



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GWŶS I GYFARFOD O'R CYNGOR

C. Hanagan
Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Y Pafiliynau
Parc Hen Lofa'r Cambrian
Cwm Clydach CF40 2XX

Dolen gyswllt: Ms J Nicholls - Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (01443 424098)

DYMA WŶS I CHI i gyfarfod rhithwir o **PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU** yn cael ei gynnal ar **DYDD MERCHER, 9FED RHAGFYR, 2020** am **5.00 PM**.

Caiff Aelodau nad ydyn nhw'n aelodau o'r pwyllgor ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd gyfrannu yn y cyfarfod ar faterion y cyfarfod er bydd y cais yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd. Gofynnwn i chi roi gwybod i Wasanaethau Democrataidd erbyn Dydd Llun, 7 Rhagfyr 2020 trwy ddefnyddio'r manylion cyswllt uchod, gan gynnwys rhoi gwybod a fyddwch chi'n siarad Cymraeg neu Saesneg.

AGENDA

Tudalennau

1. DATGANIADAU O FUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau, yn unol â gofynion y Cod Ymddygiad.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. COFNODION

Derbyn cofnodion o gyfarfod blaenorol y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu a gafodd ei gynnal ar 14 Hydref 2020.

ADRODDIADAU'R SWYDDOGION

3. ADOLYGU ASESIAD RISG TÂN

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adnoddau Dynol mewn perthynas ag Aseidiadau Risg Tân - Adolygiad o'r gweithdrefnau ar gyfer adeiladau sy'n eiddo i'r Cyngor neu'n cael eu defnyddio ganddo.

15 - 184

ADRODDIAD Y CYFARWYDDWR GWASANAETH – GWASANAETHAU DEMOCRATAIDD A CHYFATHREBU

4. DOLENNI YMGYNGHORI

Gwybodaeth mewn perthynas ag [ymgyngoriadau](#) perthnasol, i'w ystyried gan y Pwyllgor.

5. DATGANIAD SEFYLLFA - CRAFFU AR YMATEB Y CYNGOR I'R LLIFOGYDD YN YSTOD 2020

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu, sy'n rhoi diweddariad ynghylch y dystiolaeth a ystyriwyd hyd yma a'r camau nesaf

185 - 286

6. YMGYNGHORIAD LLYWODRAETH CYMRU: RHEOLIADAU (DRAFFT) AR GYFER SEFYDLU CYDBWYLLGORAU CORFFORAETHOL

Derbyn adroddiad ar y cyd y Prif Weithredwr, Cyfarwyddwr Y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a'r Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd A Chyfathrebu.

287 - 360

7. ADOLYGIAD Y CADEIRYDD A DOD Â'R CYFARFOD I BEN

Adlewyrchu ar y cyfarfod a'r camau gweithredu i'w dwyn ymlaen.

8. MATERION BRYD

Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn faterion bryd yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig.

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

Cylchreliad:-

Cadeirydd ac is-gadeirydd y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu
(Y Cynghorydd M Adams a Y Cynghorydd W Lewis)

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol:

Y Cynghorydd J Bonetto, Y Cynghorydd P Jarman, Y Cynghorydd H Boggis,
Y Cynghorydd J Brencher, Y Cynghorydd E Stephens, Y Cynghorydd L Walker,
Y Cynghorydd G Caple, Y Cynghorydd M Griffiths, Y Cynghorydd W Jones,
Y Cynghorydd A Cox, Y Cynghorydd G Hughes and Y Cynghorydd M Forey

Christian Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a
Chyfathrebu

Aelodau Cyfetholedig Addysg er gwybodaeth-

Mr M Cleverley, Cynrychiolydd Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr
Athrawesau a'r Panel Athrawon

Ms A Jones, Cynrychiolydd UNITE

Mr C Jones, Cynrychiolydd GMB

Mrs C Jones, Cynrychiolydd Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon a'r Panel Athrawon

Mr D Price, Cynrychiolydd UNSAIN/UNISON

Mr J Fish, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Mr A Ricketts, Cynrychiolydd Awdurdodau Esgobaethol â'r hawl i bleidlais

Mrs R Nicholls, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Mr L Patterson, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Y Cynghorydd M Webber

Mr G Davies – Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Archwilio

</TRAILER_SECTION>

Tudalen wag

CYNGOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Cofnodion o gyfarfod rhithiwr y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu a gynhaliwyd ddydd Mercher, 14 Hydref 2020 am 5.00 pm.

Cynghorwyr y Fwrdeistref Sirol – Aelodau o'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu oedd yn bresennol:

Y Cynghorydd M Adams (Cadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd J. Bonetto	Y Cynghorydd P. Jarman
Y Cynghorydd H. Boggis	Y Cynghorydd J. Brencher
Y Cynghorydd E Stephens	Y Cynghorydd L Walker
Y Cynghorydd G. Caple	Y Cynghorydd M. Griffiths
Y Cynghorydd A. Cox	Y Cynghorydd G. Hughes
Y Cynghorydd W. Lewis	

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol

Mr C. Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Mr N Wheeler, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran – Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen
Mr R Waters, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen
Owen Griffiths - Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni
Mr A Stone, Rheolwr Prosiectau Strategol

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru

Mr M Evans, Pennaeth Gweithrediadau Canol De Cymru

Aelodau o'r Cabinet yn bresennol

Arweinydd y Cyngor, Y Cynghorydd A Morgan
Dirprwy Arweinydd y Cyngor, Y Cynghorydd M Webber

Aelodau eraill yn bresennol er mwyn arsylwi

Y Cynghorydd E Griffiths
Y Cynghorydd J Williams
Y Cynghorydd R. Yeo

Aelod Cyfetholedig yn bresennol

Mr J Fish – Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol â'r hawl i bleidlais

69 Datganiad o Fuddiant

Yn unol â Chod Ymddygiad y Cyngor, doedd dim datganiadau o fuddiant ynglŷn â'r agenda.

70 Ymddiheuriadau

Daeth ymddiheuriadau oddi wrth Gynghorwyr y Fwrdeistref Sirol W Jones a M Forey.

71 Cofnodion

PENDERFYNWYD cymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfodydd a gynhaliwyd ar 30 Gorffennaf a 12 Awst 2020 yn rhai cywir.

Gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Jarman gwestiwn mewn perthynas â'r penderfyniad ym mharagraff olaf y cofnodion o'r 12 Awst gan ofyn am eglurhad ynghylch y cam nesaf yn y broses. Cadarnhaodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu mai penderfyniad Mr Powell, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo Corfforaethol, ar y cyd â'r Aelod o'r Cabinet priodol yw hynny ac, hyd yma, nid yw penderfyniad wedi cael ei wneud.

72 Trafod Effaith y Llifogydd yn RhCT yn ystod 2020

Nododd y Cadeirydd y byddai'r cyfarfod yn dilyn trefn wahanol i'r hynny sydd wedi'i nodi yn yr agenda. Bydd eitem 4 yn cael ei thrafod yn gyntaf ac yna eitem 3.

Cyflwynodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu ei adroddiad mewn perthynas ag effaith y llifogydd yn RhCT yn ystod 2020. Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth wybod i'r Aelodau mai pwrpas yr adroddiad yw rhoi cyfle i Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu drafod yr wybodaeth sy'n ymwneud â'r llifogydd difrifol a ddigwyddodd ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol yn ystod 2020. Cafodd yr aelodau'u hatgoffa bod y broses hon hefyd yn rhoi cyfle iddyn nhw gyfrannu at waith datblygu gofynion adrodd statudol gan y Cyngor (yn rhan o'i rôl fel yr awdurdod rheoli llifogydd).

Pwysleisiodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth fod y broses yn cynnig mecanwaith er mwyn ceisio barn yr Aelodau Etholedig hynny sy'n gyfrifol am yr adrannau etholiadol a gafodd eu heffeithio gan y llifogydd yma.

Aeth Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni ymlaen i roi cyflwyniad i Aelodau mewn perthynas ag effaith Storm Dennis ac i rannu manylion am ymateb a gwaith adfer y Cyngor. Rhoddodd y swyddog gyflwyniad sy'n mynd i'r afael â'r materion canlynol;

- Storm Dennis;
- Paratoi Digwyddiad;
- Effaith y Digwyddiad; ac,
- Ymateb ac Adfer

Yn dilyn y cyflwyniad, dymunodd Arweinydd y Cyngor, y Cynghorydd A. Morgan, ddiolch i'r swyddog am rannu cyflwyniad manwl gan gydnabod effaith fawr Storm Dennis ar gymunedau RhCT. Aeth yr Arweinydd ati i gydnabod bod digwyddiadau fel hyn yn mynd yn fwy difrifol a diolchodd i swyddogion y Cyngor a'r uwch garfan arwain am eu gwaith caled a'u hymroddiad yn ystod amser hynod heriol. Rhoddodd yr Arweinydd wybod i'r Aelodau bod y Cyngor wedi prynu adnoddau ychwanegol cyn Storm Dennis, fodd bynnag, roedd maint y storm yn ddigynsail. Roedd yr Arweinydd yn dymuno cydnabod cyfranogiad y gymuned, gan ddiolch i'r holl breswylwyr am eu cymorth yn ystod y broses adfer. O ran yr ymateb ariannol, cafodd Aelodau wybod bod y Cyngor wedi derbyn

£2.5miliwn gan y gronfa cymorth brys yn yr achos gyntaf. Cafodd oddeutu £2miliwn o adnoddau'r Cyngor eu defnyddio (roedd £800,000 o'r swm yma'n gysylltiedig â'r grantiau a roddwyd i ddeiliaid tai a busnesau). Cadarnhaodd yr Arweinydd hefyd fod y Cyngor wedi derbyn llythyr gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn tanysgrifennu hyd at £6.5miliwn tuag at gostau trwsio seilwaith a ddifrodwyd a phwysleisiodd bod Llywodraeth Cymru yn dal i apelio am arian ychwanegol gan Lywodraeth y DU. Ar ben hynny, cadarnhaodd yr Arweinydd fod y Cyngor hefyd wedi sicrhau £2.5miliwn gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn ddiweddar er mwyn bwrw ymlaen â'r gwaith yn ardal Tylorstown. Cafodd Aelodau'r Pwyllgor wybod hefyd y bydd gwaith trwsio'r difrod ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol yn costio tua £82.5miliwn a bydd y Cyngor yn parhau i apelio i Lywodraeth y DU am adnoddau ychwanegol.

Yn dilyn diweddariad gan Arweinydd y Cyngor, cafodd Aelodau gyfle i ofyn cwestiynau. I gychwyn, dymunodd y Cadeirydd longyfarch Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen ar ran Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu ar ennill Medal yr Ymerodraeth Brydeinig ar Restr Anrhydeddau'r Frenhines. Estynnodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran ddiolch i'r Cadeirydd gan bwysleisio y bydd y gwaith caled yn parhau mewn perthynas â'r gwaith adfer yn dilyn Storm Dennis.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, croesawodd y Cadeirydd Mr Michael Evans o Gyfoeth Naturiol Cymru. Cadarnhaodd Mr Evans fod gan CNC gyfres o adroddiadau pwysig i'w rhyddhau, sy'n rhoi sylw arbennig i'r gwersi a ddysgwyd. Pwysleisiodd Mr Evans mai Chwefror 2020 oedd y mis mwyaf gwlyb a gofnodwyd erioed ac roedd bron i bedair gwaith y glawiad misol wedi cwmpo yn ystod y mis. Roedd Mr Evans yn dymuno nodi ei gydymdeimlad â'r rheiny a gafodd eu heffeithio gan y llifogydd a'u teuluoedd. Pwysleisiodd Mr Evans ddifrifoldeb a natur ddigynsail Storm Dennis. Pwysleisiodd na fyddai'r asedau sydd gan Gyfoeth Naturiol Cymru wedi gallu ymdopi â'r llifogydd yma. Cafodd yr Aelodau wybod bod yr adroddiadau yma dal heb eu cyhoeddi ond mae Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn cwrdd ag Uwch Swyddogion y Cyngor a byddan nhw'n cael eu cyhoeddi cyn bo hir. Yn anffodus, roedd Mr Evans wedi cydnabod ei bod hi'n debygol y bydd digwyddiadau tebyg yn digwydd yn fwy aml yn y dyfodol oherwydd newid yn yr hinsawdd, er bod y digwyddiad yma'n ddigynsail. Roedd Mr Evans wedi dymuno diolch i staff y Cyngor am weithio mewn partneriaeth yn ystod Storm Dennis. Pwysleisiodd ei fod yn gobeithio parhau gyda'r bartneriaeth yma yn y dyfodol.

Cynhaliwyd trafodaethau a gofynnodd y Cadeirydd a oedd CNC neu'r Cyngor wedi cyfathrebu â chwmnïau yswiriant i drafod mesurau y mae modd eu cymryd i osgoi digwyddiad tebyg eto. Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni wybod mai blaenoriaeth y Cyngor yw deall effaith y llifogydd.

Gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Jarman am eglurhad ynghylch a oedd tomen Tylorstown erioed wedi bod yn destun cynllun adfer tir ac a oedd y Cyngor wedi bwriadu cynnal gwaith adfer cyn y tirlithriad yn 2020. Pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Jarman ei bod hi'n gobeithio y byddai gwaith cynllunio ac adnoddau digonol ar waith i ymdopi â'r gaeaf sydd i ddod, boed hynny ar ffurf bagiau tywod er mwyn helpu gyda llifogydd neu halen i'w roi ar y ffordd wrth fynd i'r afael ag amodau tywydd gaeafol. Gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Jarman a fyddai Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn ymrwymo i blannu coed mewn ardaloedd wedi'u datgoedwigo ar dir sy'n berchen iddyn nhw yn RhCT yn rhan o fynd i'r afael â newid yn yr hinsawdd. Holodd y Cynghorydd Jarman a fyddai wedi bod yn fuddiol i wahodd Dŵr Cymru i'r cyfarfod er mwyn ymateb i'r pryderon sy'n honni bod y llifogydd wedi bod yn waeth oherwydd pypiau a dulliau draenio sy'n cael eu rheoli gan Dŵr Cymru.

O ran tomen Tylorstown, eglurodd y Cadeirydd nad yw'r ardal sy'n cael ei chyfeirio ati'n cynrychioli Tomen Tylorstown. Mae'n cynrychioli ardal wahanol sy'n cael ei galw'n enw gwahanol yn lleol. Esboniodd nad yw ardal Tomen Tylorstown erioed wedi bod yn destun cynllun adfer tir gan nad oedd unrhyw broblemau wedi codi, hyd y gwyddo ef. Cadarnhaodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen, nad oedd unrhyw gynllun adfer tir wedi cael ei weithredu yn yr ardal y mae'r Cynghorydd Jarman yn cyfeirio ati. Fodd bynnag, cadarnhaodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth bod yr ardal wedi'i nodi gan y Cyngor a'r Awdurdod Glo, ac yn cael ei harchwilio o ganlyniad i hynny. Cadarnhaodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth fod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni adolygiadau helaeth gyda Llywodraeth Cymru ers digwyddiadau Storm Dennis ym mis Chwefror. Cafodd y cyfarfodydd yma'u cadeirio gan Brif Weinidog Cymru ac Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru. Yn ystod y cyfarfodydd yma, cafodd problemau eu codi a'r newyddion diweddaraf mewn perthynas â chynnydd ei rannu. Cafodd Aelodau wybod bod yr Awdurdod Glo yn llunio cronfa ddata mewn perthynas â'r holl tomenni sydd ar feysydd glo yng Nghymru. Maen nhw wedi mabwysiadu strategaeth risg y Cyngor i'w defnyddio fel proses asesu risg safonol ar gyfer y tomenni yma. Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen wybod i'r Pwyllgor ei fod e'n cwrdd gyda swyddogion Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru ar fore Mawrth mewn perthynas â phlannu coed ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol. Bydd yn rhannu'r adborth o'r cyfarfod yna gyda'r Grŵp Llywio ar faterion yr Hinsawdd.

O ran cwestiwn y Cynghorydd Jarman, ceisiodd y Cadeirydd gadarnhad gan Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu ynghylch a fyddai Dŵr Cymru yn cael ei wahodd i gyfarfod nesaf y Gweithgor. Cadarnhawyd y byddai modd i'r Cyngor drefnu hyn os ydy Aelodau o'r farn y byddai hyn yn cyfrannu at y drafodaeth yn ystod y cyfarfod nesaf. Yn dilyn trafodaeth, cytunodd yr Aelodau y byddai Dŵr Cymru yn cael ei wahodd i'r sesiwn craffu nesaf.

Parhaodd y drafodaeth, gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Caple gwestiwn mewn perthynas â'r llifogydd yn ardal Trehafod a Britannia. Gofynnodd am eglurhad mewn perthynas â'r cysylltiad rhwng sicrhau bod y ceuffosydd yn cael eu clirio ac effeithlonrwydd y gorsafoedd pwmpio. Cadarnhaodd Reolwr Materion Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni bod y Cyngor yn parhau gyda'i waith ymchwilio mewn perthynas â'r llifogydd yn y lleoliad yma ar hyn o bryd. Bydd y Cyngor yn edrych ar unrhyw elfennau eilaidd neu ffactorau sy'n cyfrannu at y broblem. Pwysleisiodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni y bydd unrhyw ddeilliannau'n cael eu rhannu â'r Pwyllgor cyn gynted ag y byddan nhw ar gael.

****Ymddiheurodd Arweinydd y Cyngor, Y Cynghorydd Andrew Morgan, i'r Pwyllgor - roedd angen iddo adael er mwyn mynd i gyfarfod COVID****

Cynhaliwyd rhagor o drafodaethau a nododd y Cynghorydd Cox na ellir labelu digwyddiadau fel Storm Dennis yn "ddigynsail" bellach, oherwydd newid yn yr hinsawdd, ac yn anffodus, mae'r digwyddiadau hyn yn debygol o ddigwydd yn fwy aml. Mynegodd y Cynghorydd Cox ei fod o'r farn bod angen i ymateb y Cyngor i'r digwyddiadau yma fod yn glir. Roedd y Cynghorydd Cox hefyd am nodi ei ddiolch a'i ddiolchgarwch i staff y Cyngor mewn perthynas â'u hymateb i'r argyfwng. Fodd bynnag, pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Cox fod yn rhaid inni edrych ar wersi a ddysgwyd yn ogystal â pha gamau y mae modd i ni eu cymryd i wella. Gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Cox am eglurhad pellach ynghylch proses uwchgyfeirio'r Cyngor o ran sut mae'n ymateb i argyfwng. Roedd yr Aelod hefyd

wedi holi pa waith gafodd ei gyflawni yn ystod y tri mis cyn Storm Dennis, megis pa waith gafodd ei gynnal i glirio'r ceuffosydd. Holodd y Cynghorydd Cox a oedd y gwaith mewn perthynas â thomenni categori C a D wedi cael ei aildrefnu a pha lefelau risg y mae'r rhain yn eu cyflwyno i'r cymunedau. Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni wybod ein bod ni wedi wynebu Storm Callum a Storm Donna cyn Storm Dennis a bod RhCT wedi dioddef 25,000 o stormydd ers 2018. Pwysleisiodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni fod y Cyngor wedi bod yn cyflawni adolygiad o'i ymatebion ac wedi bod yn cyflawni gwaith paratoi ar gyfer y gaeaf. Cadarnhaodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni hefyd bod y Cyngor yn cyflawni archwiliadau mewn perthynas â chategoriâu C a D unwaith bob mis, bob tri mis neu bob chwe mis gan ddiwyddu ar ei statws. Roedd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen hefyd yn dymuno nodi'i barch a'i ddiolch i holl staff y Cyngor sydd wedi gweithio'n galed iawn yn ystod y cyfnod yma sydd heb ei debyg. O ran y rhybudd coch, rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen wybod i'r Aelodau mai gweithdrefn y Cyngor yw monitro'r rhagolygon tywydd a defnyddio'r wybodaeth hynny i wneud penderfyniadau ar adnoddau priodol. Cafodd Aelodau wybod bod hyn yn cael ei fonitro dydd a nos i sicrhau bod y camau priodol yn cael eu gweithredu. Pwysleisiodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, Ffyniant, Datblygu a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen natur ddigynsail Storm Dennis a rhoddodd wybod i'r Aelodau mai hwn oedd y tro cyntaf i'r Cyngor alw am gymorth gan feysydd eraill y Cyngor.

Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen, wybod i Aelodau bod y Cyngor wedi gwario tua £80,000 ers llifogydd mis Chwefror er mwyn cynnal archwiliadau mewn perthynas ag asedau tomenni. Cafodd Aelodau wybod hefyd bod yna bedwar contractwr gwahanol ar y safleoedd yn cynnal gwaith archwilio mewn perthynas â'r tomenni a'r systemau draenio ac ati. Pwysleisiodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth bod pob tomen wedi cael ei archwilio nifer o weithiau ers llifogydd mis Chwefror. Er bod CNC wedi derbyn rhybudd o 5 diwrnod bod storm ar ei ffordd, cynghorodd Mr Michael Evans, CNC, ei bod hi'n anodd nodi faint o law fydd yn cwmpo ac ym mhle o ganlyniad i batrymau tywydd newidiol.

Cynhaliwyd trafodaethau pellach a gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Brencher a oedd unrhyw amgylchiadau eithriadol y mae modd eu nodi fel rheswm am y newid yn yr afon yn ystod llifogydd mis Chwefror. Gofynnodd hefyd am eglurhad o ran a oedd hyn yn cael ei gynnwys yn rhan o archwiliad CNC. Pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Brencher sylwadau cynharach y Cynghorydd Jarman mewn perthynas â thorri coed ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol a hoffai gweld Llywodraeth Cymru yn ymrwmo i wneud hyn. Hefyd, nododd y Cynghorydd Brencher fod bagiau tywod wedi cymryd peth amser i gyrraedd unigolion yn ystod Storm Dennis. Gofynnodd y Cynghorydd Brencher am sicrwydd bod gwaith wedi cael ei wneud i atal hyn rhag digwydd eto yn y dyfodol. Pwysleisiodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni y bydd dŵr llifogydd sy'n dod trwy'r llawr yn cael ei gynnwys yn rhan o archwiliad y Cyngor a bydd data'n cael ei gasglu gan breswylwyr. Rhoddodd Mr Evans, CNC, wybod i Aelodau nad oedd unrhyw gronfeydd dŵr wedi agor yn ystod y cyfnod yma, a bod hyn wedi cael ei gadarnhau gan Dŵr Cymru. Pwysleisiodd Mr Evans faint o law oedd wedi cwmpo a bod y dŵr wedi cyrraedd lefel uchaf yr Afon Taf yn gyflym iawn. O ran y coed, rhoddodd Mr Evans wybod i'r Aelodau bod yna fwriad i dorri'r coed yma, a bod hyn yn cael ei wneud yn rhan o ofyniad statudol i glirio'r ardal yma. Fodd bynnag, pwysleisiodd Mr Evans y byddai'r llifogydd wedi digwydd hyd yn oed os oedd y gwaith yma wedi'i gyflawni'n barod. O ran gwaith cynyddio, pwysleisiodd Mr Evans y bydd CNC yn edrych ar gyflawni'i waith mewn ffordd wahanol yn y

dyfodol ac y bydd hyn yn cael ei gyflawni yn rhan o adroddiadau CNC.

O ran y bagiau tywod, rhoddodd Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen wybod i'r Aelodau bod y Cyngor eisoes wedi buddsoddi mewn math newydd o fag tywod a bod trigolion Pentre eisoes wedi derbyn y rhain. Mae'r bagiau tywod newydd hyn yn atal dŵr rhag dod i mewn.

Parhaodd y trafodaethau a dymunodd y Cynghorydd Hughes ddiolch i Swyddogion y Cyngor, CNC a Dŵr Cymru am eu gwaith caled yn ystod y digwyddiad digynsail. Pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Hughes raddfa ddigynsail y digwyddiad ac roedd o'r farn nad oedd modd i unrhyw waith sefydlu mesurau ataliol atal y risg o lifogydd pellach yn gyfan gwbl. Holodd y Cynghorydd Hughes a fydd Llywodraeth Cymru yn ystyried cynnig cymorth ariannol pellach i drigolion mewn ardaloedd sydd wedi'u nodi. Nododd y dylai'r holl Aelodau lobïo Llywodraeth y DU i ddarparu cymorth ariannol pellach i gyflawni gwaith trwsio yn dilyn y storm.

Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Prosiectau Strategol wybod i'r Aelodau bod y gwaith rheoli perygl llifogydd yn ymwneud ag ystod eang o adnoddau rheoli llifogydd ac adnoddau cymorth, nid mesurau atal llifogydd corfforol yn unig, er mwyn mynd i'r afael â stormydd a llifogydd nad oes modd eu hatal.

Parhaodd y trafodaethau a chododd y Cynghorydd Stephens bryderon gan nodi ei bod hi'n bosibl bod llifogydd yn ei ward hi wedi bod yn waeth oherwydd draeniau wedi'u blocio a llwyni a dail heb eu torri sy'n effeithio ar y cwrs dŵr a'r system draenio o'r mynyddoedd. Nododd y Cynghorydd Stephens bod pobl yn parhau i bryderi, yn sgil effaith Covid-19 ar nifer y staff ac adnoddau sydd ar gael, a bydd hyn yn parhau i fod yn broblem wrth symud ymlaen. Pwysleisiodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen nad oedd unrhyw broblemau wedi codi mewn perthynas â nifer y staff sydd ar gael a fyddai mesurau Cyfyngiadau Symud COVID ddim yn effeithio ar nifer y staff sydd ar gael, gan fod yr aelodau o staff yma'n "weithwyr allweddol". Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen wybod i Aelodau bod gwaith archwilio cyson yn cael ei gyflawni mewn perthynas â cheuffosydd a draeniau a bod problemau'n cael eu nodi a'u trwsio'n barhaus.

Cododd y Cynghorydd Griffiths bryder mewn perthynas â gwaith adeiladu a cheisiadau am eiddo sy'n cael eu hadeiladu ar orlifdiroedd ar hyd a lled RhCT. Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni wybod i Aelodau mai CNC yw'r Awdurdod Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd yn achos gorlifdiroedd o gwmpas afonydd, yn unol â Deddf Rheoli Llifogydd a Dŵr. Bydd Cyngor RhCT yn mynd i'r afael â dŵr wyneb ffo a gwaith rheoli'n rhan o'r broses gynllunio i sicrhau bod y datblygiadau'n cael eu hadlewyrchu yng nghyfraddau dŵr wyneb ffo'r safle cyn i'r gwaith datblygu ddechrau.

Cadarnhaodd Mr Evans, CNC, mai Cyngor RhCT, nid Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru, sy'n mapio llifogydd ac sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau o ran cynllunio, yn ôl polisi Llywodraeth Cymru.

Nododd y Cynghorydd Bonetto ei phryderon o ran gorlifdiroedd a gofynnodd am sicrwydd o ran pa fesurau sydd ar waith ar gyfer tai wedi'u hadeiladu ar orlifdiroedd. Cytunodd Mr Evans, CNC, bod Nantgarw ar orlifdir a rhoddodd wybod i Aelodau fod Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn ailfodelu'r afon Taf o Bontypridd i ganol Caerdydd yn seiliedig ar fesuriadau a gwybodaeth newydd. Rhoddodd Mr Evans wybod i Aelodau fod Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn edrych ar wella'u

gwydnwch o ran llifogydd ond pwysleisiodd nad oes datrysiad hawdd o ran mynd i'r afael â'r problemau yn Nantgarw gan y bydd rhagor o amddiffynfeydd rhag llifogydd yn symud y perygl o lifogydd at gymunedau ymhellach i lawr yr afon.

Croesawodd y Cadeirydd gwestiynau ychwanegol yn unig gan Aelodau.

Gofynnodd y Cyngorydd Stephens am gadarnhad nad oedd unrhyw doriadau pellach wedi'u gwneud i'r rhaglen cynnal a chadw o ran ceuffosydd a draenau ledled RhCT. Rhoddodd Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen sicrwydd i Aelodau trwy nodi nad yw'r rhaglen wedi newid, nac yn digwydd yn llai aml a dydy nifer yr adnoddau ddim wedi lleihau.

Gofynnodd y Cyngorydd Jarman gwestiwn ynglŷn â faint o'r isadeiledd draenio o'r oes Victoria yn RhCT sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio o hyd. Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni wybod i Aelodau fod dros 700 cilomedr o asedau draenio a chysiau dŵr ledled y sir wedi'i nodi yn yr adroddiad isadeiledd. Serch hynny, rydyn ni wedi canolbwyntio ar nodi cyfrifoldebau, lleoliadau, llwybrau, ac ati a doedd dim gwybodaeth ar gael yn rhwydd o ran oedran yr asedau yma. Nododd y Rheolwr Perygl Llifogydd, Dŵr a Thomenni fod oedran yr isadeiledd presennol yn amrywio, o adeiladwaith modern i adeiladwaith yr Oes Fictoria.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD:**

1. Cydnabod cynnwys yr wybodaeth a gafodd ei chyflwyno gan Gyfarwyddwr Cyfadran Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng-flaen yr awdurdod lleol;
2. Sefydlu sesiwn ymchwiliad craffu i ystyried barn yr Aelodau Etholedig sy'n cynrychioli'r cymunedau hynny sydd wedi'u heffeithio;
3. Cytuno i ystyried asesiad y Cyngor, fel yr awdurdod llifogydd statudol, gan ystyried yr wybodaeth wedi'i darparu yn rhan o'r sesiwn ymchwiliad craffu.

73 Rhaglenni Gwaith y Cabinet a'r Pwyllgorau Craffu 2020-2021

Cyflwynodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democraidd a Chyfathrebu, ei adroddiad er mwyn rhoi rhaglen waith i Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2020/21.

Gofynnwyd i Aelodau drafod pynciau craffu a nodwyd yn y rhaglen waith 3 mis cychwynol a oedd yn canolbwyntio ar ymateb y Cyngor i COVID-19 a'i waith adfer.

Hefyd, rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democraidd a Chyfathrebu, wybod i Aelodau efallai y bydd angen bod yn hyblyg gyda'r Blaenraglen Waith dros y tri mis nesaf er mwyn ystyried Bil Setliad Llywodraeth

Leol. Cafodd Aelodau eu hatgoffa y bydd ymgynghoriad Llywodraeth Cymru mewn perthynas â'r Cydbwyllgor Corfforaethol yn dod i ben ym mis Ionawr, a bydd angen ystyried hyn yn rhan o'r Rhaglen Waith.

Rhoddodd y Cadeirydd, y Cynghorydd M. Adams, wybod i Aelodau y bydd cyfarfod y Grŵp Llywio i Aelodau'r Cynllun Datblygu Lleol yn cael ei gynnal cyn bo hir, ac y bydd argymhellion yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu maes o law.

Pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Webber yr angen i fod yn hyblyg wrth gyflawni gwaith craffu a dymunodd gofnodi ei chydymdeimlad dwysaf i ddioddefwyr y llifogydd yn RhCT, yn ogystal â'i diolchgarwch i bob Cynghorydd am eu gwaith caled yn ystod digwyddiad heb ei debyg.

Holodd y Cynghorydd Brencher a fyddai goblygiadau Brexit yn eitem ar agenda'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu. Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu, wybod i Aelodau mai penderfyniad Aelodau'r Pwyllgor yw hyn. Aeth y Cadeirydd ati i atgoffa Aelodau mai dyma'r Rhaglen Waith ar gyfer y 3 mis cychwynnol yn unig, a bydd hi'n anodd cynnwys hyn yn y Blaenraglen Waith nes bod y manylion mewn perthynas â Brexit yn glir. Cytunodd Aelodau â'r cynnig yma.

Nododd y Cynghorydd Jarman ei bod hi'n cytuno o ran cael rhaglen waith hyblyg. Serch hynny, mynegodd y Cynghorydd Jarman ei bod hi wedi siomi na chafodd y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu gyfle i gyflawni gwaith cyn y cam craffu ar adroddiad y Cabinet o'r enw "Rhaglen Ysgolion a Cholegau'r 21^{ain} Ganrif – Model Buddsoddi Cydfuddiannol" – a gafodd ei drafod yn y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 24 Medi. Holodd y Cynghorydd Jarman pam nad oedd eitem mor bwysig wedi'i chynnwys fel eitem ar ei phen ei hun yn rhan o Flaenraglen Waith y Cabinet ac felly heb gael ei thrafod gan Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu. Rhoddodd Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu wybod i'r Aelodau bod gan y Cyngor dyddiad cau ar gyfer cyflwyno ymateb, fodd bynnag, nododd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth ei bod hi'n bosibl y bydd modd nodi'r model newydd ar gyfer gwaith cyn y cam craffu yn y dyfodol. Esboniodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth fod amserlenni wedi bod yn dynn iawn, yn enwedig o ran gofynion Llywodraeth Cymru. Fodd bynnag, pwysleisiodd ein bod ni'n parhau i fod yn y camau cynnar iawn ac y bydd nifer o adroddiadau yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Cabinet yn y dyfodol gan gynnig cyfle i'r Pwyllgor Craffu gyfrannu.

Dywedodd y Cynghorydd Jarman mai prif bwrpas yr adroddiad oedd i Gyngor RhCT llunio cytundeb Partneriaeth Strategol gyda Llywodraeth Cymru a bod hwn yn newid sylweddol i'r ffordd y bydd ysgolion yn RhCT yn cael eu hariannu. Pwysleisiodd y Cynghorydd Jarman ei phryderon bod model newydd o gyllid wedi'i gytuno heb geisio cymeradwyaeth yr Aelodau Etholedig. Esboniodd y Cadeirydd y bydd y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu yn cael cyfle i gyfrannu at y drafodaeth, pan fydd cyllid ar gael.

Cynhaliwyd trafodaeth a nododd Mr Fish, Cynrychiolydd Rhieni/Llywodraethwyr, ei fod yn cytuno gyda'r Cynghorydd Jarman gan fynegi ei bryderon ar ran y Pwyllgor Craffu ar Faterion Plant a Phobl Ifainc. Gofynnodd Mr Fish am eglurhad pellach o ran a fydd cyfle i gyflawni gwaith trawsbynciol ar draws y Pwyllgorau Craffu, yn enwedig mewn perthynas â COVID a materion addysg. Cytunodd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu fod hwn yn ddull pwysig, fodd bynnag, pwysleisiodd ei bod hi'n bwysig nad ydyn ni'n dyblygu unrhyw waith.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD** cydnabod cynnwys y Rhaglen Waith Trosolwg a Chraffu arfaethedig ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2020/21 (Hydref - Rhagfyr 2020), sef Atodiad 1 yn yr adroddiad yma.

74 Materion Brys

Nid oedd unrhyw fusnes brys o ystyried.

75 Adolygiad y Cadeirydd a dod â'r cyfarfod i ben

Aeth y Cadeirydd ati i grynhoi'r argymhellion allweddol a'r deilliannau ar gyfer y cyfarfod, gan ddiolch i'r Aelodau am ddod i'r cyfarfod a chymryd rhan mewn trafodaeth adeiladol a manwl.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 7.15pm

**Y Cynghorydd M Adams
Cadeirydd**

Tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th DECEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN
RESOURCES

'FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS' A REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR COUNCIL OWNED/OCCUPIED BUILDINGS.

Author: Mike Murphy, Health and Safety Advisor, Tel 01443 425536

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members with an update on the Council's Fire Safety Risk Assessment process, as requested at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12th November last year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

Determine whether the information contained within this report provides sufficient evidence that the Council's arrangements and processes for fire safety are adequate.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 12^h November 2019, considered a report, (link below) detailing the additional actions taken since December 2018 to improve the Council's procedures and processes for managing the risk from fire, primarily the introduction of 2 fire safety e-learning modules.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/OverviewandScrutinyCommittee/2019/11/12/Reports/AgendaItem7FireRiskAssessments.pdf>

Following discussion with officers, Members resolved:

- To acknowledge the contents of the report;
 - To build the newly developed E-Learning modules into all new employees induction courses;
 - That 'spot checks' are carried out on schools and Council owned buildings, in addition to the regular pre-arranged fire safety assessments, to ensure full compliance;
 - That the Council's fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking fire risk assessments on schools and Council buildings on a rotational basis to prevent complacency; and
 - That a further report is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in four months to ensure implementation of the actions raised by Scrutiny Members.
- 3.2 Since the last report to Committee, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on the Council, with many of its buildings being closed, or operating at reduced capacity. Where possible, Council employees are currently working from home in line with Welsh Government guidance. Essential services have however continued to be delivered, and to enable these to operate as safely as possible, workloads and work priorities have had to be flexible to ensure support has been available where most needed. Throughout the pandemic, building compliance issues, such as fire safety maintenance programmes and fire safety risk assessments, have continued as planned.

4. SUMMARY OF CURRENT FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 Members will be aware from previous reports to this Committee, of the current arrangements the Council has in place to manage fire risks at its portfolio of buildings. However, for Members convenience, these are summarised below:

Policy – the Council has an approved Fire Safety Policy (copy attached at appendix 1) which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties in ensuring fire is appropriately managed. The policy is subject to regular review.

Site Management – every Council building will have a designated site / building manager (together with a deputy / deputies) appointed, who have specific responsibility for ensuring suitable controls are in place to manage the fire safety risks. To support these individuals the Council: has developed a number of Site Manager Guides (attached at appendix 2 is the guide for offices); provided various training; ensures advice and on-going support is available from a number of sources, including the Health and Safety Team, Corporate Estates and external fire safety consultants. In addition, there are various documents and templates available, including for example, a fire log book (which also gives guidance on tests etc. to be undertaken), example fire procedures and an example Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan together with guidance.

Fire Risk Assessment – every Council building has been assessed for fire safety by an external fire safety specialist. There is an on-going risk based programme of review for these assessments, for example, higher risk premises, such as residential homes, are re-assessed annually, whereas lower risk premises, such as offices, are re-assessed every 3 years. This programme of review meets (or exceeds) the recommended review periods contained in industry guidance. In addition, the designated site manager is responsible for undertaking an annual review of the current fire risk assessment to ensure it remains valid. The fire risk assessment is a comprehensive assessment that entails a detailed inspection and considers all relevant factors including current engineering controls and management systems in place at each location. Following each assessment, a report is produced and made available through an on-line system. Where actions are identified as being necessary they are included in an action plan, and compliance with these actions is monitored by key officers within the service areas, with regular (quarterly) performance reports produced.

