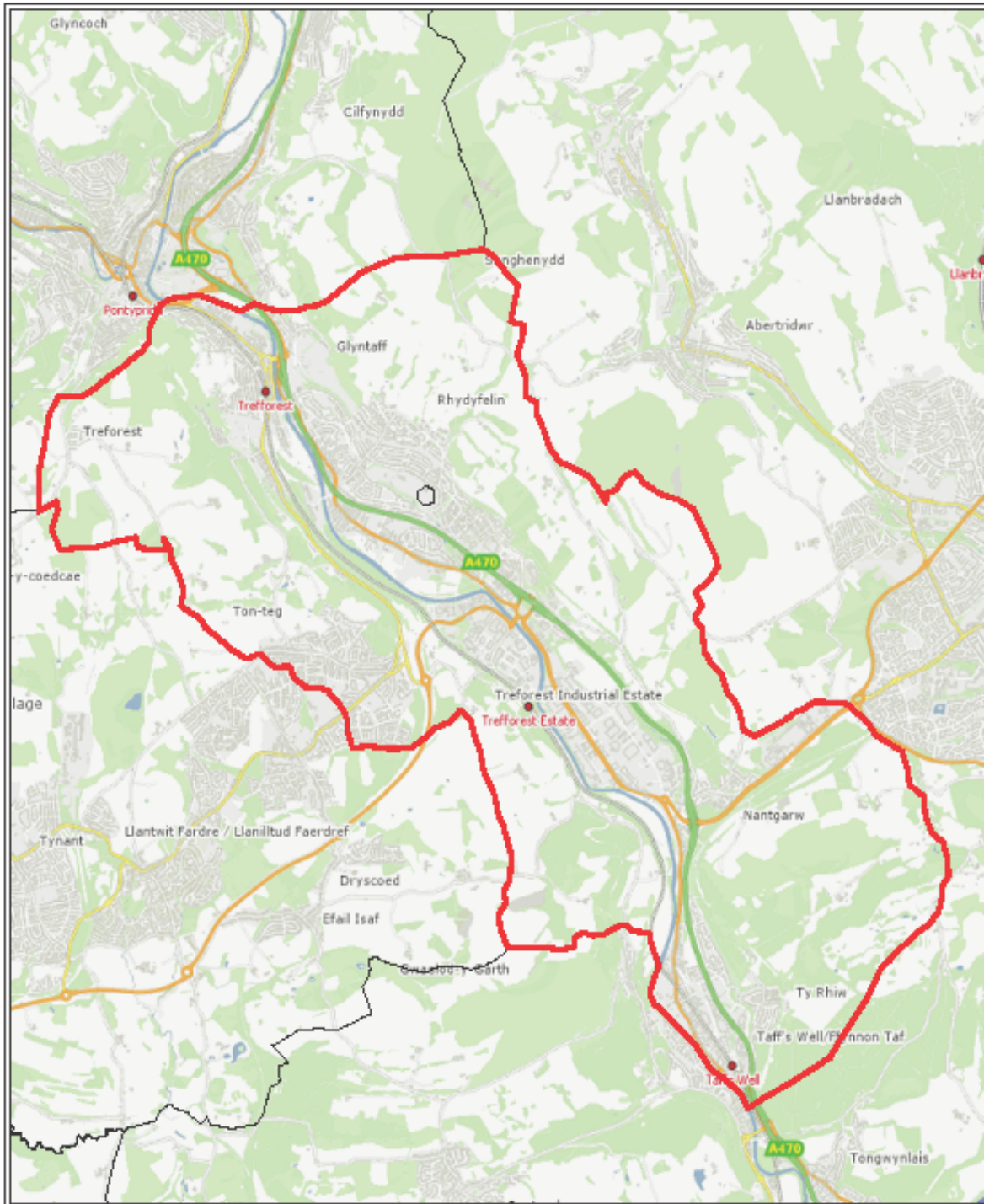
Children will be admitted up to the published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If within any one of the priority categories listed all of the applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the Mapinfo System only, measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.


For the purpose of applying admissions criteria, any child **living in the areas to be transferred from the Hawthorn catchment area**, as detailed on the map enclosed in this document and who has an older sibling still attending Hawthorn High **in the July prior to the opening of the new school, i.e. in September 2022** will have their application considered as if they still resided in the Hawthorn catchment area, i.e. their application will fall in to Category 2 of the aforementioned criteria and not Category 4. This protection will continue until all older siblings have left the school. This will only cover siblings attending Years 7 to

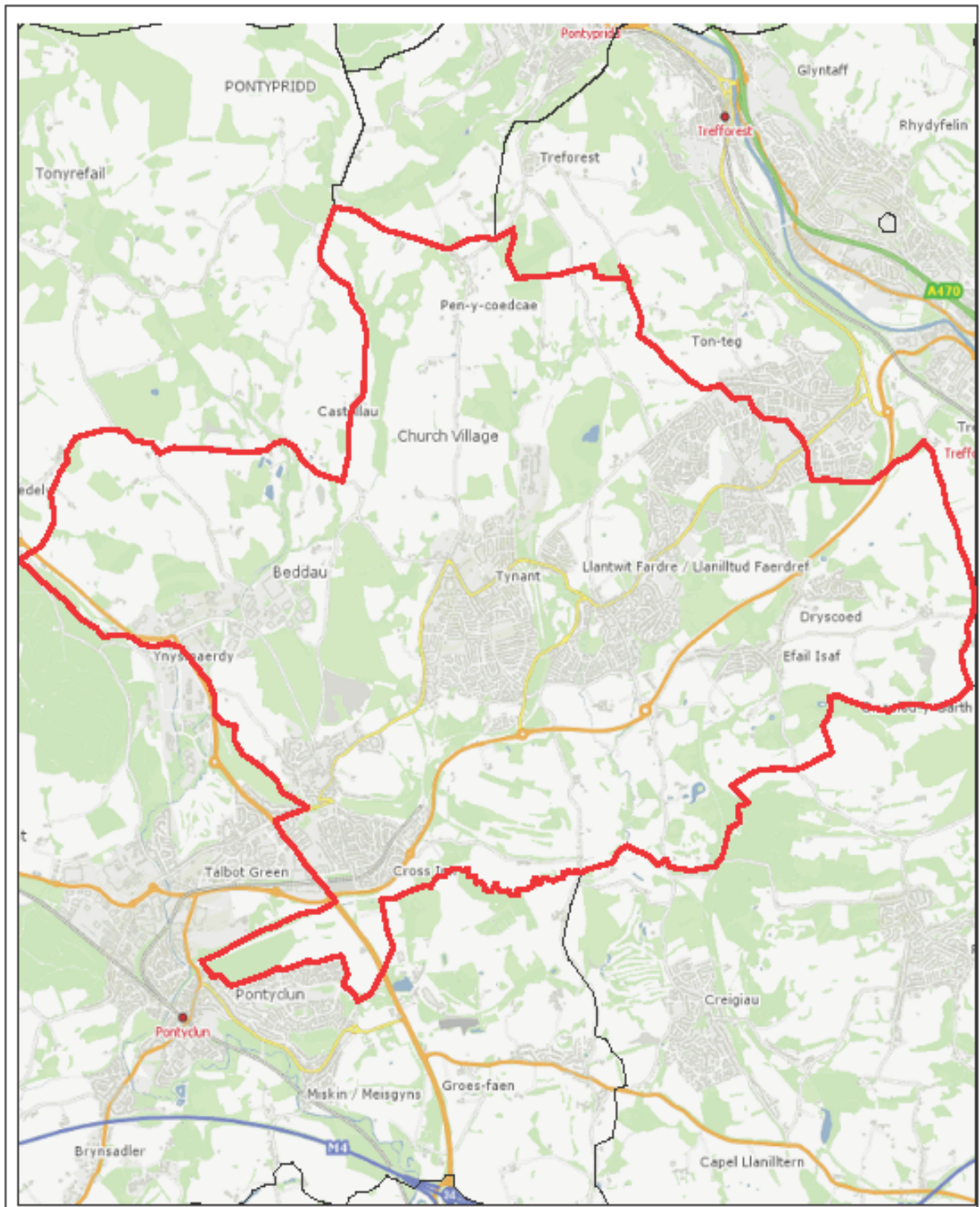
11 in July 2022, any attending the sixth form, namely Years 12 and 13 will not be eligible (as they can be dual registered in more than one school). In the case of Gwauncelyn pupils, they will receive the same protection regarding being resident in the Bryncelynnog catchment if they have elder siblings attending that school on the same dates detailed above.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd, or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.

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	Drawing Title Proposed Hawthorn High	Date	Scale
		Location e: 000000, n: 000000	
		<small>(C) Crown copyright. All rights reserved LA 100023458, 2006</small>	
		<small>(C) Hwntfaint y Gorn. Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458, 2006</small>	



	Drawing Title Proposed Bryncelynnog	Date	Scale
	Location e: 000000, n: 000000	<small>(C) Crown copyright. All rights reserved LA 100023458. 2006</small>	
	<small>(C) Hafwrfaist y Gorseu. Codwir pob hawl LA 100023458. 2006</small>		

Section 4 – The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Pontypridd

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Pontypridd High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School.
- Provide a 1,200 capacity 3-16 School for Pontypridd, for 210 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 990 pupils aged 11-16.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school. The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Pontypridd for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Pontypridd High has 428 (31.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Pontypridd High are very high, with an average of only 11 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;

- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Pontypridd High has a financial deficit of almost £520,000;
- Cilfynydd Primary School is a relatively small Primary school (its total capacity is 188 pupils), that currently has just 136 pupils on roll, meaning that almost 28% of its capacity is surplus. A relatively large number (30) of pupils' resident within the Cilfynydd catchment choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is 1.7 miles away. This represents over 10% of the total pupil roll of Coedpenmaen. The school is accommodated in three separate Victorian buildings on a steeply sloping site which is just a few hundred metres walk away from Pontypridd High School, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road. The driving distance by car, which is considerably longer than the safe walking route, is just 0.9 of a mile.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	Primary	3 - 11	188	120	118	128	126	136	27.6
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11 - 19	1,338	1,003	1,031	967	945	910	31.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending)

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	32	23	27	20	21

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the two schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Cilfynydd Primary	188	143	142	141	136	124	34.0
Pontypridd High							
11-19 – No.	1,338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6
11-16 – No.	1,205	752	768	772	796	831	31.0

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Pontypridd 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	180	125	55
Secondary 11-16	990	879	111
Total	1170	1004	166

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the Foundation Phase pupils will be accommodated in the existing Primary school, with the older primary age pupils (KS2) will be accommodated in the Year 7/8 (Lower School block which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. A secure soft play area for early year's children will be created at the front of the building. A new environmental outdoor classroom will also be created.

External play areas across the school site will be upgraded and improved, to also include the installation of a 3G pitch. Works to reconfigure the existing car park, to provide a dedicated pick up/drop off area for parents will also be undertaken.

The dedicated ALN class already in operation at Pontypridd High will transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the new 3G pitch, sports hall, playing fields, tennis courts, music and drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Cilfynydd Primary	C	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at both schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Cilfynydd Primary	May 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving ‘adequate’ ratings, both schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, both schools were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in July 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point ‘traffic light’ system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a ‘green’ school having the highest rating and a ‘red’ school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school’s performance, based on publicly available data and the school’s own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Pontypridd High School is currently categorised as a **yellow** school. This defines them as ‘effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better’. Cilfynydd Primary became a **green** school for the first time in 2018; this defines them as ‘highly effective and has a track record of sustaining a high level of outcomes, has the capacity to lead and contribute to supporting other schools’.

Primary School Standards

The tables overleaf set out the performance of the Cilfynydd Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Cilfynydd Primary	Foundation Phase Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Foundation Phase Indicator	76.19 (4)	90.48 (1)	83.33 (3)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	100 (1)	94.44 (3)
Language literacy and communication skills English	76.19 (4)	90.48 (2)	83.33 (3)
Mathematical development	80.95 (4)	100 (1)	83.33 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Cilfynydd Primary	Key Stage Two Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (1)
Maths	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (2)
Science	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	100 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	86.67 (2)	81.82 (4)	88.89 (2)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Pontypridd High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	82.94 (3)	82.42 (3)	88.05 (2)	87.27 (4)
Maths	89.41 (1)	86.81 (2)	91.19 (1)	90.30 (3)
Science	90.59 (2)	85.71 (4)	94.34 (2)	93.94 (3)
Welsh (second language)	68.82 (4)	77.47(3)	73.58 (4)	75.76 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	78.24 (2)	76.37 (4)	84.91 (2)	85.45 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Four Outcomes				
	Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold		90.48 (4)	98.37 (2)	100 (1)	95.5 (4)
Level 2 Threshold		78.57 (3)	92.93 (1)	98.24 (1)	60.8 (4)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths		52.38 (1)	53.26 (2)	61.76 (1)	51.1 (3)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)		48.21 (2)	50 (2)	61.18 (1)	48.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score		329.69 (3)	364.40 (1)	375.92 (2)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score			584.78	596.24	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the two schools over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Cilfynydd Primary	93.81%	4	93.21%	4	94.44%	No benchmark
Pontypridd High	93.16%	2	93.60%	2	94.07%	3

Financial Information

A move from a position of 'two schools - two budgets', to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not two, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Pontypridd 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out overleaf:

	Cilfynydd Primary	Pontypridd High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Pontypridd 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	550	3541	4051	40

* the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £4.7m will be made to the existing Pontypridd High site and buildings to accommodate the primary aged pupils in 21st Century facilities and to improve the 11-16 facilities at the School.

Any capital receipts from the future sale of vacated school sites will be used by the Council to invest in capital projects across the County Borough.

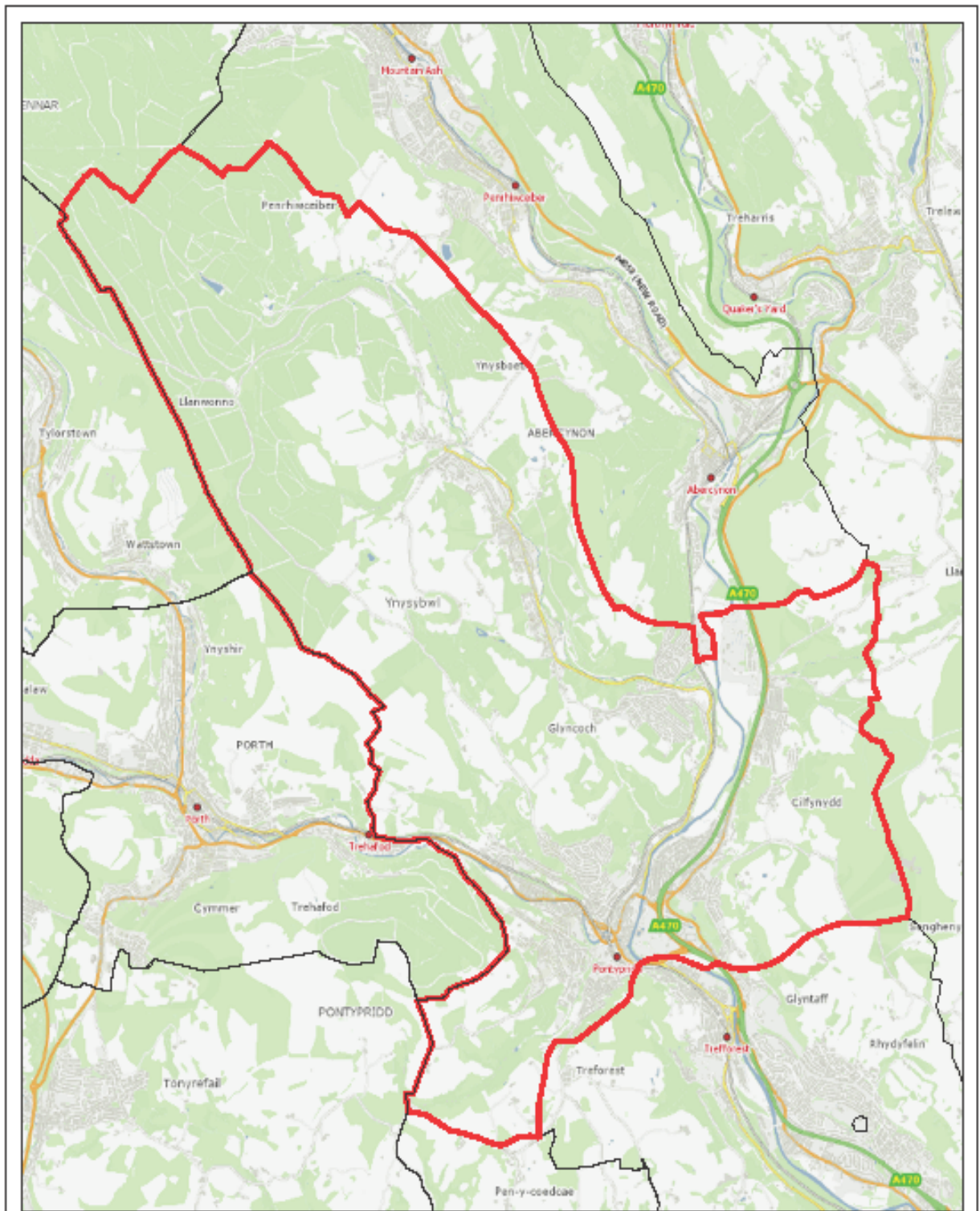
Catchment Area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School


The catchment area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the existing catchment area of Cilfynydd Primary School.
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Pontypridd High School catchment area, with the addition of the following areas that are currently part of the catchment area of Hawthorn High School:
 - The Graig area of Pontypridd, that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School;
 - The catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School.

The criteria for admission to schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the case of oversubscription is outlined in detail on page 45 of this document. As no areas are being removed from this catchment area there is no requirement to put in place any protection for siblings of existing pupils, although the protection to be put in place for those pupils who were formerly in the Hawthorn catchment, but will transfer to the Pontypridd High catchment as a result of these proposals should be noted.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.



	Drawing Title Proposed Pontypridd High	Date 	Scale
		Location e: 000000, n: 000000	
		<small>(C) Crown copyright. All rights reserved LA 100023458, 2006</small>	
		<small>(C) Hafdrinist y Cwm. Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458, 2006</small>	

Section 5 – The closure of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, Welsh Medium Community Primary school to replace both provisions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council proposes to:

- Improve and increase Welsh medium provision by building a new school that will replace the provision of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School (currently a dual language school).

To achieve this, the proposal is to construct a new, purpose built school building that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. The planned investment in this new school is £10.7 million. YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community Primary School located near Cilfynydd, Pontypridd, in poor condition buildings that are difficult to access. Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is a dual language school and it is proposed that the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in this school shall transfer to the new school, along with the pupils attending YGG, Pont Sion Norton; Heol-Y-Celyn Primary will subsequently close and the pupils educated through the medium of English will transfer to the new proposed 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, details of this proposal are outlined earlier in Section 3 of this document.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community School located at the rear of Pont Sion Norton Road, Pontypridd. The school site consists of three separate traditional stone Victorian buildings with slate roofs, built on a steeply sloping site, constructed in 1893. The school is built on a steep hillside, all of the external play areas are sloping which makes playing of ball games, for example, extremely difficult; the external areas are all tarmac yards and the school does not have access to any grassed playing fields or garden areas.

Access to the school site is via flights of stone steps and the school does not have the necessary facilities to enable any persons who use wheelchairs to access the school. There is no dedicated car parking on the site; staff and visitors have to park in a lane that serves the rear of the residential properties in Pont Sion Norton Road. School buses are unable to drive up to the school site and have to pick up and drop off pupils on the busy main road below the school.

The school has received considerable investment in recent years to repair and improve the learning environment but is still only currently categorised as a grade C according to the Welsh Government's Property Condition data in respect of building condition and suitability.

The school is currently operating at 96% of its published capacity and pupil numbers are not forecast to reduce in the next few years. There is no scope to extend the existing school buildings should demand for Welsh Medium places rise and the nature of the site would make provision of temporary accommodation very difficult to achieve. Of more concern is the inaccessibility of the school to children and adults who may have mobility problems, it is

simply not possible to undertake any reasonable adjustments to improve access at the current site. Even with further major capital investment at this school it would not be possible to create a 21st Century learning environment for all children.

If the proposal to close, and relocate the provision of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School site in a new building is agreed, then the current YGG Pont Sion Norton school site will become surplus to requirements.

Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools YGG Pont Sion Norton is graded a C for condition and a B for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £136,000.

The new school building will create a teaching and learning environment that will be fit for the purpose to provide education in the 21st Century, as opposed to a building that was constructed for 19th Century requirements. The new proposed site is flat and the building will be fully accessible to all, meeting all of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The new site will also incorporate extensive outdoor play facilities that are lacking at the current location. It will also include those pupils currently educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is currently a dual language school. The new school will be a larger, and thus more educationally and financially viable Welsh Medium school where all pupils will receive their education fully immersed in the Welsh language.

Information on the Schools

The pupil numbers in YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Language Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory pupil level annual school census (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The capacity of the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn is calculated as 31% of the total, this being the same percentage of the total number of pupils that attend the Welsh Department of the school.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	Primary	3-11	267	222	231	244	250	256	4.1
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	Primary	3-11	120	125	111	111	96	98	18.3

Nursery numbers (total pupils in attendance)

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	36	43	37	43	39
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	26	22	15	21	11

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the school, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
YGG Pont Sion Norton	267	253	247	239	235	226	15.4
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	120	95	87	80	81	73	39.1

Proposed new school site and building

Plans for the new school on the Heol-Y-Celyn school site are still at a formative stage, but it is planned that the accommodation will be in a new building on the site at Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, with separate outdoor play facilities. It will have at least 16 classrooms of approximately 60 square metres, able to accommodate 30 pupils per class, plus a Nursery unit with facilities to cater for up to 60 pupils. The proposed capacity of the new school will be 480 plus 60 Nursery places. The expected cost of the new building will be £10.7 m.

The school will be constructed to cater for the pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton and the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools detailed above during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	September 2014	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate

As a result of receiving one ‘adequate’ rating, YGG Pont Sion Norton was placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, the school was deemed to have made sufficient improvement and was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April, 2016.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point ‘traffic light’ system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a ‘green’ school having the highest rating and a ‘red’ school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school’s performance, based on publicly available data and the school’s own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

YGG Pont Sion Norton is currently categorised as a **yellow** school. This defines it as ‘effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better’.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a **yellow** school, having previously been red and then amber.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for the Welsh Department only:

	Foundation Phase Outcomes					
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	87.8 (3)	94.44 (1)	80.56 (4)	81.25 (3)	94.44 (2)	80 (3)

	Foundation Phase Outcomes					
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
	Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	93.9 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)	93.75 (2)	100 (1)
Language literacy and communication skills Welsh	95.9 (2)	100 (1)	88.89 (3)	87.5 (2)	100 (1)	80 (3)
Mathematical development	93.9 (2)	94.44 (1)	86.11 (4)	93.75 (1)	94.44 (2)	80 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest. The figures for Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School include all the pupils in the year group whether they were educated in the English or Welsh medium.

Subjects	Key Stage Two Outcomes					
	2015%		2016%		2017%	
	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Welsh	96.55 (1)	75 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Maths	100 (1)	83.33 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Science	96.55 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	88 (4)	92.31 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	93.1 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	84 (4)	

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest. The figures for Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School include all the pupils in the year group whether they were educated in the English or Welsh medium.

The attendance of the pupils of the school over the past three years is set out below.

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
YGG Pont Sion Norton	95.2%	2	94.35%	4	94.5%	No benchmark
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No primary benchmark

Financial Information

There will be no savings made as a result of this proposal, as a new school will be created to replace the ones that are closing. The formula budget allocated to the school will reflect the increased floor area of the new building, the area of the grounds and the increased number of pupils on roll.

There may be some additional transport costs for pupils as a result of the relocation and because of the catchment changes also. These will not be known until these proposals are finalised and we become aware of the demographic changes to the pupils attending the school. All pupils resident within the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport to the new school site as it is more than 1.5 miles from their home addresses.

Catchment area of the new school

The catchment area of the new school will comprise that of the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton, together with that of the current Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

Consultation Response Pro-forma

In order to comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal below, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given by you will not be shared and only used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the consultation report produced. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education
21st Century Schools Team
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ
Or by fax to 01443 744201, or e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.

4. Do you agree with proposal 4? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn

1. Do you agree with proposal 1? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 3: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Pontypridd

2. Do you agree with proposal 2? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 4: Close YGG Pont Sion Norton and relocate its pupils to a new Welsh Medium Primary School, to be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School (which will close as part of Proposal 1). Welsh Medium pupils attending Heol y Celyn will also transfer to the new school.

3. Do you agree with proposal 3? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

5. Do you agree with proposal 5? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

6. Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

7. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

8. Name (optional)

9. Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and the Councils **data protection** pages here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd OCTOBER 2018

REVIEW OF LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER

Author: Ceri Jones – Head of Inclusion Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an opportunity to consider proposals for the realignment of mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members consider:

2.1 The information contained within this report.

2.2 Proposals for the realignment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) mainstream LSC provision within the context of the School Organisation Code (2013) and the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme.

2.3 Formal approval to commence consultation on the following proposals:

2.3.1 To close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class (“LSC”) for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – no pupils in 2019;

2.3.2 To close the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Penrhys Primary School – no pupils in 2019;

2.3.3 To close the Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties in Penywaun Primary School – no pupils in 2019;

2.3.4 To close the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Pontygwaith Primary School – no pupils in 2019;

- 2.3.5 To close the Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – 2 pupils in 2019;
- 2.3.6 To close the Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Caradog Primary School – 8 pupils transferring to Cwmbach Primary School;
- 2.3.7 To transfer the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Caradog Primary School to Cwmbach Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.
- 2.3.8 To transfer the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Penrhys Primary School to Maerdy Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2;
- 2.3.9 To transfer the Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders based at Hafod Primary School to Porth Community School (3-16 provision) creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4
- 2.3.10 To re-designate the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Darran Park Primary and Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary to become Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs;
- 2.3.11 To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ysgol Nant Gwyn;
- 2.3.12 To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Treorchy Comprehensive School.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in the School Organisation Code 2013 so that an improved continuum of SEN provision can be achieved in RCT.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Considerable changes are planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with SEN/additional learning needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET) was introduced in January 2018. The Act requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. The Act will be supported by new regulations, including secondary legislation and a new statutory Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice. The current draft Code is based on the following principles:
- meeting the needs of pupils with ALN should be part of a whole school approach to school improvement

- pupils must be supported to participate in mainstream education and in the National Curriculum as fully as possible wherever this is feasible.
- 4.2 Until the anticipated implementation of the new ALN Code of Practice in September 2020, Local Authorities (LAs) are required to comply with the existing Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales (2002) and fulfil their statutory duties towards children with SEN. The Code states that children and young people have SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for a special educational provision to be made for them. Early years settings and schools are required to adopt a graduated response to meeting SEN at Early Years/School Action and Early Year/School Action Plus of the Code of Practice. For learners with the most significant SEN, a Statement of SEN is issued by the LA and statutory provision put in place.
- 4.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf currently delegates £3.3 million Additional Needs Funding (ANF) to mainstream schools to ensure that both non-statutory and statutory mainstream provision for learners with severe and persistent needs is robust and supports mainstream inclusion.
- 4.4 For pupils with more significant needs who experience difficulties in coping with mainstream education, more specialist placements are required. Rhondda Cynon Taf has a range of specialist provisions which includes, 46 LSCs, 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and 4 Special Schools. These placements are agreed by Access and Inclusion Service panels.
- 4.5 RCT has an excellent range of LSC provisions attached to mainstream schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the range of LSC provisions currently available is disproportionate to the level of need in some areas. In view of this, an in-depth data analysis exercise was undertaken to inform proposals for change.
- 4.6 Data analysis confirms that:
- some primary provisions have significant surplus capacity;
 - there is currently insufficient provision in the secondary sector;
 - the absence of cross phase specialist provision on some school sites means that some learners experience unnecessary transitions;
 - some LSCs would benefit from relocation to fully accessible schools that have benefited from the 21st Century School Modernisation and investment;
 - there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of learners in the early years.

Feedback from schools suggests that LSCs for social, emotional and behavioural needs do not currently have sufficient staffing to effectively meet need.

- 4.7 In light of these findings, the proposals for change seek to achieve the following aims:
- developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all key phases/stages;

- reduction in surplus LSC places through the effective rationalisation and re-alignment of existing LSC provision to address identified gaps in provision;
- avoiding unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible;
- creating capacity for outreach support from special schools and providing effective early intervention and prevention in the early years;
- establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

5. **CURRENT POSITION**

5.1 RCT spends in the region of £3.1 million annually on the provision of LSCs. There are currently approximately 330 pupils accessing the 46 LSC provisions within RCT across a range of needs. Table 1 outlines the range of mainstream LSCs currently available:

Table 1: Current Mainstream Learning Support Classes

SEN Learning Support Classes	Foundation Phase (FP) or Key Stage (KS)	Number of classes	Percentage of Overall LSCs
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	FP	2	34.78%
	KS2	1	
Communication Disorder	FP	3	
	KS 2	4	
ASD/ Communication Disorder	KS 3 / 4	6	
Complex Learning Difficulties	FP	7	
	KS 2	7	
	KS 3 / 4	2	
Hearing Impairment	FP/KS 2	1	2.17%
Observation & Assessment	FP	2	4.35%
Nurture	FP	2	17.39%
Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties	KS 2	5	
	KS 3 / 4	1	
Speech and Language Difficulties	FP/KS 2	2	6.52%
	KS 3 / 4	1	
Total		46	100%

5.2 The Access and Inclusion Service has a range of placement panels to agree specialist placements. Data detailed in Appendix 1 suggests that requests for placements within Complex Learning Difficulties provision has reduced dramatically over the last 4 years from 104 in 2015/16, 43 in 2016/17 to 58 in 2017/18.

5.3 RCT currently has 16 LSCs for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties accounting for 34.78% of provision. Of the 168 places available, only 103 will be filled in September 2018 leaving a surplus capacity of 38.69%. Data in Table 2 clearly suggests that there is scope for rationalising some of this provision at primary level, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Data also suggests that there is currently insufficient capacity (-17.86%) to meet need in Key Stages 3/4.

Table 2: Surplus Capacity within RCT LSC Provision for Complex Learning Needs as at Sept 2018

Key Stage	Current Number of Classes	Number of Available Places	Number of Confirmed Placements Sept 18	Projected Surplus Places Sept 2018	Surplus Capacity
Foundation Phase	6	60	19	41	68.33%
KS 2	8	80	51	29	36.25%
KS 3/4	2	28	33	-5	-17.86%
Totals	16	168	103	65	38.69%

5.4 The data provided in Appendix 2 and Table 3 illustrates that there is considerable surplus capacity in a range of provisions for Complex Learning Difficulties. This includes provision in Pontygwaith, Penrhys and Heol-y-Celyn. It is proposed that pupils from Caradog LSC provision access a comparable provision in Cwmbach Primary School, which is fully accessible and has benefited from 21st Century School Modernisation Programme investment (£6m). Cwmbach Primary School LSC provision will have 70% surplus capacity in September 2019.

Table 3: Surplus Capacity within key LSCs for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in September 2019 (proposed closure date)

School	Learning Support Class	Number of Available Places	Projected Number Placements as at Sept 2019	Projected Surplus Places as at Sept 2019	Surplus Capacity
Pontygwaith Primary School	FP Complex Learning Difficulties	10	0	10	100%
Penrhys Primary School	FP Complex Learning Difficulties	10	0	10	100%
Heol y Celyn Primary School	FP Complex Learning Difficulties	10	0	10	100%
Heol y Celyn Primary School	KS2 Complex Learning Difficulties	10	2	8	80%
Caradog Primary School	KS2 Complex Learning Difficulties	10	8	2	20%

LSCs for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

- 5.5 Appendix 3 highlights that whilst there has been a growth in the number of learners referred to placement panel for LSC provision for SEBD, only 50 of the 125 pupils (27.78%) referred in 2017/18 met the SEN Placement Criteria.
- 5.6 Table 4 highlights the capacity in primary LSC provision for SEBD, with 25% and 35% surplus capacity evident in the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 respectively. In light of this, and the pressure on placements at Key Stage 3/4, a redirection of resources from the primary to the secondary phase would be beneficial.

Table 4: Learning Support Classes for Pupils with SEBD (including Nurture)

Key Stage	Current Number of Classes	Number of Available Places	Number of Confirmed Placements Sept 18	Projected Surplus Places Sept 2018	Surplus Capacity
Foundation Phase	2	16	12	4	25.00%
KS 2	5	40	26	14	35.00%
KS 3/4	1	10	11	-1	-10.90%
Totals	8	66	49	17	25.75%

- 5.7 Data provided in Appendix 3 and Table 5 illustrates that there are no learners currently attending the LSC provision for pupils with SEBD in Penywaun Primary School.

Table 5: Surplus Capacity within a LSC for Pupils with SEBD in Sept 2019 (proposed date of closure)

School	Learning Support Class	Number of Available Places	Projected Number Placements as at Sept 2019	Projected Surplus Places as at Sept 2019	Surplus Capacity
Penywaun Primary School	KS2 SEBD	8	0	0	100%

- 5.8 In summary, a total of 3 LSCs for Complex Learning Needs will have no pupils in September 2019. A further LSC for Complex Learning Needs will have surplus capacity of 80% in September 2019. In addition, there are no learners currently placed in the Learning Support Class for SEBD in Penywaun Primary School. This provision also has a vacant teaching post.

5.9 In light of the data, it is proposed that a range of closures, re-designations and relocations of existing LSC provision is considered. In addition, it is proposed that some new provisions are established and enhanced to address gaps in existing provisions.

6. PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

6.1 Following the data analysis above the proposals for change are as follows, in summary:

- 33 SEN mainstream LSCs remain unaltered
- 6 SEN mainstream LSCs close
- 3 SEN mainstream LSCs are relocated
- 2 SEN mainstream LSCs are opened
- 2 SEN mainstream LSCs are re-designated

6.2 It is proposed the following **LSC closures** takes place from 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – no pupils in 2019;
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (x1 class) in Penrhys Primary School – no pupils in 2019;
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties in Penywaun Primary School – no pupils in 2019;
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Pontygwaith Primary School – no pupils in 2019;
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – 2 pupils in 2019;
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Caradog Primary School – 8 pupils transferring to Cwmbach Primary School.

It is considered that allowing the provisions to remain open is not an efficient use of Council resources due to no learners being in attendance or to very low numbers of learners. The resources would be better utilised if re-directed to enhance existing provision to meet need and to address identified gaps in provision. It should be noted that 4 of the above classes will have no pupils placed at the proposed closure date, and one provision will have 80% surplus capacity. A further provision has poor access for learners with physical and medical needs and the building is not fit for purpose.

6.3 It is proposed that the following LSCs are **re-located** from the 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Caradog Primary School to Cwmbach Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Penrhys Primary School to Maerdy Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders based at Hafod Primary School to Porth Community School (3-16 provision) creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4

It is proposed that the above relocations of LSCs are undertaken to premises which are more accessible and better equipped to meet a range of needs. The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relocation to two significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment. The proposals will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with significant needs, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision

6.4 It is proposed that the following LSC provisions are **re-designated** from the 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Darran Park Primary and Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary to become Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs.

The proposal to enhance current Early Years LSCs provision will enable children of non-statutory school age to receive early assessment and intervention within a mainstream LSC context and timely access to specialist support to inform re-integration placements or more long-term specialist placements. These re-designations and an enhanced outreach role for special schools will also strengthen partnership arrangements and enhance the continuum of specialist support and provision for pupils in the early years.

6.5 It is proposed that the **new provisions** are established from September 2019 as follows:

- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ysgol Nant Gwyn
- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Treorchy Comprehensive School
- The proposal to increase KS3/4 provision addresses the increasing demand for secondary LSC provision and the imbalance between the number of LSCs within mainstream primary and secondary settings.

6.6 It is proposed that some displaced staff could potentially be re-deployed to enhance staffing levels in key provisions. This flexible approach will ensure the more effective use of resources, and provide greater scope for placing pupils in the provision closest to learners' homes and communities, promoting inclusion and minimising unnecessary travel and transport costs. However, it is important to note that all pupils currently affected by these proposals will be

eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learners Travel Policy.

