



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A virtual meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Tuesday, 13th October, 2020 at 10.30 am**

Contact: Hannah Williams - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 01443 424062)

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 Friday, 9 October 2020 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. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Cabinet Committee on the 24th September 2020 as an accurate record.

(Pages 5 - 14)

3. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - FIREWORKS

To receive the report of the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services, which outlines the current legal controls on the sale and use of fireworks and consider how the Local Authority may further support the Notice of Motion made to Council on the 27th November 2019 (Appendix 1) and the RSPCA campaign calling for greater controls.

(Pages 15 - 24)

4. CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL PLAN

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community and Children's Services, which shares with Cabinet the Annual Plan for 2020/21 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

(Pages 25 - 48)

5. REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community and Children's Services, which provides Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between April 1st 2019 and March 31st 2020.

(Pages 49 - 72)

6. ACTIVE TRAVEL - REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

To receive the report of the Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services, which seeks Cabinet approval to commence a review, including a public engagement exercise, of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM). This report also outlines the reasons for undertaking this exercise.

(Pages 73 - 78)

7. THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

To receive the report of the Chief Executive, which outlines Rhondda Cynon Taf's draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which contains progress for 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21 in respect of the Council's strategic priorities.

(Pages 79 - 166)

8. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 - 2023/24

To receive the report of the Director, Finance and Digital Services, which provides Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2023/24, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2021/22 during the autumn.

(Pages 167 - 212)

9. ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2021/22

To receive the report of the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication, which informs Cabinet of the proposed 'digital by default' approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2021/22 budget.

(Pages 213 - 218)

10. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony S. ...". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

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

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Gio Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Nigel Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Paul Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 24 September 2020 at 11.00 am

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor G Hopkins

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr S Humphreys, Head of Legal Services
Mr A Griffiths, Service Director – Highways & Engineering

1 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

2 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2020 as an accurate record.

3 Leader's Scheme of Delegation

Members noted the Leader's Scheme of Delegation for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, following the presentation at the Council's Annual General Meeting.

4 Cabinet Work Programme 2020-2021

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet Members with a draft work programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, which

listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet.

The Service Director spoke of the current circumstances, commenting that there was a greater need for flexibility of the programme.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year.

The Deputy Leader commented that utilising the programme assists with openness and transparency of the decision making process within the Council and gives greater opportunity for Pre-Scrutiny.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Work Programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

5 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme - Mutual Investment Model (MIM) 21st Century Schools Welsh Education Partnership - Strategic Partnering Agreement (SPA)

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services provided Cabinet Members with an update on the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding element of Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme and sought Cabinet approval to enter into a Strategic Partnering Agreement with Welsh Education Partnership Co (WEPCo) to facilitate the delivery of education and community facilities. The Director also sought Cabinet approval to appoint the Temporary Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation and / or Director of Corporate Estates as 'Participant Representative' to sit on the Strategic Partnering Board.

The Director asked Cabinet to note that approval to enter into a Project Agreement for any of the Pathfinder Projects would be brought back to Cabinet in future for determination and that agreeing to enter into the Strategic Partnering Agreement would not commit the Council to enter into contractual arrangements in relation to any projects.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services thanked the Director for the complex and comprehensive report. The Cabinet Member spoke of the need to continue the school modernisation agenda and therefore, the need to access revenue funding via MIM and to enter into a Strategic Partnership Agreement with WEPCo for the delivery. The Cabinet Member emphasised that the MIM Model is different and more polished to the previous PFI model and stated that ownership would remain with the Local Authority. In respect of the appointment as 'Participant Representative' to sit on the Strategic Partnership Board, the Cabinet Member was happy with the recommendations and thought it would be beneficial for both officers to attend meetings, dependent on the agenda, due to their various expertise.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services voiced his support for the proposals to continue to improve the school facilities and agreed that the SPB Membership would benefit from the expertise of both officers. The Cabinet Member questioned whether it would be possible for the Council to tender for undertaking some of the maintenance work which may arise.

The Leader echoed the comments of the Cabinet Member in respect of the Council undertaking some of the work and revenue if the option is available.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the outcome of the Preferred Bidder Stage of the Competitive Dialogue Procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as outlined in this report;
2. To be a party to the execution, delivery and performance of the Strategic Partnering Agreement with the Welsh Education Partnership Co (WEPCo) in September 2020 to facilitate the delivery of a range of infrastructure services and the delivery of education and community facilities;
3. To approve the Strategic Partnering Agreement at exempt Appendix A of the report and summarised in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.16 and Appendix 1 of this report;
4. To note that the Strategic Partnering Agreement shall be executed as a deed and attested in accordance with Article 14.05 of Part 2 of the Council's Constitution;
5. To approve Andrea Richards, Temporary Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation and / or Dave Powell, Director of Corporate Estates for appointment as 'Participant Representative' to sit on the Strategic Partnering Board (SPB);
6. To begin the Approval Process for New Projects as set out in Schedule 5 of the Strategic Partnering Agreement for the delivery of new school buildings and for a Strategic Outline Business Case for three initial Pathfinder Projects be submitted to the Welsh Government. The three Pathfinder Projects are Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School, Pontyclun Primary School and Penygawsi Primary School. A further report regarding funding arrangements will be brought back to Council for approval at a future date; and
7. To note that formal approval to proceed to deliver any new project including a Pathfinder Project, and to enter into associated legal documentation to facilitate the same including a Project Agreement, would require further approval of the Cabinet.

6 The Council's Supplementary Capital Programmes 2020/2021

The Director, Finance and Digital Services presented the report, which sought to provide details and obtain approval for phase 2 of the proposed supplementary capital programmes for Education & Inclusion Services and Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects.

Members were informed that the phase 2 schemes amounted to £2.8M for Highways and £3.1M for Education.

The Leader voiced his support for the recommendations and wished to place on record his thanks to Highways and Corporate Estates teams for their ongoing work, in terms of school maintenance and delivering highways schemes.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the phase 2 schemes shown in the relevant appendices;
2. That any schemes that are not complete by the end of the financial year are carried forward into 2021/22 which will be reported via the quarterly performance reports and when setting the Capital Programme for

- 2021/22 onwards; and
3. That resources are aligned over the current 3 year capital programme in line with the progress of the schemes.

7 Review of Regeneration Business Grants Portfolio

The Director, Prosperity and Development presented the report, which sought Cabinet's approval to refocus the existing business support grant schemes delivered by the Regeneration Service, and to establish three further schemes – the Town Centre COVID 19 Recovery Grant, the Major Projects Investment Fund and the Flood Resilience Grant. The Director explained that the grant schemes would enable the Council to provide a portfolio of financial investment to support businesses to respond to the economic challenges they face, helping them build their resilience, support economic growth and diversification with the aim of stimulating future private sector investment.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing voiced his support for the proposals and took the opportunity to thank officers for working through the difficult times to establish the schemes to support businesses. The Cabinet Member commented that it was critical for businesses to receive support following the impact of Covid-19 and Storm Dennis and felt that it would be key to monitor the effectiveness of the schemes going forward.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Cabinet Member's comments and spoke of the importance of supporting the town centres, along with promoting social distancing measures.

The Leader spoke of the Flood Resilience Grant, commenting on its importance to businesses and in particular to those which may not be entitled to insurance.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That the purpose of the Enterprise Investment Fund and Town Centre Maintenance Grant is refocused to incorporate actions, as set out in paragraph 5.1.3 and 5.2.3 of the report, to more effectively support business recovery post COVID-19;
2. A new RCT Town Centre COVID-19 Recovery Grant is established to deliver Welsh Governments Transforming Towns Grant of £350k;
3. A Major Projects Investment Fund is established to provide targeted investment for projects led by external organisations, which will deliver significant economic benefit; and
4. A Flood Resilience Grant is established to provide targeted support for businesses in Town Centres who were severely impacted by the significant flooding caused as a result of Storm Dennis.

8 Council Performance Report (Quarter 1)

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement provided the Cabinet with the Quarter 1 Performance Report for the financial year.

The Service Director advised that the full year projected position for the year, was a £2.9M overspend. The Service Director explained that within the projected position was the estimated financial impact of Covid-19, amounting to £27.2M, which was assumed to be fully funded by Welsh Government financial assistance. Members were informed that within the Covid-19 estimated costs

were, Free School Meals Bacs payments, supporting the internal and external care sector, supporting home working and associated equipment costs, personal protective equipment, signage and screens in Council buildings to support social distancing.

The Service Director informed Members that there were fifteen strategic risks included within the Risk Register, all of which were reviewed and updated. There had been two specific updates to risks, firstly to Risk 11 – Regeneration Projects, which had been updated from a medium to a high to reflect the potential impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of Strategic Projects; and a new overarching risk in respect of Covid-19.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Estates thanked the officer for the report and noted that the £2.9M overspend was primarily in the Adult Social Care and Children’s Services. Given the continuation of pressures from those services and the impact of the floods and Covid-19, the Cabinet Member emphasised the need for funding assistance from Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that despite the pressures, the Council had continued to invest an additional £7.6M in Capital Investments to improve the County Borough and that staff sickness was down to 3.3%. The Cabinet Member referred to the ‘People’ section of the report and noted the huge amount of work carried out during Covid-19 to protect the communities, elderly and businesses.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the significant investment despite the pressures and thanked officers for their management. The Deputy Leader also took the opportunity to thank the staff and the community for their engagement in an extremely difficult year.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the unprecedented circumstances Council Services are operating within as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Revenue

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2020 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and note the incorporation of confirmed and estimated Welsh Government COVID- 19 funding into this position to support on-going service delivery;

Capital

3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2020 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary);
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th June 2020 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary); and

Corporate Plan Priorities

5. To note the quarter 1 progress updates for the Council’s agreed Corporate Plan priorities.

9 Establishing a Social Letting Agency

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services informed Cabinet of the proposal to establish a Social Letting Agency to manage private rented properties on behalf of private landlords and ensure suitable housing allocations to clients in housing need.

The Director spoke of the growing pressures placed on homelessness services, which had arisen from the pandemic and advised that during the period March to June 2020, the service saw a 76% increase in homelessness applications. The Director continued by explaining that the level of demand had highlighted that the social rented sector alone cannot meet the demands of the clients and that there was a need to work together with the private rented sector.

Members were informed that the Council had secured Welsh Government funding to set up the Agency for the current financial year and advised that there was potential for ongoing financial liability for the operation of the Agency.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services commented that the service was innovative and necessary to meet the Council's wider Homelessness Strategy. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the financial implications, but felt that the proposals met the Council's ambition to move away from bed and breakfast accommodation and was positive that the proposals would strengthen the Council's links with the Private Landlord Sector.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report on behalf of herself and the Elected Member for the Treforest ward and commented that the proposals provide sustainability and stability for the high number of private rented sector properties in the ward. The Deputy Leader emphasised the importance of marketing the scheme and encouraging landlords to join.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the Business case set out in Appendix 1 of the report and endorse the establishment of the Social Letting Agency for RCTCBC using Welsh Government grant funding secured for this purpose in 2020/21; and
2. To note the costs associated with operating a Social Letting Agency and note that funding.

10 Approval for RCT Theatres to produce a Digital Christmas Performance to share on-line in December 2020

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided the Cabinet with information in relation to the proposal for RCT Theatres to produce a digital Christmas performance to share online in December 2020.

The Director explained that, traditionally, RCT Theatres produce a pantomime every Christmas, which is very popular with residents and is very well-attended but that due to the Covid-19 restrictions, a live performance would not be possible in 2020. Members were informed that Theatre programmes are planned up to 18 months in advance and in this instance the contracts with performers were signed in January 2020 and as such, the service is obliged to pay them even though the planned pantomime could no longer take place.

The Director spoke of the option to provide a high-energy Christmas performance online, which would require small additional funding in relation to PPE, filming, editing and sign-language interpretation etc.

The Director concluded his presentation by assuring the Cabinet the social distancing guidelines would be adhered to and that the online performance would be free for residents to view and access the arts, despite the current

circumstances.

Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services spoke of the challenges faced by the Arts and Culture Sector and felt that the proposals would be an opportunity for the service to engage with the community and introduce festive cheer. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that unfortunately, there was digital poverty within the County Borough but recognised the work officers had put in to trying to engage with the community in different ways.

The Deputy Leader echoed the comments of the Cabinet Member and commented on the importance of the communities experiencing a level of normality and cheer at the end of a difficult year.

(Note: The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing was not present for the vote)

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To approve the proposal to produce a digital Christmas performance to share online.

11 Proposed Extension and Variation to Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services informed the Cabinet of the outcomes of the public consultation exercise and sought authority to extend the two Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf (the Dog Control PSPO's).

Prior to introducing the report, the Director wished to place on record his thanks to the Director, Legal Services and the Corporate Policy and Consultation Manager for their work in relation to the PSPO's in the previous months.

The Director explained that despite the introduction of the Dog Control PSPO's in October 2017, there remained a minority of dog owners who did not clean up after their dogs or keep them under control. As such, the Director considered it vital that the orders, which would ordinarily expire on 30th September 2020, be renewed for a further 3 year period in order to maintain the significant benefits the orders have had in relation to dog fouling and ensure appropriate powers remain in place to deal with the minority who continue to flout the laws.

The Director referred to the Appendix, which detailed the outcomes of the four week public consultation exercise and was pleased to inform Members of the overwhelming support for the Council's approach to tackling dog fouling, the continuance of the PSPO's for a further three year period and the retention of the maximum fine. The Director explained that many respondents felt that dog fouling remained a problem in RCT but acknowledged that there had been improvements following the introduction of the PSPO's.

The Director noted that Llanharry and Pontyclun Community Councils had requested that the PSPO be extended to sites within their responsibilities and that Members may wish to vary the PSPO to reflect their requests. The Director spoke of the marketing and awareness campaign, which was undertaken when the PSPO's were introduced in 2017 and asked Members to consider

undertaking a similar exercise.

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication provided Members with the comments of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, which had the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the proposals at its meeting on 23rd September 2020. The Service Director informed the Cabinet that the Scrutiny Members were in favour of the continuation of the PSPO's and recognised the positive impact they had made.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services spoke positive of the continuation of the PSPO's, commenting that the targeted intervention had been a success in recent years to deal with dog fouling and improving the cleanliness of the streets.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services thanked the officer for the report and Scrutiny for their observations and comments. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the consultation was managed differently but was pleased with the level of engagement. The Cabinet Member welcomed the extension for a further a three year period and was pleased to note that over 90% of residents were supportive of the proposals.

The Deputy Leader spoke positive of the consultation process, commenting that the results demonstrated the community's support to tackling dog fouling. The Deputy Leader also took the opportunity to thank the Scrutiny Committee for the invaluable feedback. In line with the comments made by the Director, the Deputy Leader moved that the PSPO is amended to include the requests of Llanharry and Pontyclun Community Councils and that a marketing and awareness campaign is undertaken.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the overwhelming public support for the extension of the Dog Control PSPO's relating to Dog Controls within Rhondda Cynon Taf for a further 3 year period from 1st October 2020;
2. To consider the responses to the public consultation, as detailed in Appendix 1, and determines whether any amendments are required to the existing prohibitions and requirements in relation to the PSPO's as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;
3. To extend the Dog Control PSPOs as detailed in Appendix 2A and 2B to the report, with the addition of an amendment to the extended Dog Control PSPO covering Rhondda Cynon Taf, to include the addition of the two Community Council sites identified by Pontyclun and Llanharry Community Councils in their consultation responses;
4. To give delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services, in consultation with the Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services, to produce the final PSPOs relating to Dog Controls and ensure their publication on the Council's website; and
5. That the Council undertakes an awareness and marketing campaign in relation to the extension of the Dog Control PSPO's.

12 Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass)

The Service Director, Highways and Transportation updated the Cabinet on the progress related to the development and delivery of the major transportation project: Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass).

The Service Director stated that the Cynon Gateway North is an important link from the existing A4059 to the proposed duelling of the A465, which is a strategic highway. The Service Director explained that as well as being an important link, the Aberdare Bypass would provide economic stimulus to the region.

Members were referred to Section 3.3 of the report, where the transportation and regeneration benefits of the project were outlined and included:

- Connectivity;
- Reduced traffic at Llwydcoed;
- Capacity and Resilience;
- Improved journey times; and
- Improved air quality.

The Service Director continued and spoke of the progress of the project to date, informing Members that the preliminary highway alignment had been finalised and that consultation had commenced and would continue with the stakeholders and parties affected by the Cynon Gateway North proposals.

The Leader thanked the officer for the report and spoke in favour of the proposals. The Leader spoke of the Heads of the Valley duelling, which was due to progress in the near future and advised that without the link road, there would be a much longer diversion route to enter the Cynon Valley. The Leader spoke of the benefits of the road, stating that it would significantly reduce the traveling distance for residents commuting in and out of the valley. In respect of funding for the scheme, the Leader noted that £4.3M had been allocated through Welsh Government and the Local Authority and advised that he had attended meetings with Welsh Government in respect of further incremental funding. The Leader concluded by advising that the scheme links with other developments in RCT, such as the development in Robertstown.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing welcomed the development for RCT and the rest of South Wales.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress made and endorse the next steps in the programme for the project;
2. To give delegated authority to the Group Director Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services to submit a planning application on behalf of the Council for the new Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass);
3. To give delegated authority to the Group Director Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services, subject to funding, to negotiate the purchase of any third party owned land required for the project proposal and where possible acquire such land by agreement and if such land is not able to be purchased via negotiation delegate the powers as outlined in paragraph 2.1.4 relating to the implementation of the CPO and SRO;
4. That subject to the grant of planning permission and obtaining sufficient funding for each stage of the process, give delegated authority to the Group Director Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services to take all the necessary steps to securing the making, confirmation and implementation of a CPO and SRO in respect of the land required for the implementation of the project, including but not limited to the following

procedural steps:

5. That all steps up to and including confirmation of the CPO and SRO by the Welsh Ministers (or if permitted, by the Council pursuant to Section 14A Acquisition of Land Act 1981), including the preparation and presentation of the Council's case for any Written Representations, Hearing or Public Inquiry which may be necessary.
6. That publication and service of notices of confirmation of the CPO and SRO and thereafter to execute and serve any General Vesting Declarations and/or Notices to Treat and Notices of Entry.
7. To acquire the necessary interests in the land and settle the compensation, subject to funding.
8. That referral and conduct of disputes, relating to compulsory purchase compensation, to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

This meeting closed at 12.00 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

13TH OCTOBER 2020

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION – FIREWORKS

REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR RHYS LEWIS

Authors: Rhian Hope, Health Protection and Licensing Manager
Louise Davies, Service Director - Public Protection Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the current legal controls on the sale and use of fireworks and consider how the Local Authority may further support the Notice of Motion made to Council on the 27th November 2019 (Appendix 1) and the RSPCA campaign calling for greater controls.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the existing controls available in UK Law to control the sale of fireworks and their use in public areas.
- 2.2 Require the Director of Corporate Estates to review and where necessary impose greater restrictions on the use of Council land for the purpose of public firework displays.
- 2.3 Support a promotional campaign for 2021 (coronavirus restrictions permitting) that encourages responsible use of fireworks and the early notification to the public of planned events in the community.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 There are a range of stringent legal controls in place to restrict the sale of fireworks and their use in public areas. Further controls to restrict the use of fireworks on Council owned and managed land or at Council events will provide additional safeguards for animals and vulnerable groups.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the Council meeting on the 27th November, the following Notice of Motion was accepted and an Officer report was required in response for consideration by Cabinet:

“The use of fireworks has long been a tradition in our communities to celebrate events such as Bonfire Night and the New Year. The impact of Fire Works is increasingly a concern to residents, those who have Autism, those who own pets or to Armed Forces personnel suffering with PTSD for example.

RSPCA Cymru have launched a campaign to increase public awareness and reduce the potential for injury or distress to animals by proposing the adoption of a policy for the responsible sale of fireworks, including the potential for silent fireworks, which would achieve a compromise between allowing our communities to celebrate key events, while ensuring that these celebrations are conducted in a sensitive and respectful manner.

The Council therefore requests an Officer report for consideration by Cabinet, which outlines how this local authority may support the RSPCA Campaign by:

- Considering a requirement for all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people*
- Consider the development of a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.*
- Consider encouraging local suppliers of fireworks to retail ‘quieter’ fireworks only for public display.*

5. THE FIREWORK PERIOD AND THE ROLE OF OFFICERS

- 5.1 The Explosive Regulations 2014 provides the legal framework to control the sale and storage of fireworks at retail and other premises. Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) of the Public Protection Service inspect retail premises and other types of business on receipt of an application from a trader to store and sell fireworks. The officer will need to be satisfied that the business has complied with a number of legal and statutory guidance requirements before a licence is issued under the Explosive Regulations 2014. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 can also apply to the organisation, management and delivery of public firework displays and these requirements are also within the remit of the Public Protection Service to enforce.

5.2 There are no legal controls on when the public can use fireworks, however fireworks can only be sold to the public during prescribed periods:

- 5th November (15th October – 10th November);
- New Year's Eve (December 26th – 31st December);
- Chinese New Year (the day of Chinese New Year and 3 days immediately before);
- Diwali (the day of Diwali and 3 days immediately before).

5.3 There are a total of 32 premises, including large and small retailers that are licensed to sell fireworks within the County Borough. 12 licences were processed and renewed during the period from April 2019 to November 2019. The EHO's will also investigate any complaints that are made of illegal sale of fireworks and take enforcement action where the complaint is substantiated. Two traders have been prosecuted in the past two years for failure to comply with the storage of firework requirements.

5.4 The EHO's are also members of the authority's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) that provides advice and support to organisations that want to arrange firework displays and other public events throughout the year. The ESAG also hold debrief meetings after large events and undertake a lesson learnt session.

5.5 Fireworks that are sold within retail premises must conform to various British Standards and these include provision to control the noise (decibel) level associated with their discharge. The product standards and safety are regulated by the Public Protection Service Trading Standards Team, who also ensure robust controls are in place to prevent underage sale of fireworks.

6. CURRENT POSITION

Legal Controls

6.1 The legal controls which regulate the storage, sale, safety and public use of fireworks are based in UK legislation and these matters (Trading Standards and Health and Safety Laws) are not devolved to Welsh Government. A Select Committee has made recommendations to UK Government requesting strengthened controls on firework use and the response of the Government is awaited.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201920/cmselect/cmpetitions/103/103.pdf>

Council Land and Controlled Events

6.2 The Council has the ability to control the activities held on land in its control. The ESAG have devised a form for applicants who are considering holding a large, public firework display within RCT. Within that form they require information about where the event is being advertised. This will then enable:

- The public to know where the event is being held;
- Allow people with animals or vulnerable people, for example those with PTSD to be aware and to take the steps they require necessary for their wellbeing in advance of the event.

6.3 In addition to controls through ESAG, the Council has a number of controls in place to control the activities permitted to be undertaken on land owned and controlled by the Council. In addition to the permissions granted on licence agreements, the Director of Corporate Estates will ensure that consideration is given going forward to applying restrictions on the use of land for firework displays, where appropriate and in the public interest. Cabinet will wish to note the lead taken by the Nos Galan Committee, which has already agreed to review its use of fireworks for the future event.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications in the contents of the report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 There are no consultation implications arising from this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The restrictions set out in the Fireworks Act 2003, the Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 provide the regulatory framework that seeks to support the public's enjoyment of fireworks while effectively managing the risk of fireworks harming individuals, property or animals.

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

11.1 Due regard has been made to the five ways of working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, when preparing this report. In particular, it identifies with three of the five ways of working. **Collaboration Involvement & Prevention.**

11.2 The author has **collaborated** with colleagues within our own authority to establish current working practices and identifying improvement areas. Discussion and **involvement** with colleagues has identified improvement with existing work practices that will enable more information being available to the public. By making simple changes to already established processes may **prevent** / reduce the impact of the fireworks on the residents whilst allowing others to enjoy the occasion.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 There are a range of controls in law regarding the use, storage and safety of fireworks and these are regulated by the Public Protection Service. Controls already exist over the use of Council owned and controlled land and further enhancements to those controls will mitigate the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people in the community.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2020

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR RHYS LEWIS**

RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - FIREWORKS

Background Papers:

Reference to Council Minute 27/11/2019

Officer to contact: Louise Davies Service Director Public Protection Services

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion 27th November 2019

93 Notice of Motion A. The following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors S. Rees, J. Bonetto, L. M. Adams, D. R. Bevan, H Boggis, S. Bradwick, J Brencher, A Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. DaviesJones, L De-Vet, J Elliott, S.Evans, G. Jones, M Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, M. Griffiths, J. Harries G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, G. W. Hughes, R. Lewis, W Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S Pickering, S. Powell, S. Powderhill, A. Roberts, J. Rosser, G Stacey, M Tegg, G Thomas, W Treeby, R K Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, T. Williams, C. J. Willis and R. Yeo

The use of fireworks has long been a tradition in our communities to celebrate events such as Bonfire Night and the New Year. The impact of Fire Works is increasingly a concern to residents who either own pets or to Armed Forces personnel suffering with PTSD. RSPCA Cymru have launched a campaign to increase public awareness and reduce the potential for injury or distress to animals by proposing the adoption of a policy for the responsible sale of fireworks, including the potential for silent fireworks, which would achieve a compromise between allowing our communities to celebrate key events, while ensuring that these celebrations are conducted in a sensitive and respectful manner. The Council therefore requests an Officer report for consideration by Cabinet, which outlines how this local authority may support the RSCPA Campaign by:

- Considering a requirement for all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
- Consider the development of a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
- Consider encouraging local suppliers of fireworks to retail ‘quieter’ fireworks only for public display.

This Council also resolves to write to the Welsh Government, urging them to utilise any levers at their disposal to mitigate any negative impacts on animals and vulnerable people of the hosting of fireworks displays. This Council notes the strong commitment already shown by the authority towards animal welfare through its support for the Lucy’s Law campaign and to our Armed Forces community through the Armed Forces Covenant, with a cinema screening for veterans with PTSD recently being held at the Park and Dare Theatre on Bonfire Night. This Council notes the lead taken by the Nos Galan Committee, which has already agreed to review its use of fireworks for the 2020/2021 event. At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from County Borough Councillors P Jarman (Proposer) & G R Davies (Seconder), E. Webster, J.Davies, J.Cullwick, J.Williams, A.Cox, H.Fychan,

D.Grehan, E.Griffiths, K.Morgan, S.Rees Owen, M.Weaver, S.Evans, A. Chapman, L.Jones & E.Stephens

The use of fireworks has long been a tradition in our communities to celebrate events such as Bonfire Night and the New Year. The impact of Fire Works is increasingly a concern to residents who either own pets or are vulnerable people living with autism or Armed Forces personnel suffering with PTSD. RSPCA Cymru have launched a campaign to increase public awareness and reduce the potential for injury or distress to animals by proposing the adoption of a policy for the responsible sale of fireworks, including the potential for silent fireworks, which would achieve a compromise between allowing our communities to celebrate key events, while ensuring that these celebrations are conducted in a sensitive and respectful manner. The Council therefore requests an Officer report for consideration by Cabinet, which outlines how this local authority may support the RSCPA Campaign by:

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Following discussion, it was proposed that the mover and seconder consider moving an alteration to the Motion to include reference to include the word ‘autism’. In accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was RESOLVED not to adopt the amendment. (Note: County Borough Councillors P Jarman and J Davies wished to have it recorded that they voted to adopt the amendment to the Notice of Motion) Following further discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was RESOLVED to adopt the motion as

altered by the Proposer (Cllr S Rees) & Seconder (Cllr J Bonetto) and with the agreement of Full Council as follows:-

“The use of fireworks has long been a tradition in our communities to celebrate events such as Bonfire Night and the New Year. The impact of Fire Works is increasingly a concern to residents, those who have Autism, those who own pets or to Armed Forces personnel suffering with PTSD for example. RSPCA Cymru have launched a campaign to increase public awareness and reduce the potential for injury or distress to animals by proposing the adoption of a policy for the responsible sale of fireworks, including the potential for silent fireworks, which would achieve a compromise between allowing our communities to celebrate key events, while ensuring that these celebrations are conducted in a sensitive and respectful manner. The Council therefore requests an Officer report for consideration by Cabinet, which outlines how this local authority may support the RSCPA Campaign by:

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2020

CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL PLAN 2020/21

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

**AUTHOR: Nicola Kingham, Cwm Taf Morgannwg 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 Plan for 2020/21 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (See Appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Plan for 2020/21.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Plan each year, which sets out its priorities for the coming year.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB) is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. The Board ensures that people of all ages, living in the region, are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

- 4.4 The two key safeguarding objectives around protection and prevention underpin the work of the Safeguarding Board and inform the priorities that we have agreed in this Annual Plan for 2020/2021.

5. ANNUAL PLAN 2020/21

- 5.1 In addition to carrying out its core statutory safeguarding functions, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has agreed a number of key priorities for improvement for the coming year. These are specific areas that will enhance and support the Board in achieving its objectives and are as follows:

1. Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice
2. To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board
3. Improve communication and strengthen structural links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern
4. Improve the way in which we engage and promote participation with our communities

- 5.2 A detailed work plan for the Board and its sub groups will sit underneath the Annual Plan. The work plan will include the actions required to achieve the improvements required, who is responsible, timescales and measures of success. The progress of the work plan will be monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis and will form the basis of the Annual Report for 2020/2021.

- 5.3 An initial review of the work plan, following the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, has been carried out by the Board and the critical activities that need to be achieved by March 2021 have been agreed.

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 Plan has been approved by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg 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 Morgannwg 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

13TH OCTOBER 2020

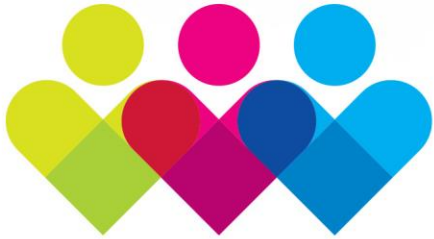
**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER,
COUNCILLOR GERAINT HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA LEYSHON**

**CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL
PLAN 2020/21**

Background Papers:

None

**Contact Officer: Nicola Kingham, CTMSB Business Manager.
Tel: 01443 490122**



Cwm Taf Morgannwg Bwrdd Diogelu Safeguarding Board



Annual Plan 2020-2021



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg
University Health Board



Gwasanaeth Prawf
Cenedlaethol
National Probation
Service



InterLink
Rhondda Cynon Taf



VOLUNTARY ACTION
MERTHYR TYDFIL
GWETHREDU GWIRFODDOL
MERTHYR TUDFUL

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SAFEGUARDING IN CWM TAF MORGANNWG

The area of Cwm Taf Morgannwg covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a total population of almost 440,000.

The **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB)** is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. The Board ensures that agencies in the region have effective arrangements in place to ensure that people of all ages, living in the region, are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

Keeping children and adults who may have needs for care and support safe is everyone's responsibility. This means feeling safe and being safe within their home or in their community, school, work place or anywhere else they go.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives around **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Safeguarding Board and inform the priorities that we have agreed in this Annual Plan for 2020/2021.

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.

Safeguarding for All People

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board carries out its objectives in line with the national statutory guidance as set out in Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Our aim is to improve safeguarding arrangements for everyone. Collaboration between children and adults safeguarding arrangements in the area has resulted in a number of joint functions,

including a joint Safeguarding Board. The Board continues to take every opportunity to collaborate across children and adults safeguarding to support joint working and the sharing of information and learning.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs

In the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region there are two Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH):

The **Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** and the **Bridgend Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**.

The purpose of the MASH is to act as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns. MASH provides the opportunity for a higher standard of safeguarding by providing all professionals with more information on which to make better, more informed decisions. This has significantly improved the sharing of information between agencies, helping to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse.

Who are the 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.

What are the Core Functions of the Safeguarding Board?

Every Regional Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to carry out core functions in relation to multi-agency safeguarding. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board carries out these day to day functions via specific committees and sub groups (see Appendix 2). These include:

- Contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of protocols and procedures that support the protection of adults and children and to prevent abuse

- Raising awareness of the Board's objectives to protect and prevent adults and children from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect and other forms of harm, and to provide information about how this might be achieved
- Reviewing the efficacy of measures taken by agencies to implement the objectives of the Board and to make and monitor recommendations
- Undertaking child practice reviews, adult practice reviews, audits, investigations and other reviews as are required in pursuance of its objectives and to disseminate learning and information arising from these reviews
- Reviewing the performance of the Board and its partners and bodies represented on the Board in carrying out its objectives
- Facilitating research into protection from, and prevention of, abuse and neglect of children and adults at risk of harm
- Review the training needs of practitioners working in the area of the Board in order to identify training to assist in the protection and prevention of abuse and neglect of children and adults at risk of harm

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES THAT WE PROPOSE TO ACHIEVE THIS YEAR?

In addition to carrying out the core statutory safeguarding functions, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has agreed a number of key priorities for improvement in the coming year. These specific areas will enhance and support the Board in achieving its objectives and are as follows:

- 1. Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice**
- 2. To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board**
- 3. Improve communication and strengthen structural links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern**
- 4. Improve the way in which we engage and promote participation with our communities**

A detailed work plan for the Board and its sub groups will sit underneath this strategic Annual Plan. The work plan will include the actions required to achieve the improvements required, who is responsible, timescales and measures of success.

The progress of the work plan will be monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis and will form the basis of the Annual Report for 2020-2021.

An overview of what the Board intends to do to achieve its priorities for the coming year is provided below.

Strategic Priority 1: Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice

- Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems and practice is a core function of a Safeguarding Board. We need to focus on learning from the experience of professionals working in our partner agencies.
- An important part of reviewing the effectiveness of safeguarding measures is through the findings of case audits undertaken on an inter-agency basis, as well as through the learning from multi-agency professional forums and child and adult practice reviews.
- As part of developing a positive culture of learning and development, we should ensure that information is widely disseminated within the workforce to share best practice and learning arising from reviews, audits and other Board activities.
- The Board is required to monitor the extent to which any recommendations are implemented, that effective action is taken and that the outcomes are monitored. Ultimately, we need to be assured that the learning has made a difference to safeguarding practice.
- This learning should also be reflected in safeguarding training activities to help build a more confident and knowledgeable multi-agency workforce.

Priority Area	What do we need to do?	Outcome Indicators
<p>Sharing the Learning from Audits and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that the learning that we identify is clear, concise and relevant to practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in traffic to the Board’s website.

Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make use of a variety of methods for communicating to practitioners and managers, such as the use of '7 minute briefings', multi-agency events and monthly updates ▪ Develop a system to ensure that partner agencies are reporting on how they disseminate the learning within their organisations. ▪ Develop a database of learning to identify any regular occurring themes ▪ Ensure that the learning that we identify is incorporated into safeguarding training, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in different methods of sharing learning ▪ Evidence from partner agencies that learning is disseminated appropriately within their organisations ▪ Database of learning and themes in place ▪ Safeguarding training reflects the learning identified.
Monitoring the Actions arising from Audits and Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit the format of our Action Plans to include the background on the case and the rationale for the recommendations made ▪ Implement improved mechanisms for the monitoring of our action plans, including appropriate means of escalating outstanding actions to the Board ▪ Ensure that each organisation takes responsibility for implementing the learning and actions identified from audits and reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in SMART action plans to implement recommendations from audits and reviews ▪ Increase in the number of actions completed within agreed timescales
Evaluating New Protocols and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Board's Protocols and Procedures Group need to consider any recommended new protocols and processes arising from the learning identified from audits and reviews ▪ Ensure that any new/updated protocols are evaluated after a 6 month period, involving appropriate staff from all partner agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practitioners are consulted and evidence the dissemination of policies.
Evidencing the Impact of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that the relevant Sub Group/Review Panel is clear on what the intended outcome is that we expect to achieve from the learning identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-audits will evidence that learning has taken place. ▪ Partner agency reports and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a system of re-audit to monitor how learning has been embedded into practice ▪ Ensure that partner agencies report to the Board on how they have implemented the learning and how it has impacted on practice ▪ Seek the views of service users/families, where appropriate, on how changes to policies/practice have made a positive impact to them 	<p>self-evaluations demonstrate a positive impact on practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service users will have a positive impact of the embedding of learning.
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Strategic Priority 2: To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board

- On 1 April 2019, the regional footprint for safeguarding changed and the Safeguarding Board assumed responsibility for the Bridgend area in addition to Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.
- The membership and remit of the Board and its Sub Groups have been reviewed to reflect this change and we have begun to adopt common processes, protocols and templates.
- Consistent quality assurance and performance data have been developed to support the measurement of safeguarding effectiveness in the region.
- As we enter our second year as a new regional Board, we want to further harmonise the arrangements currently in place to ensure that there is a consistent and joined-up approach to regional safeguarding.
- The effectiveness of the Board relies on the skills and contribution of its members and we need to be confident in challenging and scrutinising our safeguarding arrangements.