Fire Safety Working Group – the Council has established a fire safety working group with representatives from each service area. A key function of this group is to receive fire risk assessment compliance reports and monitor performance, ensuring suitable action is taken where necessary. The group also considers all other fire safety matters including, for example, training needs, emerging trends and concerns. The group last met on the 28th November 2019, and was scheduled to meet on 19th March 2020, but this meeting was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the group has not physically met since, the representative officers have continued to receive compliance reports and been consulted on various fire safety matters. Regular communication has taken place with key members of the group to ensure the Council has

continued to meet its fire safety obligations during the pandemic, for example, appropriate fire safety procedures for schools and other Council premises. Formal meetings of the group are scheduled to resume early in the new year, via 'Teams'.

Fire Safety Audits – the Council's Health and Safety Team has a planned programme of fire safety audits. The programme is risk based and currently targets a minimum of 2 premises per month. Since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2019, there have been 8 such audits completed. No formal audits have been undertaken since the middle of March. The fire safety audit programme initially targeted school premises and whilst schools will continue to be a priority, the Council's residential establishments will also be included in the next financial years programme.

5. **UPDATE**

- 5.1 Detailed below is an update for Members regarding the resolution at the November 2019 meeting of this Committee:

New e-learning modules to be built into all new employees' induction.

The Council has introduced a new induction programme and the fire safety e-learning modules are included as part of the process. Fire safety has always been a compulsory part of induction although, as different service areas have different arrangements for fire safety training, the completion of the e-learning modules is not compulsory at this time. For example, within the social care setting, the Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Partnership, based at Rock Grounds, Aberdare, arranges a number of different fire safety training events and approximately 500 staff were trained in 2019.

As of 3rd November 2020, 364 employees had completed the e-learning fire safety awareness course and 67 completed the e-learning Fire Safety for Site Managers course.

The Corporate Induction sessions are currently being held virtually on a bi-monthly basis, and a representative of the Council's Health and Safety Team attends each session. The e-learning fire safety modules are promoted to all attendees, and these include not only new employees but also any current employee that has changed position within the Council

Spot checks are carried out on schools and other Council owned buildings in addition to pre-arranged fire safety assessments / audits

Spot checks have always been an integral part of the Council's health and safety monitoring system and fire safety has been one of the priority areas for a number of years.

However, the majority of spot checks undertaken by the Health and Safety Team were ad-hoc (for example, when a visit is made to any Council building the officer would routinely check for compliance with fire safety requirements such as exit doors not blocked, fire doors not wedged open, extinguishers in place etc.). However, fire safety spot checks are now programmed into the Health and Safety Team's workload.

Fire safety spot checks are also undertaken by various other officers (other than from the Health and Safety Team). For example, within the Education Department there are officers that regularly visit schools and monitor compliance with a number of different areas, one of which is fire safety.

During the summer, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service undertook an audit of school premises, initially concentrating on those schools open as hubs.

Fire risk assessors are tasked with undertaking FRA's on a rotational basis

The Council has a contract with a fire safety specialist company, 'Riskmonitor' for the undertaking of its Fire Risk Assessments. Discussions have taken place with Riskmonitor and they have confirmed that they will allocate fire risk assessments to their assessors on a rotational basis. There may be rare occasions where this is not possible, due to timing and resource capacity issues, for example, the Council requires an urgent review or re-assessment of a building and the only available assessor is the one that completed the previous assessment.

6. IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

- 6.1 Due to the changes in the way the Council delivers many of its services during the coronavirus pandemic, the fire safety risks may have changed, for example, where buildings are open, there may be fewer people in them and the need for social distancing needs to be considered when planning evacuations, etc. Site managers and Head Teachers have been provided with guidance and support to help them ensure the safety of their buildings and building users, including their fire safety arrangements. Appendix 3 is the 'Re-Occupation of Buildings during Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for Managers' and Appendix 4 is the 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools – September 2020 (version 6)'.

6.2 Due to the need to limit physical visits to premises, the Health and Safety Team are devising a format for undertaking desktop audits. Initially these audits will measure compliance with the management of 3 safety critical areas, Coronavirus, Fire Safety and Legionella. The desktop auditing programme began week commencing 23rd November with 12 premises targeted. Questionnaires have been sent to the relevant site manager with a 3 week date for return.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is an information report, therefore, no Equality and Diversity Assessment is required.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 This is an information report, therefore, no consultation is required.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no financial implications at this time.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers to have due regard to fire safety arrangements in the work place, including the need to assess the risk from fire.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

11.1 The effective management of fire safety risks supports the Council's Corporate Plan by protecting assets, including staff and premises, which are required to deliver essential services well, and will also assist the Council live within its means by minimizing avoidable losses.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 Fire safety will continue to be a priority for the Council. The development and roll out of e-learning modules for site managers and staff to better understand the processes in place for fire safety, will further add to the robust management practices for ensuring the risks from fire are adequately controlled.

Version	2
Last Revision Date	October 2019



HS 20

Fire Policy

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

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Department	Human Resources
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Reviewing Officer	Mike Murphy
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy has been produced as a result of the legal requirements set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (hereafter referred to in this policy as ‘the Order’).
- 1.2 In this policy, references to premises are references to sites and buildings, including any part of a site or building, for which the Council is responsible.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Council's statement of intent is, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent an outbreak of fire in any premises in the first instance, and to put in place measures to ensure the safety of its employees and any visitors in the unlikely event that a fire does break out.
- 2.2 The Council intends to achieve this by complying with its duties under the Order which, for every premises, will include:
- taking the following general fire precautions:
 - measures to reduce the risk of fire, including the risk from arson;
 - measures to reduce the risk of the spread of fire;
 - measures in relation to means of escape;
 - measures for securing that, at all material times, the means of escape can be safely and effectively used;
 - measures in relation to the means for fighting fires;
 - measures in relation to the means for detecting fires and giving warning in the case of fire;
 - measures in relation to the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire, including:
 - (i) measures relating to the instruction and training of employees;
 - and
 - (ii) measures to mitigate the effects of a fire.
 - undertaking suitable and sufficient fire safety risk assessments;
 - making and giving effect to appropriate fire safety arrangements;
 - where necessary, eliminating or reducing the risks from, and establishing and implementing additional emergency measures in respect of, any dangerous substances;

- where necessary, equipping the premises with appropriate firefighting equipment and fire detectors and alarms;
- providing and maintaining appropriate emergency routes and exits that are suitably indicated by signs and, where necessary, provided with adequate emergency lighting;
- establishing and, where necessary, giving effect to appropriate procedures for serious and imminent danger and danger areas;
- ensuring that the premises and any facilities, equipment and devices provided in respect of fire safety are subject to a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
- appointing one or more competent persons to assist in undertaking the preventive and protective measures determined as necessary;
- providing employers of any employees working in or on the premises with appropriate comprehensible and relevant information on the risks to their employees and the preventive and protective measures taken in respect of fire;
- providing employees located in the premises with suitable and sufficient fire safety information, instruction and training;
- ensuring that, where premises are shared with any other organisation(s), the person responsible for fire safety for the Council cooperates and coordinates with any person appointed by the other organisation(s).

2.3 Relevant Group Directors are to ensure that a site or building manager, as appropriate, is appointed to take responsibility for fire safety arrangements for each premises (if necessary, in consultation with other Group Directors, such as when service areas belonging to different Groups occupy the same premises).

For a school, the person responsible for fire safety is the Head Teacher.

2.4 The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

POLICY GUIDANCE

3. FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 As part of the process of ensuring that it complies with its duties under the Order as described in paragraph 2.2, the Council will arrange for suitable and sufficient fire safety risk assessments (FSRAs) to be undertaken by a competent person at every premises, and for the premises to be periodically re-assessed where considered necessary.

This will help to ensure that all fire safety issues are properly assessed and that, where necessary, any required improvements are identified and implemented.

- 3.2 In order to ensure that FSRAs are suitable and sufficient, the Council will employ a specialist consultant to undertake them and, where necessary, periodically re-assess them.

The Council, in consultation with the specialist consultant, will determine the appropriate period between the FSRA and the intended periodic re-assessment for any particular premises.

- 3.3 The responsibility for determining which specialist consultant to employ to undertake FSRAs/re-assessments, and for appointing that consultant, arranging all necessary contract specifications and associated documentation and monitoring compliance with contracts, lies with the Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.
- 3.4 Before making the decision on which specialist consultant to employ to undertake FSRAs/re-assessments, the relevant officer(s) in Corporate Maintenance will consult with the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 3.5 Site/building managers are responsible for ensuring that their premises has had a FSRA undertaken and that any periodic re-assessment is undertaken when due, liaising with Corporate Maintenance and/or the specialist consultant, as necessary.
- 3.6 Site/building managers are to liaise with the FSRA consultant regarding safety procedures that must be followed by the consultant's assessors whilst they are on site/in the building.

- 3.7 On completion of the FSRA for their premises, the site/building manager is to develop a prioritised action plan (where necessary, in consultation with technical officers in Corporate Maintenance) identifying any work/management duties required to be undertaken, names of persons or departments with the responsibility for their completion, timescales where applicable, etc.

It is the responsibility of the site/building manager to ensure that required actions are addressed and that the web-based FSRA is updated.

The web-based FSRA system utilised by the specialist consultant currently employed by the Council is called the RAMIS system.

- 3.8 Site/building managers must notify the FSRA consultant of any significant change to their premises that could affect the FSRA and which could require a re-assessment before any intended periodic re-assessment date.

Such a change could be, for example, an extension to a building, alterations to the internal layout of a building, a change of use of a building or a significant increase in the number of occupants in a building.

- 3.9 Site/building managers must review the FSRA annually using the re-assessment referral questionnaire form, and file the form appropriately on RAMIS.
- 3.10 Site/building managers must inform occupants of premises, both permanent occupants and any visitors, of any significant risks identified by the FSRA.
- 3.11 Where the Council only occupies part of a premises, the site/building manager must inform any person(s) responsible for the other part(s) of the premises of any significant findings that could affect the other part(s).

4. FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT, DEVICES AND SYSTEMS, ETC.

- 4.1 The Council will employ specialist contractors to install in premises all fire safety equipment, devices and systems, including signage, determined as necessary by the findings of the relevant FSRA.

- 4.2 The Council will employ specialist contractors to test, service and maintain to statutory requirements all appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems installed in premises, including any illuminated signs, to ensure that they are maintained in an efficient state, efficient working order and in good repair.
- 4.3 The responsibility for determining which specialist contractors to employ to install and/or test, service and maintain appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems, and for appointing those contractors, arranging all necessary contract specifications and associated documentation and monitoring compliance with contracts, lies with the Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.
- 4.4 Site/building managers must monitor to ensure that the specialist contractors are undertaking the necessary testing, servicing and maintenance of all appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems, and that records of the same are entered in the fire log book and/or on RAMIS.
- 4.5 Site/building managers must ensure that all required in-house checks/tests of appropriate fire safety equipment, devices and systems are undertaken and that records of the same are entered in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

In-house checks/tests are also to include ensuring that:

- escape routes are kept clear of obstructions and can be easily used in the event of a fire;
- any devices fitted to fire doors, such as door hold-open devices, work properly;
- locking mechanisms to final exit doors, such as panic bolts and electronic door releases, work properly.

- 4.6 Where checks/tests indicate a fault, site/building managers must take appropriate action to remedy the fault and record details of the action taken in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

False alarms are to be considered as a fault.

- 4.7 Where site/building managers delegate the duty of undertaking in-house fire safety checks/tests to other employees, they must monitor to ensure that those checks/tests are being properly carried out and that details are recorded in the fire log book and, where appropriate, on RAMIS.

In addition to undertaking such monitoring, site/building managers must evidence that they are doing so (one means of evidencing monitoring would be to periodically sign the fire log book record sheets).

5. FIRE-RELATED INCIDENTS

- 5.1 Site/building managers must report fire-related incidents to relevant officers in Corporate Maintenance, and also to the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team using the Council's Incident/Accident Investigation and Injury Record form HS 5(A).

6. FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Site/building managers must ensure that suitable fire safety procedures, including an evacuation plan, are developed and implemented for their premises.

Fire procedures must be appropriate to the particular premises and take into account the findings of the fire safety risk assessment.

- 6.2 Where premises include occupants that require assistance to evacuate, such as some mobility or sensory impaired disabled people for example, site/building managers must ensure that suitable personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are developed for those occupants, including both permanent occupants and visitors.
- 6.3 Evacuation plans, including those for disabled people, must not rely on the assistance of the Fire and Rescue Service to be effective.
- 6.4 Site/building managers are to ensure that fire safety procedures are documented and copies kept in the fire log book.
- 6.5 Site/building managers must ensure that fire safety procedures are brought to the attention of the occupants of their premises, both permanent occupants and visitors, including any contractors.

The posting of 'what to do in case of fire' fire action notices in strategic locations throughout a building can assist in informing people, particularly non-employees, about the fire procedures for a premises. Any such fire action notices must be consistent in the information provided and reflect the fire procedures developed for the premises.

- 6.6 Where the Council only occupies part of a premises and the fire safety procedures could affect occupiers of any other part(s), for example having to use the same escape route(s) in the event of a fire, the site/building manager must cooperate and coordinate with any person(s) responsible for the other part(s) of the premises.
- 6.7 Employees are not expected to try and fight a fire unless it is safe to do so and they have been trained in the use of firefighting equipment, or if they need to do so to make their escape from a building.

Employees must not put themselves at risk to fight a fire – their personal safety must always be the priority.

7. FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

- 7.1 Site/building managers must ensure that employees located in their premises are provided with all necessary fire safety information, instruction and training, and that records of the same are kept in the fire log book.

Training provided to employees is to be suitable for their roles and responsibilities.

- 7.2 Employees nominated to undertake additional duties in respect of fire safety, such as people appointed to undertake in-house checks/tests of equipment, devices or systems, people appointed to act as fire marshals to help ensure the safe evacuation of occupants in the event of a fire, or similar, people nominated in a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) to provide assistance to a disabled person in an evacuation, or similar, will require training over and above that provided to employees in general.

Any employees nominated to undertake additional fire safety duties, such as to act fire marshals, must be competent for the role.

- 7.3 Training is to include carrying out fire drills to test the efficiency and suitability of fire procedures and evacuation plans.

A minimum of two fire drills a year should be carried out at each premises (at some premises it may be advisable to carry out more, for example, in schools it may be advisable to carry one out near the start of each term).

8. EMPLOYEES' DUTIES

- 8.1 Employees are required to comply with all fire safety procedures.
- 8.2 Employees have a duty to report to their line manager any issues they become aware of that may adversely affect fire safety.
- 8.3 Employees are not permitted to misuse any equipment, system, device or similar provided in respect of fire safety.

9. RECORDS

- 9.1 It is essential that appropriate fire safety records are kept and that they can readily be made available for inspection by, for example, visiting Fire Officers, since they are a means of evidencing that the Council is complying with its duties under the Order.
- 9.2 The following records must be kept, together with any others deemed appropriate for the particular premises:
 - details of any visits by Fire Officers;
 - the fire safety risk assessment, together with any measures implemented as a result;
 - in-house checks/tests of fire safety equipment, devices and systems, such as fire alarm call points, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment;
 - in-house checks/tests of escape routes, including devices such as door-hold open devices and locking mechanisms to final exit doors, such as panic bolts and electronic door releases;
 - details of action taken when checks/tests reveal faults;
 - periodic tests/servicing by specialist contractors on fire safety equipment and systems, such as fire alarm and emergency lighting systems and firefighting equipment;
 - details of any false alarms and action taken to prevent recurrences;
 - fire safety arrangements and procedures including, where appropriate, any personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) prepared in respect of the evacuation of a disabled person;

- details of any people given additional responsibilities in respect of fire safety, such as someone appointed to the role of fire marshal;
- details of fire safety information, instruction and training provided to employees;
- details of fire drills, including subsequent debriefing meetings, any issues identified in such meetings and the measures implemented to address those issues;
- evidence of monitoring by site/building managers to ensure required in-house checks/tests are being properly undertaken (where they do not undertake such checks/tests themselves).

10. ADVICE

10.1 Advice on the implementation of this policy can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources, Ty Elai, Williamstown, CF40 1NY, telephone 01443 425531.

SITE/BUILDING MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Has a fire safety risk assessment (FSRA) been undertaken for the premises?			
• Are you arranging for any measures identified as necessary in the FSRA to be addressed?			
• Are you aware of any intended FSRA re-assessment date and that you are required to liaise with Corporate Maintenance and/or the FSRA consultant, as necessary, to arrange for the re-assessment to be undertaken?			
• Are you aware that you will need to notify the FSRA consultant of any significant change to your premises?			
• Are you aware that you need to complete an annual FSRA review questionnaire?			
• Are you aware that you need to report fire-related incidents to Corporate Maintenance and the Corporate Health and Safety Team?			
• If you share a premises with any other employer, are you aware that you must consult and cooperate with the person appointed by the other employer to be responsible for fire safety?			
• Are there appropriate fire safety arrangements and procedures in place including, where necessary, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for disabled people?			
• Are there suitable and sufficient escape routes and exits, suitably indicated by signs, and are these inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order?			
• Is any emergency lighting inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is any fire detection and alarm system inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is firefighting equipment inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			
• Is any other fire safety device, equipment or system inspected, tested and maintained in efficient working order (including in-house checks/tests)?			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have employees been provided with comprehensible and relevant information on fire safety? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any outside employers or self-employed people working on the premises been provided with comprehensible and relevant information on the risks identified by the FSRA, the preventive and protective measures put in place and the identities of the person appointed to take charge of those measures? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have employees, including any given additional responsibilities, been provided with appropriate fire safety training? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are fire drills held at least twice a year? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are debriefing meetings held after fire drills and are measures implemented to address any issues identified in such meetings? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a fire log book for the premises? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is all relevant fire safety information recorded in the fire log book? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you update the RAMIS system as required, and do you check that specialist contractors do so as well and inform Corporate Maintenance if there are any issues? 			

Completed by: _____
(Signature)

Confirmed by: _____
(Signature)

Name: _____
(Print)

Name: _____
(Print)

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____



**Site and Building Managers’
Guide to Health and Safety
in
Offices**

**Issue 3
November 2015**





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Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist site managers understand and fulfil their duties under health and safety legislation. It draws attention to the main hazards found in offices, and provides information and guidance to safeguard employees and other persons who may visit or share the site e.g. members of the public, contractors, etc.

It is the responsibility of the relevant group directorates to appoint site managers, and deputies if necessary. Group directorates should contact Corporate Estates Asset Management Team who will coordinate and maintain an up to date database of site managers. Site managers must be provided with relevant information, instruction and training regarding their role and responsibilities. In large multi-occupancy or shared sites it is likely that the site manager will have a coordinating role for the management of health and safety throughout the site. In general, the site manager will have responsibility for communal areas and ensuring that the relevant maintenance and servicing of equipment and systems is carried out in accordance with set standards e.g. fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, portable appliance testing etc. The day-to-day management of individual offices, storage areas and kitchens etc., used by individual sections will be the responsibility of the relevant section head.