- 6.7 It is proposed that a number of LSCs have an increase in their capacity to accommodate the level of need within specific areas of SEN. Depending on the SEN designation of class (i.e. ASD, Complex Learning Difficulties) we currently place between 8-10 pupils in primary settings and approximately 14 in secondary settings with between 2-3 adults, depending on the type of provision.
- 6.8 Increasing the capacity of some classes will provide Access & Inclusion Service Placement Panel with more flexibility in terms of placing pupils in provisions closest to their home address. The LSCs will remain well-resourced and additional specialist staff will be appointed where there is a need identified.
- 6.9 Following feedback received from schools, it is proposed that additional staffing will also be placed in settings where there needs to be an enhanced focus on supporting learners with challenging behaviour and re-integrating learners on dual placements back into mainstream settings with the necessary level of support to ensure success.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessments are not required for these proposals. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and will be published on the Council's website together with the consultation document that outlines the proposal in detail.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (006/2013). These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposal is at a formative stage and that a consultation document must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council's website.
- 8.2 The draft consultation document for the proposals outlined in this report is attached as Appendix 4 to this report. The consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter, will run from the 19th of October to the 30th November of 2018.

The Consultation report attached is in draft subject to Cabinet approval.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 If the above proposals to realign LSC provision within RCT proceed, resources will be re-directed to address the identified gaps in existing provision. In closing some provisions redundancy costs may arise. However, the Council seeks to minimise these costs by redeploying displaced members of staff wherever

possible. It is therefore not possible at this point in the consultation process to identify any possible redundancy costs.

The enhanced provision in key settings will be central to supporting the needs of some learners on dual placements who may require more enhanced support to meet their needs when in mainstream and support to manage very challenging behaviour within LSC provision for learners with severe SEBD.

We will also use the funding to develop outreach opportunities from our special schools so as to enhance the capacity of mainstream and LSCs to effectively meet the additional learning needs of learners in the early years.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 Section 316A of the Education Act 1996 specifies that children with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational provision that their learning difficulty calls for; the efficient education of other children, and the efficient use of resources.

10.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires the LA to ensure that SEN provision is kept under review. Sections 1:20 and 1:21 of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002) also requires LAs to evaluate the effectiveness of school funding arrangements in supporting and raising the achievement of children with SEN.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

11.1 The proposals will ensure that two of the Council's three key priorities will be met. These include

- Economy: Building a strong economy
- People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone

11.2 The proposals will ensure that some of the Council's most vulnerable pupils will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes. The redirection of valuable resources from SEN settings which have surplus places will enhance opportunities for providing successful inclusion in local community schools. The proposals will ensure more efficient and effective use of Council resources which promotes the development of social inclusion and positive outcomes for learners. This will also have a beneficial impact on transport costs and on carbon emissions.

11.3 Organising services so that they are focussed on early intervention and prevention is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and a key element of the Council's Corporate Plan. These proposals will ensure there is renewed capacity for early intervention and prevention thus minimising the need for statutory processes and intervention.

12. CONCLUSION

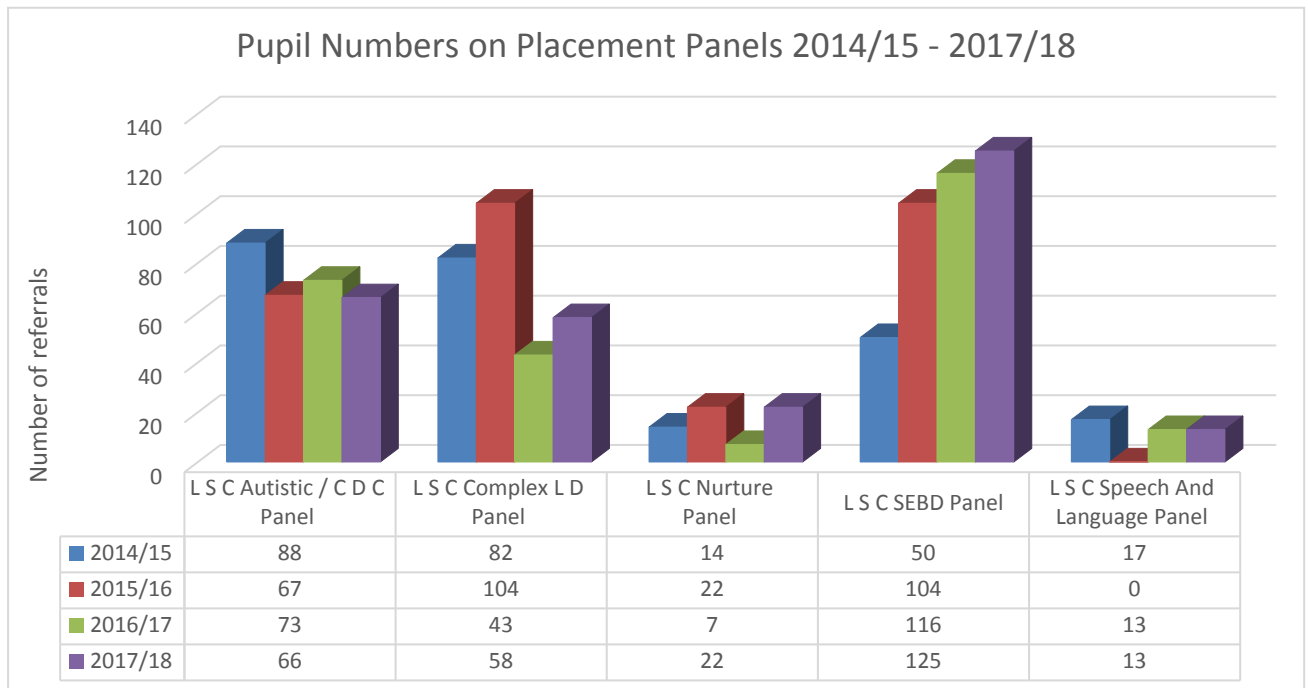
- 12.1 Welsh Government and legislation requires LAs to regularly review arrangements for supporting Pupils with SEN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities.
- 12.2 The priority for the Education Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and early years settings, and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. If the cycle of deprivation and underachievement is to be broken, a top quality education that meets the needs of all children and young people is essential. There are considerable benefits to be gained from the realignment of LSCs in ensuring the SEN of all children and young people are met and outcomes for pupils are improved.
- 12.3 The proposed realignment of LSCs will ensure that the LA has an enhanced focus on providing more effective mainstream inclusion opportunities for pupils with a wide range of SEN. The importance of mainstream inclusion for pupils with SEN is reflected in the revised Estyn Common Inspection Framework which highlights that judgements of achievement for all learners including those with additional learning needs should take account of progress made in relation to agreed learning goals from individual starting points. The framework also recognises the positive impact that the expertise within a LSC can have on enhancing practice and improving outcomes for learners with SEN across the whole school.
- 12.4 The proposals ensure that the best possible use of resources and a more equitable continuum of provision is achieved for pupils with significant SEN.
- 12.5 The proposals provide an effective local solution and provision for pupils with significant SEN thus reducing transport costs and the LA's carbon footprint. Increasing the capacity of some LSCs will also reduce individual placement costs, whilst continuing to provide high quality specialist provision for pupils with the most significant needs.
- 12.6 It is recommended, therefore, that approval is given to commence consultation on the proposed realignment of SEN mainstream LSC provision so that we can urgently address and resolve some of the challenges currently faced within the LA.

Other Information

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.

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Appendix 1: Number of pupils Referred to Placement Panels for Learning Support Class Provision



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RCT Learning Support Class Provision Current and Projected Numbers 2018 – 2020

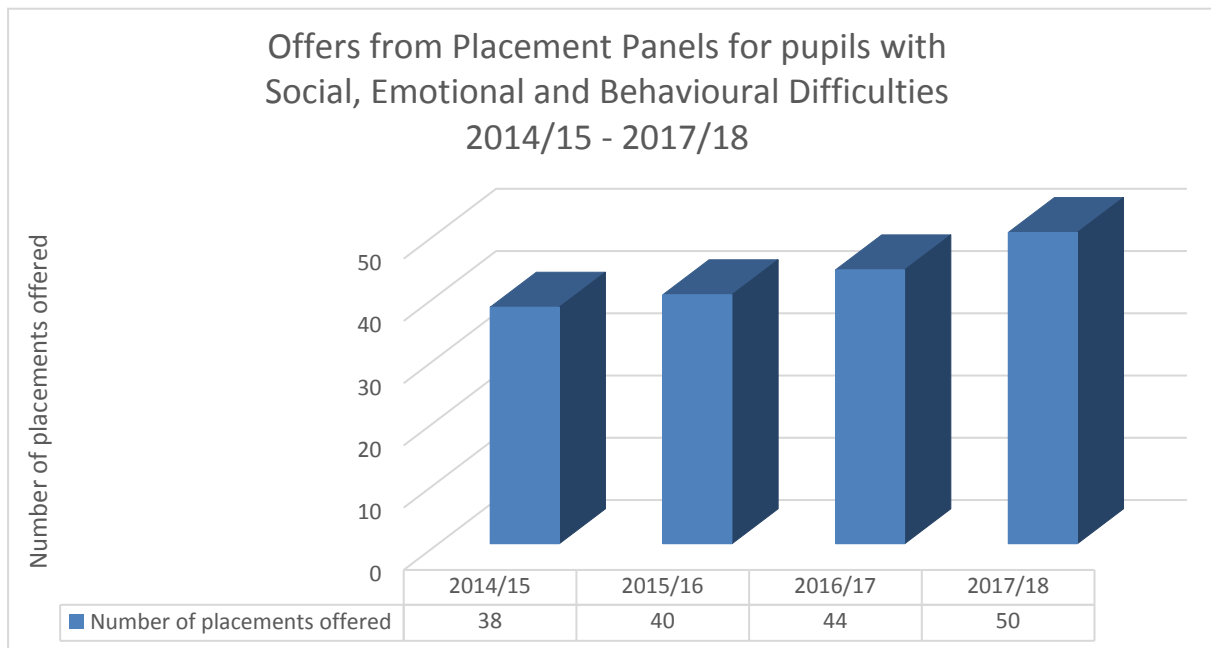
LSCs for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties

School	Key Stage	Number of Classes	Maximum Number of Places	Projected Surplus Placements Sept-18	Projected Placement Numbers Sept-19	Projected Surplus Placements Sept-19	Number of Projected Placements Sept-20	Projected Surplus Placements Sept-20
Caradog Primary	2	1	10	0	8	2	6	4
Caradog Primary	FP	1	10	2	3	7	0	10
Cwmbach Primary	2	1	10	6	4	6	3	7
Darran Park Primary	FP	1	10	5	1	9	1	9
Gwaunmeisgyn Primary	2	1	10	7	1	9	0	10
Gwaunmeisgyn Primary	FP	1	10	1	8	2	6	4
Heol Y Celyn Primary	2	1	10	6	2	8	1	9
Heol Y Celyn Primary	FP	1	10	10	0	10	0	10
Maerdy Primary	2	1	10	1	7	3	2	8
Penrhys Primary	2	2	20	1	8	12	7	13
Penrhys Primary	FP	2	20	13	1	19	0	20
Pontygwaith Primary	FP	1	10	10	0	10	0	10

LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs

School	Key Stage	Number of Classes	Maximum Number of Places	Projected Surplus Placements Sept 2018	Projected Placement Numbers Sept 2019	Projected Surplus Placements Sept 2019	Number of Projected Placements Sept 2020	Projected Surplus Placements Sept 2020
Penywaun Primary	2	1	8	8	0	8	0	8

Appendix 3: Placements offered to pupils to attend LSC for SEBD



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Consultation on the

REVIEW OF LEARNING

SUPPORT CLASS

PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA

CYNON TAF

September 2018

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Section 1

Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on proposals for the realignment of mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within RCT.

The proposals will address surplus capacity issues in key provisions allowing existing resources to be re-directed to enhance capacity for mainstream inclusion, early intervention and preventative approaches. In addition, the proposals will address the current imbalance between the number of primary and secondary provisions, transition and accessibility issues.

The proposals seek to achieve the following aims:

- developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all key phases/stages
- reducing surplus LSC places through the effective rationalisation and re-alignment of existing LSC provision to address identified gaps in provision
- avoiding unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible
- creating capacity for outreach support from special schools and providing effective early intervention and prevention
- establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

To achieve these aims, the proposals for change include:

j) The closure of key LSCs due to no confirmed placements, diminishing numbers or poor access for learners with physical or medical needs

It is proposed that the following closures take effect from 31st August 2019 at:

- 3 Foundation Phase LSCs for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Pontygwaith Primary School, Penrhys Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- 2 Key Stage 2 LSCs for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Caradog Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- 1 Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD) in Penywaun Primary School.

It is not an efficient use of Council resources to allow the provisions to remain open due to considerable surplus capacity issues, including 4 provisions with no learners in 2019 and one 80% surplus capacity. Resources would be better utilised if re-directed to establish new provisions in areas of identified needs, and located in settings where there is good access for learners with physical and/or medical needs.

ii) LSC relocations to ensure cross phase provisions in single sited, accessible school buildings

It is proposed that the following relocations take effect from 1st September 2019:

- 2 Foundation Phase LSCs for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Penrhys Primary School and Caradog Primary to relocate to Maerdy Community School and Cwmbach Primary School respectively so as to create a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.
- 1 Key Stage 2, the LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders at Hafod Primary School to relocate to create a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 3/4 at Porth Community School.

It is proposed that the above relocations of LSCs are undertaken to ensure cross phase provisions on single school sites in premises which are more accessible and better equipped to meet a range of needs. The proposals will ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relocation to new and significantly improved premises which have benefited from the considerable 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme investment.

iii) Proposed LSC re-designations to ensure a better match of provision to identified need

It is proposed that the following re-designations take effect from 1st September 2019:

- 1 Foundation Phase LSC for Complex Learning Difficulties in Darran Park Primary School and 1 Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary School to become 2 Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs.

The Early Years LSCs will enhance current provision available for children of non-statutory school age, providing early assessment and intervention within a mainstream context and timely access to specialist support and expertise. The above re-designations and strengthened partnership arrangements with special schools will enhance the continuum of specialist support and provision for pupils in the early years.

iv) Proposed development of new provisions

It is proposed that two LSCs for Key Stages 3/4 are established in September 2019:

- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Treorchy Comprehensive School
- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Ysgol Nant Gwyn

Who will we consult?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of the following schools: Heol Y Celyn Primary; Penrhys Primary; Penywaun Primary; Pontygwaith Primary; Caradog Primary; Cwmbach Primary; Maerdy Community Primary; Hafod Primary; Darran Park Primary; Llantrisant Primary
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Ysgol Nant Gwyn, Ferndale Comprehensive School, Aberdare Community School, Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School, Porth Community School and Treorchy Comprehensive School
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education and Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd and Cynon Valley
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and Support staff trade unions
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Neighbouring local authorities

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on the 19th October 2018 and will be completed at 5pm on 30th of November 2018. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in December 2018. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on www.rctcbc.gov.uk.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the report, based on the feedback, and decide whether to proceed with the proposal, make changes to the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of this proposal for the foreseeable future.

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal Statutory Notices will be published in January 2019 providing a 28 day notice period for objections.

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013) requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education & Inclusion Services' will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and his/her response to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period. This report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed in Appendix 1.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the objection report at the next available Cabinet meeting to determine the outcome of the statutory notice.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, the proposal will be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of this proposal, the implementation date is the 1st of September 2019.

What do you now have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed changes to LSC provision within RCT.

We would like you to consider the information contained within this document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposals.

How do you make your views known?

A consultation questionnaire is attached (Appendix 1), and is also available on the Council's internet site at www.rctcbc.gov.uk. The questionnaire also enables consultees to register their wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report to the Council's Cabinet. Schools will also be offered opportunities to consult with pupils and are advised to consult with School Council representatives to seek pupil views. You are also welcome to put your views in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services, Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Telephone: (01443) 744333 E-mail: A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

Fax: (01443) 744024

All correspondence should be received no later than the 30th November 2018

Please note that responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the Statutory Notice.

Consultation events will be held and you are welcome to attend the appropriate meetings.

School Affected	Group-Staff/Parents	Time	Date	Venue
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	Staff	14:30-15:30	6 th November 2018	Heol Y Celyn Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	6 th November 2018	
Penrhys Primary School	Staff	14:30-15:30	7 th November 2018	Penrhys Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	7 th November 2018	
Caradog Primary School	Staff	14:30-15:30	8 th November 2018	Caradog Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	8 th November 2018	
Hafod Primary School	Staff	14:30-15:30	13 th November 2018	Hafod Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	13 th November 2018	
Darran Park Primary School	Staff	14:30-15:30	14 th November 2018	Darran Park Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	14 th November 2018	
Llantrisant Primary School	Staff	14:30-16:30	15 th November 2018	Llantrisant Primary School
	Parents	15:30-16:30	15 th November 2018	

Section 2

Background

RCT has an excellent range of SEN provisions which allows the majority of pupils to attend schools near to where they live. These include 46 LSCs attached to mainstream settings, 4 special schools and 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). In addition to this, £3.3M is made available via delegated Additional Needs Funding (ANF) annually to support pupils with severe and persistent needs in mainstream settings. This is in line with RCT's vision for inclusive education and the right for children with SEN to be educated in their local mainstream school where appropriate.

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales (2002) provides detailed guidance on the duties and responsibilities of local authorities (LAs) in meeting the SEN of children and young people. Children and young people have SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for a special educational provision to be made for them. A learning difficulty is evident when children and young people have:

- significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children and young people of the same age; or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children and young people of the same age in schools within the area of the locality.

The SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002) recommends that early years and school settings adopt a graduated response to meeting SEN. A graduated response means that progressively greater expertise and support can be brought in to address the difficulties a child or young person may be experiencing. Additional or different provision should be made at Early Years/School Action, Early Years/School Action Plus or a Statement of SEN depending on the severity of the child/young person's level of need.

Section 316A of the Education Act 1996 specifies that children with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational provision that their learning difficulty calls for, the efficient education of other children, and the efficient use of resources. For those pupils who have very significant needs, more specialist placements are required and this might result in a placement in one of our specialist provisions. These placements are agreed by Access and Inclusion Service panels.

It has become increasingly apparent that the range of LSC provisions currently available is disproportionate to the level of need in some areas (e.g. Complex Learning Difficulties). In view of this, an in-depth data analysis exercise was undertaken to inform proposals for change in relation to LSC provision within RCT.

Data analysis confirmed that:

- some primary provisions have significant surplus capacity

- there is currently insufficient provision in the secondary sector
- the absence of cross phase specialist provision on some school sites means that some learners experience unnecessary transitions
- some LSCs would benefit from relocation to fully accessible schools that have benefited from the 21st Century School Modernisation and investment
- there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of learners in the early years.

Feedback from schools also suggests that LSCs for social, emotional and behavioural needs do not currently have sufficient staffing to effectively meet need.

In light of these findings, the proposals for change are aimed at:

- developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all key phases/stages
- reduction in surplus LSC places through the effective rationalisation and re-alignment of existing LSC provision to address identified gaps in provision
- avoiding unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible
- creating capacity for outreach support from special schools and providing effective early intervention and prevention in the early years
- establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

Overview of the Proposals

RCT County Borough Council wishes to seek the view of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to proceed with:

i) LSC closures due to diminishing numbers or no confirmed placements, or significant access issues for learners with medical and physical needs

It is proposed that the following closures take effect from 31st August 2019 at:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – no pupils in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Heol y Celyn Primary School – 2 pupils in September 2019
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (x1 class) in Penrhys Primary School – no pupils in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties in Penywaun Primary School – no pupils in September 2019
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Pontygwaith Primary School – no pupils in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Caradog Primary School

ii) LSC relocations to ensure accessible cross phase provisions and/or more accessible school buildings

It is proposed that the following relocations of key LSC provisions take effect from

the 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Caradog Primary School to Cwmbach Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Penrhys Primary School to Maerdy Community Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders based at Hafod Primary School to Porth Community School (3-16 provision) thus creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 3/4.

iii) Re-designations of LSCs to ensure a better match of provision to identified need in the early years

It is proposed that the following provisions are established from the 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Darran Park Primary and Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary to become Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under compulsory school age with significant presenting needs.

iv) Proposed new provisions

It is proposed that two new LSCs provisions to be established from the 1st September 2019:

- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ysgol Nant Gwyn
- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Treorchy Comprehensive School

What is the basis for this proposal?

Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires LAs to regularly review arrangements for supporting pupils with SEN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities.

The priority for the Education Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and early years settings, and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. If the cycle of deprivation and underachievement is to be broken, a top quality education that meets the needs of all children and young people is essential. There are considerable benefits to be gained from the realignment of LSCs in ensuring the SEN of all children and young people are met and outcomes for pupils are improved.

The proposed realignment of LSCs will ensure that the LA has an enhanced focus on providing more effective mainstream inclusion opportunities for pupils with a wide

range of SEN. The proposals ensure that the best possible use of resources and a more equitable continuum of provision is achieved for pupils with significant SEN. The importance of mainstream inclusion for pupils with SEN is reflected in the revised Estyn Common Inspection Framework which highlights that judgements of achievement for all learners including those with additional learning needs should take account of progress made in relation to agreed learning goals from individual starting points. The framework also recognises the positive impact that the expertise within a LSC can have on enhancing practice and improving outcomes for learners with SEN across the whole school.

The proposals provide an effective local solution and provision for pupils with significant SEN thus reducing transport costs and the LA's carbon footprint.

What is the educational case for the proposal to re-align LSC?

The advantages of implementing the proposed changes includes:

- an enhanced focus on improved mainstream LSC provision which provides improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners
- a reduction in surplus places in some specialist provisions and redirection of resources to areas of identified need
- more efficient and effective use of LA resources and a reduction in the cost of per placement costs
- appropriate continuum of provision which is well matched to pupils' primary needs
- compliance with one of the underpinning principles of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales that all pupils should access mainstream education where possible
- improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to effectively meeting pupil needs
- enabling greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils by reducing the number of transitions SEN pupils make between school phases and increasing the number of cross phase provision on single sites
- greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools
- providing effective local solutions and provision for pupils with significant SEN thus reducing transport costs and the LA's carbon footprint
- ensuring that LSC provision is situated within education settings that are accessible and appropriate for the needs of pupils with wide ranging needs, including physical and medical needs
- improving the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils.

What are the financial implications of the proposal?

The LA proposal if agreed will have a positive impact on pupils with SEN across RCT as it will mean that the funding will be re-directed to establish provisions that address areas of growing need. The proposal will ensure that the County Borough Council continues in its commitment to effectively meeting the needs of learners with SEN

and resources will be reinvested to address gaps in existing provision and to improve the quality of provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The schools will be delegated sufficient funding to establish the proposed provisions. These costs will cover staffing and capitation.

The proposals do not involve any transfer or disposal of land.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on school pupils?

Many of the proposals do not impact on learners as many of the proposed closures are for settings where there are no existing learners or considerable surplus capacity. However, suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with all involved to ensure that appropriate provision is made for any learners affected by the changes. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice, or alternative specialist provision appropriate to the pupils' individual needs. Interim arrangements could be put in place to maintain continuity in the existing school if this was deemed appropriate. This could include access to a specialist teacher and learning support assistant input to support mainstream inclusion. This could be put in place until the need for specialist provision within the pupils' current key stage ceases. Person centred planning will be undertaken in consultation with parents, carers and relevant professional and bespoke arrangements put in place if required so as to minimise the impact on pupils and their families.

Transportation would be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. All pupils affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting.

The Welsh Government and the Council has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is expressed in seven core aims that all children and young people:

1. Have a flying start in life;
2. Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race cultural identity recognised;
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

We consider that this proposal benefits children in their communities in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the LSC?

All LSC staff are appointed by the LA and are contracted to work in any appropriate LSC provision. This is subject to the needs of the LA and the skills set of the staff in question. Any additional necessary resources will be provided to support the realigned provisions. Every effort will be made to redeploy any displaced staff and to minimise the risk of redundancy.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on the local communities?

This proposal will not have any significant impact on the local communities for the following reasons:

- *Proposed closures:* there are currently very low numbers of pupils attending the majority of provisions; 4 of the LSCs proposed for closure will have no pupils in attendance
- *Proposed relocations:* the proposed host schools have sufficient capacity to provide enhanced opportunities to access high quality cross phase educational provision in modern and accessible school buildings.
- *Proposed re-designations:* there are currently very low numbers of pupils attending the provisions proposed for re-designation. 1 of the 2 provisions will have no pupils affected by the proposal. The second provision has a surplus capacity of 90%.
- *Proposed new provisions:* More local children will be able to access specialist provision within their local community and the new provisions will address a gap in existing provision. There will be less demand for transporting children out of area to receive their education and this should impact positively on the environment. The schools will make effective use of any surplus space within the school and develop a resource that will be of benefit to vulnerable children and young people, and their parents/carers. The proposed establishment of LSCs will enhance the overall capacity of the host schools to meet a diverse range of needs as there will be further specialist SEN expertise within the school.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal. This will be updated after the consultation has been completed to ensure that they include pertinent issues that have arisen and need to be taken into account. The assessment will be presented to the Council's Cabinet in the report that sets out the consultation feedback received in respect of this proposal. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

What are the disadvantages of these proposals?

LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some limited disruption and uncertainty for a period of time, although previous experiences has demonstrated that any potential difficulties can be minimised when managed effectively. Provisions have been

selected based on considerable surplus capacity issues. Preventative measures will be taken to ensure that any potential negative impact on children's education and wellbeing are avoided or minimised.

The change in provision has some implications for a relatively small number of pupils attending the provisions as a change in provision may be needed. Bespoke packages of support will be put in place to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact. The re-location of some LSC provision aims to provide more continuity for our most vulnerable learners to access cross phase specialist provision, reduce unnecessary transition and travel with the opportunity to provide through provision for all primary ages.

The closure and re-designation of some LSCs will enable the LA to re-direct much needed resources to areas of greater need. Without closing and re-designating the named LSC provisions, the LA will not be able to implement the plan for the proposed re-alignment for the LSCs across the LA. Implementing this plan will be of benefit to all pupils with SEN across RCT and will ensure greater equality and access to specialist provision.

The Council considers that the educational advantages of the proposals outweigh the short-term impact of the changes for the pupils and parents.

What alternative options have been considered?

To do nothing would be an inefficient use of resources and would result in inadequate provision in areas of identified need. To use the closure of provisions as an opportunity to make efficiencies would not be in keeping with the LA's commitment to developing high quality provision for some of our most vulnerable residents. There is clearly identified need for this provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf and it would be in children and young people's interest to address this.

Some consideration was given to re-directing resources to further enhance the capacity of mainstream schools to meet need in local community schools. However, in so doing this could make the continuum of provision more fragmented which could in turn enhance pressures for special school and PRU placements.

Whilst alternative options have been considered, these have not been pursued given the obvious benefits of implementing these changes. These are summarised as follows:

Proposed closures: the majority of proposed LSC closures are to take place in settings that have either no learners in attendance or have significant surplus capacity. Resources still need to be redirected to address gaps in existing provision. This suggested course of action is the only logical solution, which will enable the LA to make more effective use of scarce resources.

Proposed relocations: the proposed relocations have been specifically selected as they allow for greater opportunities for SEN pupils to access high quality cross phase

educational provision within accessible school environments that have benefited from school modernisation and investment programmes.

Proposed re-designation: the LSCs selected for re-designation fall within the catchment areas of Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch, re-designating the provision to Early Years settings will strengthen partnership arrangements with both special schools and will enhance the continuum of specialist support and provision for pupils in the early years thus enhancing the possibility of re-integration back into mainstream or assessment to inform more long-term specialist placement in an alternative setting.

Proposed new provisions: alternative secondary schools could be approached to establish a specialist provision. However, Ysgol Nant Gwyn and Treorchy Comprehensive School were selected because of their inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with SEN in the mainstream and significant investment from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme. Furthermore, the location of the settings will address local needs. Establishing these provisions will reduce the demand for special school/PRU placements which can then be safeguarded for pupils with more complex learning, medical and physical needs.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessments are not required for these proposals. However, an Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and will be published on the Council's website together with the consultation document that outlines the proposal in detail.

Section 3

Learning Support Class Proposed Closures

RCT County Borough Council proposes LSC closures to take place from the 1st of September due to no pupils attending the designated provisions or diminishing numbers: To achieve this, the proposal is to close the following LSCs:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties Heol y Celyn Primary School – no learners in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties Heol y Celyn Primary School – only 2 learners in September 2019
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (x1 class) Penrhys Primary School – no learners in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties Penywaun Primary School – no learners in September 2019
- Foundation Phase for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in Pontygwaith Primary School – no learners in September 2019
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils Caradog Primary School with Complex Learning Difficulties

Background to the proposed closure of LSC's

On the 3rd October 2018 Cabinet considered the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning's report on the Review of Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Approval was given by Cabinet for the proposals to be consulted on in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013).

Improving the quality of education and raising standards is one of the Council's key priorities. It is considered that improving standards and educational outcomes for some of our most vulnerable pupils will improve their life chances, access to the world of work and other education pathways. Ensuring that our provisions are well matched to the needs of pupils is central to pupils achieving positive outcomes.

There are currently a number of LSC provisions that have no learners placed, have diminishing numbers or are situated in schools that have poor access. Allowing poorly utilised provisions to remain open is not an efficient use of Council resources. The resources would be better utilised if re-directed to enhance existing provision to meet need and to address identified gaps in provision. Ensuring that LSC provisions are based in full accessible schools fit for the 21st Century is also a priority.

Information on schools affected by the proposals

Heol Y Celyn Primary School

Heol Y Celyn Primary School is located at Holly Street, Rhydfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5DB. This school is a bilingual provision and is situated in a CLASP modular building. It is in good repair. The school currently has 2 English medium Learning

Support Classes (LSC) designated to support 8-10 Foundation Phase pupils and 10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Heol Y Celyn from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Heol y Celyn Primary school are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code.

Pupil numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	298	295	296	316	320	323	328	332	322

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	56	57	67	46	54	50	51	51	51

Capacity of the school: 391

Heol Y Celyn Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in June 2014 (follow up visit were undertaken in November 2015 and January 2017). The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

There are currently no pupils attending the Foundation Phase LSC provision for Complex Learning Difficulties. There will also be a surplus capacity of 80% in the Key Stage 2 provision for learners with Complex Learning Difficulties in 2019. It is proposed that both classes close in September 2019.

For the 2 pupils potentially affected by the Key Stage 2 proposal, suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with parents and professionals to ensure appropriate provision is made thus minimising any potential impact on the pupil and their families. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need. The nearest LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties is at Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School (5.4 miles). All pupils affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Penrhys Primary School

Penrhys Primary School is located at Penrhys, Tylorstown, Ferndale, CF43 3PL. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a CLASP modular building plus a small extension. It is in poor repair. The school currently has 2 LSCs designated to support 16-20 Foundation Phase pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties and 2 LSCs designated to support 20 Key Stage 2 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Penrhys Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Penrhys Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, nursery capacity separately is shown separately.

Pupil numbers (excluding Nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penrhys Primary School	124	120	107	106	94	85	82	73	65

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penrhys Primary School	22	14	16	5	10	10	9	10	9

Capacity of the school: 130

Penrhys Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in October 2017. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

By September 2019, there will be 1 pupil accessing the x 2 Foundation Phase LSC provisions for Complex Learning Difficulties. It is proposed that 1 LSC with no pupils in attendance in September 2019 is closed. No pupils will be affected by this proposal.

Penywaun Primary School

Penywaun Primary School is located at Coed Glas, Penywaun, Aberdare, CF44 9DR. The school is an English Medium provision and is situated in a modern brick and block style building. It is in good repair. The school currently has 1 LSC designated to support 8-10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and 1 LSC designated to support 10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Communication Disorders.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Penywaun Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Penywaun Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, we have shown the nursery capacity separately.

Pupil numbers (excluding Nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penywaun Primary School	200	198	204	176	169	155	141	131	125

Nursery pupil number and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penywaun Primary School	33	35	19	20	22	22	20	21	21

Capacity of the school: 253

Penywaun Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in March 2017. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

The class for pupils with SEBD has not been operational since September 2017 and no learners are currently attending the provision, No learners will be affected by this proposal. There is also a vacant teaching post in this setting.

Pontygwaith Primary School

Pontygwaith Primary School is located at Graig Street, Pontygwaith, Ferndale, CF43 3LY. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a Victorian style

building. It is in good repair. The school currently has 1 LSC designated to support 8-10 Foundation Phase pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Pontygwaith Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Pontygwaith Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, the nursery capacity is shown separately.

Pupil Numbers (excluding Nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Pontygwaith Primary School	143	175	164	166	167	154	149	145	137

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Pontygwaith Primary School	37	35	24	24	20	28	25	26	26

Capacity of the school: 182

Pontygwaith Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in March 2011. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

The class has not been operational since September 2017 due to diminishing numbers. No pupils will be affected by this proposal as there are no learners currently in the provision.

Caradog Primary School

Caradog Primary School is located at 30 Clifton St, Aberdare CF44 7PB. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a Victorian style building. It is in good repair, but accessibility for pupils with complex physical and medical needs is not ideal. The school currently has 2 LSCs designated to support 8-10 Foundation Phase pupils and 10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD).

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Caradog Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Caradog Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's

Statutory School Organisation Code. However, nursery capacity is shown separately.

Pupil Numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Caradog Primary School	171	182	186	199	193	193	188	186	187

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Caradog Primary School	24	31	35	24	26	26	24	25	25

Capacity of the school: 194

Caradog Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in April 2014. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

There are currently 6 pupils attending the Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties with a predicted surplus capacity of 20% in September 2019. Access is an issue in this setting, particularly for learners with physical and medical needs. For those pupils affected by this proposal suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with parents and professionals to ensure that appropriate alternative provision is made thus minimising the impact on pupils and their families. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need.

The nearest LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties will be Cwmbach Primary School (2.8 miles). This school is fully accessible due to the £6m investment as part of the 21st Century school programme. It will also house the Foundation Phase LSC for Complex Learning Difficulties which will minimise future transitions and ensure that there is cross phase provision on the one, fully accessible and modernised school site. All pupils affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Section 4

Learning Support Class Proposed Relocations

RCT County Borough Council proposes to relocate 3 LSCs from the 1st of September 2019.

To achieve this, the proposal is to relocate the following LSCs:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Caradog Primary School to Cwmbach Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Penrhys Primary School to Maerdy Community Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders based at Hafod Primary School to Porth Community School (3-16 provision) creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4.

Background to the proposed relocation of LSC's

On the 3rd October 2018 Cabinet considered the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning's report on the Review of LSC Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Approval was given by Cabinet for the proposals to be consulted on in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013).

Improving the quality of education and raising standards is one of the Council's key priorities. It is considered that improving standards and educational outcomes for some of our most vulnerable pupils will improve their life chances, access to the world of work and other education pathways. Ensuring that our provisions are well matched to the needs of pupils is central to pupils achieving positive outcomes.

It is proposed that relocations of LSCs are undertaken to premises which are more accessible and better equipped to meet a range of needs. The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relocation to two significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment. The proposals will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with significant needs, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision

Information on schools affected by the proposals

Hafod Primary school

Hafod Primary School is located at Wayne St, Pontypridd CF37 2NL. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a Victorian style building. It is in good

repair. The school currently has 1 Learning Support Class (LSC) designated to support 10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Communication Disorder (CD).

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Hafod Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Hafod Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, nursery capacity is shown separately.

Pupil Numbers (excluding Nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Hafod Primary School	91	96	102	107	105	114	121	115	114

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Hafod Primary School	15	17	17	20	18	19	17	18	18

Capacity of the school: 113

Hafod Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in March 2016. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

There are currently 8 pupils attending the Key Stage 2 Communication Disorder LSC. It is proposed that they transfer to a newly established provision in Porth Community School (3-16). Those pupils affected by this proposal will access suitable support and transition to ensure that appropriate provision is made. This would involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need. Pupils may transfer with the proposed relocation of the newly established LSC in Porth Community School which has recently received £11.6m investment as part of the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme and will provide a fully accessible cross phase provision for learners with ASD. All pupils affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Caradog Primary School

Caradog Primary School is located at 30 Clifton St, Aberdare CF44 7PB. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a Victorian style building. It is in good

repair, but presents with significant access issues due to its location and structure. The school currently has 2 Learning Support Classes (LSC) designated to support 8-10 Foundation Phase pupils and 10 Key Stage 2 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD).