Priority Area	What do we need to do?	Outcome Indicators
Board Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that there is a fully integrated Board structure, maximising opportunities to make all meetings regional, with a focus on both children and adults, where appropriate ▪ Ensure that Board members are accountable for their agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A fully integrated Board structure is in place ▪ Regional Performance Framework is established

	and have the appropriate skills to effectively challenge safeguarding measures across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Member role profiles reviewed
MASH Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the existing governance arrangements for the Cwm Taf and Bridgend MASH to reduce duplication and share good practice. Develop consistency in working practices and performance management arrangements across both MASH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent performance data and reporting arrangements in place for both MASH.
A regional approach to tackle Child Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a regional response to the Welsh Government's National Action Plan on Child Sexual Abuse Align the existing governance arrangements for tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) across Cwm Taf and Bridgend to reduce duplication and share intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSA Actions for 2020/21 are all completed A consistent approach to tackling CSE is adopted across the region
A regional response to Self Neglect and other Complex Cases in Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a multi-agency Task Group to develop a regional approach to Complex Cases (including Self Neglect) in adults Develop a multi-agency protocol to support practitioners in addressing the challenges involved in working with complex cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regional approach to complex cases is in place and implemented
The Secure Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop effective reporting arrangements to the Board from the Secure Estate (Parc Young Offenders Institute and Prison) Fully embed the work of the Secure Estate into Board functions and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A memorandum of understanding is in place between the Board and the Prison Reporting arrangements in place to the Board
Dealing with Critical Incidents (including suicides)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a common approach to addressing critical incidents across the region, combining the Cwm Taf Immediate Response Group and the Bridgend Rapid Response Group processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regional approach to critical incidents and suicides is in place

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen the links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern

- Working with other Partnerships in the region is integral to the work of the Board to carry out its functions more effectively.
- We have identified a number of areas of common concern that ‘cut across’ the responsibilities of both the Safeguarding Board and other Partnerships. These include:
 - County Lines
 - Human Trafficking
 - Modern Slavery
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Suicide and Self Harm
 - Substance Misuse

Priority Area	What do we need to do?	Outcome Indicators
Serious and Organised Crime Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish the remit of the Serious and Organised Board in relation to areas of common interest, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ County Lines ○ Modern Slavery ○ Human Trafficking ▪ Identify and agree what information the Board needs in relation to these areas of concern and what collaborative work can be undertaken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreement on reporting arrangements on county lines, modern slavery and human trafficking ▪ Collaborative work undertaken on these areas of common concern
Western Bay Modern Slavery Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish the remit of this Group in relation to Bridgend Local Authority ▪ Identify the need for a separate forum for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are effective mechanisms in place to manage the Modern Slavery agenda across the region

Community Safety Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree on a collaborative response across the region in relation to key areas of common concern, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Prevention/Reduction of Suicide and Self Harm ○ Tackling Domestic Abuse (building on the collaborative work undertaken in 2019/2020). This will also include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence ▪ The MARAC process ○ Substance Misuse ▪ Continue to support with the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process and establish systems for monitoring the actions coming out of these reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration work achieved in relation to areas of common concern ▪ Enhanced training and communication activities delivered ▪ Agreement in place on how DHR actions are monitored and learning shared (see Priority 1)
Together for Mental Health Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the existing responsibilities of the Together for Mental Health Partnerships in relation to Suicide and Self Harm so that a co-ordinated response is agreed across the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A co-ordinated response to suicide and self harm is agreed
Chairs of Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Propose that a 'Chairs of Partnerships' group is established to address cross-cutting concerns, reduce duplication and enhance safeguarding activity in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The responsibilities of the Board in relation to partnership working are embedded into all Sub Group functions ▪ Involve Partnership representatives in Board events and activities, as appropriate

Strategic Priority 4: Improve the way in which we engage and promote participation with our

communities

- The Board must ensure that children and adults are given the opportunity to participate in its work. We want to ensure that people are better informed about the work of the Board and are able to challenge openly.
- We need to creatively engage with children, young people and adults to improve participation in the work of the Board and raise the profile of safeguarding.
- This will involve increasing the amount of engagement events held for the public, improving links with local forums and activity groups to ensure the voices of the people we support are thoroughly embedded into our work.

Priority Area	What do we need to do?	Outcome Indicators
<p>Participation and the Voice of the Child/ Adult</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the Board’s Participation Strategy, on a multi-agency basis to ensure that it provides an effective framework to engage with our communities and encourage participation in the work of the Board ▪ Consider and adopt different methods whereby the public can be more engaged in the work of the Safeguarding Board ▪ Consider and agree the key topics/areas of work, linked to this Annual Plan, that we want people to be involved in ▪ Maximise the opportunities that National Safeguarding Week brings to improve participation ▪ Identify the key points of contact within our partner agencies who have already well-established links in the community to maximise opportunities for community involvement ▪ Establish a ‘Junior’ Safeguarding Board and agree its scope and areas of responsibility, in line with the Children’s and Young people’s National Participation Standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in the number of participation activities ▪ An improved understanding by communities of the Safeguarding Board and the work it does. ▪ A positive progression on the ladder of participation ▪ An increase in the level of involvement from the selected hard to reach groups with the Safeguarding Board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider ways of engaging with the 'seldom heard' or 'harder to reach' groups. ▪ Consider the development of a 'promise to child and adults' which can be embedded into the work of the Board ▪ Utilise a 'Ladder of Participation' to assess and measure the progress of the Board in moving towards co-production with service users/families ▪ Ensure that hearing the voice of the child/adult is central to all functions of the Safeguarding Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 2021/2022 plan to be informed by coproduction with the public
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WHO DO WE INTEND TO COLLABORATE WITH TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES?

Effective collaboration with other partnerships and agencies, whether it be on a regional or national basis, is key to the effective delivery of the Board functions. For this reason, we have identified this as a stand-alone priority for the coming year (see Strategic Priority 3).

In addition to the partnerships we have already identified, we will develop and/or build on collaborative activities as follows:

Who will we collaborate with?	Areas to collaborate?
Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies and legislation ▪ Practice Guides for safeguarding ▪ New Unified Review Process
National Inspectorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Receive reports and act on inspections in relation to partner agencies

Third Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage their participation in the Regional Safeguarding Board ▪ Safeguarding Training
Other Regional Safeguarding Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent policies and processes across Wales ▪ Sharing learning and best practice ▪ Implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures
National Independent Safeguarding Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking advice on national safeguarding issues

OUR BUDGET FOR 2020-2021

The Board budget for the year will be resourced by financial contributions from the statutory partner agencies. The budget set will enable the Board to delivery its priority outcomes as set out in this Annual Plan and will be allocated as follows:

Business Management Unit Staff Costs and Accommodation:	£230,025
Advertising and Translation:	£6,090
General Expenditure:	£9,850

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
In Bridgend: 01656 642320

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
In Bridgend: 01656 642477

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 the Cwm Taf Morgannwg 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 everybody's business!

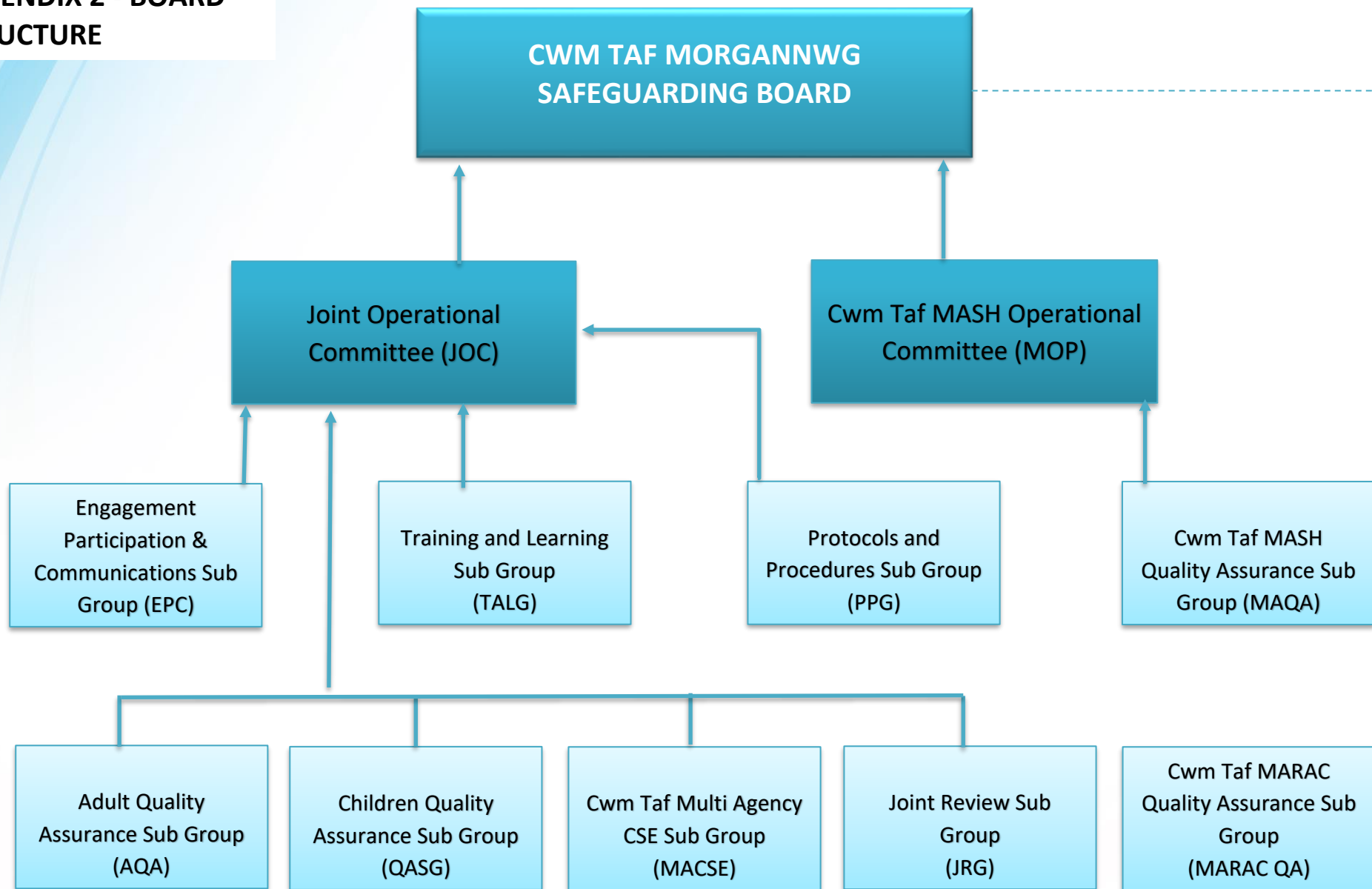
For more information and advice visit: www.ctmsb.co.uk

APPENDIX 1 - BOARD MEMBERSHIP

TITLE	AGENCY
<p>Director of Community and Children's Services (Co-Chair)</p> <p>Head of Public Protection</p> <p>Adult Safeguarding Service Manager</p> <p>Service Director, Adult Services</p> <p>Head of Safeguarding and Support (Children)</p> <p>Director of Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Service Director, Children Services</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council</p>
<p>Chief Officer, Social Services (Co-Chair)</p> <p>Safeguarding Principal Manager</p> <p>Chief Officer, Community Regeneration</p> <p>Chief Officer, Education</p> <p>Head of Children Services</p> <p>Head of Adult Services</p>	<p>Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council</p>
<p>Director of Social Services and Wellbeing (Co-Chair)</p> <p>Head of Children's Social Care</p>	<p>Bridgend County Borough Council</p>

Head of Adult Social Care	
Head of Education and Family Services	
Named Doctor for Safeguarding Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Patient Services Assistant Director for Quality and Safety	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Superintendent, Northern BCU Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager	South Wales Police
Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Head of Young Person's Unit Interim Deputy Director	Her Majesty's Prison and Young Offenders Institute, Parc
Director	Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations
Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Third Sector Representative	Interlink
Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Designated Doctor (National Safeguarding Team)	Public Health Wales

**APPENDIX 2 - BOARD
STRUCTURE**



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2020

REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

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

Author: Jayne Thomas, Customer Feedback, Engagement and improvement
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 April 1st 2019 and March 31st 2020.
- 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 2019/20 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 2019/20

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 112 complaints were received requiring a response at stage one. This is an overall increase of 26 complaints when compared to the previous year with the increase being in Children's Services. 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 42.5% of stage one complaint's were responded to within the required timescale, compared with 58% 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 112 Stage one complaints received, 7 progressed to stage two. This figure included complaints that were made initially in the previous reporting year but that concluded in 2019/20. Whilst higher than in previous years the majority of people remain happy for the Council to deal with their complaints at a local level.
- 5.5 In 2019/20, 83 formal compliments were received which is a decrease on numbers recorded in 2018/19.
- 5.6 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 with in 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:

- Improve the experience of those using health and social care services;
- Engage with and use Customer Feedback to redesign our 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

13th OCTOBER 2020

**REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES
ANNUAL REPORT**

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

Background Papers

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014

**Officer to contact: Jayne Thomas, Customer Feedback, Engagement and
Improvement Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425449**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES

REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20



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 2019 and 31 March 2020. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by the Customer Feedback and Engagement 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 an independent investigating officer. 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 2019/20 there were 112 recorded complaints during the year, compared with 86 in the previous year. There was a small decrease in Stage 1 complaints about Adult Services with 55 received in 2018/19 compared to 54 this year whilst there was a significant increase in Stage 1 complaints about Children's Services with 31 received in 2018/19 compared to 58 this year.

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, only 42.5% were responded to within statutory timescales which is a decrease from 58% in 2018/19. This is an area where we would like to see a significant improvement 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 and the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has issued good practice guidance to assist in ensuring written

responses meet an expected standard as well as quality assuring responses before they are issued to complainants.

Adult Services

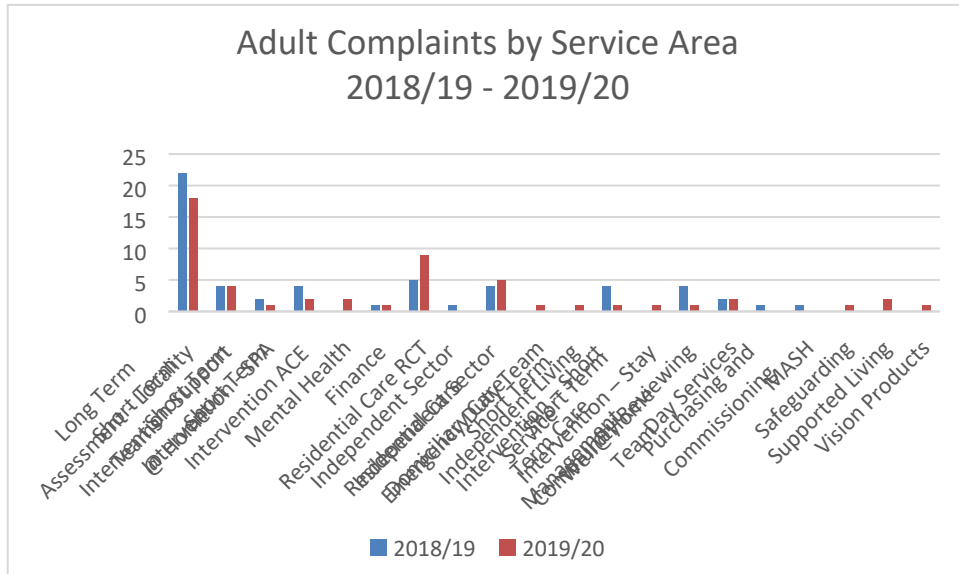
54 complaints were received for Adult Services during the year. This represents a 2% increase on the total amount received in 2019/20

Of the complaints made about Adult Services, 9% (5) were made by the service users themselves and 91% (49) were made by their representatives e.g. carers, family members and advocates. These figures highlight the reliance of many adults on their family and carers to raise issues on their behalf and is consistent with comments received as part of the Social Services Performance Measures Survey undertaken in September 2019.

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	2018/19	2019/20
Long Term Assessment - Locality Teams	22	18
Short Term Intervention Support @ Home	4	4
Short Term Intervention - SPA	2	1
Short Term Intervention ACE	4	2
Mental Health	0	2
Finance	1	1
Residential Care RCT	5	9
Independent Sector Residential Care	1	0
Independent Sector Domiciliary Care	4	5
Emergency Duty Team	0	1
Independent Living Service	0	1
Short Term Intervention – Short Term Care Management	4	1
Short Term Intervention – Stay Well@Home	0	1
Community Reviewing Team	4	1
Day Services	2	2
Purchasing and Commissioning	1	0
MASH	1	0
Safeguarding	0	1
Supported Living	0	2
Vision Products	0	1
Total	55	54



There are no significant changes in the number of complaints per service area over the last year. Numbers remain low across Adult Service given the number of service users with a Care and Support plan.

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	2018/19	2019/20
Failure to provide a service	8	5
Financial issues	3	1
Lack of information/communication	5	4
Issues around adaptations	4	0
Staff issues	11	16
Waiting for assessment/Request for assessment	0	0
Quality of care	9	16
Quality of service	13	12
Information Governance	1	0
Missed Calls	1	0
Total	55	54

Complaints relating to quality of care/service and issues around staff are the highest category of complaints. Complaints around staff issues have increased in comparison to previous year, as have complaints around the quality of care.

Some logged quality of care issues relate to complaints about care provided by private commissioned domiciliary care providers which come to the attention of the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team and so figures can be

impacted when complainants use the Council as an intermediary in complaints that relate to the private sector.

Of the 54 Stage 1 complaints received for Adults Services, 45 were resolved locally, 3 progressed to Stage 2, one complaint was withdrawn by complainant, 2 required No further Action and 3 are on hold due to COVID -19

Children’s Services

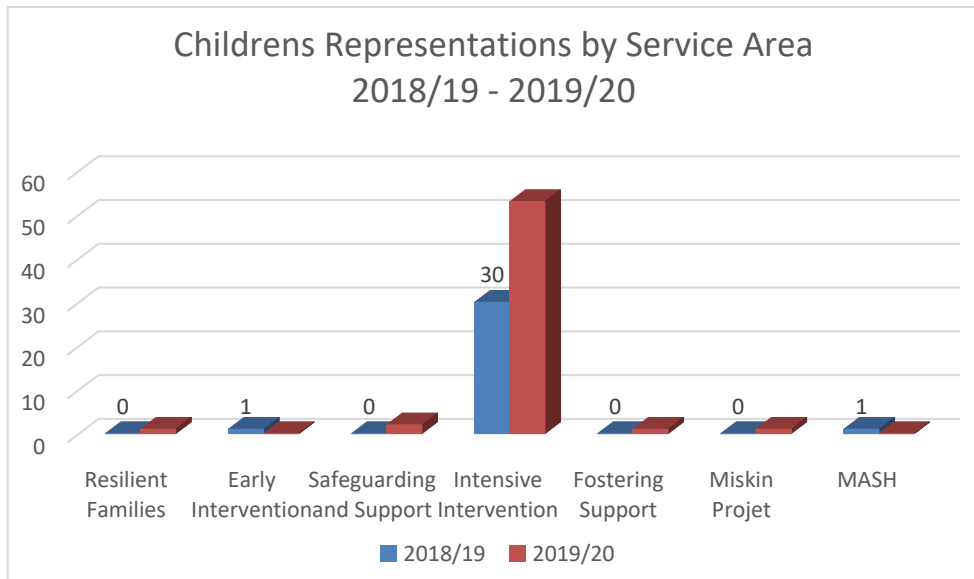
58 Complaints about Children’s Services were received during the year. Whilst this represents an increase compared to the previous year when 31 complaints were received it is important to note the numbers are low in comparison with the number of families worked with and that the figures for 2018/19 were unusually low. With the exception of five complaints all complaints were for the Intensive Intervention Services which is consistent with previous years.

Over the past year the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has continued to support services areas by triaging contacts and providing advice and answering queries at the first point of contact with parent/carers. This has successfully reduced the number of issues that have progressed to Stage 1 of the complaints process.

Table 3 sets out the complaints received recorded by service area and compares them with the previous year.

Table 3: Summary of complaints by Service Area

Service area	2018/19	2019/20
Resilient Families	0	1
Miskin Project	0	1
Early Intervention	1	0
Intensive Intervention	30	53
Fostering	0	1
MASH	0	0
Safeguarding and Support	0	2
Total	31	58



Of the 58 complaints received 4 progressed to Stage 2 Complaints

Of the 58 complaints made about Children’s Services, all representations were made by parents/relatives and carers.

Representations

There were no representations received from children or advocates in this reporting period.

Table 4: Summary of children and young people’s representations

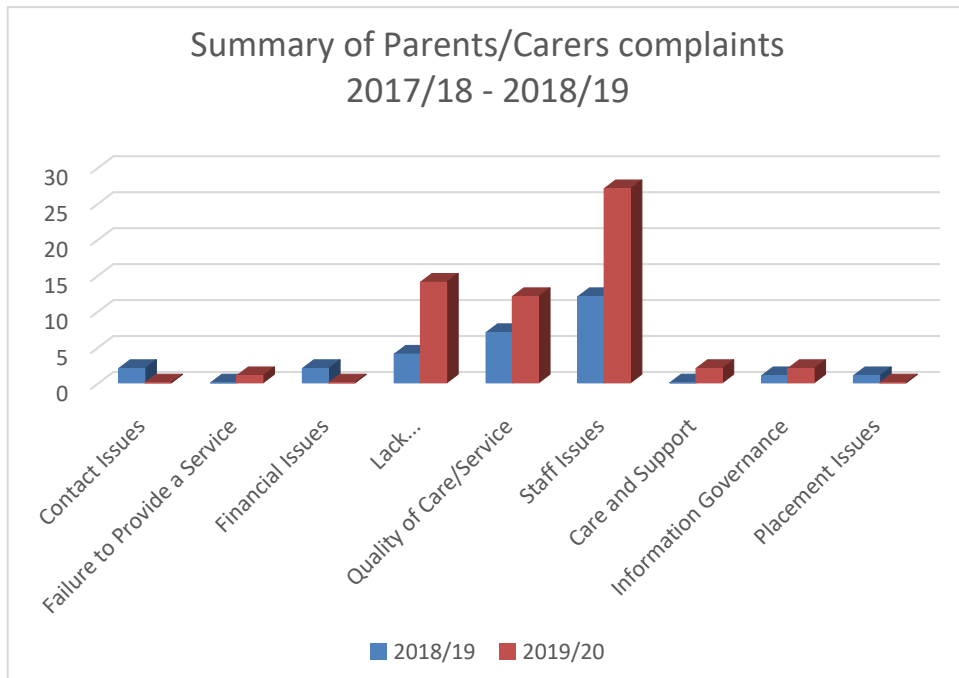
Nature of complaint	2018/19	2019/20
Staff issues	1	0
Quality of Care	1	0
Financial	0	0
Quality of Service	0	0
Total	2	0

The Council commissions an Independent Advocacy Provider for children and young people in line with the requirements of the Social Services Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 and the National Approach to Advocacy. This involves all children over the age of 5yrs being offered the support of an advocate when they become a Child Looked After or subject to Safeguarding arrangements. The Advocacy Service supports children and young people to have their say and effectively supports children and young people to raise any concerns about their care and support outside of the complaints process.

Table 5 sets out the detail of complaints made by parents/carers and compares them with the previous year.

Table 5: Summary of complaints from Parents/Carers

Nature of complaint	2018/19	2019/20
Adoption Process	0	0
Contact issues	2	0
Failure to provide a service	0	1
Equality issues	0	0
Financial issues	2	0
Lack of information/communication	4	14
Quality of care/service	7	12
Staff issues	12	27
Care and Support	0	2
Information Governance	1	2
Placement Issues	1	0
Total	29	58



Complaints relating to staff issues and lack of information remain the highest category of complaint, and have increased on figures received for 2018/19. Again these represent low numbers in comparison to the number of cases dealt with throughout 2019/20 and do not reflect the difficulties in staff retention over this period and frequent changes in staff that usually impact on the quality of service. That said the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team is of the view that further training should be provided to staff on managing difficult conversations and dealing with persistent and unreasonable customers.

4. CONTACTS AND CONCERNS

This year the Customer Feedback Team has again focused on attempting to resolve issues at source where this is considered appropriate and have worked collaboratively with managers across both services resulting in a reduction in complaints being passed to front line services.

In 2019/20 the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team dealt with a total of 151 contacts 2 of which progressed to Stage 1 complaints. 63 contacts were for adults services with 88 contacts being received for Children's Services.

The Team also received 5 concerns where the subject specified that they did not wish to make a complaint but where action was identified as necessary. These were recorded and passed to the relevant service area where they were successfully resolved.

5. STAGE 2 'FORMAL' COMPLAINTS

Overall, there were 7 Stage 2 complaints made during 2019/20, 6 of which progressed from Informal Complaints and one progressed from Stage 1 of Corporate Complaints process. The number of complaints received is an increase compared with the number of Stage 2 complaints for 2018/19.

Adult Services

There were 3 stage 2 complaints received for Adult Services – 2 of which progressed from Stage 1 Informal Complaint process and 1 progressed from Corporate Complaint.

Table 7: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2018/19	2019/20
Staff Issues	0	1
Failure to Provide a Service	1	0
Complex Learning Difficulties	0	0
Quality of Care	0	1
Issues Around Adaptations (Vision Products)	0	1
Total	1	3

Children's Services

There were 4 Stage 2 complaints received relating to Children's Services, all of which progressed from unresolved complaints at Stage 1.

Table 8: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2018/19	2019/20
Quality of Service/Care	2	2
Lack of Communication/Information	0	0
Failure to Provide a Service	1	0
Contact Issues	0	1
Staff Issues	0	1
Total	3	4

6. OMBUDSMAN Enquiries/Complaints

In 2019/20, 12 complaints were made to the Public Services Ombudsman, 9 for Children's Services and 3 for Adults.

1 enquiry was referred back to the authority for investigation, 1 referred back to authority for stage 2 investigation, The Ombudsman made recommendations for 2 complaints and 7 required no further action.

LEARNING THE LESSONS

In 2019/20 the Customer Feedback and Enagement Team held its first learning event following the investigation of a Stage 2 complaint against children's services. The event was hosted by the Investigating Officer and the Independent Person and involved a cross section of staff from across Children's and Legal Services.

The event proved to be successful and resulted in a number of actions for improvements specifically in relation to the transfer of cases from both neighbouring and cross border local Authorities.

It was a particularly valuable exercise in establishing understanding of existing policy and where working with neighbouring Councils could be beneficial in avoiding unnecessary delay in the transfer of cases and in particular those with safeguarding concerns.

It is intended that learning events will be used in all cases where there are identified improvements and/or recommendations following a Stage 2 complaint and it is hoped that this can be extended to Adult Social Care.

Examples of further learning from complaints include:

- Improved information on falls procedure for relatives of older people in residential care, and;
- Reminder to staff to ensure where residents are not accompanied to hospital that relevant information is passed to the receiving hospital.
- Staff reminded of the need to update wishes and feelings of service users in regard to representation and whom they wish information to be shared with.
- Revisit ordering process and suitability of provider of equipment necessary to support individuals who require adaptations to access respite provision.
- Following a user of the lifeline service falling in the garden public information was updated to advise users of the range limitations to the

lifeline pendant. This information is also to be reinforced by staff during installation.

- Information on website relating to Care Homes in Authority reviewed and updated ensuring information regarding their statement of purpose is accurate.

7. 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 2019/20 was 83 compared to the 123 received in 2018/19

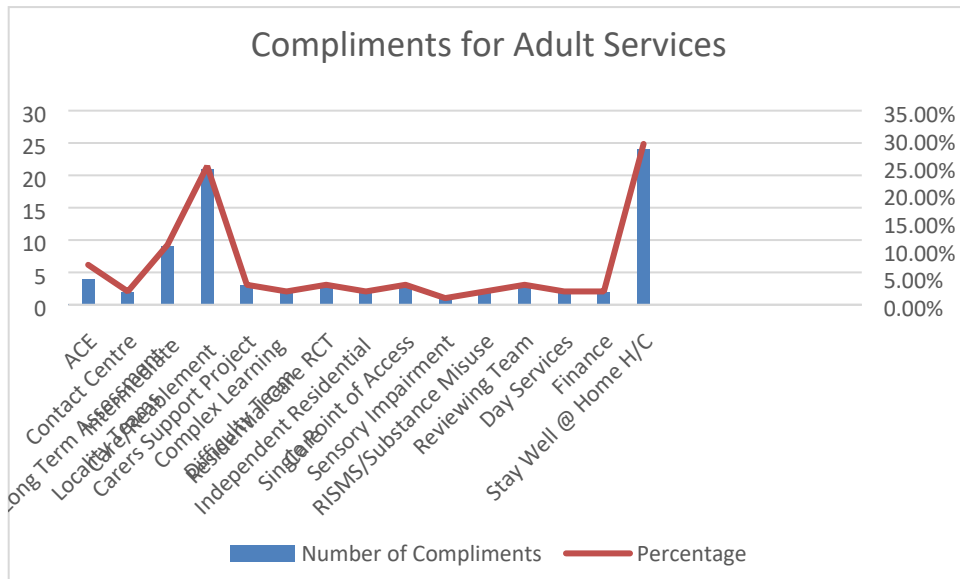
Adult Services

In 2019/20 there were 83 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
ACE	4	7.2%
Contact Centre	2	2.4%
Long Term Assessment - Locality Teams	9	10.8%
Intermediate Care/Reablement	21	25%
Carers Support Project	3	3.6%
Complex Learning Difficulty Team	2	2.4%
Residential Care RCT	3	3.6%
Independent Residential Care	2	2.4%
Single Point of Access	3	3.6%
Sensory Impairment	1	1.2%
RISMS/Substance Misuse	2	2.4%
Reviewing Team	3	3.6%
Day Services	2	2.4%
Finance	2	2.4%
Stay Well @ Home H/C	24	29%
	83	



The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Adult Services during 2019/20

- *Many thanks for all your hard work in running our trip to see Calendar Girls It was thoroughly enjoyable and greatly appreciated.*
- *SU and wife rang to pass on praise to Karen O'Sullivan and to note that nothing had been too much trouble and that "couldn't have gone through the last few months without her assistance".*
- *Locum SW wanted to "commend you and your staff for the level of care and kindness shown to NAME, she looks 100% better than when she lived at home and her family are delighted".*
- *Family of SU said that "RCT SS are outstanding. I am very pleased with the service we have received and I couldn't have asked for better".*
- *SU and Daughter would like to say how very grateful for all the "fantastic help and support that you give us. We are very lucky to have you".*
- *Family of SU would like thank Laura for her "Patience and professional support" "Has been much appreciated" and looking for SU best interests*
- *Catherine Nursing Directorate would like to give praise to Kevin on how beneficial his input is in a particular case and how good work is being overlooked.*
- *SW giving thanks to all staff at Pentre House for helping SU reach her goals*
- *Daughter of SU is would like to give the opportunity to say thank you to the team for all the kindness you have shown the family.*
- *SU and family are saying that they are "forever grateful" and "would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the support, love and care you have given".*

- *Giving thanks to Ceri for her "professionalism and humanity" and for explaining the purpose of intermediate care "She demonstrated and she provided an excellent service".*
- *Daughter of SU phoned SPA and said that she was "so grateful that you took the time to listen" to her and what mattered. "You were so empathetic and that you really understood where she was coming from"*
- *Feedback given by telephone from husband of SU. Husband wanted to personally thanks staff "for the support provided to his wife throughout a very difficult period. His wife has made real good progress and increased confidence".*
- *Son of SU giving thanks for the help and support given to him and also pass thanks on to all staff. He praised our hard work and was very appreciative of everything*
- *SU giving thanks for carer saying "she was absolutely outstanding, she was calm, kind, helpful, very caring and treated me as if I was her grandmother"*
- *"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and the wonderful nightmobile staff that have supported my father for past 2 years to maintain his independence in his own home"*
- *Wish to compliment the entire team of service provided and swift response and for the understanding of needs.*
- *Daughter of SU gave positive feedback saying that they are "experts in their field". "I really wish my mother could stay with the RCT girls".*
- *Daughter of SU wanted to pass on her thanks for all the support received from services before his passing.*
- *Family of Margaret Thomas would like to give thanks for the care and support given to mother during her last weeks*
- *SU given lots of praise to IC for their services.*
- *SU giving thanks for services saying "Thank you so much for all your help, it's meant so much to me and Den and we are truly thankful*
- *Son of SU would like to congratulate OT on work that she has done being so professional, caring, attention to detail and for having manners which are "first class" and genuine.*
- *Sister of SU wanted to give thanks to Keith saying "Your visit has opened up her life she is back to writing and colouring, thank you so much it has made such a difference".*

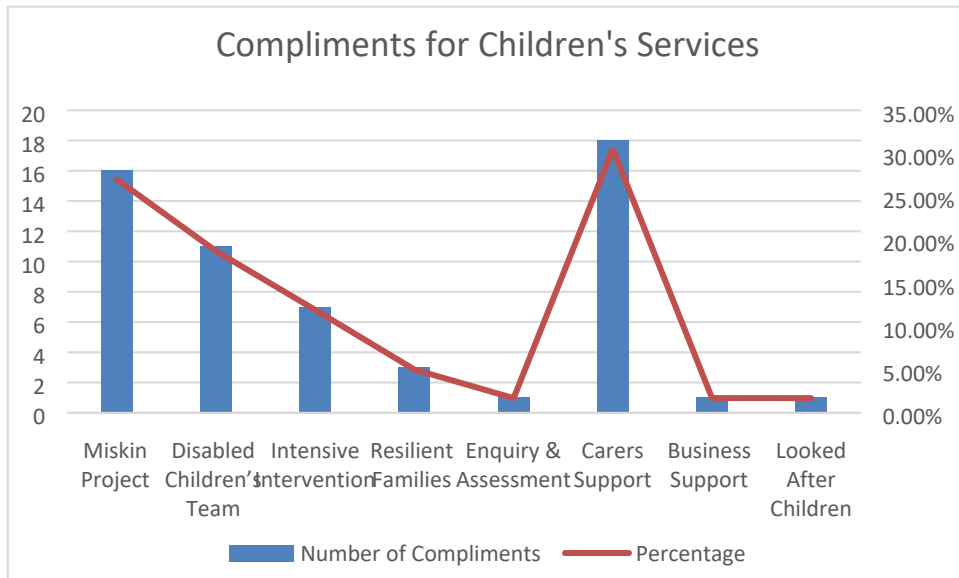
Children's Services

The number of compliments recorded in 2019/20 was 59 compared to 39 received in 2018/19

Table 9 sets out the number of compliments recorded by Service Area.