In large multi-occupancy or shared sites it is possible that the site manager will need assistance and cooperation from other site users on issues such as fire, first aid, traffic management, accident reporting and security. These arrangements should be documented and agreed with the relevant section heads. Please note, there is a legal requirement that where different employers share a workplace they must cooperate and coordinate with each other on health and safety matters.

Self Audit/Inspection Checklists are provided at the end of the guide and should be used by the site manager to direct their attention to areas that require regular examination.

Legal Duties

As an employer, the Council has duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the Act) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees, and others who might be affected by its undertaking. This includes the provision and maintenance of:

- a safe and healthy place of work and working environment;
- safe plant, equipment and working systems;
- safe handling, transport and storage of materials and substances;
- information, instruction, training and supervision to enable employees to recognise and minimise hazards;
- adequate welfare facilities.

Employees of the Council also have duties under the Act, the most important of which are to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who might be affected by their work activities, and to cooperate with their employer in all matters of health and safety.

In order to assist in the process of managing health and safety, the Council has developed Health and Safety Policies covering a host of specific topics. The policies can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's intranet site at [Council Policies](#).

The following pages provide information and guidance concerning the management of the main health and safety hazards likely to be encountered in an office environment.

Further advice and guidance can be found by either contacting the Health and Safety Team based at Ty Elai Williamstown and/or Corporate Estates based at Valley's Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon.



Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material that has been a popular building material since the 1950s. It is used as an insulator (to keep in heat and keep out cold), has good fire protection properties and protects against corrosion. Asbestos is found in many products used in buildings, including ceiling tiles, pipe insulation, boilers and sprayed coatings, and because asbestos is often mixed with another material, it is hard to know if you are working with it or not. Some offices will have asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in some areas of the building, but generally speaking, if the building was built from the year 2000 onwards then this is unlikely.

The Council has a legal duty to control and manage the presence of asbestos in all properties under its control. To this end, Corporate Estates have undertaken surveys of Council premises and have developed a framework for managing ACMs that includes:

- the identification of ACMs in the building;
- the assessment of the condition of the ACMs;
- either removal, or management in situ which would include the development of an Asbestos Management Plan;
- providing information to employees and contractors;
- training for employees where required; and,
- appropriate record keeping.

The site manager will follow the Asbestos Management Plan provided by Corporate Estates and will:

- ensure they are aware of the emergency arrangements;
- keep the Asbestos Management Plan readily available and use it to manage and control any ACMs that may be present in the building;
- inform anyone who may work in the vicinity of the ACMs of their presence (e.g. maintenance staff);
- report any ACMs that might, or have become damaged to Corporate Estates for immediate action;

- contact Corporate Estates when any building works are planned including, refurbishments or demolition, running computer cables, electrical cables, plumbing etc.

If your premise has not received an asbestos survey, or as the site manager you have not received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities, please contact Corporate Estates.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy—HS24—Control and Management of Asbestos](#)
- The Site Asbestos Management Plan*

*Contact Corporate Estates for copy

Two workers installing computer equipment were exposed to dangerous asbestos fibres after drilling into asbestos containing material. Although an asbestos survey had been carried out, this was not communicated to the contractor, and the contractor had not requested to see the asbestos survey report prior to the work commencing. Both the landlord and the contractor were prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following the incident.



Communication

It is the site manager's responsibility to ensure that there are clear and effective channels of communication throughout the site for information and guidance relating to its health and safety management, particularly in multi-occupancy/shared sites.

This can be achieved by holding regular meetings with other site users to discuss site based issues, circulating written information to ensure site users are kept apprised and ensuring safety signage is appropriate and adequate. Notice and information boards should be kept up to date.

The site manager must ensure that the HSE's health and safety law poster is completed appropriately and displayed where employees can easily read it. The poster includes basic health and safety information and lets people know who is responsible for health and safety on site.

Current legislation requires the employer to consult with employees on health and safety matters. Consultation involves not only giving employees information, but also listening to and taking account of what they say, particularly when they report problems, and before making any health and safety decisions. The Council's Employee Suggestion Scheme and Hazard Reporting Scheme can assist in this process.

Where building or maintenance issues arise, the site manager must inform Corporate Estates. Communication and/or co-ordination with Corporate Estates should ideally be done via an identified "single point of contact" for the site. It is the responsibility of the site manager to inform Corporate Estates immediately of any changes or contact details in respect of this person.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [The Council's Employee Suggestion Scheme](#)
- [The Council's Hazard Reporting Scheme](#)

Control of Contractors

The control of contractors within a site is very important. Contractors in an office environment may be involved in long-term major refurbishment work or everyday maintenance, such as servicing of the heating system, repairing damaged guttering, maintaining the emergency lighting system etc.

The site manager should always liaise with Corporate Estates and also follow the Council's Policy HS23 Managing Contractors, for the planning, selection, appointment and monitoring of anyone undertaking works. This includes:

- having clearly identified personnel who are points of contact for contractors and visiting workers;
- having all significant and unusual hazards and risks on site clearly identified;
- exchanging information on hazards and risks.

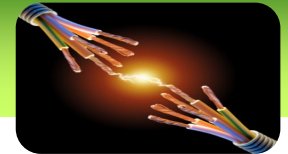
The site manager will ensure effective communication is established and maintained through:

- regular workplace meetings with contractors;
- providing contractors with copies of appropriate hazard registers, such as the asbestos register;
- informing employees and visitors about hazards on site;
- having effective signing in and out procedures for contractors;
- informing contractors of emergency site procedures e.g. fire evacuation plan
- sharing findings of risk assessments with contractors;
- asking contractors about the hazards and risks which they are bringing on site (e.g. creating noise, dust, fumes);
- informing employees and visitors about any possible interference with normal working practices (e.g. re-routing of emergency escape routes);
- monitoring the work against agreed methods.

Any issues or unsafe practice concerning the work of contractors must be reported to Corporate Estates.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS23—Managing Contractors](#)
- [Using Contractors—A brief guide—HSE](#)



Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

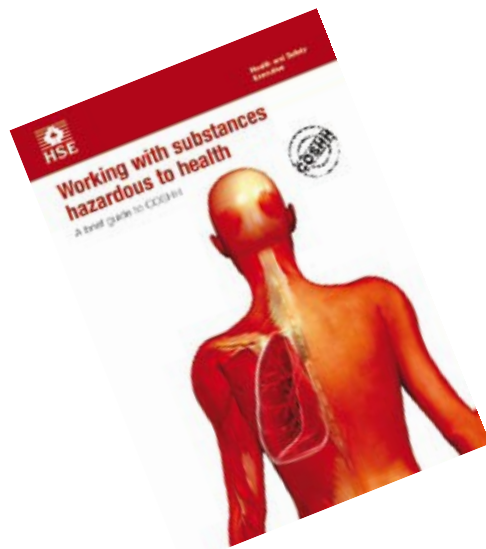
The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) require employers to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances. This would include substances listed as: very toxic; toxic; harmful; corrosive; irritant; and, microorganism. They can be in the form of a solid, liquid, gas, vapour or microorganism, and can endanger life by being: inhaled; ingested; or, absorbed/injected through the skin or mucous membranes.

In offices these substances could include general cleaning materials, adhesives, photocopier toner, etc. In general, these types of product are used by cleaners and caretakers. Responsibility for the undertaking of COSHH Assessments and the development of appropriate control measures is the responsibility of line managers.

The site manager must liaise, where required, with the line managers to ensure materials are stored and used appropriately.

The site manager must report back any issues to those responsible.

All substances must be stored in their original containers and in accordance with manufacturers' requirements, and kept secured away from vulnerable persons.



Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy—HS3—Control of Substances Hazardous to Health](#)

Electricity

Electricity can kill. It can also cause shocks and burns and can start fires. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 cover the use of electricity in offices. These regulations require employers to maintain electrical systems and electrical equipment within their control.

Electrical systems include the lighting and power circuits, and portable electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners, power tools etc. All work carried out on electrical circuits and equipment such as installation work, inspection, testing and maintenance, must be carried out by a competent person. Fixed electrical installations must be inspected and tested at regular intervals. Corporate Estates have contracts in place for both fixed and portable electrical equipment.

All portable electrical equipment should be subject to periodic portable appliance testing (PAT). The frequency of the testing varies according to the appliance and its usage, although it is generally undertaken on an annual basis for office type equipment such as printers, computers etc. You will find stickers or labels on the equipment indicating when it was last inspected and the date when the next inspection is due. Residual Current Devices must be used where required. If you are unclear as to when the fixed electrical systems or portable equipment was last checked you should contact Corporate Estates.

Employees using portable equipment must visually check it prior to use, and report any damage or defects. For example broken plugs, frayed flex, discoloured or overheated cables. Defective or unsuitable equipment should be immediately withdrawn from service and labelled until it is either repaired or destroyed.

Employees must not bring their own electrical equipment into the Council's offices.

Electrical switch-rooms must be kept free from combustible materials and never used as storage areas.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS10—Electricity at Work](#)
- [Electrical Safety at Work—HSE](#)



Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on the “responsible person” to ensure that a Fire Safety Risk Assessment (FRSA) is completed and regularly updated. If a current FRSA is not available on site, the site manager should liaise with their direct line manager to establish whether or not an assessment has been undertaken, and to request a copy of the resulting report. In the absence of a report, arrangements must be made for a FRSA to be completed. Corporate Estates can assist in this matter.

The site manager is responsible for overall management of the day-to-day fire precautions on site and will ensure that systems and arrangements are developed to:

- identify any significant findings from the FRSA and implement any actions required;
- check escape routes to ensure they can be used and are not obstructed;
- check the emergency exit devices on doors to ensure they work correctly;
- test fire alarm systems, including weekly alarm tests and periodic maintenance by a competent person;
- test and maintain emergency lighting systems, fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets etc., including periodic maintenance by a competent person;
- record the training of relevant people;
- ensure a coordinated site based emergency evacuation plan is developed;
- liaise with other site users to ensure personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) are developed for disabled persons;
- maintain the fire log book.



The site manager must also:

- update the FSRA as required;
- liaise with Corporate Estates on building and maintenance issues; and,
- undertake an annual review of the FRSA.

As stated previously, in large multi-occupied or shared sites many of the fire related maintenance and procedural arrangements will need to be coordinated with other site users.

The current fire related maintenance contracts in place and managed through Corporate Estates include:

- fire fighting equipment e.g. extinguishers - 1 service per year;
- fire detection and alarm systems e.g. smoke/heat detectors, alarm repeater - 4 visits per year;
- emergency lighting - 4 visits per year;
- gas heating systems - 2 visits per year (summer/winter) (the summer visit will include a gas safety check); and,
- gas safety check – annual (see reference to gas heating systems above).

The site manager must ensure that the maintenance is undertaken in line with the above contracts. Any discrepancies or uncertainties must be reported to Corporate Estates.

Additional Information/Guidance

- Council Policy HS20—Fire Safety Policy (Draft)
- [Fire Risk Assessment Guide—Offices and Shops—HSE](#)
- [Fire Risk Assessment Guide—Means of Escape for Disabled People—HSE](#)
- Fire Log Book



First-Aid

Under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 “Employers have a legal duty to make arrangements to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. It doesn’t matter whether the injury or illness is caused by the work they do. What is important is that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called in serious cases.” The extent of first-aid provision will depend on a number of factors, such as the types of hazards present, the number of employees, the history of accidents, the proximity of medical services etc. This can be determined by carrying out a first-aid needs risk assessment. The approved code of practice (ACoP) for the regulations provides guidance to help employers meet their obligations.

The site manager will liaise with other site users to ensure that the required numbers of first-aid trained persons or appointed persons are available during the hours of work.

Sufficient and adequately stocked first-aid boxes must be provided and maintained by authorised personnel. The location of the first-aid boxes and the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for their up-keep must be clearly displayed throughout the site.

Records should be kept by the first-aiders/appointed persons of all treatment administered, and should include the name of the injured person, date, time and circumstances of the accident, and details of the injury sustained. This information must also be recorded on the incident/accident form.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare standards. These regulations aim to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of all employees, including people with disabilities. The Regulations cover factors such as:

- **Health** - ventilation, temperature, lighting, cleanliness, waste materials, room dimensions and space, workstations and seating.
- **Safety** - maintenance, floors and traffic routes, doors, gates, walls, windows.
- **Welfare** - sanitary conveniences, washing facilities, drinking water, accommodation for clothing, changing facilities, facilities to rest and eat meals.

It is probable that the majority of queries received by site managers will be in some way related to these areas. The site manager should therefore make themselves aware of these regulations.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS12—Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare](#)
- [Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare—A Short Guide for Managers—HSE](#)

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS9—First Aid at Work](#)
- [First Aid at Work—Guidance on the Regulations—HSE](#)
- [First Aid at Work—Your Questions Answered—HSE](#)

General Working Environment



Incidents/Accidents

It is the responsibility of all employees to report incidents and accidents that occur on Council premises or which arise from work carried out on behalf of the Council. Incidents and accidents must be reported on the Council's Incident/Accident Investigation and Injury Record form HS5 (A).

Certain incidents/accidents are also reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

The following are reportable if they arise 'out of or in connection with work':

- accidents that result in the **fatal injury** of an employee or member of the public;
- accidents that result in an employee suffering a **major injury** (fracture, dislocation etc.)
- accidents that result in an employee being **absent from work or unable to do their normal duties for more than seven days**;
- accidents that result in a member of the public suffering an injury and being **taken to hospital directly from the scene of the accident**;
- an employee **diagnosed with one of the specified work-related diseases**; or,
- one of the specified 'dangerous occurrences' – these do not necessarily result in injury but have the potential to do significant harm.

Reporting Arrangements

In the event that a work-related accident occurs on the site, the relevant manager must notify the health and safety team in line with the timescales identified in the Accident Reporting Arrangement Guidelines.

Where an incident/accident occurs on site and involves an employee, it is the direct line manager's responsibility to investigate. However, the site manager must be notified in order that hazardous areas and trends can be identified and any repairs or remedial work can be organised. Where the incident/accident involves a visitor, member of the public or contractor then the site manager should investigate unless there are obvious reasons why the responsibility rests with a different manager.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS5—Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences](#)
- [Accident Reporting Arrangement Guidelines—May 2012](#)
- [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013—HSE](#)

Interview Rooms

Interview rooms have an important role within the Council's office facilities as they provide an area of privacy where employees and members of the public can meet.

Where possible it is important that the interview room is in a location that prevents unauthorised access by the visitor(s) to the rest of the building. The design of the room should be such that it affords the employees a means of removing themselves from any violent situation, should it occur.

It is equally important that, where necessary, the interview room is fitted with a panic alarm for employees to summon assistance if needed. Arrangements should be developed for employees to follow in the event of the alarm sounding, and all employees must be aware of these procedures. Arrangements should include the need for the interviewer to check the room prior to the interview for any objects that could be used as weapons.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS13—Violence at Work](#)



Legionella

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal type of pneumonia, which is contracted by inhaling tiny airborne droplets or particles containing viable Legionella bacteria. Although healthy individuals may develop Legionnaires' disease, the elderly, smokers, alcoholics, and those with cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory or kidney disease would be more at risk. Legionella bacteria are common and can be found in water systems, wet air conditioning plant, whirlpool baths and hydrotherapy baths.

Corporate Estates have undertaken Legionella Surveys of the water systems within Council premises and developed site specific Legionella Site Log Books.

The site manager will follow the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book and will:

- keep the Log Book updated and readily available and use it to manage and control the water systems in the building;
- carry out the monthly temperature monitoring as instructed in the Log Book;
- carry out weekly flushing of any low-use water outlets as instructed in the Log Book and record actions accordingly; and
- record the findings and report any failings to the Legionella Team for investigation/rectification.

If your premise has not received a Legionella Survey/Site Log Book, or you as the site manager have not received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities, please contact Corporate Estates.

Additional Information/Guidance

- The Council's Legionella Survey/Site Log Book*

* Produced by Corporate Estates

There are always occasions when employees working in an office will need to move equipment, furniture, boxes etc. It is therefore essential that before undertaking these tasks, a risk assessment is undertaken that considers the factors below:

- avoiding hazardous manual handling operations where reasonably practicable —
 - is the job necessary?
 - can it be done in a different way?
 - can it be mechanised?
- assess any hazardous operations that cannot be avoided;
- reduce the risk of injury as far as is reasonably practicable -
 - add specialist sliders or wheels to furniture that has to be moved
 - provide sack trucks or trolleys
 - spread moving and handling tasks throughout the day
- ensure employees have received suitable and sufficient training.

The most useful assessments are set out in a simple format so that it is possible to quickly assimilate what equipment, techniques and numbers of employees are required to carry out the task safely. Simple tasks only require simple assessments, e.g. dividing large boxes into smaller loads. More complex tasks will require detailed assessment and will need to be recorded. In some instances generic assessments are acceptable, however, all assessments should consider the task, the load, the working environment and the individual's capabilities.

Clothing, footwear and protective equipment are other factors that have a direct impact on movement and the ability to adopt the correct posture while moving and handling. They should allow employees to perform a full range of unrestricted movements.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS4—Manual Handling](#)
- [Manual Handling at work - A brief guide—HSE](#)

Moving and Handling



Passenger Lifts

All passenger lifts must be thoroughly examined by competent persons, at least every six months. As well as the lift, the inspection/maintenance programme should include any release mechanism, alarm and communication device installed. Corporate Estates have contracts in place for the examination and maintenance of lifts, and the site manager should consult and cooperate with them, the lift manufacturer and/or the lift servicing/maintenance company regarding matters concerning the lift.

Site managers are responsible for ensuring:

- notices are appropriately displayed instructing that the lift is not to be used in the event of a fire (unless it has been designed as a fire evacuation lift);
- sufficient people are designated and suitably trained to act as “responsible persons” in the event of a lift breakdown;
- appropriate procedures are in place for responsible persons to follow in the event the lift fails, trapping someone inside it;
- notices are prominently displayed in/on/adjacent to the lift giving:
 - the names and contact details of the responsible persons
 - clear instructions on how to isolate the electrical supply to the lift
 - details of where any access panel and emergency manual lift door release keys are located
- only trained and competent individuals have access to lift machinery, and that unauthorised access to the manual cranking mechanism/lift electronics etc. is prevented;
- notices are displayed inside the lift explaining what to do in an emergency;
- any emergency telephone, bell or other device, fitted in the lift for summoning help, is functioning correctly and can be heard where assistance is available; and,
- emergency operating procedures are periodically tested.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Thorough Examination and Testing of Lifts - A simple guidance for lift owners —HSE](#)
- Council's Safety Bulletin—Lift Breakdowns—14 February 2012

Site Security

Crime does sometimes occur in public buildings and usually involves the “opportunist” theft of property from unlocked or unattended offices, but it can occasionally involve physical or non-physical violence against employees. By ensuring that security, like safety, is non-negotiable, opportunity for crime can be substantially reduced. The site manager is responsible for ensuring that on-site security is effective and sustained at an appropriate level.

Procedures should be developed for locking and unlocking the building and for receiving and supervising visitors, and, where assessed as necessary, CCTV and magnetic swipe/proximity card access systems installed. All procedures and systems should be periodically reviewed to assess their efficiency.