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Caradog Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Caradog Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, the nursery capacity is shown separately.

Pupil Numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Caradog Primary School	171	182	186	199	193	193	188	186	187

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Caradog Primary School	24	31	35	24	26	26	24	25	25

Capacity of the school: 194

Caradog Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in April 2014. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

There are currently 8 pupils attending the Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties LSC. However, accessibility for learners with physical and medical needs is an issue. For those pupils affected by this proposal, suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with all involved to ensure appropriate provision is made. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need. Pupils may transfer with the proposed relocation of the LSC to Cwmbach Primary School. In light of learners needs and numbers a review of support needs will also be undertaken to assist with transition into a new setting. Cwmbach Primary School is fully accessible and has recently received £6m investment as part of the 21st Century school modernisation programme. This will provide cross phase provision on an accessible single school site. All pupils affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Penrhys Primary School

Penrhys Primary School is located at Penrhys, Tylorstown, Ferndale, CF43 3PL. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a CLASP style building. It is in poor repair. The school currently has 2 LSCs designated to support 16 - 20 Foundation Phase pupils and 2 Key stage 2 LSCs to support 20 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD).

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Penrhys Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Penrhys Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, nursery capacity is shown separately

Pupil Numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penrhys Primary School	124	120	107	106	94	85	82	73	65

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Penrhys Primary School	22	14	16	5	10	10	9	10	9

Capacity of the school: 130

Penrhys Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in October 2017. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

In September 2019, there will be 1 pupil attending a total of 2 Foundation Phase LSC provisions for Complex Learning Difficulties. For the one child affected by the proposal to transfer the LSC provision to Maerdy Primary School, suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with all involved to ensure that appropriate provision is made. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need. The pupil may transfer with the proposed relocation of the LSC to Maerdy Community Primary School which will have cross phased provision on site. The pupil affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Section 5

Learning Support Classes Proposed Re-Designations

RCT County Borough Council proposes the re-designations of LSCs to ensure a better match of provision to met identified need.

To achieve this, the proposal is to re-designate the following LSC provisions with effect from the 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Darran Park Primary and Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary to become Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under compulsory school age with significant presenting needs.

Background to the proposed re-designation of LSC's

On the 3rd October 2018 Cabinet considered the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning report on the Review of LSC Provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Approval was given by Cabinet for the proposals to be consulted on in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013).

Improving the quality of education and raising standards is one of the Council's key priorities. It is considered that improving standards and educational outcomes for some of our most vulnerable pupils will improve their life chances, access to the world of work and other education pathways. Ensuring that our provisions are well matched to the needs of pupils is central to pupils achieving positive outcomes.

The proposal to enhance current Early Years LSCs provision will enable children of non-statutory school age to receive early assessment and intervention within a mainstream LSC context and timely access to specialist support to inform re-integration placements or more long-term specialist placements. These re-designations and an enhanced outreach role for special schools will also strengthen partnership arrangements and enhance the continuum of specialist support and provision for pupils in the early years.

Information on Schools affected by the proposals

Darran Park Primary School

Darran Park Primary School is located at Brook Street, Ferndale CF43 4LE. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a modern style building. It is in good repair. The school currently has a Foundation Phase LSC for 8-10 pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Darran Park Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Darran Park Primary

School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code.

Pupil Numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Darran Park Primary School	251	267	313	307	313	306	315	315	308

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Darran Park Primary School	50	44	57	49	52	56	51	53	53

Capacity: 359

Darran Park Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in September 2017. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

By September 2019, there will be 1 pupil with attending the Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties. Suitable arrangements will be put in place in consultation with parents and professionals to ensure appropriate provision is made thus minimising the impact on the pupil and their families. This could involve additional support in a mainstream setting of parental choice or alternative specialist provision appropriate to individual need. The nearest LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties will be Maerdy Community Primary School (1.9 miles). The pupil affected by these proposals will be eligible for school transport to their nearest appropriate specialist setting in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy.

Llantrisant Primary School

Llantrisant Primary School is located at Coed Yr Esgob, Llantrisant, CF72 8EL. The school is an English medium provision and is situated in a modern style building. It is in good repair. The school currently has a Foundation Phase Observation and assessment Class for 8 – 10 pupils.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Llantrisant Primary School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Llantrisant Primary School are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The

numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code. However, nursery capacity is shown separately.

Pupil Numbers (excluding nursery) and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Llantrisant Primary School	115	112	102	102	96	89	85	81	84

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Llantrisant Primary School	24	24	25	18	21	20	20	20	20

Capacity: 155

Llantrisant Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in November 2015. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

There are currently 5 pupils attending the Assessment and Observation LSC. No pupil will be affected by this proposal in September 2019.

Section 6

Proposed New Provisions

RCT County Borough Council proposes to create the following new LSCs provision with effect from the 1st of September 2019:

- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ysgol Nant Gwyn
- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Treorchy Comprehensive School

Background to the opening of new LSC's

On the 3rd October 2018 Cabinet considered the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning's report on the Review of LSC Provision in RCT. Approval was given by Cabinet for the proposals to be consulted on in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013).

Improving the quality of education and raising standards is one of the Council's key priorities. It is considered that improving standards and educational outcomes for some of our most vulnerable pupils will improve their life chances, access to the world of work and other education pathways. Ensuring that our provisions are well matched to the needs of pupils is central to pupils achieving positive outcomes.

The proposal to increase KS3/4 provision addresses the increasing demand for secondary LSC provision and the imbalance between the number of LSCs within mainstream primary and secondary settings

Information on schools affected by the proposals

Ysgol Nant Gwyn

Ysgol Nant Gwyn is located at Llewellyn Street, Penycraig, CF40 1HQ. The school is a newly created 3 – 16 English medium provision and is situated on a site that has benefited from extensive modernisation and extension through the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme. The school does not currently have LSC provision.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Ysgol Nant Gwyn from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Ysgol Nant Gwyn are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code.

Projected pupil numbers (new school therefore no historical information is available)

School Name	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Ysgol Nant Gwyn	997	1002	987	962

Nursery pupil numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Ysgol Nant Gwyn	15	20	20	20

Capacity: 1200

As this is a new education setting there are no Estyn reports currently available. This proposal does not adversely impact any children as it is proposed that the provision is established to meet an identified need.

Treorchy Comprehensive School

Treorchy Comprehensive School is located at Pengelli, Treorchy, CF42 6UL. The school is an English medium provision and is situated on a site that has benefited from extensive modernisation through the 21st Century school modernisation programme. The school does not currently have LSC provision.

The pupil numbers and forecast information for Treorchy Comprehensive School from 2018-2020 are shown below and are obtained from the statutory PLASC which is undertaken in January each year. The pupil forecasts for Ysgol Nant Gwyn are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as required by Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code.

Pupil Numbers and forecast information:

School Name	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Treorchy Comprehensive School	1630	1609	1648	1650	1643	1667	1689	1698	1719

Capacity: 1687

Treorchy Comprehensive was last inspected by Estyn in March 2016. The inspection comments are summarised as follows:

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

The proposal will ensure that the current gap in secondary LSC provision for learners with Complex Learning Needs will be addressed.

Consultation Response Pro-forma

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to: Director of Education and Inclusion Services', Access and Inclusion Service, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, CF45 4UQ or by fax to 01443 744024, or email to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: The closure of the following LSC in August 2019:

- Heol y Celyn Primary School – Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties
- Heol y Celyn Primary School – Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties
- Penrhys Primary School – Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties (x1 class)
- Penywaun Primary School – Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties
- Pontygwaith Primary School – Foundation LSC Phase for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties
- Caradog Primary School – Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 2: The relocation of the following LSC from September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Caradog Primary School to Cwmbach Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.
- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties from Penrhys Primary School to Maerdy Community Primary School, creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 2 LSC for pupils with Communication Disorders based at Hafod Primary School to Porth Community School (3-16 provision) creating a cross phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4

2. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 3: The re-designations of the following LSC's from 1st September 2019:

- Foundation Phase LSC for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Darran Park Primary and Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class at Llantrisant Primary to become Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSCs for pupils under compulsory school age with significant presenting needs.

3. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 4: The creation of New LSC provision with effect from the 1st of September 2019:

- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ysgol Nant Gwyn
- Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at a Comprehensive School to be confirmed following discussions with Headteachers

4. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

5. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

6. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

7. Name (Optional). Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report
-

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later **than 5pm on the 30th November 2018.**

DRAFT

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

AUTHOR: Nicola Kingham, Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Business Manager,
Tel No: 01443 484550

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with Cabinet the Annual Report for 2017/18 for the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (Children, Adults and MASH). See Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2017/18.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report on 31st July each year, to demonstrate its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.
- 4.2 The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board Business Management Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

- 4.3 The two key safeguarding objectives of protection and prevention underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.
- 4.4 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) sits within the structure of the Board to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together in one place to receive all safeguarding referrals and share relevant agency information to make collaborative decisions.

5. ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

5.1 The purpose of the Annual Report is twofold; it is a tool of accountability and a tool for evaluation. Accountability has three components:

- accountability to the public;
- accountability to the statutory partner agencies of the Board; and
- accountability to the inspectorate bodies.

5.2 The required content of the Report is set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. A summary of some of the key achievements included in the report is provided below:

5.3 Safeguarding Practice

- The Cwm Taf MASH led on an Information Sharing System Working Group (with Cardiff and Bridgend MASH) to source alternative options to the current MHUB IT system (to be carried out in 2018).
- A review of the adult and children safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making within the MASH was carried out. This has provided the Board with a better understanding of where there are perceived differences between the two local authorities and how partner agencies can work together to overcome barriers that may cause delays in decision making.
- The introduction of a MASH Quality Assurance Group has enabled the Board to focus on the front-end safeguarding referrals and how the MASH systems and processes are ensuring that these are dealt with appropriately.
- The Board commenced one Adult Practice Review which was published in April 2018. One Child Practice Review commenced and two joint Child/Adult Practice Reviews were published, having commenced in 2016. The time taken to complete these reviews was due to the complexity of both cases.

5.4 Safeguarding Specific Groups of People

- There was a specific focus during the year to ensure that providers of services in Cwm Taf had an improved awareness of safeguarding and how concerns are reported. This resulted in a total of 16 care providers receiving Level 2/3 safeguarding training.
- Lessons learned from our two published Reviews identified a need to ensure that the transition to adulthood for young people is managed more effectively to reduce the risks of harm. A multi-agency task and finish group was set up to develop a set of transition principles for agencies to adopt.
- Over 60% of safeguarding reports for adults are for those over 65 years old and a significant proportion of these are for older people with dementia. This year, we have strengthened the questions asked by Safeguarding Officers around the adult at risk's decision making ability by adding additional questions to the case management tool.
- The local authorities have increased access to advocacy for people who need support to participate in safeguarding processes.
- The focus of the Board in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards continues to be on safeguarding those people who are most in need. Whilst waiting lists for assessments remain high, every case is risk-assessed, prioritised and a review programme is in place.
- One of our priorities for 2017/18 was to work with the Cwm Taf Together for Mental Health partnership to support children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. A workshop with all partners was held in February 2018 to develop a plan to take this work forward into 2018/19.
- The Board has acknowledged that a clear policy is needed to manage children placed outside of the area and also for those placed in other areas from Cwm Taf. We are currently awaiting a national piece of work being conducted by the Welsh Government.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has continued to be a priority for the Board. A Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) group was set up in 2017 and has become embedded into the Board governance.
- The Board still awaits the outcome of the national work on neglect to adopt any recommendations for Cwm Taf.

5.5 Collaboration

- The Safeguarding Board Business Managers across Wales have continued to collaborate during the year.
- The Board continues to collaborate with the CSP as the agendas are increasingly aligned.
- The Board Chairs, Members and Business Managers have developed good working relationships with the Welsh Government.
- The Cwm Taf representative from the National Board attends the Board meetings on a quarterly basis, contributes to discussions and events and shares materials relevant to the work and interests of the Board.

5.6 Engagement, Participation and Communication

5.7 The Board has been proactive in raising awareness of safeguarding and how everyone is able to contribute to keeping people safe.

5.8 The Board ensures that participation is as inclusive as possible given the various needs of professionals, children, young people and adults at risk. This has enabled us to improve our engagement opportunities and ensure that the views of people contribute to developing best practice, and that frontline staff are integral to informing the improvement of learning and development.

5.9 This has been supported by a number of engagement activities and consultation with the people who use our services throughout the year.

5.10 Information, Training and Learning

- During the year, 150 multi-agency safeguarding training courses were delivered to 2,542 delegates in Cwm Taf.
- The Board also hosted a number of Multi Agency Practitioner events this year to share learning with a wide range of practitioners involved in safeguarding.
- The Board continues to use the Cwm Taf Safeguarding website to share a range of information to public and professionals. This year, two E-Bulletins for professionals were published which included a range of topics and news items.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Annual Report has been approved by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board and shared with the Welsh Government, the National Independent Safeguarding Board and the five other Regional Safeguarding Boards.
- 7.2 A copy of the report has been published on the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board website www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities and the functions of the Regional Safeguarding Boards.

10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The Board contributes to elements of the work of the Public Service Board by reporting on safeguarding activity.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER,
COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON**

CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Background Papers:

None

**Contact Officer: Nicola Kingham, CTSB Business Manager.
Tel: 01443 484550**

CTSB

CWM TAF SAFEGUARDING BOARD

Safeguarding in CWM TAF



The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018



VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL
MERTHYR TYDFIL



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TYDFIL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



Gwasanaeth Prawf
Cenedlaethol
National Probation
Service



Cwmni Adsefydlu Cymunedol
Cymru
Wales
Community Rehabilitation Company



PROBATION



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

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1. Introduction and Foreword - Co-Chairs of the Board

Welcome to the second Annual Report for the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board.

Working Together to Safeguard People¹ identified the requirements placed on Regional Safeguarding Boards in terms of accountability and effectiveness. Within this guidance, it is identified that each Board should publish a Report on the 31st July each year. The guidance also identifies what is required within the Annual Report which allows for consistency across Wales.

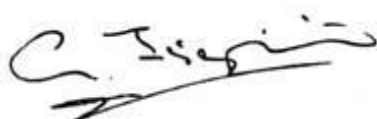
The governance arrangements within Cwm Taf continue to be robust with an Annual Plan setting out our agreed outcomes. It has a clear and effective multi agency structure supporting the delivery of our Plan on behalf of the Board. Reports are routinely submitted to the Board to raise risks and issues against the delivery of the Plan and for decision and action from the Board. This supports the Board to take ownership of its work at strategic level and provide leadership to the Sub Groups on the delivery of the plan.

The Board's business is managed through a dedicated and effective Business Management Unit which is financed through a committed Safeguarding Board budget. The Business Management Unit and associated resources are continually reviewed supporting a staff structure for both Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children with one Strategic Business Manager.

This Report highlights the work that the Board has undertaken during 2017/18 in pursuit of our aim to ensure that the people of Cwm Taf are safeguarded from abuse, neglect or other forms of harm. We are acutely aware that this can only be achieved through our strong partnership, with all Board agencies working together proactively and productively.

We continue to seek opportunities to further develop and improve safeguarding in Cwm Taf and we recognise that this can only be achieved through effective collaboration. We will therefore continue to collaborate with partner agencies, Welsh Government and other partnerships and safeguarding boards to enhance practice and to share learning.

We also endeavour to engage with children and adults and offer them opportunities to participate in our work. We would encourage anyone who would like to be involved to contact our Business Management Unit on **01443 484523** or email: cwmtafsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk



¹ Statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

2. Safeguarding in Cwm Taf

The area of Cwm Taf covers the local authority areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a population of approximately 300,000.²

The **Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board**³ is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board Business Management Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives of **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It has an overall responsibility for challenging relevant agencies so that:

- there are effective measures in place to protect children and adults at risk who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- there is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

What is Abuse and Neglect?

Abuse means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse. Neglect means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being.

The **Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** sits within the structure of the Board and acts as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns across Cwm Taf. The MASH has been fully operational since May 2015, having been set up to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together in one place to receive all safeguarding referrals and share relevant agency information to make collaborative decisions.

MASH activity comprises:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Adults at Risk Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

² Source: Data Unit Wales

³ Referenced throughout this document as the Board

Cwm Taf MASH Partners are aligned to the membership of the Board and are:

- Cwm Taf University Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council:
 - Adult Social Services
 - Children's Services
 - Education
 - MARAC (Domestic Abuse service)
 - Emergency Duty Team (EDT)
- National Probation Service
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

The key aims of the MASH relate to the following themes:

- Improved coordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a safeguarding report is raised
- Improved response times leading to earlier interventions
- Reduction of repeat referrals

3. Members of the Safeguarding Board

The Lead Partner for the Board is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the membership complies with the statutory guidance issued under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014.

A list of members is attached as Appendix 1.

4. How did we achieve our outcomes for 2017/18?

The Board published two Annual Plans on 31 March 2017, setting out the priorities for safeguarding adults and for safeguarding children in 2017/18.

The Annual Plans for 2017/18 can be accessed at:

www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org

Priority Outcome - Governance

What did we say?

The priority for 2017/18 was to have a robust structure and clear governance arrangements for the Board to support its effective operation and its compliance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

How have we achieved this?

This year the Board has continued to take every opportunity to collaborate across children and adults safeguarding to support joint working and sharing of information and learning. There has been a joint Board for children and adults since 2015. This has proved to be an effective approach in improving safeguarding arrangements for everyone breaking down artificial barriers based on age. This has been embraced by all Board members.

The Board has co-ordinated the safeguarding activities of each partner represented on the Board through its Work Plan for 2017/18. The Board ensures that safeguarding activities are effective by challenging agencies via Board meetings, reviews and audit activity. Action plans generated from the latter are monitored to ensure that partner agencies are implementing appropriate improvement actions.

A Performance Management Framework is in place to enable the Sub Groups to report to the Board on progress and to escalate any risks and issues for decision.

The Board is supported by the Safeguarding Business Management Unit which provides effective management, co-ordination and administrative support. The capacity of the Business Unit was increased in 2017/18 to support the additional responsibilities linked to the MASH governance arrangements and the co-ordination of Domestic Homicide Reviews and Adult/Child Practice Reviews.

The Board structure is set out in Appendix 2.

5. How we implemented our Annual Plans in 2017/18

Priority Outcome - Safeguarding Practice

What did we say?

The priority for 2017/18 was for the Board to be assured that there are effective inter-agency safeguarding practice and processes in place, supported by robust quality assurance and information sharing systems. We also wanted to ensure that the MASH information sharing platform (MHub) continued to be fit for purpose and to continue to share information in a timely manner.

How have we achieved this?

Information Sharing Systems

The Board wanted to ensure that systems to support safeguarding were kept updated to comply with the forthcoming changes associated with the introduction of the WCCIS⁴ system. WCCIS was introduced in Merthyr Tydfil at the start of 2017 and regular updates were provided to the Board on progress. System issues resulted in significant delays in the production of all of the performance data. The Board ensured that a process was in place to manage the risks associated with this and the issue was resolved by the end of year.

An Information Sharing Accord between the Health Board and the two Local Authorities was signed off in 2016 for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This has allowed the sharing of information in relation to DoLS. It will be reviewed in 2018/19 in light of the GDPR⁵. There is also an Accord in place between the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub partner organisations to support the regular sharing of personal information.

In addition, an Information Sharing System Working Group (with Cardiff and Bridgend MASH and the system supplier) was set up to devise a plan to review current requirements and source alternative options (to be carried out in 2018)

Performance and Quality Assurance

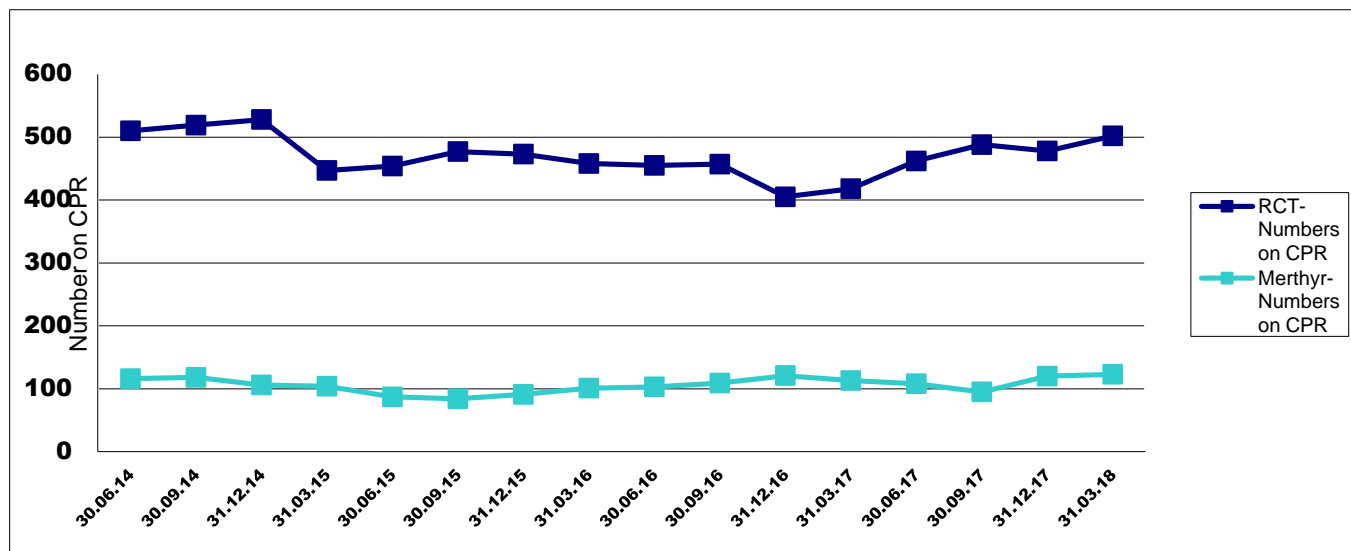
In Cwm Taf, safeguarding data is recorded at the point of referral/report through to the child or adult protection processes and any associated outcomes. This data is received quarterly from the Local Authorities' Performance Management Teams and is scrutinised via the Quality Assurance Sub Groups. Any patterns or trends can then be identified and areas requiring further explanation can be explored further via audits or reviews.

⁴ Welsh Community Care Information System

⁵ General Data Protection Regulations

Child Protection Data for 2017/18

During 2017/18 the number of children on the Child Protection Register has increased by 20% across Rhondda Cynon Taf (418 to 502) and by 9% (113 to 123) across Merthyr Tydfil, with children aged between 5-9 years being the highest age range for registrations across Cwm Taf.



As at 31 March 2018 the number of children registered under each category of abuse was:

	Neglect, Physical & Sexual	Neglect & Physical	Neglect & Sexual	Physical & Sexual	Neglect	Physical	Sexual	Emotional	TOTAL
RCT	0	8	2	5	148	76	20	243	502
MT	0	0	0	0	22	9	9	83	123

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of Neglect decreased from 42% (176) at 31/03/17 to 29% (148) at 31/03/18.

In Merthyr Tydfil, the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of Neglect decreased from 25% (28) at 31/03/17 to 18% (22) at 31/03/18.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of Emotional Abuse increased from 36% (150) at 31/03/17 to 48% (243) at 31/03/18. In Merthyr Tydfil, the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of Emotional Abuse increased from by 62% (70) at 31/03/17 to 67% (83) at 31/03/18. This correlates with the increase in incidents of domestic abuse across Cwm Taf.

The number of re-registrations for children who have had 1 previous period of registration was 36% (182 children) for Rhondda Cynon Taf and 27% (33 children) for Merthyr Tydfil for 2017/18. This has increased slightly across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil compared to 2016/17.

The Board's Quality Assurance Sub Group for Children continues to monitor changes in the performance data. Where there have been noticeable changes the Quality Assurance Sub Group has carried out further investigations and/or audits to satisfy the Board that there are no missed opportunities for learning or improvement.

Adult Protection Data for 2017/18

Across Cwm Taf a total of 6,111 suspected adult at risk reports were received during the year. This is a significant increase compared to the previous year (4,308).

The number of reports for each category of abuse was as follows:

	Physical	Financial	Neglect	Sexual	Emotional
RCT	1016	428	2278	199	1858
MT	145	66	148	25	682

26% (Rhondda Cynon Taf) and 22% (Merthyr Tydfil) of adults were reported more than once for the same category of abuse or neglect during the year. 26% (Rhondda Cynon Taf) and 15% (Merthyr Tydfil) of adults were reported for different categories of abuse or neglect during the year. These figures require further investigation during 2018/19.

The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days was nearly 94% for Rhondda Cynon Taf and 89% for Merthyr Tydfil.

CASE STUDY:

A referral was received from the National Probation Service regarding a perpetrator who was in prison for actual bodily harm, having assaulted his partner. There was a concern that he was going to be released shortly and that he intended to reside with his partner when he was released. There was a further concern that the victim was being encouraged by her partner to have his restraining order removed. Additionally, the victim did not recognise the harm caused by her partner and his behaviours.

Following a referral to MARAC⁶ and to Adult Safeguarding, adult services became involved and a social worker worked closely with the IDVA⁷ to establish trust with victim.

A strategy discussion took place where MASH partners shared information that may previously have been unknown, and agreed a joint plan to safeguard the victim.

Joint work between Domestic Abuse Services, Adult Social Care, Health Services and the National Probation Service via the Adult Safeguarding process resulted in a co-ordinated plan to protect and support the person in her new-found determination to remove herself from the relationship.

⁶ Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

⁷ Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

Developments to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

In 2017/18 a review of the adult and children safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making within the MASH was carried out. As a result a proposal was developed to further integrate the local authority functions within the MASH, including a review of business support (to be completed in 2018/19).

The review of the processes and thresholds in MASH has provided the Board with a better understanding of where there are perceived differences between the two local authorities and how partner agencies can work together to overcome barriers that may cause delays in decision making.

The introduction of a MASH Quality Assurance Group has enabled the Board to focus on the front-end safeguarding referrals and how the MASH systems and processes are ensuring that these are dealt with appropriately. In 2018/19 the Group will scrutinise MASH safeguarding outcomes and themes via a performance management framework and planned audit programme. This is in line with the audit programmes implemented via the Board's other Quality Assurance Groups.

Audits completed during 2017/18 in relation to **safeguarding adults** included:

- Quality of strategy discussions
- Use of advocacy in Safeguarding
- Suspected Adult at Risk Reports from Independent Hospitals
- Review of Outcomes of Criminal Investigations
- Audit of Health-led Safeguarding Cases

Some of the themes identified via these audits are provided in Section 10 of this report.

CASE STUDY

A multi-agency case audit was completed in relation to a lady with advanced dementia who lived at home with her husband. On a number of occasions domiciliary carers had reported to the MASH Safeguarding Team that the lady had unexplained bruising. Concerns for the lady were high amongst all professionals involved with her to the extent that she had been removed from her home in her best interests on a number of occasions.

Following another incident, the lady was admitted to an emergency residential placement and this time, a recommendation was made that she should remain there permanently and that an application to the Court of Protection be made to authorise such a placement.

The subsequent audit of the case identified some learning for agencies in relation to professionals' understanding of the law in these circumstances and that the pervasive view, that since it could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt that her husband was abusing her, nothing could be done to secure her safety, was flawed.

This learning was remitted to the Board's Training and Learning Group for inclusion in a Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum. It was also recommended that further guidance be issued for staff around Court of Protection processes.

During the year, the Adult Quality Assurance Sub Group also monitored activity in relation to:

- Concerns regarding Inter-Agency Safeguarding Practice - 3 received and processed
- Multi-agency Safeguarding Complaints - 1 received and dealt with as a single agency concern
- Use of Police Custody as a Place of Safety for 'vulnerable women' and 'males under 30' is also now being reported
- Escalating Concerns regarding providers of domiciliary, residential and nursing care

Audits completed for **children's safeguarding** included:

- Children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) for 2 years plus
- Children subject to re-registrations
- Children deregistered having been on the CPR for 6 months or less
- Children on the CPR who are also looked after

Again, some of the themes identified are provided in Section 10 of this report.

CASE STUDY

A referral was made to MASH Children Services by a GP around father's behaviour. On the same day 3 contacts were made by the police citing deterioration in his mental health. Child protection procedures were implemented to protect the children.

A multi-agency audit was requested to review interventions for both children and adult and a subsequent Practitioner Event was held with professionals to identify any lessons relating to the case. Recommendations from this identified a need for joint training for both children and adult services in relation to child protection and the impact of parental mental health.

As a result, all services are working together to achieve the aims within the Child Protection plan and joined up work between children and adults services has improved. The local authority was praised by the court in their promotion of contact between father and children.

The Children's Quality Assurance Sub Group also monitors activity in relation to:

- Police Powers of Protection - 29 reported during the year, group assured that actions were appropriate and safeguards in place
- Conference Complaints - 2 reported, 1 not upheld, 1 partially upheld
- Concerns regarding Inter-Agency Safeguarding Practice - monitored 6 weekly - see data and case study later in this section
- Professional Strategy Meetings - monitored quarterly
- First Time Entrants into Custody - 6 reported during the year, 2 of which were children looked after, group assured that appropriate safeguards were in place

Audits completed during the year in relation to the **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)** included:

- Waiting lists - care homes and hospital wards
- DoLS documentation on patient clinical records
- DoLS Assessments for 6 Managing Authorities
- Family Representatives' understanding of their role and their support needs

CASE STUDY - SURVEY OF FAMILY REPRESENTATIVES⁸ UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE AND NEED FOR SUPPORT

The findings of the survey were that family Representatives appeared to have a high level of understanding of the role and had confidence in using the health and social care system, which suggests that the person appointed should be in a good position to fulfil the requirements of the role.

However, it appears that a significant minority of Representatives felt that they were given insufficient information about the Representative role and some did not recall being told about the availability of specialist advocacy to support them.

As a result, both the Health Board and the Local Authorities have changed their practice and now routinely refer a Family Representative for advocacy support to help them meet the requirements of the role, unless they actively tell us that they do not want this.

Adult Reviews and Child Reviews

The Adult Review Group (ARG) and the Child Review Group (CRG) ensure that the Board discharges its functions in relation to Adult and Child Practice Reviews.

The Board must commission a Review where a child or adult at risk has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment.

In 2017/18 the ARG considered 4 new cases, a reduction compared to the previous year (7). One Adult Practice Review (APR) commenced during the year and was published in April 2018. Two joint Child/Adult Practice Reviews were published, having commenced in 2016. The time taken to complete these reviews was due to the complexity of both cases.

The CRG considered 18 new cases during the year, one met the criteria for a Child Practice Review and this will be completed in 2018/19.

Two child cases were subject to a Multi-Agency Professional Forum⁹ where learning was identified and subsequently presented to the Board's Child Review Group. The actions arising from the cases continue to be monitored by the Child Review Group.

The Board has also supported the completion of one Domestic Homicide Review¹⁰, commissioned by the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership (to be published in 2018).

Section 10 of this report provides further information on the themes and learning identified through the Child and Adult Practice Review process.

⁸ If a person's care is authorised following a DoLS assessment, they must have a representative appointed, called the 'relevant person's representative'. Often this is a family member, friend or other carer.

⁹ A Multi Agency Professional Forum allows practitioners working with children, young people or adults at risk to share learning and best practice to support them in making improvements to their work

¹⁰ A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves.

Protocols and Procedures

The Board has a range of protocols and procedures to support practitioners in safeguarding children and adults at risk, overseen by the Board Protocols and Procedures Sub Group (PPG).

In 2017/18 the PPG continued to manage and monitor a database of the Board protocols and procedures to ensure that they are current, relevant and fit for purpose. This resulted in the creation of new protocols (identified need via reviews and audits) and also the cessation of some existing protocols that are no longer relevant.

Specific improvements identified at the start of the year were as follows:

- **Complete the review of the Cwm Taf Escalating Concerns protocol**

This protocol was reviewed and approved by the Board in March 2018. It will be used where there are concerns relating to the performance of Council-owned Care Homes and other Council direct service provision.

To date, there have been 5 Escalating Concerns meetings held which have proved useful in receiving early information about escalating concerns in care homes. For example, where Merthyr Tydfil residents have been placed in RCT, both authorities have worked together to address issues with a domiciliary care provider that covers both areas. The development of the protocol has also resulted in better co-ordination of safeguarding interventions on a cross-local authority boundary basis.

Reports from the Escalating Concerns meetings have now been integrated into the Board's Adults Quality Assurance (AQA) meetings so that all partners are aware of providers that are causing concern. Closer working between Safeguarding and Commissioning Teams has already made a difference in terms of communication and actions taken to safeguard people.

In addition, a Home Closure Protocol has been developed between the local authorities and the Health Board and in consultation with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as part of local procedures established to manage escalating concerns in care homes in Cwm Taf.

The effectiveness of these new protocols will be monitored and evaluated during 2018/19.

- **Implement the Challenging Cases protocol for children on the Child Protection Register and monitor via the Quality Assurance Sub Group**

This protocol was originally implemented in May 2017 to provide practitioners with guidance on the process to be followed in cases where a Child Protection Care and Support Plan is not reducing the risk to a child or young person. The protocol introduces a 3-stage professional review approach to manage cases.

CASE STUDY

A request was made by the Police to escalate a case to a Challenging Cases Tier 3 multi agency supervision event as the risks were not reducing at Tier 2¹¹.

The event took place in March 2018, facilitated by 2 independent professionals who used a 'traffic light system'; Red - What we should stop doing, Amber - What we should do more of and Green - what new things/ideas should we put into action.

Agencies agreed to stop repeating work that has already been done and withdraw duplicate services. Agencies agreed to do a criminal exploitation check list alongside Child Sexual Exploitation, to maintain stability and consistency in good relationships and listen to the young person's wishes. Finally, a recommendation was made to ensure that if a child moves into an area a meeting with all professionals should take place as soon as possible.

The young person is currently in a bespoke placement outside of the area which is being monitored.

Despite some good work being undertaken within the remit of this protocol, evaluations have indicated that the protocol is not enhancing practice as intended and a review is due to be carried out in June 2018.

▪ Influence the implementation of the new national safeguarding procedures

In May 2017, the Minister for Social Services and Public Health awarded the funding for the revision of the National Safeguarding Procedures to the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Safeguarding Boards.

An overarching Project Board was set up to provide advice and guidance to a dedicated Project Team, advising Welsh Government and other stakeholders of progress and holding the project to account. The Cwm Taf University Health Board's Head of Safeguarding represents the Board on this Board and provides updates on progress.

A stakeholder event was held in November 2017 which allowed Cwm Taf staff and practitioners to draw on their experience and make suggestions on the content of the procedures.

▪ Ensure that the Welsh Government's new guidance on Handling Individual Cases is integrated into safeguarding practice

The Board was consulted on the draft document but publication was delayed until May 2018. This will therefore be addressed in 2018/19.

¹¹ For further information on the Challenging Cases protocol please visit www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org

In addition to the above, in 2017/18, the following existing protocols were reviewed and updated:

- **Core Group Guidance**

A review of the Core Group guidance for Child Protection planning was carried out and shared with all practitioners. Update sessions were held with staff to ensure that they are fully aware of the guidance and its purpose. It is evident already that through the child protection process that Core Groups are monitoring progress against the Care and Support Plan. This is enabling effective outcomes for children and young people.

- **Child Safeguarding in Schools Policy**

A revised 'model' Safeguarding Policy for Schools was circulated to all during the Autumn Term, to allow schools to revise and update their documentation, for presentation to Governors. This revised document incorporates recent changes in legislation and includes actions within the Domestic Abuse agenda and further information in relation to Prevent¹².

- **Resolving Concerns about Inter-Agency Safeguarding Practice (Causes for Concern)**

This document supports practitioners who are working with children, young people or adults at risk in finding a resolution when they have a professional disagreement or concern in relation to interagency safeguarding practice. In 2017/18, 25 causes for concern were escalated and resolved via the Board's Quality Assurance Sub Group for Children.

CASE STUDY

A good practice example involved a concern raised by Children Services regarding a referral made by a hospital. As a result, an internal investigation was carried out and the Board was provided with an assurance of the relevant actions undertaken by Health.