Table 9: Summary of compliments received

Service areas	Number	Percentage
Miskin Project	16	27%
Disabled Children's Team	11	18.7%
Intensive Intervention	7	12%
Resilient Families	3	5%
Enquiry & Assessment	1	1.7%
Carers Support	18	30.5%
Business Support	1	1.7%
Looked After Children	1	1.7%
Supported Living	1	1.7%
Total	59	100%



The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Children's Services during 2019/20:

- *TM giving thanks to Miskin Project for work they've done with SU*
- *IRO giving praise to SW for high standard of work. Family members report Lauren to be very helpful*
- *To say thank you to the team for a great awards ceremony and the positive changes and achievements made.*
- *Parent giving thanks to Support Workers who they thought were very friendly and very good at what they do and have helped the family a lot.*
- *IRO giving praise and thanks to SW for negotiations with adults support agency to ensure that young person is supported into adulthood*
- *Parent giving thanks to SW saying " You have played a major roll in NAME's childhood and I cannot thank you enough for your support, understanding and guidance."*
- *Giving thanks for the support to SU with 100 percent at school and how important emotionally the SW's are.*
- *Family of SU have said "the support from resilient families has been brilliant and helped us out as a family". "I would like to state that Cherie Carmens has been brilliant"*
- *Family wanting to thank team for making them having "a more positive outlook on NAME behaviour, being more understanding and open as a family".*
- *Independent reviewing officer feels the needs to "highlight all of the excellent work that you are doing" "you have gone above and beyond".*
- *Mother of SU "wanted to mention while she was on the phone, that she really appreciated all the help and support she has had off everyone over the summer holidays".*
- *Mother rang to thank SW for her work and thanking CS for rectifying the issues she had raised. Mum feels that SW went above and beyond*
- *IRO wanted to highlight evidence "Of some exceptional practice" "NAME took real pains and went to great lengths to attempt to convene the work in the best way". "Sessions were hard for them all, including NAME and carers, and were carried out with skill, effort and care with support available before, during and indeed well beyond".*
- *Family of SU would like to pass on "Many thanks to NAME for always being there for us as family. So, professional about her job. Very lucky to have her".*
- *SU wanted to compliment everyone at RCT to because of the pleasant surprise of the quantity of presents left. "I'm sure it will give many children in RCT a happy Xmas, it certainly gave me a warm glow so well done for running the campaign.*

- *Grandmother rang in to say how fantastic the services are that we offer and feels it is a great benefit to her grandchildren.*
- *Parent of the carer meal would like to say "Thank you for a lovely evening!! Thoroughly enjoyed".*
- *"We had a fun filled Carers Cwtch last night, full of spirit, fun and laughter, Happy Christmas all!" Really enjoyed myself thank you all, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."*
- *"Just a quick email to say a huge thank you for the life story book that was completed for NAME. It is so colourful, informative and age appropriate." "So thank you these workers are invaluable".*
- *Parents of SU would like to pass on their thanks to allocated support worker. "She has been amazing with our son, and would like her to receive the positive feedback she deserves- she is an asset to your team."*
- *Work experience Co-ordinator said that the pupils "Thoroughly enjoyed their week in the world of work. Meeting people, learning new skills and gaining valuable experiences have been noted as highlights." "We are most appreciative of the opportunity so kindly offered by your company."*

8. WORK PROGRAMME, PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ **Over the last year the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team have focused on making improvements to the Corporate Customer Feedback Scheme whilst ensuring the Statutory Complaint's process remains responsive to users and continues to provide support to managers and staff.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team held the first learning event following a Stage 2 complaint and this model of learning from complaints will be utilized going forward with opportunity for service user feedback to also be included where appropriate.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Manager has liaised with the Complaint's Standards Authority (CSA) which has been developed as part of the Public Services Ombudsman's new powers and this has resulted in free complaints training for Council staff including managers across social care which will take place in 2020/21.**
- ❖ **In line with new legislation the Customer Feedback Team has submitted complaints data on a quarterly basis to the CSA.**
- ❖ **Early intervention by the Complaints Officers has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of Stage 1 complaints across both Adults and Children's Social Care.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has continued to provide support and advice to managers on complaints resulting in clear improvements on response writing for individual managers. In 2020/21 further focus on written**

responses will include a quality assurance process to target individual training needs of managers in complaints handling as well as working to improve response timescales.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2020

ACTIVE TRAVEL: REVIEW OF INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER; CLLR A CRIMMINGS

AUTHOR: Roger Waters, Service Director Frontline Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to commence a review, including a public engagement exercise, of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM). This report also outlines the reasons for undertaking this exercise.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- Notes the reasons for undertaking a review of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM), including a public engagement exercise.
 - Agrees to the Council undertaking a public engagement exercise during 2020 and 2021 as part of this review.
 - Receives a further report in due course on the outcome of this exercise, prior to the submission of the updated version of the ATINM to the Welsh Government in September 2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In November 2017, the Council submitted its first ATINM to the Welsh Government as part of the requirements set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. The ATINM contained details of the existing and planned network of active travel routes that the Council was seeking to develop in order to facilitate more widespread walking and cycling journeys across Rhondda Cynon Taf. A copy of the existing ATINM is shown in Appendix A below. It has been split into separate areas of RCT.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/ActiveTravelandCycling.aspx>

- 3.2 The associated economic, health and environmental benefits of active travel are becoming increasingly recognised with policies to promote active travel being adopted not only by the Council but by other bodies such as Public Health Wales. Furthermore, with increasing funding and investment taking place to construct new active travel routes and improve existing routes, the Welsh Government has instructed local authorities to review their ATINM with the focus being placed on public engagement and consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As previously indicated, in November 2017, the Council submitted its first ATINM to the Welsh Government as part of the requirements set out in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. This submission followed a period of extensive public consultation and engagement involving local residents, businesses, organisations, community groups and other stakeholders.
- 4.2 As three years have almost elapsed since this date, the Welsh Government has instructed local authorities to review the information contained in their ATINM and update the contents. As part of this process, the Welsh Government is placing an increased emphasis on local authorities undertaking an extensive public consultation and engagement exercise prior to submitting an updated version of their ATINM by the end of September 2021. The Welsh Government will be making available materials and resources to assist local authorities and ensure that consistent standards are achieved.
- 4.3 In the context of the current legislation, it should be noted that a duty is placed on local authorities to develop policies and deliver infrastructure which promote active travel (walking and cycling) as a practical and convenient alternative for travelling by car to key facilities over short distances. The focus is on non-recreational (non-leisure) type of journeys such as travelling to work or college or to the shops etc.
- 4.4 Against this background, this report outlines the action the Council proposes to undertake during 2020 and 2021 to review and update its ATINM, prior to the revised version being submitted to the Welsh Government.

5. REVIEW OF ACTIVE TRAVEL INTEGRATED NETWORK MAP

- 5.1 Under the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, an ATINM is a document which sets out the plans of the Council for developing a network of active travel routes within its area over the next 15 years. It should be noted that the details shown in the ATINM are to be viewed as aspirational and do not commit the Council to implementing any of them. They could, for

example, include new routes or links that could emerge from future new developments.

5.2 As part of a review and update of its ATINM, it is proposed that the Council undertakes the following tasks:

- Amend the existing ATINM to take account of the route alignment of new active travel routes that have been constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Correct any errors and omissions previously highlighted.
- Undertake an audit of those active travel routes which have been improved and upgraded using the Welsh Government template contained in the Active Travel Design Guidance Manual.
- Raise advance and ongoing awareness of the review and public engagement exercise through various media. This exercise must run for a minimum period of 12 weeks.
- Place a bilingual questionnaire and the updated ATINM on the Council's website which can be viewed. Also make printed copies of these documents available at libraries and One4All centres.
- Directly contact key internal and external stakeholders, organisations and bodies with details of the updated ATINM – particularly those organisations and bodies who represent people with protected characteristics.
- Arrange engagement events at public locations such as large supermarkets and community centres. These can help target residents who currently do not cycle and could be potential active travel users.

5.3 It is intended that the feedback obtained from the above tasks will be analysed and, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, the outcome will be shown in the updated version of the ATINM and prioritised over a 15 year timeframe. Following the completion of this process, it is intended that a further report is presented to Members - prior to the submission of the updated version of the ATINM to the Welsh Government in September 2021.

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 report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 As indicated, the preparation of an updated ATINM will involve extensive consultation with the public and key stakeholders. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The preparation of the updated ATINM and planned consultation exercise will incur costs of approximately £50,000. It should be noted that all the projected costs being incurred as a result of these activities are being met by the Welsh Government, through its Active Travel core funding allocation in 2020 / 2021 of £726,000, and will have no impact on the Council's own budget. It is anticipated that this funding allocation will continue to be available in 2021 / 2022 in order to meet any further costs that could be incurred by the Council.
- 8.2 It is, however, recognised that in future years, funding constraints may limit the ability of the Council to achieve continuous improvement to active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf unless appropriate funding is made available by Welsh Government to meet the new legislative requirements.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The activities of the Council described in this report are governed by the provisions set down in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. However, the implementation of proposals drawn-up in the updated ATINM may impact on the Council's functions under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and Traffic Management Act 2004, with subsequent maintenance responsibilities covered by the Highways Act 1980.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / FUTURE GENERATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 The aim of the Active Travel legislation and related policies is to promote more sustainable forms of transport amongst the population, such as walking and cycling, for short journeys and non-recreational purposes. The aims and objectives being to improve the health and well-being of local residents and their access to key facilities and services, as well as reduce congestion and improve local air quality.
- 10.2 These aims are linked to the objectives covering health and prosperity set out in the Council's Single Integrated Plan and emerging Corporate Plan. They also meet a number of the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For example, a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Over the last 15 years, the Council has been actively involved in the development of an extensive network of Community Routes and Safe Routes in Communities that provide residents with an alternative means of accessing local services and facilities within their locality. This is particularly the case in communities where households do not have access to a private vehicle (such as a car) and where there are underlying levels of deprivation associated with poor health.
- 11.2 It is important to note that the work undertaken by the Council, in connection with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, is on-going. Delivering an expanded network of active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and maintaining this network to high quality standards, will present a challenge to the Council in the current financial climate. Notwithstanding this, the progress achieved by the Council to date will help inform it in the preparation of future bids for funding Community Routes and Safe Routes in Communities Schemes. It will also help to build upon the achievements to date.
- 11.3 The submission to the Welsh Government of an updated Active Travel Integrated Network Map in September 2021 will be in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government and the current legislation.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2020

THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A. MORGAN

Author: Lesley Lawson – Performance Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines Rhondda Cynon Taf's draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which contains progress for 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21 in respect of the Council's strategic priorities. It also sets out how the CPR enables the Council to meet its statutory reporting requirements.

2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Endorse the draft CPR (Appendix 1) and recommend its approval to Council on 21 October 2020.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure the Council publishes information on performance across its strategic priorities in line with statutory reporting requirements.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council's three key strategic priorities for 2019/20 are set out in the Council's first Corporate Plan, [The Way Ahead](#) agreed in 2016. The Council's new priorities, covering the period 2020-2024, were agreed by Council [on 4 March 2020](#) and are set out in the Council's new Corporate Plan '[Making a Difference](#)'. 'Making a Difference' continues the positive work started in 2016, and is a key element of effective strategic and financial management for the Council to ensure that it:

- is well placed to meet future ambitions, particularly in the context of challenging funding levels, demographic changes in the demand for services and legislation changes;
- sets a clear strategy and set of priorities for future years;

- allocates resources to priority areas; and
- puts in place plans to deliver the agreed priorities.

4.2 The new plan continues to set a clear direction for the Council, which all staff and Managers can see, understand and work toward through their Service Delivery Plans. There are transparent, robust and regular reporting and scrutiny arrangements in place which also ensure that residents and external stakeholders are able to hold the Council to account.

4.3 The three new strategic priorities are:

1. Ensuring **People**: are independent, healthy and successful;
2. Creating **Places**: where people are proud to live, work and play; and
3. Enabling **Prosperity**: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

4.4 As with the previous Corporate Plan, progress in the delivery of these priorities will be reported as part of the Council's quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee during the year, and also made available on the [Council's website](#).

4.5 There are two separate, but related legislative reporting requirements on the Council that are met by the Corporate Performance Report:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives, take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives and publish an annual report of progress; and
- The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, which requires all local authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions by setting Improvement Objectives and to make a public assessment of their performance for each financial year by no later than 31 October following the end of the financial year to which the information relates.

4.6 Improvement Objectives need to reflect the strategic priorities of the Council and to all intents and purposes, Well-being Objectives and Improvement Objectives can be treated as one and the same. Therefore, by integrating processes for setting and reporting on its Corporate Priorities, the Council can discharge its duties under both areas of legislation.

4.7 This approach was supported by Council in endorsing the new Corporate Plan on [4 March 2020](#) when it agreed that the Council's Corporate Priorities would also serve as the Council's Well-being Objectives.

5. THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS 2020/21

5.1 The Council has a positive track record of setting and delivering its Strategic Vision and in doing so meeting its statutory reporting duties. In previous years, the Corporate Performance Reports have been agreed by Council in meetings held in July.

5.2 However, the impact of the recent unprecedented events of the floods resulting from Storms Ciara and Dennis, and more recently the wider national and local impact of Covid-

19, has affected the 2019/20 reporting arrangements and has also necessitated a different approach for the Council's 2020/21 planning.

- 5.3 These events have not diminished the Council's ambition in the medium to longer term. However, in recent months the Council has, of necessity, considered and agreed urgent key tasks it will tackle during 2020/21, e.g.
- Cabinet on [21 May](#) agreed:
 - Contact Tracing;
 - Recovery and Service Planning;
 - Decision Making & Democratic Engagement;
 - Counting the Cost (now and into the future); and
 - Economic Resilience.
 - Cabinet on [28 July](#) agreed a set of Service Recovery Plans following the easing of lock down restrictions.
- 5.4 The Council's draft CPR for 2020/21 has been prepared in the context of the above events and is included as **Appendix 1**. The content of the draft CPR has been reviewed and challenged by Council officers and its purpose is to provide a high level, easy to read summary of:
- progress of the Council's previous priorities of **Economy, People and Place** since 2016 and, in particular, 2019/20. More detailed evaluations of performance and progress, and other relevant support documents, are included as links within the CPR to enable the reader to access more detailed information, as required; and
 - plans to deliver the new priorities of **People, Places and Prosperity** in 2020/21. The detailed plans and target dates are also included as links within the CPR.
- 5.5 In this way, the draft CPR aims to provide elected Members, partners, residents, staff and regulators with an overview of progress and plans, as well as access to further detailed information. This approach also ensures the Council meets its legal duties as set out in paragraph 4.5 above.
- 5.6 At its meeting on [24 September](#) 2020 as part of the Quarter 1 Performance Report, Cabinet received a progress update based on the draft plans put in place to deliver the three Corporate Priorities of PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY in 2020/21. Where revisions are required to the content of the draft plans, following review by Cabinet and Council in October, these will be incorporated into quarterly Performance Reports presented to Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee this year.
- 5.7 Audit Wales has a statutory duty to audit the extent to which Councils have met their statutory responsibilities, which will be formally reported to Council in due course.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of the recommendation set out in the report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendation set out in the report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendation set out in the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The report aims to ensure the Council complies with its legal duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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

10.1 This report evidences how it is managing its Strategic Priorities, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plans '[The Way Ahead](#)' and '[Making a Difference](#)' at this unprecedented time. The Council's Corporate Performance Report also provides information and evidence of how the Council is meeting its duty in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The Council's draft CPR 2020/21 demonstrates the positive progress made since 2016, and in particular 2019/20, and puts in place a clear and positive direction for the Council in the context of continuing global, national and regional challenges.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

as amended by

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

13TH OCTOBER 2020

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE
COUNCIL, CLLR A. MORGAN**

Background Papers

Cabinet - [Quarterly Performance Reports](#)

Cabinet - [Report 21 May 2020](#)

Cabinet - [28 July 2020](#)

Cabinet - [Report 24 September 2020](#)

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The Council's Corporate Performance Report (draft) 2020-21

All data included in this report will be subject to final checks

This document contains the Council's priorities which are the Improvement Objectives as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and also the Council's Well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. To all intents and purposes, Well-being objectives and Improvement Objectives can be treated as one and the same. Therefore, by integrating processes for setting and reporting on these key objectives, the Council has discharged its duties under both areas of legislation.

***This document is available in other languages and formats on request.
All data included in this draft will be subject to final checks prior to publication***

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Introduction and Contacts

This is the Council's annual Corporate Performance Report. It tells you about how we performed in 2019-20 and our new priorities for 2020 - 21.

We welcome your views on this report, our plans for the future and how we did last year. We would also like to know how you, your family and your community have been affected by our work to improve services.

You can get in touch

Via the web	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/sayit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/Reportit
Via Twitter	@rctcouncil or @cwmtafconsult
Via Facebook	www.facebook.com/RCTCouncil
Via The Leader's Blog	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/TheLeadersBlog
Help us to improve by providing your comments, compliments and complaints	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/feedback
Join the Citizens' Panel	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/jointhepanel
Get involved in our consultations	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/GetInvolved
Consultation Team	Email: consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk
Cwm Taf Engagement Hub	www.ourcwmtaf.wales
Your Councillor	Find the contact details of your local Councillor www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councillors
If you are interested in taking over the running of a Council run building or service	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/rcttogether

A message from the Leader of the Council – Councillor Andrew Morgan

Welcome to the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2020. This report brings together information from across the Council about how well we delivered our priorities in 2019/20 and our plans to deliver our ambitions in 2020/21. This report helps us to meet many of the Council's legal reporting requirements, but more importantly, it has also been designed so that you, the Council's residents, partners and other interested organisations can judge how we are delivering upon the commitments we have previously made. We want to show where we are doing well, where we can do better, and be honest about the challenges ahead.

However, this report is being produced at a time when the Council is continuing to tackle unprecedented local, national and global challenges. Following storms Ciara and Dennis in February 2020 our focus was on working with communities and redirecting staff to make sure we were supporting those residents and businesses that were so badly affected. At the same time, a virus was spreading across the world and in March 2020, RCT faced the new challenge of helping to keep every single resident and member of staff safe and well. Working with community groups and volunteers to provide help and essential supplies directly to those who needed it, keeping essential services going, working with health partners to help stop the spread of the virus and at the same time making sure that we followed the Welsh Government guidelines to keep people safe. The last few months have been a time like no other. The virus is still with us and with the visible impacts of climate change, there is no doubt we will be facing more severe weather events for the foreseeable future. However, the Council remains positive and ambitious and as our services restart safely, we continue to be focused on making RCT the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous.

The Corporate Performance Report contains many examples of how the Council is working to improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the residents and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It also shows what the Council's Independent Auditors have said about our work and progress.

For those readers that would like to see more in depth information, the report includes many links to detailed reports and data. In whatever way you choose to read this report, I hope it helps you to understand and challenge what we are doing, and encourages you to get involved in feeding back your views so that the Council can provide you with the best possible services.

The data and information we collect, check and compare, shows that overall we are continuing to improve and that our residents are receiving a number of services that, our most recent data shows, are amongst the best in Wales. This includes

- helping to prevent homelessness
- the condition of our non-principal (C) roads
- maintaining high levels of cleanliness of our highways
- making timely decisions on planning applications and getting those decisions right so they are not overturned at appeal

At the same time as looking at where we are making good progress and compare well with others, there are areas where we know we need to do better. This includes

- continuing to improve the condition of our roads - so we are continuing to invest in our roads and bridge repairs.
- improving school attendance at both primary and secondary schools - so we continue to work with schools to help to jointly tackle the problems that can lead to children and young people not going to school.
- continuing to invest in our leisure centres and encouraging people to look after their health and fitness.

The financial climate in which the Council and the public sector in Wales is currently operating is unprecedented. For the Council, our robust approach to financial management and planning is enabling the necessary support to be provided to residents and businesses, by partnership working and with support from Welsh Government.

We will continue to work closely with Welsh Government and our partners to make best use of all available resources and to secure the on-going additional funding needed to recover from unprecedented events. We are also changing how some services are delivered to ensure they continue to both meet the needs of our local communities and provide value-for-money and at same time ensuring the financial health and stability of the Council is maintained.

Overall, we think the Council is making good progress but our work never stands still, especially now as services are trying to respond to and plan for fast moving events over which they have no control. As well as talking about the last year, this report also tells you about our ambitions for the future and what we will do over the next year to improve in those priorities that you told us were most important to you and your communities, which we have set out in our new Corporate Plan. Looking ahead to 2020/21 we will be working hard to

- **ensure 'People' are independent, healthy and successful**
- **create 'Places' where people are proud to live, work and play**
- **enable 'Prosperity' by creating opportunities for people and businesses**

This report gives you more information about how we will do this, although when you read the report, more progress will have been made in the work it describes, particularly where our progress was affected by the impact of floods or lockdown conditions. We remain fully committed to keeping residents up to date with what is happening in the Council, on our progress and improvements, through our social media channels and on our website. I would encourage you to see for yourself the changes we are making. We will also continue to provide meaningful opportunities for residents to engage in our democratic processes. The benefits of some of our work can be seen now, other benefits will take longer to see, but we continue to put in place firm foundations that will support improvement and from which future generations can benefit and also build on.

Finally, none of this work would happen without the continued commitment of staff, councillors and partners. The last few months in particular have shown the incredible commitment and hard work of Council staff to doing everything possible to support residents, communities and

businesses, throughout the most difficult of times, both professionally and personally. I would like to put on record, once again, my personal thanks and gratitude to everyone who continues to work so hard to make Rhondda Cynon Taf one of the most successful Councils in Wales so that our residents get the best possible services, despite the many challenges we continue to face. One of our most valued assets continues to be our local authority staff who transform our ambitions into reality.

I hope this Performance Report helps you to understand how the Council is approaching both the challenges and opportunities it faces now and how we are preparing for the future. Please let us know what you think of our progress, particularly as we continue to work through the pandemic, and our plans for the future. Tell us what matters to you and give us your ideas about what we can do to further improve the positive impact of the Council's work for you, your family and your community.

I would also like to place on record my thanks to all elected Members, particularly through our scrutiny processes, who all play an important role in ensuring this Council delivers upon the commitments and priorities we have set.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Council.



Councillor Andrew Morgan

Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Continuing to deliver our priorities in 2019-20

The Council's [Corporate Plan for 2016-2020, 'The Way Ahead'](#) put residents at the centre of what we do. The plan was originally developed and shaped by residents, staff and partners who told us what mattered most to them. It set the direction for everything we have done since 2016 and set the firm foundations for our new [Corporate Plan for 2020-24, 'Making a Difference'](#), which was put in place from April 2020. In this annual report we will show you the progress we have made since 2016, with a focus on 2019/20 and also how we intend to progress our new priorities beyond 2020.

On 2016, 'The Way Ahead' set out a Vision for the future, for *a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all*, and it focused on three priorities

- **Economy** - *Building a strong economy.*
- **People** - *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.*
- **Place** - *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work .*

The Plan also set out the key principles we would follow to deliver these priorities, i.e.

- providing essential services well;
- helping people and communities to help themselves;
- building a sustainable County Borough; and
- living within our means.

Since then, we have put in place annual plans and reports to show our progress. The detailed plans that showed how we would deliver our priorities in 2019/20 were set out in our [Corporate Performance Report for 2019](#).

Our work has been reviewed and checked by Councillors every three months and at the same time, [Quarterly performance reports](#) have been put on the Council's website so that residents and other interested organisations can see our progress for themselves. We are now at the end of the 2019/20 reporting year, so this report contains the year end assessment of our progress and provides examples of where our work has made a difference to the lives of people that live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf, and also where we need to do better.

Taking this approach with our first Corporate Plan has served the Council well, and as you will see throughout this report, we have made positive progress since 2016.

Looking at our progress since 2016, at what we need to do both now and in the future and also listening to what you have told us is important to you, has helped us to prepare the detailed steps and plans and set ambitious targets for the future. Our progress so far will help us to prepare to respond to the challenges we face in 2020 and beyond. We are confident that this progress will continue in the future as we plan for and deliver our new priorities in our new plan 'Making a Difference'. This is described in more detail in section 9.

As we progress our plans, we will continue, to involve people and communities, think about the effect of what we do now has on people and communities in the future, carefully plan what we do so that we can work with others where it is best to do so, and put in place services that will help prevent problems from happening or getting worse.

No single report or plan can tell you about the many services that we deliver directly to or organise for our residents, communities and businesses. Many of these services were at the forefront of responding to floods arising from storms Ciara and Dennis earlier this year, as well as the impact of Covid-19, and many plans for 2020/21 will be uncertain. However, you can find out more about all the services we deliver, the progress we are making and how we are supporting residents and communities, on the [Council's website](#), [Council's Twitter](#), [Council's Instagram](#) or [Council's Facebook](#) pages.

To help us to achieve our ambitions and respond to the impact of increasing financial pressures, we are continually looking at ways we can make more of the resources we have available by tackling

Digitalisation so that customers can access more of our services online and also helping to increase access to technology for people and communities.

During 2019/20 we made positive progress in rolling out our Digitisation programme e.g. increasing the availability of services on line, providing information about support available during the floods in early 2020 and free Wi Fi in Aberdare, Mountain Ash, Ferndale, Porth and Treorchy Town Centres, with infrastructure for Wi Fi in 2 other Town Centres currently in progress. In March 2020, this work was accelerated by the immediate need to make it possible for over 3,000 office based staff and Councillors to effectively work from home with appropriate equipment and 'tools'. This allowed

- residents and community groups to be kept informed about service changes and help available.
- democratic processes to continue virtually.
- online virtual meetings with vulnerable people.

At this time, we also worked with partners, put in place an interim solution for Covid-19 Contact Tracing across the areas of Cwm Taf Morgannwg and supported the development of a national solution to support the national drive to keep people safe.

Other ways that digitisation is helping people and communities can be found in our detailed evaluations for Economy, People and Place.

Commercialisation so that the Council takes more opportunities to act as a business to earn income rather than cut budgets.

Renting our assets to create income and new jobs

Early Intervention and Prevention so that we spend more on stopping problems and less on trying to fix them once they have happened.

We have changed the way we provide Early Years support in RCT, to include 0-7 year olds. Early Years services are now delivered as part of the [Resilient Families Service](#) to ensure families in RCT receive the right support at the right time. This means that the specialist parenting and early language support that was previously only available to families in 'Flying Start' areas, is now available to all families who require it in RCT as part of a comprehensive package of family support. More recently, we have received approval from Welsh Government to make changes to health visiting, by developing the RCT 'Family Health Visiting Programme' so more support is available to all families no matter where in RCT they live. It has also been agreed that we can trial changes to our childcare offer so that this support is available to all families in the same way.

Independence so that our vulnerable residents stay as well as they can for as long as they can.

This includes using funding from Welsh Government announced in Summer 2019, to develop and implement a new way of using technology to help our residents to stay in their own homes, safely, for longer. Our new Mobile Response service which started in January 2020, provides a 24-hour rapid response service, for 365 days a year, to people using an RCT lifeline pendant. You can see more about this new service in the [PEOPLE evaluation](#).

Efficient and Effective Organisation so that we challenge everything we do to see if we can do it better.

We continued to centralise office based administration to make the most of the skills and expertise available behind the scenes. At the same time, we helped staff working in the community by providing 'hot desks' that they could use in different locations so that they spent more time working with residents, communities and businesses and less time travelling across the County Borough back to an office. This approach meant that the Council had a head start when staff were required to work from home in response to Covid-19. The lessons we have learned from the necessity of home working supported by appropriate ICT tools etc. will help to inform our thinking for the future shape of the organisation.

During 2019 we also continued to embed the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) into the Council's work and priorities. This Act applies to 44 public bodies in Wales including all Councils, Health Boards, Fire and Rescue Services and Natural Resources Wales.

The Act means that as well as the Council continually improving, it also needs to carry out 'Sustainable Development' which is the process of improving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Act also asks us to "maximise our contributions" to seven national Well-being Goals, which you will see throughout this report.

You will also see more about how we are applying the Act in section 15 and we have also provided a summary of how our work is contributing to the seven national Well-being goals in Appendix 1. However, we need to continue to build and improve on this positive platform.

Our progress throughout the year has been set out in regular reports for Councillors to challenge and check, and for residents to see for themselves, and is included below. Our progress showed that we were on track to achieve most of our ambitions we set ourselves in 2016. However, the impact of severe flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic both had a significant impact on progress towards the end of 2019/20.

DRAFT

ECONOMY - Building a Strong Economy

We put in place the **ECONOMY** priority as we believed that economic growth would drive prosperity and bring opportunities to our residents and business as well as the Council. A growing economy will continue to support jobs for our residents and will also allow the Council to generate more income to fund services, enable a responsible approach to setting Council Tax levels, support businesses and invest in the infrastructure needs of the County Borough. Helping to create these conditions will also help to improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of residents and communities. Residents told us this is important to them and studies have shown that work is good for people and can benefit individual mental health and contribution to communities.

We want to support residents, particularly our young people, to realise their potential by getting the best education, fulfilling jobs and good quality housing, irrespective of their backgrounds. We also want to make sure that RCT is best placed to take full advantage of the many different opportunities that will arise from the [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#).

Making RCT Town Centres more attractive will not only benefit our residents, it will also add to the appeal of the area as a visitor destination, which will help to increase tourism and will in turn support local businesses as well as provide more opportunities for jobs for our residents.

We also know that we have to plan to meet higher expectations from our residents with less funding so we have to do things differently.

The steps we put in place to achieve this Priority are

- **A responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created – including investments in town centres and the commercial infrastructure such as Treforest Industrial Estate**
- **Making Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can**
- **Making sure there is a broad offer of skills and employment programmes in place for all ages - by using European Social Fund monies where we can**

Latest available data tells us

Economy

- Latest data, 2018, shows the value of goods and services (GVA) produced in the County Borough was £3,580 million, 5th highest in Wales. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- At the end of 2019, the average house price in RCT was £114,000, 3rd lowest in Wales [Source: Office for National Statistics](#)
- Council Tax increases in RCT have been the lowest in Wales over the last 3 years [Source: StatsWales](#)

Employment

- Latest data, March 2020, 69.8% of RCT residents aged 16+ were in employment, the third lowest L.A. in Wales and 3.9 percentage points lower than the Wales average (73.7%) [Source: StatsWales](#)
- According to latest figures (2018), the Public Administration, Education and Health industry is the largest employer throughout RCT (31% of workers), followed by Wholesale, Retail and Hospitality (28%) and Production (15%) [Source: StatsWales](#)
- According to 2019 estimates, the average weekly earnings of people working in the Rhondda Cynon Taf area was £521.20, an increase of £16.80 per week on the previous year but still lower than the Wales average (£535.00) [Source: StatsWales](#)

Education

- As of 2019, 11% of working age people in RCT had no qualifications, 2.5% higher than across Wales (8.5%). [Source: NOMIS](#)
- During 2018-19, there were 5,280 people employed within apprenticeship and trainee schemes in the RCT area, the second highest number in Wales. Of these, 1.42% were from a BAME background, the 5th lowest of the 22 Local Authorities. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- 29,320 people from RCT participated in further education during 2018/19. [Source: StatsWales](#)

In 2019 we said we would continue our work to Build a Strong Economy, focusing on improving our economy by supporting business growth and helping individuals improve their skills. Overall, we continue to make positive progress as a Council and in the wider partnerships including the [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#) and the [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#). Progress in some of our key measures was slower than we anticipated, for a number of reasons, some of which were beyond our control. For example, the increase in empty commercial units Aberdare, Porth and Pontypridd as a result of continuing national trends exacerbated by storms and Covid-19, although it is worth noting that these rates are better than the Welsh national average. Also the gap in educational achievement between our pupils receiving free school meals and their peers remains too high and we still have too many children and young people being excluded from our schools.

However, we continue to focus on supporting business growth and improving individual's skills. This focus was tested as never before towards the end of the 2019 reporting year, when we needed to prioritise our work because of the significant and unprecedented local impact of floods arising from Storms Ciara and Dennis, and also by the introduction of the lockdown conditions arising from the onset of the coronavirus, Covid-19. We rescheduled many of our plans and

focused on working with partners to provide direct and immediate support to businesses, people and communities in most need. However, more positively we were able to continue our work on some significant physical regeneration and improvement projects during this challenging time. The impact of the floods and Covid-19 won't be fully reflected in the progress we have described in 2019, but its impact will be more significant in our work in 2020/21.

Alongside our work in delivering our ECONOMY priority we are continually building on our experience of doing things differently, what has worked and what we need to do better. We are also increasing our understanding of the effect of the changes we are making for the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider Cwm Taf Region.

Our work within the ECONOMY priority is overseen by Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and, where appropriate, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Cwm Taf Public Services Board and other Boards.

You can see more detail of our progress against what we set out to achieve in 2019/20 in our [ECONOMY Performance Evaluation](#).

We said we would put in place a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created

Measures we set out last year

- We supported 34 property improvements in our Town Centres (*not able to compare to last year as definition changed*)
- 86 new homes built by local small or medium sized businesses.
- There were 9,505 active businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2018, an increase from 8,585 the previous year [Source: StatsWales](#)
- Fewer business start-ups compared to last year but still significantly more than South East Wales region at 15.5%, Wales at 13.3% and UK 12.9%
- More business deaths, at 18% compared to 11.7% in South East Wales, 10.4% in Wales and 11.4% in the UK, reflecting in part the significant impact of the weather events in early 2020. However, we are confident that our plans for regeneration and the town centre redevelopments will support new and existing businesses. As a result of Covid-19, we are already developing new approaches to deal with the current challenges and different opportunities
- More affordable homes delivered. *This is better than last years at 135 compared to 83 in 2018/19.*
- Fewer empty properties brought back into use at 172 compared to 213 in 2018/19. *This was due to a delay in the launch of the Valleys Taskforce empty homes grant scheme, which meant it initially took longer to approve grants. However, this is still the highest number of properties brought back into use in Wales through direct action by a local authority during 2019/20.*

Among other things we have...

- continued to modernise our Town Centres and help them adapt to new challenges and opportunities. We are implementing the plans for Porth and Mountain Ash and are working on new plans for Treorchy and Tonypany. This includes work starting on site on ambitious projects such as the Porth Transport Hub, supported living accommodation and a new medical centre in Mountain Ash. We also rolled out *safe Wi-Fi to Aberdare, Mountain Ash and Ferndale town centres. Work to bring this to Treorchy and Porth was delayed but has now been completed and Pontypridd and Tonypany will be progressed as soon as possible. We also helped 34 businesses improve their premises. More recently we have been putting in place arrangements to make our Town Centres safe e.g. helping to manage social distancing, and providing grants to help businesses quickly adapt to new circumstances.
- continued to deliver the new development at the heart of the regeneration of Pontypridd, [Llys Cadwyn](#), following the demolition of the former Taff Vale precinct, bringing office accommodation, a community hub with a modern library and leisure facilities as well as additional jobs. The significant redevelopment of the former Pontypridd YMCA also started which will produce a modern facility for community and social business use.
- continued to support local small businesses and start-ups through our [Enterprise Investment Fund](#). This scheme has widened the scope of the previous Enterprise Support programme to provide better focussed financial assistance to enable them to grow and diversify as well as create jobs. We are currently putting together a more comprehensive package of support for local businesses, to help them face the challenges and opportunities of the new economic environment.
- launched our Town Centre Crime Reduction Strategy 2019-2021 and worked with businesses and partners to make our towns safer by tackling anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and public order offences. We have also upgraded CCTV in our Town Centres and are continuing our plans to put in place free Wi-Fi, accredited by the government's *safe standard [Friendly Wi Fi](#) which blocks inappropriate content.
- continued to develop the tourism offer in RCT, drawing on the strengths of the region, including landscape and green spaces and industrial heritage, working alongside local businesses to make the region attractive to visitors. Examples of new attractions under developed/explored include Rhondda and Abernant Tunnels and Zip World. Our long standing Welsh Mining Experience at the Rhondda Heritage Park received further recognition through the [Sandford Award](#) for inspiring learning and curiosity in our future generations. We have also continued to develop our two Discovery Gateway sites at Dare Valley Country Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park with grant support from Welsh Government. More recently we have been unable to involve stakeholders to develop the detailed plans for tourism in RCT as a result of Covid-19 pandemic but we are keen to start this work as soon as we are able.
- continued to widen the range of housing available including working with partners to redevelop derelict buildings, breaking down the barriers to help more people to self-build the properties of their choice, bringing empty properties back to life through schemes such as the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Scheme and the Council's Houses into Homes Loans and using enforcement where necessary to encourage property owners to take appropriate action where homes are left empty for long periods. We also continued to work with Registered Social Landlords to provide good quality affordable housing utilising a £15m social housing grant investment, and helped people with disabilities to

make adaptations to help them stay in their homes, using local contractors to undertake £4m of work across 297 properties.

- continued to support RCT residents to access grants to install over 3,800 energy efficiency measures into their homes, improving the warmth of their home and decreasing energy bills.
- started to look at how work to put in place our new Local Development Plan can have a positive impact on the environment both now and in the future. Discussions to consider how this can best be achieved have been delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and will now take place later this year. These discussions will include how planning can play a key part in reducing the impact of climate change and reducing carbon emissions in the County Borough. You can find more information about how the Council's work on climate change and the environment through our social media and in the work of the Council's [Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group](#).

Investing in Local Businesses - [Gwalia Health Care](#)

Gwalia Health Care, based on Treforest Industrial Estate, received a £10,000 grant through our Enterprise Investment Fund to help them develop a partnership with Firstkind Ltd, to manufacture their 'Geko' products. The Geko device is worn like a wristwatch below the knee, helping to prevent and treat conditions like the prevention of swelling following orthopaedic surgery, reducing blood clotting risk in stroke patients and the treatment of leg ulcers. Gwalia produces several of the device's components locally. The grant support has assisted them to purchase laser technology equipment to assemble Geko products. The partnership between the two companies has created 18 high quality local jobs.

We said we would make Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can

Measures we set out last year

- RCT pupils increased their average Capped 9 Score to 352.0, a slight increase from last year's 348.0 (*average point score for each pupil's best 9 grades including English/Welsh, Mathematics and Science*)
- Pupils eligible for Free School Meals, on average, did not achieve as high results as their classmates. This data is not published at a Council level as Welsh Government has recommended that the performance of each school is considered separately looking at the challenges it faces. *We are working with individual schools to look at how we can improve support for pupils to enable them to achieve their full potential*
- more fixed term exclusions in both primary and secondary schools
 - Primary schools 20.14 (per 1,000 pupils)
 - Secondary schools 126.6 (per 1,000)
- permanent exclusions also increased. *To tackle this, we have put in place a range of options that can be used to support and challenge schools, early signs show that this approach is working but we are continuing to monitor the situation.*
- more of our primary school pupils attended school more regularly. At 94.3%, this is a slight improvement compared to last year's 94.2% and a step in the right direction.
- fewer of our secondary and through school pupils attended regularly, at 92.9%, this was marginally below last year's attendance at 93%. *We are continuing to challenge and support schools that need most help and also support pupil and parents to find more suitable education provision where appropriate and piloting a new school based approach.*

Among other things we have...