All site-based employees should be made aware of security procedures and informed of their responsibility to follow them. Steps should be taken to monitor employee compliance with those procedures.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS13—Violence at Work](#)



Slips, Trips and Falls

Most slips occur when the flooring or ground is wet or contaminated. Most trips are due to poor house-keeping. These types of accidents are seen by many as inevitable and many people may not take them seriously. However, the statistics prove that slip, trip and fall accidents cost employers and the NHS millions of pounds each year, notwithstanding the pain and suffering of those injured.

The solutions are often simple and cost effective. A suitable assessment of the risks should identify the necessary control measures. For example:

Internal Areas

- floor surfaces should be kept free from obstructions and holes and defects repaired promptly, particularly those on staircases;
- handrails should be fitted on stairs;
- stairs should be maintained in a safe condition, kept free of obstructions and well lit;
- spillages should be cleaned up immediately;
- section heads are responsible for ensuring that the work areas under their control are kept clean, tidy and free from defects.

External Areas

- steps and paths in outdoor areas should be kept in good condition and free from obstructions that could lead to slips or trips;
- changes in surface levels such as on ramps and steps should be clearly marked and lighting should be suitable and sufficient;
- steps should have a suitable handrail, and paths that are used during the hours of darkness should be provided with outdoor lighting.

During the winter months it is likely that the risk of slips, trips and falls will increase. Arrangements should be developed to ensure that the increased risk is managed appropriately. For example:

- undertaking a pre-winter risk assessment/ inspection of pipes, guttering, drainage channels, traffic routes etc., to ensure leaks are identified and repaired before the onset of winter;

- ordering supplies of salt/grit, and developing procedures to ensure adequate stocks are maintained;
- prioritising pedestrian and vehicle routes for gritting;
- agreeing the timing and frequency of gritting; and,
- informing other site users of these arrangements.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare—A Short Guide for Managers—HSE](#)
- [Council Guidance—Snow & Ice Management—A Guide for Site Managers](#)
- [Preventing slips and trips at work—A brief guide—HSE](#)



Smoking

The Smoke-Free Premises (Wales) Regulations 2007 prohibit smoking in enclosed or substantially enclosed public places, including workplaces. There is no obligation on employers to provide designated areas where employees can smoke. However, if designated smoking areas are provided, they should be located outside the building and away from doorways, windows and pedestrian routes. Arrangements must be made to remove all smoking debris.

"No smoking" signs must be placed in prominent positions at or near each entrance, so that people entering can see them.

Please note that the Council's 'Smoking in the Workplace' Policy imposes restrictions on smoking over and above those required by the aforementioned legislation. For example:

- employees can only smoke in their own time;
- the restrictions on smoking apply equally to both tobacco products and e-cigarettes;
- employees or visitors are not permitted to charge e-cigarettes in the workplace and/or in vehicles owned, leased, hired or rented by the Council.

Every year about 70 people are killed and 2500 seriously injured in accidents involving vehicles in the workplace. Being struck or run over by moving vehicles are the most common causes of these accidents. Although the likelihood of being struck by a vehicle in an office site is low, the potential still exists. Vehicles likely to be encountered on an office site include cars, vans, delivery vehicles etc. Additionally, there may be occasions where building or refurbishment works may impact on the regular traffic management arrangements on site.

It is therefore essential that a risk assessment be undertaken to identify the potential hazards and to ensure that appropriate control measures are adopted.

The risk assessment should take into account items such as: the type of vehicles accessing the grounds; reversing vehicles; access for emergency vehicles; parking; pedestrian routes; vulnerable visitors; unsecured gates etc. Control measures could include: speed limits; adequate lighting; separate access/egress for pedestrians and vehicles; clearly marked and/or designated parking bays; assistance for reversing vehicles; close supervision of visitors; one-way systems etc.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS18—Smoking in the Workplace](#)
- [Smoking Guidance and signage—Welsh Assembly Government](#)

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Managing Traffic Safety on Council Premises](#)
- [Workplace Transport Safety—A brief guide—HSE](#)



Traffic Management



Visitors

Visitors to Council offices could include members of the public, contractors and other visiting Council employees. To protect visitors from harm, it will be necessary to know they are on site.

The simplest way of recording visitors' presence is by using a register and/or issuing a visitor's badge. Where practical, visitors must sign in and out indicating who they are visiting, the time they arrived and the time they leave.

Visitors must be informed of the risks to which they may be exposed whilst on site and any emergency arrangements, including the location of assembly points. Where an emergency arises, measures must be taken by the responsible person to ensure the visitor is accompanied to a place of safety. The responsible person may not necessarily be the site manager, but is likely to be the person who is meeting the visitor. Adequate supervision must be maintained while the visitor is on site.

Where disabled persons access the site, the responsible person must ensure, where necessary, that personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are developed for these individuals (See Fire Safety).

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS15—Visitors in the Workplace](#)

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) require the risk to people's health and safety, from equipment that is used at work, be prevented or controlled. Generally any equipment which is used at work is covered by PUWER. Work equipment in an office environment includes items such as, shredders, stepladders, trolleys, and photocopiers.

Work equipment provided must meet the requirements of PUWER, and in doing so it must be:

- suitable for use, and for the purpose and conditions in which it is used;
- maintained in a safe condition; and
- in certain circumstances, inspected to ensure that it is, and continues to be, safe for use.

Any inspection/maintenance must be carried out by a competent person and records kept. Where appropriate, employees will be expected to undertake visual inspections of equipment before use, and report to their line manager, any defects noted.

Risks created by the use of the equipment must be assessed, and eliminated where possible or controlled.

Employees using work equipment must receive adequate training, instruction and information for the equipment they are using.

Section heads are responsible for work equipment used solely by their employees.

Additional Information/Guidance

- [Council Policy HS21—Work Equipment](#)
- [Providing and using work equipment safely - A brief guide - HSE](#)

Work Equipment

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Self Audit/Inspection Checklists

(To be completed by the site/building manager)



Policies and Procedures	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Have you access to all the current Corporate H&S Policies?			
Have you access to all current H&S Guidance? (Available on Intranet)			
Have you on display the completed Health and Safety Law Poster?			
Asbestos			
Have you a current Asbestos Register and Management Plan for your premise?			
Have you received training/instruction in its use including the emergency arrangements?			
Do you inform all contractors/maintenance staff / surveyors of the requirement to read and sign the register?			
Do you inform everyone who may work near asbestos of its presence?			
Have you arrangements in place that when you are not available a competent member of staff manages this process?			
Communication			
Are all site-based employees made aware of site safety arrangements?			
Are meetings with other occupiers held regularly?			
Has Corporate Estates been provided with current site contact information?			
Control of Contractors			
Have you arrangements in place to risk-assess how building work / maintenance / refurbishment works will affect the safety at the premise?			
Are Corporate Estates consulted and involved before and during construction/maintenance/ refurbishment works?			
Have you identified in-house personnel who are points of contact for contractors and visiting workers?			
Do you have arrangements in place to exchange information regarding hazards and risks with the contractors?			
Do you have arrangements in place to regularly communicate and meet with contractors?			
Are arrangements in place to ensure all site-based employees and visitors are made aware of hazards and risks associated with the contractor's work?			



COSHH	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Is there an inventory of all hazardous substances used/stored on site?			
Have appropriate COSHH assessments been undertaken?			
Are substances stored safely away from vulnerable people?			
Are arrangements in place for liaising with cleaner/caretaker's line managers?			
Are arrangements in place to liaise with contractors regarding hazardous substances?			
Have all relevant employees been suitably trained concerning safe methods of work?			
Has suitable personal protective equipment been issued, and employees trained in its correct use?			
Are procedures for dealing with spillages in place?			
Are new employees trained before using substances?			
Electricity			
Have the electrical systems been checked by competent persons?			
Are appliances in good condition?			
Are plugs, sockets and leads in good condition?			
Are electrical leads prevented from trailing across floors?			
Are there enough sockets (i.e. sockets not overloaded)?			
Are RCDs used where required?			
Are regular visual checks of equipment carried out?			
Do only competent people check and maintain equipment?			
Are employees trained in the safe use of equipment?			
Are there mechanisms in place to safely deal with faulty equipment?			



Fire Safety				Refer to rear of fire risk assessment folder for annual fire safety self audit.
First-aid	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required	
Has a first-aid needs risk assessment been carried out to determine the number of first-aiders and appointed persons required?				
Where required, are all shifts covered by suitable numbers of first-aiders and appointed persons?				
Are notices displayed detailing the location of the first-aid provision on site, including the identity and location of the first-aiders and/or appointed person(s)?				
Are all first-aid kits clearly marked?				
Are all first-aid kits, fully stocked, and regularly checked and replenished when necessary?				
General Working Environment				
Are floor surfaces suitable, flat, free from trip hazards and properly maintained?				
Have you arrangements for cleaning up spillages?				
Are carpets in good condition?				
Are stairs well lit?				
Is the stair covering in good condition and clean?				
Are stairs free from obstructions?				
Are lighting levels sufficient including those in corridors and stairs?				
Is there sufficient ventilation?				
Is glazing in good condition ?				
Are window restrictors in place, where required?				



Incidents/Accidents	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Are all incidents and accidents investigated and reported appropriately within set timescales?			
Are records kept at the premise of all incidents and accidents?			
Are incidents / accidents reviewed to identify trends?			
Interview Rooms			
Is the interview room appropriately located to prevent unauthorised access to the rest of the building?			
Has the room been designed to allow employees to safely leave if they feel threatened?			
Is there a panic alarm installed?			
Are procedures in place for employees to follow in the event the alarm is activated?			
Are alarms regularly tested?			
Is the room free of objects that could be used as weapons?			
Legionella			
Have you a Legionella Survey/Site Logbook?			
Have you received training/instruction regarding your responsibilities?			
Do you undertake weekly flushing of low-use water outlets as instructed in the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book?			
Do you carry out monthly water temperature checks as instructed in the Legionella Survey/Site Log Book?			



Moving and Handling	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Is moving and handling avoided where possible?			
Have all manual handling tasks been assessed and preventative measures implemented?			
Do assessments cover the load, work method, workplace, working environment and individual capability?			
Are appropriate lifting and handling aids available and used?			
Are employees trained in use of equipment and handling techniques as appropriate?			
Passenger Lifts			
Are all passenger lifts maintained and inspected in accordance with set contract (contact Corporate Estates)?			
Is there signage outside the lift indicating that it must not be used in the event of a fire?			
Are there emergency procedures in place if the lift fails and people are trapped?			
Are there notices inside the lift stating what to do in the event of an emergency?			
If fitted, are checks made on the emergency telephone, bell or other device to call for assistance?			
Are drills carried out periodically to test the efficiency of the emergency operating procedures?			
Site Security			
Have suitable assessments of security needs been undertaken, and are periodic reviews carried out?			
Are there procedures in place for locking/unlocking the premises?			
Are there procedures in place for receiving and supervising visitors?			
Have all site-based employees been informed of these procedures, and is compliance with them monitored?			



Slips Trips and Falls	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Internal Areas			
Are floors in good condition?			
Are pedestrian routes free from obstruction and trip hazards?			
Are changes to surface levels clearly marked?			
Are work areas kept clear of trailing cables and other trip hazards?			
Are pedestrian routes appropriately and adequately lit?			
External Areas			
Are all steps and pathways in good condition and free from obstructions?			
Are suitable handrails in place for steps?			
Is there lighting for paths used after dark?			
Are procedures in place for clearing snow and gritting traffic routes?			
Have traffic routes been prioritised for clearing/gritting?			
Have sufficient supplies of salt/grit been ordered?			
Has suitable training and instruction been provided to relevant staff?			
Smoking			
Are appropriate "No Smoking" signs suitably displayed?			
If provided, are designated smoking areas located away from doors and windows?			
Have arrangements been made to remove all smoking debris?			
Have all site-based employees and others been informed of the restrictions on the use of both tobacco products and e-cigarettes?			
Are procedures in place to monitor compliance?			



Traffic Management	Yes	No	Comments/Action Required
Has a Traffic Management Risk Assessment been undertaken?			
Where possible, are pedestrians segregated from vehicles?			
Is the car park adequately lit?			
Is all relevant signage clear and visible?			
Visitors			
Have you arrangements in place to account for all visitors?			
Are steps taken to inform visitors of any known risk?			
Do you inform visitors of the fire evacuation procedures?			
Have you "Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedures" in place for disabled visitors?			
Work Equipment			
Is the equipment in good condition?			
Is the equipment inspected in accordance with the relevant legislation?			
Are appropriate service/inspection records maintained?			
Have suitable and sufficient risk assessments been carried out?			
Have employees received appropriate training?			
Are records kept of employee training?			

Signature:

Date:





RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CORPORATE ESTATES

GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

RE-OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS DURING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

**Taking all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace:
Guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions)
(Wales) Regulations 2020**

**This document is available in Welsh or English and other formats are available when
requested**

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Checked	Approved
C19.01	May 2020	Hilary Reid	Mike Murphy	David Powell

CONTACT

**Hilary Read, Head of Operational Property 01443 281188
hilary.s.reid@rctcbc.gov.uk**

RE-OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS DURING CORONAVIRUS **(COVID-19)**

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 ("Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations") have been amended with effect from 7 April 2020 to introduce general restrictions on places of work, which were not previously covered.

1.2 Certain businesses were closed down and people were told to 'stay at home', protect the NHS and save lives. Employers were required to take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

1.3 It was recognised that not everyone can work from home and certain jobs require people to travel to their place of work. Everyone attending a place of work must take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace to comply with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020, wherever possible.

1.4 A breach of the above regulation may result in a fine (the amount of which is unlimited) or fixed penalty. This is a change in law in Wales which is in force until 26 September 2020, with ability to extend.

1.5 As the restrictions are eased over the coming weeks/months and businesses re-open, the Council needs to be ready to respond to buildings being opened such as Libraries, Schools, Offices etc whilst still complying with the physical distancing rules until such time as the restrictions are fully lifted and there is no further threat of contracting the virus.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 This guidance document sets out Rhondda Cynon Taf's approach to open buildings whilst applying consistent measures to protect staff and visitors in accordance with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

2.2 The guidance is specific for our built assets and does not attempt to deal with open spaces, parks or town centre facilities.

2.3 The guidance sets out practical measures for managers to use in the various workplaces and is intended to be used in conjunction with signage/specialist equipment for each building based upon specific risk assessments/building requirements.

2.4 Each section covers particular 'spaces' within the building and any spaces not included below specific to a building such as a classroom, will need to be assessed and similar principles applied to ensure compliance with the physical distancing within the workplace.

3. KEY THEMES

3.1 Managers must:

Ensure a suitable risk assessment for Covid-19 in the workplace is undertaken and implement any necessary controls. To ensure the risk is reduced as far as reasonably practicable managers will need to:

- Take reasonable measures to **ensure a 2m physical distance** is maintained between all staff, whenever possible
- Provide **hand sanitiser/wipes/ handwash arrangements** in appropriate locations
- **Not exceed** the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Ensure an **enhanced cleaning regime** is introduced for the office and workstations
- **Use virtual meetings where practical**, if physical distancing is not possible
- Ensure a **clear desk policy** is maintained
- Ensure staff **do not cross on stairs** – use one way travel wherever possible
- Restrict use of **lifts to 1 person** (and a carer) at a time
- Mark out **2m exclusion zones** in appropriate locations
- Use Kitchens for individual beverages only with **no food preparation**
- Consider having **staggered start/finish times** for staff to avoid gatherings in confined spaces
- **Communicate effectively with staff** and ensure they also adhere to the regulations and any site specific rules

3.2 Staff must:

Inform their manager if they (or someone in their household) are in an 'at risk' category, and

- Ensure they are **symptom free** while working from the office
- Maintain a **2m distance** between themselves and colleagues wherever reasonable and practicable to do so
- **Regularly wash hands** with soap for a min. of 20 seconds
- Make use of **hand sanitiser/wipes** as appropriate if hand washing facilities not available
- Adhere to the **max number of staff** in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Adhere to the **clear desk policy** and ensure individual workstations are cleaned/sanitised before re-use
- **Use common sense** when moving around the workplace and be courteous to colleagues when waiting to enter spaces/use equipment

4. RECEPTION

4.1 Objective: to ensure the safety of both visitors and staff

- Where possible, visitors should arrive only by appointment and the organiser should make arrangements with reception staff to achieve the smallest turn around time possible
- Use of temperature sensing equipment may be required
- Clear plastic (or existing glass) protective screens must be used to separate staff and visitors and allow for safe interaction
- Areas must operate on a one in/one out basis and if possible, the use of one way systems
- Where possible a separate waiting area should be provided
- Use of floor and wall signage both internally and externally (see section on signage) will help to remind staff and visitors of distancing requirements
- Doors may be propped open (subject to advice on fire restrictions) to allow for better visibility and reduced contact with door handles
- Sanitiser should be provided at reception counters
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Limiting visitor times to a specific time window and restricting access to required visitors only
- Maintaining a record of all visitors

5. DELIVERIES

5.1 Objective: to reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace and staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.

Steps that will usually be needed:

- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.
- Cleaning procedures for vehicles.
- Introducing greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.
- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.
- Restricting non-business deliveries, for example, personal deliveries to workers.