- **Decision Making at Child Protection Conferences**

An update of this guidance has provided participants at Child Protection Conferences with clarity in respect of their roles. Conference Chairs and practitioners contributed to the review to ensure that the guidance was relevant. As a result, consistent decisions are being made and outcomes for children and young people are effective and protective.

- **Working with Families Not Co-operating**

This has recently become a joint children and adults protocol which has been well received in adult services. The need for a review was identified following a Multi Agency Practitioner Forum event concerning a family not co-operating. Moving forward, the effectiveness of this protocol needs to be measured within adult services.

- **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Policy**

This document sets out the policy for the operation of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and how they link to the principles and requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. It provides information about the specific roles and responsibilities in these processes, and how they should be applied

¹² Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism

when a resident or a patient is resident in, or is due to be resident in, a care home or hospital in a way that is, or may be, a deprivation of liberty.

The following new documents were produced in 2017/18:

▪ **Chronology Guidance**

This document was approved by the Board in March 2018. It supports practitioners involved in the completion of timelines and chronologies for the Child and Adult Practice Review process. Positive feedback has been received to date, with an improvement in the quality of completed timelines being evident.

▪ **Complaints Policy**

The existing policy relating to Child Protection Conferences was updated to incorporate adult safeguarding and the requirement for the Board to have a complaints policy for Practice Reviews. Its purpose is to ensure a sensitive and professional multi-agency response to the management of complaints arising from the functioning of the Board's multi-agency child and adult protection processes.

CASE STUDY

To date, the policy has been used once in relation to a child protection registration. The process followed resulted in a reconvened child protection conference being held and the subsequent deregistration of the children involved.

▪ **Cwm Taf Life Journey Toolkit**

This toolkit and accompanying training has been effective in increasing awareness about the significance of identity and understanding family history and why decisions have been made for young people's emotional well-being and development.

CASE STUDY

Life Journey work was carried out with two siblings, both with additional learning needs, who were placed together. The worker fully engaged with both children in Life Journey work through activities that they could take part in. In fact, the work has assisted them to feel confident enough and empowered to direct how the work progressed and in expressing their wishes and feelings about future contact with family.

Life Journey work allowed the worker to develop a strong relationship with the children which may not have been established through the usual statutory visiting that is undertaken with Children Looked After. The work assisted the children to understand the court process and the decisions that had been made about them.

The Board is also committed to ensure that all new Board reports, protocols and policies are subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. This resulted in the development of a Board Equalities Impact Assessment form which is being rolled out in 2018/19.

Priority Outcome - Safeguarding Specific Groups of People

What did we say?

The priority for 2017/18 was for the Board to anticipate and identify where there may be specific groups of people at risk of abuse and in need of safeguarding and work with service providers to develop earlier identification and preventative services.

How have we achieved this?

Keeping children, young people and adults at risk safe is everyone's responsibility. This means feeling safe and being safe with those with whom they live and who support and care for them, as well as being safe in environments outside the home where they may live, travel, play, learn, work or undertake sport, cultural, leisure and other activities.

There are some groups of people who are particularly vulnerable and the Board has a responsibility to ensure that a proportionate response is adopted to protect them and ensure that actions are in place to prevent them from becoming further at risk.

Preventative Services for Adults at Risk

In 2017/18 the Board ensured that there was a clear connection with the DEWIS database of voluntary organisations via links to the website www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org. This provides the public with advice, information and support to keep well and to keep safe.

The Board also commissioned a research project via the RCT 'Mercury Management Programme' to establish how partner agencies are working together to prevent adults becoming at risk of abuse or neglect and identify any gaps that need to be addressed. The recommendation from this work was to develop a Cwm Taf-wide Preventative Strategy. The Board will consider this during 2018/19.

CASE STUDY

A report was received by the MASH Safeguarding Team that a lady appeared to be experiencing domestic abuse at the hands of her husband. Given the level of concern and the lack of any current involvement with services, the MASH Safeguarding Officer contacted her directly to arrange to meet.

As a result of the meeting, the Officer was able to provide the lady with information about domestic abuse services. By meeting with her in a safe space, this gave the lady sufficient time to discuss the situation fully and allowed the Officer to gain her trust using an empowering and supportive approach. The lady felt able to disclose further information relating to her mental health problems and adverse childhood experiences. She gave her consent for the Officer to speak to her GP and other local services so that she could access appropriate treatment and support.

This is a good example of some of the preventative and proactive work undertaken by the staff in the MASH. There have been no further concerns reported in relation to this person.

Preventative Services for Children

Although this wasn't identified as a specific area for improvement in 2017/18 this will be a key area for the Board to consider in 2018/19 and how the work of the Board links to existing services.

Safeguarding Awareness Raising and the Duty to Report Concerns

There was a specific focus during the year to ensure that providers of services in Cwm Taf had an improved awareness of safeguarding and how concerns are reported. This resulted in a total of 16 care providers receiving Level 2/3 safeguarding training.

Transition to Adulthood for Young People

Lessons learned from two published Child/Adult Practice Reviews identified a need to ensure that the transition to adulthood for young people is managed more effectively to reduce the risks of harm.

A multi-agency task and finish group was set up to consider the development of a Cwm Taf transition policy. However, it was felt that a set of principles would be more appropriate for agencies to adopt.

This work will be completed in 2018/19 and the aim will be to roll out these principles via workshops with partners.

The Board's Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Group also provides a forum to monitor young people who are in transition from Child to Adult Services. Partner agencies share information to increase the understanding of the risks posed by Child Sexual Exploitation and then identify options to minimise risk, providing a more holistic view to ensure that the young person receives a wrap around service to assist with a smooth transition into adulthood.

People who lack Mental Capacity or who suffer from Dementia

Over 60% of safeguarding reports for adults are for those over 65 years old and a significant proportion of these are for older people with dementia. This year, we have strengthened the questions asked by Safeguarding Officers around the adult at risk's decision making ability by adding additional questions to the case management tool.

A Task and Finish Group has been set up to consider ways of making sure that people who lack capacity to manage their financial affairs are safeguarded. This is a particular concern for those people with whom the Local Authorities are not involved, such people whose placements have been privately arranged or who are funded via Continuing NHS Health care arrangements. The outcome of this work will be reported during 2018/19.

Training in relation to Dementia Care in the Domiciliary Setting was delivered during the year to 37 people.

CASE STUDY

A lady lived in a nursing home. The nursing home made a request to the Local Authority for a DoLS Standard Authorisation, as the lady had severe dementia and was not able to consent to her residence in the nursing home or to the care and support that she needed.

It became apparent during the assessment process that the lady had substantial assets but no-one had authority to manage these for her. In addition, a Safeguarding report was made because it appeared that a distant family member might have access to her bank accounts and was stealing her money. The adult at risk had not been able to access any of her money since she had moved to the nursing home

The DoLS assessor arranged for the lady to receive the services of an advocate from a local third sector advocacy provider, who asked a solicitor to take over the management of the lady's financial affairs in order to safeguard her interests and ensure that she had access to her resources. In the meantime, the Safeguarding Team at MASH ensured that the lady's money was safeguarded by ensuring that her bank accounts were frozen and all of her cash/debit/credit cards were blocked.

The family member was ultimately arrested and interviewed by police on suspicion of theft.

Advocacy Support for Adults at Risk

The local authorities have increased access to advocacy for people who need support to participate in safeguarding processes. The process around referrals for advocacy support have been strengthened to ensure that the voice of the person and their wellbeing outcomes are at the heart of the safeguarding process.

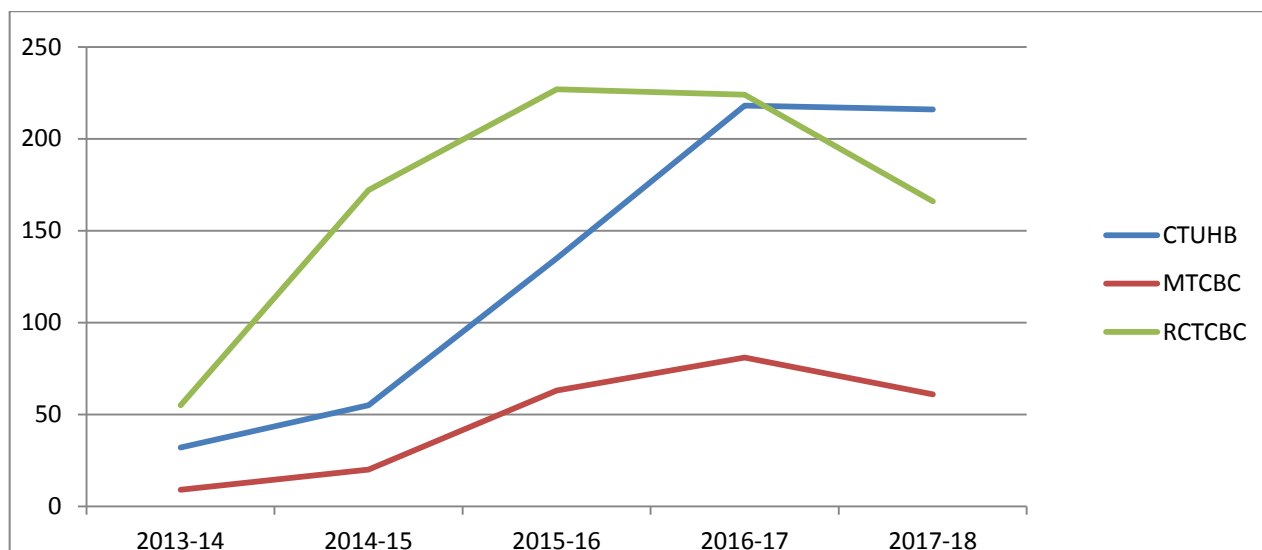
There has been a 50% increase in the use of independent representatives for people subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, which improves the service user's ability to access their right to appeal.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

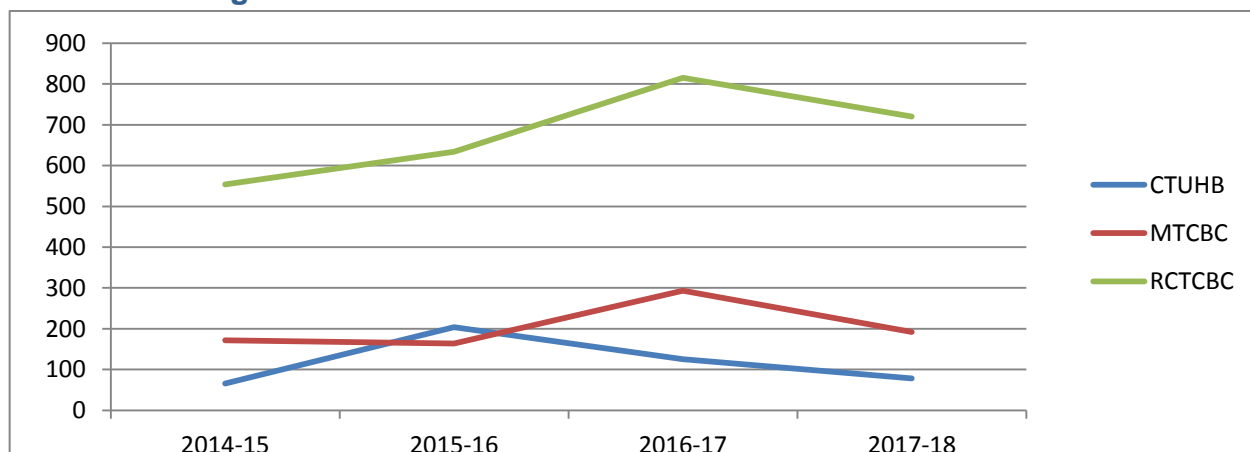
The focus of the Board in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards continues to be on safeguarding those people who are most in need. Whilst waiting lists for assessments remain high, every case is risk-assessed, prioritised and a review programme is in place.

In 2017/18, 443 DoLS assessments and re-assessments were completed by the Cwm Taf Supervisory Bodies, i.e. RCTCBC, MTCBC and the Cwm Taf UHB. This was a decrease from the previous year's figures (518 total assessments and re-assessments), although Cwm Taf UHB did achieve a slight increase. However, the applications awaiting assessment reduced from 1,786 in 2016/17 to 990 on 31st March 2018.

1. DoLS Assessments undertaken 2014-18



2. DoLS Waiting Lists 2014-18



In the last year there was an increase in the complexity of cases that were being assessed. This was evidenced by the correspondingly greater number of cases being heard in the Court of Protection, which creates further demand on the DoLS Teams' capacity. In excess of 18 cases were heard in the Court in this financial year, as opposed to less than 6 the previous year. All 3 Supervisory Bodies concentrate on ensuring that the correct legal authorisation is in place for those people who object to the arrangements made for their care and treatment.

Children and Young People with Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Needs

One of our priorities for 2017/18 was to work with the Cwm Taf Together for Mental Health partnership to support children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. The numbers of children placed on the child protection register for emotional abuse has increased over the past few years. Between March 2017 and March 2018 this number increased in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 150 to 243 and in Merthyr Tydfil from 70 to 83.

A multi agency strategic group was set up and it became apparent that to make a difference for children and young people that the focus needed to be on:

- An integrated phased approach to building resilient communities
- Providing investment in local communities to support children, young people and families' learning resilience and wellbeing
- Develop shared plans for the development and organisation of early intervention in localities, with joint working arrangements and the active involvement of children.

A workshop with all partners was held in February 2018 to develop a plan to take this work forward into 2018/19.

Children Looked after Outside of Cwm Taf and those being placed in Cwm Taf

The Board has acknowledged that a clear policy was needed to manage children placed outside of the area and also for those placed in other areas from Cwm Taf.

A number of meetings were held to progress with this work and a process was proposed. However, this work was superseded by a national piece of work being conducted by the Welsh Government and it is anticipated that this policy will be produced during 2018/19.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has continued to be a priority for the Board and this year there has been a stronger focus on the links to human trafficking, unaccompanied asylum seekers and modern slavery.

A Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) group was set up in 2017 and has become embedded into the Board governance. The MACSE brings together key agencies in order to effectively address the causes of Child Sexual Exploitation. It monitors the response to risk posed to children and young people, by understanding and recognising current and emerging trends whilst acknowledging risk posed by certain geographical areas and by identified offenders. The MACSE also reviews existing disruption plans and holds agencies to account for the delivery of actions to minimise risk.

The group is now established and the attendance and representation is appropriate with wide cross partnership representation. It is already clearly evidencing the potential for the group to make a difference and to influence the management and safeguarding of young people at risk from Child Sexual Exploitation.

Training on Understanding and Recognising Child Sexual Exploitation continues to be a priority with 12 courses delivered during the year to 210 delegates. In addition, 3 Human Trafficking courses were delivered to 46 delegates.

CASE STUDY

A young male was brought to the attention of the MACSE as a perpetrator and was a high risk offender to young girls due to his highly sexualised behaviour, including his partner at that time. He had all the relevant agencies working with him, including Education, Social Services and the Youth Offending Service and, as a result of this multi agency working to manage the risks, he was eventually placed in accommodation outside of the area.

The accommodation was an education placement where he was taught how to deal with his sexualised behaviour and to live independently. This arrangement is in place until he reaches adulthood. This placement also prevented him from being sent to prison for his continuous offending.

Since he has been in this accommodation there has been no further incidents brought to the attention of the MACSE.

Neglect

Children subject to neglect remained a priority for the Board during 2017/18 although there has been a reduction in the number of children placed on the Child Protection Register under this category. In Rhondda Cynon Taf the number decreased from 202 (March 2017) to 158 (March 2018). In Merthyr Tydfil the number also decreased from 28 (March 2017) to 22 (March 2018).

The Board still awaits the outcome of the national work on neglect to adopt any recommendations for Cwm Taf.

6. Who have we worked with to implement our Annual Plans for 2017/18?

Priority Outcome - Collaboration

What did we say?

The Board should actively pursue opportunities for collaborative working with other agencies, partnerships and boards to support the pursuance of its objectives.

How have we achieved this?

We have continued to seek opportunities to develop strong working relationships with other partnerships, Safeguarding Boards and agencies to improve safeguarding arrangements both locally and nationally. This has included the following collaborations:

Other Safeguarding Boards

The Safeguarding Board Business Managers and Development Officers across Wales have continued to collaborate during the year, both as a group and with the Welsh Government on a range of issues affecting safeguarding on a national basis. This has included:

- Sharing published Child and Adult Practice Reviews and role profiles
- Sharing Annual Reports and Annual Plans
- Sharing Protocols and adopting good practice
- Sharing promotional information e.g. leaflet for Child and Adult Practice Reviews
- Safeguarding Week 2017

The Safeguarding Board Chairs also meet on a regular basis across Wales to discuss key issues and share learning and good practice.

CASE STUDY

The Chairs of the Board referred a case to a South Wales forum of Safeguarding Boards due to its cross-border nature. The young person was identified as being particularly vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation and was at risk of absconding from a placement. Issues were identified in relation to the multi-agency management of the case, the availability of suitable specialist Child Sexual Exploitation provision and managing risk versus potential procedural and legal breaches related to deprivation of liberty.

As a result of the discussions held, the case was referred to a national summit on Child Exploitation, hosted by the Care Inspectorate Wales. Subsequent recommendations included a need to develop guidance on multi-agency working when children are placed outside of an area and a need to consider the impact of the lack of appropriate placements.

Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

The Board continues to collaborate with the CSP as the agendas are increasingly aligned. This year we have ensured that there is a Community Safety Partnership representative sitting on the Board and specific areas of work have been carried out as follows:

- 1 Domestic Homicide Review completed
- Links identified in relation to Modern Slavery referral mechanisms and the need to safeguard victims

There have been improved links in respect of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) agenda. This has included training for professionals and a joint review of the MARAC domestic abuse service.

Cwm Taf Public Services Board

Members of the Safeguarding Board contributed to the completion of Cwm Taf Population Needs Assessment during 2017/18.

Regular updates are provided from the Board to the Strategic Partnership Board (the group that sits under the PSB) and issues requiring escalation to the PSB have included a proposed financial calculation for the sharing of costs associated with the MASH.

Welsh Government

The Board Chairs, Members, Business Managers and Business Development Officers have developed good working relationships with the Welsh Government, working in collaboration on the following:

- Consultations on the new statutory guidance on safeguarding
- Training for reviewers to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews
- Setting up a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking online resource library
- The development of a Self Assessment and Improvement Toolkit for Boards
- Involvement in Task and Finish Groups to develop additional protocols for safeguarding children
- Safeguarding Week 2017
- The development of a National Training Framework for Wales
- MCA/DoLS Network and Leadership Group

Children's Commissioner

The Board is represented on the Children's Commissioner's Round Table on Child Sexual Exploitation to provide updates on developments in working with young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. The group focuses on information sharing across Wales, highlighting issues of national concern and considering new initiatives and related research.

National Independent Safeguarding Board

The Cwm Taf representative from the National Board attends the Board meetings on a quarterly basis, contributes to discussions and events and shares materials relevant to the work and interests of the Board. This has included:

- A recommendation to Ministers arising from meeting Directors of Social Services about the resource implications of addressing multiple Freedom of Information requests concerning Child and Adult Practice Reviews
- Advising Chairs about a free book for Safeguarding Board Chairs
- Promoting compliance with the Act and addressing the challenges which are exercising particular Regional Boards
- Collaboration with Business Unit Development officers to host an event on Safeguarding in Sport during Safeguarding Week
- Meeting with the Board Business Management Unit
- Meetings with Board Chairs with regards Annual Reports

Other Agencies

The Board worked with numerous agencies during Safeguarding Week to deliver events and activities to public and professionals. This included:

- BAWSO
- New Pathways
- University of South Wales
- Age Connects Morgannwg
- Victim Support
- Churches in Wales
- Action on Elder Abuse Cymru

7. Section 137 requests for information

Section 137(1) of the Act provides a Safeguarding Board with the power to request specified information from a qualifying person or body provided that the purpose of the request is to enable or assist the Board to perform its functions under the Act.

In 2017/18 the Board did not use its Section 137 powers to access information.

8. Contributions of Board Members

Each Safeguarding Board partner has a responsibility to ensure that the Board is operating effectively. There are clearly defined Terms of Reference as well as role profiles for Board members.

The Board continues to review the effectiveness of measures taken by partners and other bodies in relation to safeguarding via quality assurance, audits and performance management. All the required statutory partner agencies in Cwm Taf are represented on the Board, Operational Committees and Sub Groups and attendance is monitored at these meetings. The attendance data at Board meetings last year is detailed in the table on the next page:

AGENCY	ATTENDANCE AT BOARD (4 meetings)	PRESENTED AT BOARD (4 meetings)	ATTENDANCE AT OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE (Adults) (4 meetings)	ATTENDANCE AT OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE (Children) (4 meetings)	ATTENDANCE AT QA SUB GROUP (Adults) (held 6 weekly)	ATTENDANCE AT QA SUB GROUP (Children) (held 6 weekly)	CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE REVIEWS
Chairs:							
Director (RCT)	75%	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Chief Officer (MT)	75%	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
RCT Children Services	100%	5	NA	100%	NA	100%	Chair x 1 Reviewer x 1
RCT Adult Services	75%	9	100%	NA	100%	NA	Reviewer x 1
RCT Public Protection	50%	2	0%	25%	NA	8%	
RCT Education	50%	0	NA	100%	NA	75%	Reviewer x 1
MT Children Services	100%	3	NA	100%	NA	100%	Chair x 1 Reviewer x 1
MT Adult Services	100%	4	75%	NA	100%	NA	Reviewer x 1
MT Public Protection	50%	0	50%	75%	NA	0%	
MT Education	25%	0	NA	100%	NA	41%	
Cwm Taf University Health Board	75%	10	100%	100%	90%	75%	
South Wales Police	100%	7	100%	100%	100%	75%	Reviewer x 1
National Probation Service	50%	0	50%	75%	66%	58%	
Wales Community Rehabilitation Company	25%	0	0%	25%	0%	0%	
Third Sector	50%	2	50%	25%	66%	0%	Chair x 1
Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service	100%	2	NA	100%	NA	100%	Chair x 1
National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales)	100%	2	25%	0%	0%	0%	Reviewer x 2
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust	50%	0	0%	0%	55%	33%	

The statutory Board members provide financial contributions to the Board in line with the formula set out in the statutory guidance as follows:

Agency	% Split	% Split
Rhondda-Cynon-Taf CBC	61.02%	80%
Merthyr Tydfil CBC		20%
Cwm Taf UHB	23.73%	
South Wales Police	10.17%	
Probation Service	5.08%	50%
Wales Community Rehabilitation Company		50%
Totals	100.00%	100%

Individual agencies are requested to report to the Board on the outcome of internal agency reviews and inspections to support effective challenge at a multi-agency strategic level. In 2017/18 the following report was presented to the Board:

- CSSIW Inspection of Safeguarding in Rhondda Cynon Taf - the recommendations were noted by the Board and assurances were provided that these would be incorporated into the local authority's Adult Services Delivery Plan

The introduction of an 'Agency Hot Topics' section on the Board agenda provides individual partners an opportunity to raise any areas of concern or share success. For example at the Board meeting in March 2018, the following agency updates were noted and discussed:

- Merthyr Tydfil CBC – Children's Services Inspection commencing and request for partner agencies to be involved
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC - Request for the Board to take part in the review and evaluation of Delayed Transfers of Care following a tough winter for services
- Cwm Taf UHB – A review will be brought to the Board with regards to a Health Inspectorate Wales investigation
- Third Sector – Issue with meeting the demand for Level 1 and Level 2 Safeguarding Training

In addition to the above, each partner has provided a summary below of their contributions during 2017/18 as follows:

Cwm Taf University Health Board

The Director of Nursing, Head of Safeguarding and Deputy Head of Safeguarding are all active members of the Safeguarding Board and its Sub Groups. The Head of Safeguarding chairs the Joint Operational Committee which scrutinises the work of all the Board Sub Groups, ensuring they deliver against their work plans and the Board's overall objectives. In addition, she is the chair of the Adult Review Group, is Vice-chair of the DoLS Operational Committee and has facilitated workshops around specific issues at the request of the Board.

The Deputy Head of Safeguarding represents the UHB on all other sub-groups of the Board, chairs the Training and Learning Group and facilitates the wider engagement of the UHB in the work of the Safeguarding Board.

The UHB has an Executive Safeguarding Group and two Operational Safeguarding Groups one each for adults and children. The work of the Safeguarding Board including APRs and CPRs is discussed at these meetings as standard agenda items. The UHB also produces its annual report in relation to safeguarding and public protection which is shared with the Safeguarding Board.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)

MTCBC has engaged proactively in the work of the Board during the year through attendance at Board, Sub Groups and a number of Task and Finish groups. In addition, staff have also been involved in the following:

- Vice Chair of Case Review Group
- Vice Chair of Adult Quality Assurance Group
- Chair of Protocols and Procedures Group
- Led on development and implementation of Life Journey work
- Led on the development of transition principles
- Contributed to a number of quality assurance audits and the development of action plans to support practice improvement
- Involved in the development of Board protocols and policies

MTCBC has also contributed significantly to the ongoing development of the Cwm Taf MASH including being involved in workshops to ensure that practice is consistent across all agencies. This has contributed to the development of the quality assurance process within the MASH.

A joint case audit has been undertaken, involving both Children and Adult Services and the learning from this was shared via an internal staff event. The impact of this has resulted in a better understanding of each area's processes and procedures and legal gateways for action being taken.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

In 2017/18 RCT Children and Adult Services have continued to contribute a comprehensive level of staffing, physical and financial resources to enable the Board to be effective in its operation. This has included:

- Chair of 3 Sub Groups and Vice Chair of 4 Sub Groups
- Membership on all Board Sub Groups
- Contributed to specific Task and Finish Groups e.g. Life Journey work and Transition
- Led on development of 3 new Protocols/Policies
- Co-ordination of Safeguarding Board Training Programme and provision of practitioner trainers
- Led on the introduction of the Cwm Taf Multi-Agency Risk Assessment tool

RCTCBC has ensured that regular performance information is reported to the Board, with a focus on specific groups of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse and in need of safeguarding. This supports effective challenge amongst partner agencies and work with service providers to develop earlier identification and preventative services.

There continues to be an emphasis on the priorities of the Board to support effective inter-agency safeguarding practice and processes, robust quality assurance and information sharing systems. RCTCBC continue to support the MASH and its ongoing development and monitoring of multi-agency safeguarding practice through the Quality Assurance Sub Groups. This has enabled us to identify any professional learning needs and gaps in the provision of safeguarding training, and to address this internally and with the support of the Board.

RCTCBC has also continued to contribute towards the well-received programme of Multi Agency Practitioner Events to share learning from audits and reviews with a wide audience of practitioners involved in safeguarding.

RCT Children's Services has been proactive in engaging with its community. For example we have undertaken age appropriate consultation with Looked After children and young people, their parents and carers on what matters to them and have used our new web based platforms to further improve our engagement with the wider community, children, young people and parents/carers.

Both RCT Adult and Children's Services used the National Safeguarding Week to engage with adults, children and young people in order to raise awareness of issues relating to abuse and neglect. Whilst Safeguarding Week provided an excellent platform, there have been events throughout the year that promote engagement and involvement.

South Wales Police

South Wales Police continues to demonstrate its commitment to safeguarding within Cwm Taf, this is epitomised through a re-structuring and alignment of the functions of the Public Protection Unit and the Integrated Offender Management Unit under a single Senior Manager. The relocation of all staff onto a single floor of Pontypridd Police Station incorporating the MASH has created a single floor for safeguarding.

Significant resources have been invested in uplifting the establishment of the Public Protection Unit staff and created the following new roles to complement existing functions and to provide some additionality to areas where closer partnership work will provide better and more timely intervention including:

- A new Detective Sergeant post within the Missing Persons team, thus providing resilience and enabling the large volumes and safeguarding concerns to be better managed
- Increasing the Protecting Vulnerable Persons Officers three fold thus allowing the creation of the MASH Initial Assessment Team who now work alongside colleagues in the local authority. This provides an improved partnership response to managing the initial assessment of cases where crimes could have occurred

Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS)

The Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service is fully aligned to the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board of which the YOS Head of Service is a member. There is significant YOS representation on the safeguarding Board sub groups including the Engagement, Participation and Communications group which is chaired by the YOS Head of Service. An Operational Manager also attends the Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) meeting and chairs the multi agency child exploitation strategy meetings.

During 2017/18 the YOS was involved in two Child/Adult Practice Reviews. The events contained a strong focus on the issue of transition into adulthood, and the YOS was central to the learning events attended by all partners across the region.

National Probation Service (NPS)

The NPS always ensure that relevant staff attend Board meetings and Sub Groups. The information gathered at these meetings is cascaded to NPS managers at monthly strategic and operational management meetings. Managers are tasked with cascading all relevant information, including new policies and procedures to operational staff.

NPS attend all relevant APR and CPR panel meetings and share learning from these cases. All staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training. NPS have staff based in the Cwm Taf MASH and, as a result staff are able to respond quickly to any safeguarding concerns. This has included recalling perpetrators to prison and enables swift referrals at Court.

NPS across the Board understand how instrumental safeguarding is to daily business and this permeates from the Senior Managers to operational staff who recognise that safeguarding is a fundamental part of day to day work. This ensures staff prioritise attendance at child protection conferences, contributing to core groups and sharing of information pertaining to risks.

Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)

Wales CRC has introduced a new operating model which has included a reduction in a number of staff. In turn, this has impacted on the ability to attend all Board meetings, but since the transformation period has concluded, Wales CRC is now better equipped to meet more requirements of the Board and its Sub Groups.

Quality assuring safeguarding practice is extremely important and risk assessments are carried out for all cases. Recently, a new observation policy for staff has been introduced which includes questions on safeguarding and an internal quality team complete thematic audits of work. A suite of online training is in place which includes safeguarding.

National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales)

A Designated Professional from the NST (NHS Wales) attends Board meetings. The NST (NHS Wales) works in collaboration with safeguarding partners to drive forward and agree national standards, policy and practice guidelines to ensure best practice is achievable throughout organisations. The NST works collaboratively with stakeholders/partners to ensure that safeguarding is a priority and to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding. This has included:

- Facilitating the Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDIC) and development of the revised policy
- Supporting Child/Adult Practice Reviews as an independent reviewer

Wales Ambulance Service NHS Trust

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust achieves the safeguarding objectives of each Regional Safeguarding Board by effectively working together to ensure good outcomes for people who have contact with the service.

Activity during 2017-18 to prevent, protect and support individuals and their families within the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board region has included the following:

WAST Child at Risk Referrals to Local Authority	173
WAST Adult at Risk Referrals to Local Authority	35
WAST Adult Social Care Need Referrals to Local Authority	126

Opportunity for increased engagement has been promoted by attendance at the Regional Board meetings and involvement in the associated work plans. This has included participation as panel members in Child and Adult Practice Reviews and attendance at associated Learning Events. All learning is incorporated into WAST Safeguarding training, policies and procedures as appropriate.

WAST is also represented on a number of the Board sub groups.

9. Managing our Resources

The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

In 2017/18 expenditure was as follows:

Staff	£165,192
Premises	£6,360
Other	£19,730

Training costs are not included as this sits outside the Board budget.

It is acknowledged resources used to support the work of the Board are not confined or restricted to financial contributions from statutory partner agencies. The Board Chairs, Members, Sub Group Chairs and Sub group members provide a significant amount of the time to support the board and its work. This is often in addition to their identified professional roles and day to day responsibilities. The variable and diverse nature of the Board's work makes this difficult to report on within a quantifiable and measurable resource context and is not always obviously visible to other professionals and agencies. The process, management and publication of Child and Adult Practice Reviews, as well as the development of regional protocols and policies are just some examples of the work that require high levels of professional input, knowledge and expertise.

10. Safeguarding Themes

What did we say?

In 2017/18 the Board agreed to undertake a programme of audit and review work via the Quality Assurance Sub Groups. The purpose was to identify themes and trends to inform best practice in relation to safeguarding and share these with our partners.

How have we achieved this?

The Board carried out a range of audits and reviews during the year, both thematic and on an individual case basis. The themes identified from some of these audits are provided in the table on the next page:

SUBJECT/ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED	RECOMMENDATIONS	DISSEMINATION METHOD	OUTCOME
Recording of Strategy Discussions for Adults	Delays in proceeding to strategy discussion Recording of rationale for decisions requiring improvement	Guidance to be developed, staff training and evaluation of impact Improvements to record rationale for decision making	Findings were shared with DLMs	Subsequent audits and one to ones with staff have evidenced improvements
Adult cases where transfer from Local Authority to Health exceeded timescales	Section 126 enquiries not completed within timescale Cases could have been closed at strategy discussion and transferred to Health	Health representative to be invited to attend strategy discussions if the concern relates to a health setting Relevant documentation to be completed by Health staff to avoid delays	Shared with relevant Local Authority and Health staff	Follow up audit to be carried out in 2018/19 Health have evidenced that the relevant documentation is now consistently completed
Review of Criminal Investigations (Adults)	The Designated Lead Manager not always being updated in a timely manner Police lack of understanding over pressure ulcers and capacity issues and how these impact on each other	Training for Police Officers around pressure ulcers Improve Police feedback to the Designated Lead Manager throughout the investigation All investigations to be progressed in a timely manner	Feedback findings to Police Public Protection teams	All actions completed and evidence that there has been an improvement
Individual Case Audits (Adults) x 3	Police not always being called to attend an incident Some incidents not being reported to safeguarding and the Care Inspectorate Wales Self-neglect, risky and unmanageable behaviour	Police to be called to an incident, where appropriate, to assess Reporting of incidents - to be shared with adult safeguarding team and Care Inspectorate Wales Development of a Self Neglect protocol	Themes identified remitted to the Training and Learning Group and incorporated into future safeguarding training	1 case proceeded to an Adult Practice Review, 1 case still being considered and the other subject to a Multi Agency Practitioner Forum Self Neglect Protocol to be considered in 2018/19

SUBJECT/ ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED	RECOMMENDATIONS	DISSEMINATION METHOD	OUTCOME
Children who are placed on the Child Protection Register having been registered previously	Use of critical questions in core groups and conferences - unclear whether these are being asked Risk Taking Behaviour evident in young people Parental Substance Misuse A need to improve the quality of case notes Delays in specialist assessments	Use of critical questions in Core Groups and Conference to assess risk levels Multi agency planning meetings to be held regularly Clear evidence of work needs to be recorded Referrals to be communicated clearly and followed up in writing	Findings shared with partner agencies via Quality Assurance Sub group	Cases monitored via Quality Assurance Sub Group
Children on the Child Protection Register who are also looked after	Audit completed for Rhondda Cynon Taf identified 13 children subject to dual status	Children in foster care should only be on the CPR under exceptional circumstances	Findings shared with partner agencies via Quality Assurance Group	4 cases remain on the Register; 3 subject to the Challenging Cases and the other subject to S76 accommodation
Individual Case Audits (Children) x 8	Lack of communication between partners Neglect tool not being completed by staff Missed opportunities to engage with family Honour based Violence Working with young people from traveller communities	Agencies need to be more proactive in challenging Conference discussions and decisions. MASH staff to complete training on Honour Based Violence Staff to complete training in Working with Traveller Communities to understand the needs of these communities.	Findings shared with partner agencies via Quality Assurance Sub group	Cases monitored via Quality Assurance Sub Group

Child and Adult Practice Reviews

The Board published Practice Reviews on two young adults during 2017/18. Recommendations from these reports included a focus on the following themes;

THEME / RECOMMENDATION	OUTCOME / UPDATE
A need to review the processes for the escalation of difficult cases in both children and adults	Challenging Cases for Children on the CPR in place - May 2017 Challenging Cases for Adults - being considered 2018/19
A need to review the arrangements for transition planning for children when they become adults	Transition Champion leading on Task and Finish group to develop Transition principles - to be implemented in 2018/19
Ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place when commissioning specialist placements for vulnerable people.	Liaison with 4 Cs and assurances from both local authorities that safeguards are in place
Ensuring that safeguarding training reflects the learning from Adverse Childhood Experiences	Included in Training and Learning Group work plan for 2018/19
A need for the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures to include a process for escalation of challenging cases	Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board representation on Project Board to influence the procedures
A need to review relevant hospital discharge policies and identify any improvements that could be made	Request submitted to Cwm Taf University Health Board - awaiting outcome
A recommendation to remove a child's name from the child protection register should be informed by re-assessment which evidences that risk has reduced	Audit of cases carried out by Quality Assurance Sub Group Critical questions now being used and new Multi Agency Risk Assessment Framework in place
Reporting under the Challenging Cases Protocol should provide assurances that it is effective in achieving positive outcomes	Evaluation to be carried out in 2018/19
Remind practitioners about procedures and protocol in relation to the management of harmful sexual behaviour	Awaiting updated guidance from Welsh Government

THEME / RECOMMENDATION	OUTCOME / UPDATE
<p>A need to ensure that the Youth to Adult (Y2A) Transitions Principles are having a positive impact for young people who are experiencing the change from working with the Youth Offending Service to the National Probation Service for adults</p>	<p>Y2A process not yet in place. Monitor in 2018/19</p>
<p>Vulnerable prisoners who are reported by professionals to be experiencing mental illness should have access to psychiatric assessment without delay</p>	<p>Letter submitted to Western Bay Safeguarding Board requesting that this is taken into consideration</p>

Action plans are being monitored by the Board's Adult and Child Review Groups to ensure that the recommendations are carried out. Subsequent audits and reviews have evidenced that the recommendations are already being achieved.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

Waiting list audits have been featured throughout the year in the DoLS Quality Assurance Group's audit schedule. However, other audits have also been undertaken, all of which have evidenced a high quality of DoLS practice at both an Assessor and Supervisory Body level. Themes coming out of these audits include:

- Translating learning from training into practice remains a priority for staff
- Some indication as to the patient's wishes/feelings about being in hospital would provide greater personalisation in hospital DoLS cases
- Care Homes not notifying the Supervisory Bodies about hospital admissions

Themes from Child Deaths

The Board identified a continuing need to raise awareness in a way that can change behaviour in relation to the dangers of co-sleeping for babies. As a result, a Safer Sleeping Campaign was carried out to raise awareness of the importance of 'safer sleeping' for infants. This included a series of interactive practical literature for parents as well as an event for health professionals which introduced a protocol for Safer Sleeping.