- remodelled or improved school buildings and facilities in Gelli Primary School, Llanharan Primary School, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llantrisant, Cymmer Primary School, Cwmdare Primary School, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Treorchy Comprehensive School Ferndale Community School and Pengeulan Primary School. We have also successfully obtained Welsh Government funding to continue to improve our schools and increase the availability of Welsh Medium Education. More recently, the Council has received the

Helping families to help their children in Glenboi

Glenboi Primary School has a high number of disadvantaged pupils. To help pupils achieve their full potential and encourage more parental and family involvement, the school put in place a Family Engagement Officer who has been working closely with parents. As a result of her work, a positive relationship has developed between the school and its families, which in turn has been positive for pupil outcomes, their attitudes to learning and wellbeing and attendance. When asked, parents were positive about the school, information about their child's progress and general communication with the school. During a school inspection in March 2019, Education Inspectors, Estyn, were highly complimentary about the impact of the Family Engagement Officer on the school and has published the work as a case study on its [website](#).

You can see more details about the work of the [Family Engagement Officer in Glenboi](#).

As a result of the success of the Family Engagement approach in Glenboi, we are putting in place Family Engagement roles in six of our secondary schools with the lowest attendance as at trial programme to see if they have the same success.

results of a Judicial Review into school reorganisation in Pontypridd. We are currently reviewing the judgement before deciding how to move forward.

- obtained Welsh Government funding for a learning hub at Ffynnon Taf primary school, which will provide a new hall, childcare facilities and a community room, allowing suitable accommodation for popular local services to meet growing demand. The first part of the scheme is nearing completion and will allow a local childcare provider setting and the local Community Development Association to move into new accommodation during the 2020/21 academic year.
- we have reviewed the support we provide to children with Additional Learning Needs before they start school and put in place a pilot with Ysgol Hen Felin which aims to help children prepare for full time school. Following an initial review, the pilot was due to be extended until the end of the Summer Term 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, this work will be taken forward into 2020/21 when schools reopen.
- worked with Health Colleges, to develop the RCT 'Family Health Visiting Programme', to ensure all families across RCT with children up to 5 years old are given the opportunity to access support that meets their needs no matter where in RCT they live. The RCT Family Health Visiting Programme will focus support on all children and families who most need it.
- agreed to trial new funded childcare for families with 2-3 year olds who most need it, rather than being based on where families live. Those families currently accessing childcare will continue to receive child care during the changeover.

We said we would make sure there is a broad offer of skills and employment programmes in place for all ages

Measures we set out last year.

- 1,400 people gained training, qualifications or work experience. 635 people successfully gained employment following our support and their hard work.
- the most recent number of young people not in education, employment or training is not yet available as a result of delays in the publication of data caused by the Covid-19. In 2017/18, our latest available data, 1.9% of 16 year olds (year 11) and 2.9% of 18 year olds (year 13) leaving school were known not to be in education, employment or training.
- we supported 147 people with health conditions or disabilities that affect them in the work place, to stay in, or return to work after a period of absence. (*new measure, too early to compare*)
- we also supported 41 small businesses to improve their policies and systems so they can provide better support to people with work limiting health conditions or disabilities (*new measure, too early to compare*).

Helping people into work

One of the people we helped into work was J, a single mum of two with anxiety and confidence issues who had little experience of applying for jobs or attending interviews and no childcare in place. J was helped to prepare, apply and train for work that she already had some personal experience of. By also supporting J with transport, providing work experience and information about ways that work would benefit her, J's confidence grew and she was successful in getting work that fitted in with her children's school hours.

Read more about J's story in our [Communities for work case study](#).

Engage to Change Gateway to employment for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities

Working [with Coleg y Cymoedd](#), Learning Disability Wales [Engage to Change project](#) and Elite employment agency, we provided supported internships for 10 young people as part of their college courses across Council services including libraries, leisure centres and social care. As part of their final year at college, the young people spend up to 4 days a week on work placement, developing work related skills in their areas of interest. *Tomos, one of the supported interns based at Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd said "I have learnt so much from the team I've been working with, learning about all the different types of flowers, plants and wildlife. I've also felt part of the team and had the opportunity to use a variety of equipment such as leaf blowers to keep the park clean and tidy". Tomos has since started paid work in a temporary job with the parks service. You can find out more about the experience of some of our other interns in this [short film](#). Our 2020 internships were interrupted by Covid-19 but placements will restart as soon as it is safe to do so.*

Among other things we have

- implemented the [Staying Well at Work](#) project, supporting small and medium sized businesses to help people to stay in work by providing occupational health support. The project supported 81 people with health conditions or disabilities to return to work for their employers after absences, and a further 66 people were supported with adjustments or treatment to prevent time off work. The project also supported 41 businesses to put in place effective policies and procedures to help their staff with health conditions or disabilities, both now and in the future.
- through the RCT 'Gatsby' pilot, worked with all of our secondary schools to improve how careers information is provided to pupils. 'Gatsby' helps schools to plan activities including contact with local employers, so that pupils can see the direct link between what they are learning in school and potential future careers. You can see more detail in this [short film](#). We also continued to provide details of over 700 risk assessed and safety vetted businesses, including some who are disability confident, so schools can help young people to easily and safely access a wide range of work experience in line with their interests.

Helping to Stay Well@Work *A was absent from work in a small business following a work related injury. To support their recovery, they were asked to attend our Staying Well@Work Service by their employer.*

A's condition was assessed by Staying Well@Work physiotherapist when they also discussed what would help them return to work. A plan to treat the problems A was experiencing was put in place, which also included steps they could take themselves that would help. During the assessment, it became clear that A was also dealing with a close family bereavement which was affecting their self-confidence. To support A through this time, they agreed to attend counselling sessions.

Following an initial course of physiotherapy and counselling sessions, A indicated that they were better able to cope better both physically and mentally. A was able to start a phased return to work whilst still receiving physiotherapy treatment with adjustments in work to take account of the condition.

- We are working with Coleg y Cymoedd, University of South Wales and University of Wales Trinity St David to provide opportunities for young people within our ‘participatory programme’, giving them opportunities to work with and learn from professional artists and performers. We also began to develop sessions within our libraries and youth programmes, for example gaming and coding. Along with creative partners, we are working to develop a creative strategy for Pontypridd, linking to the many positive new developments including Muni Arts Centre, Llys Cadwyn, Clwb y Bont and YMCA building, although we have not made as much progress as planned due to the severe flooding in Pontypridd. More recently, our work with the creative industries has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are currently focussing on developing different ways of working, for example delivering online mentoring, coaching support, masterclasses and skill development for aspiring performers, including help with developing virtual performances.
- continued to support people of all ages to improve their skills and to access employment opportunities. Our support, known as the RCT Employment Pathway, is for people who need help with essential skills as well as for those who are ‘job ready’. The Pathway also includes working closely with employers so that we are able to match people’s skills and interests to opportunities which are available locally. We helped over 680 people gain qualifications and 635 to find work. We also provided work placements, training programmes and on the job learning in various Council services to over 50 young people, including apprenticeships, graduate programme, traineeships for care leavers and internships for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The work in our Economy priority is contributing to an RCT and Wales that is

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our new Corporate Plan **[‘Making a Difference’](#)**, ‘agreed in March 2020, aims to *“Support the Prosperity of RCT by creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper”*. How we will do this in 2020/21 is set out in section 12 and in our 2020/21 **[PROSPERITY Plan](#)**.

PEOPLE - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone in Rhondda Cynon Taf

In 2016 we put in place the **PEOPLE** priority as we believed that the best way to support people to live long and healthy lives was to support them to make informed choices, keep control of how they live their lives and support and contribute to their communities. Residents told us this was and is important to them.

From the latest available data, the population of RCT is 241,264 (2019 MYE), which has increased from 231,937 in 2001. As people are living longer, the proportion of older people in RCT is also growing. We want our residents of all ages to stay as well as they can for as long as they can but, inevitably, age related conditions in more older people will mean an increase in the need for health and social care.

We know that in RCT we have high numbers of vulnerable residents of all ages as well as deprived communities. We want to make sure people of all ages have the best chance of benefitting from the opportunities available to them including taking control of the services and facilities they value. We also want to focus on those in most need and to make sure that they have the right support at the right time.

We also know that we have to plan to meet higher expectations from our residents with less funding so we have to do things differently.

The steps we put in place to achieve this Priority are

- **Personalising and integrating health and social care services, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes**
- **Giving our children and young people a great start in life**
- **Redesigning local services so that they are joined up and efficient**

Latest available data tells us

Population - Latest estimate 241,264, an increase of 0.5% on 2018 [Source: InfoBase Cymru](#)

0-15 years 19%	16-64 62%	○ 65+ 19%
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(figures rounded for illustrative purposes)

Community & Equality

- 24% of children in RCT are living in poverty. However, when the cost of housing is deducted from household income, this figure increases to 32%. [Source: End Child Poverty.](#)
- As at 31 March 2020, there were
 - 717 children in the care of the Council
 - 597 children on the Child Protection Register at significant risk of harm.

Physical Health

- Average life expectancy at birth in RCT was 77.53 for men and 81.1 for women (2016-2018).
- Average healthy life expectancy at birth in RCT is 56.5 for men and 60.2 for women (2016-18).
- On average, people living in less deprived areas in RCT live longer than those from more deprived areas. Men can expect to live 6.7 years longer, and women 4.3 years. However, this difference described as the 'inequality gap' is not as big as in some other parts of Wales.
- 45% of adults in RCT reported at least one long-standing health condition in the last year.
- RCT residents reporting their health to be
 - "bad or very bad" is the second highest in Wales
 - "good or very good" is the third lowest in Wales.
- 26% of RCT residents participated in sporting activities 3 or more times per week.
- 12% of adults in RCT showed less than 2 healthy lifestyle behaviours.
- Men, middle-aged adults, and those in the most deprived areas were most likely to show less than two of the healthy behaviours.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

- 13% of people in RCT are lonely. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- RCT 'scores' in the [Thriving Places](#) Wales index measuring aspects of well-being, i.e.
 - 4.47 for Social Isolation, the same as in 2018.
 - 3.58 for Mental and Physical Health, slightly higher than 3.36 in 2018.
10 is the best possible and 0 being the worst.
- Cwm Taf has the second highest rate of alcohol specific death in Wales 2016-18. [Source Public Health Wales.](#)

Culture

- 48% of RCT residents agreed that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect. *WFG indicator.*
- 67% of RCT residents attended arts, culture or heritage events at least 3 times in the last year [Source: National Survey for Wales.](#)

In 2019, we said we would continue our work to promote independence and positive lives for everyone – Overall, we continued to make good progress as a Council and as part of wider partnerships including the [Cwm Taf Regional Partnership Board](#) and the [Public Services Board](#). Progress in some of our key measures was slower than we anticipated, for a number of reasons, some of which were beyond our control. For example, we still have too many children at risk of significant harm or in the care of the Council, we need to do more to listen to and hear from children about how we deliver our services to them, we need to do more to support young people leaving care to access education, training or employment and we still need to encourage more people to use our leisure centres and libraries to support their health and wellbeing. However, we continue to focus on helping to keep our residents of all ages and backgrounds safe and well. This focus was tested as never before towards the end of the 2019 reporting year, when we needed to prioritise our work because of the significant and unprecedented local impact of floods arising from Storms Ciara and Dennis, and also by the introduction of the lockdown conditions arising from the onset of Coronavirus, Covid-19. At this time, we rescheduled many of our plans and focused on working with partners to provide direct and immediate support to people and communities in most need. Our work won't be fully reflected in the progress we have described in 2019, but its impact will be more significant in our work in 2020/21.

Alongside our work in delivering our **PEOPLE** priority, we are continually building on our experience of doing things differently, looking at what has worked and what we need to do better. We are also increasing our understanding of the effect of the changes we are making for the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Our ongoing work involves meeting the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and we are continuing to learn and understand more about how we embed the requirements of these Acts to continue to help us shape our 2020/21 plans.

Our work within the **PEOPLE** priority is overseen by [Cabinet](#), relevant [Scrutiny Committees](#) and, where appropriate, the Regional Partnership Board and Public Services Board. In the last year, three areas of work in this priority have been subject to external review or inspection by [Care Inspectorate Wales](#) (CIW):

- 'Inspection of Children's Services, focusing on support for Disabled Children' in December 2019
- 'Focused activity with regard to support for Carers' in March 2020
- 'Focused activity with regard to support for Care Leavers' in March 2020

The findings from this work, have been made publically available in the Annual Review letter issued to the Council by CIW in [August 2020](#). Officers are considering the findings, where the Council is doing well and also where we need to improve. The responses will be considered by Councillors in the coming months.

We said we would personalise and integrate Health and Social Care services, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes

Measures we set out last year

- there were fewer people admitted to residential or nursing care. *This is better than last year with 385 people admitted to residential or nursing care compared to 420 in 2018/19.*
- more adults who completed a period of reablement needed less support 6 months later. *This is better than last year at 86.67% compared to 85.43% in 2018/19.*
- Fewer people per 1,000 population returned home from hospital more quickly. *This is worse than last year at 4.52 compared to 3.43 in 2018/19. This is because the demand for home care has increased as we support more people to live at home rather than in residential care.*
- more people used a direct payment to manage their own care arrangements, choosing who provides care and when. *This is better than last year at 16.8% compared to 16.1% in 2018/19.*
- there were fewer visits to our sports and leisure facilities for exercise. *This is worse than last year at 7,948 visits per 1,000 population compared to 8,302 in 2018/19. This is due to the impact of Storm Dennis and the reduction in visitors and latterly the closure of leisure facilities because of the Covid-19 global pandemic.*

Among other things we have

- built on the success of our [Stay Well@home](#) service with phase 2, introduced in January 2020, bringing additional care to our vulnerable residents. More recently, both the demand for the service and capacity to deliver was affected by the impact of Covid-19, and as a result was temporarily suspended. The service will be resumed in 2020/21
- introduced a new 24-hour rapid response service for people using an RCT pendant with the help of Welsh Government funding. Mobile Responders are able to help in situations such as falls where people are not injured but, for example, are unable to get back up, have personal care emergencies or need welfare checks. Users of the service can be helped more quickly and safely without an emergency call for an ambulance and they also avoid going to hospital unnecessarily. The service provides peace of mind for its users and their family and friends.
- continued to build Extra Care facilities with our partners Linc Cymru. Our second facility, [Maesyffynon Extra Care opened in Aberaman](#) with the first resident [moving in on 5 May](#). Construction is well under way at Cwrt yr Orsaf Extra Care, the former Magistrates Court in Pontypridd, despite the recent challenges created by Covid-19. However,

Helping people to get the help they need to stay independent

Mrs A, a 99-year-old lady was suffering from bladder problems which meant that she needed to visit the toilet more than usual, including through the night. Because of her condition and her lack of sleep, Mrs A was feeling tired and weak and on one occasion fell during the night. Mrs A was helped by our Lifeline service and her son who got her back to bed. Her GP prescribed medication to help her medical problem and also referred her to the Single Point of Access (SPA) team for help, as until Mrs A was completely well, she was at risk of greater injury if she fell again. Through our Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation service, we were able to provide care for Mrs A. in one of our residential care homes for a week until she recovered from her bladder problems. After this, she was able to return to her home with help to get her fully back on her feet.

progress on the three facilities in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Porth has been slowed by the impact of the pandemic.

- continued to develop Supported Housing Schemes to help people with learning disabilities to live more independently within their communities. Penllew Court, Aberdare, opened in January 2020 and work is underway for a new development in Treorchy which is on target for completion in Autumn 2020.
- continued to work with partners across Cwm Taf Morgannwg to find non-medical ways to help to keep our residents happier and healthier. This is called Social Prescribing and might include activities such as volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports. Although progress was slowed by the pandemic, it will restart as soon as it is safe to do so. What we have learnt from helping to support shielded and vulnerable people in our communities and the strong community networks in place will help us in this work.
- continued to invest in our Leisure facilities including at the new Llys Cadwyn development in Pontypridd, outdoor pitches and the George V athletics track in Tonypany to encourage residents to participate in exercise, contributing to their improved health and well-being. We have also been working with partner organisations to deliver activities aimed at specific groups, e.g. 'Super-Agers', pregnant women and new mums in our ['Made for Mams'](#) programme. More recently, some leisure facilities have been able to reopen following a complete closure arising from the impact of Covid-19.

We said that Rhondda Cynon Taf's children and young people will receive a great start in life

Measures we set out last year

- more children were in the care of the Council. *717 children compared with 674 in 2018/19. This is worse than we had anticipated because more babies required our care. We will focus on more vulnerable women receiving support during their pregnancies.*
- more children needed the involvement of statutory services. *41.62% compared to 30.6% in 2018/19. This is worse, however the majority of children (69%) either did not need on-going care and support or they and their families were signposted to the Resilient Families Service*

Among other things we have

- strengthened the support we provide to Foster Carers e.g. by identifying ‘Pioneer’ Foster Carers who are able to offer peer support and advice and/or training for new Foster carers. We have also provided opportunities for Foster Carers to receive more intensive training which involves them working alongside schools and young people to gain more experience and a greater understanding of caring and working to improve outcomes for the children in their care. We have also launched [Fostering Cwm Taf](#), a regional fostering recruitment service, to improve recruitment of foster carers and increase the number of local placements that we have in Cwm Taf.
- continued to improve the availability of information, advice and assistance so families can find the help they need quickly, e.g. by
 - working more closely with community groups so that they can use their local knowledge to reach the families who can most benefit from our help,
 - putting in place drop in services in communities and
 - through digital/media platforms e.g. for our [Resilient Families Service](#) and [Family Information Service](#) and [wicid.tv](#). More recently these developments have supported a comprehensive online information advice and assistance offer which has proved instrumental in enabling the service to continue to provide essential support to children and young people during the Covid-19 global pandemic.
- following discussions with service users and staff and working with housing partners we have put in place a new Temporary Accommodation service. The service aims to provide appropriate housing options and support for vulnerable groups, prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation. However, more recently, there has been an increase in homelessness and the number of people eligible for temporary accommodation as a result of both Storm Dennis and the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020/21 we will be working to implement a Homelessness Recovery Plan which will use Welsh Government funding to address the increased demand we have seen during this time of great uncertainty.

Helping vulnerable children find their voice

G was placed with foster carers following allegations she made against her father. At that time G also accepted our offer of active ‘advocacy’ support. This means that an independent person, not employed by the Council, helped her to understand what the Council was doing to care for her, and why. Having this independent person helping her encouraged G to talk more freely, understand that her opinion mattered when decisions were made about her care and so be confident about how she felt and saying what she wanted for her care.

We said we would redesign Local Services for our residents so that they are integrated and efficient

Measures we set out last year

- the majority of clients we worked with across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg areas reduced, abstained or sustained their substance misuse from the start of their programme to their most recent review. *87.45% (Cwm Taf Morgannwg APB)*
- our review of arrangements for people experiencing Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence has been widened to include Bridgend as part of the change to the Health Board area, Cwm Taf Morgannwg. We are continuing this work in 2020/21.

- more families indicated that they felt better able to resolve or cope better with the challenges they were facing following early support. *This is better than last year with 1,004 families compared to 761 in 2018/19*
- 95.1% of families increased their resilience following completed intervention with the Resilient Families Service (95.4% in 2018/19) – *Whilst this % is slightly lower than last year, the number of families supported was nearly 250 higher than last year.*

Among other things we have...

- changed how Early Years support is provided by making it available to families of children up to seven years old through our Resilient Families Service. This means that specialist parenting and early language support is now available to all families in RCT who need it. More recently, we have received approval from Welsh Government to make changes to health visiting, developing the RCT ‘Family Health Visiting Programme’ so more support is available to all families no matter where in RCT they live and agreement to trial changes to our childcare offer so that support is available to all families that need it regardless of where they live in the County Borough.
- introduced the new Cwm Taf Substance Misuse Service ‘[Barod](#)’ covering the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf areas. Barod provides a number of different services for adults and young people who misuse substances and offers support to friends and family of all substance users. The new service makes sure that no matter where a person lives in the Cwm Taf area they receive the same help and support to avoid problems getting worse.
- Identified where in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil services are in place for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. We had planned to use this information to put in place services that are to the same standard across the two areas. We haven’t made as much progress as we planned and our work has also been affected by the changes in the Local Health Board which now includes Bridgend. We are continuing our work to change the way we support the survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence and this will also include people in the Bridgend area.
- worked more closely with South Wales Police to change the way vulnerable people are supported so that they have the chance to make better life choices and break generational cycles of crime and adversity that affect the children in their households. We now have a Police Community Support Officer based within the Resilient Families Service who is able to add more to the support provided to families e.g. staying safe online, grooming, anti-social behaviour and consequences of crime.

Every day, many of our families are coping with many different challenges

One of our families, already coping with mental health issues and divorce, also had to deal with one of their children being groomed online which lead to them being at risk of harm. To help the family cope together, they received help to rebuild family relationships and trust, recognise grooming and stay safe in the community and online and to understand about healthy relationships. You can see more about how the family was supported by the council and its partners to be better able to cope with their challenges by reading about the [EAT Programme](#).

The work in our People priority is contributing to an RCT and Wales that is

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our new Corporate Plan, [‘Making a Difference’](#) agreed in March 2020, aims to “Ensure that People are independent, healthy and successful”. How we will do this in 2020/21 is set out in section 10 and in our [2020/21 PEOPLE Plan](#)

DRAFT

Latest available data tells us

Housing

- There are 104,865 households in RCT. This is an increase of 0.8% on 2017 and 6.5% over the last 10 years. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- 172 empty properties were brought back into use in 2019/20. This was 19% less than the previous year.

Transport

- 1,436 million vehicle miles were travelled throughout RCT in 2019, the second highest total in

Section 6

PLACE - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

In 2016, we put in place the **PLACE** priority as we believed that despite public sector austerity, the Council must look positively to the future through the growth and regeneration of the County Borough's infrastructure. Millions of pounds were and will continue to be invested in schools, new housing, our principal towns and the transport networks that will benefit the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of residents and communities, helping more residents and families to become more independent. Residents told us this is important to them and there is much to enjoy and celebrate about the County Borough.

We wanted to help residents and visitors to RCT to get on with their lives by maintaining the environment for a thriving County Borough where they can get around efficiently and safely whether they are commuting to work or enjoying RCT's rich and varied landscape to stay active and healthy.

We know that our residents have pride in their communities and we believe that by giving choice and power to local people you get better results and achieve better value. We wanted to help communities to do more themselves and give them more control over local services such as libraries and other cultural and community facilities.

However, we also knew it would be wrong to spend more than we can afford, and/or to pass on financial problems to future generations. This meant we had to make difficult decisions, manage our budgets and focus on our priorities.

The steps we put in place to achieve this Priority were

- **Rhondda Cynon Taf will be amongst the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion, and residents feeling safe**
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces continue to be valued by residents**
- **Involved and resilient communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf**
- **Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment will be clean and attractive, with well-maintained roads and pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill**

Wales and an increase of 3% on 2015. [Source: Gov.uk](#). The majority (82%) were travelled by car. [Source: Gov.uk](#).

- Approximately 33% of RCT residents walked for over 10 minutes every day, the second highest percentage in Wales. 4% of residents cycled more than once a month, the third lowest in Wales. [Source: Gov.uk](#).
- There were 665 battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, or range-extended electric vehicles registered in RCT, currently the third highest number among Welsh regions. [Source: Dept of Transport](#)

Energy & Environment

- The latest estimates show that in 2018, 1,064.8 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the main greenhouse gas was emitted across RCT. This equates to 4.4 tonnes of CO₂ per resident or 2.5 kilotonnes per km². [Source: Gov.uk](#)
- The Council generated 570,535 Mw/h of electricity through low-carbon or renewable technologies, [Source: StatsWales](#) approximately enough to power 65 homes for 1 year. [Source: OFGEM](#)
- 9,270 properties in RCT were considered to be at 'high-risk' of surface or river flooding, with a further 4,330 properties in the 'medium-risk' category. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- RCT is one of four¹ defined flood risk areas in Wales. 11.3% of the population of RCT is at risk from surface water flooding due to excess rainwater issues.
- There are 11 Green Flag Awards for parks and open spaces in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Waste & Hygiene

- 77 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for dog fouling.
- 2,945 recorded incidents of fly-tipping throughout RCT, continued to fall since 2016/17.
- RCT waste that cannot be recycled or reused equates to 0.2kg per RCT resident.
- We recycled 88,288 tonnes of waste and sent 6,239 tonnes of waste to landfill in 2019/20.

In 2019 we said we would continue our work to 'Create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'. Overall, we continued to make good progress as a Council and as part of wider partnerships, exceeding expectations in some areas e.g. Recycling. However, towards the end of the 2019 reporting year, our progress was affected by the significant and unprecedented local impact of floods arising from Storms Ciara and Dennis and also by the introduction of the lockdown conditions arising from the onset of the Coronavirus, Covid-19. At this time, we rescheduled many of our plans and focused on supporting communities. This work will not be fully reflected in our progress in 2019 but its impact will be more significant in our work in 2020/21.

Alongside our work to deliver our PLACE priority, we continued to build on our experience of doing things differently, looking at what has worked and what we need to do better. We are also increasing our understanding of the effect of the changes we are making for the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider Cwm Taf Region. This has been tested and challenged as never before during 2020.

¹ As defined by the Natural Resources Wales Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment in December 2018

Our work within the PLACE priority is overseen by [Cabinet](#), relevant [Scrutiny Committees](#) and, where appropriate the [Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet](#) and the [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#).

You can see more detail of our progress against what we set out to achieve in 2019/20 in our [PLACE Performance Evaluation](#).

We said we would help to support involved and resilient communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Measures we set out last year

- 74% of households were successfully prevented from becoming homeless. This is better than last year 71%
- We are unable to provide information on '*resident's satisfaction with RCT as a place to live*' as the survey could not take place this year.

Among other things we have:

- worked with communities, private, public and third sector partners in our new Community Hubs in [Canolfan Pennar](#), Mountain Ash and [Ferndale Hwb](#) in Rhondda Fach. Progress in Porth Plaza, has been slowed by the impact of Covid-19. More recently the Council has adapted its use of all its Community Hubs to provide focal point to that delivered significant help to our residents most in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- worked with [Shelter Cymru](#) and [Llamau](#) to provide people facing homelessness with suitable accommodation and support and advice to help them to maintain tenancies over the long term. We have also worked with private landlords to check that housing in RCT meets the required standards. This has included bringing existing empty properties back into use wherever it is possible. How we are supporting homeless people is described in more detail in the [ECONOMY evaluation](#).
- continued to create and develop the spaces and opportunities for people to get involved with arts. Access to the Arts, libraries and learning has been shown to have positive effects on the well-being of people and communities. More recently our work has been significantly affected by the impact of Covid-19, which forced the closure of our theatres, community events etc. However, we are increasing our digital offer of shows, delivering outreach programmes and planning for a phased and safe opening of theatres in line with Welsh Government guidance.
- opened an education centre in Bryn Pica, to show people of all ages the importance of reducing, re-using and recycling waste. This sits alongside the proposed [Eco Park](#) that will provide light industrial units specifically for organisations that specialise in 'closed loop recycling', meaning that all materials can be recycled back into itself using the renewable heat and power generated at the site. Subject to funding, once in place, the first phase of Bryn Pica Eco Park will secure available technology to process three material groups i.e. rigid plastics, absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) including nappies and waste paint.

We are also working as part of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board to deliver the changes it has set out in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan, in particular the [Cwm Taf Well-being Objectives](#) of Thriving Communities, to put in place Community Hubs and the wider support to residents and communities identified in our [PEOPLE plan](#).

We said that Rhondda Cynon Taf will be amongst the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion, and residents feeling safe

Measures we set out last year

- We have been unable to collect the required survey information to tell us whether ‘people feel safe in our town centres’ as the survey could not take place this year.
- 97% of our most vulnerable or repeat victims of anti-social behaviour feel safer following our involvement (79.75% in 2018/19)

Among other things we have...

- learned lessons from the work of our Community Alcohol Partnership (CAPs) in Pontypridd that we can use to further improve in Pontypridd and also apply to new CAPs in future e.g.
 - keep involving young people and do even more to encourage them to get involved.
 - make sure we use different approaches to talk with pupils in different schools.
 - make sure our training is clear about who is responsible for what so that everyone knows what is expected of them.
 - stress the importance of healthy behaviours to young people
 - Make sure that parents have information about underage drinking that they can use to positively influence their children’s decisions about alcohol consumption
 - retailers and licensees are key to making sure that young people are not able to buy alcohol
 - keep checking that we keep focussed on what matters and that with our partners we are achieving what we set out to achieve.
- continued to raise aware of the harms associated with knife use and knife crime including working with schools to make sure that the messages to all our schools are clear and consistent. We have also worked with ‘Crimestoppers’ to put in place our Fearless campaign including making a [short film](#) to raise awareness of the dangers surrounding street crime, drugs and violence and shows how young people can report crime anonymously
- focused on getting earlier involvement with young people so that they can be directed away from criminality and ASB. By working more closely with our partners, young people have been provided with more appropriate and timely support to help them to understand the consequences of ASB.
- continued to protect vulnerable people in our communities from rogue traders and doorstep crime by assisting in the provision of call blocking unit ‘Truecall’ to stop nuisance calls. Also by [promoting](#) the [National ‘Friends Against Scams’](#) the Council has signed up 1,441 Friends Against Scams, 15 SCAMChampions and we also have 51 ScamMarshalls, the most in Wales. More recently we have been raising awareness of [Covid-19 scams](#), where residents and organisations are targeted with emails, texts, telephone calls and WhatsApp messages offering advice and treatment for the Coronavirus.

True to its word...

Truecall users told us

“I would recommend it! It has been fantastic!”

“It is very comforting – I don’t have any more night calls’ ‘It’s marvellous!”

“I would much rather it be there, it’s brilliant!”

“I want to keep it; it has changed my life”.

We said that Rhondda Cynon Taf’s local environment will be clean and attractive, with well-maintained roads and pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill

Measures we set out last year

- Information campaigns and support to communities together with community action has allowed us to
 - recycle more of our waste, at 64.71%, this is better than last year (61.01%) and only 4.59% of our waste went to land fill
 - issue fewer Fixed Penalty Notices for Dog Control offences, at 129 this is fewer than last year (170)
- Since 2014/15, we have seen a marked improvement in our roads, when 9.3% of our 'A', 'B' and 'C' roads were reported as being in poor condition, this reduced to 4.8% in 19/20. Last year there were improvements in the condition of A and B roads by 0.2% and 0.3% respectively, and we are continuing our work through our road investment programme.

RCT Future Generations leading the way

Our school pupils always lead the way in their schools, recycling Christmas and Easter wrapping and batteries among other things. Nearly all RCT schools are registered with [Eco Schools](#) with over 60 achieving awards from the programme. The programme [empowers the pupils](#) to lead environmental change and work together with each other and communities to develop knowledge and environmental awareness.

Our young people also get creative, like the talented local rapper Joshua Packham working with our SONIG project and Social Soundwaves to produce the rap '[Plastic Earth](#)' which highlights the destructive issue of plastic pollution. Officially launched in Recycling Week in Treorchy Comprehensive School in September 2019, 'Plastic Earth' was shown in the 'Love Where You Live' awards, is played during visits at the education centre in Bryn Pica and will be used in future campaigns and social media to help raise awareness.

Among other things we have

- continued to improve the condition of our existing roads and highways e.g. resurfacing 96 of our roads and 2,030 potholes. We also repaired bridges and river walls, replaced footways and put in place new road safety measures.
- progressed major new schemes including Cynon Gateway North - A4059 Aberdare Bypass Extension, Mountain Ash Cross Valley link, Llanharan Bypass. Also put in place new traffic arrangements in Porth, Bridge Street Pontypridd and road safety repairs at [A4119 Ynysmaerdy Roundabout](#).
- progressed transport schemes that will join with other schemes that will encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport as well as Community and Active Travel routes providing safer walking options for our residents and associated environmental and health benefits.
- invested £550,000 for Flood Drainage and Flood Risk Management which included monitoring of culverts to help prevent floods in our communities. Our work included
 - [Culvert Installations at A4061 Rhigos Road, Hirwaun](#)
 - [Drainage improvement schemes in Aberdare](#) and off [Llanwonno Road](#) Mountain Ash
 - [Culvert Repairs at Treforest](#)
 - [Culvert Repairs at Pentre](#)
 - Culvert repair schemes in [Rhydyfelin](#) and [A 4058 Cymmer Road](#)
 - Repair works to [Gwrrangon Culvert](#) beneath Heol Pendarren
 - Replacement [Culvert at Hirwaun](#)

However, February 2020 brought with it, severe weather conditions with heavy rain and strong winds with significant impact for people and communities in RCT. Storms Dennis and Ciara brought devastation across RCT with some areas seeing a months' worth of rainfall in 24 hours, and rivers reaching their highest recorded levels. [Storm Jorge](#) was the third storm to hit on 28 February. The Council and its partners worked together and with communities, to provide help including food, clothing, home items, financial assistance and emergency temporary accommodation. How the Council responded to support the residents, their families and RCT businesses throughout this and the Covid-19 outbreak is set out in [Major Incident Recovery Board Meetings](#) and a later report to [Cabinet](#). More detail can also be found in the [PLACE evaluation](#). Managing flood risk is a high and continuing priority for the Council in 2020/21.

- involved schools and residents in projects to encourage more recycling including a community project in Rhydyfelin, our long standing '[Love Where you Live](#)' awards and our new hidden green tickets that can win residents a 'Bagsy for Life'. Our work with schools will start again as soon as it is safe to do so.
- continued our campaigns to prevent littering and dog fouling and worked with residents and communities to help them tackle local issues. We have issued fewer Fixed Penalty Notices which suggests greater public awareness of envirocrimes as well as the consequences. We have 'zero tolerance' of flytipping and have taken legal action to prosecute offenders. In the last year we took 26 cases to Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates Court, resulting in fines and also jail sentences.
- completed our initial review of the infrastructure needed for low carbon vehicles and how the Council will consider low carbon vehicles in its own fleet. The recommendations were considered by Councillors at meetings on [3 September](#) and [24 September](#) 2019 and the work was developed for consideration by the newly formed Climate Change [Cabinet Steering Group](#) on 28 January 2020. More recently our progress has been slowed by the impact of both floods and Covid-19 but will be continued during 2020/21.

We said that Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces would continue to be valued by residents

Measures we set out last year

- more of our parks, 11, were awarded a [Green Flag or Green Flag Community award](#), this includes four new community awards for 2019/20. This international award recognises the high standards of our parks and green and outdoors spaces.
- 80% of our residents were satisfied with our parks and open spaces – *This is worse than last year 80.7%. We are continuing our investment in parks and open spaces to make them more attractive and accessible to all our residents.*
- Air quality has improved in three out of four of our monitored areas following WG imposed speed restrictions on the A470. The area not showing improvement is marginally above, and may not see the same rate of change as it is an area with a slip road onto the A470, that sees a heavy traffic flow.

Following more successful bids for funding, we are continuing to develop and improve our parks and open spaces and also helping to support volunteering activities, with plans in place for 2020. Among other things we are

- continuing to take steps to make RCT more 'Green' including further investment in our parks and green spaces, tree planting and reducing air pollution. Information about our work will be more easily available through the work of our Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group. More recently, some of our progress has been affected by the impact of Covid-19 but work has been starting again as lock down conditions ease.
- considering ways we can further improve air quality across RCT e.g. better traffic management including moving bus stops so they don't cause obstructions and improving traffic light signals, making it easier to use trains including the improvements to the Park and Ride in Abercynon as well as more and better trains.
- considering the effect of the speed reduction on the A470 on the air quality in the surrounding areas. Early signs are that air quality has improved in the three out of the four areas of Pontypridd being monitored but more information is needed on this work. Welsh Government imposed speed restrictions will remain in force on the A470 for the foreseeable future.
- continuing to invest in outdoor play facilities that are accessible to all. More recently some of our work has been affected by both the floods earlier this year and the closure of play areas arising from lockdown, but this remains a key priority in 2020/21.
- progressing plans to link Parks across the Valleys region as part of the Welsh Government's '[Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways](#)'. This will connect the Valleys as a region, tell the stories of its rich cultural and industrial heritage, and encourage people to be more active and explore the Valleys landscapes. In Dare Valley we are creating family accessible bike paths and improving the play area as well as improving accommodation and campsite. Progress in Pontypridd has been affected by flooding earlier this year, this remains a key priority in our [Prosperity Plan for 2020/21](#).

The Place priority is contributing to an RCT and Wales that is

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our new Corporate Plan, '[Making a Difference](#)' agreed in March 2020, aims to 'Create Places where people are proud to live and work and play'. How we will do this in 2020/21 is set out in section 7 and in our [2020/21 PLACES Plan](#)

What we achieved in our Corporate Plan between 2016-20

When the Council launched its first Corporate Plan '[The Way Ahead](#)' in 2016 to set the direction of the Council's work up to 2020, set ambitious targets for improvement and focus on three areas of work that would improve the lives of the people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Since the Plan was launched, the decisions that the Council has made, the resources that have been put in place, the risks that have been managed and the training and development opportunities that have been provided to staff have all been directed to making a difference to the lives of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have seen investment of over £418M across 21st Century Schools, highways, transportation and other infrastructure, parks, play areas, leisure centres and outdoor sports facilities and our community assets.