6. CIRCULATION SPACE

6.1 Objective: to maintain social distancing while using common areas.

- Staff/visitors must not cross on stairs wherever possible – most buildings can accommodate one way travel
- Staff will need to be alert at all times of distancing ability being compromised in these areas
- Good use of signage (see section on signage) will help to remind staff of distancing
- Doors may be propped open (subject to advice on fire restrictions) to allow for better visibility
- Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation where possible
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

7. LIFTS

7.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by allowing for social distancing outside or inside a lift

- To be operated as one in/one out basis (with a carer if required)
- Signage to be clearly visible
- Queuing system to be utilised
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

8. FIRE RECORD SIGNING IN/OUT BOOKS

8.1 Objective: to operate the procedure safely whilst still complying with fire safety regulations

- Sanitiser should be provided at the station
- Signage should be easily visible
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Staff to use personal pen to sign in /out (rather than communal pen)

9. SPACE/DESK UTILISATION

9.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by creating an office space allowing for desk users to achieve relevant distances between them

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Desk occupation should be allocated to achieve the appropriate space/distance between people this can be done in various ways often depending upon the desk layouts for example: diagonally, straight line, alternating etc
- If desk need to be used by more than one person then the clear desk guide will be explicit in this and user must clean desk after use
- Staff rotas may be needed in order to achieve safe distancing
- Moving desks apart may be possible to assist
- Use of screens between people/desks could assist
- Increase number of air changes/hr in rooms by adjusting ventilation and/or opening windows

10. CLEAR DESK POLICY

10.1 Objective: to reduce transmission between desk users and allow for cleaning of desks to be achieved easily and consistently

- No personal items/paperwork etc are to be kept on desks at any time
- Pedestals must be locked or secured with tape and no items put back and forth onto/from the desk
- Desks, keyboards and telephones must be wiped clean before and after use
- Staff must not share desk phones and shall try at all times to use mobile phones

11. SHARED EQUIPMENT

11.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by managing the use of these

- MFD's and similar equipment such as plotters should be operated on the basis of one user at a time
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Sanitiser should be made available
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Wipes to be provided for cleaning after each use

12. MEETINGS

12.1 Objective: To reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings.

- Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings, wherever possible
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example avoiding sharing pens and other objects.
- Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
- Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.
- Limiting or restricting use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers or whiteboards

13. KITCHEN USE

13.1 Objective: to reduce transmission and maintain social distancing while allowing staff to use the facilities

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Only hot drinks to be made or cold drinking water from the dispenser
- Drinks must only be made for the individual needing/wanting one
- No food preparation is to be carried out in the space
- Food and drink which needs refrigeration can be placed in the refrigerators but must be placed in and removed swiftly and removed from the kitchen area for consumption
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Regular checks on the supply of sanitiser/soap should be undertaken
- Cupboards will be sealed so that no items can be held in the kitchen
- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

14. TOILETS

14.1 Objective: to allow safe use of facilities while reducing transmission and maintaining social distancing

Toilets must be operated on a safe space distancing basis

- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Distance between hand basins and door cubicles must be able to accommodate staff passing whilst maintaining appropriate distancing
- A one staff in/one staff out policy may need to be implemented
- Where possible visibility of persons in the ancillary toilet area should be achieved
- Space for queuing should be identified
- Suitable hand wash facilities at the sink
- Regular checks on the supply of sanitiser/soap should be undertaken
- The advised maximum number of staff should not be exceeded
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out

15. SHOWERS

15.1 Objective: to reduce transmission and maintain social distancing while allowing staff to use the facilities

Where possible, showers must not be used unless they are required because of the work activity so in the event that they are needed;

- Users will need to provide their own soap etc...
- Nothing to be left in the space after use
- Ensure lockers and changing rooms are kept clean and clear of personal items
- Appropriate exclusion zones marked out
- Wipes to be provided for cleaning surfaces after each use

16. STATUTORY MAINTENANCE COMPLIANCE

167.1 Objective: to ensure buildings that have been closed are maintained appropriately prior to staff returning

Prior to opening buildings, building managers should;

- Undertake a full building inspection for any obvious health and safety issues noting any degradation of the site including access and egress routes and car parking areas
- Liaise with Corporate Maintenance regarding all corporate statutory inspections and testing compliance undertaken during the building closure
- Ensure all routine Legionella flushing and/or testing has been completed
- Ensure all routine fire alarm testing has been completed
- Whilst testing of fire alarms and systems must be maintained, building managers are advised to resume fire drills and will need to consider what arrangements may be needed for social distancing, for example, perhaps additional assembly points. Managers will need to periodically remind staff of the procedures to ensure they are fully familiar with arrangements
- Inspection of the fire escape routes to ensure that they remain adequate and clear of any obstructions
- Physical check of all Internal & External fire doors to ensure that they open and close as intended
- Recommission any specialist plant/equipment in accordance with manufacturers recommendations

17. ACCIDENTS, SECURITY AND OTHER INCIDENTS

17.1 Objective: to prioritise safety during incidents.

- In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.
- People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

18. SIGNAGE/EQUIPMENT

18.1 Objective: to reduce transmission by means of the provision of multiple targeted message signs and the erection of physical barriers.

- Signage to be displayed in the following locations using signage as listed in Appendix A

Locations	Sign Type
Reception/waiting areas –signs	A,B,C,D, F,H,I,J,K
Kitchens	A,B,C,E,J, M
Toilets	A,B,C,E,J
Lifts	D,J
Staff notice boards and prominent locations on walls	A,E,K
Hand sanitiser stations	F,J
Hand washing locations	E,
Floor distance/direction markers	J
Doors to identify direction of travel	B,G,H,I,J
Hazard Marker tape to be used in front of lift doors to indicate distance spacing and in Entrance Foyers/Receptions to keep back/queuing	L

- Specific equipment will also be provided as listed in Appendix A
 - Additional bins for disposal of wipes
 - Additional temporary clear plastic screens for reception counters
 - Suitable quantities of sanitiser/wipes

19. FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

<https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-launched-to-help-get-brits-safely-back-to-work>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>

CONTACTS

Hilary Reid, Head of Operational Property 01443 281188

hilary.s.reid@rctcbc.gov.uk

Phil Bond, Head of Corporate Maintenance 01443 281151

philip.c.bond@rctcbc.gov.uk

Mike Murphy, Health and Safety Advisor 01443 425536

mike.murphy@rctcbc.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – RCT APPROVED SIGNAGE/EQUIPMENT

Type A - Covid posters to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets and communal areas;

(COVID-19) - Coronavirus
Physical Distancing in the workplace
Office Accommodation Standards
A guide for managers/staff

Everyone attending a place of work **MUST** take all reasonable measures to maintain physical distancing in the workplace to comply with guidance under regulation 7A of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

Managers must:

- Take reasonable measures to ensure a 2m physical distance is maintained between all staff
- Provide hand sanitiser/wipes in appropriate locations (e.g. entry/exit points, sign-in/sign-out, shared ICT kit)
- Not exceed the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Ensure an enhanced cleaning regime is introduced for the office and workstations
- Use virtual meetings if physical distancing is not possible
- Ensure a clear desk policy is maintained
- Ensure staff do not cross on stairs - use one way travel whenever possible
- Restrict use of lifts to 1 person (and a carry) at a time
- Mark out 2m exclusion zones at lift doors, entrance to building, the signing in book, etc.
- Use lockers for individual beverages only **NO** food preparation
- Consider having staggered start/finish times for staff to avoid gatherings in confined spaces

Staff must:

- Ensure they are symptom free while working from the office
- Maintain a 2m distance between themselves and colleagues whenever reasonable and practicable to do so
- Regularly wash hands with soap for a minimum of 20 seconds
- Make use of hand sanitiser/wipes as appropriate
- Adhere to the max number of staff in the office, kitchen and toilets
- Adhere to the clear desk policy and ensure individual workstations are cleaned/sanitised before reuse
- Use common areas when moving around the workplace and be courteous to colleagues when waiting to enter specialist equipment

Should you have any queries please contact:
Head of Operational Property:
 01443 281188
 Corporate Estates will provide the maximum number of occupants.
Health and Safety Advisor:
 01443 425536
 Corporate Health and Safety will be able to address concerns.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

(COVID-19) - Y Coronafeirws
Cadw pellter corfforol yn y gweithle
Safonau ar gyfer swyddfeudd
Canllaw i reolwyr/staff

RHAID i bawb sy'n bresennol mewn gweithle gymryd mesurau rheoli rhesymol i gadw pellter corfforol yn y gweithle er mwyn cydymffurfio â chanllawiau o dan reoliad 7A o Reoliadau Diogelu Iechyd (Cyfyngiadau Coronafeirws) (Cymru) 2020

Rhaid i reolwyr:

- Cynydd masau rhaed rhesymol i storhau bod pellter o 2 fetr yn cael ei gynnal rhwng pob aelod o staff
- Parhau glan wydd, weipis dweipis mewn lleoliadau parhau, sicrhwydd sanitiswrs, weipis, weipis, dylawiau sanitiswrs, offer TOSH sy'n cael ei nannu
- Sicrhau bod nifer y staff yn y awyddfau, y gegin a'r toiledau ddim yn fwy na'r uchafswm
- Sicrhau bod system lathiau frey talyfeyrn yn cael ei ddyfynw ar gyfer y awyddfau a'r manau gweith
- Cynnal cyfarfodydd arlein os dda dim modd caed pellter corfforol
- Sicrhau bod gollod desglaw gllin yn cael ei gynnal
- Sicrhau bod staff ddim yn croesi ar y grisiau - ddefnyddwch system unffordd i bob hynnyth bob diwrnod
- Sicrhau bod dim mwy na 1 person (a chynnalwr) mewn lift ar unrhyw oeddi
- Nodwch y llaw i'r max rhedid cadw pellter o 2 fetr wrth ymyl dylawiau, mynadau ddiwylliaeth, llyfr llofnod, llyfr, ac ati
- Sicrhau bod hwyd DDIM yn cael ei banelu gan unigolion yn y gegin - dim ond ddyddid iddy'n niw ar funn
- Ystyried bod staff yn dechrau gorfoni ar weithio i amgoreiddio bi eu bod niw ddim yn ymgwgu mewn talydd cyffing

Rhaid i staff:

- Sicrhau bod dim symptomau gyda niw pan maen niw'n gweithio yn y awyddfau
- Cadw pellter o 2 fetr rhwyngdy'n niw a'u cydwelwyr i'r bob hynnyth rhesymol os yn ymysafed
- Gynguwrth y pŵll desglaw gllin a sicrhau bod manau gweith unigol yn cael eu glanhau/dihelu cyn eu ddefnyddio
- Defnyddio awyrgyrru cyffwrdd wrth ymyd dweip gweithle a dangos cerbydau i gydwelwyr wrth aros llyd mewn i llyddid ddiwylliaeth

Os oes gyda chi ymholiadau:
Pennaeth Eiddo Gweithredol:
 01443 281188
 Bydd modd i'r gegin Eiddo Corfforol nodw'r uchafswm o bob mewn lleoliad.
Cyngorydd Iechyd a Diogelwch:
 01443 425536
 Bydd modd i chi deud pryderon i'r gegin Iechyd a Diogelwch Corfforol.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Type B - Sign to be erected outside of kitchens, toilets and all/any small areas or rooms and reception areas

UN I MEWN
UN ALLAN

ONE IN
ONE OUT

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Type C - Sign to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets, reception and communal areas



Type D - Sign to be erected outside of the lift and at appropriate entry/exit locations



Type E - Sign to be erected in prominent locations around the building including office notice boards, kitchens, toilets, reception and communal areas



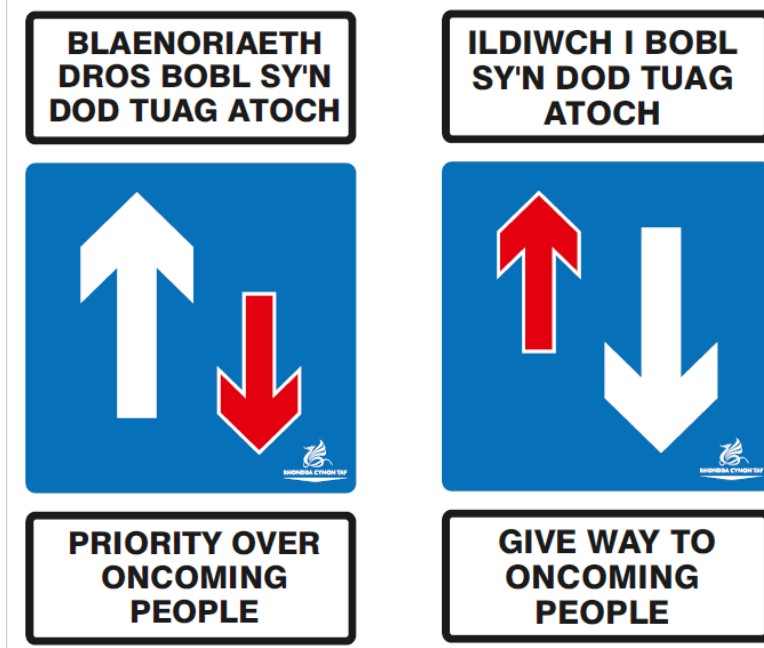
Type F - Sign to be erected at all sanitiser locations



Type G - Signs to clearly indicate one way systems around office areas including stairwells and on doors into rooms where one way in and one way out can be achieved



Type H - Signs to be erected at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas on doors and on walls in stairwells



Type I – Floor sign to be placed at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas



Type J – Floor signs to be placed at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate where safe distance queueing can take place around office areas to access kitchens, WCs, printers ,lifts, filing rooms and outside reception areas



Type K – Sign to be placed at locations where wipes can be disposed of in appropriate bins



Type L – Hazard tape to be used at appropriate locations around the building to clearly indicate travel systems around office areas, no-go zones such as clear areas outside lifts and to separate travel directions in corridors and stairwells.



Type M – Sign to be erected in kitchens/tea making facilities.

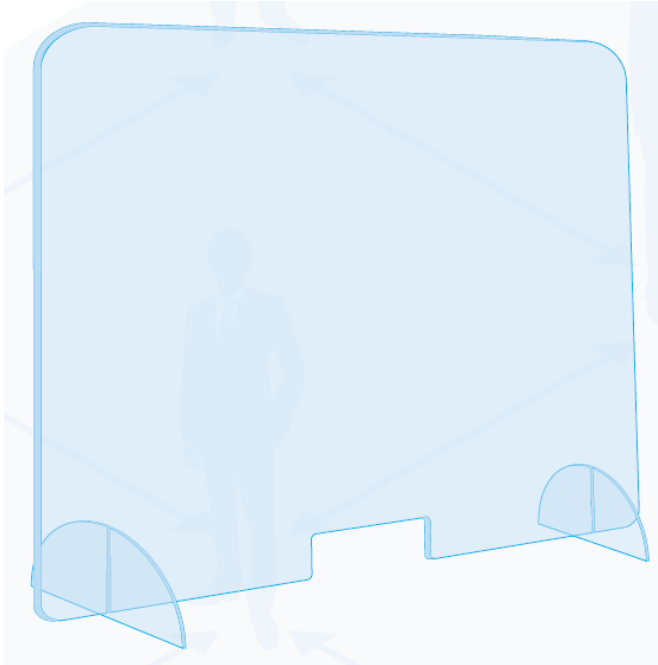


Equipment

5L Sanitiser



Clear plastic screens for reception counters, manufactured to site specific measurements



APPENDIX B – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Q1 Who is guidance aimed at? Building Managers or all Managers?

A1 The guidance is aimed at managers but managers with responsibility for buildings also have an over-arching responsibility. Staff will also need to read/understand the guidance to ensure compliance while attending the workplace.

Q2 How is the guide going to be distributed to staff regarding their responsibilities?

A2 It is anticipated that an e-version of the COVID poster will be issued to staff via one of the regular staff updates together with a link to a document on 'Source' for managers/staff to access and acknowledge they have read/understood it.

Q3 Is there specific guidance for spaces such as lounges in Care Homes and classrooms in schools?

A3 This guidance does not cover all eventualities and/or spaces, it is designed to provide guidance for the 'workplace'. It will be for Service Groups address specific spaces in their unique settings by adopting the principles set out in the guidance for the workplace. Corporate Estates and Health and Safety officers will be happy to assist as and when requested.

Q4 How will I get to know what new site procedures are in place?

A4 Managers are responsible for undertaking specific risk assessments before staff return to their workplace and a mini induction process will be adopted by Service Groups to ensure that all site/building/behaviour related changes are communicated to all staff.

Q5 Are staff being subjected to unnecessary risk by being asked to attend work/the office?

A5 No, as occupation of offices and work places will have been subject to a risk assessment where mitigation processes have been identified and incorporated into the return to work procedure, i.e. distancing at desk locations, sanitising, controlled movement to ensure distancing.

Q6 Are we only testing visitor temperatures to buildings - why not all staff?

A6 Staff should only attend the workplace if they are not displaying symptoms. It is possible to check everyone but this would be time consuming and will take up dedicated resources.

Q7 What will happen if I develop Covid-19 symptoms while at work?

A7 You will be asked to leave immediately and obtain a test/self isolate as appropriate. Your immediate working area will need to be thoroughly cleaned before anyone else is permitted to use it.

Q8 Managers are responsible for ensuring enhanced cleaning regimes are adopted - what are they? A8 Corporate Estates have liaised with Cleaning Services and enhanced cleaning regimes have been agreed, managers need to check they are content with the regimes and request additional measures if required.

Q9 What are the cleaning procedures for deliveries to site?

A9 This depends upon specific site circumstances and the type of deliveries. Where possible, pre-determined knowledge of impending delivery which will assist in this process. Protective gloves and wipes may be used by recipients.

Q10 Who will inform Service Groups how many staff would be in a building/room/kitchen and toilet? A10 Corporate Estates will identify the maximum numbers in readiness for re-occupation.

Q11 Who will supply the new signage and equipment needed to re-occupy buildings?

A11 Corporate Estates have worked closely with Procurement colleagues and will be providing a pack of signs/equipment to Building Managers. Any additional signs required in the future can be obtained by contacting the Head of Operational Property.

Q12 Who is going to install the signage/equipment?

A12 Managers will be responsible for their 'spaces' and building managers will also have an over-arching responsibility. Corporate Estates staff will be available to assist wherever requested.

Q13 Will staff have to bring their own sanitiser/wipes to work?

A13 Sanitiser/wipes will be provided at relevant locations for example; receptions, entry/exit points, kitchens, printers, etc. All sanitiser wipes to be disposed of in clearly marked specific bins.

Q14 What if more than one person uses the same desk/workstation?

A14 Workstations/desks should be cleaned by the member of staff using it prior to commencing any work, and at the end of the working day. Cleaning materials will be provided in each office.

Where desks are shared, the most straightforward way of managing this would be to assign one workstation/desk to no more than two people, and label both the workstation/desk and chair with the name of the two allocated individuals. In this situation, the attendance of the two individuals who share a workstation/desk will need to be managed so that they do not attend the workplace at the same time. For such shared workstations/desks, the requirement for members of staff occupying the desk to clean at the outset and end of the working day should be very strictly adhered to.

Q15 How will I achieve and maintain the clear desk policy requirement?

A15 Upon request from a manager, appropriate numbers of recycling and confidential waste bags will be provided. Items left on desks at the end of the day should be cleared into bins for removal.

Q16 Have the buildings been suitably maintained during the period of closure?

A16 Routine statutory maintenance/testing and weekly checks have been undertaken to ensure compliance. Building managers must liaise with the Head of Corporate Maintenance prior to re-opening a building/site.

Q17 Will the ventilation system increase the risk of passing Covid-19?

A17 No, ventilation systems will be set to 'by-pass' which will ensure air is not re-circulated. Increasing the number of air changes in offices by opening windows will also reduce risks.

Q18 Will vending machines be in use?

A18 No

Q19 How will building opening and closing arrangements work with staggered staff arrival/departure time?

A19 Building opening and closing times will be amended if necessary by dialogue between building managers and the Head of Operational Property.

Q20 Will there be new first aid kits?

A20 First aid kits will be replaced at each location.

Q21 Will the hot desk sites still operate?

A21 All dedicated hot-desking areas will remain closed and not available for agile working.



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools - September 2020

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

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1. Introduction

This guidance outlines the proposed phased approach to all schools opening on the 1st of September 2020, as outlined by the Education Minister Kirsty Williams, on the 9th of July 2020.

Further information is provided at

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-advice-return-school>

This technical and scientific evidence suggests ‘that the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID–19) is very low’ and that the ‘balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. Being out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development and their health and wellbeing, particularly for disadvantaged children; and, can have an impact both in the short and longer term’.

Further information is provided at

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

This information aims to support schools to develop and maintain ‘reasonable measures’ to keep learners safe, and this information is provided as a framework to help school leaders to plan for the safe return of children to their local schools from September 2020.

Underpinning this guidance is the expectation that schools work in partnership with the local authority and parents and carers to ensure that approaches are adopted to ensure the safe return of all learners to school. This will build on the robust risk assessment planning and control measures put in place during the check in, catch up and prepare phase. These risk assessments will need to be reviewed in light of this new guidance, and revised risk assessment and business continuity plans shared with staff before the start of term and submitted to the local authority by the **31st of August 2020** at the very latest. Risk assessments should also include containment measures to be adopted in the event of a local lockdown and how continuity of education would be maintained in these circumstances.