11. Engagement, Participation and Communication

Priority Outcome - Communications and Engagement

What did we say?

The Board wishes to be proactive in engaging with its communities and people should be given the opportunity to participate in the work of the Board.

How have we achieved this?

The Board has been proactive in raising awareness of safeguarding and how everyone is able to contribute to keeping people safe.

The Board ensures that participation is as inclusive as possible given the various needs of professionals, children, young people and adults at risk. This has enabled us to improve our engagement opportunities and ensure that the views of people contribute to developing best practice, and that frontline staff are integral to informing the improvement of learning and development.

This has been supported by a number of engagement activities and consultation with the people who use our services throughout the year. These included:

Safeguarding Week 13-19 November 2017

- Over 100 events and activities took place across Cwm Taf with over half of these aimed at the general public, including well attended community consultation and awareness events held in accessible venues
- Events aimed at professionals included training around 'hot topics' such as cyber security, radicalisation, modern slavery and human trafficking, domestic abuse and older adults, safeguarding in sport and skin hygiene
- Events specifically for children and young people included safer alcohol use, homelessness, mental health, healthy relationships, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and respect
- Young people who are looked after designed a logo for Safeguarding Week that was used across Wales and by Welsh Government

'Looking for Callum' Spectacle Theatre March 2018

An interactive theatre workshop for young people to explore Child Sexual Exploitation and grooming was held with 30 young people of Year 6 from a number of schools in Cwm Taf. The outcome of this was:

- The pupils readily and fully engaged with the characters and the story
- The participation enabled them to explore and play with the situation presented
- The workshop challenged their ability to act in ways that would keep them safe
- It exposed how vulnerable young people can be in the potential and real circumstances of grooming behaviour
- The participation in the drama enabled the young people to reveal what they understand and to speak from their specific experience

‘How to cope with everyday life’ Student Conference

This conference was held with children from schools in Merthyr Tydfil and was attended by Sally Holland, the Childrens Commissioner for Wales.

Nine workshops were held covering topics such as substance misuse, mental health, racism, physical health and healthy relationships. Presentations were delivered on Mental Health, Sexual Relationship Education and a Smoke Free Toolkit. Closing speeches were given by Youth Mayor, Lauren Davies and Deputy Youth Mayor, Jenna Noble.

Wellbeing Day for Members of Public / Service Users / Carers and Professionals

- Over 100 people attended this event which involved open sessions for the public and talks on wellbeing and relaxation
- The event identified a common lack of information about Safeguarding and where to get information on safeguarding
- Links were made to local groups to raise awareness of safeguarding
- Public and staff were interested to learn more about Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Engagement through Child and Adult Protection process, Child Practice Reviews and Adult Practice Reviews

▪ Child Protection

The views of families involved in the Child Protection Conference process are important. An example of positive feedback was captured in RCT where a family commented after an Initial Conference that they had been very frightened and anxious about the meeting, but that it had been much better than expected because the chair had made them feel respected and they had been able to express their views and had felt listened to.

▪ Adult Protection

RCT completed a qualitative survey of people who were receiving care and support which has confirmed that 79% of adults who are receiving care and support reported that they feel safe, with 15% reporting they feel safe some of the time. This is an improvement on 2016/17 when 76% reported they feel safe.

An Adult at Risk satisfaction survey pilot in RCT produced limited results and alternative ways of collecting feedback need to be considered in 2018/19.

▪ Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Individuals representing a range of partner agencies were invited to participate in the annual consultation survey to assess their understanding and perceptions of the MASH. This survey was also conducted in the previous three years. Responses from the latest consultation survey demonstrate that most respondents feel that the MASH has made a positive difference to safeguarding in Cwm Taf. Key conclusions are noted below (from a total of 145 responses):

- 92% of respondents felt that the MASH has improved safeguarding in Cwm Taf (compared to 94% in 2017 and 87% in 2016)
- 89% felt that the MASH has improved outcomes for vulnerable people
- 70% felt that information sharing is effective compared to 83% in last year’s survey

- 84% felt that decision making and threshold levels have improved (20% were unsure and 6% felt this has deteriorated)
- 57% felt that systems have improved (34% were unsure and 9% felt that they have deteriorated)
- 65% felt that MASH has made a positive difference to their role (19% felt that it has made a negative difference and 17% were unsure)

CASE STUDY - Feedback from School

I wanted to express my thanks for the speedy and efficient service provided by MASH last night. It was my first experience dealing with what, at the time, seemed like an urgent case.

I called the team just after 2pm with a case and discussed with the duty officer. She asked me to send the referral form as soon as possible and, in the meantime, discussed the case with her supervisor. At 2:50 just as school finished I spoke to the officer who took my mobile number and convened a strategy meeting.

She called me back about half an hour later having assembled all the required people. Following the decision to allocate the case to Children's Services, the assigned social worker drove down to the school. She'd asked me to contact the parents and had given me a script to reduce tensions. She spoke to the child and parents separately, then mediated between them together and agreed the outcomes with me. We all left by 5:30pm.

Thankfully it does not seem that any further action needs to be taken but most importantly the child was able to go home having been listened to and having had professional support in a difficult situation.

Child/Adult Practice Reviews

Positive feedback was received from a family member of a person subject to a joint Child/Adult Practice Review. This is summarised below:

Thank you to you both, for the work you did, for the care and attention you have paid to mine and my family's experience and of course (my family member). Thank you again, it has meant more than you know to be listened to, and to have had a real positive experience.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

A survey of family DoLS Representatives was undertaken, which demonstrated that many Representatives feel confident in their role, although some felt they would benefit from more information and support.

In response, it was agreed to adopt an 'active offer' approach to advocacy support for Representatives, so that (unless there is a clear objection), all Representatives will be sent an introductory letter by the Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service for Cwm Taf. This has changed our practice in so far as we are all now much more proactively referring for advocacy support.

Ensure that there is appropriate public-facing literature published to raise awareness of safeguarding and the work of the Board

- Undertaken a review of literature and the development of an in-house, as well as an online, resource library
- Developed an accessible leaflet in partnership with RCT People's First
- Developed a substance misuse education leaflet in partnership with TEDS
- Worked with looked after young people to develop a leaflet and poster for peers
- Review of the public literature for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Redesign of the biannual E-Bulletin for practitioners so that it is more interactive

This work has also included further developing the Board's website

- Complete redesign of the Board website to improve usability
- Revamped the Domestic Abuse page including the addition of new links, easier access and improved signposting information
- Addition of new sections including a resources tab where users are able to find Practice Reviews, useful links and information for the public and professionals

12. Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs)

The statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the arrangements for these civil orders to be used by a local authority to enable an authorised officer to speak in private with a person suspected of being an adult at risk.

The Board has ensured that there are 4 authorised officers in Cwm Taf who are appropriately trained and that a regional process has been put in place. To date, no orders have been sought in Cwm Taf.

13. Information Training and Learning

Priority Outcome - Training and Learning

What did we say?

The priority for 2017/18 was for the Board to ensure that safeguarding inter-agency training and dissemination of learning and research is used to support a more confident and knowledgeable multi agency workforce.

How have we achieved this?

Safeguarding Training

The Board's Training and Learning Group (TALG) continues to monitor multi-agency training and identify any gaps in provision.

The Group has experienced a number of chair changes during the last year and this has resulted in a level of instability and challenge in relation to the function and delivery of its objectives. Despite these difficulties, many of the key themes from legislation and local safeguarding learning have been incorporated into the multi-agency training programme. A new chair and vice chair have now been appointed, enabling the group to re-focus for the coming year.

During the year, 150 multi-agency safeguarding training courses were delivered to 2,542 delegates in Cwm Taf. In addition to the Levels 1-3 Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults courses, topics included:

- Domestic Abuse
- Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups
- Over 50s Alcohol Awareness
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Dementia Care
- Mental Capacity Act and DoLS training

Agencies attending training included:

- RCTCBC (1,390 delegates)
- MTCBC (235 delegates)
- Health (324 delegates)
- Police (14 delegates)
- Probation (8 delegates)
- Foster Carers (46 delegates)
- Housing providers (71 delegates)

New courses delivered this year included:

▪ **Reduction of Suicide and Self Harm**

A Training Delivery Group was re-established during 2017/18 to review the existing training pack and deliver two courses before the end of the financial year. This was achieved with 35 people from a range of agencies attending. Four more courses are planned for 2018/19.

▪ **Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

Cwm Taf became the second phase pilot area for 'Ask and Act' training which was commissioned by Welsh Government and delivered by Welsh Women's Aid.

It was agreed via the Cwm Taf Public Services Board that the training should become part of the Safeguarding training governance structure.

A VAWDASV training delivery group was established and three 'Train the Trainer' courses were delivered to 23 Cwm Taf staff between December 2017 and February 2018.

▪ **Practice Review Training**

The pool of appropriately skilled reviewers/facilitators to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews has been increased following a 2 day training course, commissioned by Welsh Government. This was attended by 14 professionals from Board agencies.

Multi Agency Practitioner Events

The Board hosted a number of Multi Agency Practitioner events this year to share learning with a wide range of practitioners involved in safeguarding.

- DoLS Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum: Learning from local Cases in the Court of Protection (20 delegates attended)
- Feedback on three adult safeguarding cases
- Feedback on one child safeguarding case in Merthyr Tydfil (see Case Study Section 5 of this report)

A workshop was held in March 2018, hosted by the Barnardo's Gwella Project to deliver initial findings from research exploring the link between early trauma and children and young people at risk of experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation or demonstrating Sexually Harmful Behaviour (SHB). This was attended by 20 practitioners who all gave positive feedback and felt that their staff would benefit from this information.

For Safer Internet Day, RCTCBC and the Police placed information on their public-facing websites to highlight the dangers of, and ways to keep safe when, using the Internet. This ranged from information about on-line banking, internet shopping and safe use of social media. RCT also launched a new e-learning module for staff on safe social media use.

In November 2017, an Interactive Workshop on Domestic Violence & Older People was held, in partnership with Action on Elder Abuse Cymru. The session was designed to raise awareness amongst professionals of the issues around this topic. 27 people attended from a range of agencies, discussions and problem solving activities were held and as a result, recommendations were remitted to a National Conference in February 2018.

A 'Preventing Skin Breakdown & Pressure Ulcers in Health & Social Care' conference took place in February 2018. 51 professionals from a variety of health and social care backgrounds attended and rated the event as very useful (37) or useful (3). Respondents highlighted the multi-agency aspect of the training as being central in enabling them to understand how pressure ulcer care is managed within a safeguarding framework. Many described how they will apply the learning to their role in order to prevent harm and to effectively respond to safeguarding concerns where pressure damage is avoidable.

As part of National Safeguarding Week 2017 the Board hosted a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Conference. The objectives of the event were to raise awareness amongst professionals of their statutory duties and the duties of first responder agencies, to find out about the National Referral Mechanism and to provide an overview of support services available in Wales. There was a series of interactive workshops for professionals using real life case studies to further their understanding of people who had been trafficked. Speakers included Steve Chapman (Anti –Slavery Co-ordinator for Wales) and Jan Pickles (National Independent Safeguarding Board). 83 professionals attended the event with 80% saying that it was better than expected, 90% of people rated it very good and 97% said that it was very useful to the work that they did.

Dissemination of Information

The Board continues to use the Cwm Taf Safeguarding website to share a range of information to public and professionals. This year, two E-Bulletins for professionals were published which included a range of topics and news items.

Other items of information sent to partners included:

- NSPCC newsletters
- Policies and procedures – added to website and disseminated via email to professionals.
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – working with Welsh Government to set up a website page with useful resources.
- Trafficked campaign advertised on the website as part of county lines awareness raising

14. Guidance and Advice received from the Welsh Ministers and/or the National Board

The conclusions contained in the National Board's Annual Report in October 2017 were considered when developing this year's Annual Report and have informed its structure.

A member of the National Board attends Board meetings on a quarterly basis as well as attending other key meetings such as the Board Development Day.

Are You Concerned About Someone?

If you suspect that a **child or young person** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425006
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000

Opening Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you suspect that an **adult** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about vulnerable adults at risk are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425003
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000

Opening Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

To contact Children or Adults Services outside office hours, at weekends and bank holidays, ring:

Cwm Taf Emergency Duty Team on **01443 743665**.

If you suspect that a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police.

If you would like to report a non-urgent incident, or have a problem or general query, you can call 101, the 24 hour non-emergency number for the police. **Use 101 when the incident is less urgent than 999.**

Remember - safeguarding is everyone's business!

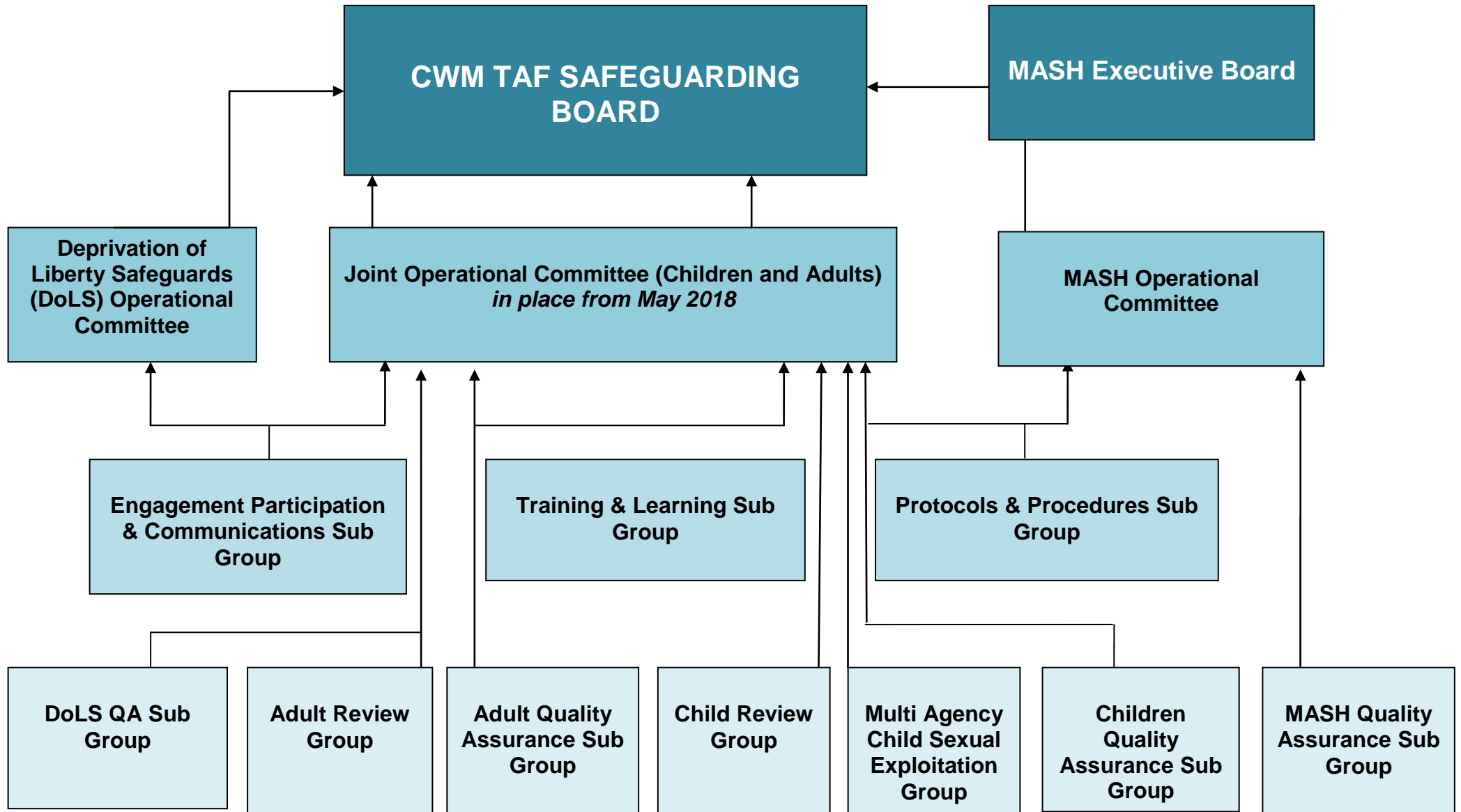
For more information and advice visit: www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org

APPENDIX 1 BOARD MEMBERSHIP

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY
Gio Isingrini	Director of Community and Children's Services (Co-Chair)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Philip Howells	Head Of Community Housing Services	
Jackie Neale	Adult Safeguarding Service Manager	
Neil Elliot	Service Director, Adult Services	
Julie Clark	Head of Safeguarding and Support (Children)	
Esther Thomas	Temporary Director Education and Lifelong Learning	
Ann Batley	Service Director, Children Services	
Lisa Curtis-Jones	Chief Officer, Social Services (Co-Chair)	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Alex Beckham	Safeguarding Principal Manager	
Alyn Owen	Chief Officer, Community Regeneration	
Susan Walker	Chief Officer, Education	
Annabel Lloyd	Head of Children Services	
Mark Anderton	Head of Adult Services	
Lynda Williams	Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Patient Services	Cwm Taf University Health Board
Jane Randall	Head of Safeguarding	
Phil Ashby	Superintendent	South Wales Police
Beth Aynsley / Sue Hurley	Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager	

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY
Eirian Evans	Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Jo Stephens	Deputy Assistant Chief Executive	Wales Community Rehabilitation Company
Ian Davy	Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Lyndon Lewis	Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Jean Harrington	Director / Interlink Chair	TEDS (Treatment and Education Drug Service)
Linda Davies	Designated Nurse (National Safeguarding Team)	Public Health Wales
Nikki Harvey	Assistant Director for Quality, Safety and Patient Experience	Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

APPENDIX 2 BOARD STRUCTURE



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd OCTOBER 2018

A465 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS DUALLING SECTIONS 5 AND 6 DOWLAI TOP TO HIRWAUN

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR A MORGAN.

AUTHOR: Andrew Griffiths, Head of Highways and Engineering (01443 281117)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the current situation regarding the A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Sections 5 and 6 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the proposals drawn-up by the Welsh Government to dual the existing A465 between Dowlais Top and Hirwaun.
- 2.2 Notes the letter of support from the Welsh Government in respect of the Council's Cynon Gateway North (see Appendix A).
- 2.3 Agrees to the Council supporting the Welsh Government's proposals for the dualling of the A465.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This major improvement to the existing strategic trunk highway network on the A465 i.e. the dualling of the section of the A465 between Dowlais Top and Hirwaun, a length of 17.7km, will see the dualling of this important part of the Welsh Government's strategic road network and Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) Network connecting South and West Wales to the English Midlands. The improvement is not only integral to the national and regional strategic highway network, it is also linked to part of the Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA) Cynon Gateway –

Energizing the Region (based in Hirwaun), but also to the wider economic opportunities for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Cardiff Capital Region.

3.2 The project will have transportation and regeneration benefits including:-

- It will improve capacity and resilience of the A465 for the section concerned which currently experiences congestion during peak hours and will be the final stage of dualling this strategic route.
- It will improve connectivity between Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and the Heads of the Valleys region, west Wales and the Midlands.
- It will facilitate economic regeneration and development of the northern area of RCT, especially the SOA the Cynon Gateway, and encourage investment in the wider area.
- It will provide access to employment across the region for commuters and job seekers to strategically significant employment sites as well as access to key services such as education and health facilities.
- It presents opportunities for businesses and suppliers across the Heads of the Valleys region and Wales as a whole. Businesses and suppliers gain productivity benefits from being close to one another and from access to larger and deeper labour markets.
- It will act as a catalyst for the development and construction of the Cynon Gateway North highway linking to the A4059.
- It will improve reliability and journey times.
- It will enhance road safety and reduce casualties.
- Improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians, providing opportunity for healthy lifestyle and a reduction in short vehicle journeys.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The need to dual the A465 between Abergavenny and Hirwaun was identified in the 1990 South Wales Area Traffic Study. The length between Abergavenny and Hirwaun was identified for upgrade leading to a public consultation in 1994 and the announcement of a Preferred Route in 1995. Between Dowlais Top and Hirwaun, this comprised of widening of the existing A465 corridor with a modification at Hirwaun creating a new off-line section to the south between the Hirwaun and Trewaun junctions

- 4.2 In 1997, a draft Line Order and Environmental Statement was published for the project as well as draft Side Road and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO and SRO) for the sections between Tredegar to Dowlais Top and Abergavenny to Gilwern. A Public Local inquiry followed in 1998 and in 1999 the Line Order for the A465 Abergavenny to Hirwaun was made along with the CPO and SRO.
- 4.3 Development and implementation of the sections of the route has since progressed with only sections 5 and 6 (ie Dowlais Top to Hirwaun) not complete or currently under construction. The Welsh Government and their Technical Advisor, Jacobs, have been developing the outline design of the 1999 Line Order route. This has resulted in the need to publish a draft Amendment Order to the 1999 Line Order for the section between Dowlais Top and Hirwaun by the Welsh Govt.
- 4.4 In July and August 2017, the draft Orders, along with the Environmental Statement and a Statement to Inform and Appropriate Assessment for the Dowlais Top to Hirwaun sections were published and exhibited at the draft Orders Exhibitions held during August 2017.
- 4.5 In April 2018 the Local Public Inquiry for the Dowlais Top to Hirwaun sections of the A465 was held in Merthyr Tydfil and was completed in May. The Inspector's decision is anticipated in September / October 2018.
- 4.6 The A465 passes through the Heads of the Valleys region, an area of economic and social deprivation which has been the subject of regeneration programmes. The problems have been linked in part to poor accessibility to key public services and connectivity between local communities, and the main towns and cities. The Our Valleys, Our Future Delivery Plan and the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal identify the importance of transport improvements to economic growth. The dualling would address congestion, and safety capacity issues completing a dual carriageway route through the Valleys, providing a critical Northern Cross valley link for the Metro and improving the resilience of the City Deal transport network.
- 4.7 The dualling would be likely to deliver wider economic benefits including social impact of improved accessibility, increased social inclusion, improved accessibility for tourists and the perception and attractiveness of the Heads of the Valleys as an area in which to invest.
- 4.8 On 21st September 2017, the Council approved five Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) and in particular the "the Cynon Gateway." In doing so, the Council has committed to developing and delivering projects that will achieve the primary aspirations of this Strategy; namely enabling significant economic growth and jobs. There are three main areas in this SOA; Tower Plateaux, Bryn Pica and Hirwaun

Industrial Estate. The SOA recognises that the Council will need to work with partners on delivering projects and the A465 dualling was noted as being of key importance.

- 4.9 Council officers from various departments have been actively working with the Welsh Government and Jacobs since 2015 in respect to the proposed dualling works within the RCT boundary in order to mitigate any impact on communities, the transportation network and the environment, whilst also seeking to deliver key benefits for the Council such as key transport links, improved junctions and accessibility for development sites.
- 4.10 As a result of the discussions with the Welsh Government and Jacobs on their project, the following has been achieved:
- Inclusion of an additional junction at Croesbychan on the A465 to facilitate the Cynon Valley Gateway North (A4059 Aberdare Bypass extension)
 - Recognition that the Cynon Gateway North will mitigate any effects of the A465 dualling on the local road network, supporting development of the Cynon Valley.
 - Welsh government has committed to working in partnership with RCT to progress development of the Cynon Valley Gateway North Link.
 - Replacement of T-junction at B4276 Merthyr Road and Swansea Road with a roundabout to improve flow of traffic movements.
 - Amendment of tie in details at Hirwaun Interchange and Trewaun roundabout to facilitate for future development in accordance with RCT's LDP.
 - Remediation works to be undertaken to any Welsh Government assets to be handed over to RCT as part of the de-trunking process to insure the assets are fit for purpose at hand-over.
 - Commuted sums being made available for future maintenance of any Welsh Government assets to be transferred to RCTCBC.
 - Agreement on provision of non motorised (active travel) routes as part of the dualling project.

Council officers will continue to work closely with the Welsh Government, their Technical Advisors and the contractor to ensure that the above are achieved.

- 4.11 The project is being funded through the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) and is anticipated to be completed during 2022.
- 4.12 A plan of the proposed route is included at Appendix B.
- 4.13 The A465 dualling is in accord with the following:

Welsh Assembly Government Policy

Wales Spatial Plan (2008)
Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
National Transport Plan (2010, updated 2011)
Active Travel Action Plan for Wales (2016)
Heads of the Valleys Action Plan “Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020”
One Wales : One Planet – the Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales (2009)
Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan (2012)
National Transport Finance Plan (2015)
Road Safety Framework for Wales (2013)
Vibrant and Viable Places (2013)
Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021
Prosperity for All : the national Strategy and Economic Action Plan (2017)
Our Valleys our Future (2017)

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. The A465 dualling Dowlais Top to Hirwaun will enhance existing movements along the strategic highway network and hence between communities.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the stakeholders and parties affected by the A465 dualling Dowlais Top to Hirwaun and these include the Council’s departments, statutory bodies, statutory undertakers and third parties whose land is required for the proposals directly by the Welsh Government and their Technical Advisors.

6.2 Close liaison with RCT will continue throughout the project.

6.3 Further information from the Welsh Government and their consultants can be found on the following websites / links:

<https://beta.gov.wales/a465-section-5-and-6-dowlais-top-hirwaun>

<http://a465-dualling-persona-pi.com/index>

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 The Council has previously obtained funding from the Welsh Government to undertake initial investigations for the Cynon Valley Gateway North, but has not received any funding from 2016/17 onwards.

- 7.2 The current estimated cost of the Cynon Valley Gateway North is £30M and is inclusive of design, construction, land purchase, compensation and risk. It is envisaged that this cost could reduce as further investigation work and preliminary design is undertaken.
- 7.3 The Welsh Government is committed to working in partnership with RCT to progress development of the Cynon Valley Gateway North project with a view to opening the link as soon as it is practicable to do so.
- 7.4 All assets which are to be handed over to RCT as part of the detrunking process will have remediation works to bring up to an adoptable standard and will transfer with an agreed commuted sum for future maintenance.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Part of the land which will be compulsorily acquired by the Welsh Government is in the ownership of RCT.
- 8.2 The powers being exercised by the Welsh Ministers in making the compulsory purchase order and side roads order are sections 10, 12, 14, 125, 239, 240, 246, 250, 260 and 268 Highways Act 1980 and section 2 of, and paragraph 1(1)(b), (3) and (4) of Part 1 of Schedule 2 Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

9 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 9.1 The A465 dualling Dowlais Top to Hirwaun supports a number of the authorities' own plans, policies and strategies that relate not only to transport, but the wider local agenda.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - The A465 dualling Dowlais Top to Hirwaun will help achieve the well-being goals and objectives of the Act. Measures along this transport corridor to reduce journey times and improve reliability will help to improve access to key employment sites in the northern part of the borough. Increasing the proportion of employed residents will support economic growth in the area, help raise household income levels, tackle inequality and generate greater prosperity for communities. The safety issues with the existing route will be alleviated by the project

Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan – Replaces the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) and a number of different partnership plans that were previously produced, including the Community Strategy, Children and Young Peoples Plan, Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy, Community

Safety Plan and Local Housing Strategy. The Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan has been produced by an overarching partnership of organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. The aim is to promote thriving communities, healthy people and a strong economy. These are closely aligned to the Welsh Government's 'Programme for Government Priority Areas'.

Local Development Plan (LDP) – The LDP provides the framework for the development and use of land within Rhondda Cynon Taf. It sets out the objectives and priorities relating to the development and use of land and the policies and proposals for implementing them.

Core Policy CS8 – Transportation, includes specific reference to the A465 dualling (CS8(a)(4)) and the A4059 Aberdare Bypass Extension – Cynon Valley Gateway North (CS8(a)(3)).

Policy NSA8 – Land South of Hirwaun – for construction of 400 dwellings, 36 hectares of employment, a new primary school, a retail store, medical/community centre and informal recreation.

Policy NSA22 – Rail Network and Station Improvements – former freight line between Aberdare and former Tower Colliery and provision of station at Hirwaun.

Policy NSA21.1 – Park and Ride / Park and Share Provision at Strategic Site 5: Land south of Hirwaun.

Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOA's) – The current context of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the Valleys Taskforce means that it is more important than ever to identify where there are key strategic opportunities to work with partners to deliver economic growth in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As such, RCT has identified key strategic opportunity areas to maximise the benefit of economic regeneration and ensure RCT is successful in the global competition for investment. SOA's are geographical areas where resources are focused to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. Each SOA aims to provide a comprehensive and focused package to encourage investment and enterprise. On 21st September 2017, the Council approved five Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) and in particular the "the Cynon Gateway." In doing so, the Council has committed to developing and delivering projects that will achieve the primary aspirations of this Strategy, namely enabling significant economic growth and jobs.

- 9.2 The proposals to dual the A465 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun will make a significant contribution towards the Corporate Priorities "Building a Strong Economy" and "Improving our Communities". The proposal has a significant impact on improving accessibility and connectivity which is

recognised as a fundamental factor in linking the labour market with employment opportunities and supporting economic activity.

- 9.3 It is noted that this Welsh Government project would be in accord with the Corporate Plan commitment to invest in highways infrastructure and to improve the transport network.
- 9.4 On 21st September 2017 Council approved the Strategic Opportunity Areas and in particular the Cynon Gateway.
- 9.5 The dualling of the A465 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun will help support the delivery of a Wales of cohesive communities, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The enhancement of this important transport corridor brings with it not only local benefits but also improved connectivity within the region and nationally delivering greater economic opportunities.
- 10.2 The dualling of the A465 Dowlais Top to Hirwaun will improve journey time reliability, reduce journey times, reduce congestion, improve capacity and safety.
- 10.3 The dualling will aid and act as a catalyst for the Strategic Opportunity Area the Cynon Gateway.
- 10.4 The Welsh Government will work in partnership to implement the Cynon Valley Gateway North highway project which will further facilitate economic regeneration.

Appendices.

- Appendix A – Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, Welsh Government (27/2/2018)
- Appendix B – Plan of proposed sections 5 & 6 HoV Dualling

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

Item: A465 HEADS OF THE VALLEYS DUALLING SECTIONS 5 AND 6 DOWLAIS TOP TO HIRWAUN

Background Papers

Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
National Transport Plan (2010, updated 2011)
Active Travel Action Plan for Wales (2016)
Heads of the Valleys Action Plan "Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020"
One Wales : One Planet – the Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales (2009)
Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan (2012)
National Transport Finance Plan (2015)
Road Safety Framework for Wales (2013)
Vibrant and Viable Places (2013)
Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021
Prosperity for All : the national Strategy and Economic Action Plan (2017)
Our Valleys our Future (2017)

Officer to contact: Andrew Griffiths, Head of Highways and Engineering
(01443 281117)

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Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cllr. Andrew Morgan
Leader Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Andrew.Morgan2@rctcbc.gov.uk

27 February 2018

Dear

Andrew

A465 Heads of the Valleys Dualling Abergavenny to Hirwaun – Sections 5 & 6 Dowlais to Hirwaun.

I am writing to you following the meeting on 19 January 2018 between the Welsh Government's project team and your officers in relation to the above scheme and the recent response from our Technical Advisers, Jacobs to your email dated 6 July. I am grateful for the ongoing input from your officers in providing detailed consideration of our proposals for the A465 dualling between Dowlais and Hirwaun.

I would like to confirm the following in relation to the published scheme.

Impact of the dualling on Llwydcoed and the A4059 Cynon Valley Gateway

It is clear from the figures generated from our traffic modelling that the closure of the Trewaun junction and the re-configuration at the Baverstock junction, proposed as part of the dualling scheme, contributes to a substantial increase in traffic on some of the local roads within the Llwydcoed community.

It is also clear that the construction of the northern extension of the A4059 Aberdare Bypass (known as the Cynon Valley Gateway) makes a significant contribution to mitigating the impact on the local roads in the area by connecting the A4059 to our new junction at Croesbychan, proposed as part of the A465 dualling.

The implementation of the Cynon Valley Gateway contributes to the Value for Money case for the A465 dualling including an increase to the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the scheme.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswilt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government is aware that delivery of the Cynon Valley Gateway scheme to connect the northern end of the A4059 Aberdare Bypass to the A465 is a priority project for Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) as identified in Policy CS8 of the adopted Local Development Plan. The Welsh Government recognises the benefits the scheme can bring in supporting the development of the Cynon Valley area and complementing investment in the A465 dualling.

However, because of the procurement model being used to deliver the A465 dualling and the current stage of development of both schemes, the Welsh Government does not believe it feasible to include the delivery of the Cynon Valley Gateway as part of the dualling scheme.

Instead, I can confirm that the Welsh Government is committed to working in partnership with RCTCBC to progress development of the Cynon Valley Gateway scheme with a view to opening the link as soon as it is practicable to do so to minimise the period of time where the substantial traffic impacts on Llwydcoed arising from the dualling scheme are unmitigated.

The junction provided at Croesbychan as part of the dualling is important in meeting the objectives of the scheme and connecting into the current local road network. However it also accommodates the future connection of the Cynon Valley Gateway onto the improved A465. The project team are working with officers of RCTCBC and your consultants to agree the detail around how the projects would tie-in to each other.

In light of concerns raised by Council Members during consultation, my officials have reviewed the junction arrangements for connecting the B4276 Merthyr Road and Swansea Road. Our plan is to replace the T junction currently proposed in the published scheme with a roundabout in order to improve the flow of traffic movements between the Baverstock Junction and B4276 Merthyr Road. This revised proposal will be implemented during the detailed design stage and will be a contractual requirement.

Tie in details between the A465 dualling and local roads

There have been a number of discussions between Welsh Government's Technical Advisers and your consultants regarding how the published scheme ties in to RCTCBC's local road network and development sites. In particular tie-in proposals at the Hirwaun interchange, the roundabout at Trewaun and access into the proposed NSA8 development as well as the connections at Croesbychan.

It is our understanding that RCTCBC are, in principle, content with the proposals in the published scheme but there remain reservations with the details at the strategic roundabouts that are still to be resolved. Both our Technical Advisers and your consultants are continuing to work to resolve these matters and the agreed proposals will be addressed by our appointed contractor as a contractual requirement at detailed design stage.

I can confirm that the contract documents will include a mandatory requirement for the appointed contractor to consult with yourselves and agree the details of the tie-ins at the strategic junctions etc. during the detailed design phase and prior to construction.

De-Trunking

As you are aware, a consequence of the published scheme is that the length of the existing A465 between Trewaun and Hirwaun will be de-trunked with responsibility and ownership of this length of road handed to RCTCBC.