The sections above set out what we have achieved the last year. The information below shows our achievements over the life of the plan, since 2016

In 2016 in our ECONOMY priority we said

We wanted to regenerate RCT, build new homes and create new jobs and we have seen

- the ratification of the £1.2billion City Deal which includes the implementation of the South Wales Metro and associated local transport schemes.
- a new building at the heart of the regeneration of Pontypridd, [Llys Cadwyn](#), following the demolition of the former Taff Vale precinct, bringing a community hub with a modern library and leisure facilities as well as additional jobs.
- over 2,800 new jobs coming to the County Borough. These will include 1,500 jobs to the new Headquarters of Department for Work and Pensions in Treforest and 500 to their depot in Taffs Well, 500 to Llys Cadwyn for Transport for Wales, 60 at Zip World Hirwaun and 300 in the Health Education and Improvement Wales Offices in Nantgarw.
- more business start-ups, and although there have also been more business closures, overall there has been an increase in the number of registered businesses/enterprises
- 2,106 additional housing units provided and 685 affordable homes delivered, helping to meet the housing needs of residents across RCT
- the development of two designated destination gateways at Dare Valley Country Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park which will see a range of improved facilities, although flooding had a significant impact on Ynysangharad park and the Lido. Work is underway to repair the flood damage and it is hoped the Lido will [reopen for Easter 2021](#).
- Confirmation of the Eisteddfod coming to RCT, although the event has been delayed until 2023 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

We wanted our schools to be among the best in the country and we are seeing pupils enjoying new or refurbished schools in Y Pant, Treorchy, Porth, Tonyrefail, Cymmer, Ferndale and Garth Olwg with more improvements on the way at Hirwaun and a new learning hub under development at Ffynnon Taf. We have also continued to invest in our existing school buildings to improve facilities for pupils as well as adding more sustainable technologies so our buildings have less impact on the environment.

We have worked closely with schools to not only improve educational standards but also support pupils' wellbeing and mental health. We continue to work hard to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on young people's education.

We wanted to put in place a broad range of skills and employment programmes for all ages and we have supported over 3,500 people of all ages to gain qualifications and find employment through our employment pathway, which provides support for people at every stage, from improving essential skills to gaining sector specific qualifications and work experience for jobs that are available locally. We have also provided targeted support to help people with specific needs to find or stay in work, such as those with disabilities or learning difficulties and young people leaving care, and employed over 170 apprentices and graduates across our council services, providing a range of opportunities for young people to develop their careers and developing the talent of tomorrow.

In 2016 in our PEOPLE priority we said

We wanted to provide our residents with the care they need to live in their own homes for longer and we are seeing more people helped to live independently, however despite the new Stay Well@home service, there are fewer older people getting back to their homes from hospital more quickly. This is because the demand for home care has increased as we support more people to live at home rather than in residential care. Where care providers in the independent sector do not have enough staff to provide home care, our Support @Home Service provides short-term support so that people can get back home. We have seen happy residents living in a new extra care facility in Ty Heulog, Pontyclun, and a second new facility, Maesyffynnon, in Aberaman was completed in May 2020. We have started work on a third Extra Care facility, Cwrt yr Orsaf, in Pontypridd and proposals are also being developed for three further facilities in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Porth. There are more adults choosing their own care providers and more people better able to remain independent following a package of care.

We wanted to make services more joined up and efficient and by working closely with others we improved and extended our Early Years services for families so that more families in RCT can access support, regardless of where they live, so they are less affected by poverty. We also improved our Substance Misuse services across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to make it easier for people to access the help they need.

We wanted to give RCT's children and young people a great start in life so we put in place a [Resilient Families Service](#) and are seeing that families get the help they need at the right time. We provided more training opportunities for our foster carers to improve their knowledge and skills and they are better able to support the children that they care for. Despite positive progress, in 2019/20 we have seen more children subject to statutory intervention, more children are registered on the Child Protection Register (CPR) and more children taken into the care of the Council.

In 2016 in our PLACE priority we said

We wanted RCT to be among the safest places in Wales, with communities helping each other and residents feeling safe so we changed the way we deal with victims of Domestic Violence and also put in place technology to help protect older and vulnerable adults from unwanted phone calls and cold callers. We visited schools to talk to pupils about hate crime and how to report it, helped more people to enjoy socialising in town centres by putting in place Public Spaces Protection Orders in Aberdare and Pontypridd to help control anti-social behaviour because of the misuse of alcohol. We have also seen more residents who have been victims of anti-social behaviour feel safer after our involvement.

We wanted RCT's parks and green spaces to continue to be valued by residents, we have improved sports facilities by putting in 18 3G and artificial pitches across RCT, progressed grants to improve our parks which includes funding to restore the bandstand and sunken garden at Ynyshangharad War Memorial Park, supported local communities to manage and open paddling pools throughout the summer months and continued our playground investment programme with over 120 play areas improved since 2015. We want our residents and visitors to enjoy the many parks and green spaces that RCT has to offer and by using them, improve their health and wellbeing.

We wanted RCT's communities to be involved and resilient and we have done this by involving them more in the decisions that the Council makes to improve the lives of residents, e.g. the redesign of our Library services to ensure that they meet the needs of all residents. We have developed Community Hubs within the heart of communities to provide the help and support that our residents need and also the opportunity to socialise. We have also supported those residents in need of housing to prevent homelessness and provide longer term housing solutions. Our work to help families to be better able to cope is described in the Resilient Families Service, above.

We wanted a local environment that is clean and attractive, with well-maintained roads and pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill, so we have continued to keep high standards of street cleaning, and after listening to what residents told us, we put in place a [Public Spaces Protection Order](#) so that we could enforce the rules in place to reduce dog fouling, and have also run campaigns to enforce these messages of 'zero' tolerance of those dog owners that do not follow the rules. We have also made improvements to our roads and footpaths and have also replaced streetlights to make them more energy efficient. Looking to the future, we have started major road schemes and progressing others e.g. Mountain Ash Southern Cross Valley link that will keep residents, business and visitors moving throughout the County Borough and benefit the local economy. We have also seen more residents recycling more of their waste which helps meet the challenges arising from climate change and meet the Welsh Government recycling targets.

We also know that there is still more work to do where we haven't made as much progress as we had planned e.g.

Economy - the achievement of our more vulnerable pupils is still too far below their classmates. We also need to work with schools in the future to improve school attendance and reduce the number of pupils excluded

People – we are not able to get all people home from hospital quickly when they are well enough

Place – we need to continue to encourage residents to recycle their waste so that we can meet our own challenging recycling target of 80% by 2025 and contribute to reducing the impact of climate change.

It is impossible for our Corporate Plan to show information about all the many different services we deliver to or organise for our residents, communities and businesses, but there is lots of information available about all our services on the [Council's website](#).

Our new Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' sets out the Council's ambitions for 2020-2024 and builds on what we have achieved to date.

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

How are we performing compared to the rest of Wales?

When comparing our performance in 2019/20, we must acknowledge the significant impact of the unprecedented events that occurred during the final three months of the financial year: firstly, Storms Dennis in February 2020, which caused significant damage to many communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf and was by far the most destructive weather event the area has experienced for a generation and secondly, the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. Both events impacted on performance at the end of the year, although as a result of work undertaken earlier in the year, in many cases targets were still met and performance still improved when compared to 2018/19.

In 2019/20, there were fewer nationally set measures in place. This means that there are fewer measures with which we can compare with other councils in Wales. Of the 28² national indicators we report, we can compare our performance for 20 with other Councils³, using the most recent national data available. Our performance measured by national indicators show that ...

- 5 indicators were in the top quartile in Wales
- 13 indicators showed improved performance compared to other councils
- 10 indicators performed better than the Wales Average.
- 10 indicators performed worse than the Wales Average.
- 5 indicators were in the bottom quartile in Wales, although our performance compared to others councils improved in 3 of these indicators
- 9 indicators showed performance declined
- performance in 1 indicator remained unchanged

To see a full summary of how our 2019/20 performance compared to the rest of Wales please view our [PI comparisons](#).

To summarise, comparing our performance against other Welsh Councils we were among the top quartile in Wales for

- % of highways inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness
- % of households threatened with homelessness successfully prevented from becoming homeless
- % of non-principal (C) roads that are in overall poor condition
- % of all planning applications determined within requested time period
- % of planning appeals dismissed

We were among the bottom quartile in Wales for

- % of pupil attendance in primary schools and secondary schools
- % of principal 'A' roads that are in overall poor condition
- % of B roads that are in overall poor condition

² PAM033 & PAM034 have been withdrawn nationally by Welsh Government.

³ We have used the most recent all Wales data from 2018/19 to compare our 2019/20 performance

- Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres per 1,000⁴

Explanations for this performance and what we are doing to improve, are included within this report and in the detailed performance evaluations.

There will be no national comparative data available for 2019/20, as there was no national data collected as scheduled in May 2020 as a result of the pandemic. It is also unclear what, if any, data will be collected nationally in respect of the reporting year 2020/21. If you would like to see information about Rhondda Cynon Taf and other Councils across Wales, in an easy to read format, you can find it in [My Local Council](#).

Comparing our performance with other councils can raise more questions than answers. This is positive as it can help us to better understand what we do, learn from better practice as well as provide us with an indication on how well we are performing. If we can see that our performance is not improving over time and remains below the Wales Average without good reason, we can then focus on what we need to do to improve.

We have also compared our performance against the targets we set ourselves for 2019/20 and found

- 17 indicators met or exceeded target and 3 indicators were within 5% of hitting the target
- 5 indicators missed the target, and data was worse than 2018/19. This includes two indicators, *visits to leisure centres* and *kilograms of non-recycled waste per person*, where performance was affected by the flooding and Covid-19 at the end of the reporting year. For two of the remaining indicators for *getting older people back to their homes from hospital more quickly* and *children in our care that moved placements 3 or more times over a 12-month period*, performance remains above the 2018/19 Welsh average. For the remaining indicator, *% of child assessments completed on time*, we are reviewing current arrangements to see how we can strengthen processes and improve performance.

Performance indicators are not the only measure of how well services are performing, nor do they tell the whole story, but they can help. We also look at residents' views and survey responses, and the comments, compliments and complaints we receive through social media and our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Councillors are able to check this information in reports to the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#). These reports also set out what has been done to improve services following feedback in previous reports.

We also [report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) so that Councillors can see the responses received through the [Council's Corporate Feedback Scheme](#). This also includes developments and improvements to the scheme in the previous 6 months. As part of our arrangement we also provide quarterly reports to [the Public Services Ombudsman \(PSOW\)](#). These reports provide information on the number of comments, compliments and complaints we have received and the outcomes of these. Should a customer disagree with the outcome of a complaint once it has been investigated by the Council, they can refer the matter to the Public Services Ombudsman to request an independent investigation.

⁴ PAM017 has been affected by a reduction in the overall leisure centre usage impacted by Storm Dennis and COVID-19 with no usage from 20th March 2020.

It is important that as a Council we can evidence that we learn from our residents' feedback and from other Local Authorities where they have received recommendations for improvements from the PSOW. We have been working with the PSOW to help us compare the quality of our services, processes and policies with other Councils across Wales so that we can improve.

We compare our performance with published best practice, we also consider what our auditors and inspectors as well as the PSOW, are telling us. There is always something we can learn to continually improve what we do. All of these steps help us to make sure that the services we provide help to make "[*RCT the best place in Wales to live, work and play.....*](#)". You can see the [reports that our auditors and inspector have issued to the Council](#).

We also need to contribute to the seven national Well-being goals for Wales set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which is described in more detail in section 16. In September 2019, the Welsh Government published its third report, [Well-being of Wales 2019](#) which sets out the progress being made across 44 public bodies in Wales, to meet these seven national goals using 46 national measures. Whilst the report is not about Rhondda Cynon Taf, we can use this information to look at the Council's contribution to the 7 national goals.

The [main points in the Wellbeing of Wales national report](#) relating to Wales were

- "Healthy life expectancy continues to stagnate. Our diets continue to be low in fruit and vegetable consumption and too high in salt, sugar and red meat.
- We have seen improvements this year in the levels of main pollutants in the air, renewable energy capacity and carbon emissions.
- The labour market in Wales continues to be strong in historical terms. However, this does not necessarily equate to good quality work for everyone, and the gender pay gap has increased.
- The first survey data in a decade showed that house conditions have improved significantly in Wales, which means there are fewer people living in houses that have hazards and are not energy efficient.
- There continues to be disparities between the most and least deprived, for example in terms of avoidable deaths and educational attainment. And relative poverty rates remain at a similar level this year".

[The Thriving Places Index Wales for Local Conditions 2020](#) measures many different services and different providers categorised by Place and Environment, Mental and Physical health, Education and Learning, Work and Local Economy, People and Community. Across all of the categories, the 2020 data gives RCT an overall rating of 4.43 out of a possible 10. This is a slight increase from 2019. The highest rating category in 2020 was 5.56% for Place and Environment and the lowest was 3.58 for Mental and Physical health.

Making a Difference – the Council’s new Corporate Plan

We have built on the success of the Council’s first Corporate Plan which gave shape and direction to the Council’s work between 2016-2020. The Council’s [new Corporate Plan was agreed on 4 March 2020](#), following wide ranging consultation and discussions with our residents and stakeholders. This plan is key to the way we continue to manage the Council’s work, people and finances. By having this plan in place, we can make sure that the Council

1. is well placed to meet future challenges, particularly in the context of challenging funding levels, changes in law, population and the demand for services
2. has a clear strategy and set of priorities for future years; and
3. can allocate resources and ensure action plans are in place to deliver the agreed priorities.

The new plan ‘*Making a Difference*’ sets out a new Vision for the next four years which is **“To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous”**. The Plan also sets out three new priorities, which also serve as the Council’s Well-being Objectives. These are

Ensuring **People** are independent, healthy and successful
 Creating **Places** where people are proud to live, work and play
 Enabling **Prosperity** creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

We will deliver these priorities by

- Living within our means and making the most of the Council’s money in ways that also help us to reach our commitment to reduce Carbon.
- Being an efficient and effective Council so that anyone who contacts the Council gets the best possible service and with more online access, at a time that suits their lifestyle.
- Finding ways to get more income into the Council, taking advantage of RCT’s position as part of regional projects to create jobs and opportunities for RCT residents and businesses.
- Helping residents and community groups to have more control over what they can do to support local people in their communities and working with other public bodies to get the most out of all our work.

However, shortly after the new plan was agreed, the country and the Council, faced unprecedented circumstances as a result of the coronavirus Covid-19. On March 23, the Prime Minister announced lockdown measures to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus between households, changing the way in which everyone in the UK lived their daily lives. The purpose of the lockdown was set out in the four UK governments’ messages of ‘Stay at Home; Protect the NHS; Save Lives’. The overwhelming focus was to delay the virus and ensure the demand for NHS services did not exceed the supply, which could have resulted in many hundred thousands of deaths. This meant our planning and the context in which we worked and our short term focus changed.

Our detailed planning to deliver our priorities has been significantly affected by the restrictions imposed by UK and Welsh Government arising from Covid-19. Much of our planning for the short to medium term is with this in mind. However, the virus has not gone away. Because of this, all possible steps are being taken to minimise risks for residents and staff and to keep everyone safe. The potential for a second wave or localised clusters of the virus remains very real.

All Council services have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by the impact of Covid-19. The effect on many, particularly those front line services that have continued in the most challenging circumstances for the most vulnerable residents has been significant, others forced to provide reduced services and extended time scales etc. and some, where staff were furloughed. Planning for services can only be at a point in time and will take account of the best advice available. Plans will be continually reviewed and revised in the light of experience, advice and the effect of Welsh Government's relaxation of lockdown measures.

In re opening, each service is undertaking a risk assessment and considering a range of issues in respect of social distancing, the requirements of service users and staff, maintaining good personal hygiene, the capacity of buildings to accommodate the service and social distancing and the cleaning regimes required for shared areas.

As services emerge from lockdown at different speeds etc., they share common needs, e.g. ICT for increased agile working arrangements and 'Comms' support to help them to provide clear and timely information to as wide an audience as possible. They will also seek to address common 'barriers' that may affect progress, e.g. the impact of self-isolating/shielding on resources across services, particularly in the front line; the potential for continuing reduced capacity arising from child care/schooling and other care responsibilities; access to ICT/technology and equipment; the effect of changes to training and support particularly on recently appointed staff as well as skills gaps arising from new ways of homeworking and service challenges that have arisen.

However, the Council is also challenging itself and all its services to take and build upon the opportunities created from this experience and continue the benefits e.g. the flexibility of working from home and delivering services digitally or in a different way. We are taking new opportunities and ideas, including learning from others, to ensure services do not routinely return to "normal – as we were". We will be asking our residents' if their expectations of the Council's services have changed as a result of their experiences. Also, we will be building on the relationships with our public sector partners which have become stronger and closer because of the unprecedented, immediate and sustained work which has given real 'life' to the value of collaboration, and working with others.

The Council's longer term ambition remains strong and clear. However, for the reasons above, many of our plans for 2020/21 can only be short term and will take into account the lifting of Government restrictions.

You can see how the Council has and continues to respond to the effects of the virus on people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf in key reports to the Council's Cabinet on [21 May](#), [25 June](#), [28 July 2020](#) and the [Leader's Executive Decision on 14 August](#) in respect of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Covid-19 Prevention & Response Plan.

The circumstances outside of our control, both now and in the coming months, have affected our plans and what we can achieve in 2020/21. However, we are taking all steps to make sure that the Council services recover as quickly and as fully as they are allowed, that we continue to invest in major developments across the County Borough and that we also take full advantage of any lessons we have learned from dealing with the pandemic to better support our residents, communities and local businesses. By doing so, we can come back stronger to deliver our vision for RCT ***“to be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous”*** and maintain a sharp focus on our three priorities **PEOPLE, PLACES** and **PROSPERITY**. Some of the work we plan to carry out in 2020/21 is set out below.

DRAFT

PEOPLE our plans for 2020/21 include

Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing to work with partners to make sure that people get out of hospital more quickly and safely and are supported in the community. • continuing to work in partnership with Linc Cymru to complete the new extra care housing schemes at Pontypridd next year. • continuing to work with housing providers to complete modern Supported Housing accommodation for vulnerable people, including in Crown Avenue, Treorchy and Oxford Street, Mountain Ash. • helping care homes to implement procedures to safely accommodate visits from friends and family and also reopening day and respite services in line with Welsh Government guidance. • Reopening regional equipment services to meet increasing demand for community equipment in health and social care. • restarting Stay Well@Home (Phase 2) and launching RCT Lifeline+ Service. • restoring 'At Home' library service.
Encouraging residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing by....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting more people to exercise at home or minimise face to face contact in our Leisure Centres. • introducing some open air classes making good use of our parks and 3G pitches. • promoting “essential exercise” for physical and mental health benefits of our residents and communities.
Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs by....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivering an effective and efficient Contact, Track and Trace Service for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider Cwm Taf Morgannwg area, ensuring flexibility of staff to deal with potential resurgence of Covid-19 in our communities
Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sure vulnerable children have access to Education and emergency childcare. • ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place for children and adults at risk. • making sure we are able to provide statutory services to those children at risk of serious harm, increasing the service that can safely be made available with the goal of achieving a return to a full service when it is safe to do so in line with Welsh Government Guidance. • improving availability of sustainable quality accommodation for children and young people with complex needs where they cannot remain with their own families • continuing to offer 'virtual' activities for young people through our Youth Engagement and Participation service (YEPS) and plan to reintroduce face-to-face provision when it is safe to do so.

You can see more details about our plans for 2020/21 in our [PEOPLE Plan](#).

Looking beyond 2020/21 for PEOPLE...

By 2043, the Population

- of Wales is projected to rise by 3.7% to 3.26 million. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- of RCT is expected to rise by up to 5.3% to 254,145. [Source: StatsWales](#)
- of RCT residents over the age of 65 is expected to climb by 23.2% to 57,429. This means that the % of the population that are over 65 will rise from 19.3% to 22.6%. [Source: SatsWales](#)

Health & Well-being

- Life expectancy from birth in Wales is predicted to rise. [Source: Public Health Wales Observatory Profile](#)

	2020	2029
Males	88	89.1
Females	90.6	91.5

- By 2025, 68.7% of adults in Cwm Taf will be overweight or obese. [Source: Public Health Wales Observatory Profile.](#)
- By 2035, the number of adults with a common mental health disorder in Wales will increase by 7.2% to 447,159 on the 2017 baseline, while the number of people aged 65+ living with dementia will increase by 64% to 77,769 in the same period. *Public Health Wales* [Source: Futures for Wales Report.](#)
- By 2035, there will also be an increase in the number of adults with chronic conditions in Wales, including an increase of 18.2% of people with diabetes to 220,376, an increase of 27% of people with heart conditions to 321,986 and an increase of 29.5% of people suffering a stroke to 90,214. *Public Health Wales* [Source: Futures for Wales Report.](#)

PLACES our plans for 2020/21 include

<p>Keeping RCT clean through efficient street cleaning services, minimising the amount of waste we send to landfill, achieving our recycling targets through weekly recycling and regular refuse collections, and reducing our carbon footprint by....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing waste and cleaning services, with appropriate safe working arrangements in place. • monitoring Community Recycling Centres (CRC) ensuring residents and staff safety follow reopening requirements after Covid-19 lockdown.
<p>Keeping the County Borough moving, including improving roads and pavements and public transport, whilst also improving air quality by continuing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our Highways Improvement Programme including the design, planning and delivery of major infrastructure projects e.g. the A4119 dualling at Coed Ely, the Cynon Valley Gateway North Link and the Llanharan By-Pass and bridge repairs. • to deliver major Economic Infrastructure Projects and Transportation Investment (Metro, etc.); Improve our highways infrastructure including resurfacing of roads and footways and making necessary repairs to bridges, and continuing Flood Alleviation work. • to ensure safe parking for our residents particularly as shops reopen after lockdown. • to safely deliver and manage the Council’s contracted passenger transport requirements particularly for schools and community transport.
<p>Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe by....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resuming face to face..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Substance Misuse client support meetings. ○ Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) client meetings and drop in support at the Oasis Centre. • continuing to work in partnership to ensure the residents of RCT are safe
<p>Getting the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces by....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing biodiversity across RCT • managing the impact of flood damage in our Parks and open spaces including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reopening Lido Pontypridd in 2021 and, ○ completing the rebuild/repair work in Ynyshangharad Park. • continuing to invest in playgrounds, sports pitches and parks buildings, encouraging use of green spaces for physical activity.

You can see more details about our plans for 2020/21 in our [PLACES Plan](#)

Looking beyond 2021 for PLACES....

Environment

- Based on estimates of future global greenhouse gas emissions, Wales may see an average annual increase in temperature of between 0.1°C and 1.5°C by 2039. [Source: UK Climate Projections](#)
- Wales could also see an increase in rainfall of 4% during the winter and decrease of 10% in the summer across the same period. [Source: UK Climate Projections](#)

Transport

- By 2030, the number of miles travelled on roads in Wales is expected to increase by at least 5.7% (1.02 billion miles) from the 2017 baseline.
[Source: Department for Transport](#)
- If current trends continue, the number of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles registered in RCT may increase by 36% from 665 in 2020 to 901 by 2025.
[Source: Transportation for Wales](#)

Energy & Waste

- The Welsh Government has set a goal of achieving 70% renewable energy consumption by 2030.
[Source: Welsh Government](#)
- The energy demand in Wales is predicted to rise between 14% and 68% by 2035, from 2014 baseline.
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

PROSPERITY our plans for 2020/21 include:

Investing in our town centres, bringing jobs and homes into our town centres to create vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with members of the business community to help them meet new challenges and opportunities, including developing grants to support businesses to recover and refocus following the impact of Covid-19 and encouraging local businesses to use local suppliers. • delivering a programme of key property developments in town centres leading to a more sustainable future such as those at Dunraven Street Tonypany, Hannah Street Porth, Mountain Ash Town Hall and the Black Lion in Aberdare.
Delivering major regeneration and transportation schemes, maximising the impact of the new South Wales Metro, to create better places to live and work, whilst protecting and enhancing the County Borough by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating sustainable local investment and jobs through investment across the County Borough, including delivering new business units at Robertstown, Aberdare and Coed Ely business park; completing the Llys Cadwyn project and footbridge to Ynysangharad Park; and redeveloping the old Bingo hall site in Pontypridd. • developing a new integrated Transport Hub in Porth for better connected bus and rail travel. • supporting the delivery of major Tourism projects such as Zip World Tower and developing an accommodation strategy to encourage visitors to stay for longer. • developing Dare Valley Country Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park as Valleys Regional Park Discovery gateways, providing new facilities and attractions for residents and visitors. • redeveloping the YMCA building in Pontypridd as a hub for social enterprise and community arts activity and seeking funding to develop a cultural hub in Treorchy, building on the existing theatre and library. • redeveloping Oxford Buildings, Mountain Ash for new residential use including supported living.
Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting Early Years settings and schools to deliver blended onsite and distance learning, including making sure all pupils have access to the technology they need to do their work • supporting the return of pupils to school sites in line with Welsh Government policy and supporting the wellbeing and additional learning needs of all our pupils • continuing to invest in our school buildings and facilities through our 21st Century schools programme.
Increasing the number of quality homes available and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritising housing need in response to Covid-19 including homelessness, temporary accommodation and landlord

affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents by.....	<p>support and developing an integrated Homelessness Recovery Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to support the development of new affordable homes by working with Registered Social Landlords and supporting projects through grant funding.
Helping people into work and better paid employment by.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to provide support to help people back into work, including developing digital/remote provision. increasing the number of apprenticeships and graduate trainees across Council services to support young people at the start of their careers.

You can see more details about our plans for 2020/21 in our [PROSPERITY Plan](#).

Looking beyond 2021 for **PROSPERITY**....

<p>Employment & Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of people employed in Wales is expected to reach 1.466m by 2024, a 4.9% increase from the 1.397m employed in 2019 Source: Working Futures 2014 – 2024 and StatsWales From 2019 to 2024, Wales will see a decline in jobs in Engineering, Agriculture and Manufacturing. Jobs in Finance and Insurance, Information Technology and Health and Social work are set to increase Source: UKCES labour market projections for Wales 2014 – 2024. <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of pupils in Wales is set to increase by 1.36% between 2018 and 2028, with the greatest increase predicted in the number of students over 16 (12.31%) Source: StatsWales. The number of people in the Welsh workforce without a qualification is set to drop from 3% to 2% between 2019 and 2024, while 70% of the workforce in 2024 will have qualifications at A level/equivalent or above, up from 65% in 2019 Source: UKCES labour market projections for Wales 2014 – 2024. <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of households in RCT is projected to increase by 5.7% by 2028. RCT will also have one of the highest increases in Wales in the number of one person households, up 13.3%. Source: Local Authority household projections for Wales. <p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pay difference between the highest and lowest earners is likely to grow across the UK to 2030. The pay difference in Wales is lower than the rest of the UK and this is projected to continue to 2030. Source: UKCES future of work evidence. Based on predictions from the Institute for Public Policy Research, the UK economy is set to be £55bn smaller by 2030 than it would have been without Brexit. In a worst-case scenario, households may be up to £1,700 worse off per year. Source: Institute of Public Policy Research.

Delivering for the future

For many years, Councillors have been faced with financial challenges that have meant they have had to make tough choices and difficult decisions. These choices and decisions have allowed the Council to prioritise services, particularly for those who are most vulnerable, whilst at the same time make the savings needed to balance the books. We are continually reducing our management structures and administration, finding new ways to work in partnership with other councils and public bodies, making better use of the buildings and office space we have as well as increasing our use of technology to help us to be more agile and to work smarter.

We have achieved these changes because we are continually looking to see where we can do things differently or better and where we can get better value for our money. We ask our residents and our staff for their ideas, we use all the feedback we receive from inspections and audits and we learn from organisations that are the best at what they do. We also [regularly review and challenge every service](#) the Council delivers to see how and where it can improve. This means that we know our strengths and also our areas for improvement and are better able to respond quickly to change and continue to provide quality services with reducing resources, including fewer managers and staff. We continue to making best use of limited resources by working with others where it makes sense to do so. By continuing to challenge what we know about our services and the needs of our residents and communities, both now and in the future, we can better understand how and what we need to change. This helps us to make sure that we focus on improving what matters most now and also make sure that the needs of future generations can be met.

The Council also works in partnerships with other public bodies e.g other councils, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue, the Third Sector and Natural Resources Wales. You can see some examples of how we work with others on [our website](#). Some of the partnerships are in place because we think we can deliver better services together, and also because some problems cannot be dealt with by one organisation alone.

The Welsh Government also recognises the value of partnership working, and has put in place laws that direct public bodies to work together e.g. the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which is described in more detail (see section 16)

Another law that directs how we work is the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). This Act gives people more of a say in the care they receive. To do this, the Act asks Councils to work in partnership with Health Boards and the Third Sector to work together better to improve the well-being of adults and children who need care and support, as well as their carers. To do this, in RCT we now work as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board, which was formed on 1 April 2019 when the Bridgend area was merged with Cwm Taf Heath Board Area to form Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

The Social Services [Well-being Area Plan](#) put in place by the previous Cwm Taf Regional Partnership Board is still in place but will be updated as part of the new plan for Cwm Taf Morgannwg in 2023. It sets out what it intends to do to work better together to benefit:

- children and young people
- older people
- health/physical disabilities
- learning disability/autism
- mental health
- sensory impairment
- carers who need support
- violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

with priority given to

- 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 and illness.

As a Council, working alone and also working in partnership with others, we continually strive to improve everything we do so that we can provide better, more efficient, effective and joined up services to our residents and communities.

In its most recent report published in [September 2019](#) our independent regulator, the Wales Audit Office, indicated that “the Council continues to meet its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement”. You can see this and other reports from our inspectors on our [website](#).

Making the best use of our budget – Living within our means

Over the past decade, Rhondda Cynon Taf, like all Councils in Wales, has operated within an environment of reduced resources alongside rising demand and costs associated with many services. Despite this challenging climate, we have delivered over £96Million in efficiency savings and have achieved this through carefully managing our finances and prioritising investment, planning ahead and changing how we work.

The 2020/21 Revenue Budget Strategy took account of expenditure requirements such as changing service demands, inflationary pressures and priority areas for continued additional investment together with the money we would receive from our main funding source, Welsh Government, of +4.5%. This meant that we needed to make savings of £8.7Million that we were able to deliver from areas that did not impact on frontline services and included for example becoming more efficient in how we purchase goods and services, restructuring and redesigning services by taking advantage of latest technology, and also through the use of specific one-off grants.

Importantly, the Revenue Budget Strategy also allocated additional resources to priority areas, for example, an 8.5% increase to schools, equating to £12.7M and, within this, recognising that there would be a requirement for local efficiency planning on a school by school basis; £0.250Million supporting further youth engagement activities to help young people reach their full potential; £0.050Million to support the provision of paddling pools across the County Borough; and £0.104Million to support the preparatory work required to re-open the Muni Arts Centre (Pontypridd).

As part of balancing the Council's Revenue Budget, we continued to take a responsible approach when setting Council Tax levels. For the 2020/21 financial year, a Council Tax increase of 2.85% was agreed, the lowest increase in Wales for the third consecutive year. More detail on our 2020/21 Revenue Budget of £508.747Million can be found in the report to [Council](#) on 4 March 2020.

Our financial planning arrangements also look beyond one financial year and forecast expenditure and funding levels over a three-year period. Our latest Medium Term Financial Plan published in July 2019 and covering the period 2019/20 to 2022/23 estimated that we will need to find further savings of around £39Million by 2022 to meet increasing demand for services, particularly social care, and forecasted real term reductions in funding levels. We know it will be harder to deliver year-on-year savings in the future and that is why we are continuing with our approach of examining every part of the Council's budget alongside a programme of significant investment in key areas. Our work and investment is continuing to focus on:

- Early intervention and prevention work in a wide range of areas to improve the lives of residents. This includes our Early Years and Family Support Service, Resilient Families Programme and Youth Engagement and Participation Service.
- Keeping adults independent, by, for example, working with partners to deliver the regional Stay Well@home service, providing home adaptations, support for carers and also involving

residents in helping to shape social care over the longer term in areas such as Extra Care provision.

- Investing in town centres and bringing more empty properties back into use to support the provision of good quality housing and to generate income from Council Tax.
- Offering more services on-line and involving customers in the design of services and continuing to use digital technology to modernise how the Council works.
- Thinking longer term and investing in the future through improvements to the highways infrastructure to reduce on-going maintenance costs and invest-to-save energy efficiency schemes that reduce energy consumption in Council buildings.

Since the publication of the Council's latest Medium Term Financial Plan in [July 2019](#), the unprecedented events of Storm Dennis and the start of the Covid-19 pandemic have occurred. The impact of both events has been significant and the Council's robust approach to financial management and planning is supporting the continued delivery of a range of important services to residents and businesses as well as ensuring the financial health and stability of the Council is maintained. This approach will ensure the regular reporting of updates on the Council's financial position during 2020/21, working in partnership with Welsh Government to secure funding to cover additional costs associated with Storm Dennis and Covid-19, and updating our Medium Term Financial Plan that is scheduled to be published in autumn 2020.

In parallel, our 3-year capital programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 invests £132Million in priority areas to further improve infrastructure and facilities available for residents. These include regeneration projects, improving school buildings and facilities, improving adult social care provision through a long term programme of creating new Extra Care facilities, improving the condition of both roads and community assets such as parks and playgrounds, and a programme of flood alleviation works. We will continue to work closely with partners over this period to ensure we make the best use of resources and take all opportunities to attract additional funding should it become available.

As part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, the Council is also playing a central role in delivering an exciting and ambitious long term plan to improve the economy of South East Wales.

Working now for the well-being of Future Generations

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) puts a legal duty on the Council to improve the Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural well-being of its residents and contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals. This Welsh law also asks all Councils and many other public bodies in Wales to change what they do and how they do business so that they can make these improvements. We are working hard to embed what the law is asking us to do, into everything we do. The Council’s new priorities and its Well-being Objectives, PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY set out in the Council’s new Corporate Plan, endorsed by [Council at its meeting on 4 March](#), will help direct how we improve the Well-being of our residents, carrying on from the direction from our first Plan.

The Act also tells us that we must maximise our contributions to seven national goals by applying 5 Ways of Working so that we

- balance the short term needs with planning for the future.
- work with other partners to deliver our objectives.
- involve those with an interest in our work and seek their views.
- put resources into preventing problems altogether, or getting worse.
- consider the effect of our work with that of other public bodies and organisations.

You can see many examples of how we have applied these Ways of Working throughout this report.

The law also means we need to think more about those services which are behind the scenes so that they also work in a way that helps us to succeed in delivering our plans and to meet the Well-being requirements. These ‘back office’ services provide the best possible support to our front line services, so that as a Council we can continue to focus and deliver our priorities at the pace required and to make best use of resources available. The work of these ‘back office’ services are described by the Act as “Core Activities” which are “likely to most effectively secure the type of change required”. Our progress in these activities can be seen below.

WFG Act Core Activity	RCT Progress
Corporate Planning	In March 2020, Councillors agreed that the new priorities in our new Corporate Plan should be considered as our Well-being Objectives. This Plan,

WFG Act Core Activity	RCT Progress
	<p>'Making a Difference' will direct our work between 2020 and 2024. This decision further develops the way we approached the requirements of the Act in our first Corporate Plan in 2016, which was to embed these requirements into the Council's business at every level of the organisation, including the Corporate Plan. The processes that underpin our Corporate Plan include our annual corporate and service assessments which also helps us to see how this approach is working across the whole Council. We continually look to increase our knowledge and understanding of how the Act should be applied, learning from feedback and recognised good practice.</p>
Financial Planning	<p>We spend our budgets on what matters most to residents and communities, directing our resources to our priorities and finding ways to work more efficiently, work better with partners and share our resources.</p>
Work force Planning	<p>We train our staff so that they continue their personal development and keep up to date with the skills they need to help the Council to improve. We think that the physical and mental well-being of our staff is key to a well-motivated workforce and make sure that they are supported to stay as well as possible. We also look to the future e.g. with our graduate scheme and our apprenticeship programme which won an award in the National Apprenticeship Awards Cymru in 2018. We want to make sure our residents are also able to develop their skills so that they can take advantage of work and digital opportunities so we also put in place activities to help them e.g. Digital Fridays, opportunities to get involved in intergenerational projects and supporting them to maintain services and facilities as part of 'RCT Together'.</p>
Procurement	<p>We make sure that anything we buy for the Council is value for money, benefits society and makes as little impact as possible on the environment. We also make sure that our policies take into account other social responsibilities e.g. promoting anti-slavery, the use of Fair Trade products and buying electricity that is generated from 100% renewable energy sources. The arrangements we have put in place with our major contractors when they are working on our contracts, provided 139 people with jobs in 19/20.</p>
Managing our Assets	<p>We make sure that we make best use of our buildings to benefit our residents and communities, e.g. community use of our schools and also provide staff with the equipment they need so that they can spend more time with residents, communities and businesses. We share office space with other organisations where it makes sense to do so. e.g. Porth Plaza contains a library, childcare facilities, private training businesses and our One4All centre. We are also working with Public Sector partners to see how we can improve services, make better use of all partners' buildings and so reduce costs. More recently over 3,000 staff have been required and supported to work from home as a result of Covid-19 and we will learn the lessons from</p>

WFG Act Core Activity	RCT Progress
	home working etc. to plan the use of office space in the future. All of this work also takes account of our drive to deliver a carbon neutral service.
Managing Risks	We identify short, medium and long term risks that will need to be mitigated in order to help us to deliver our Corporate Priorities. These are set out in our Strategic Risk Register .
Managing our Performance	We make information about what we do and how well we do it, widely available on our website. This report is one of the ways we make this information more accessible to people, communities and our partners. We make sure that everything we do is focussed on the things that people have told us are important to them and continue to find new and different ways to involve residents and communities in our work and the decisions that affect them. We continue to look for ways we can share relevant data with our partners to help us improve all public services in RCT and also strengthen the information we have available. We also continue to lobby national bodies, e.g. Data Cymru, Future Generations Commissioner and Welsh Government to improve access to a wider range of consistent, timely and relevant information about Future Trends that will help us with our long term planning.