There is an expectation that schools operate within the parameters of the guidance documents provided by the local authority, although there is recognition that headteachers, in partnership with their governing bodies, need to make strategic and operational judgements based on their individual contexts and the presenting challenges faced on a daily basis.

The safety of children and staff is of utmost importance and this advice seeks to support staff working in schools to deliver education in the safest way possible, focusing on measures that can be put in place to help limit the risk of the virus spreading in schools. These measures should aim to enable all learners to receive a broad and balanced



curriculum, which will enable all learners to learn and progress, both academically and from a wellbeing perspective.

2. Return of Learners to School

Our priority in Rhondda Cynon Taf is to ensure that we get all of our learners back into school as quickly and as safely as possible so that the positive benefits of being back in school can be achieved from September and to ensure the relevant safety measures continue to be in place thereafter.

Risk assessments should be regularly updated.

Nursery age pupils should also return from September with no modifications to access.

Post-16 consortia arrangements should continue but must be explicitly referenced in all risk assessments and planned in partnership with other schools involved.

Further guidance on post-16 learning delivery from September 2020 is provided at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/post-16-learning-and-skills/blended-learning-guidance-for-post-16-providers>

Risks should be mitigated through the appropriate use of preventative and reactive strategies

Prevention

- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school (Section 3: Symptomatic Learners and Staff).
- Minimise contact between individuals wherever possible. For younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on physical distancing where possible. (Section 4: Social (Physical) Distancing).
- Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual, ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and promote effective ventilation (Section 6: Effective Hygiene).
- Continue enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach (Section 7: Effective Cleaning).
- Where necessary, in specific circumstances (set out later in the guidance), wear appropriate PPE (Section 15: PPE).

Reactive Approaches

- Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) strategy (Section 20: TTP).
- Manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the school community and contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice (Section 21: Potential Outbreaks).



The updated list of Frequently Asked Questions is at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolfaq to support parental/carers queries.

Key actions:

- Regularly update risk assessments.
- Plan the content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (including discussing attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection).
- Aim to ensure an effective range of preventative and reactive measures and that these are included in the risk assessment.
- Ensure that learners with statements of SEN have support in place as specified in their statement of SEN and alert the local authority of any staffing capacity challenges.
- Put in place provision for pupils with SEN in conjunction with families and other agencies and engage with the LA/agencies to provide support.
- Agree what arrangements should be put in place for dual-registered or collaborative post 16 arrangements with the other educational settings.

3. Symptomatic Learners and Staff

In accordance with Public Health Wales advice, under no circumstances should learners or staff attend schools/settings if they:

- feel unwell with any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, or a high temperature or loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell), or
- they have tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 10 days, or
- they live in a household or are part of an extended household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or
- they have been identified as a contact of a case by Test, Trace and Protect and advised to self-isolate, or
- they have returned from a country specified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as being subject to quarantine.

Schools and settings should have clear procedures if learners or staff begin to show symptoms on site. These need to be fully understood by both staff and parents/carers. Those showing symptoms during the school day should be kept separate until they can be collected and taken home. Ideally, this should be in a separate room, supervised at a distance of two metres (**if 2 metres cannot be maintained then PPE should be used – please refer to Section 15**). If they need clinical advice, they (or a member of



staff or their parent/carer) should go online to **111 Wales** (or call 111 if they don't have internet access).

Surfaces that learners or staff with symptoms have come into with should be carefully and thoroughly cleaned.

Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home and begin to self-isolate for at least **10 days** from the date of symptom onset while making arrangements to be tested. If the test result is negative the individual with symptoms will not be required to complete the full **10 days** self-isolation period. Anyone who lives with someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms, or is in an extended household arrangement (where they had contact in the two days before the person had symptoms) with someone displaying symptoms must stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person became ill or until the outcome of the COVID-19 test is known. Individuals who are isolating because they have been contacted as part of the Test, Trace and Protect must continue to self-isolate for 14 days even if a negative test result is received. The same applies for individuals who have to quarantine after returning from abroad.

All schools have been provided with temperature checking devices although it is not a mandatory requirement to screen for a temperature. Care should be taken to ensure that PPE in the form of a visor is worn if devices require close contact.

4. Social (Physical) Distancing

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of COVID-19. These practices need to be embedded across all schools to ensure that staff and children are safe and well, and every effort is made to break the chain of infection. Schools will need to ensure that policies reinforce the importance of a range of preventative measures as outlined in section 2, including social distancing of adults at all times and of pupils where possible outside of the classroom. This should be reflected in school wellbeing/behaviour policies, intimate care and healthcare needs policies. These should be widely shared with stakeholders and expectations made clear in relation to requirement for all members of the school community to adhere to social distancing requirements, where possible. A school's response to a deliberate refusal to comply with social distancing should be reflected in the school's wellbeing/behaviour policy and the position communicated to all stakeholders prior to learners returning to school.

Schools should aim to minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing of adults at all times and of pupils where possible.

Minimising contacts and social distancing

In order to reduce transmission of COVID-19, schools must consider how to best minimise contacts and promote social distancing whilst delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. It is acknowledged that schools will have constraints relating to buildings, rooms and staffing resources and an element of flexibility may be needed in order that children can be accommodated to return to school.



The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff by keeping groups separate and maintaining distance between individuals. Potential barriers to achieving this in practice include learners' ability to keep distance; layout of schools; and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum, especially at secondary school. For younger learners, the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on maintaining some social distancing where possible and discouraging physical contact with others.

Consistent grouping should be maintained where possible to limit the number of learners and staff in contact with each other to only those within the contact group. Young learners often struggle to socially distance and consistent grouping provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct contact groups that do not interact will ensure that the identification and isolation of contacts will be swifter in the event of a confirmed case.

Maintaining small contact groups will be challenging, particularly at secondary level, when full national curriculum delivery is resumed. Risk assessments and control measures should be revised to reflect the growth in contact groups in September. In secondary schools, key stage 4 and key stage 5 contact groups are likely to be the size of a full year group to ensure access to specialist teaching and resources. Where smaller class size contact groups can be accommodated in secondary schools then this is recommended, particularly in key stage 3. At primary level, implementing class size contact groups is recommended where possible.

If class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, then consideration should be given to establishing year or half-year group sized contact groups. Whatever the size of the contact group, they should be kept apart from other contact groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Schools with the capacity to do so should also limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. When using larger groups, other preventative measures become even more important, to minimise transmission risks and the need to self-isolate. Welsh Government recognise that younger learners will not be able to maintain social distancing, and advise that it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Even when it is challenging to fully separate groups and to maintain distance, partial implementation can still provide benefits. For example, schools may robustly adhere to limiting contact groups for the majority of the day, but might allow mixing for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport. Siblings may also be in different groups. Making efforts to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between learners will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission opportunities.

Staff responsible for younger learners should remain with set groups rather than



interchange between different/a number of groups. Again, Welsh Government recognises this is not always possible with younger learners and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.

All staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as possible with younger learners, but must adhere to those measures in their interactions with older learners, other staff members and visitors to the school.

Teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups where required in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try to keep their distance from learners and other staff as much as they can, and ideally 2 metres from other adults.

Where mixing between groups cannot be avoided, schools and practitioners should run the *approach to risk estimation and management* process to reduce the risk of transmission between contact groups. Further consideration of the process outlined in Annex A of the attached document should be given.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf>

Classroom measures

Maintaining a distance between people and reducing face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission. Public Health Wales strongly advise that secondary staff should maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from learners where possible.

When working with young pupils, it can be more challenging to maintain social distance, adults should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of both children and adults. Similarly, when working with many learners who have complex needs or who need close contact care measures should be taken to minimise risks and to keep learners in smaller, class sized contact groups. Where there are capacity constraints steps should be taken to exploring different spaces to eat lunch, including classroom settings. The portability of school meal provision will be an important consideration in this regard.

Classroom layouts should support social distancing where possible (although it is recognised this may be very challenging when all learners return to school). Arrangements should include seating learners side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

Use of other school spaces

Contact groups should be kept apart where possible, and large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group should be avoided. When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to



a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Schools and settings should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

To help social distancing, staff should consider as many activities outside as practicable. This will require children to have appropriate clothing for the weather.

Staggered start and finish times

Where possible, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. These should not reduce the overall teaching time and this could be achieved by condensing/staggering free periods or break time, or starting or finishing later. Changes should be clearly outlined to parents and expectations in relation to drop off and collection made explicit, including not gathering at the school gate or attending without an appointment.

For dual placed learners, including post 16 consortia arrangements, schools should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the learner.

On-Site Visitors

Supply teachers, peripatetic staff and/or other temporary staff can move between schools. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for learners with SEN should provide interventions as usual. Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors and ensure site guidance on social/physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours and/or meetings can take place remotely, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors. Whilst visitors will be required to follow hygiene standards, including use of sanitiser, they will not be mandated to wear any PPE (unless identified as required by a risk assessment).

Signage and layouts

Appropriate signage has been provided for all settings prior to schools opening and examples of the signage can be seen Appendix 4. A guidance document has also been distributed to all schools – ‘Signage and Layout – Guidance for Schools – Re-occupation of school buildings during coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

Key actions:

- Plan for how social (physical) distancing will be achieved and implement plans

- Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to limit risks and limit movement around the building(s) (for example, classroom layouts, entry and exit points, staggered starts and break times, class sizes, lunch queues, toilet timetabling, use of communal staff areas).
- Access rooms from the outside where possible.
- Use one-way circulation, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors.
- Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.
- Maintain continuity in grouping and staffing where possible, and minimise interaction and transmission risks across contact groups and individuals.
- Whatever the size of the contact group, they should be kept apart from other contact groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups.
- Secondary staff should maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other and from learners where possible.
- When working with young pupils, adults should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of both children and adults.
- When working with learners with complex needs where PPE is routinely used, consideration should be given to keeping learners in smaller, class sized contact groups.
- At key stage 4/5 contact groups are likely to be a year group or smaller so contacts are minimised and physical distancing reinforced where possible. Care should be taken to ensure that years 12/13 are kept as discrete contact groups.
- In key stage, 3 contact groups should be class size where possible. Where it is not possible, consideration should be given to half-year (or full year) group sized contact groups.
- Contact groups in primary schools should be class sized.
- Schools should aim to adhere to limiting contact between groups for the majority of the day, but might need to allow for wider mixing for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport.
- Schools with the capacity to do so should also limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.
- Undertake individual risk assessments for high-risk learners and ensure that they are well supported to mitigate risks.
- Update behaviour policies to reflect new procedures and protocols aimed at reducing risks in settings and agree how to communicate this to school staff, students and parents.
- Stagger drop off and collections to promote social distancing.
- Plan parents' drop-off and pick-up protocols that minimise social contact.
- Ensure that all are aware that anyone displaying symptoms does not attend school and immediately self-isolates.

- Where appropriate, organise seating for that learners are facing the front and are not face to face or side on, where this is age appropriate (for younger age groups a combination of control measures should be implemented to mitigate risks)
- Avoid sharing of resources or equipment.
- Utilise outdoors for lessons and classroom activities.
- Encourage outside play but not contact or other risky sports and games.
- Remove unnecessary equipment and furniture if possible, to maximise social distancing opportunities.
- Stagger the use of staff rooms and offices to limit occupancy and ensure social distancing.
- Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and that hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers) are in place.
- Allow access of professionals who work across other schools and ensure compliance with preventative measures.
- Parents/carers should attend on a pre-appointment basis only.

5. Nursery education

There is a need to ensure that our youngest children who are at a critical stage of cognitive development get the very best start to their educational life, and one that they can build on for the future.

Transition

This September schools and funded non-maintained settings will have the added responsibility of transition for more new learners than usual, with summer term children that have not yet started. In addition, existing learners will need to re-transition due to the length of time they have been away and some learners will also transition from settings to schools.

Schools and settings should follow their normal transition processes for our youngest learners, where possible, to ensure a positive, and safe experience within the overall aim of all children accessing education as soon as is practical.

If a child is accessing both education and childcare across two sites, it is essential that schools and settings understand the transition arrangements and are clear on when the child will be in each setting and what collection and transport arrangements are in place. Attendance at more than one setting is highly likely in this age group, and is not an issue where appropriate risk management measures are taken.

Resources

Having different sets of equipment and resources for different groups of children in nursery, **if possible**, will help minimise transmission, particularly where more than one group of learners needs to access the same space during a single day – for example, in schools with morning and afternoon nursery provision. This should not replace the stringent cleaning measures required, but would reduce the amount of cleaning needed to be undertaken in relation to resources during the change-over period with the focus then being on fixed furniture, larger equipment and high touch points.

Social distancing

The level of social (physical) distancing within indoor childcare settings with young children will be harder to maintain than in other settings. Settings should therefore implement the social distancing and mixing in childcare settings measures set out in the revised **Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe** guidance to minimise the number of contacts that children and adults have when inside, while ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

The time learners spend outdoors should be maximised. This has important physical, mental and educational benefits and helps combat transmission of COVID-19.

Foundation Phase Practice

The evidence shows that youngest learners are in the least at risk group. Early years' educational practitioners are experienced in caring for the needs of young children and will apply professional judgement.

We recognise that provision and learning experiences may not be exactly the same as they were in March, however, early years' educational practitioners are experienced in caring for the needs of young children. Continuing with a child centred approach means a high-quality delivery of the Foundation Phase and the same learning outcomes of social and personal development and well-being can still be achieved with safe modification and adaptation of learning spaces and resources.

Key actions:

- Ensure effective communication with childcare settings (where a child is accessing education and childcare across more than one site) and ensure risk management measures are identified and implemented.
- Ensure effective communication with parents regarding procedures for pick up / drop off and settling in arrangements.
- Give due consideration to having different sets of equipment and resources for different groups of children in nursery (as required).
- Maximise outdoor learning opportunities.

6. Effective Hygiene

It is recommended that learners limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, bags, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Learners and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to learners' education and development. Similar rules on hand washing, cleaning of the resources and rotation should apply to these resources.

For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and learners have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the contact group; these should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between contact groups, such as sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different contact groups.

Schools and settings should ensure outdoor playground equipment is more frequently cleaned. This would also apply to resources used inside and outside by wraparound care providers.

There are important actions that children and young people, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus. In all education settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). A range of approaches and actions should be employed to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, create an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. For further information, please refer to:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/harp/infection-prevention-and-control/guidance/>

Staff must ensure that all staff and children regularly wash their hands. They should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Staff should also ensure that children understand effective handwashing techniques. Regular handwashing should include on arrival and when leaving the school or childcare setting; before and after handling food; before and after handling objects and equipment that may have been used by others; where there has been any physical contact and after people blow their nose, sneeze or cough, and before and after visiting toilets to avoid contamination of toilet cubicles.

Ensuring that help is available for children and young people who have trouble cleaning their hands independently should be encouraged. Handwashing is preferable to the use of hand sanitisers but hand sanitisers must also be provided in all school settings. These should be available at entrances to the childcare/school settings and strategically



positioned in places that takes into consideration the health and safety of children and staff.

Please raise any issues relating with the supply of hygiene products with your local authority lead. Sufficient supplies of sanitiser and PPE will be delivered to your schools prior to schools opening. If further supplies are needed, then please order as follows:

- Sanitiser - ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk
- PPE – paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk / ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk

Learners must wash their hands (or use sanitiser) immediately on arrival and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. If learners and staff on arrival at school wish to remove a face covering they should be advised to take care and avoid touching their face when they do so, although some may choose to continue to wear them throughout the school day. Any disposable face coverings should be placed in a pedal operated waste bin. Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and taken home by learners / staff for washing.

Children and staff should cough into their elbow. Staff and children, insofar as it is possible, should be encouraged not to touch their face, especially when using a tissue or elbow to cough. Bins for tissues should be emptied throughout the day and any used tissues deposited in bins, including pedal bins. Consideration should be given to encouraging young children to learn and practice these good habits through games and different activities.

There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in an educational or childcare setting.

All spaces should be well-ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units. Doors should be propped open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation.

Key Actions:

- Decide the approach to be adopted to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing) and ensure this is consistently implemented.
- Decide on policy related to usually shared items (for example, books, toys, practical equipment) and implement.
- Limit the amount of items that children bring into schools.
- Resources that are shared between contact groups should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different contacts.
- Ensure that there is sufficient sanitiser disseminated throughout the building.
- Install pedal bins.
- Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and taken home by learners / staff for washing.

- Teach good hygiene habits through different games and activities.
- Ensure good ventilation and keep doors open where it is appropriate to do so, and does not present as a fire or safeguarding risk.

7. Effective Cleaning

Current information relating to cleaning in non-clinical settings is provided at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Points to consider and implement includes putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and more frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas after they have been used by different groups. Frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal and separate toilets should be provided for different contact groups, where possible. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly will help. Learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet

School building(s) will need to be cleaned regularly and at least once a day. Hard surfaces should be cleaned with warm soapy water or disinfected with the cleaning products normally used. Particular attention should be given to 'high-touch' areas and surfaces, which should be cleaned at least once a day and more frequently in high use areas based on local assessment, including washrooms, railings, tables, toys, equipment and door handles.

The handling of objects between individuals, including staff, parents/carers and children, should be minimised. Handling of objects by multiple individuals without cleaning should be avoided.

An additional clean will be required when a contact group is changed within any area or classroom. This will include canteen facilities and staggered lunch breaks. Cleaning staff should aim to maintain social distancing with adults and children, and mitigate risks by deploying a range of preventative measures.

Tissues should be placed in a separate bin/pedal operated waste bin and disposed of safely. Used antibacterial surface wipes should also be placed in a separate bin/pedal operated waste bin and disposed of safely on a daily basis. If schools are not able to obtain antibacterial wipes from their normal suppliers, then they are advised to contact the Procurement Service.

Additional cleaning hours will be commissioned on the schools' behalf with all cleaning providers. Primary schools will receive an additional 6 hours per day, special schools 9 hours, secondary schools 12 hours, and all through schools and larger secondary schools 18 hours daily. These are minimum requirements, some sites will receive additional hours based on building size and the number of pupils. The frequency and effectiveness of daily cleaning will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. The



additional cleaning hours will be invoiced and paid for centrally. Concerns relating to the standard of cleaning should be escalated to the service manager.

Managing Symptomatic Cases of COVID-19

Once someone with symptoms has been identified all areas where this person has been, must be identified and kept clear. Management of the area should be physical where possible, i.e. barriers with suitable signage or behind locked doors. An immediate clean down should take place before reoccupation following the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Particular attention should be given to any specific area where the person has been in contact with, i.e. allocated desk as well as all other 'high-touch' areas. Any soft toys should be removed and stored securely for 72 hours before reintroducing to the area if not already removed as a preventative control. If any waste is suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19, it should be placed in a waste bag, held in a secure place for 72 hours then disposed of with other waste.

Cleaning staff should fully understand the cleaning requirements, and schools should work with LAs to ensure that cleaning staff have appropriate training, products and equipment available to them in a timely manner.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Actions Following Confirmed Case of COVID-19

Following a confirmed case, all areas known to have been accessed should be quarantined until it can be confirmed that a deep clean has been completed (this will be dependent on when the setting was last accessed by the confirmed case). Management of the area should be physical where possible, i.e. barriers with suitable signage or behind locked doors. A deep clean can consist of an intense general clean followed by a clean down with disinfectant or an approved vapour or ozone decontamination system. If a decontamination system is not used any soft furnishings should be steam cleaned.