An inventory of the existing asset features has been prepared along with details of the current asset condition in order to understand the extent of any long term maintenance liabilities that RCTCBC will be taking on in the future.

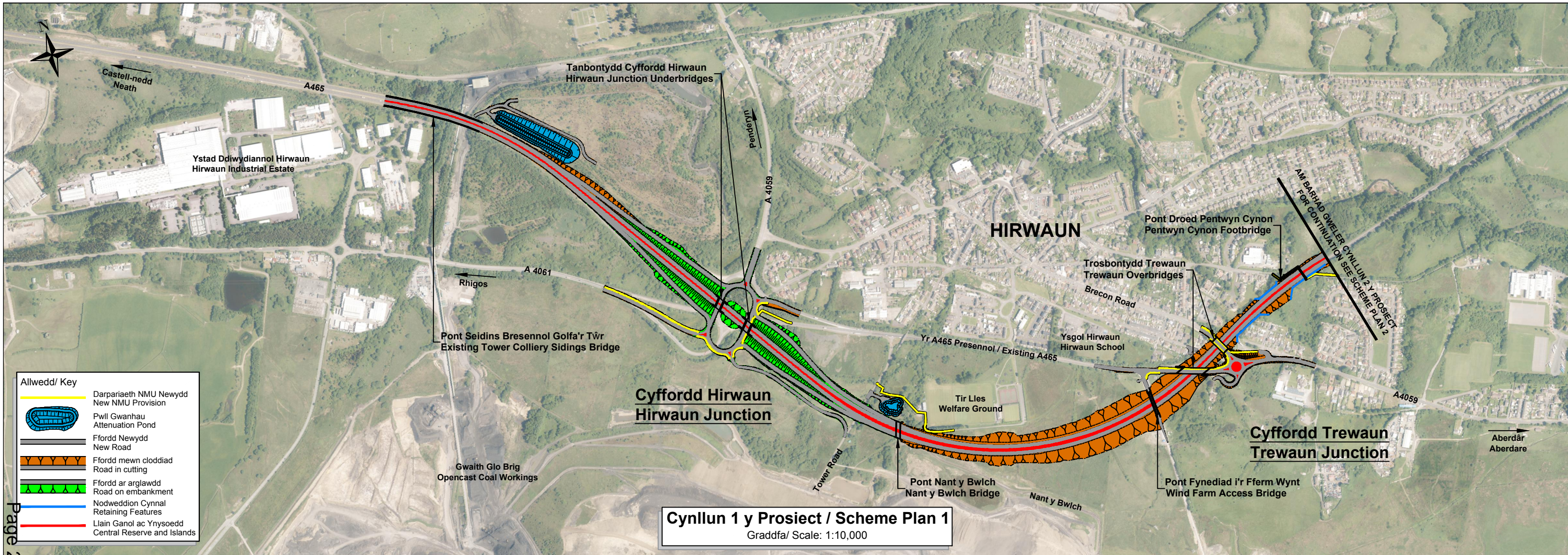
It is agreed that an assessment of the condition of this asset will be undertaken jointly by the Welsh Government and RCTCBC and subsequently any remediation works required to bring the asset up to an agreed standard prior to handover will be undertaken by the Welsh Government. I do not propose that the de-trunking remedial works are undertaken as part of the main contract but are instead procured as a separate works package to follow construction of the dualling which will be procured and administered by the Welsh Government. It is agreed that RCTCBC will receive a commuted sum for future maintenance of the additional assets as a result of the de-trunking works. We will continue to maintain dialogue with yourselves through the next stages of the project in order for this to be achieved.

I trust that this letter clarifies Welsh Government's position in relation to the main areas of concern raised by RCTCBC. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



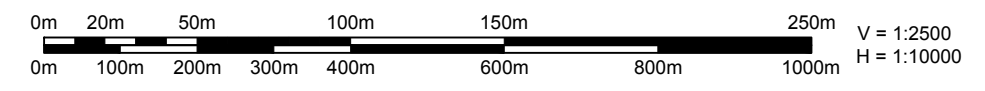
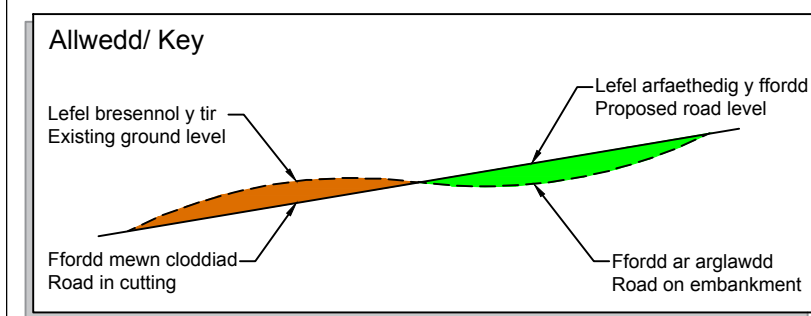
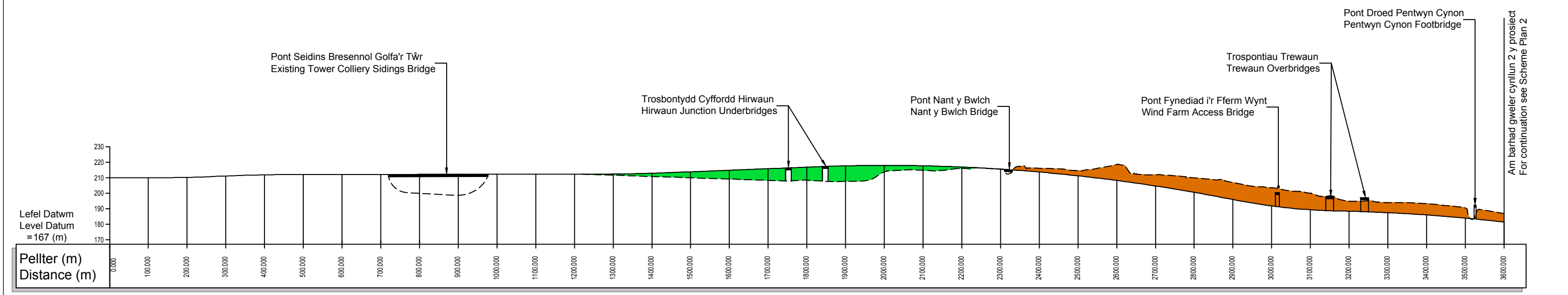
Ken Skates AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport



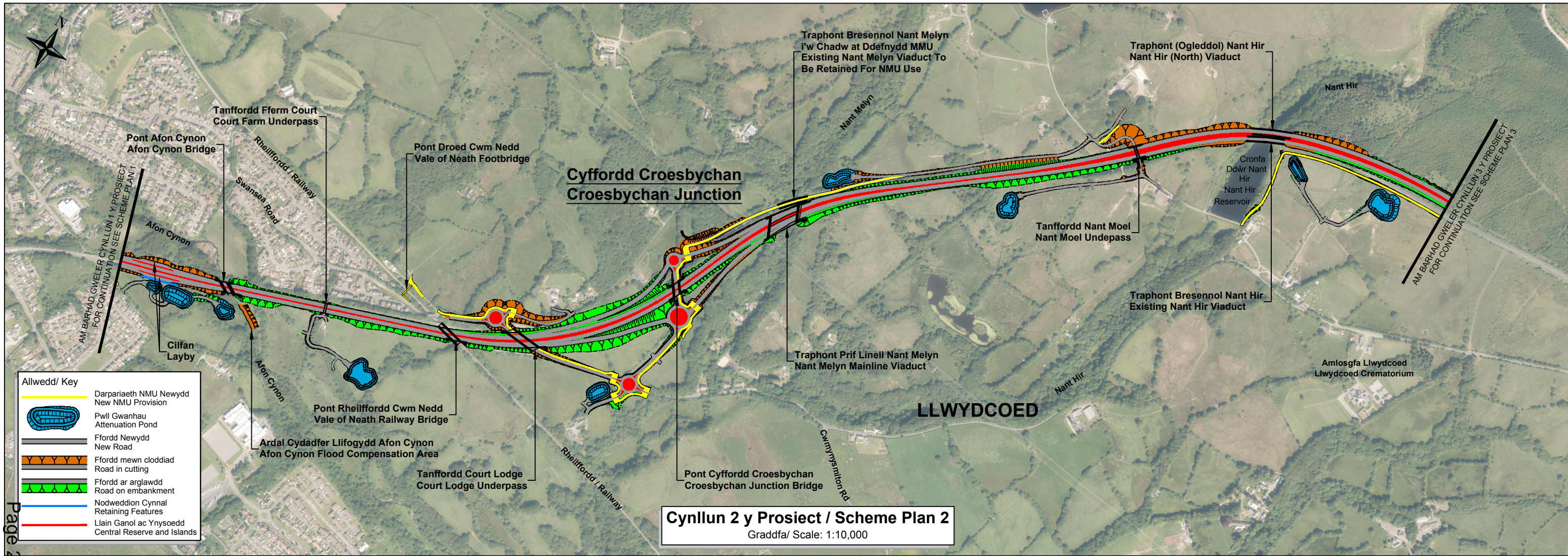
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	Pwll Gwanhau Attenuation Pond
	Ffordd Newydd New Road
	Ffordd mewn cloddiaid Road in cutting
	Ffordd ar arglawdd Road on embankment
	Nodweddion Cynnal Retaining Features
	Llain Ganol ac Ynysoedd Central Reserve and Islands

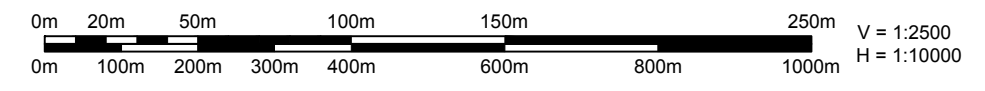
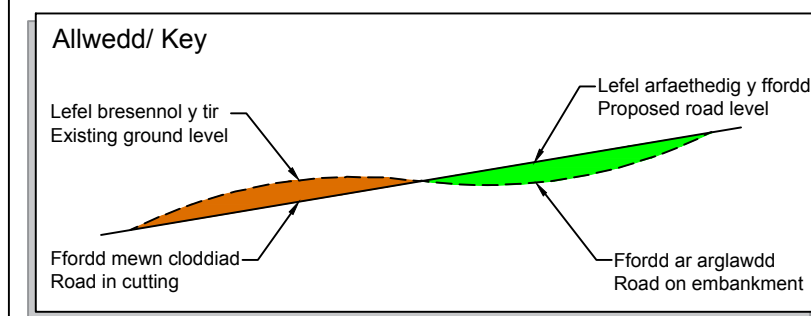
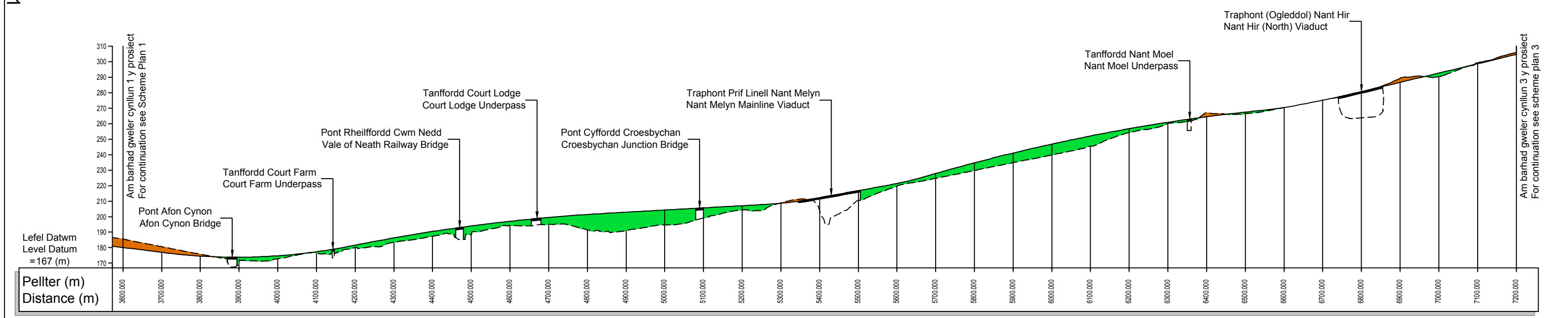
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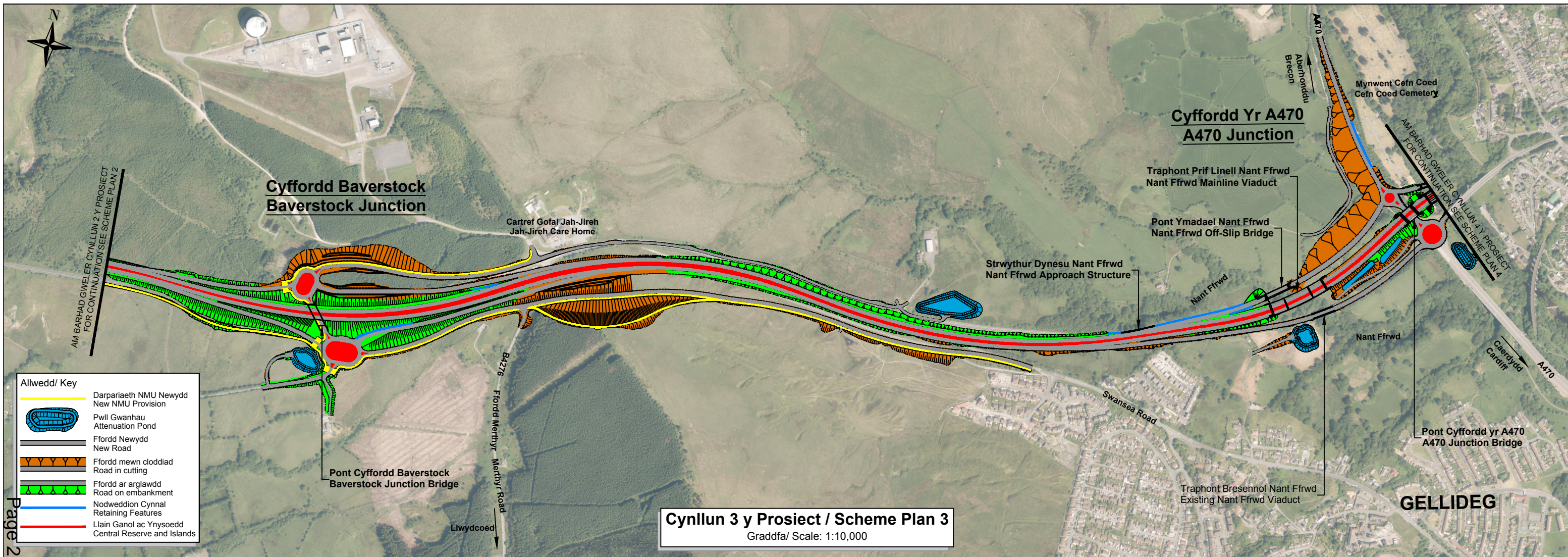
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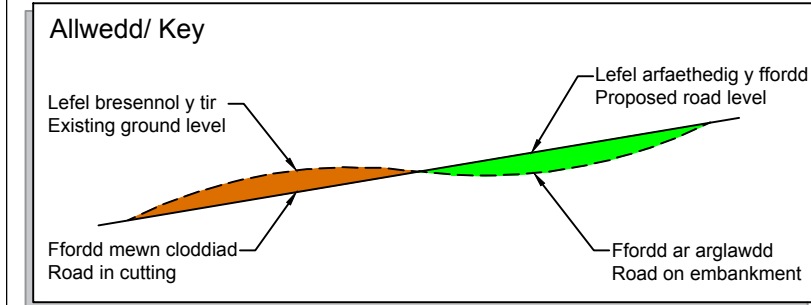
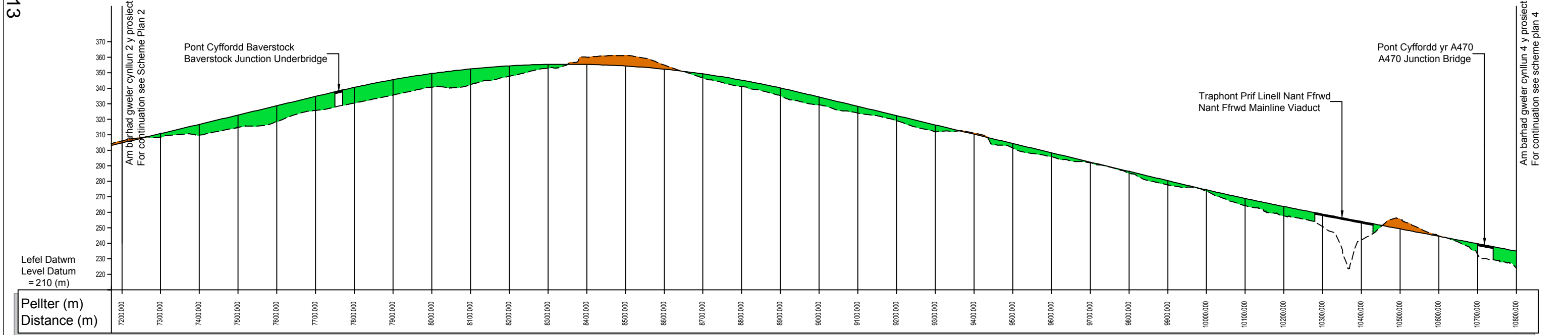


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- Allwedd/ Key**
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Cynllun 3 y Prosiect / Scheme Plan 3
Graddfa/ Scale: 1:10,000



Toriad hydredol yn dilyn llinell ganol y cynllun arfaethedig
Longitudinal section following the centreline of the proposed scheme
Graddfa Lorweddol/ Horizontal Scale - 1:10000
Graddfa Fertigol/ Vertical Scale - 1: 2500



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

Author: Jayne Thomas, Service Improvement, Engagement and Complaint's
Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425449

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.
- 1.2 The report contains information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2017/18 and future developments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report (attached as Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014 that the Local Authority produce an annual report and that the report is considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Social Services has a statutory requirement to operate a complaints procedure that follows the legislative requirements of the regulations specified

above. The guidance requires an annual report to be produced relating to the operation of the complaints procedure.

4.2 The Social Services complaints procedure is available to:

- All service users or their representatives
- Any child with a care and support plan
- A parent of a child with a care and support plan
- A local authority foster parent
- A person who the Authority consider to have sufficient interest in the child's/adult's welfare

It is based upon the principle that people have a right to complain; to have the complaint examined and resolved as quickly as possible.

4.3 The complaints process was amended in August 2014 in line with the new Complaints Regulations and Guidance issued by the Welsh Government and became a two stage process:

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving, whilst adhering to the 15 working days response time that has been imposed under the Regulations.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by the investigating officer appointed to the case. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 25 working days.

4.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two Investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

5. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2017/18

5.1 When analysing complaints, it is important to remember that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided. An increase might indicate the positive view we take towards complaints, together with the fact that people are well informed about how to make a complaint. Given the vulnerability of many people accessing services, it would be worrying if people felt unable to complain if they were dissatisfied with the services they received.

5.2 During the reporting period a total of 162 complaints were received requiring a response at stage one. This is a decrease of 20 complaints when compared to the previous year. Overall, the number of complaints received remains comparatively low in contrast to the number of people that come into contact with Social Services annually.

- 5.3 Across Social Services 52% of stage one complaints were responded to within the required timescale, compared with 59.5% reported last year. This continues to be an area highlighted for improvement and processes have been introduced across both Children's and Adult Services to address both the quality and timeliness of responses to issues raised.
- 5.4 Of the 162 stage one complaints received, 3 progressed to stage two with 1 complaint being received directly at stage 2 of the process. This is a decrease on last year and the number remains low in contrast to the number of people receiving services and demonstrates that the majority of people are happy for the Council to deal with their complaints at a local level and that managers are effectively dealing with the issues raised.
- 5.5 Further details and analysis about the number and causes of complaints and compliments, and the service areas where these have been made, are provided in Appendix 1. The annual report also outlines some of the achievements and developments undertaken by the Complaints Team during the year.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and/or diversity implications from this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report as it provides information on the operation of the Representation and Complaints Unit and direct feedback from service users in relation to how well services are delivered through the monitoring of complaints and compliments.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report and the Work of The Representation and Complaints Unit services is managed within the existing allocated budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The work of the Complaints and Representation Unit is underpinned by the requirements of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. This report has been produced in line with the legislative requirements contained within those procedures.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The function of the Complaints and Representations Team and the collation of service user feedback through both complaints and compliments

provide a quality assurance mechanism by which Adults and Children's Services can measure their performance against the corporate priorities to:

- Provide essential services well, and;
- Ensuring increased levels of satisfaction with people who have contact with Council Services.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure in line with the statutory requirements. Complaints are seen as providing valuable customer feedback, with the information from complaints providing valuable lessons learnt when planning and improving services to meet the needs of our customers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR
HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON**

**REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES
ANNUAL REPORT**

Background Papers

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014

**Officer to contact: Jayne Thomas, Service Improvement, Engagement and
Complaint's Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425449**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES

REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

ANNUAL REPORT

2017/2018

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have in place a representations and complaints procedure for Social Services.

Each local authority is required to produce an annual report concerning the operation of its representation and complaints procedure.

This annual report provides information about the operation of the Social Services representation and complaints procedure between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by the Social Services Representation and Complaints Team during that period to develop the representation and complaints service.

2. BACKGROUND

Social Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf adopts a positive attitude towards complaints and views them as a valuable form of feedback, which assists in the development and improvement of services. Complaints also provide an opportunity to learn lessons where a service has fallen short of an expected standard.

The representation and complaints procedure is widely publicised generally and specifically to people who use our services and provides them with an opportunity to:

- Voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied in order that the issue can be rectified to their satisfaction, wherever possible
- Make compliments
- Suggest improvements
- Challenge decisions

The aim is for our representation and complaints procedure to secure a better service for all the people using social care services and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Commitment to providing quality services
- Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs
- Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest possible opportunity
- Strong problem solving element
- Operated without prejudice or discrimination
- Adheres to the principle of equal opportunity

The representation and complaints procedure also provides an opportunity for service users to address concerns in relation to independent sector providers where they remain dissatisfied following implementation of the agencies own internal complaints procedures.

The Social Services complaints process has two stages:

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving. The complainant will be offered a discussion about the issues they have raised and this can either be done by telephone or face to face in an attempt to resolve the issues. This must be done within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint. Following this discussion and any further investigation that is necessary, a written response will be provided within 5 working days.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by the investigating officer appointed to the case. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 25 working days.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

3. STAGE 1 'INFORMAL' COMPLAINTS

In 2017/18, there were 162 recorded complaints during the year, compared with 182 in the previous year. There was a decrease in Stage 1 complaints about Adult Services with 82 received in 2016/17 compared to 51 this year whilst there was an increase in Stage 1 complaints about Children's Services with 101 received in 2016/17 compared to 111 this year.

Out of the 162 Stage 1 complaints received 4 were dealt with under Stage 2. The new complaints regulations and guidance sets an expectation that complainant's will be offered a face to face meeting wherever deemed appropriate as a means to resolving their complaint. This has continued to be effective in resolving most complaints at a local level and has resulted in more positive outcomes for complainants and their ongoing relationship with the service.

Of the Stage 1 complaints that were received, 52% were responded to within statutory timescales which is a decrease on 59.5% in 2016/17. This is an area where we would like to see improvement and as well as monitoring systems that are currently in place the need to respond to deal with complaints in a timely manner will be reinforced through training and manager briefings.

Support to improve the quality of Stage 1 complaint responses has also been provided across service areas.

4. CONTACTS AND CONCERNS

This year the Complaints Team has focused on attempting to resolve issues at source where this is considered appropriate and worked collaboratively with managers across both services resulting in a reduction in complaints being passed to front line services.

In 2017/18 the Complaint's Team dealt with a total of 141 contacts that did not progress to Stage 1 complaints. 47 contacts were for adults services with 94 contacts being received for Children's Services.

The complaints Team also received 13 concerns where the subject specified that they did not wish to make a complaint. These were recorded and passed to the relevant service area.

5. COMPLIMENTS

161 Compliments were received across both service areas with 2 compliments being received for the complaint's team.

Adult Services

51 complaints were received for Adult Services during the year. This represents a 38% decrease on the total amount received in 2016/17.

Of the complaints made about Adult Services, 7.8% (4) were made by the service users themselves and 92.2% (47) were made by their representatives e.g. carers, family members and advocates.

Details of complaints received recorded by Service Area are summarised in Table 1 and compares them with the previous year.

Table 1: Summary of complaints by service area

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Long Term Assessment - Locality Teams	24	18
Safeguarding Team	2	0
Short Term Intervention Support @ Home	1	2
Day Services	1	1
Residential Care	9	0
Short Term Intervention ACE	2	2
Mental Health	2	4
Finance	3	3
Business Services	0	1
Independent Sector Residential Care RCT	4	5
Independent Sector Domiciliary Care	18	2
Complex Learning Difficulties	10	4
Short Term Intervention – Short Term Care Management	1	5

Community Review Team	1	4
Sensory Impairment	1	0
Total	82	51

As in previous years, the highest number of complaints were received for Long Term Assessment Teams. There has been a decrease in numbers of complaints recorded for Independent Sector Domiciliary Care by the Complaints Team and this is as a direct result of Stage 1 complaints being redirected to the provider to be dealt with under their own complaint's procedure.

From 2016/17 to ensure more accurate recording there will be an expectation that the domiciliary care providers provide information on the number of complaints and compliments they have received on an annual basis in line with reporting arrangements to Care in Wales..

In other service areas complaints were fairly consistent with previous years and remain comparatively low in contrast to the number of people that access services.

Table 2 sets out in more detail what the complaints were about and compares them with the previous year.

Table 2: Summary of what complaints were about

Nature of Complaint	2016/17	2017/18
Change in call times / Missed Calls (Homecare)	3	1
Failure to provide a service	14	10
Failure to comply with policies	2	0
Financial issues	4	5
Lack of information/communication	15	8
Medication issues	4	0
Issues around adaptations	2	0
Staff issues	17	18
Waiting for assessment/Request for assessment	0	2
Quality of care	15	4
Quality of service	5	3
Transport (Learning Disability)	1	0
Total	82	51

Complaints relating to issues around staff remain the highest category of complaint and are consistent in numbers to the previous year. Numbers of complaints around lack of information/communication have reduced along with complaints relating to quality of care.

Of the Stage 1 complaints received for Adults Services, 50 were resolved locally with only 1 complaint progressing to Stage 2.

Children's Services

111 complaints about Children's Services were received during the year. This represents an increase compared to the previous year when 101 complaints were received. The highest number of complaints remain for the Intensive Intervention Services which is consistent with previous years and a reflection of the difficult nature of the work that the service undertakes.

The numbers overall still remain low in comparison to the number of cases being managed by the Service. Table 3 sets out the number of complaints recorded by service area and compares them with the previous year.

Table 3: Summary of complaints by Service Area

Service area	2016/17	2017/18
16+ Team	0	3
Early Years	0	1
Disabled Children's Team	0	4
Early Intervention	11	4
Safeguarding and Support	5	0
Intensive Intervention	86	95
Fostering Support	0	3
MASH	0	1
Total	102	111

Of the 111 complaints received 2 progressed to Stage 2 with 1 complaint being received directly at Stage 2.

Of the 111 complaints made about Children's Services, 2 complaints were made by children and young people or advocates, 109 complaints were made by parents/relatives and carers.

Table 4 sets out in more detail what the complaints from children and young people or advocates were about and compares them with the previous year.

Table 4: Summary of what the complaints were about

Nature of complaint	2016/17	2017/18
Staff issues	2	1
Quality of Care	0	1
Total	2	2

Both complaints received related to children and young people who are looked after by the Council and were successfully resolved at Stage 1.

Whilst complaints from children remain low there are a number of factors that may contribute to this. As well as having a designated children’s complaints officer the Local Authority has an embedded advocacy service for children which has seen the number of referrals steadily rise over the past 4 years. In 2017/18 the advocacy service assisted 123 children and young people in raising their concern directly with the service area with most issues being effectively dealt with outside of the statutory complaints process. These issues are monitored through a quarterly reporting process and the need for any service improvements are captured and reported both to senior management teams and to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Independent reviewing Officers also have a mechanism for escalating concerns in relation to Children Looked After and as with advocacy this information is collated, monitored and reported.

The number of complaints received from parents and carers increased from 102 in 2016/17 to 110 in 2017/18, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of what the complaints were about

Nature of complaint	2016/17	2017/18
Adoption Process	0	1
Contact issues	5	7
Failure to provide a service	7	3
Equality issues	0	1
Financial issues	2	1
Lack of information/communication	22	21
Quality of care/service	5	6
Staff issues	55	68
OT Appeals	2	0
Care and Support	2	2
Information Governance	2	1
Total	102	111

Following initial contact to discuss the complaint, 11 of the 111 complaints needed no further action.

Complaints relating to staff issues remain the highest category of complaint and have increased on figures received for 2016/17 whilst complaints relating to the provision of information and communication remain consistent with previous years.

6. STAGE 2 'FORMAL' COMPLAINTS

Overall, there were 4 Stage 2 complaints made during 2017/18 compared with 8 in 2016/17. 3 of the complaints progressed from Informal Complaints and 1 was received directly at Stage 2.

Stage 2 complaints, where improvements were identified, result in an action plan being developed to ensure improvements for both the service user and the service area. (See learning the lessons).

Adult Services

There was 1 stage 2 complaint received for Adult Services – which progressed from Stage 1 Informal Complaint process. 1 case that fell outside of the statutory complaint's process was considered as part of an independent review.

Table 7: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2016/17	2017/18
Quality of Service	2	0
Failure to Provide a Service	1	0
Finance	1	0
Complex Learning Difficulties	0	1
Total	4	1

Children's Services

There were 3 Stage 2 complaints received relating to Children's Services 2 of which progressed from Stage 1 Informal Complaints process and one that was received directly at Stage 2.

Table 8: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2016/17	2017/18
Quality of Service/Care	1	1
Lack of Communication/Information	2	1
Staff Issues	1	0
Failure to Provide a Service	0	1
Total	4	3

7. OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

In 2017/18, 5 complaints were made to the Public Services Ombudsman, 3 for Children's Services and 2 for Adults.

1 complaint for Children's Services progressed to an Ombudsman investigation and 4 were either referred back to the Council for resolution or closed.

LEARNING THE LESSONS

It is crucial that there is learning from complaints at all stages of the procedure, resulting in improved services and delivery, wherever possible. Complaints provide useful information in respect of the way that services are delivered and in highlighting where improvements need to be made. Likewise information obtained from monitoring the Council's contract with advocacy providers identify themes and areas where services can be strengthened to avoid complaints in the future.

Some examples of action points and improvements arising from the investigation of complaints in both Adult and Children's Services and from monitoring the use of advocacy are summarised below.

Adult Services

- **An information pack for parents of adults making the transition to supported living has now been developed.**
- **Improvements have been made to the timeliness of decision making in relation to the transition process for adults with complex learning disabilities.**
- **Improvements to the management of additional calls for Homecare through the use of mobile device alerts.**

Other areas for action:

- **Review of the policy and guidance for excluding service users with learning disabilities from day centre provision.**
- **Consideration of issue raised by the advocacy service relating to adults with physical disabilities and their development of appropriate adult relationships as part of the care and support planning process.**
- **Ensuring that older people in residential care have access to their personal allowance.**
- **Review information provided to families who arrange care privately ensuring they are aware of who concerns should be referred to and the role of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.**

Children's Services

- A review of Life Story work within Children's Services to be undertaken as part of the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Group Workplan, incorporating lessons learnt from complaints and feedback from young people following the Bright Spots survey.
- A review of the family finding process and improved guidance for prospective adopters on the linking process.

8. COMPLIMENTS

Compliments provide valuable information regarding the quality of services that are provided and identify where they are working well. The number of compliments recorded in 2017/18 was 161 compared to the 164 received in 2016/17

Adult Services

In 2017/18 there were 120 compliments made within Adult Services.

Table 8 sets out the number of compliments recorded by Service Area.

Table 8: Summary of compliments received

Service areas	Number	Percentage
Adaptations and Community Equipment	11	9.1%
Complaints Unit	1	0.8%
Locality Teams	14	11.6%
Homecare	30	25%
Intermediate Care/Reablement	7	5.8%
Carers Support Project	15	12.5%
Community Mental Health Teams	3	2.5%
Supported Living	1	0.8%
Single Point of Access	3	2.5%
Short Term Care Management	3	2.5%
Sensory Impairment	2	1.6%
Business Services	1	0.8%
Complex Learning Difficulties	1	0.8%
Day Services	1	0.8%
Finance	3	2.5%
Housing	3	2.5%
MASH	2	1.6%
Mental Health & Substance Misuse	4	3.3%
Residential Care RCT	15	12.5%

The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Adult Services during 2017/18

- *"Thank you for helping me through this very difficult time I am going through at the moment"*
- *"Thank you all so much for your help and support. I would not have got where I am now without you"*
- *"Thank you all so much for the care you show towards my mother. Words cannot express my appreciation"*
- *"A great big thank you for the care my dad had. I cannot thank you enough for your care and support you gave us"*
- *Telephone call expressing heartfelt thanks to Lee Williams and Craig Heycock for all their care and support for her father who has now gone into Hospital*
- *Where do I find words big enough to say Thank You to your whole team who have helped us through this dark and difficult period. In particular thanks to Ian Moran, he is a real gentleman and 100% the right man for such an important job.*

Children's Services

In 2017/18 there were 41 compliments made within Children's Services.

Table 9 sets out the number of compliments recorded by Service Area.

Table 9: Summary of compliments received

Service areas	Number	Percentage
Contact Centres	1	2.4%
Early Years	1	2.4%
Miskin Project	19	46.3%
Disabled Childrens' Team	3	7.3%
Foster Care	7	17%
Residential Care	1	2.4%
Kinship Care	2	4.9%
Complaints	1	2.4%
Independent Reviewing Team	1	2.4%
Intensive Intervention	5	12.2%

The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Children's Services during 2017/18:

- *Thank you for being on the other end of the phone, means a lot as Ive "never had any support and now it's just taking it's toll with everything going on - Thanks for being there for us"*
- *"I wanted to pass on my thanks and say how much I appreciated her continued work with NAME. It benefited the family to have continuity and was a great help to my team due to staffing issues"*
- *"You have been amazing with the help and guidance with me and my children. It has been a privilege to work wiith you"*
- *"Thank you for everything you did for me. You have helped me a lot and you became my best friend, we got along so well and I'm so sad it's the end. Thank you so much"*

9. WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2017/18 the Representation and Complaints Unit has;

- Liaised with Welsh Government on the review of Complaints Guidance as part of the SSWB Act (Part 10) and the Review of the Independent Visitor scheme.
- Supported the attendance of the young people, as part of the Blueprint Forum at Corporate Parenting Board and other events run by the Council.
- Developed the Advocacy Champion Group within Adult Care Management Teams to promote the use of advocacy and inform future commissioning arrangements.
- Continued to provide induction training to all staff and attend staff briefings and team meetings as required.
- Monitored the provision of advocacy across both adults and children's service and supported the implementation of the Welsh Governments National Advoacy Approach and the 'active offer'.
- Supported Welsh Governments review of the Social Services survey required as part of the SSWB Act providing feedback on management of the process.
- Worked with individual managers on improving the quality of complaints responses.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

Author: Giovanni Isingrini, Group Director, Community & Children's Services.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires that the Director of Social Services publishes an Annual Report about the exercise of the Local Authority's social services function.
- 1.2 The first draft of the Annual Report was presented to Cabinet in July this year and has subsequently been taken to both the relevant Scrutiny committees, and circulated to partners etc for consultation and comment.
- 1.3 As a result of this consultation some minor amendments have been made to the report and a final version is now presented to Cabinet for formal approval prior to publication. Some suggestions made in the Scrutiny committees will also inform the production of reports in future years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the Rhondda Cynon Taf Director of Social Services Annual Report (Appendix 1) for publication.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Director of Social Services to discharge statutory duties in relation to publishing an Annual Report on the delivery, performance, risks and planned improvements of the Social Services function of the Council.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 includes in Part 8 a Code of Practice with regards to the role of the Director of Social Services.
- 4.2 This replaces Statutory Guidance issued in June 2009 regarding the Duties and Accountabilities of Directors of Social Services in Wales and includes an ongoing requirement for the Director of Social Services to publish an Annual Report.
- 4.3 The new code of Practice states that the Director of Social Services must prepare and publish an annual report about the exercise of the Local Authority's social services functions and that this annual report must be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of a financial year.
- 4.4 The annual report must evaluate the performance of the Local Authority in relation to the delivery of its social services functions in respect of that year and include lessons learned. It must also set out objectives in relation to promoting the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, for the forthcoming year.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report makes no change to operational service delivery.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The draft Director of Social Services Annual Report was presented for Scrutiny to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee and to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee.
- 6.2 The draft Director of Social Services Annual Report has been amended as necessary in response to comments received.
- 6.3 Overall, feedback was positive and the draft report has required limited amendments.
- 6.4 A record of all comments received will be kept and is available on request.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 This report makes no change to operational service delivery.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

9.1 The Director's report provides a view on the delivery of Social Services during 2017/18 and complements the Council's Corporate priorities.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 All comments received were considered by the Director of Social Services and staff working on the Director of Social Services Annual Report and appropriate changes made.