How we have applied the Act is shown throughout this report. We have used the Act to check where we can do better and also use resources being developed by the Future Generations Commissioner to provide relevant support and challenge as we continue to embed the Act into the Council's arrangements and processes.

We know we are making positive progress and also that there is always more to do as we plan for and keep up with the speed and scale of changes facing the Council and all public bodies in Wales. This is why we continually challenge why, what and how we do what we do so that we can make changes that will benefit the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf, both now and in the future. This work has, and continues, to be tested by the ongoing work to meet the challenges we are facing because of the impact of Covid-19.

During 2019, we were able to get an independent view of our progress to date from our Regulator, Audit Wales. This independent view was arrived at following two 'Tracer' reviews in two different areas of service over the last 18 months, to show how the Act is being applied. The reviews were conducted in the Stay Well@home Service and Leisure Services. The feedback from Audit Wales from each of these reviews, has given us confidence that we are on the right track.

[Stay Well@home service](#), - This review looked at how the Council is working with the Health Board to focus on early intervention and prevention, choice, control and independence for older and vulnerable people.

The findings set out many positive aspects and also some areas for improvement. Overall, the review found

“The Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in developing and implementing the new community based models of service, and recognises a number of areas where it could further embed the five ways of working

Leisure Services – The review looked at how the Council is delivering priority investments for leisure facilities to increase participation in exercise and so contribute to improvement in residents’ health and wellbeing.

The findings set out many positive aspects and also some areas for improvement. Overall, the review found

“There are clear examples of how the Council is applying the sustainable development principle to the investment in leisure facilities, but there are opportunities to strengthen long term planning and involve people in shaping future leisure provision”

We are pleased that our work to date has been positively acknowledged by our independent Regulator. We also know that we need to continue to ensure that the Act is fully integrated into all our processes and plans, including the work to shape the detailed plans which support the delivery of the priorities within the new Corporate Plan.

In the next year, to meet our obligations as a Council, we will continue to

1. use advice, guidance and feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner, Audit Wales and best practice to continue to embed the Act into our work, and also to lobby for more national support where necessary.
2. use what we learn from our own pilot projects in the Council to test and further improve our arrangements.
3. continue to work with national bodies, e.g. Welsh Government and Future Generations Commissioner so that collectively we can improve how we join together the different national policies put in place.
4. work with national partners to find stronger and more consistent information about future trends that will help us to improve our long term thinking.
5. continue to seek a solution that will allow/enable appropriate data sharing with partners.
6. contribute positively and support the Cwm Taf Public Services Board, particularly in its joint working with Bridgend County Borough Council.

We know we can’t do everything ourselves and we have a good track record of working with others. From well-known partnerships like the [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#) to smaller partnerships, you can see some examples of how and where we work with others on our [Working with Others](#) page on our website. There are also many other everyday examples of where we talk to and work with other public bodies so that we can overcome shared local difficulties more easily. We also work with and alongside local community groups to provide residents and communities with direct support to get things done in their communities, e.g. through our ‘RCT Together’ programme, supporting them to prepare community bids for Welsh Government funding.

However, the Act also puts a legal duty on the Council to work in a formal partnership with other public bodies in a Public Services Board (PSB). This means public services covering the Council’s

area, must work as part of a Public Services Board, finding out how they can make the biggest difference to people and communities by working better together.

As RCT works with many of the same public bodies as Merthyr Tydfil CBC, e.g. South Fire and Rescue, South Wales Police, Cwm Taf University Health Board, in 2016 the Councils agreed to join together to form a joint PSB, the [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#), covering the Cwm Taf areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

The Cwm Taf PSB set out how it will work together to improve the Well-being of the Cwm Taf area in four Well-being Objectives. These objectives are set out in more detail in the Cwm Taf [Well-being Plan](#), published in 2018. The four Well-being Objectives are

Thriving Communities	promoting safe, confident, strong, and thriving communities improving the wellbeing of residents and visitors and building on our community assets
Healthy People	helping people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenge
Strong Economy	growing a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf
Tackling Loneliness and Isolation	finding new ways to channel the undoubted strengths of our communities, including volunteering to tackle more effectively the loneliness and isolation which often exists within many of them.

The Council is the lead partner for the Thriving Communities objective and is also actively involved in the other three Well-being objectives. You can see more information about the PSB's work and progress on its [website](#). How we are working with our PSB partners has been described throughout this report. The PSB published its first annual report in [July 2019](#) and an interim update report in [July 2020](#).

The highlights of achievements set out in the latest PSB report include

- Launching the Cwm Taf Employability Pledge – to share information across partners that will widen opportunities for residents and staff to volunteer, find work experience and jobs across the public bodies.
- The opening of two PSB supported Hubs in Cwm Taf. Hubs are [Calon Las](#) in Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil, and [Hwb Glynrhedynog](#) in Ferndale in Rhondda Cynon Taf. [Hwb Glynrhedynog](#) is one of the Hubs being put in place across RCT to meet the Council's commitment to working more closely with communities. This work is described in more detail in [section 6 –PLACE](#).
- Making progress in identifying vulnerable families in Cwm Taf early so that they get the help they need before they reach crisis point.

Since the Cwm Taf PSB was established, one of the statutory partners, the Cwm Taf UHB has been joined by the Bridgend Council area to form the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) University Health Board. Whilst there are no detailed plans in place to expand the Cwm Taf PSB to reflect the changes in the Health Board boundaries at this time, there is commitment for more regional working and better integration between the work of the various Partnership Boards e.g. the Regional Partnership Board, to make better use of partnership resources. In the meantime, the Cwm Taf and Bridgend PSBs will work together to produce a joint [Well-being Assessment](#) to cover

the CTM area that will refresh and replace the Assessments for the two separate areas completed 2017. This work will drive and shape new arrangements that will bring together the two PSBs for a new joint Well-being Plan from early 2023.

The Future Generations Commissioner has also set out six areas of work that people across Wales have told her are the biggest challenges facing the country and where she could have the most impact.

These areas are

1. [Skills](#) – our work includes putting in place an employment pathway to support people to develop their skills in line with the needs of local employers. For more details refer to [section 4 - Economy](#).
2. [Housing](#) - our work includes putting in place new housing, bringing empty properties back to life and providing all our residents with the opportunity to live safe independent lives in purpose built accommodation.
3. [Transport](#) - our work includes putting in place active travel routes and also creating a sustainable, accessible transport system for all by investing in public transport as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as well as considering the infrastructure requirements for electric vehicles. For more details refer to [section 6 - Place](#).
4. [Planning](#) - our work includes how planning can be used to create the right places, communities and infrastructure for future generations. We are also looking at how the work on our new Local Development Plan can help us do this. For more detail see [section 4 -Economy](#). [Making Wi-Fi available in Town Centres will help](#) support high street business.
5. [Adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#) - our work includes helping children and young people and their families to cope with the difficulties they face including through our Resilient Families Service and providing work opportunities for young people leaving care. For more details refer to [section 5 – People](#) and the [PSB interim Report July 2020](#).
6. [Better Ways to keep people well](#) - our work includes working with partners across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, finding non-medical ways to help to keep our residents happier and healthier. This is called Social Prescribing and might include activities such as volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports. For more details refer to [section 5 - People](#).

These are just some of the ways we are already tackling these areas of work. You will find more detail included throughout this report.

You can give your thoughts and experiences on the Commissioner’s priorities on the [People’s Platform](#) and see the Commissioner’s first [Future Generations Report](#) published in May 2020. This report analyses the progress of all public bodies subject to the Act, including Welsh Government, in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act since it became law in 2015.

Equalities – A fair and equal County Borough

<p><u>RCT Population (2019 MYE)</u></p> <p>Total - 241,264 Males - 118,397 (49%) Females - 122,867 (51%)</p>	<p>RCT staff data (March 2019) Over 80% of employees live in the Council area</p> <p>Total 10,698 Male 25.6% Female 74.4%</p>																					
<p>Age range 0-15 - 44,975 (19%) 16-64 -149,661 (62%) 65+ - 46,628 (19%) <i>(figures rounded for illustrative purposes)</i> Source: InfoBase Cymru</p> <p>Ethnicity 2.8% of RCT residents identify as Black, Asian or Minority ethnic.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Total</th> <th>% of Workforce</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16-24</td> <td>612</td> <td>5.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-34</td> <td>1,949</td> <td>18.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-44</td> <td>2,500</td> <td>23.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45-54</td> <td>3,215</td> <td>30.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>55-64</td> <td>2,092</td> <td>19.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65+</td> <td>330</td> <td>3.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>More detailed information about the workforce can be found in the annual equalities monitoring report to Cabinet 19 March 2019.</i></p>	Age Group	Total	% of Workforce	16-24	612	5.7%	25-34	1,949	18.2%	35-44	2,500	23.3%	45-54	3,215	30.1%	55-64	2,092	19.6%	65+	330	3.1%
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<p>18% of all Lower Super Output Areas, within RCT are amongst the 10% most deprived in Wales, while 45% are ranked amongst the 30% most deprived. A Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) is a small geographical area of population of approx. 1,500 people. There are 154 LSOAs in RCT and 1,909 in Wales. Source: WIMD 2019.</p>																						
<p><u>The Thriving Places Index Wales for Equalities 2020</u> measures inequalities in Health, Income and Employment. The 2020 data gives RCT a rating of 4.43 out of a possible score of 10. The measure covers many different services and different providers at a local, regional, national and international level and the score for RCT has fallen from 5.26 since it was introduced in 2018.</p>																						

In the last year we have maintained our good progress towards a fair and equal RCT and we can point to many positive examples of this throughout this report as well as in our annual Equality Report which was presented to Cabinet in [March 2019](#). Other examples include helping people with additional learning needs to access public transport, ensuring that applications for street cafes meet consistent accessibility standards and remain pedestrian friendly and putting in place more help for transgender young people that works alongside the support provided by schools. We have also been working with partners to provide support and opportunities for homeless young people or those at risk of homelessness, which includes providing 1 to 1 advice and support to help them develop independent living skills.

Our new [Strategic Equality Plan for 2019-22](#) was agreed in May 2019. In our plan we said we would focus on the five key areas that our residents told us were most important to them to help to achieve a fairer Rhondda Cynon Taf.

we said we aim to	and amongst other things we
better understand the needs of our	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have developed a new approach to collecting equality monitoring information for our customers and staff. By capturing information

we said we aim to	and amongst other things we
communities and the barriers they face to thrive.	<p>about our customers, services are better able to respond to their needs and help to break down the barriers they face accessing Council services e.g. getting into buildings, using technology, language or availability of transport. We will test our new approach within Leisure Services, as this service has a direct contact with a large amount of staff and customers, to see if it provides the right information at the right time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are working with Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales 'EYST' to strengthen how we involve Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people. • continued to work with and involve the RCT residents Disability Forum. This year we asked them for their views on the Modernisation of Residential Services and Day Care and Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations. One member of the forum has been working closely with the Council's Highways teams to make accessible improvements to footpaths in their community.
reduce inequalities that exist within our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are continuing to look at how our services can better support people to reach their potential e.g. in education, housing and employment. This also includes making information more accessible to all our residents.
promote safe communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continued to provide hate crime awareness training in schools and raise awareness of the need to report Hate Crime. This is described in more detail in the PLACE evaluation.
reduce the gender pay gap within the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are continuing to analyse the gap between the pay of men and women employed by the Council so that we can better understand and can reduce this pay gap. We are exploring how we can encourage more women to apply for senior roles. We are continuing to roll-out the Performance Review of staff to ensure that they discuss career and development opportunities with their manager. We now have a better understanding of challenges women face when returning to work following maternity leave and we intend to provide awareness for managers on pregnancy and maternity arrangements.
creating an inclusive workforce within the Council that represents the differences in our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are continuing to develop our staff networks and improve how we promote national campaigns to raise awareness. For example, for Deaf Awareness week in May 2019 daily posts were published on the staff Intranet which included the finger alphabet, information and facts about the effects of hearing loss and where to get help. This year we focussed on the experiences of staff to raise awareness of difference, for example:

we said we aim to	and amongst other things we
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2019, for 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities', we featured the experience of a staff member, L, who is a carer for her father, who has a disability. By being a member of the RCT staff Disability and Carers Staff Network, L is able to get the support and flexibility she needs at work that also allows her to care for her father. • As part of LGBT+ History Month in February 2020, we featured stories from 'Perthyn' our LGBT+ staff network. Council staff have frequently appeared in articles in Fyne Times, a UK based free gay and lesbian magazine, setting out their experiences of working for the Council. • Time to Talk Day in February provided a focus for staff across the County Borough to have conversations about mental health without being judged. 'Time to Talk' also featured one of the council's senior managers sharing their experience of mental ill health and the steps they take to help them to cope. • On World Menopause Day in October 2019, we held an 'Afternoon Tea' to support staff, provide information and raise awareness of the symptoms of menopause in the workplace.

As well as implementing our new Strategic Equality Plan we also

Continue to meet our responsibilities under the '[Disability Confident](#)' Scheme so that as an employer the Council makes the most of the talents disabled people can bring. Examples of how we do this include

- providing reasonable adjustments for people when they apply for jobs and go through selection processes and also for our staff while they are in work. In social care we also work with our partner universities to make sure that students have any reasonable adjustments put in place for them before they start their practise placement. There are many types of reasonable adjustments e.g. making sure candidates can access interview spaces, providing the right type of phone for an employee who uses a hearing aid, providing a parking space for a person who has a disability or it could mean a change to a Council policy.
- buying technology software '[Browsealoud](#)' and '[Read&Write](#)'. 'Browsealoud' is now available on the Council's website to make it easier for people to access the information contained on the website and so improves accessibility for all our customers. 'Read&Write' has been introduced across the Council for staff who need extra support with reading and writing.
- continuing to share relevant information and updates relating to disability through our Disability Officers group, which is a network of RCT staff from across the Council. The group meets quarterly and a recent meeting was attended by representatives from Transport for Wales to provide an update on the South Wales Metro system, which provided the opportunity to discuss accessibility barriers that some customers may face.
- reviewing our accessibility guidance to improve how we communicate with our customers. This includes internal, external and digital accessibility and a particular focus being on the

Deaf community. The next phase will involve engagement with disability and Deaf groups and well as our staff Disability and Carers network.

- keeping HR staff updated with relevant disability awareness training. We are reviewing the range of equality and diversity training we offer to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to support the diversity of our customers.

Remain committed to the 'Time to Change Wales' pledge, 'Stonewall Diversity Champions' programme and 'Stonewall Equality Education Index'.

Time to talk days

Reducing the stigma around mental health is important to the Council, as we want to encourage a culture where staff are confident to share experiences and seek support when needed. Our Time to Talks days described above, are an essential tool to raise awareness of mental ill health and to encourage open conversations.

Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme

The Council was again recognised as an inclusive employer by ranking in [Stonewall's Top 100](#) employers 2020, demonstrating our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Over the year, we have engaged with the LGBTQ+ community at Rhondda Pride and Pride Cymru. The people we talked to at Rhondda Pride told us that they felt the Education sector could do more to train teaching staff so that they are better able to understand some of the barriers and issues that LGBTQ+ pupils can face. By training teachers, they can provide better support to LGBTQ+ pupils. Behind the scenes we also made sure that the Council's Human Resources policies are correct and up to date. Part of this work included refreshing our policy that applies to RCT staff who are transitioning to make sure that it is clearer for staff and managers.

[Black History Month \(BHM\)](#)

In October 2019 we held a coffee morning in Aberdare Library to mark the Council's first BHM event, celebrating Black History Month and raising awareness of racial diversity. The focus was on black literature, highlighting black authors and stories. Whilst the event was modestly attended, it provided insights of experiences of people of colour living in RCT and their experiences of our services. BHM also featured a staff awareness campaign called 'Hidden Figures' highlighting black British people that have been forgotten in history.

Continue to deliver Dignity and Respect training to all Council staff.

The training also serves to remind staff of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and includes an overview of the Public Sector Equality Duties as well as all protected characteristics. The training also provides them with the knowledge and encouragement to challenge negative attitudes in their workplaces or communities. Equality and Diversity training is also included in Induction programmes for all new staff joining the Council.

Strengthen equality training for staff dealing with complaints about the Council's services and ensure that findings are used to inform improvements in services.

Any complaint made about a service providing unequal or unfair treatment to our residents is reviewed in depth after it has been dealt with so that we learn lessons to make the necessary

improvements and/or train our staff. This means that staff gain a better understanding of the different issues and needs of our residents so they can challenge their own actions in future.

Continue to focus on Mental Health

We have continued to work with trade unions to raise awareness of mental health issues for managers and helping them to recognise symptoms in Council staff. As a result of this work, we secured a further £16k from the [Welsh Union Learning Fund](#) and the Council contributed the same amount. Because of this joint funding we have been able to pay for 350 managers and supervisors to receive Mental Health awareness training between November 2019 and February 2020. Plans to train more of our staff between March and June 2020 were affected by Covid-19 and will be arranged as soon as it is safe to do so.

The awareness training that took place was well received by those who attended. This training also highlighted the need for managers to be able to better support staff and their mental health and wellbeing and also for managers to have the confidence to have difficult conversations where necessary. We have been working with [Psychology Wales](#) see how we can meet this additional training need and have run a pilot course to see if this can be rolled out more widely

Strengthen our understanding of the needs of our Armed Forces Veterans.

In April 2019 the [Veteran Advice Service](#) was launched. The service is funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund. The service regularly engages with veteran groups across RCT and Merthyr Tydfil, e.g. Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association '[SSAFA](#)', [Royal British Legion](#), and Welsh based charity for veterans '[Change Step](#)'. As part of its work, the service offers a range of support and advice to veterans in the Council's Community Hubs. More recently this support has been provided by staff working at home in line with WG guidelines and will resume in the Council's Hubs when it is safe to do so. All Council managers have received training about the Armed Forces Covenant and all new staff also receive training about the service when they start work in the Council.

Between April 2019 and August 2020, the Veteran Advice Service received 215 direct contacts or referrals from across RCT. The service has helped the veterans in a number of ways including making sure that they get the benefits they had previously not been claiming. More recently it has helped to support veterans during lock down because of Covid-19.

By talking to and building relationships over time, we are able to gain a greater understanding of our Armed Forces veterans and are able to shape our services to better meet their needs.

Following a successful pilot launched in 2018, the Council introduced a reduction of 25% on bereavement fees for veterans. RCT is the only Council in Wales to offer this scheme. During the pilot alone, 58 families benefitted from reduced funeral costs for their loved ones. The reduction in fees varies according to the service families receive, but some have had funeral costs reduced by more than £400.

We also work closely with our schools to support service children and their families, recognising that service children may have distinct needs.

In the last year, we held a number of events commemorating the Armed Forces including:

- [Armed Forces Day](#)
- [Festival of Remembrance and Remembrance Day Service](#) at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

Delivery and success of these events is as a result of working in partnership with the Armed Forces and Armed Forces charities such as Help for Heroes and Royal British Legion.

The new [Cynon Valley Memorial Garden](#) in Aberdare was formally opened in November 2019. Funding for the memorial was raised by the Aberdare Branch of the Royal Welsh Comrades Association and hundreds of people came along to show their support on the day. The local support highlighted how important the memorial is to the community and the Council is committed to continuing to give it our support.

“The project has been a massive success, it has provided a focal point to the area bringing in members of the general public and also family members who have placed a stone in memory of a loved one”.

Phill Adkins

Cynon Valley Armed Forces Memorial Garden Co-ordinator

On 5 November, 2019 we held a very special event at the Park and Dare Theatre when we [screened the film Zulu](#) for Armed Forces families. The film was chosen by the families also. This idea was developed following discussions with veterans about how fireworks on Bonfire night can be a trigger of PTSD symptoms. The event attracted over 100 people and was deemed a huge success by all. It also attracted [significant media coverage](#).

Our work to deliver this plan helps us to show how we are contributing to [a more equal Wales](#) - a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. But it also seeks to support all the Well-being goals including a Wales of Cohesive communities and a Prosperous Wales.

Contributing to an RCT and Wales that is

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Welsh Language - delivering services in the language of your choice

We are making good progress with our work to deliver services to you in the language of your choice, although we know that there is more to do, especially if we are to play our part to help Wales to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

- The number of Welsh speakers in RCT has remained fairly consistent since 2001.
- The greatest proportion of Welsh speakers are under 25 years old.
- The 2011 Census tells us there are 27,779 Welsh speakers in RCT, 12.3% of the population. Data from ONS Annual population survey in March 2020 suggests that there are now more Welsh speakers, 42,500 (18.3%). However, the ONS survey involved fewer people so it might not be a true reflection.
- 4% of RCT residents said they use the Welsh language as part of their everyday life in 2019-20.
- RCT continues to have the highest % of pupils taught Welsh as a first language from within the 5 Councils covered by the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (18.9%).
- The number of 7 year olds being taught through the medium of Welsh has increased slightly, 526 in 2019/20, 9 more than in 2018/19. However, there are now slightly more 7 year olds being taught in English so the overall percentage of pupils learning through Welsh has decreased by 0.07%
- In 2019 the Council committed to a number of projects to increase school capacity which will provide a further 690 Welsh medium education places by 2022.

During 2019 – 2020 we provided Level 1 Welsh language training to 304 staff. An additional 238 member of staff have benefited from Level 2, 4 & 5 lessons. As a result of the improvements in recruitment and training for Welsh language, more of our staff have indicated they are fluent in Welsh. In March 2020 there were 569 staff who self-identified as fluent Welsh speakers, 167 more than in 2017/18.

We are committed to encouraging residents to deal with services in Welsh, and making it easier for them to contact and do business with the Council in the language of their choice. At the last census, the number of Welsh speakers in our communities was 12.3% of our population 27,779, lower than the Wales average at 19%. As a result, the number of local people applying for jobs in the Council who are able to speak Welsh is low, as the majority of Welsh speakers in RCT are not of working age.

This means we need to continue to support and encourage our existing staff to use and improve their Welsh skills at work and encourage our residents to engage with us in Welsh. It also means that we need to plan ahead so that we are able to take advantage of the Welsh language skills our young people have to offer as they leave full time education and reach working age. Our Welsh language tutor continues to support our staff with training directly related to their job role so they can better respond to residents' needs, and tutored 542 members of staff during 2019-20. We continue to work in partnership with the [Welsh Government's 'Work Welsh' project](#), ensuring that our staff can access on-line support and tutoring. 40 staff completed Work Welsh online training between 2017 and 2019, with further 88 staff undertaking courses during 2020 so far, a number

which is likely to increase. Additionally, a small number of staff have also attended week long intensive courses at [Nant Gwytheryn](#).

Along with the planned projects to increase capacity in our Welsh medium schools, the announcement in March 2019, that Rhondda Cynon Taf will [host the Royal National Eisteddfod](#), originally scheduled for 2022 but now to be held in 2023, is an exciting opportunity to further boost the use of the Welsh language in our communities. This will also contribute to helping the Council to meet the national Well-being goal of a 'Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language', a Prosperous Wales as well as other national Well-being goals.

The Council also needs to adhere to the [Welsh language laws](#) and apply [national Welsh Language Standards](#), making sure that we:

- treat the Welsh language the same as the English language, and
- offer people the opportunity to receive their services from us, as well as from those funded by us, in Welsh.

The Welsh Language Standards apply to all parts of the Council's work, including to Council meetings, where translation facilities have been put in place. The Welsh Language Unit now have dedicated translators at senior level to provide text translation and simultaneous translation support to Members and Senior Officers for and at Council and Committee meetings. These arrangements have remained in place throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

A national [Welsh Language Commissioner](#) is responsible for making sure that the Welsh Language Measure and the Standards are being implemented across Wales. We [report](#) our plans and progress to the Commissioner every year. The Council also has its own arrangements in place to make sure we are making progress, which in 2018 were recognised as good practice on the [Welsh Language Commissioner's website](#). Our compliance officer continues to audit practice within the Council and works with services to improve the ways they provide services through the medium of Welsh.

If we do not properly implement the Welsh Language Standards, we could receive a penalty of up to £5,000 for each breach. In 2019/20, 23 complaints were received, or still under investigation, about how the Council is treating the Welsh language, a slight decrease from the previous year (27). In the majority of these cases, complaints were upheld and action was taken to resolve the problems identified. We continue to work to quickly resolve any issues identified and to put in place measures to stop mistakes happening, including working closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office, and so far have received no financial penalties.

As part of our duties under the law, we must publish two documents:

1. [Welsh Language Standards Action Plan](#) explains how we intend to comply with the standards
2. [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy](#) sets out how we will promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use more widely in the area.

To make sure that we keep on track and meet the Welsh Language Standards, a Steering Group of Councillors and representatives from other interested public bodies and voluntary groups, including Fforwm Iaith, who bring together local Welsh language groups:

1. checks the progress we are making against our Promotion Strategy,
2. reviews Audit reports to make sure that all services are delivering services in Welsh, and
3. approves major Welsh language policies that affect all services to our residents.

In addition to this, we had planned for our Overview and Scrutiny Committee to check how effectively we deliver our services in Welsh. This work has been delayed due to the postponement of meetings as a result of the impact of Covid-19, but we aim to put it in place later this year. Every year each service also looks at what they can do to improve and increase the services we provide in Welsh.

As well as challenging ourselves to do better, another way of helping us to improve is to work with others. We do this in many ways e.g.

1. as part of the Welsh Language Forum, made up of local voluntary groups, schools, and other key Welsh-centric local and national public bodies to progress the promotional strategy and other key work streams
2. Grŵp Deddf, the National forum for Welsh language officers working in the Public Sector
3. Grŵp Deddf Llywodraeth Lleol a Llywodraeth Cymru, a South East Wales Regional workgroup to support compliance with the regulations and share best practice;
4. Fforwm Mwy Na Geiriau, a Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional forum for Social Services and the Health Sector;
5. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Group and also
6. the Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner who help us to develop and implement our plans for the Welsh language.

To increase services we provide in Welsh,

last year we said we would	and amongst other things we
work towards our target of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in RCT by 6.8%, by the next census date of 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted investment in Welsh medium books and online resources in our libraries which has resulted in an increase in loans • worked with the Welsh Language Commissioner’s office to approve a revised List of Welsh Place-names for Rhondda Cynon Taf and started developing functionality on our website to allow residents to search using Welsh addresses e.g. for planning applications. • created an Estates & Works signage manual to support partner organisations to produce bilingual temporary road signs, increasing the visibility of Welsh language on our roads.
work with the Royal National Eisteddfod Committee on the arrangements to bring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointed an Eisteddfod Project Officer to co-ordinate the preparations for the Eisteddfod across the Council and liaise with the National Eisteddfod officers and chair of the Working Committee (Pwyllgor Gwaith) on behalf of the Council. As a

last year we said we would	and amongst other things we
the Eisteddfod to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2023.	result of the impact of Covid-19, the Eisteddfod will be held in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2023 and not 2022 as originally planned.
promote key national and local Welsh medium events to raise awareness of the Welsh language	Ran campaigns linked to St David’s Day, Owain Glyndwr Day and Shwmae Su’mae Day, focussing on a variety of elements including both language and culture. Activities included storytelling and craft activities in libraries and work with both Welsh and English medium schools which received positive engagement and feedback.
encourage our businesses to see the advantages of Welsh both locally and globally.	Unfortunately, due to a lack of Welsh Government funding, we were unable to provide Businesses with support in using the Welsh language. However, we have recognised the Welsh language as an integral part of the RCT Tourism Strategy, which will play a key role in boosting the local economy through encouraging sustainable tourism to the area.
further strengthen the translation facilities in Council meetings.	Put in place new simultaneous translation equipment in the Council chamber along with guidance to help people chairing meetings to run them bilingually with the help of translators. Two staff are following post graduate courses in simultaneous translation, which will help them to support people to access meetings in their language of choice without interrupting the flow of meetings
increase the opportunities for staff to learn Welsh, including by working with Cymraeg Gwaigh (Work Welsh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Cymraeg Gwaith, provided online and residential training courses to help staff improve their workplace specific Welsh language skills. • Provided basic Welsh language training as part of induction for all social care staff, and included the nationally produced app ‘Gofalu Trwy’r Gymreg’, on the mobile phones of all social care staff which provides Welsh phrases to help communication with Welsh speaking clients. • Set up a buddies scheme so that staff can practice their workplace Welsh with other learners • Produced a Corporate Induction video to help all new staff understand the Welsh Language Standards in a more interactive way using infographics and animation

We have received positive feedback from the Welsh Language Commissioner about our progress, so we know we are on the right track, but there is always more to do.

Among other things, in 2020/21 we will:

- continue to work towards our target of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in RCT by 6.8%, by the next census date of 2021.
- continue to work with the Royal National Eisteddfod Committee on the arrangements to bring the Eisteddfod to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2023.
- highlight the significance of Welsh people and culture, including the Welsh language, in Council wide campaigns relating to UK and world events.
- Continue to support staff to develop more advanced Welsh language skills so we can help more customers in their language of choice.
- help people use more online services in Welsh through developing bilingual software.
- develop our processes so more customers can have their queries dealt with in Welsh by the first person they speak to.
- continue to review how well our services are offering and promoting Welsh.

Our work to promote the Welsh language is contributing to an RCT and Wales that is

Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Globally Responsible
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Biodiversity

Key Information:

- Over 70% of land in Rhondda Cynon Taf is classed as countryside, while total tree coverage is approximately 33%.
- There are at least 85 different kinds of bee throughout old coal tips in RCT, alongside a wide range of other insects, lichen, fungi and flowers.
- Two thirds of the land within County Borough has been identified as high-importance for wildlife, including Local Nature Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- 11 Parks throughout the County Borough have been awarded Green Flag status for accessibility and exemplary management.
- According to the [State of Nature Report 2019](#), of the 6,500 plant and animal species in Wales, 523 (8%) are under threat of extinction from the UK, 666 (17%) are under threat of extinction from Wales, and 73 (2%) are already extinct in Wales.
- As per the figures from [Natural Resources Wales](#), 22% of electricity generated in Wales is from renewable sources. The amount of renewable electricity generated is the equivalent of 48% of electricity consumed in Wales, a five-percentage point increase compared to 2016.
- As shown in [Government statistics](#), while RCT is the 4th largest producer of total carbon emissions in Wales, the County Borough is also 4th lowest when considered on a per-person basis (4.11 metric tonnes)

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth, comprising all plants and animals, as well as the ecosystems in which they live. Alongside all other Local Authorities, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has a duty under [The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) to maintain and enhance its biodiversity, taking account of the diversity, scale, condition and adaptability within its local ecosystems. This is in addition to the requirements of the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) 2015](#), which itself compels public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions and to safeguard our local environments in pursuit of becoming a [more resilient](#) and [more globally responsible Wales](#).

In line with the Biodiversity Duty of the Environment Act, the Council must also produce a report to the Welsh Government every 3 years outlining what has been done to improve biodiversity across the County Borough. Our [first Biodiversity Report](#) in 2019, demonstrated a considerable amount of positive work being conducted across the Council, while identifying certain areas in which improvements can be made.

Plans to address issues of Biodiversity, as well as interrelated environmental issues such as Climate Change, are set out in [the Council's new Corporate Plan](#) and are being developed in more detail as part of the ongoing work of the [Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group](#). This newly established group, which first met in November 2019, aims to ensure that the Council becomes Carbon Neutral by 2030 and intends to work with both residents and businesses throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf

to support the entire County Borough in also becoming Carbon Neutral as close to 2030 as possible.

As outlined in its [Future Work Programme](#), the work of the Climate Change Steering Group is set to focus on a number of major environmental issues, including Biodiversity, Carbon Reduction, Renewable Energy, Natural Resources and Community Engagement, as well as addressing any unforeseen and pressing issues brought forward by a member of the committee. A more detailed account of the work currently undertaken by the Steering Group, alongside that of other services across the Council, is given below.

Our work in 2019/20 included:

- Putting in place a sustainable natural drainage system to prevent flooding at Park Lane School, with [work onsite starting in August 2020](#). The scheme uses existing land between Aberdare Park and a redundant pitch to reduce the flood risk. This work will also contribute to the Rhos Pasture network for the conservation of the rare Marsh Fritillary Butterfly.
- Publishing a new [Biodiversity website](#) to showcase the Council's Biodiversity work and to encourage local residents to engage with future Biodiversity initiatives. The site will be further developed in the future to provide information that will help staff, residents and community groups to work together to protect and enhance our local ecosystems.
- Working with Community Groups across the County Borough on events including the Pontyclun Wildflower Walk, the Beddau Biodiversity Ramble; Aberdare Park moth and bat events and Dare Valley Country Park bird events, engaging and educating members of the public about local wildlife and habitats. Nature events for children were held at both Dare Valley and Ynysangharad Parks.
- Publication of the [RCT Recorders Newsletter](#) in January 2019. The newsletter details resident wildlife sightings and so provides a snapshot of biodiversity within the area. The latest edition, which provides a summary of resident records from 2018/19, indicates a continued interest in the local biodiversity, with evidence of involvement from at least 34 residents. Following delays due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2019/20 edition is planned later in the year.
- Ensuring that Biodiversity is considered across all Council work through providing training and advice to services. This included training Street Care teams on more [sustainable grass-cutting and wildflower policies](#) and supporting our Corporate Estates team to consider biodiversity in the management of our Council land and buildings.
- Establishing the new Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group (as mentioned above), attended by Councillors from all political groups across the Council, as well as community representatives from [Welcome to our Woods](#) and [Friends of the Earth](#). This was set up in response to the recommendations from [the Committee on Climate Change](#) and the Welsh Government's '[Low Carbon Wales](#)' and has started to put in place and monitor work across the Council to tackle the impact of Climate Change. Future areas of work will include: creating and using renewable energy, reducing energy use in Council buildings, improving air quality across the County Borough and eliminating the use of single use plastic across the Council.
- Completing 396 ecological reviews of planning applications received by the Council and continuing to monitor the work identified from previous planning applications to reduce

the environmental impact e.g. sustainable long term management of public open spaces, protecting trees and hedges meadows and wildlife corridors.

- Continuing to reflect the Biodiversity Duty in our work, including work to prepare the new Local Development Plan, which will set out the development of the County Borough over the next 15 years and provide the basis for the consideration of future planning applications.
- Developing a new [Procurement Social Responsibility policy](#), which acts to protect local and national biodiversity by making sure that goods and services bought by the Council, suppliers and partners cause minimal damage to the environment.
- Working with partner organisations to promote biodiversity across operations and supply chains; for example, collaborating with Natural Resources Wales to develop the [South Central Wales Area Statement](#). This digital statement, which covers an area comprising Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, maps out the local environment, ecosystems and natural resources in detail and begins to identify the key challenges facing the area. This is an ongoing project that intends to address the identified challenges with collaborative and sustainable solutions.
- Progressing the [‘Healthy Hillside’ project](#), continuing to work with partners and the community developing sustainable land management to reduce the severity and impact of grass fires on 6 sites in RCT whilst increasing the biodiversity of the habitat.
- We had planned to continue with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership and progress the review of [Action for Nature](#). However, progress was delayed by the late start to Welsh Government funding, and some partnership events were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Our plans for 2020/21 include:

- Delivering peatland restoration schemes to ‘re-wet’ peatlands which have dried out or degraded, to prevent carbon being released into the atmosphere and improve biodiversity, alongside other flood-management to provide natural flood management solutions.
- Working with residents to support grassland management and wildflower growth, also making more and better information available, including through our new Biodiversity webpage. The public will also be engaged through social media to help assist wildflower growth through the identification of new growing areas and the continuation of the ‘Grab a Rake’ scheme.