10.2 Feedback was constructive and positive.

10.3 Detailed action plans to support delivery of the Director of Social Services Annual Report are included within the Service delivery Plans of the individual Services which form the Community & Children's Services Group.

10.4 In summary I am pleased to report that the performance of Social Services in RCT continues to be good despite the level of financial pressure experienced. However, Cabinet will be aware that there are still areas that need further improvement and compared to other Councils we still support more adults in institutional settings rather than in their own home, and we still have a comparatively larger number of children who are 'looked after' by the Council rather than living with their families. Whilst there are a number of factors contributing to this situation, working with partners to strengthen community based support services to address these continues to be a key priority.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Background Papers:

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions)

<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160322part8en.pdf>

The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance (ADSS)

https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/The_Local_Authority_Annual_Social_Services_Reports_Guidance.pdf

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2017 - 2018

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1. Introduction

As the Statutory Director of Social Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf, I am pleased to present my annual report for 2017/18 setting out how the Council's Social Services performed last year, building on this new style of report, and highlighting the direction and priorities we have set for the year ahead. In doing so you'll notice how we are linking the delivery of information, advice and services to the promotion of the wellbeing of those people who we support.

Social Services provide a wide range of activities across the County Borough that protect and support vulnerable children, young people, adults, families and carers. Helping people to be safe, independent and free from poverty is our aim as we know that this is how we can best support people's long-term wellbeing.

Whilst we continue to provide a good quality of service to people in Rhondda Cynon Taf we do so in a changing environment where more people are living longer, and whilst most people are able to live active and independent lives, a number need care and support to overcome the effects of long term illness, disability or family breakdown.

Although two years have passed since the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 we continue to focus on the individual at the heart of what social services delivers, with partnership and service delivery that emphasises earlier intervention and prevention, and new ways of delivering care to people.

I am pleased to be able to report that there have been many achievements during 2017/18. The Cwm Taf Partnership has continued to access the Intermediate Care Fund from Welsh Government supporting us to introduce new service models together, some of which operated throughout 2017/18 such as our enhanced Reablement service, for people with dementia, the Early Stroke Discharge service and the Community Coordinators. We have continued to make progress in introducing the Stay Well @Home Service and the Integrated Autism Service. These projects will play a significant role during 2018/19.

Social Services remains a core part of what our Council is responsible for, and we are key in the implementation of the 2016 – 2020 Corporate Plan, delivering health and social care services that are personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes. To demonstrate how the Council helps to improve the wellbeing of those we provide services to, we are working more closely with other Council departments utilizing our professional expertise.

Our longer-term objectives as I set out last year are still guiding what we deliver, in particular that:

- Services for adults will be remodelled to focus on minimising intervention and maximising independence, with a greater emphasis on early intervention.
- Better manage the huge costs of A&E and hospital admissions, with social care commissioning integrated with health services, such as primary and community care thereby improving the experience of those using health and social care services.
- Ensure that more young people with complex disabilities will stay in Rhondda Cynon Taf, where they grew up, and live in their own homes, with opportunities to engage in education, training, culture and the arts, helping them to grow in independence.

- More people with mental health issues will receive support in the community to help them stay well, reengage in learning, get a job and remain active, with support focused on helping people with their whole life, not simply providing a diagnosis.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf's residents will be some of the most active and healthy in South Wales, benefitting from improved leisure facilities, visiting our theatres, libraries and heritage sites and making use of the County Borough's parks and open spaces.

2. Director's Summary of Performance

I said last year that I wanted to ensure that during 2017/18 we would continue to deliver good quality and consistent practice across all our statutory functions. I am pleased that our staff and partners working together have delivered what I had set out.

In looking at the key achievements of 2017/18 I am pleased to report that we have:

- Implemented the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requirements, focusing on developing our information, advice and assistance service for adults, making sure that residents have a voice and real control over their own lives, asking them "what matters?" and by working with partners to shape the support and services in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have also changed the way we work including our assessments and paperwork to make sure we focus on what matters to children and families.
- Continued to respond effectively to adults at risk, by raising awareness of safeguarding, and working with partners to ensure care and support is available to those at risk of abuse and neglect, enabling them to lead safe, confident lives.
- Introduced a new 'Stay Well @ Home' Service as well as working with others to develop community networks of support.
- Contributed to the Cwm Taf Health and Social Care winter planning arrangements to support patient flow in hospital settings and improve delayed transfers of care and the rate of delayed transfer of care attributable to social care decreasing from 4.95 (per 1,000 population aged 75 or over) in 2016/17 to 1.90 in 2017/18.
- Worked with partners to improve service arrangements for people with learning disabilities engaging with our service users and their families to help shape the service needed and to understand what matters to them.
- Worked with children and young people who need care and support so that they reach their full potential.
- Provided a single point of access for all our Children's Services so that all cases are dealt with in the same way and made sure urgent and emergency referrals happen quickly.
- With our partners, reviewed the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and concluded it is making a positive impact on outcomes for children, as well as identifying further improvements for the future.
- Helped children and families get the information and advice they need through introducing the DEWIS Cymru website.
- Worked with families experiencing difficulties to help children remain at home or return home more quickly, where it is safe to do so.
- Helped more children to stay with their extended families when they cannot live with their parents.

We have continued to improve the quality and management of social services provision by applying a planned approach to learning and development, and by seeking to increase the take-up of training across the social care sector. We have continued to build on last year's achievements where we focused on delivering quality training to frontline staff, continuing to embed the new social services legislation and reflecting the increasing amount of partnership working across the Cwm Taf region.

I am pleased that we can demonstrate progress since last year. In particular, our Corporate Performance Report for 2017/18 shows that we were in the top quartile for:

- Making sure that children in our care had less than 3 placements during the year, bringing more stability into their lives.
- Visiting children in our care, in line with regulations.
- Pupils leaving school with qualifications.
- Pupils in our care leaving school with qualifications.
- Assessing the needs of Carers of adults
- The high proportion of our older residents that we support in the community.
- Delivering disabled facilities grants quickly, so helping people to maintain their independence.
- Adult protection referrals where the risk has been managed.

We do know that we need to help people leave hospital and return to their home or care home more quickly when they are well enough and give them the confidence to better cope at home. Our preventative and early intervention work will help to reduce the numbers of our older residents being supported in care homes. Our new Extra Care facility 'Ty Heulog' in Talbot Green has provided its residents with greater independence and their families with peace of mind and forms part of a wider additional £50M Council investment to deliver modern accommodation to meet the changing need and expectations of the growing older populations in the County Borough. This preventative approach is also helping children to stay with their families, even though the number of children in our care remains comparatively high.

I am also pleased to report that we have continued to tackle other big issues which will take much longer to solve, for example:

- Helping children to move through to adult social services.
- Tackling substance misuse.
- Minimising the impact of poverty, including fuel poverty.
- Preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

This year we have continued to make information easier to find and understand. By making sure that our information is clearer, more user friendly and easy to read we hope that everyone can better understand the issues and challenges faced by the Council.

We have continued to ensure that our reports include more information, with a greater focus on social media and our online Engagement Hub, which makes it easier to see what residents are being asked about in surveys. In building on our engagement as set out in last year's report we have seen some notable successes during 2017/18.

In February 2018 all children in care in RCT were asked to participate in an online survey, mainly through their schools and colleges. 146 children and young people responded to the survey: a response rate of 36% with boys slightly underrepresented.

- All (100%) young children (4-7yrs) felt settled where they lived. More young people (83%) reported feeling settled compared to looked after young people (73%) in other Welsh authorities.
- More young people (83%) reported feeling settled compared to looked after young people (73%) in other Welsh authorities.
- Overall, 88% of children and young people reported that they felt safe in their placements 'all or most of the time': a larger proportion than the 75% of young people in the general population who felt safe in their homes.
- More young people felt they could do the same things as their friends: 90% in RCT compared to 84% of looked after young people in other Welsh authorities.
- School is a positive experience for most children. A larger proportion of children and young people (98%) felt that their carers were interested in their education compared to peers (90%) in the general population.
- The proportion (75%) of children and young people (4-18yrs) who had a pet was higher than reported by children in the general population where 66% have a pet.
- None of the youngest children (4-7yrs) gave responses which suggested low well-being.

As a result, we will make sure that actions (Section 4 (e)) are picked up in in 2018/19.

In developing the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board Regional Plan we held 3 Community Panels in Abercynon, Porth and Merthyr Tydfil in December 2017 to seek peoples' views, focused on six key themes which had been identified in the Population Needs Assessment and which the Regional Plan seeks to address:

- Getting information, advice and assistance
- Stopping problems before they start
- Stopping problems before they get worse
- Connecting you to your community
- Seamless services
- Making it personal and working together with you

Members of the Community Panels had an opportunity to respond to the Regional Plan which included:

- Identifying positive opportunities for co-production and building on community assets.
- Identifying good practice in relation to the provision of information advice and assistance that supports resilience and well-being.
- Exploring what outcomes people would expect from efficient and reliable community services.
- How they want to be kept informed on progress and the changes to the area plan.

The feedback from each event has provided a rich source of information that has informed the development of the Regional Plan.

This report has been shared with those responsible for developing and delivering the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan as there are many common areas of interest, particularly around the use of existing assets, working more effectively together with communities to build resilience and tackling loneliness and isolation. We are also continuing to conduct consultations and surveys so that we get views from as many residents as possible.

A Young Persons Forum across RCT has also been set up to improve how we engage with young people. This Forum will be made up of young people representing their schools who in turn will report back to their School Councils so that young people can be more involved in important issues that affect them. We are also continuing to work with the five Older Persons Forums across RCT so that the views of older people are known and considered.

In delivering the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 we continue to carry out qualitative surveys of those who use services. As a priority area of work for 2017/18 we will ensure that this information starts to impact on how we work. Overall our assessment of this year's survey returns tells us that:

- 87% of respondents felt that they live in a home that supports their well-being with 13% responding that their home sometimes or did not support their well-being.
- Only 50% of respondents felt that they can do the things that are important to them with 36% responding that sometimes they can do the things that are important to them.
- Only 52% of respondents feel part of their community. There was no significance of age with results averaging across all age groups.
- 84% of respondents reported being happy with the support from their family, friends and neighbours.

According to the 2011 census figures, 27,779 Welsh speakers live in Rhondda Cynon Taf which represents 12.3% of the total population. The Welsh Language Standards apply to all areas of a Council's work and mean that residents across Wales can expect the same approach to applying the Welsh Language in services across the country, to ensure that the language is treated the same as the English and that all Councils offer people the opportunity to receive their services from us, as well as from those funded by us, in Welsh.

In the past twelve months, services have been embedding new processes to meet the requirements, particularly those services which affect how things work within the Council, e.g. ensuring that staff can access Welsh language support tools on their computers and

rules such as making sure that all published material is available to residents in both Welsh and English, e.g. the Council's Website, Committee papers, Job Advertisements and Social Media.

All our work is integrated into the Council's wider priorities and policies, for example currently the Strategic Equality Plan and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20. We now have a greater legal duty to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as actively promote the Welsh language more widely.

We are continuing to work on the implementation of the 'More than Just Words' action plan in response to the Welsh Government strategic framework for Welsh language services in Health and Social Care. Building on last year's annual report we continue to develop our active offer of contact through Welsh, promote and raise awareness of the language amongst staff and provide workforce development training through the language.

4. Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

An individual's well-being and personal outcomes continues to be at the heart of our approach to sustainable social services. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has now been in force for 2 years and we have been working hard to ensure that we support the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support.

This section of the report describes our performance in promoting and improving the well-being of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have linked the work we have been doing to the six National Quality Standards, including the priorities we identified in last year's Annual Report, plus additional priority actions related to new ways of working. This section of the report gives information on our progress and provides data, where available, with real life examples of the impact on people, as well as setting out priorities for what we want to deliver in 2018/19.

Following the publication of last year's Population Assessment, we have worked closely with our Partners to develop a Regional Plan 2018 - 2023 which supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priority "*promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*" by helping local people with care and support needs to stay living independently at home. Each of the partner organisations in Cwm Taf provides a wide range of activities and services across the region that respond to vulnerable children, young people, adults and families. Each partner is committed to promoting high quality, responsive services to the public but recognise that they also must work together if services are to be transformed to meet the challenges today and tomorrow.

The Regional Plan has now been developed and identifies key priorities that will be delivered with our partners over the next five years.

(a) Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

What did we plan to do last year?

We identified a range of priority actions arising out of our self – evaluation assessments of both adults and children's services and included these priorities in last year's Annual Report.

Our plans for last year included:

- Delivery of personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health that promote choice, control and independence, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes.
- Ensuring that families have access to the right support and information, earlier, so that fewer children and young people require statutory Children's Services support.
- Developing and deploying the Wales Community Care Information Service (WCCIS) to provide more accurate up to date information to create and sustain a unified approach for people in need of care and support.
- Increasing the number of social care clients that receive direct payments to enable them to make personal choices to manage their own needs.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

Personalised and Integrated Services – We have delivered personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health that promote choice, control and independence. We have worked in a way that made the best and most sustainable use of our limited and decreasing resources, always looking at alternative ways of doing things, to limit the impact on the Council taxpayer.

We understand that older people are choosing to remain independent and be cared for at home, rather than go into residential care. We also need to meet the challenges of an ageing population, it is vital that older people's care and support services are sustainable and cost effective. We have developed alternatives to residential care to shift the balance of investment towards alternatives.

This year we have focused on the model of Extra Care Housing which supports the delivery of personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health so that more people are supported to live longer in their own homes. The provision of this accommodation offers an opportunity for older people to lead more independent lives and prevent unnecessary admissions to residential care.

In October 2017, Cabinet discussed a plan to develop five new extra care facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with a £50m investment to deliver modern accommodation options to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population in the County Borough. Linc Cymru, the largest provider of extra care in Wales, is the Council's chosen partner to deliver this ambitious plan.

Extra care helps older people live as active and independent lives as possible, enabling residents to live in their own homes and receive targeted support to meet their individual assessed needs. The Council has identified the need for 300 extra care housing places across Rhondda Cynon Taf as demand for new models of care and support increases.

The Aberaman facility, which has been developed in partnership with Linc Cymru, was granted planning permission in February 2018. It followed the demolition of the former Maesyffynnon Residential Care Home in October 2017, and the development is supported by the Welsh Government's Innovative Homes Programme.

The development will include the construction of 40 independent apartments (36 one-bedroom and four two-bedroom) for people aged 50 and over, within a single three-storey building on Club Street. There will be on-site assistance for residents with decreased mobility or other similar conditions.

It will provide communal facilities including a dining room and cafe, hair salon, therapy room, lounge, laundry room, winter garden room, activity room and guest suite. Ancillary areas such as a kitchen, staff room and offices will be provided, along with a 24-space car park and a garden area – which will be used in conjunction with Blaengwawr Primary School.

The Aberaman project is currently at a pre-construction phase, and the main construction of the new building is scheduled to begin during early June 2018. The homes will be built to a higher standard than required by building regulations to ensure running costs of the units are affordable.

The development will use Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) working in collaboration with the Welsh Procurement Service and F1 Modular Ltd, based in Powys. The company will construct elements of the development up to final fit-out stage – for instance kitchens and bathroom – in their factory. They will then be delivered to site, helping to reduce the construction period.

As part of our Extra Housing Development Strategy we commencement an independent review of in-house residential care home provision and day services for older people, which has included site visits to the relevant establishments.

We have worked closely with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cwm Taf UHB, to develop a Joint Statement of Strategic Intent for Children, Young People, and Adults with Learning Disabilities (that includes autism and complex needs) and their families which describes a shared commitment to deliver a new model for health and social services. This Strategy focusses on the following key messages:

- Maximise the use of universal services
- Increase early intervention, prevention, information, advice and assistance
- Build community support and develop people's independence
- Sustain people in their own homes
- Enable people to live full lives and achieve their potential
- Keep people safe
- Make the best use of our resources

We have focused on timely discharges from hospital and recruited Health and Social Care Discharge Coordinators, through a partnership arrangement between Cwm Taf University Health Board, RCTCBC and MTCBC. These Coordinators continue to support hospital discharge arrangements for all four Cwm Taf hospital sites. 2017/18 has seen some changes to staff which has impacted on the work of this team. There has been good progress made and this service has made strong links with the Single Point of Access, the Stay Well @Home teams and the Third sector. Multi-disciplinary meetings are held twice a week to ensure people's personal well-being outcomes are considered as part of the hospital discharge process.

The Social Work component of the Complex Care Team has also been actively working to assess those people with complex care needs and facilitate the safe, seamless and timely discharge of patients from hospital with the right package of care that best meets an individual's personal outcomes. This team responds to referrals for social work support with discharges from hospital, where the individual doesn't have an allocated social worker. Significant improvement was made in 2017/18 to patient flow and in response to emergency situations during the winter, despite the complexity presented by the cases assessed. There has been an improvement in performance throughout quarter 4 for hospital discharges requiring social care assessments.

The rate of delayed transfer of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over is 1.90 for 2017/18, compared to 4.95 in 2016/17.

There are many case studies that support the work of these teams, here is an example:

Health and Social Care Hospital Discharge, Personalised and Integrated services

M was admitted to an acute hospital following an injury they were later transferred to a community hospital for rehabilitation. M was previously living alone at home with no Social Care input. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was aware of M's circumstances via the multi-disciplinary meetings held twice weekly. During these meetings it was evident that M was medically fit and receiving ongoing Physiotherapy. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was able to link in with multiple Health professionals including the Consultant, Physiotherapist and Ward Manager.

The experience and knowledge of the Coordinator combined with the skills of the Health professionals enabled discussion to be held regarding further rehabilitation in the home environment as opposed to inpatient therapy. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was also able to link in quickly with the Reablement Team therapist based in Social; Care and provide accurate and up to date information from the Hospital therapist, sharing information effectively. Through this quick and effective collaboration between Health and Social Care staff we were able to determine that M could continue their recovery and rehabilitation journey at home.

This enabled M to return home safely in a timely manner and prevented an unnecessary hospital stay. These actions were positive to M's wellbeing and they quickly reaching their previous levels of independence and routine.

Improving Performance Information - One of the key challenges in evaluating our performance is developing the right suite of measures and mechanisms for reviewing the evidence of how well we are doing. In 2017, we have undertaken a review of performance information and monitoring systems across the Service Area and new improved arrangements are still being developed to ensure that we can report fully on all measures and capture the evidence that matters most in understanding the impact of what we do.

We have made good progress in developing and deploying the Wales Community Care Information Service (WCCIS) which is a national ICT system. Implementing the WCCIS will help us to deliver our key priorities and address the considerable technical and practice challenges involved in creating and sustaining a unified approach. During 2017/18, we have reviewed our business processes as part of the implementation of our revised operational model. The preparatory work for the transfer to WCCIS has presented some challenges and the data cleansing process has taken longer than planned. Once completed the system will provide more accurate up to date information to create and sustain a unified approach for people in need of care and support. This will help us to deliver our key priorities and address the considerable technical and practice challenges involved in creating and sustaining a unified approach. We will be going live with WCCIS in May 2018.

Improved Access to Services - Social Services has this year continued with the changes needed to deliver further improvements to services. This has included the review and implementation of new operating models, in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act both in Children's and Adult Services.

Adult Services have restructured the Short Term Intervention and Long Term (Locality) Assessment Service Areas and increased resources at the "front door" i.e. the Single Point of Access (SPA) to ensure all service users are offered a community response and assisted with third sector or independent services, where appropriate, rather than access traditional Adult Social Services. The SPA offers a proportionate assessment of each

person's individual needs and agreed outcomes. These changes have supported service users to achieve their agreed outcomes, supporting them where appropriate to find their own solutions or to find support from community resources. Where this is not possible service users have been signposted to the preventative or rehabilitative services provided by the Council. We have embedded a new approach to assessment in 2017 - staff have been improving and extending their skills in holding a “what matters” conversation with service users and their families. This involves working in partnership with people to understand what matters to them; by putting them at the centre and building on people’s strengths and abilities. This will better enable citizens to maintain an appropriate level of independence, a better quality of life and with a proportionate level of care and support.

The SPA team has access to a directory of services via the national website of DEWIS Cymru which links to the websites of the Council, UHB and other partner organisations. This directory of services has expanded in 2017/18 with a more comprehensive list of services available in the RCT area.

The waiting list for sensory assessments has continued to reduce and now over 90% of people are being seen within agreed standards.

Case Study – Improving Access to Services

Mrs X was referred to the Single Point of Access following the sudden loss of her husband. The Single Point of Access made contact and undertook a proportionate assessment to establish 'what mattered' to Mrs X. She reported that her husband was her carer and since his loss she felt lonely and in low mood, she was independent with personal care. Mrs X wanted to have greater social interaction and felt that her needs would be best met by moving into a sheltered complex or residential home in order to have company.

Staff discussed with Mrs X to see how she could be supported to stay in her own home and helped to be connected with activities in her community to build her support network. Mrs X agreed and a referral was made to the Community Coordinators who sourced activities that supported her previous interests. Mrs X was also linked with a counselling service to support with bereavement.

Children services have also reviewed its access points. There is now only one front door with resources having been increased and all requests for services whether for early Intervention prevention through Resilient Families or statutory services go to the same point of access. This allows for signposting to the correct services as soon as contact is made.

Direct Payments - We have increased the number of Direct Payments issued for social care clients in both Adults and Children’s Services as shown in the table below. This means that more people are being funded directly to make personal choices to manage their own needs.

Children’s Services		Adult Services	
2016/2017	127	2016/17	339
2017/ 2018	134	2017/18	358

A qualitative survey has also been carried out with people receiving care and support to assess if people knew who to contact about their care and support.

- 79% (624/795) of adults who responded to the survey reported **they know who to contact about their care and support**. This figure is the same as last years, although there is a 50% increase in the number of people who responded to this question.
- 91% (735/809) of adults receiving care and support who responded to the survey reported they had been **treated with dignity and respect**. This is a decrease of 1% on last year's return.
- 85% (152/178) of children with a care and support plan who responded feel **their views about their care and support have been listened to**. This is an increase of 4% on last years return.
- 92% (169/183) of children with a care and support plan who responded feel they **were treated with respect**. This is an increase of 1% on last year's return.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Prioritise the integration of services for: Older people with complex needs and long-term conditions, including dementia; People with learning disabilities; Carers, including young carers; Integrated Family Support Services; and Children with complex needs due to disability or illness.
- Deliver new accommodation models to improve outcomes for those individuals who need support to live independently and continue to work jointly with Linc Cymru to deliver the Council's Extra Care Housing Development Programme and enable more people to live in their own home rather than institutional settings.
- Conclude the review of existing residential care home (and day centre) provision for older people to support our future service needs supporting more people to live independently in their own homes rather than institutional settings
- Make better use of technology solutions to maintain people's independence in their home and prevent escalation of need increasing.
- Implement the resilient Families Service and secure the engagement of internal and external partners to deliver the Resilient Families Programme
- Promote engagement with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure coproduction and that the voice of the children and young people are heard.
- Implement the National Adoption Support Framework within RCT to ensure the children are placed for adoption reach their full potential and have opportunities to achieve.
- Ensure there is offer of a direct payment to all people with eligible care needs

(b) Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Delivering the Stay well @ Home Service to provide an integrated response with partner agencies to reduce the total number of citizens who experience a delayed transfer of care from hospital.

- Working with Health to review our future approach to community mental health, including working towards integration of CMHT's
- Bringing together a range of strategic work streams and priorities to provide a single focus for all partners to engage with and commit to the delivery of family focused early intervention and prevention services that make a difference to families in RCT through the establishment of the Resilient Families Programme.
- Better targeting the provision of universal Early Years services including the implementation of an Integrated Parenting Framework
- Working with partners to form a strategic board to support sport and physical activity in RCT
- Developing and delivering services that focus on building more involved and resilient communities to tackle poverty and promote well-being. This will enable individuals and their families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating and reduce the demand for high cost specialist services and ensure that any adverse child experiences (ACE's) are identified addressed and their impact on children is minimised.
- Delivering the priority investments for Leisure, Parks, Playgrounds, Bereavement and Heritage Services. This investment in Leisure will allow the service to attract new customers from local communities to improve their inclusion in physical activity to benefit their health and well-being. The playground investment will provide more stimulating and safer play opportunities for children throughout the County Borough.
- Better delivery of the Sport and Health Development priorities of the Leisure Strategy to increase active participation in physical activity across all age ranges with the aim of reducing levels of childhood and adult obesity, increasing overall life expectancy and contributing to the general health and well-being of the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

Stay Well@Home Service (SW@H) - We implemented the SW@H in April 2017 providing an integrated response with partner agencies to reduce the total number of citizens who experience a delayed transfer of care from hospital. This service operates at Prince Charles and the Royal Glamorgan acute hospital sites in A & E and on the wards from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

The initial performance data for the SW@H is very positive:

- in the first 6 months, over 200 people have been discharged from hospital using this new service
- as at September 2017, there was a 5% increase in zero length of stay for patients aged 75+ in comparison with the previous year
- there are fewer patients staying 5 days or more in hospital in comparison to previous years
- the number of patients transferred to a community hospital has reduced by 50% since April 2017

Parenting Framework - We have developed the RCT Parenting Framework which provides co-ordination and support to a range of internal Council Services and external partners delivering parenting interventions to ensure our efforts are targeted to deliver improved outcomes for families.

Memory Project - We have supported the delivery of a Memory Project which is an integrated (Health & Social Care) Short Term Reablement Service for people with cognitive impairment or memory problems. This project has worked co- productively with people to define the well-being outcomes they wished to achieve and provided support for people referred from both hospitals and the community.

- **138** referrals were made to the memory project, **135** (39 from hospital and 96 from the community) referrals were accepted.
- Out of 135 referrals, we were able to provide **86** programmes of support as well as some additional 31 specialist occupational health assessments. In total we provided **4829** hours of support.
- **92%** of the people supported felt they achieved all their goals and **94%** said we had helped them remain living independently in their home environment.
- **73%** of people across both the Memory Reablement and Intermediate Care and Reablement services required no further ongoing services.

Case Study

Mrs. P's daughter in law contacted Social Services with concerns about her mother in law's memory and the impact it was having on her ability to carry out her personal care routine. There were concerns regarding Mrs P's memory and resulted in a referral by her GP to memory clinic.

Following an assessment by Mrs P's Social Worker, it was clear that she struggled with her personal care routine. Her husband had been undertaking the shopping, cooking and majority of household tasks for quite some time, however neither he or their family had been able to engage Mrs P in her personal care routine. Mrs P's family raised concerns that she was remaining in the same clothes for months at a time, refusing to shower or change as she truly believed she'd already done so.

Her family had attempted to support her to shower, however this resulted in Mrs P becoming agitated and verbally aggressive towards them. Mrs P and her husband are a very independent couple, previously resistive to accept help that had been offered by their family. Mr P recently suffered a period of ill health resulting in a hospital admission. During this time family supported Mrs P at home, it was then they realised how much support her husband had been providing.

It was requested that the Reablement memory service support Mrs P for 7 mornings a week to engage her in a personal care routine, with the aim of establishing her functional abilities. The goal was to support and encourage Mrs. P to re-engage with a morning routine to include showering and changing her clothes on a regular basis. Initially staff encouraged Mrs P to accompany them into the shower room; they would then turn on the shower, leaving the water to run. As part of the morning routine, a change of clothing would then be brought into the shower room. Once familiar with the new morning structure, staff then encouraged Mrs P to use the shower. Initially staff were required to prompt Mrs P with the sequence of events, however as the programme progressed the prompts required reduced.

Mrs. P engaged well with staff, however she remained unsure as to why they were calling, insisting she didn't require help. As her programme progressed so did her ability to re-engage with a morning routine, however without on-going support she would not retain this ability. Mrs P continued to require staff support in order to initiate the task, the level of prompts she required - both verbal and non-verbal, varied daily. Staff would allow Mrs P time to process the task before prompts were given. Mrs P become agitated at the level of support being provided so it was decided to reduce the calls to 4 x weekly and should Mrs P become more familiar with the routine, calls could be increased.

We have been working in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board to develop the Valley LIFE project which is delivering local integrated services for the frail and elderly. This service provides older people with dementia, their carers and families with timely support to improve their wellbeing and quality of life. A key part of this work includes developing two new health and wellbeing centres for older people who have cognitive and memory problems, and those with dementia.

This year we have been working hard to ensure the health and well-being centre at Ysbyty George Thomas is ready for opening in May 2018 and identified new revenue funding which will provide:

- Health and Wellbeing Centre for older people with cognitive and memory problems; Enhance Day Care services for people with dementia;
- Enhance mental health intervention teams to support people in care and residential homes;
- Increase staffing levels in Community Mental Health Teams;

We have committed more resources to support people with mental health issues find the right accommodation to meet their needs. A social worker is working directly with staff to find ways of improving well-being outcomes for "step down" individuals who were residing in specialist accommodation for people with mental health problems. Previously, the Local Authority was funding many placements at a significant cost and this did not always provide the best outcomes for the individuals. Demand for such placements was increasing and once people were in a placement there appeared to be limited options for people to move on to accommodation that better met their needs and was tailored for their personal well-being outcomes.

Seven individuals have been supported to "step down" to lower level supported placements and a further four individuals have stepped down from Social Care Well-being projects into their own tenancies in the community. These moves have taken considerable planning, working closely with the service users, providers, families and the support team to ensure the well-being outcomes people wished to achieve were met.

Case Study

Y has spent most of his adult years in a hospital setting, ranging from acute wards to rehabilitation units. Once discharged from hospital Y moved to a 24 hour specialist mental health placement where he lived for 5 years after which it was clear that his outcomes could be met in a less restrictive independent environment.

He was placed on the common housing register and was bidding for properties without success. Y was a single male and was therefore not classed as a priority for housing to have his own tenancy.

The housing system required him to bid weekly for potential properties which are then allocated on a priority basis. Y consistently bid on several properties but was always placed 20th or below on the list. Inevitably this meant that despite weekly bidding he was never offered a property and remained in the specialist placement at a cost of £1560 per week.

Discussions took place with the council's housing department to establish what support could be offered with regards to this. It was agreed that the support of Gofal could be utilised to support applications to "move on panel" who had the authority to prioritise Banding allocation. A referral was made to Gofal who assessed Y and submitted an application to move on panel.

This was accepted and Y was prioritised to Band A which resulted in him being accepted for a property. Y was supported by his care team and Gofal to set up utility bills and housing benefit and to settle into the property. Services were increased at this time to support Y with the anxieties of the transition of moving into independent living. Y is now settled in his own flat and continues to receive ongoing support from mental health services.

Performance in relation to the Mental Health Performance Measure remains positive overall and during August 2017, HIW and CSSIW undertook a joint inspection of the Cynon CMHT. Feedback from Inspectors was positive, with no areas of significant concern identified.

We have also worked with Innovate Trust to pilot the use of assistive technology to support people with learning disabilities living more independently in the local community. We have also worked with “Just Checking” and Supported Living Providers to trial the use of assistive technology to explore a new way of supporting individuals during the night-time according to need and to promote independence.

The Just Checking technology has been tested at 36 supported living properties to monitor the activity levels of all individuals to provide a better understanding of when support is required and confirm optimum levels through the most effective combination of staff and technology. Findings from the pilots will be trialed in partnership with Just Checking; Support Providers; social workers; supporting residents and their carers in early 2018.

We continued to redesign some existing learning disability day services provision as part as a wider programme of service transformation, for example:

- Secured WCVA ESF Active Inclusion funding to work with third sector partners to develop programmes of activity (from April 2018) that will focus on engaging with participants that are furthest from the labour market and offer them a 'first step' intervention to help them start their journey into employment.
- Worked with Cambrian Village Trust to develop and deliver an innovative healthy living and confidence building programme for individuals who current access learning disability day services.
- Worked with Artis Community to develop funding bids (decisions due in early 2018) to the Esmee Fairbairn Trust to expand arts based intervention programmes.
- Worked with Innovate Trust has as part of their “Greenday” project, helping adults with learning disabilities to gain skills and confidence to help them to lead independent lives within their local communities. The project is carried out in parks and green spaces across Rhondda Cynon Taf and carries out a wide range of activities from hands on conservation work, to nature walks and biodiversity surveys.

As part of our qualitative survey of children receiving care and support during the past 12 months we have been told that 74% (136/185) of children with a care and support plan who responded reported they are able to do the things they like all of the time whilst 25% (47/185) said they could some of the time. As part of our work engaging children across our services it is important to have this information to help us shape what we support and deliver.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

We have identified a range of priorities arising from our self –evaluations of both adults and children’s services:

- Work with Partners to develop a community response service (SW@H Phase 2) to prevent people being taken to hospital unnecessarily.
- Complete review of learning disabilities day services provision and prepare options analysis for the redesign of current provision to ensure that new models of support are high quality and cost effective.
- Develop the capacity and quality of specialist care home provision to ensure people with a dementia no longer able to remain in their own homes can access specialist care locally
- Continue the Valley LIFE project to develop a range of services for older people with dementia which helps to support people to stay well at home for longer.
- Continue the work between Adult’s and Children’s Services to improve the way we support young people transitioning into adulthood.

(c) Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Continuing to ensure that Children and Young People are protected from abuse and neglect and taking appropriate steps to protect and safeguard children and young people who need care and support and carers who need support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.
- Implementing a Risk Framework Model to ensure consistency in decision making relating to the lives of Children
- Reducing the number of repeat episodes where Children and Young People are placed on the Child Protection Register
- Equipping staff with the skills and knowledge to ensure groups with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and to identify safeguarding issues with the aim of preventing problems from getting worse or happening.
- Putting in place a greater choice of high quality local placements available for children who cannot remain at home, by increasing the number of Rhondda Cynon Taf foster carers.
- Undertaking a programme of audit and review work via the Adult Quality Assurance Sub Group (AQA) to identify themes and trends to inform best practice in relation to adult safeguarding
- Completing the review of the adult safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making, in line with the new Welsh Government guidance
- Ensuring that there is a robust performance management framework in place for the MASH which is aligned to the work of the Board’s Quality Assurance Sub Group.
- Continuing to develop the multi-agency training calendar and identify any gaps in provision
- Developing a programme of Multi Agency Practitioner Events to share learning from audits and reviews with a wide audience of practitioners involved in safeguarding

- Increasing the pool of appropriately skilled reviewers/facilitators to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

We are continuing to ensure that children and young people in RCT are protected from abuse, neglect or any other kinds of harm and this year have taken further steps to protect and safeguard children and young people. All children and young people have access to Advocacy and since the introduction of the National Advocacy Framework have an 'active offer'; which ensures that all children and young people who become looked after or whose names are on the Child Protection Register have a visit from an independent advocate. NYAS, the advocacy provider is a member of Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) and the issues they deal with are gathered together so that any emerging themes are addressed within the service.

We have also increased access to advocacy for people who need support to participate in safeguarding processes, particularly for people who do not qualify for Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy, but, who, nevertheless would benefit from such support. There has been a 50% increase in the use of independent representatives for people subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, which improves the service user's ability to access their Rights to appeal. We have also made improvements to working practices and performance of the Adults Safeguarding Team has continued to be made.

We have developed a Placement Strategy which will give children who cannot stay at home a greater choice of high quality local placements and also increased the number of foster carers.

A senior practitioner has been seconded for two years to work with Social Workers to improve adoption practice, processes and guidance and provide a clear link to the Regional Adoption Consortium for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff. This has allowed for consistency of service delivery across the services. We do know that the percentage of looked after children experiencing three or more changes to their placement during the year was 7.4%.

The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board for Adults and Children has merged and a Joint Operational Committee has been established. A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Tool has been developed and is being used by all partner agencies.

We have through the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board developed a website that provides information, advice and guidance to the public and professionals whose work brings them into contact with children, young people, adults at risk and their families. The website is designed to help agencies, organisations and individuals working with children, including families and parents as well as members of the wider community, to help keep our children, young people and adults at risk safe. This site can be accessed via www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org/home

We have developed and implemented an audit programme and completed the following audits:

- Quality of strategy discussions audit
- S126 enquiries timescale audit

- Use of advocacy in Safeguarding
- Suspected Adult at Risk Reports from Independent Hospitals
- Review of Outcomes of Criminal Investigations
- Audit of Health-led Safeguarding Cases
- A range of Multi-Agency Individual Case Audits

The findings have reported excellent safeguarding practice and where improvement actions are identified these have been noted and will be prioritised for action in 2018/19.

- Working with partner agencies we also the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) processes with no significant issues identified
- We have completed the review of the adult safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making.
- New protocols have been developed to manage the interface between Safeguarding and the Escalating Concerns process and we now have a Cwm Taf Escalating Concerns Group that meets monthly and provides regular reports to the Adult Quality Assurance Group
- A new draft Management of Allegations against Professionals and a draft Strategy Discussions Protocol have been produced. This work will continue in 2018/19 and we will constantly review our processes to check for statutory compliance and best practice.

We have held several multi-agency practitioner events this year to share learning from the audits and reviews with a wide range of practitioners in safeguarding. These include:

- Feedback event to share the learning from two Adult Practice Reviews completed by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board. The key areas of learning related to transition from childhood to adulthood and have resulted in the development of new transition principles.
- Pressure Ulcer Prevention conference
- Modern Slavery conference
- DoLS Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum: Learning from local Cases in the Court of Protection
- Feedback on three adult safeguarding cases (Multi–Agency Practitioner Forum).

We have increased the pool of appropriately skilled reviewers/facilitators to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews. Looking at the evidence we know that:

- The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days was 93.78%
- The overall numbers of children on the child protection register has increased by 20%, from 418 on 31/03/2017 to 502 on 31/03/2018
- The percentage of re-registration of children on the local Authority Child Protection Register is 18.6%
- During 2017/18, 3 children become looked after on more than 1 occasion. This equates to 2% of all admissions

We have completed a qualitative survey of people who are receiving care and support which has confirmed that 79% of adults who are receiving care and support reported that they feel safe, with 15% reporting they feel safe some of the time. This is an improvement on 2016/17 when 76% reported they feel safe. 94% of children with a care and support

plan who responded reported they feel safe all the time. This is an increase on 2016/17 when 92% reported feeling safe all the time.

Adult's Safeguarding Case Study

A report was received by RCT's Safeguarding Team at MASH that a 32 year old woman appeared to be experiencing coercive control and domestic abuse at the hands of her husband. The report was made by a local charity where the person was a volunteer. The manager of the charity was extremely concerned for her safety and reported that she might have underlying mental health issues.

The person had recently been assessed by her local community Mental Health Team, but she had denied any problems with her home situation or that she had any mental health issues. Because of a meeting with MASH, the Safeguarding Officer could provide the person with information about domestic abuse services (although she continued to state that she did not experience any form of abuse). By meeting with her in a safe space, giving the person sufficient time to discuss her situation fully and build trust and rapport quickly using an empowering and supportive approach, the person also felt able to disclose to the Safeguarding Officer that she did, indeed, suffer with mental health problems because of adverse childhood experiences. She gave her consent for the Safeguarding Officer to liaise with her GP and other local services so that she could access appropriate treatment and support.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

- Strengthen our Quality Assurance Framework and further reduce the number of repeat episodes where children and young people are placed on the child protection register.
- Deliver the actions in the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel's Work Plan 2018/19 to ensure that children looked after and care leavers receive good quality placements that support them to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives and to achieve their potential.
- Complete and deliver the Adults Quality Assurance audit schedule for 2018-19, focusing on the themes and trends that have become apparent from management information data and audits in 2017-18 and ensure this is aligned to the work of the newly-formed MASH Quality Assurance sub-group.
- Deliver the training opportunities identified in the multi-agency safeguarding training plan focusing on suicide and self harm; VAWDASV; Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS); Section 126 enquiries; County Lines, and; Domestic Abuse and Older People (in partnership with Elder Abuse Cymru)
- Develop the Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum model as an effective method to develop practitioner knowledge, skills and values in relation to Adult Safeguarding and DoLS with assistance from the Cwm Taf Learning & Development Centre, with the aim of delivering regular events over the year that use real case examples to explore practice.

(d) Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Working with communities and the third sector to build community resilience and capacity as a means of improving general health and wellbeing whilst facilitating and promoting social enterprise.
- Engaging with communities and third sector organisations to co-produce community hubs that can: offer information advice and assistance to people in their area; link to the wider network of community based activities and facilities; offer some simple community based solutions to meet some the low level support needs of the people living in the area (i.e. dementia cafe etc.)
- Working with key stakeholders to identify the optimum network areas and most beneficial locations for community hubs.
- Seeking third sector partners across the county borough and set out a critical path for development.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

Developing Community Hubs - We have engaged widely with communities and third sector organisations to co-produce community hubs, building resilient communities that provide a range of citizen based services in priority neighbourhoods. These facilities will support a preventative approach that enables individuals and families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

This year we have consulted widely with the local communities in Mountain Ash and Ferndale to seek their views on the development of our first two Community Hubs. As a result, Cabinet were asked to approve a programme of investment across the County Borough for the development of these Hubs as part of the Council's approach to building resilient communities. Work has been on going to plan at Mountain Ash Day Centre and the former Ferndale Infants School.

The development of Community Hubs will encourage and support people to learn, develop and participate in society and will deliver the following outcomes:

- Better public services that are joined up, cost effective and accessible.
- A community in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised.
- A community that is well connected.
- A community that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
- A community that promotes and protects its culture and heritage.

The Hubs will also provide:

- A single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance.
- A platform to develop community capacity and volunteering.
- Encouragement for older people to stay active and connected to delay or prevent them needing statutory services.
- Opportunities for people to improve their mental health, well-being and confidence.
- Opportunities for people to improve or maintain their physical health.
- Opportunities for parents and families to improve their relationships and parenting skills.

- Opportunities for vulnerable people to seek support and be signposted to other services as appropriate.
- Opportunities for people to learn and develop skills in support of employment.
- Flexible community space for people to meet, share interest and socialise, thereby tackling loneliness and social isolation

We have also been working with Age Connects Morgannwg (ACM) to transfer, via Community Asset Transfer, St. Mairs Day Centre. This transfer helped ACM access £1.1million of Big Lottery funding and they have commenced the redevelopment of the Centre which will give it a new identity as Cynon Linc, an intergenerational Community Hub for the whole community in the Cynon Valley, featuring specific activities and resources. The Hub will provide activities throughout the day and evening from arts and crafts, storytelling, reminiscing, music, education classes, gardening to concerts and films. There will also be a sensory room that can be used with people suffering from dementia alongside a dementia café and a social enterprise bistro providing affordable, healthy meals and snacks for the whole community. This facility is an excellent example of what working in partnership with the Third sector can achieve to further help people learn, develop and participate in society and achieve personal well-being outcomes.

We have also worked on delivering the Miskin Project to support young people and families across Rhondda Cynon Taf who may be vulnerable, looked after or at risk of becoming looked after. The Miskin Team have had a partnership working relationship with Cultural Services over a number of years. Various arts and music projects have been provided; this has included providing a resident artist– the artist was from Artis Community. Recently a Drama Group was provided through Community Music Wales, via Cultural Services; young people have received ASDAN accreditations for attending the drama group.

The Miskin Project also includes a partnership with the Tai Education Centre to provide a range of outdoor activities. The aim is to get young people re-engaged with education through these activities and achieve recognised qualifications.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 our plans are to:

- Increase the number of Community Hubs via a phased development of consultation and the rolling out of further Hubs across the County Borough and neighbourhood networks over a three year period. This phased roll out of the locations of these Hubs will be based on the analysis of the consultations and evidence of greatest need.
- Develop new community based models of service with a focus on early intervention and prevention, choice, control and independence

(e) Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Reducing the need for Statutory Services by ensuring that children, young people and families have coordinated integrated family support earlier.
- Supporting children who cannot live with their own parents so that they are able to live in suitable accommodation within RCT to help them safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.
- Supporting children and young people who need care and support and carers who need support to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.
- Implementing the Resilient Families Service to deliver an improved Team around the Family (TAF) Model across RCT and implement the Vulnerability and Resilience Model, to enable us to respond to the needs of families swiftly and effectively and reduce reliance on statutory services.
- Implementing the recommendations following a review into all Families First Commissioned services, with a focus on prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement
- Developing the Fostering Service to support children and young people who are in need of care and support so that they can maintain connections with their families
- Improving the safety of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and reduce the impact this has on their lives of the victims and perpetrators and wider families

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

During 2017, Adult and Children's Services have worked together with health board and third sector partners across the Cwm Taf Region to review the existing model of services for carers and considered options for the development a regional integrated service to support carers.

Improved Fostering Service - The Fostering Services has been reconfigured and now comprises of two teams. These are a Fostering Assessment Team responsible for the connected persons assessment for potential kinship carers and a Fostering Support Team responsible for supporting all foster carers be they mainstream, short break or kinship.

We have piloted a Fostering Well Being Programme with Merthyr Council. This has improved the wellbeing outcomes for fostered children by encouraging everyone in the team around the child to work together to share learning and best practice. Foster carers, children and young people have been recruited as champions and have an important role in taking this work forward. The work we have carried out contributes to placement stability for children and young people within family type placements and has:

- increased the number of in-house mainstream carers (including increasing numbers moving over from the independent sector);
- enhanced support for foster carers;
- enhanced training and development to further develop skills, knowledge and experience (in particular in relation to caring for teenagers);
- strengthened kinship care provision.

We have carried out considerable development work this year with our foster and kinship carers, 3 consultation events are undertaken every quarter and support groups have been established, success celebrated with the engagement of our marketing colleagues. The

feedback received from carers shows this has been appreciated, as it demonstrates their value and contribution to children young people and the service.

Resilient Families Programme - A delivery model for the Resilient Families Service was approved in October 2017 and after evaluative reviews, research findings and consultation with service users and professionals this has delivered improved Team around the Family arrangements in RCT. The entire service is focused on quicker response times, sharper diagnostic assessment of need, the removal of barriers to increase resilience levels and to improve the delivery of family support services to residents. Both the Programme and the Service rely on the successful implementation of an Integrated Family Support Framework to organise, co-ordinate and govern the delivery of early intervention and prevention services by both Council services and partners across the County Borough. The implementation of the Resilient Families Service has resulted in the reorganisation of both the On-Track Team and the Family Aide Support Team (FAST) with staff consultation completed early in 2018.

The delivery of the new RCT Integrated Parenting Support Framework will be managed by the Early Years and Family Support Service from April 2018 and changes to staffing structures are underway to accommodate this arrangement. The Holiday Fun Time Scheme has also had an overhaul in August 2017 and is now operating as Care2Play - a supported engagement in play programme that seeks to provide additional support to children and young people in universal settings. The RCT Parenting Framework is in place and provides co-ordination and support to a range of internal Council Services and external partners delivering parenting interventions to ensure our efforts are targeted to deliver improved outcomes for families.

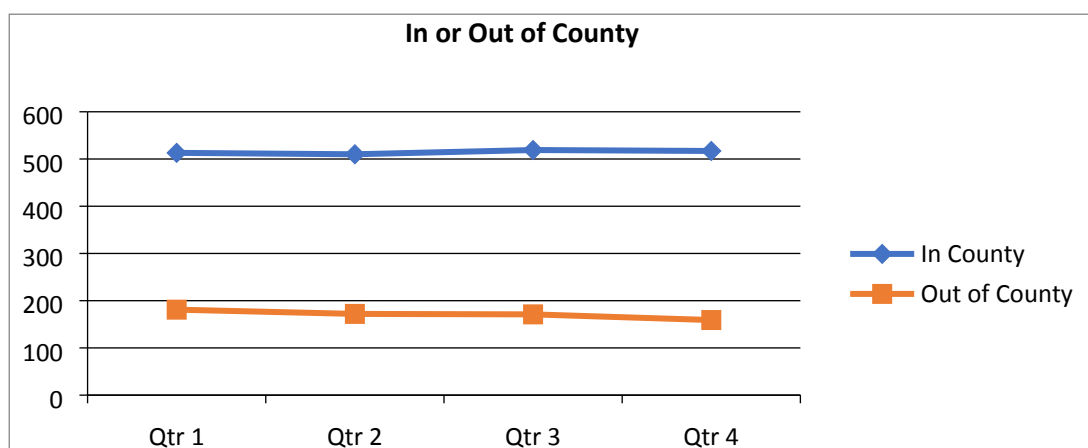
As we set out in Section 3 of this report, all children in care in RCT were asked to participate in an online survey. Your Life, Your Care: A survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs.

Areas for improvement which will be reviewed as a priority included:

- The majority of children and young people (4-18yrs) trusted their social workers, but young people emphasised that they disliked social workers changing.
- Nearly all older children and young people (8-18yrs) knew who their social worker was and knew they could ask to speak to them alone. A quarter of the youngest children (4-7yrs) did not know who their social worker was.
- Most children and young people (8-18yrs) felt included in social work decision-making, but 16% of young people (11-18yrs) did not. Some young people wrote that they were not informed when decisions had been made.

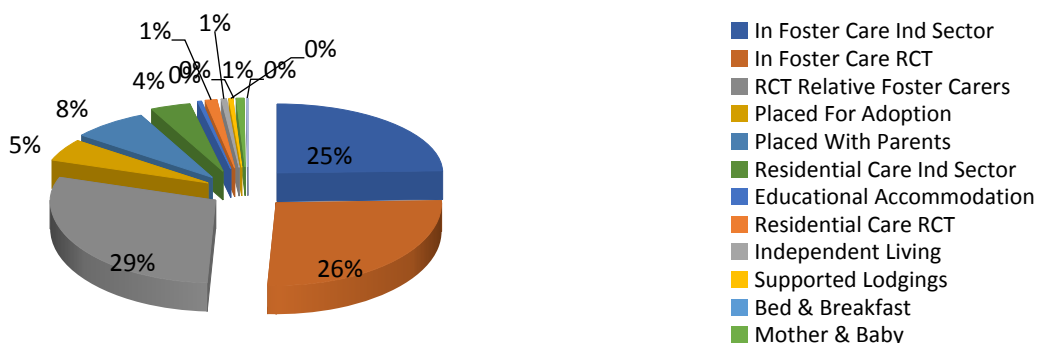
We have reviewed the location and placement types for Children Looked After to reduce the number of Children that are placed out of county. At 31st March 2018 76.5% of our children looked after were residing within RCT. We are pleased that each quarter has seen a drop in the number of children residing outside RCT, with 26% reported on 30th June 2017 reduced to 23.5% on 31st March 2018

Location of Placements Types (in/out of County 207/18)



If we consider the location of the placements for Children Looked After, most children have been placed with Relative Carers (29%). This figure includes approved and non-approved kinship carers. The number has increased when compared to the same time last year where we had 175 (26%). In House Foster Care numbers are higher than Independent Sector Foster Care but figures have dropped in both categories when compared to last year's figures. Mother and Baby placements have also increased along with the number of children in Adoption placements.

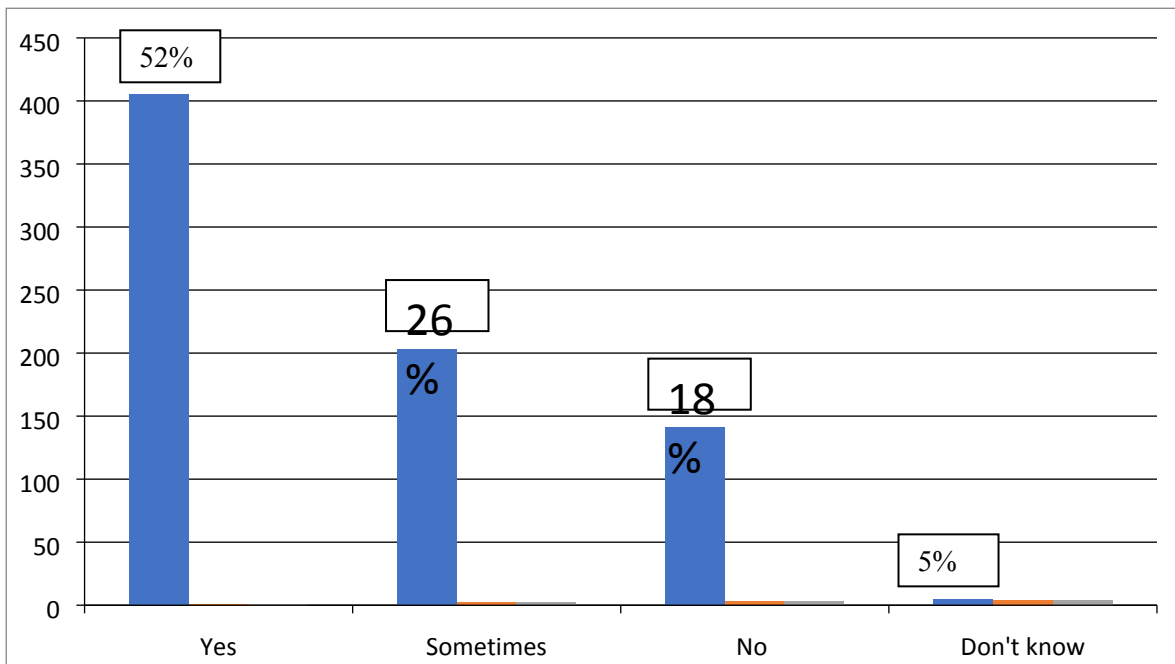
LAC as at 17/04/2018 by Placement Type



During 2017, Adult's and Children's Services have reviewed the "transition" between both service areas and developed a common approach to understanding what matters, developing practice to enable people across the age range to live their own lives. The aim of this work is to remove the word (and process) of 'transition' between adult and children's services through a common model of practice, which is based on long term relationships and where services are organised around what support is needed. This work will continue into 2018/19.

Getting feedback on what matters to people: In our survey of 786 adults who are receiving care and support, 608 said that they sometimes or always feel part of their community, this is 4% more than last year.

I feel I am part of my community



We also know that 88% of adults (707/800) said they were happy with the support from family, friends and neighbours, and that 87% (163/187) of children with a care and support plan who responded to our survey reported they are happy with my family, friends and neighbours

What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 we will:

- Continue to work with Children's Services to develop a practice - led approach that improves the way we work with young people and their families throughout their life and, in particular, at the critical time of the transition to adulthood.
- Develop a plan to implement a Regional Fostering Service in line with the recommendations of the National Fostering Framework.
- Develop plan to implement recommendations review of services for carers; including the provision and availability of respite services

(f) Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Reducing the length of time Children and Young People remain within the Children Looked after (CLA) system.
- Reviewing the accommodation needs of Children who are Looked After (CLA), including those who have recently left care

- Ensuring that children that cannot live with their own parents live in suitable accommodation in RCT.
- Improving the integrated commissioning capacity of the Social Services and Wellbeing Regional team and deliver the statutory requirements of the Cwm Taf SSWB Partnership Board for 2017/8 to ensure that care is planned with organisations working together to fully understand peoples' care and support needs,
- Delivering Community Safety Services and Programmes that promote Rhondda Cynon Taf as a safe place to live with high levels of community cohesion to help reduce crime and the fear of crime.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

We started working with housing providers and care providers to co-produce alternative and more modern, efficient ways of meeting assessed care needs in relation to supported accommodation. We have provided six units of additional modern supported accommodation for adults with a learning disability at the Old Vicarage in Tylorstown in partnership with Rhondda Housing Association. This has enabled us to relocate these individuals to a more suitable environment and free up their existing accommodation to step down more complex individuals in a more appropriate setting.

Work is on-going to convert of Penllew Court, sheltered housing scheme for older people in Aberdare, owned by Cynon Taf Housing Association, into new supported living accommodation for people with a learning disability. The redevelopment of Penllew Court would see the renovation of the scheme into a modern 19 bed facility for individuals with a learning disability, with each resident having a self-contained one bedroom flat with access to communal areas for activities and social interaction. The scheme will be accessible to wheelchair users and will support independence alongside providing appropriate support for residents, 24/7 where needed. It is proposed that the redeveloped scheme will include a community café facility for use by the residents if they so wish and, potentially, members of the public. Communal facilities at the scheme will also be reconfigure to support the remodelling and modernisation of our current day service provision within the Cynon Valley through, in particular, the provision of community based outreach opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

CSSIW external reports were received for the In-house Learning Disability Supported Living and Respite Services and In-house Residential Care Homes. These services were judged as performing well with no regulatory requirements in the past 12 months. Over the past year the Accommodation Service has continued to improve working practices and have reviewed and implemented changes to falls protocols, on-call arrangements and staffing rotas across residential care as well as modernising and developing service delivery to meet the changing service need and work with people to achieve their personal well-being outcomes.

An inspection by CSSIW in February 2018 of Home Care at Ty Elai reported that 'People have a particularly well-organised service that ensures they receive good personal and practical support to enable them to continue life at home. The service is highly developed both in the quality and quantity of support available and provided by staff and includes the quality monitoring systems'.

We have developed a Regional Market Position Statement (MPS) for care home accommodation as one of the steps in the process of delivering the statutory requirement

to establish a regional pooled fund for care home accommodation. The development of a regional MPS has clarified this position further and forms the basis for future dialogue and stronger partnership between commissioners and providers specifically with regards to:

- Sharing information and analysis of future population needs
- Providing a review of the current 'market' of services
- Describing our future approach to commissioning services
- Identifying the potential future shape of the market to enable providers to position themselves and meet future demands/needs
- Describing how commissioners can more effectively engage and support service providers to achieve a healthy and sustainable market.

We have been working with partners through the Cwm Taf Partnership Board regarding the establishment of a Regional Commissioning Team from April 2018. This Team will help us meet the future pooled budget requirements in line with Welsh Government's timescale and will mean that care is planned with organisations working together to fully understand people's care and support needs.

We have been reviewing the accommodation provision for Children Looked After and the number of children residential establishments within RCT has been reduced to three. The decision to close Treherbert Children's Home was taken in September 2017 following an independent review of the future accommodation and placement needs of children and young people looked after.

The Miskin and Rapid Intervention Response Teams have been relocated together and are fully integrated and now known as the Miskin Service Their primarily role is to provide an urgent intense family focused service to both children/young people on the cusp of becoming looked after and who are in the CLA system and need to be returned home quickly. This integration allows for a more consistent, focused service that delivers the same model of support to children young people and their families from aged 0 to 18.

The independent Review and Refocus of Accommodation and placement provision to Children Looked After found that:

- 81% of children with care and support plans who responded feel that their views about their care and support have been listened to.
- 91% of children who responded reported they had been treated with respect.

We have continued to focus on anti-social behaviour (ASB) as a priority within our communities. The emphasis has been on early intervention with perpetrators of ASB and increased support for vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB.

During 2017/18, a total of 1371 referrals were received for perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Following intervention by our ASB team, 1077 of those (78.56%) did not engage in further incidents of anti-social behaviour (within six months of the referral). During the same period, the ASB team supported a total of 53 vulnerable / repeat victims of anti-social behaviour. Following a range of interventions from the team, 48 of the victims (90.56%) felt safer.

The Community Safety Team have also identified the importance of diverting people away from the Criminal Justice System, and therefore improving life prospects for those individuals. The Divert 18 – 25 project focusses on diverting first time offenders, aged 18-25 years old, away from the Criminal Justice System. A number of interventions are used, focusing on the needs of the individual. The project has been running for two years and a total of 141 individuals have been diverted on to the project. Of these individuals, 136 (96.45%) have not reoffended within six months of completing the intervention.

We are committed to promoting community cohesion within our communities, and a main focus for us is to tackle the issue of under reporting when it comes to hate crime incidents. During 2017/18, we have conducted a series of hate crime training sessions with a total of 372 individuals completing the training. Of those individuals trained, 365 (98.12%) report they have an increased awareness of hate crime reporting procedures.

Case Study - Supporting People to live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

L is 46 years old and she has bariatric needs which impact on her mobility and ability to manage her personal care. She lives with her partner in a housing association property. Prior to her hospital admission, L was unable to access all areas of her home and was restricted to living in one room. She rarely left the house.

L was admitted to hospital in May 2017 following a fall at home. L became medically fit for discharge in October 2017 and a referral was made for social work involvement, to assist in discharge planning. L's mental well-being had been impacted on by the length of her hospital stay; she had lost motivation in engaging with physiotherapy and this was exacerbating her physical problems. She was now nursed in bed for the majority of the time, and needed to use a bariatric wheelchair to get around. This meant that her home was no longer accessible to her. The width of the wheelchair caused significant issues in terms of securing accommodation for L. A number of potential properties were assessed but were unable to accommodate the specialist wheelchair. Temporary residential placements were also explored, but none within the county borough were able to accommodate the wheelchair. A purpose built bungalow had been identified as the way forward but this had a completion time of 9 months.

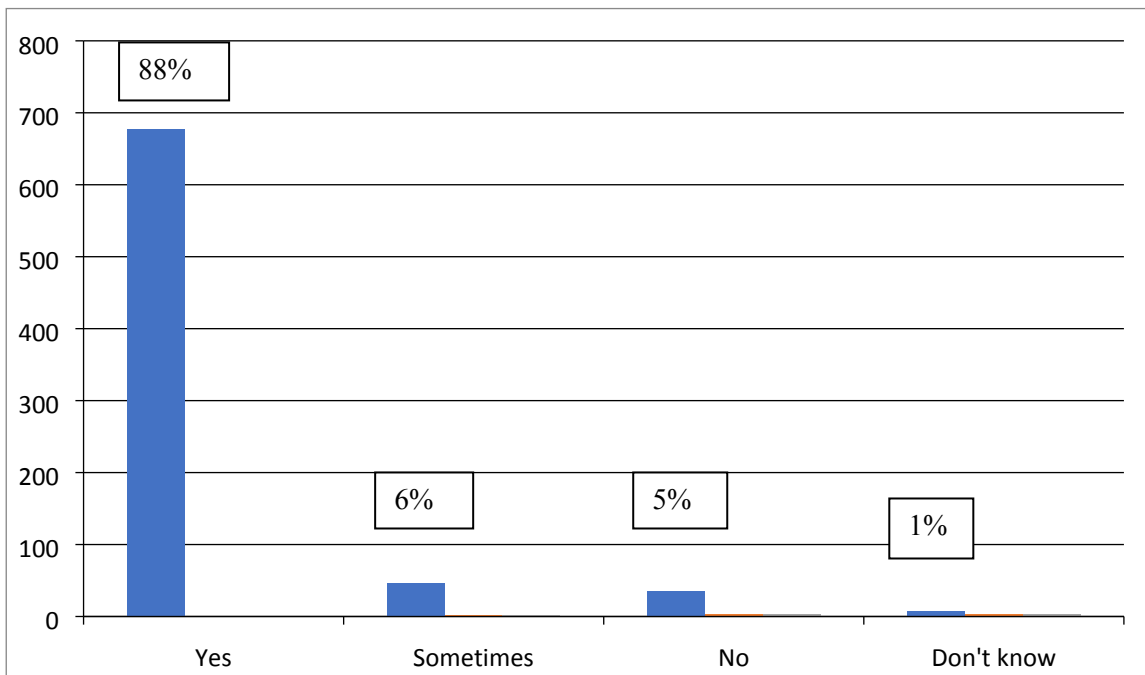
The social worker undertook a multi-disciplinary assessment, involving L and her partner, physiotherapist, nursing staff, occupational therapist and housing advisor. She made an application to the project so that L could secure temporary accommodation, pending completion of the adapted bungalow. L had agreed to support with her personal care via a commissioned care package. Health colleagues ordered specialist equipment (bed and hoist) and housing arranged to move furniture from L's existing property to the adapted flat.

L was able to leave hospital and return to her community to live with her partner. Further reablement support is being provided at home to try to support L in maximising her independence and regain some mobility. Without the availability of the adapted flat, it is probable that L would have remained in hospital until the purpose built bungalow was ready. This would have entailed a hospital stay of 18 months (including 12 months where L was medically fit for discharge).

During her 'what matters' conversation, L said 'I have been in hospital since May 2nd 2017 and I am looking forward to going home.'

We carried out a qualitative survey and 88% (678/ 768) of those adults receiving care and support who responded to the survey, reported that they live in a home that best supports their well-being. This is a 1% increase on last year's return.

I live in a home that best supports my well-being.



What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 we will:

- Complete the redevelopment of specialist accommodation for people with learning disabilities
- Continue to ensure that there are appropriate levels of modern fit for purpose housing and accommodation available for vulnerable people that meets their needs and supported, where appropriate, by access to community facilities
- Implement the recommendations of the independent report: Review and Refocus of Accommodation and Placement Provision for Children Looked After and Care Leavers'
- Realign the Children Looked After Project to take account lessons learnt and ensure that children who cannot live with their own parents live in suitable accommodation within RCT.
- Identify a range of placements that support Children Looked After and care leavers to achieve positive outcomes and draft a new model of service provision within our residential establishments.

5. How We Do What We Do

(a) Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

We know that we cannot deliver the high quality of services to people needing our support without the right number of well trained professionals in our workforce with the mix of skills and experience. We have continued to ensure that all core learning and development, including induction and qualification training reflects the new legal framework, that we secure the development of, and enhance, the skills of the workforce especially in their partnership working across organisational boundaries, and that we understand the needs and wider context in which our workforce operate.

Across the Council we continue to face on-going challenges such as increasing pressure on services, changing demographics such as the growth in older cohorts, increasing public expectations, recruitment and retention issues in some areas and the requirements of greater collaborative working to achieve goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. To meet both the current and inevitable future changes we need the right workforce with the skills and ambition to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We want our staff and managers to ensure that work they do is always providing excellent service, improvements and value for money for our residents. We want a workforce that will embrace change for the better and uses their skills, and learn new ones, to work in different ways to help the Council achieve priorities.

We also want to strengthen the skills of our leaders and managers to lead the way through change to achieve the best for residents. The relationship between line managers and their teams is key to organisational effectiveness and success.

To ensure we have the workforce we need to achieve the best for our residents, over the next five years the Council will focus on the following five Council Workforce Plan delivery aims which apply across the delivery of our services:

- Developing a flexible and agile workforce that shares organisational knowledge
- Recruiting and retaining the best talent to create a diverse workforce
- Leadership and management development
- Enabling a high performing engaged and committed workforce
- Supporting health and well-being to maximise attendance

In reviewing our training needs in social services, one of our key objectives has been to maintain high levels of staff training and awareness of our safeguarding responsibilities across the range of children and adults who could be at risk of harm or abuse.

In doing so we ensured that colleagues could grasp the new Adult and Children Practice Reviews statutory guidance through a two-day training course, attended by 14 professionals from Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board agencies. We are developing a register of trained and skilled reviewers, and an E-Learning package which is in development will be rolled out across Wales, and we will use this in future staff development.

We will continue to further the scope and reach of the learning and development provision building on the initial approach of single service provision across the region and extend

this to working in partnership with other partner Regions to build on the strengths of collaborative and shared delivery.

Our objectives for the forthcoming year are that we will:

- Continue to support social care staff engaged in duties delivered under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to have the knowledge, skills and competencies to operate in the legal and cultural expectations of the Act
- Support the implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act by supporting the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and supporting knowledge of responsible individuals.
- Support efficient approaches by drawing upon and working with the Social Care Wales national plans/ programmes: including Step Up to Management; Social Services Practitioners; Middle Manager Development Programme; Team manager development programme; and learning and development programme for the Acts
- Continue the current support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales; support frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and support introduction of the revised induction framework from September 2017; and support the infrastructure for learning and development across Wales, including local and regional partnership and joint working.
- Ensure the learning and development commitments made in response to the Older People's Commissioner 'Requirements for Action' are followed up (in relation to the report, "*A Place to Call Home*")

(b) Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

Even within this period of significantly reducing resources and hence financial pressure on all services, the Council remains committed to continue to deliver its key services, stronger communities and social justice. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020 sets out that our key purpose is to provide a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all. Whilst demand for social services grows, in part due to the local challenges we face but also in response to the changing age profile of the area, the Council has worked hard to protect budgets for those in greatest need. Our key strategic priorities for the past 12 months have been around the themes of:

- Economy – building a strong economy;
- People – promoting independence and positive lives for everyone; and
- Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.

At the same time, residents are facing greater financial pressures from increasing energy bills, housing costs, continued wage restraint and benefit reforms. People expect better services and more prompt responses from the Council.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC alone has had to save over £100m from its revenue budget since 2011 as a result of reductions to public sector funding. We have also made decisions to support specific groups of people where resources are required, where the Cabinet decided in December 2017 to award 100% Discretionary Council Tax Relief to care leavers aged 18-25 from the 1st April 2018.

(c) Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

In our 2016/17 annual report we stated that our partnership working across the wider region was strong, and that the development of cross organisational working in the Public Service Board and the Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Board was demonstrating a high level of collaboration in planning our workforce needs and training requirements, integrating our service provision and responding to region wide challenges. This last year has again demonstrated that we continue to be effective in enhancing our joint working arrangements and in particular have reached agreement on a pooled fund in response to the requirements of the new social services legislation.

In their Annual Improvement Report, the Wales Audit Office concluded in March last year that we are:

- collaborating effectively with a range of partners to achieve efficiencies and improve services to our citizens
- collaborating well with our neighbouring councils;
- a valued member of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board;
- seeking to modernise health and social care for the benefit of our citizens working with Cwm Taf University Health Board;
- leading on the City Deal initiative to primarily improve the economic performance and the transportation infrastructure of the region.

The report went on to say that:

“There are effective and established relationships with the Health Board around modernising health and social care that include joint officer posts and pooled budgets in relation to hospital admissions and discharge planning. The Council is also seeking to support modernising primary care provision through its asset management programme. Both partners are mutually well respected and valued but pace is an issue if the Council is to realise its efficiency savings and modernise the service for the citizens of RCT.”

Our political and corporate leadership continues to be effective, demonstrated by elected Members, with a focus on challenging the performance of cabinet members, and officers, driving service improvement and change. Our Cabinet Members are approachable, supportive and fully engaged in the delivery of services to children, young people, their families and adults.

Regular reports as part of our governance and accountability are presented to scrutiny committees to ensure appropriate challenge in relation to our priorities. The Leader is also engaged via service change update meetings and formal processes e.g. Cabinet and Council. All policy changes are taken through Cabinet for approval.

We have recently implemented a new electronic case management system which is the Wales wide “WCCIS” which has been designed to deliver improved care and support for adults, children and their families by facilitating better management of care through improved communication between partner agencies, less onerous assessment processes and increased opportunities for sharing information across multiple agencies.

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

The balance I have attempted to strike in this annual report is conveying the sense of direction and achievement in providing the sorts of services that people need to help them, but in doing so ensure that we rely on the most up to date and accurate performance reports, data and responses to surveys. We can't capture everything in this report and it is not the only way that members of the public, key partners and service providers can find out about what and how we are delivering across the county borough. We always say, and it's important to repeat that if something is not mentioned in this report as a key priority it doesn't mean we're not doing it, as there is a lot of activity across social services that plays a part in helping us to provide for a big range of people who at some stage of their lives needs us to help them.

There are a range of big strategic documents that support our direction of travel and others that back up what we have said in this report. The following sources of information will provide additional information that you might wish to look at:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Workforce Plan 2017 - 2022
- The Cwm Taf Population Needs Assessment
- Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board Regional Plan
- The Cwm Taf Wellbeing Assessment
- Our Council's departmental reports
- Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report – March 2017