Supporting [Wildflowers and Grassland](#) in Rhondda Cynon Taf

To improve the Wildflowers and Grassland in RCT, we have put in place a ‘cut and collect’ system of mowing. ‘Cut and Collect’ allows flowers to bloom and seed before they are cut, and the cuttings collected and removed help provide the best environment for wildflower growth. Removed cuttings are composted in ‘eco-piles’, which both eliminates waste and also provides hibernation areas for wildlife. Wildflowers that are thriving also support bees, other pollinating insects and creatures that thrive in the habitat. Welsh Government is funding the ‘cut and collect’ machinery that will do most of the work but we are encouraging residents to join our [‘Grab your Rake’](#) scheme to help in areas that the machinery cannot reach.

- Continuing to update the 'Action for Nature' plan in collaboration with the Council's Local Biodiversity Partnership. The Plan will set out how the Council intends to protect and enhance the wildlife and biodiversity of Rhondda Cynon Taf, while considering new legislation, emergent environmental challenges and the viewpoints of local residents, community groups and conservation experts.
- Considering the role of Natures Assets in RCT. This work has slowed as a result the pandemic but will include enabling the natural regeneration of woodland and the development of 'Green Infrastructure' – a network of natural spaces and features including parks, street trees, allotments, gardens and streams which provide benefits such as improved drainage, carbon storage and cooling of built up areas during heat waves, and also benefit people's mental and physical health.
- Planting approximately 350 trees, funded by Welsh Government. Most of the planting will be in our parks and cemeteries with the aim of helping to tackle the impact of climate change and pollution in urban areas as well as supporting local wildlife.
- Continuing to prepare the new Local Development plan, including the overall land use development strategy for the County borough, taking account of sites of importance for nature conservation and local ecosystems, and strengthening the Council's biodiversity policies. Residents will also be involved in the development of the new plan to ensure that expectations regarding the local environment are understood and that work is directed to satisfy the needs of the community.
- Developing a plan to reduce greenhouse gases across RCT and taking actions based upon the recommendations of the [Committee on Climate Change](#) and in line with the Welsh Government's 'Low Carbon Wales' advice.
- Through our Climate Change Steering Group, developing and implementing plans that will support and encourage Biodiversity and improve the environment across the County Borough.

Involving people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf

We have a good track record of engaging with and involving our residents from all backgrounds in many different ways. We take account of what they tell us when we are planning or changing our services and welcome feedback on what we do. We also know that there is always room to do better so we are committed to continue to improve how we involve residents and communities in the decisions that affect them.

We have shown throughout this report many examples of how we have involved people and communities in the decisions that affect them and the services they receive. We do this in many different ways ranging from having face to face conversations in our town centres and other public spaces e.g. parks and supermarkets to conducting more traditional surveys whether this is online or over the telephone where it is appropriate to do so. We also encourage feedback through social media, Twitter @RCTCouncil and [Facebook](#). We have found that talking to people about what is important to them and their families can provide a wealth of information that we use to both help shape our services and inform our more formal surveys. Getting out and about in communities and talking to people also means we get to know what is happening in communities when it isn't always obvious.

We want all our residents to have the opportunity to be involved and provide their views on the decisions that will or may affect them. To encourage more people to get involved we have to make the information available to them in different ways, including using plain English or Welsh in written information, producing easy read versions that provide a short, clear and simple summary of complex information and also using graphics and animated videos. Where we have used these different ways they have been well received and allowed us to widen our involvement with residents and communities.

Helping people to get involved

As part of our conversations with residents in our care homes about changes in residential care, we produced an easy read booklet which set out the proposals in ways that residents could better understand and be informed.

By making it easier for people to give us their views, more people are responding to us, using different methods and engaging in different ways. However, as with all public bodies, we know we need to do more if we are to be fully inclusive and if people are to continue to have a real and lasting involvement in the future of their communities. Covid-19 has meant that our usual ways of talking to people are not possible for the foreseeable future so we need to be more creative. One way of doing this is using 'virtual' engagement e.g. Zoom etc., which was used in August when [we asked people for their views about dog fouling](#). We aren't able to show you the session because of data protection, but the views of the people that joined us will be used to plan ahead. We also need to improve how we use the information that residents' complaints is giving us so that we get a more complete picture of residents views.

To improve how we work across the council to involve people and communities, we aimed to put in place a new Involvement Framework for 2020-24. The aim of this Framework is to provide an overview of the ways that the Council will inform, engage and consult with and involve people who live, work and do business in Rhondda Cynon Taf in the decisions that affect them. Discussions with Councillors on our Framework started in the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)

[in January 2020](#). Since then we have not been able to fully progress the work as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic but will be doing so during 2020/21. In the meantime, we are working to the principles contained within the proposals agreed by Councillors so far, i.e.

1. Strengthen the culture of involvement
2. Make sure our Involvement is focused and has a purpose
3. Make it easy for everyone to be involved
4. Streamline our involvement requests
5. Train and enable staff so that they have the skills they need
6. Provide feedback to people about how their views have been used
7. Evaluate what have done so that we can improve in future

In developing our new Framework we have taken account of good practice and advice including guidance from the [Future Generations Commissioner](#) about involving people and communities.

We can point to many examples of how residents and communities were involved in the Council's work last year e.g.

- **Setting the Council's Budget** - 4,000 residents gave us their views about our 2020/21 budget in town centres, leisure centres and libraries across RCT. We also talked to representatives of our older residents in the Older Person's Advisory Group (OPAG) and representatives of our disabled residents in the Disability Forum. By using 'RCT Money' people were able to choose where they thought it could be best spent.
- **Shaping our new Corporate Plan** - we held 15 events in venues and locations across Rhondda Cynon Taf so that we could talk to residents of all ages and background and get their views on what is important to them. We also videoed a sample of willing volunteers to bring life into the feedback they provided.
- **Changes to residential care homes** we sought a wide range of views from our residents in residential care and their relatives. These discussions took place within the Care Homes which were also open for care staff to attend. We also provided an advocacy service for all residents and their families. We also held more open 'drop in' events for RCT residents of all ages to inform discussions and decisions about residential homes for older people in each of the three geographical areas of the County Borough.
- **How to tackle empty properties across RCT** – so that we can bring empty properties back to life and improve local places.
- **Traffic Management in Llantrisant**, when 200 people give us their views about a [potential traffic management scheme for Llantrisant Old Town](#).

The Secretary of the Older Person's Advisory Group [tells us what is important to them and to many of our older residents.](#)

We are also in regular contact through meetings or by mail with representative groups so that we gain a greater ongoing understanding of the issues that affect them, including

- Our Citizens' Panel – which we have continued to review and expand so that it more fully represents the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Disability groups and the [RCT Disability Forum](#).

- Young People through Youth Forums. Feedback from an event held in Pontypridd Rugby Club, some of which was filmed, told us what it is like for young people to live in RCT and what could be improved. This feedback was used to develop the Council's new Corporate Plan.
- During 2019/20 we also trialled a new system to help us find out the best way of getting to know more about our residents and the best way of getting information directly to those who want or need it. Although information from the system helped us in some ways, e.g. helping us to prepare to bid for some funding, it didn't fully meet our needs. We are continuing to look for other ways that will provide the information we need. We are also continuing to work as part of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board, the Safeguarding Board and other partnerships in involving people in their areas of work.

More recently, in early 2020 we were dealing with a series of unprecedented events that affected people and households across RCT. The significant flooding arising from Storms Ciara and Dennis and the start of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic have affected all areas of Public Services. These events required the Council to communicate and engage with residents, volunteers, community groups and other key partners to provide accurate and timely information so that we could coordinate help and support our most vulnerable residents and businesses affected. The Council is continuing to work with people, communities and partners to support those in need. You can find more detailed information about the way the Council is responded to these events in the [PLACE evaluation](#).

Our plans for 2020/21 include

- continuing to engage and involve residents and communities in matters that affect them so that their voices are heard in Council decisions.
- finalising the Involvement Framework and putting in place the steps needed to implement the principles across the Council so that we improve how we engage and involve our residents and communities.
- making sure the Council meets the requirement of the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) law, to increase public participation in local democracy and improving transparency by putting in place a 'public participation strategy'.
- continuing to make our consultations more accessible to residents, by increasing the use and availability of easy to read materials. Training our staff in the production of plain English materials.
- increasing the use of digital engagement methods, through increasing the use of social media and videos.
- developing 'virtual' involvement and engagement, ensuring that we include those people without online access.

Giving Back

In a recent staff survey 77% of staff surveyed told us that they were proud to work for the Council. Over 80% of our staff live in RCT, with many others also having connections to local communities. Throughout the year, the Council, Councillors and staff support many charities in their own time, in many different ways, giving back to the community they serve. Examples include.....

Giving Gifts – at Christmas to children and young people who may not otherwise receive gifts through the Santa appeal and to those who are homeless through relevant charities.

Giving Essentials – through regular donations to foodbanks and homeless charities.

Giving Money – to numerous charities and supporting national and local causes in bake sales, dressing up and down days, direct sponsorship for activities and donating cash instead of sending Cards at Christmas time.

Giving the Spotlight – to people and groups in our communities e.g. PRIDE, International Women’s Day, Black History Month and many Health Awareness campaigns.

Giving Blood – encouraging staff to donate blood and providing the opportunity to do so in work time if necessary.

Giving Support – locally by providing access to council buildings, parks and pitches to charities so that they can hold activities within communities. This Council is also a partner in [PONT](#), a charity funded by local people based on friendship, commitment and respect and providing support and community to community links to Mbale Uganda. Among other things PONT has provided motorbike ambulances, trained thousands of healthcare workers and twinned over 100 local schools.

Giving Confidence

For the last 10 years, one of our residents in Supported Living Accommodation has joined the many hundreds of people in the Annual Macmillan Rhondda Walk from Treherbert to Trehafod, last year raising £90 for Macmillan Cancer Support. From collecting and banking sponsor money to completing the walk, staff are with him every step of the way.

How our work in 2019/20 contributed to the seven national Well-being Goals?

National Well-being Goal	Building a Strong ECONOMY	Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone PEOPLE	Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work PLACE
Prosperous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for businesses to emerge and flourish • Building new homes • Creating opportunities for jobs • Providing schools where children can achieve the best they can 	Supporting Children and Young People by giving them a great start in life through our Resilient families programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping people and traffic moving on well-maintained roads and pavements • Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now and in the future
Resilient	Promoting biodiversity by protecting existing habitats where possible and creating new areas for wildlife in our schools	Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules by using modular construction methods in the construction of our Extra Care facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in and valuing our Green Spaces • Integrating biodiversity into new housing estates • Expanding 'Healthy Hillside's' project
Healthier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in our Leisure Centres • Putting in place Walking Routes for residents and visitors and also safe routes to school for children and young people 	Helping people to stay as well as they can for as long as they can by encouraging increased activity through investing in our playgrounds, leisure centres and community facilities in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Flag progress in parks • Continuing to tackle environmental crime • Encouraging healthy activities in our parks e.g. Park Runs
More Equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing sanitary products to help tackle period poverty for girls in our schools • Providing opportunities to all our residents to improve their digital skills • Freezing prices in Leisure Centres and minimal pricing in the Lido 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure that residents can access services, no matter what their background or circumstances • Creating opportunities for people of all ages to get together to learn from each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Community Hubs for all to enjoy and benefit from • Making sure that our residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy our parks and green spaces
Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving housing for all our residents and creating pleasant neighbourhoods in which communities can thrive. • Organising Community events that bring people together, e.g. Big Bite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people to stay in their own homes for longer and enabling them to contribute to communities and strengthen social relationships • Continuing 'Food & Fun' during School holidays 	Keeping people safe and helping them to feel safe by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting sensible drinking • tackling anti-social behaviour

National Well-being Goal	Building a Strong ECONOMY	Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone PEOPLE	Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work PLACE
Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating the culture and history of the area in our theatres and parks • Promoting RCT as a visitor destination, including the Eisteddfod 	<p>Providing more opportunities for our residents to communicate with the Council and each other in Welsh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising Arts events for all sections of the community • encouraging local talent
Globally Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting in place transport hubs that will minimise car use and so improve air quality • Supporting Fair Trade Initiatives 	<p>Our work with PONT, a volunteer-based charity organisation in RCT which is making a difference to lives in Mbale, Eastern Uganda and which aims to support Ugandan organisations who have the potential to tackle poverty in their towns and villages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating our recycling and reuse • Progressing the Eco Park in Bryn Pica • Continuing to celebrate residents who go above and beyond to keep RCT clean and green through our 'Love Where You Live' awards

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2020

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 TO 2023/24

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR M NORRIS

AUTHOR: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2023/24, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2021/22 during the autumn.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- i. Note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process; and
 - ii. Determine any requirements for wider communication and engagement with full Council and the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to keep Members informed of the budget modelling work being undertaken as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements. This work is in advance of the Provisional Local Government Settlement, due from Welsh Government later this year.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Each year as part of the Council's robust financial management arrangements, an update on the Medium Term Financial Planning assumptions is provided to Members in advance of the detailed budget strategy work in the autumn.

- 4.2 The Public Sector has faced a prolonged period of real term reductions in funding levels for a number of years and unprecedented challenges lie ahead for services across local government, not least as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This position is also coupled with increasing demand and costs associated with many services, in particular Social Care Services.
- 4.3 Locally, this Council has demonstrated its ability and willingness to invest in services over a long term period, linked to our priorities as set out in the Council's 'Corporate Plan – 2016 – 2020' and more recently as part of the new Corporate Plan "Making a Difference - 2020 – 2024", in order to meet the changing needs of our people and communities. The significant 'additional' investment already agreed by Members during recent years is providing real improvements across many areas including Schools, Town Centres, Roads and Parks and Play Areas.
- 4.4 Whilst investment through the use of one off funds has been very positive, the Council recognises that it must still address base budget shortfalls and make difficult decisions to balance its ongoing revenue budget into the medium term. This report provides an interim view on the scale of the challenge faced and the arrangements being put in place to address any shortfalls across the planning period.
- 4.5 Members will note the latest indication from the UK Central Government is that the 2020 Budget scheduled for November 2020 will not go ahead this year and the Comprehensive Spending Review, setting public sector expenditure / funding limits and also scheduled for November 2020, will still go ahead but that no decision has been taken on whether it will cover the three years originally planned. The implications of these changes on the 2021/22 local government settlement in Wales will be key to our planning assumptions.

5. CURRENT MODELLING ASSUMPTIONS

- 5.1 The detailed modelling assumptions are included as part of the up-dated 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The updated plan sets out the detailed basis of the medium term strategy with references to revenue spending, capital plans, income levels and reserves.
- 5.2 Key assumptions used in the construction of the revenue budget modelling to 2023/24 are shown below:



5.3 Income

- Local Government settlement levels have been modelled on a range of planning scenarios:

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2021/22 to 2023/24	2.0% per annum	3.0% per annum	4.0% per annum

- Council Tax increases are currently being modelled at 2.85% per annum.
- One-off funding from Welsh Government assumed to be mainstreamed in respect of Social Services and Children’s Services specific grants.
- Fees and charges uplifted by inflation only.

5.4 Expenditure

- Service area pressures reflected which arise from statutory requirements, demand led pressures, demographics etc.
- Uplifts included for pay and non-pay inflation.
- Authority wide requirements reflected including Capital Financing, Levies and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Schools budget is modelled to cover, in full, pay and non-pay inflation (and in the context of the projected range of local government settlement levels).

6. **CURRENT MODELLING OUTCOMES**

6.1 The modelling uses a number of assumptions which are all subject to change and will be reviewed as part of the detailed budget strategy work underway. Due to current uncertainty at a UK Central Government level around public sector funding levels, as set out in paragraph 4.5, a range of modelling assumptions have been compiled based on Welsh Government funding being at +2%, +3% and +4% per year for financial years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. The variability of the potential level of the Settlement from Welsh Government has a significant impact on the budget gap, at £3.9M per 1% and Figure 1 illustrates the outcome of the range of modelling assumptions currently applied.

Figure 1 : Modelled Budget Gap 2021/22 to 2023/24

Budget Requirement	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Additional Budget Requirement			
Inflation	8,445	9,075	9,788
Inescapables	9,558	5,913	5,252
Risks	1,877	3,754	3,754
Schools (Uplift)	6,516	5,679	5,638
Authority Wide	1,576	1,847	1,418
Budget Requirement	27,972	26,268	25,850
Additional Resources			
Council Tax	3,303	4,010	4,145
Transition Funding	- 800		
Social Services and Children's Services Specific Grants	-	-	-
WG Resource at +2%	7,773	7,929	8,087
WG Resource at +3%	11,660	12,010	12,370
WG Resource at +4%	15,547	16,169	16,815

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels				3 Year Budget Gap
2% Increase	17,696	14,330	13,618	45,644
3% Increase	13,809	10,249	9,336	33,393
4% Increase	9,922	6,090	4,891	20,903

Note: a 2.85% Council Tax increase per year is assumed as part of the modelled gap

7. **BALANCING THE BUDGET**

- 7.1 The Council continues to focus on the budget gap position over the medium term and has successfully implemented a strategy of early identification and delivery of base budget reducing measures in-year. This has enabled the Council to deliver financial savings early and to replenish the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve which has been used proactively as part of the budget strategy for a number of years.
- 7.2 Our priority and focus this year to date has been responding to the pandemic and ensuring that our residents, communities and businesses have been

protected and supported. Options will now be developed which can help address the range of the potential budget gap which we will face but it is important that in doing so we ensure that we maintain our valued and critical services. Inevitably the focus at annual budget setting time is for the forthcoming financial year, that is, 2021/22, and the savings quantum required is still to be confirmed pending receipt of the Local Government Settlement from Welsh Government.

- 7.3 As part of developing options opportunity must be taken to ensure that we “lock in” the transformation and service delivery changes which we have made across many, if not all of our service areas. The Council has taken the opportunity to make a step change in our working arrangements and become more efficient in terms of maximising the use of digital solutions where appropriate, recognising that such delivery does not meet the needs of all of our residents.
- 7.4 In line with the above, the areas we will explore include the continued: maximisation of efficiency saving opportunities; delivery of our Social Services Transformation Programme (including our significant commitment and investment in the provision of Extra Care facilities); review of our base budget requirements at both a service level and an authority wide level; maximisation of opportunities to invest for the long term and collaboration with others; and a focus on the principles of Digitalisation, Commercialism, Early Intervention and Prevention, Independence and being an Efficient and Effective Organisation.
- 7.5 As work develops through the areas described in 7.4 above, this will be reported to Members as appropriate.
- 7.6 Greater clarity will be available on the level of savings required post the Provisional Local Government Settlement later in the year. The position will be reported to Members as soon as possible after the settlement publication.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no immediate equality and diversity implications to consider as an Equality Impact Assessment will be an integral part of the budget strategy itself that will be reported on later in the year.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 There are no specific consultation requirements at this time.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The financial modelling assumptions and implications are set out in the detail of the report. At this stage, the Council or Cabinet is not being asked to make any new financial decisions in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

- 12.1 The report supports our Corporate Plan cross-cutting priority of 'Living within our Means'.
- 12.2 The Medium Term Financial Plan is a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its obligations to support wider partnership objectives.

13. CONCLUSIONS

- 13.1 This report and the accompanying 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' sets out the current position on the financial challenges facing the Council in the medium term. The report notes, that subject to the level of funding from Welsh Government, a significant budget gap is likely to be faced in 2021/22 and for the following two years.
- 13.2 The report clearly states that the proactive strategy adopted in recent years through early identification of savings and the targeting of key areas such as new ways of working and an increased emphasis on preventative approaches can still deliver significant efficiency savings.
- 13.3 The focus will switch to the 2021/22 budget strategy upon receipt of the Provisional Local Government Settlement and, as part of this, setting out a range of budget saving options to enable the Council to deliver a balanced budget for the forthcoming year.

Other information

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

13th October 2020

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 TO 2023/24

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

Item:

Background Papers

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22 – <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2019/07/18/Reports/Item5MediumTermFinancialPlan.pdf>
- Performance Reports ([Year-end 2019/20](#) and [Quarter 1 2020/21](#))

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies

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**Rhondda Cynon Taf
County Borough Council**

Medium Term Financial Plan

**2020/21 – 2023/24
(updated October 2020)**

Medium Term Financial Plan - Contents

Introduction and Purpose

Section 1 Background and Context

Section 2 Mid-Year Budget Review

Section 3 Local Government Settlement – Prospects

Section 4 Council Tax

Section 5 Individual Schools Budget

Section 6 Fees and Charges

Section 7 National and Local Pressures

Section 8 Inflationary Pressures

Section 9 Specific Grants

Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability

Section 11 Reserve Policy (General Fund Reserves and Earmarked Reserves)

Section 12 Balancing the Budget

Section 13 Capital Programme

Section 14 Consultation and Scrutiny

Section 15 Other Relevant Documents

Annex 1 Council Revenue Budget by Services Provided

Annex 2 Council Revenue Budget by Priority Area

Annex 3 Council Capital Programme by Priority Area

Annex 4 Council Earmarked Reserves

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Medium Term Financial and Service Planning is an essential component of the effective financial management of this Council. It is the cornerstone of good governance and an enabler of service delivery and service improvement within the constraints of available resources.

This Medium Term Financial Plan sets out, holistically, the financial context within which the Council is operating and forward projects the financial challenge facing the Council over a 3 year planning period.

It will also align and link our financial resources to our Corporate Plan Priorities and will enable us to track resource allocation in this way over future years.

It will be appropriate to ensure the Strategy continues to be kept under on-going review particularly in light of the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), recognising that the course of the pandemic and its effects on the Council's finances will be subject to change.

Section 1 Background and Context

- 1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has a track record of strong and effective financial management. Medium Term Financial Planning is an essential part of these arrangements.
- 1.2 The austerity measures emanating from the actions of Central Government have impacted on the resources available to Welsh Government and consequently local government in Wales over a sustained period, recognising that for the 2020/21 financial year a more positive local government settlement was received. At a national level, the overall local government settlement for Wales over the last 7 financial years is shown below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Financial Year	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.5%
2016/17	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.3%

- 1.3 For Rhondda Cynon Taf the real term reductions in funding over many years has translated into a need to make budgetary savings in excess of £96M over the last 10 years or so, equating to a reduction of approximately 19% of the Council's net budget.
- 1.4 In March 2020, the Council agreed a new Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' 2020 – 2024 that set the overall direction for the Council over the four year period, describing its vision, purpose and ambition for the County Borough.
- 1.5 The Council's vision is:

“To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous”.
- 1.6 The Council's purpose and the reason why it exists is:

“To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous”.

1.7 The Council is focused on the following three priorities that have also been adopted as its Well-being objectives in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act:

- Ensuring **People: are independent, healthy and successful**;
- Creating **Places: where people are proud to live, work and play**; and
- Enabling **Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.**

1.8 The Corporate Plan is a key component of the Council's budgetary and business planning process, and it recognises that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and the wider public sector continue to face significant financial challenges. The Corporate Plan sets the context that despite significant reductions to Government spending since 2010 and a return to economic growth, the financial environment for the Council, the wider public sector and residents continues to be challenging, and was summarised in the Plan as follows:

- Despite the new UK Government increasing its spending commitment for public services, for the first time for many years, pay and pensions costs are rising quickly. This negates the majority of the benefit of the increase in public sector funding.
- It is likely that over the next three years further spending cuts will be required, as the UK budget deficit still stands at around £40 billion or 2% of national GDP meaning that some form of austerity will continue.
- Increasing pressure on services: increasing demand on services is driven by a changing population. Rhondda Cynon Taf's population is increasing but health and social services in particular are facing acute challenges due to the growth in older cohorts, as people live for longer.
- Wider financial pressure on households: from energy bills, housing costs, wage restraint, and benefit reforms.
- Increasing public expectations in terms of responding to climate change and the need to act, will require the Council to invest in ensuring its day to day activities become Carbon Neutral. This means that the Council must plan for the fact that this additional cost will not be met from simply doing more of what it is currently doing, but from making other difficult choices on what it does or does not provide.
- Knowing that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges in the years ahead, it has a responsibility to develop and agree a plan for meeting the challenge.

- 1.9 The Council has proved that it has the capacity and capability to respond to the challenge of austerity and still invest in its priorities and modernise its services. The new Corporate Plan seeks to build upon the changes we have made to the way we work and to seek to ensure that local residents and businesses are sufficiently skilled and resilient to respond to the opportunities and threats the global economy presents to us all, including the on-going impact of the coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.10 The Council's agreed Revenue Budget for 2020/21 amounts to £508.747M. Annex 1 sets out the Council budget for 2020/21 as allocated across services.
- 1.11 The budget has also been analysed across the 3 priority areas of People, Places and Prosperity as set out in the Corporate Plan (referenced in paragraph 1.7) in order to demonstrate the allocation of Council Revenue resources to these priority areas. Whilst some allocation has been necessarily subject to a degree of 'best fit', this is still felt to be a helpful analysis and provides a basis to track resource allocation over time. This is attached at Annex 2. A similar analysis is also included for the 3 year capital programme at Annex 3.

Section 2 Mid-Year Budget Review

- 2.1 The Council set its Revenue Budget Strategy for 2020/21 and Capital Programme (2020/21 to 2022/23) in March 2020, and within a very short space of time the COVID-19 crisis escalated and the subsequent national lockdown was announced and became effective from 23rd March 2020.
- 2.2 Since this time work has been prioritised on supporting residents and businesses through an unprecedented period and has resulted in significant disruption across Council services with many repurposed, reduced or fully suspended.
- 2.3 Funding in respect of additional costs and income losses as a result of COVID-19 is being provided by Welsh Government on a claims basis. Whilst to date funding has covered in full the majority of additional costs incurred, the level of additional resource is likely to be finite and not everlasting with local government needing to become self-sufficient at some stage.
- 2.4 An analysis of the estimated costs and income loss for the year is shown in Table 2.1, along with amounts already recovered (quarter 1) and an estimate of how much is to be recovered. The estimated amounts are clearly subject to ongoing review as and when restrictions are revised moving forward and the associated impact on Council Services.

Table 2.1

Service Area	Quarter 1	Quarter 2 - 4	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	-509	-1,336	-1,845
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	-1,801	-2,896	-4,697
Community and Children's Services	-5,216	-6,303	-11,519
Education and Inclusion Services	-3,611	-1,904	-5,515
Authority Wide	-2,481	-1,201	-3,682
TOTAL	-13,618	-13,640	-27,258

The above table is net of income recovered from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme of £1,150k and off-setting cost savings as a result of specific services being reduced or suspended.

- 2.5 After the assumed recovery, in full, of the above amounts, the Council's projected out-turn position, estimated at 30th June 2020 (Quarter 1) is shown in the table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Service Area	2020/21 – as at 30 th June 2020 (Quarter 1)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 1 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services	192.627	192.781	0.154
Community & Children's Services	162.681	165.536	2.855
Chief Executive	27.039	26.901	(0.138)
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	55.928	56.143	0.215
Sub Total	438.275	441.361	3.086
Authority Wide Budgets	70.472	70.289	(0.183)
Grand Total	508.747	511.650	2.903

- 2.6 With regard to the projected overspend, after assuming full recovery of additional costs and income losses as a consequence of COVID-19, service managers have been charged with identifying corrective actions to bring spend back in line with budget. We also continue to make representation in respect of funding required for winter pressures in social care, the projected costs of which are already factored into the above position.
- 2.7 The mid-year review work to assess the financial implications as a result of COVID-19 is on-going and aims to, amongst other things, capture efficiency saving opportunities from the transformation and service delivery changes being made across Council services. Areas being reviewed include:
- Consumables and Non-pay Budgets – this area covers print, stationery, postage, equipment and general materials, with cost reduction opportunities being explored from new ways of working and working practices brought about through an acceleration of processes being automated and digitised.
 - Buildings - building costs, including utility expenditure, will be reduced due to the significant reduction in occupancy across a range of buildings to date this year and the likely continuation of home working arrangements going forward. Work is focussing on identifying one-off cost savings, for example, where services have been temporarily suspended during the current year, and also looking ahead where use of Council buildings can be further optimised leading to an on-going rationalisation of the estate in the future.

- Staff Travel Costs – the additional investment and step change in facilitating home working, over and above the Council’s Digital Strategy aspirations at the start of the year, has provided a significant number of Council officers with the technology to communicate remotely in a secure environment with team members, officers from other Council services and external partners, and, as part of this, has enabled documents to be shared remotely and worked on by a number of officers at the same time. This technology is also supporting the transformation of the Council’s democratic processes. The impact of the additional investment and step change in this area is helping officers and elected members to undertake more of their duties remotely and in doing so reduce the number of business journeys. Work is underway to capture the resulting on-going cost savings.
- Inflation – analysis is being undertaken to compare the inflationary uplifts built into 2020/21 non-pay budgets compared to the actual inflationary impact services are experiencing when purchasing specific goods and services. Where it is identified that the inflationary allowance built into budgets is in excess of the actual inflation rate, adjustments to service’s budgets will be actioned.
- Schools – in the same way as expenditure and budgets are being reviewed across non-school council services, the financial impact of schools being closed or not fully operational between April and June this year is being reviewed to assess saving opportunities, particularly in relation to energy and capitation related areas. The aim of the exercise will be for schools to contribute to the delivery of additional efficiencies from the cost savings that have been realised in the first 3 months of the year.

2.8 The above reviews will now become part of the preparatory work being undertaken to formulate a draft 2021/22 revenue budget strategy, with relevant updates incorporated into reports to Members as part of the budget setting process

Section 3 Local Government Settlement – Prospects

- 3.1 As referenced in Section 1, local government as a whole has received negative and below inflation settlements from Welsh Government in overall terms for 6 of the last 7 financial years. Whilst positive settlements have been received since 2017/18, for three of these years the levels have been some way below inflation. For Rhondda Cynon Taf the level of settlements received, in comparison to the all Wales average, are shown below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Financial Year	RCT Settlement	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.7%	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.7%	-3.5%
2016/17	-0.9%	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.4%	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.5%	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.8%	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.5%	+4.3%

- 3.2 Welsh Government have not provided any definitive indication of future year financial settlements, leaving local government to themselves model potential scenarios. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) support local government in this regard.
- 3.3 Nationally, the outcome of the 2019 general election, Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic, along with the implications of the next Comprehensive Spending Review when published, have increased the uncertainty over future public sector funding levels.
- 3.4 The level of Welsh Government funding is a key factor in the Council’s overall resource availability, accounting for 76.4% of our budget. Each 1% change in the level of Welsh Government funding amounts to £3.9M of funding for this Council.
- 3.5 For planning purposes, this Council has modelled a range of scenarios based upon planning assumptions as summarised in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: RCT Planning Assumptions – Welsh Government Settlement

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2021/22 to 2023/24	2.0% per annum	3.0% per annum	4.0% per annum

- 3.6 The provisional local government settlement for 2021/22 is anticipated to be received during the autumn 2020 (subject to any impact on timing as a result of the UK Central Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, also scheduled to be announced in autumn 2020).

Section 4 Council Tax

- 4.1 Council Tax income accounts for 22.8% of the Council's net budget, generating £115.881M from local taxpayers in 2020/21.
- 4.2 The total yield from Council Tax is determined by a combination of the level of the tax base and the level at which Council Tax is set.
- 4.3 The Tax Base is the measure of the relative taxable capacity of different areas within the County Borough and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The Gross Tax Base is the number of chargeable dwellings in the area expressed as Band D equivalents after allowing for exemptions, disablement reductions and discounts. This is then adjusted for an assumed collection rate to give the Net Tax Base.
- 4.4 The Tax Base is provided to Welsh Government and is used as part of the distribution formula for the Local Government Settlement. The Tax Base is calculated for the County Borough as a whole and for those areas that have a Community Council.
- 4.5 The Tax Base movement over recent years is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Year	Gross Tax Base (£)	Collection Rate	Net Tax Base (£)
2014/15	75,189	96.5%	72,557
2015/16	75,565	97.0%	73,298
2016/17	76,207	97.5%	74,302
2017/18	76,901	97.5%	74,978
2018/19	77,608	97.5%	75,668
2019/20	78,844	97.5%	76,873
2020/21	79,317	97.5%	77,334

- 4.6 The level of any increase or decrease of Council Tax is considered each year as part of the annual budget consultation processes, and subsequently determined by Council as part of the annual budget strategy. The formal resolution is also agreed by Council.
- 4.7 Council Tax levels over recent years are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Year	Band D Council Tax £	Increase over Previous Year
2014/15	£1,248.00	4.5%
2015/16	£1,295.48	3.8%
2016/17	£1,331.17	2.75%
2017/18	£1,361.18	2.25%
2018/19	£1,406.17	3.3%
2019/20	£1,456.85	3.6%
2020/21	£1,498.44	2.85%

- 4.8 The total amount raised through Council Tax is derived by multiplying the net tax base by the band D Council Tax charge, which for 2020/21 amounts to (77,334 x £1,498.44) £115.88M.
- 4.9 For modelling purposes in our medium term calculations as part of this report, a Council Tax increase of 2.85% per annum is currently being used for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24, noting of course that this is a key decision for Members to make as part of setting each year's budget. In terms of generating resources, a 1% increase in the level of Council Tax will raise an extra £883k¹ of additional income each year (this is net of the costs associated with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme described in more detail below).

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

- 4.10 During 2019/20 the Council paid CTRS to 24,747 eligible applicants at a cost of £23.624M. For 2020/21 the Council has estimated the cost to be £24.680M. This estimate pre-dated the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to a significant increase in claimants eligible for support. Discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government to clarify the funding arrangement for the increase in costs. The CTR Scheme in Wales is a national scheme developed by Welsh Government.

Tax Base

- 4.11 On 19th December 2017 Cabinet approved a policy which enabled the Council to reduce the Council Tax bill for Care Leavers up to the age of 25 who were resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf to zero. The policy has been operational during 2018/19.
- 4.12 During 2018/19 the Welsh Government introduced legislation, effective from 1st April 2019, making all properties in Wales that are occupied by Care Leavers (up to the age of 25) exempt from paying Council Tax. This will remove the requirement for the Council to have its own discretionary policy for this category of residents.
- 4.13 All awards of this new exemption type have been reflected in the Council Tax Base from 1st April 2019.

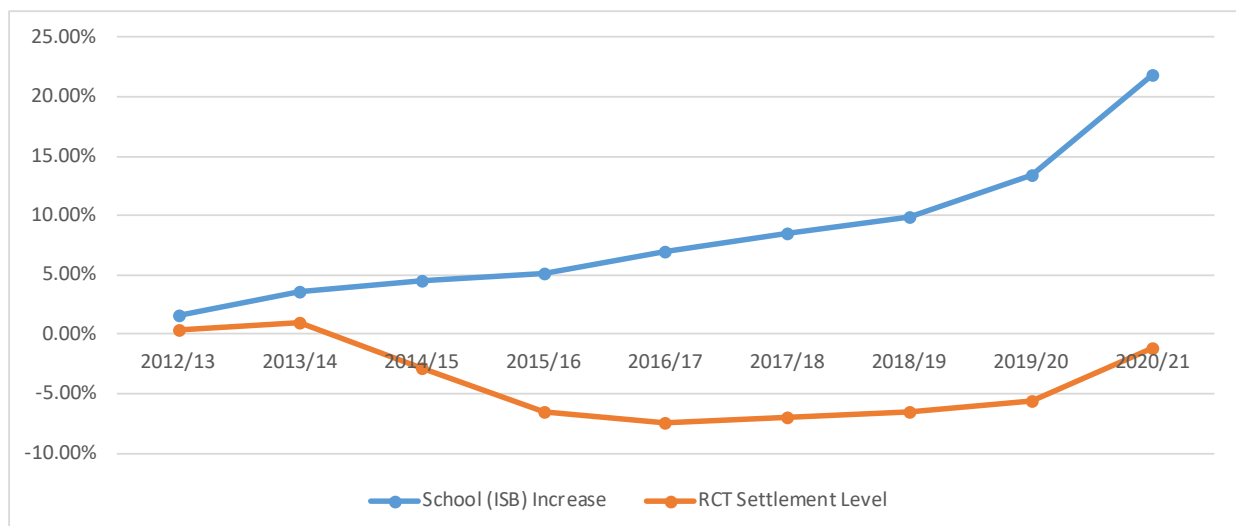
¹ Based on 2020/21 Council Tax Income

Section 5 Individual Schools Budget (ISB)

- 5.1 The total Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for the Council in 2020/21 amounts to £161.6M and represents over 31% of the Council's net budget.
- 5.2 Since 2012/13, the ISB has increased at a level above other Council services and above the level of the Council's own settlement from Welsh Government, and, at the same time, recognising that there is still an expectation that schools will continue to make a positive contribution toward balancing the overall Council budget. The ISB has been subject to protection requirements by Welsh Government over this period which ended in 2016/17. The comparative ISB increases over the last nine years are shown in Table 5.1 and graphically below:

Table 5.1

Year	School (ISB) Increase	RCT Settlement Level
2012/13	+1.58%	+0.42%
2013/14	+2.08%	+0.5%
2014/15	+0.9%	-3.7%
2015/16	+0.6%	-3.7%
2016/17	+1.85%	-0.9%
2017/18	+1.5%	+0.4%
2018/19	+1.4%	+0.5%
2019/20	+3.5%	+0.8%
2020/21	+8.5%	+4.5%



- 5.3 Over the 9 year period shown in Table 5.1, the ISB has received an increase amounting to 21.91%, as opposed to the Council's remaining budgets having

been reduced by 1.18%. In monetary terms, applied to an ISB of £138M (2011/12 ISB), this amounts to an extra £31.8M being provided to schools over the period.

- 5.4 Pupil number forecasts are modelled across Primary, Secondary and Special Schools sectors with the financial implications included in the Schools Budget requirement.
- 5.5 The levels of school reserves held as at the 31st March 2020 are shown in Table 5.2 below (draft, subject to audit).

Table 5.2

Type of School	31/03/2019	2019/20 Movement	31/03/2020
	£k	£k	£k
Primary	3,704	(762)	2,942
Secondary	(1,729)	539	(1,190)
Special	338	(21)	317
All Through Schools	694	(379)	315
Total	3,007	(623)	2,384

- 5.6 As part of ensuring sustainable levels of resources for schools over the medium term (to meet pay and non-pay pressures), it will be critical that on-going funding, via Welsh Government, continues to be included in core (RSG) settlements.

Section 6 Fees and Charges

- 6.1 The Council raises approximately £19M of income annually from fees and charges raised across services. The level of charges is reviewed annually.
- 6.2 Cabinet reviewed (20th February 2020) fees and charges levels with the objective to continue to provide a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices. The initial budget modelling for 2020/21 had assumed a 1.50% increase.
- 6.3 The outcome of Cabinet's review was a 1.50% standard increase to fees and charges (allowing for rounding adjustments as appropriate) with the exception of a number of areas that would be subject to specific treatment. A summary of these exceptions are set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 – Summary of fees and charges not subject to the standard increase

Area of charge	Increase for 2020/21
Leisure for Life	Nil increase
Car Park Charges	Nil increase
Summer and Winter Playing Fees (Sports Clubs)	Nil increase
School Meals (Primary and Secondary Schools)	£0.05 per meal (and then no increase for 2 years i.e. 2021/22 and 2022/23)
Meals on Wheels and Day Centre Meals	£0.10 per meal
Pontypridd Lido (entry for adult users)	£0.50 per Adult Swim
Rhondda Heritage Park	Revisions as detailed below

- 6.4 Further information on the exceptions in Table 6.1, where appropriate, are set out below.

School Meals (Primary and Secondary Schools)

- 6.4.1 For 2020/21 the price per meal increased by £0.05p and then no increase for the following 2 financial years (i.e. 2021/22 and 2022/23). The 2020/21 primary school meal price is £2.55 and the 2020/21 free school meal value of a secondary school meal is £2.80. In terms of comparing across Wales, prices range between £2.00 and £2.60 for primary schools and £2.15 and £3.05 for secondary schools.

'Meals on Wheels' and 'Day Centre Meals'

- 6.4.2 The 2019/20 meal price for both meals on wheels and day centre meals is £3.85, with the price for both increased to £3.95 for 2020/21. In terms of comparing across Wales, prices range between £3.30 and £5.40.

Pontypridd Lido (entry for adult users)

- 6.4.3 The 2020/21 charge for adult users increased from £2 to £2.50 per swim (use for those aged ‘under 16’ remains free). The Lido continues to be successful in terms of user numbers, promoting healthy activity and delivering wider economic benefits to the area, and the proposed charge would remain competitive compared to other tourist attractions.

(Since determining the increase the Lido has been closed due to significant damage caused by Storm Dennis).

Rhondda Heritage Park

- 6.4.4 The individual adult entry fee and family ticket for the Welsh Mining Experience (underground tour) has increased by £1.00 (to £7.95 and £20 respectively) and to standardise the non-school entry fee for both adults and children for Santa’s Toy Mine to £10. A comparison of attractions in neighbouring areas confirmed that the revised ticket prices continue to position the Rhondda Heritage Park as one of the lowest priced attractions.
- 6.5 The total estimated impact of the above revised fees and charges levels is a reduction in income of £2k in a full year (as compared to all fees and charges being increased by 1.5%).
- 6.6 In addition to the information set out at Table 6.1, a number of fees and charges decisions have previously been approved and accordingly have already been incorporated into the Council’s 2020/21 Budget Strategy. These are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 – Summary of decisions already approved

Area of charge	Decision approved
Adult Social Care Charges (non-residential care services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase from £80 to £90 per week in line with the revised limit determined by Welsh Government with further increases to be made in line with Welsh Government limits (Cabinet 18th July 2017)
Fixed Penalty Notice (for environmental crimes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set at £100 with effect from 1st April 2018 (Cabinet 25th January 2018)
Houses in Multiple Occupation - Licenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • License fees set for the period 2019/2020 to 2023/2024 (Cabinet 14th February 2019)
Bereavement fees and charges for war veterans and service men and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% reduction to all Council bereavement fees incurred by families of deceased war veterans and service men and women resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Delegated Decision 8th May 2019)

Adult Learning Course Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hourly rate increased from £2.50 to £2.90 for the period 1st January 2020 to 31st March 2021 (and thereafter, subject to annual review). <p>(Delegated Decision 22nd October 2019)</p>
Leisure Centres and Swimming Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure for Life membership prices frozen until January 2023; and Leisure non-membership prices (e.g. pay and play) increased by 1.5% effective from 1st January 2020. <p>(Delegated Decision 20th December 2019)</p>

- 6.7 Furthermore, at the [21st November 2019](#) Cabinet meeting, a 12 month pilot was approved to apply a reduced cremation fee for funeral directors offering a direct cremation² in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As this is currently a pilot, no budgetary impact on fees and charges was incorporated into the Council’s 2020/21 budget.
- 6.8 For completeness, a full list of all 2020/21 fees and charges across all Council services can be accessed [here](#).

² Direct Cremation - A “direct”, “simplicity” cremation or “cremation without ceremony” is where a funeral director arranges a service with no mourners and brings the deceased directly to the crematorium with no religious service or attendees. The fees and charges to the family of the deceased are significantly reduced making the service more affordable, particularly for those on low incomes.

Section 7 National and Local Pressures

7.0 Authority Wide Budgets

7.1 Appropriate sums must be set aside to cover a number of Authority Wide costs. These include the following:

Capital Financing

The projected level of capital charges are linked to the Council's Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy.

Levies

Levies are raised (against non-service specific budgets) by the South Wales Fire Service, the Coroner, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Glamorgan Archives (Joint Committee).

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

This demand led area of expenditure is in line with the Welsh Government national scheme introduced from financial year 2013/14.

Miscellaneous

The areas of expenditure held here include:

- Graduate and Apprenticeship programmes
- Trade Union Costs
- Local Government Elections
- Planning Appeals
- Former Authority Pension Costs
- Voluntary Termination Costs
- Local Government Pension Scheme including auto-enrolment
- Bank Charges
- Housing Benefit Subsidy Costs
- Energy / Invest to Save
- External Audit Fees
- Vehicle Replacement Funding
- City Deal Costs
- Insurance Costs
- Discretionary Non Domestic Rate Relief
- Apprenticeship Levy

7.2 A summary of the projected requirement for Authority Wide budgets from the current year (2020/21 budget) to 2023/24 is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Authority Wide Budgets	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Current Budget	(Projected)	(Projected)	(Projected)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing	19,713	19,950	20,308	20,658
Levies	12,438	12,687	12,940	13,199
CTRS	24,680	25,420	26,183	26,968
Miscellaneous	13,641	13,991	14,464	14,488
Total	70,472	72,048	73,895	75,313
Change - Inc / (Dec)		1,576	1,847	1,418

The above position includes a contribution of £0.5M per year to replenish our General Fund Reserves by £1.5M over the 3 year period.

7.3 Service Inescapable Pressures

- 7.4 There are clearly areas of our budget which are exposed to more uncontrollable spending requirements which might arise from demand led or demographic changes, legislative or regulatory change, the effect of external market forces (and prices) and the financial implications of policy and service planning decisions made by the Council. These are **inescapable pressures** and include the ongoing implications of inflation and Living Wage on our External Contracts, the cost of pay awards for our teaching and non-teaching (APT&C) workforce, changes in pupil number projections, demand led social care pressures for adult and children's services, and assumptions around reductions in specific grants.
- 7.5 The amount included for Service Inescapable Pressures within the Budget Requirement is shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Forecasted Inescapable Budget Pressures	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools	1,575	233	-54
Education and Inclusion Services	547	502	352
Community and Children's Services	8,317	4,564	4,264
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	550	777	573
Chief Executive's Division	144	70	63
Total	11,133	6,146	5,198
			22,477

7.6 Service Financial Risks

- 7.7 In addition to the above inescapable budget pressures, there are items of risk which have been identified and which are captured and estimated in financial terms. A view is then taken on the potential overall likelihood of the risk materialising and the quantum of it which should be included in the early modelling of the budget requirement. As time progresses the risks will either become inescapable or will fall away, possibly with a longer term impact.
- 7.8 The amount included for Service Financial Risks within the Budget Requirement is shown below in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Financial Risks	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Value of Risk Included	1,877	3,754	3,754

7.9 School (ISB) Requirements

- 7.10 Section 5 set out the context for school budgets noting their favourable treatment as compared to other Council services and the expectation that schools will continue to make a positive contribution toward balancing the overall Council budget. As part of modelling assumptions, pay and non-pay inflation pressures are fully funded, which is set within the current planning assumptions for Welsh Government settlement levels, and recognising that there may still be a requirement for local efficiency saving planning at an individual school level. The modelled ISB budget increases are set out in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4

Schools (ISB) Modelled Budget	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Modelled Budget	168,094	173,773	179,411
Modelled Increase	6,516	5,679	5,638

Section 8 Inflationary Pressures

8.1 Employee Inflation

8.2 For modelling purposes, initial estimates of employee inflation levels built into the medium term financial plan are teachers' (average) pay increasing by 3.1% per year and non-teaching staff by 2.75% per year (both in line the 2020 level of pay awards). Employee inflation forecasting will be kept under on-going review.

8.3 The results of the 2019 Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund triennial valuation has been completed and the results incorporated into the Council's base budget from 2020/21 on. In addition, following confirmation through the 2020/21 local government settlement of funding being provided for Teachers Pension costs, this funding has also been included as part of the Council's base budget from 2020/21 on.

8.4 Non-Employee Inflation

8.5 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee continues to set monetary policy to meet a 2% inflation target. For the MTFP, inflation is included across all expenditure and income heads currently at 1.7%, 1.7% and 1.9% for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively. A number of specific cost areas where inflation is known or anticipated to differ from these rates have more appropriate inflationary allowances applied as detailed below.

8.6 Specific Inflation

8.7 There are some budget heads which are particularly volatile and susceptible to variations in rates of inflation which are outliers to the central forecasts. More detailed analysis and procurement intelligence is applied to uplifts for the following expenditure heads:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Fuel (Petrol)
- Food

8.8 The overall cost of inflation to the Council is summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1

Inflation	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employee Related	9,360	10,433	10,781
Non-Employee	4,026	4,088	4,699
Total	13,386	14,521	15,480
			43,387

Section 9 Specific Grants

- 9.1 The Council is mindful of the opportunities that are likely to accrue by the Council attracting specific grants to supplement its base revenue budget. Whilst specific grants can dilute local accountability, the fact remains that in attracting such funding, it allows us to undertake projects that otherwise we may have had to defer or cancel.
- 9.2 By their nature, specific grants tend to be time-limited and involve an assessment process. It is important therefore, that any specific grant funded programme complements the Council's locally determined priorities. In addition, even if they are initially successful in attracting specific grants, authorities are restricted in their ability to confidently forward plan, as they have no guarantee of ongoing (specific grant) funding. Consequently, because specific grants are time limited it is vital to develop appropriate "exit strategies".
- 9.3 Whilst specific grants come from a number of sources, for 2020/21 the Welsh Government alone will provide over £1Billion in total to Welsh Local Authorities (excluding funding provided in relation to the coronavirus pandemic). The allocation of specific grants remains a key feature of the Welsh Government's annual local government settlements, albeit the Welsh Government is committed to reduce this form of hypothecation in the longer term.
- 9.4 Table 9.1 sets out the main areas of expenditure and services which are funded currently by specific revenue grants.

Table 9.1

Award Body	Purpose	2019/20 Amount £M	2020/21 Amount £M
<u>Community & Children Services</u>			
Shaw Trust & Working Links	Subsidisation of Employment of Disabled Workers	0.293	0.303
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Subsidy Bed & Breakfast Scheme	0.122	0.122
Welsh Government	Children's and Community Grant	22.318	13.442
	Communities 4 Work	1.093	1.093
	Inspire 2 Work	0.344	0.317

Award Body	Purpose	2019/20 Amount £M	2020/21 Amount £M
Welsh Government	School Effectiveness Grant - Play	0.073	0.000
	Social Care Workforce Development Programme	0.570	0.556
	Substance Misuse Action Fund	2.971	3.810
	General Practitioner (GP) Referral Scheme	0.168	0.000
	Intermediate Care Fund (Via LHB)	2.102	0.000
	Environmental & Sustainable Development Single Revenue Grant	0.036	0.000
	Community Learning	0.201	0.232
	Youth Support Grant	0.239	0.712
	Child Burial Grant	0.048	0.048
	European Social Fund (ESF) Ignite/Platform 1	0.141	0.000
	Housing Support Grant	0.000	9.070
	Integrated Care Fund	0.000	3.310
	National Exercise Referral Scheme	0.000	0.168
	National Approach to Advocacy (Children's)	0.000	0.049
	Regional Facilitation Grant	0.000	0.066
Youth Justice Board	Youth Justice Provision	0.304	0.000
Police Crime Commissioner	Police and Crime Reduction	0.197	0.000
Sports Council for Wales	Grand/Big Splash	0.306	0.000
	Dragon Sports Scheme	0.040	0.000
	Sports Development	0.549	0.000
Arts Council Wales	ACW Revenue Grant	0.150	0.000
	Arts Portfolio Wales	0.000	0.150
Cwm Taf Health Board	Community Joint Care Programme	0.000	0.068
		0.000	
Heritage Lottery Fund	RCT's Sporting Heroes	0.000	0.032

Award Body	Purpose	2019/20 Amount £M	2020/21 Amount £M
Home Office	Police & Crime Commissioner	0.000	0.111
	Youth Justice Provision	0.000	0.517
Sport Wales	Disability Sport Wales Community Scheme	0.000	0.020
	Free Swimming	0.000	0.060
	Local Sport Plan	0.000	0.475
Total Community & Children's Services		32.265	34.731
<u>Education & Inclusion Services</u>			
Welsh Government	Post-16 Provision in Schools	9.337	9.805
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Delegated to Schools	0.000	9.010
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Admin	0.000	0.018
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Foundation Phase Non Maintained	0.000	0.145
	Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant - Education Improvement Grant	8.949	0.000
	Pupil Development Grant Delegated to Schools (estimate)	7.425	7.238
	Pupil Development Grant Children Looked After (estimate)	0.367	0.358
	Local Authority Education Grant – Minority Ethnic & Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Learners	0.243	0.243
	Local Authority Education Grant – Pupil Development Grant Access (estimate)	0.173	0.000

Award Body	Purpose	2019/20 Amount £M	2020/21 Amount £M
	Local Authority Education Grant – Support for Pressures Arising from Teachers Pay Award (estimate)	0.621	0.000
	Early Years Pupil Development Grant (estimate)	1.056	1.732
	Seren Network	0.090	0.045
	Nursery Childcare Administration	0.000	0.279
	Nursery Childcare (estimate)	2.089	2.549
	Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant (estimate)	0.163	0.753
	Period Products Grant	0.186	0.000
	Period Dignity in Communities	0.000	0.018
	Period Dignity in School	0.000	0.093
	Reduction in Infant Class Sizes Grant	0.390	0.432
	Music Grant	0.111	0.000
	Out of School Childcare Grant	0.165	0.083
	Schools Business Manager Grant	0.053	0.000
	Schools Based Supply Cluster Grant	0.028	0.000
	Professional Learning Grant (estimate)	0.000	0.944
	ICT Hwb in Schools Infrastructure Grant	0.000	0.242
	Education Grant - Emotional Wellbeing	0.000	0.121
	Education Grant - PDG Access - School uniform grant	0.000	0.504
Rural Payments Agency	Infant Milk (Estimate)	0.465	0.471
Total Education & Inclusion Services		31.911	35.083

Award Body	Purpose	2019/20 Amount £M	2020/21 Amount £M
<u>Chief Executives</u>			
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	0.788	0.779
Welsh Government	NDR Admin Grant	0.394	0.394
Total Chief Executives		1.182	1.173
<u>Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services</u>			
Welsh Government	Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Grant	0.034	0.030
	Sustainable Waste Management Grant	1.158	1.154
	Lead Local Flood Authority Grant	0.065	0.070
	Concessionary Fares	6.789	6.789
	Road Safety	0.125	0.125
	Bus Service Support	0.665	0.665
	Tomorrow's Valley Residual Waste	1.189	1.189
	Tomorrow's Valley Food Waste	0.064	0.064
Total Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services		10.089	10.086
TOTAL SPECIFIC REVENUE GRANTS		75.447	81.073

- 9.5 Assumptions are made in the MTFP about future levels of specific grants, in particular where they are effectively funding core services, for example, the Sustainable Waste Management Grant which provides funding for our Recycling services.

Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability

10.1 The impact of the aforementioned modelling, including schools, is aggregated into Table 10.1 to show the forecast budget position over the next 3 years. The modelling shows a projected budget gap over the 3 year period which needs to be addressed and closed with actions during the period. Whilst modelled over a three year period, the Council must also be mindful of its legal responsibility to set a balanced budget annually and for the forthcoming financial year this has to be completed before the 11th March 2021.

Table 10.1

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Budget Requirement	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Additional Budget Requirement			
Inflation	8,445	9,075	9,788
Inescapables	9,558	5,913	5,252
Risks	1,877	3,754	3,754
Schools (Uplift)	6,516	5,679	5,638
Authority Wide	1,576	1,847	1,418
Budget Requirement	27,972	26,268	25,850
Additional Resources			
Council Tax	3,303	4,010	4,145
Transition Funding	- 800		
Social Services and Children's Services Specific Grants	-	-	-
WG Resource at +2%	7,773	7,929	8,087
WG Resource at +3%	11,660	12,010	12,370
WG Resource at +4%	15,547	16,169	16,815

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels				3 Year Budget Gap
2% Increase	17,696	14,330	13,618	45,644
3% Increase	13,809	10,249	9,336	33,393
4% Increase	9,922	6,090	4,891	20,903

10.2 Clearly a significant determinant on the budget gap is the level of funding which the Council receives from Welsh Government. For each 1% change in the level of settlement from Welsh Government equates to a £3.9M change in resources available to the Council (based on 2020/21 settlement levels).

Section 11 Reserves Policy

- 11.1 Reserves play an important part of the overall financial management and financial standing of the Council. The Council's General Reserve balances at 31st March 2019 amounted to £10.498M and following the approved in-year allocation of £1.5M to support the Council's recovery work from Storm Dennis coupled with an in-year overspend of £0.289M, the remaining balance at 31st March 2020 is £8.709M (draft position, subject to audit). The level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review by the Council's Section 151 Officer and replenished going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the overall quantum of the budget and the financial risks therein and facing the Council.
- 11.2 The Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which are sums set aside for specific purposes. The full schedule of reserves is attached at Annex 3 (as at the draft Statement of Accounts 2019/20).
- 11.3 All reserves are reviewed at least twice yearly, at budget setting stage and as part of the year end closure of accounts process. In between, changes in risk and potential liabilities are continuously monitored as part of the Council's financial management and budgetary control arrangements and changes in reserve levels are actioned, following member approval, as appropriate.
- 11.4 The Council has used reserves prudently as part of supporting its annual budget strategy for a number of years. Whilst reserves can be used to balance the budget, this alone is not a sustainable strategy and more permanent changes / reductions to the base budget must be made. With regard to the budget gaps modelled in Section 10, to balance the budget, for example, based on a +3% per annum Welsh Government settlement level, for the next 3 years using reserves alone would require the use of over £71M of reserves and the Council would still have a need to reduce its base budget by over £33M.
- 11.5 The Council holds reserves for the following purposes:

Capital, Treasury and Insurance Reserves

Reserve	Purpose
Capital Developments	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.
Treasury Management Reserve	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.
Insurance Reserve	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.

Other Revenue Related Reserves

Reserve	Purpose
Revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2020/21 Budget Strategy.
Joint Committee Reserve	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.
Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend – required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.
Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.
Infrastructure / Investment	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough.
Prior Year Commitments	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.
Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.
Invest to Save	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.
Other Specific Reserves	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.

Section 12 Balancing the Budget

- 12.1 Whilst the budget setting process is necessarily and statutorily an annual process, this Council has for a number of years moved away from the annual cycle for financial planning purposes and seeks to address the budget gap on an ongoing basis over the medium term period.
- 12.2 Part of this process is the early identification and delivery of base budget reducing measures in-year and therefore before the start of a financial year. This has enabled the Council to deliver financial savings early and to replenish our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve which we have used proactively as part of our budget strategy approach for a number of years.
- 12.3 Our priority and focus this year to date has been responding to the pandemic and ensuring that our residents, communities and businesses have been protected and supported. Options will now be developed which can help address the range of the potential budget gap which we will face but it is important that in doing so we ensure that we maintain our valued and critical services.
- 12.4 The opportunity must be taken to ensure that we “lock in” the transformation and service delivery changes which we have made across many, if not all of our service areas. The Council has taken the opportunity to make a step change in our working arrangements and become more efficient in terms of maximising the use of digital solutions where appropriate, recognising that such delivery does not meet the needs of all of our residents.
- 12.5 In line with the above, the measures we will explore will include:
- a. Efficiency – we have for many years delivered significant efficiency savings as part of our ongoing work and which have contributed to closing the budget gaps we have faced. Over the last 3 years we have delivered at least £6M per year in this regard. It is important that we maximise our efficiency more than ever as part of balancing next year’s budget in order to ensure that we preserve and where possible enhance our critical services.
 - b. Our Social Services Transformation Programme, including our significant commitment and investment in the provision of Extra Care facilities, continues to be implemented. The financial impact of our ongoing preventative strategy will continue to be modelled alongside the increases in demand for services linked to demographic changes.
 - c. We will continue to review our base budget requirements at both a service level and an authority wide level, with ongoing modelling around key service pressures including inflationary requirements, contractual arrangements and capital charges.
 - d. We will ensure that we continue to maximise opportunities to invest for the long term, benefiting residents and reducing our core ongoing spend

requirements in doing so. We will continue to collaborate and work with others where it is for the benefit of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

e. We will also continue to focus and maximise opportunities across the following areas :

- Digitalisation;
- Commercialism;
- Early Intervention and Prevention;
- Independence; and
- Efficient and Effective Organisation.

Section 13 Capital Programme

- 13.1 The Council's 3 year capital programme, 2020/21 to 2022/23 was agreed by Council on the 4th March 2020.
- 13.2 The three year Capital Programme is a key component of the overall Medium Term Financial Planning and Resources Strategy for this Council. Targeted capital investment can make a significant impact on service delivery and used effectively, is able to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, where relevant.
- 13.3 The three year programme amounted to £131M and includes further additional investment of £11.850M in priorities aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 13.4 The rolling 3 year programme is reviewed and determined annually (in March of each year) and provides service managers with the opportunity to plan investment in our infrastructure and assets over the medium term.
- 13.5 A summary of the current 3 year programme is provided in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 : THREE YEAR SUMMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

GROUP	BUDGET		
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£M	£M	£M
Community & Children's Services			
Adult & Children's Services	4.895	1.595	1.495
Public Health, Protection & Community Services	2.589	0.495	0.495
Education & Inclusion Services			
Schools	19.458	0.547	0.164
Supplementary Capital Programme	5.785	3.875	3.875
Chief Executive's Division			
Finance & Digital Services	0.700	0.700	0.700
Corporate Estates	1.319	0.925	0.925
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services			
Planning & Regeneration	16.839	0.699	0.600
Private Sector Housing	6.750	6.450	5.550
Highways Technical Services	15.257	4.509	1.455
Strategic Projects	9.764	2.665	0.165
Waste Strategy	2.147	0.000	0.000
Fleet	6.112	1.573	0.400
Buildings	0.100	0.100	0.100
TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET	91.715	24.133	15.924

Section 14 Consultation and Scrutiny

- 14.1 Following consideration of this MTFP by Cabinet, it is proposed that this document and the planning assumptions be made available to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee, as part of the consultation on the draft 2021/22 budget strategy.
- 14.2 The MTFP will be used as a basis of planning for our 2021/22 budget strategy consultation processes, updated as appropriate to reflect the implications of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be received in autumn 2020.

Section 15 Other Relevant Documents

Below are links to other documents which are relevant to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Budget Book

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/Councilbudgets.aspx>

Statements of Account

2018/19 Audited Statement of Accounts -

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/StatementofAccounts.aspx>

2019/20 Draft Certified Statement of Accounts -

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/RelatedDocuments/StatementofAccounts/StatementofAccounts2019to2020Draft.pdf>

Capital Strategy Report incorporating Prudential Indicators

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/18/Reports/Agendaitem72021CapitalStrategyIncorporatingPrudentialIndicators.pdf>

Treasury Management Strategy incorporating Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/18/Reports/Agendaitem6TreasuryManagement.pdf>

Council Performance Reports

Quarter 4 2019/20 -

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2020/07/28/Reports/Item7CouncilPerformanceReport31stMarch2020YearEnd.pdf>

Quarter 1 2020/21 -

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2020/09/24/Reports/Item8CouncilPerformanceReportQuarter1.pdf>

Corporate Plan (2020-2024)

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/04/Reports/Agendaitem6CouncilsDraftCorporatePlan20202024.pdf>

Council 3 Year Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/04/Reports/Agendaitem8CapitalProgramme2020120223.pdf>

GENERAL FUND REVENUE : SERVICES PROVIDED

2019/20 Budget		2020/21 Budget
£M		£M
	<u>Community & Children's Services</u>	
87.326	Adult Services	93.047
47.666	Children's Services	50.958
2.682	Transformation	2.567
15.824	Public Health, Protection & Community Services	16.109
153.498		162.681
	<u>Education & Inclusion Services</u>	
27.892	Education & Inclusion Services (Non Delegated)	31.049
151.606	Delegated Schools	161.578
179.498		192.627
	<u>Chief Executive</u>	
0.395	Chief Executive	0.391
2.859	Democratic Services & Communications	2.913
6.817	Human Resources	6.670
1.622	Legal Services	1.636
10.660	Finance & Digital Services	11.717
3.459	Corporate Estates	3.712
25.812		27.039
	<u>Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services</u>	
2.667	Prosperity & Development Services	2.791
54.142	Frontline Services	53.137
56.809		55.928
415.617	Total Group Budgets	438.275
	<u>Authority Wide Budgets</u>	
18.917	Capital Financing	19.713
12.384	Levies	12.438
11.815	Miscellaneous	13.216
0.400	NDR Relief	0.425
24.336	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	24.680
67.852	Total Authority Wide Budgets	70.472
483.469	TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET	508.747

ANNEX 2

Council Revenue Budget by Priority Area

Budget 2019/20*	Priority Area	Budget 2020/21
£'000		£'000
	<u>PEOPLE</u>	
47,123	Children's Services	49,837
91,076	Adult Services	97,108
3,817	Leisure (including physical participation) / Heritage Sites	4,151
142,017		151,096
	<u>PLACES</u>	
7,438	Libraries / Parks / Play Areas	7,435
457	Anti-Social Behaviour / Domestic Violence / Substance Misuse	427
654	Crime Reduction (inc hate crime)	648
4,188	Highway cleanliness	4,787
18,384	Waste / Recycling	18,349
9,294	Highways Infrastructure and Road Maintenance / Condition	9,052
40,415		40,697
	<u>PROSPERITY</u>	
26,525	Economically active people / Job Seekers Allowance Claimants / Job Creation / Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	26,574
191,039	School Attainment	204,083
583	Town Centre	455
400	Town Centre Vacancy Rates (businesses)	425
1,054	Housing / Affordable Housing Delivered / Homelessness Prevention	1,109
219,601		232,646
	<u>LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS</u>	
1,548	Customer Care	1,505
5,281	Office Accommodation/Buildings	5,058
6,829		6,563
408,862	TOTAL SPEND ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES	431,003
5,543	REGULATORY PUBLIC SERVICES	4,867
2,234	OTHER SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC	2,284
43,116	AUTHORITY WIDE COSTS	45,367
23,715	CORE SUPPORT	25,226
483,469	TOTAL COUNCIL BUDGET	508,747

* Budget 2019/20 - Restated in line with the Council's new Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' 2020 - 2024

ANNEX 3

COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME - BY PRIORITY AREA

Priority/Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2020 - 2023			
	2020/21 Budget	2021/22 Budget	2022/23 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£M	£M	£M	£M
People				
Adult Services	11.210	6.385	6.257	23.852
Children's Services	0.425	0.402	0.400	1.227
Total - People	11.635	6.787	6.657	25.079
Place				
Parks, Leisure, Libraries, Culture & Heritage, Open Spaces	3.929	0.493	0.260	4.682
Crime Reduction	0.050	0.050	0.052	0.152
Highways Cleanliness	0.246	0.068	0.051	0.365
Highways Infrastructure	24.338	7.845	1.720	33.903
Waste Strategy	7.044	0.605	0.335	7.984
Total - Place	35.607	9.061	2.418	47.086
Prosperity				
School Attainment	25.313	4.422	4.039	33.774
Business Support	7.716	0.259	0.200	8.175
Town Centres	8.713	0.400	0.400	9.513
Housing	0.545	1.300	0.400	2.245
Total - Prosperity	42.287	6.381	5.039	53.707
Living Within Our Means				
Management and rationalisation of service accommodation	1.243	0.975	0.975	3.193
Customer Care	0.029	-	-	0.029
Total - Living Within Our Means	1.272	0.975	0.975	3.222
Total Capital Budget Allocated to Council Priorities	90.801	23.204	15.089	129.094
Regulatory Public Services	0.184	0.149	0.135	0.468
Authority Wide Costs	0.030	0.080	-	0.110
Core ICT Systems Support	0.700	0.700	0.700	2.100
Total Capital Budget	91.715	24.133	15.924	131.772

ANNEX 4

COUNCIL EARMARKED RESERVES

Capital, Treasury and Insurance Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/19	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/20
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Developments	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.	52,655	(2,421)	8,795	59,029
Treasury Management Reserve	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.	2,465	0	0	2,465
Insurance Reserve	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.	8,587	(465)	0	8,122
Total		63,707	(2,886)	8,795	69,616

Other Revenue Related Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/19	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/20
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Budget Strategy 2019/20	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2019/20 budget.	1,537	(1,537)	0	0
Revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2020/21 budget.	0	0	800	800
Joint Committee Reserve	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.	761	0	482	1,243
Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend - required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.	3,856	(3,856)	2,600	2,600
Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.	13,636	(12,984)	12,635	13,287
Investment / Infrastructure	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough	6,534	(5,346)	5,047	6,235
Prior Year Commitments	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.	5,888	(2,688)	5,216	8,416
Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.	3,303	(800)	1,059	3,562
Other Specific Reserves	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.	3,296	(1,718)	1,307	2,885
Invest to Save	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.	3,056	(3,056)	0	0
Total		41,867	(31,985)	29,146	39,028
Total Earmarked Reserves		105,574	(34,871)	37,941	108,644



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2020

ENGAGEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2021/22

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION, CHRISTIAN HANAGAN IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR M WEBBER.

Author: Chris Davies, Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager
01443 424069

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Cabinet of the proposed 'digital by default' approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2021/22 budget.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Support the suggested 'digital by default' approach to the Council's budget consultation for 2021/22, whilst providing alternative means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- 2.2 Support the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels will be met via the proposed approach.
- 2.3 Support the budget consultation process taking place during the autumn of 2020, with the dates to be confirmed following clarification of the likely Welsh Government budget settlement timescales.
- 2.4 Authorise the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications to plan the necessary timeline of engagement once the details of the Provisional Local Government Settlement are known, in

consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member & Director of Finance & Digital Services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide residents with the opportunity, via a range of methods, to provide feedback to the Cabinet on the 2021/22 budget setting process.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In previous years the Council has undertaken a comprehensive approach to its annual budget consultation, involving a large number of residents and key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The approach has developed to include a wide range of face to face events in the community across the County Borough, as well increased social media engagement and the use of an online budget simulator, which gives residents and service users the opportunity to set the budget themselves and engage in a more interactive way. Over 4,000 people were involved in last year's 2020/21 budget consultation process.
- 4.3 The widespread approach we use and the range of views we capture provides senior managers and Cabinet with the necessary information they need to inform budget setting for the year ahead. In addition, we have found that the information we collect is also valuable for service managers to use for their service planning and development.
- 4.4 The current COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it brings present a unique set of circumstances for engagement and consultation. Face-to-face engagement is not possible and may not be for quite some time.
- 4.5 As a result the 2021/22 annual budget consultation will take on a 'digital by default' approach, whilst continuing to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- 4.6 This new approach was used in the recent consultation on the Dog Fouling PSPO and was found to be an effective way to engage with a wide range of residents and stakeholders. The online methodology complemented with offline alternatives provided a meaningful consultation.
- 4.7 It is therefore proposed that the approach outlined in section 5 below is utilised for the 2021/22 budget consultation process.

5. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 5.1 The 2021/22 budget consultation will take place in 2 phases. The first phase will take place in the autumn of 2020 and will aim to collect views on investment priorities, council tax levels and efficiency savings. This will enable the Cabinet to consider the feedback received whilst developing a draft Budget Strategy for 2021/22. Phase 2 will take place early in the New Year and will engage with residents on this draft strategy.
- 5.2 The approach will be mainly online, but it also provides a number of alternative methods to ensure that it is inclusive of those who are not online or would rather provide their views in a different way;

Online Approach

- 5.3 The use of an online budget simulator providing information on the services the Council provides and the potential consequences of increasing or reducing funding to services to set a legally balanced budget.
- 5.4 The use of social media to communicate the key messages to residents and service users and encourage engagement and feedback regarding the Council's budget and investment areas. This will include online polls via social media channels.
- 5.5 An online survey to collect responses on Council investments, Council Tax levels and the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 5.6 Emails to be distributed to all key stakeholders (including the Council's Citizens' Panel, Councillors, staff etc.).
- 5.7 To replace our usual face to face engagement, we will undertake a number of virtual meetings to outline the budget approach, answer questions and collect views. These online (Zoom) events will give residents the opportunity to engage with and speak to Cabinet Members and senior officers regarding the Council's budget and investment priorities and will include;
- A number of Zoom Public meetings
 - Engagement with older people via the Older Persons Advisory Group meeting
 - Engagement with young people via Rhondda Cynon Taf's Youth Forums.
 - A presentation and discussion with young people via our schools.
 - Reporting to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the School Budget Forum.
 - A presentation at the Community Liaison Committee

Alternatives to online

- 5.8 As already stated it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- A telephone Consultation option working with the Council's Contact Centre – The contact centre number would be made available for people to discuss their views or as a minimum to request consultation materials.
 - Individual call backs if required. For example, some of the members of the Disability Forum requested phone calls to provide their views during the recent Dog Fouling consultation.
 - Paper surveys and information available on request.
 - Consultation freepost address for postal responses.
 - Easy Read/Plan English Documents – These will still need to be produced and placed online as well as being available in paper copy on request.
 - Opportunity can also be provided to engage in virtual sessions through a land-line
- 5.9 In addition to the above, all members have had opportunity over recent months at Cabinet and through Full Council to engage in the ongoing work on the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

Council Tax, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Investment Priorities

- 5.10 The proposed approach will ensure the Council's duty to consult regarding Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme are met as well as providing residents and service users with the opportunity to feedback on the Council's investment priorities.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. As noted in section 5, there will be a range of options for all to get involved in the budget consultation. The consultation will also involve the Council's Disability Forum.
- 6.2 The online budget simulator is accessible on mobile phones and tablet devices, and residents without internet access or smart phone/tablet devices can request a hard copy of the budget consultation questionnaire.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The recommendations outlined in the report seek to ensure a range of engagement opportunities are provided to residents and service users as part of the budget consultation process.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications directly aligned to this report.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult on Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which will be met under the approach to budget consultation outlined in this report.

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

- 10.1 The budget setting process clearly impacts on the delivery of all Council services and contributes in turn to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The comprehensive approach undertaken in the last few years has led to increased engagement in the budget consultation process through a more interactive and varied approach.
- 11.2 The current COVID-19 pandemic bring challenges for public engagement and consultation, especially in Rhondda Cynon Taf where we have developed a very successful face to face approach with residents.
- 11.3 However, the approach outlined seeks to continue the positive work by ensuring that all residents and service users have every opportunity to provide feedback. The 2021/22 budget consultation will take on a 'digital by default' approach, whilst continuing to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- 11.4 The results of the consultation will be presented to senior officers and Cabinet Members early in the new year to inform the construction of a proposed 2020/21 Revenue Budget Strategy.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview & Scrutiny & Finance and Performance

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