Key actions:

- Review the enhanced cleaning schedule and liaise with the local authority to request assistance to adapt any necessary changes to the current service provision.
- Ensure that frequent cleaning is undertaken throughout the day for high touch areas.
- Organise deep clean in the event of a confirmed case (depending on when the confirmed case last attended the setting).
- Ensure consistent responses are adopted to a suspected or confirmed cases.
- Review uniform expectations.
- Sensitively communicate to parents the need to wash uniforms frequently.

8. Transport

The headline messages from the latest guidance issued by the Welsh Government in relation to school transport stated that:

- Local authorities remain under a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible learners of compulsory school age over certain distances from their education centres.
- Local authorities, working with schools, education establishments, education institutions and transport operators as necessary, should identify the risks arising from COVID-19 and must then work through the system of controls set out below and adopt measures in a way that addresses the identified risk, work in the local circumstances, and allows learners to attend school or their educational establishment.
- Social distancing guidance to passengers on public transport (<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-during-coronavirus-pandemic-guidance-public-html#section-42710>) will not apply on dedicated home to school transport from the autumn term because:
 - the overall risk to learners from COVID-19 is very low
 - they do not mix with the general public on those journeys
 - dedicated school transport often carries the same group of learners on a regular basis, and those learners may also be together in school.
 - the predictability of those travelling, which public transport does not offer, will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place.
- Allowing space between passengers, or groups of passengers, is still helpful where possible, but transport capacity means that there are many circumstances in which this will not be feasible. Where it is not possible, other measures from the system of controls become more important.
- There is no requirement for learners to sit on school transport with the group of learners with which they are educated, but it is one of the measures that can be adopted if possible/appropriate.

Welsh Government guidance groups the system of controls for home to school transport into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'. The way in which these controls are implemented will need to vary according to local circumstances.

i. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell

Parents must be advised that learners must not board home to school transport if they or a member of their household has any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell).



Learners should also not attend school if they are in a household that is required to self-isolate as contacts of a case under Test, Trace, Protect or in quarantine if returned from a country specified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

If a learner develops symptoms whilst at school/setting or their educational institution, they will be sent home. They must not travel on home to school transport. The school or setting should contact the parent/carer who should make arrangements for the learner's journey home.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for the parent to make arrangements for the learner's journey home, transport may be provided. The guidance on '[safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings](#)' sets out what must be done.

Anyone with symptoms must follow the guidance; <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants who have been in contact with someone who has developed symptoms whilst at school/setting or education establishment or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or if they have been requested to do so by Test, Trace and Protect.

Learners, drivers and passenger assistants must perform hand hygiene by washing their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after contact with someone who has symptoms. If a person with symptoms has been in a vehicle that provides school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected with appropriate disinfectant with special attention to touch points e.g. rails, arm rests etc to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: [cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#) for information, including carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation

ii. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

COVID-19 is an easy virus to remove when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or killed with hand sanitiser. Learners should clean their hands, before boarding home to school transport and when arriving at school or home. It should not normally be necessary for learners to clean their hands during the journey.

iii. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is very important. Schools/settings and education establishments will be reinforcing this message with learners.



Learners should be encouraged to carry tissues on school transport.

Some learners with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers due to their additional learning needs. This should be considered when deciding what safeguards should be put in place in order to support these learners and the staff working with them.

iv. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach

COVID-19 is easy to kill on surfaces. The Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) will work with transport operators to agree the arrangements for cleaning vehicles.

v. Minimising contact and mixing

The guidance recommends that schools and educational settings should minimise contact and mixing by implementing contact groups of learners between which interaction is minimised.

The guidance for schools and settings acknowledges that implementing contact groups will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, and that schools may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances including on transport. Siblings may also be in different groups.

The ITU will work with schools and transport operators to consider how mixing might be minimised on school transport. However, we know that vehicle capacity and the geographic nature of home to school transport arrangements, mean there are limits to the extent to which mixing can be minimised. Nevertheless, there is a consistent group of learners travelling on the same vehicle each day they attend, making it easy to identify potential contacts if any member tests positive. Therefore it is important that records are kept of who is on what vehicle.

vi. Other measures for schools to consider:

- Communicate transport arrangements clearly to learners, parents and carers. Be aware that some may feel concerned about the risk of infection on school transport and may want to be reassured about the safeguards that are in place;
- Encourage children to adopt active travel opportunities where reasonable and practical.
- Remind parents/carers that their learner must not travel if they or anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19;
- Work with the ITU and transport operators to draw up seating arrangements so that learners understand where they need to sit on school transport, ensuring the same children always sit together will help further to minimise the number



of contacts each child has. Such arrangements will require clear communication between schools and families/children. Drivers are unable to 'police' seating arrangements. Their role is to focus on driving the vehicle safely

- Ensure that records are kept of who routinely travels on what vehicle and that passes or lists of passengers travelling are checked as learners board school transport. These contact groups would need to be identified as potential contacts if any member tests positive.
- Work with the ITU and transport operators to put in place appropriate queuing or other arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off learners at school, or young people at educational institutions.
- Provide clear information for parents/carers, learners about the arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off learners people at their home destination.
- Face coverings must be used by secondary aged pupils travelling on dedicated school transport. Not only will this measure help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 but also common colds and flu, which will also be a benefit.

Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission (those under 11 years are exempt from requirements to use face coverings on public transport).

One re-usable face covering per learner was initially delivered to the schools to be handed to those in year 7 and above for their first return trip home **on school transport (for the initial trip into school, drivers issued a disposable face covering for pupils to wear until they collected their reusable face covering)**. Further face coverings are available. They will be replaced as required. Stock has been made available to schools to enable replacements to be provided.

Schools and settings should have a process in place for learners who wear face coverings to be able to remove them safely. This means hand hygiene before and after removal of the face covering. Facilities for the disposal of temporary face coverings in a covered bin will be needed. Reusable face coverings should be placed in a plastic bag when not in use and stored safely by the individual pupil in their school bag where possible.

Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing where possible.

- Close partnership working with the ITU will be key, and information relating to school's plan for the first two weeks of the autumn term will be essential.



Information relating to which year groups and groups of learners (e.g. learning support class learners) will be targeted for school attendance in the days leading up to the 14th of September and should have already been submitted to the ITU.

Transport will run on existing routes every school day to avoid major re-scheduling, with similar arrival and departure times. Schools should aim to stagger times to allow walkers, parental transport and those on school transport to arrive/depart separately.

- Every effort will be made to reinstate the crossing patrol service in September, in line with the most up to date guidance on social distancing but parents and carers should be reminded of their responsibilities to get their children to school safely. Active travel should be encouraged where possible and parents/carers advised to access transport only if they have no other alternative.

Key actions:

- Drop off and pick up times to be agreed with between schools and ITU to ensure staggered starts and collections. Where schools stagger their times, they should aim to allow walkers and those on school transport to arrive/depart separately.
- Schools to communicate transport arrangements and behaviour/safety measures and expectations to parents/carers and learners.
- Distribute face coverings to secondary age learners.
- Advise parents/ carers/ pupils of the requirement for secondary age learners to wear a face covering on school transport and that these will be provided by the school.
- Advise parents / carers / pupils that school transport may be compromised for secondary age learners who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering.
- Sensitively advise parent/carers of washing requirements for reusable face coverings. Daily washing should be undertaken.
- Provide covered bins for disposal of temporary face coverings.

9. Clinically Vulnerable Children and Young People

Extremely vulnerable or previously 'shielding staff' or learners

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales took the decision to pause his advice to shield from 16 August, because the infection rate in Wales is very low. Staff and learners who were shielding will be able to return to work or school in the autumn term if the environments are risk assessed to be 'COVID-controlled' (having taken reasonable measures to minimise risk to employees and learners). Staff who return to



school should strictly follow the social distancing measures in addition to what other safety measures are put in place for their return.

The CMOs from across the UK recently accepted the guidance published by Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) in relation to children and shielding. According to the RCPCH guidance, the majority of children currently on the Shielding Patients List (SPL) no longer need to shield. Over the summer paediatricians and GPs were to review the records of children who have been shielding to assess whether they need to remain on the SPL. Once a child is removed from the SPL because they do not need to shield, they can behave in the same way as any other child in the school/setting. Whilst shielding advice is paused, those who remain on the SPL should follow the same advice as those children in the 'at risk' group.

Clinically vulnerable staff or learners at 'increased risk'

In the context of COVID-19 individuals at 'increased risk' are at a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. This category includes people aged over 70, those who are pregnant and those who have a range of chronic health conditions. As the advice to shield has been paused people in this category can go out to work and return to school as long as the workplace is 'COVID-controlled'. It is essential that guidance on social and physical distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene is closely followed.

Every school should continue to carry out risk assessments and put in place controls to minimise those risks, such as the frequent hand washing, surface hygiene and one-way systems we have seen work well at the end of the summer term.

Pregnant women after 28 weeks' gestation are specifically advised to work from home or in a non-public-facing role in a COVID-controlled workplace where 2 metre physical distancing can be maintained at all times.

Living with a person who was shielding or is at increased risk

If a learner lives in a household with someone who is at increased risk or was previously "shielding", as the advice to shield has been paused, learners in this category can return to school.

Parents/carers and learners who are anxious about returning to school and settings

Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents/carers who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include learners who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.



If parents/carers of learners with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend schools/settings discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school/setting. Schools and settings should be clear with parents/carers that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance, etc.). The Council's Equality and Diversity Team can assist with any queries in relation to protected characteristics, for example disability or BAME and the provision of reasonable adjustments.

10. Staffing Considerations

The Council has been supportive of staff with underlying health conditions; who are pregnant; living with a person who is pregnant or with an underlying health condition; or had childcare issues and enabled them to remain off from work whilst still delivering services where appropriate. Moving forward, as key services start to re-open, advice and guidance should be sought from HR and the following principles applied:

Extremely vulnerable staff including those who were previously shielding (very high risk)

From 16 August 2020, the Welsh Government paused shielding for everyone on the shielding list (children and adults), subject to whether the number of Covid-19 cases in the community starts to rise significantly. This means that staff who were shielding can now return to work. However, it is important to recognise that whilst shielding is necessary to protect vulnerable peoples' physical wellbeing, it may also have had an unintended impact on their mental wellbeing and you should reflect this in your discussions with staff. Staff that fall into this category should provide a copy of their shielding letter if they have not already done so.

Where practical to do so, staff should work from home, however, there will be instances where this is not practical, and in these cases shielded staff must complete the Covid-19 self-reporting Risk Assessment Tool shown in Appendix 1. Alongside the risk assessment tool headteachers must complete a workplace health and safety risk assessment. In determining whether a shielding member of staff can return to the workplace, both the working environment and the activities performed should be considered in conjunction with the Covid controlled measures, for example, 2m physical distancing, enhanced PPE.

Line managers should refer to advice already circulated on global email and available on RCT Source. Further advice can be sought from human resources and occupational health where questions about the suitability or safety of a return to work arise.

Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant women over 28 weeks should be regarded as at increased risk and are recommended to stay at home. For pregnant women with underlying health conditions and those who are BAME, a precautionary approach is prudent. According to public health guidelines, women who are pregnant with 'significant heart disease, congenital

or acquired' are in the shielding group. If a shielding letter has been received, staff should remain off work for now. However, if no letter has been received and homeworking is not a practical option, the Medical Risk Assessment provided in Appendix 1 should be completed by the line manager and advice sought from occupational health before any return to work can be considered. Health & safety risk assessments will also need to be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

Clinically vulnerable staff with other COVID risk indicators (moderate risk)

Current research suggests that there are several other indicators that, when combined, may mean that an individual is at a higher risk level. A list of these indicators can be found in section 3 of the Medical Risk Assessment in Appendix 2. Where appropriate, the Medical Risk Assessment in Appendix 2 will be undertaken by the member of staff so as to inform decision making in relation to whether it is safe for them to return to work. If the individual concerned does not complete the medical risk assessment form it would be reasonable to assume that the member of staff considers themselves to be fit for a return to work. Where the risk is deemed to be low, or can be mitigated, then the member of staff will be required to return to the workplace. A health & safety risk assessment should also be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

Staff who live with someone at high risk, pregnancy and moderate conditions from coronavirus

Employees in this category have been able to refrain from attendance in work to protect them. Moving forward, if home working is not feasible, then this category of staff must now return to duty and adhere to social distancing principles. A health & safety risk assessment should also be undertaken by headteachers to ensure a safe return to work and the effective use of preventative and social distancing approaches.

Staff with childcare issues, including responsibilities for children with ALN

If homeworking is not a practical option, staff with these responsibilities must now return to work using the social distancing principles, wherever practical to do so. In respect of childcare matters, if staff feel that they have extenuating circumstances then these should be shared with the line manager in the first instance, who can then seek advice from the Occupational Health, Equalities and Employee Relations teams.

Please note, that further detailed and precise guidance should be sought from HR prior to implementing the above actions.

Key actions:

- Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if bringing staff in to their place of work in advance of pupils returning to school.
- Ensure that all staff absences are swiftly updated on vision to inform accurate reporting.
- Undertake a staff audit of teaching and non-teaching staff (including availability and location) to identify any gaps or pressures in essential posts, including

leaders, teachers, support staff, first aiders, designated child protection staff, caretakers, crossing patrols, etc.

- Take corrective steps if necessary staffing levels are inadequate.
- Inform your allocated local authority lead if you are experiencing significant staffing challenges that are likely to restrict learner numbers.
- Identify staff who cannot return to school at this point and identify how they can work from home (e.g. supporting distance learning).
- Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders) and ensure appropriate sign posting as detailed in HR communication.
- Ensure access to testing where appropriate, and engagement in the test, track and protect interventions.

11. Staff Deployment/Recruitment

Schools and pupil referral units may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly to welcome back all learners during the autumn term. Managers should discuss and agree any changes to staff roles with individuals, and where appropriate with Human Resources. It is important that planning builds in the need to avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload for staff. School leaders should raise any concerns about staffing capacity with Human Resources.

Recruitment should continue as usual. Further information on interviewing teachers remotely can be found at:

<https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/29/recruiting-during-lockdown-how-we-did-it/>
<https://teaching.blog.gov.uk/2020/06/12/attending-your-first-remote-interview/>

When recruiting, schools must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. Should headteachers experience any issues around these checks they should contact Human Resources.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnerships have worked flexibly to ensure this year's NQTs are ready and prepared to enter the classroom. They will be supported by the ITE partnerships and regional consortia as they embark on their induction programmes. Changes have been made to the Regulations governing induction to ensure that NQTs will not be disadvantaged during the Coronavirus pandemic. The amended Regulations came into force on the 15th of July and will remain in place until the 31st of August 2021.

Supply Teachers

Schools can continue to engage local supply teachers and other supply staff during this period. To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the school premises, and secure best value, schools may wish to use longer assignments with supply teachers/agency staff and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year. This advice for supply teachers also applies to other temporary staff working in schools.

12. Attendance

Schools and settings should work with learners, parents and carers to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help learners catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their well-being and wider development.

Schools/settings must:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around attendance to parents and carers throughout the summer ahead of the new school year;
- identify learners who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This may include meeting to discuss the barriers to returning. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic;
- work closely with other professionals such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, youth workers, mental health support as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to maintain regular contact with the child's social worker if they have one, informing of attendance patterns.

All learners, including those that were previously shielding, returned to their school or setting from the 3rd of September. Those learners who had been advised that they no longer need to shield should be supported in returning back to school. Support to transition back to school will be crucial for this cohort, as their level of anxiety may be greater due to the length of period many have had to shield.

The Welsh Government's view is that it would not be appropriate for a local authority/school to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or commence proceedings for non-attendance at the school. The Welsh Government will monitor the situation over the first half term before reviewing its position.

If a learner is unable to attend the physical setting of the school for any reason it is vital the school continues to engage regularly with the learner remotely. [Learning guidance](#) is available to support schools and settings in doing so.

Schools and settings should keep a record of attendance and families should notify their school if their child is unable to attend and explain the reason for this to enable the school to record attendance correctly. This will help schools, settings and local authorities plan for, and understand any barriers to, learners returning to school and identify any further support needed. It will be critical that all learners engage with the school and any concerns about engagement, or the welfare of a learner, are followed up immediately by the school. Concerns should only be escalated to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service after the school has made every attempt to engage the family.



Following consultation, the Welsh Government has revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 (in force from 7 August 2020). As a result schools are not required to set targets for the academic year 2020/21.

Schools should record attendance and absence in keeping with the codes below until further notice.

Code	Meaning	Statistical Category
/	Attending school in the am	Present
\	Attending school in the pm	Present
C	Unable to physically attend the school due to medical/health risks or caring responsibilities agreed with the school. Also for a staggered return in the first 14 days when some age groups return. Should also be used for individuals who are self-isolating under preventative measures	Authorised absence
#	Planned school closure for all pupils which may take place in the first 14 days, eg planning days.	Not required to attend
Y	Not expected to attend due to unexpected school closure (in the event of subsequent forced school closures). Should also be used for groups of children self-isolating at the request of the school following a confirmed positive result	Not required to attend
I	Illness, including Covid 19.	Authorised Absence
All other codes apply as per the guidance on school attendance:	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf	

∧: The code for learners who attend school

All children in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as present / \ upon arrival at their school or education setting.



C: The code for learners who are unable to attend

This includes learners who are unable to physically attend school for reasons understood and agreed by the school. They should be recorded as code C (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)).

This code would be used for learners who have medical or health reasons preventing them from physically attending or they may have exceptional circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

This code would be used for learners who are self-isolating as set out in the preventative section of this guidance.

This code will also be used during the first 14 days of term when some year groups will have staggered returns.

This code should be used for individuals who are self-isolating under preventative Covid 19 measures.

Schools must engage with parents/carers to understand why they are not attending and ensure there are not any concerns about their well-being or alternative support options that could be arranged to enable them to attend. Any concerns should be followed up by the school or education setting and where relevant the local authority. The school should review the situation with the learner and parents or carers on a regular basis to avoid any prolonged absence.

#: The code for planned school closures for all pupils

Code # should be used for planned days where pupils are not required to attend such as planning days in the first weeks of term.

Y: The code for enforced school closure.

Code Y should be used for enforced school closure in the event of further requirements due to Covid 19.

This code can also be used where groups of children are requested to self-isolate by the school following a confirmed Covid 19 contact case.

Using other authorised absence and attendance codes

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools should use these as usual.

Key actions:

- Schools to communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to parents/carers prior to the summer and ahead of the new school year.
- Schools should identify learners who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This

may include meeting to discuss the barriers to returning. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic.

- Schools should provide additional support to ease transition back to school for pupils who may have been shielding.
- Schools should work closely with other professionals such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service, Youth Engagement and Participation Service and/or the Educational and Psychology Service to support the return of learners to school, including continuing to maintain regular contact with Children's Services if they have involvement.
- Schools to work closely with learners and parents/carers to secure regular school attendance from the start of term.

13. Estates

Based on current scientific and medical advice Welsh Government did not consider it necessary for schools and settings to make significant adaptations to school sites and to acquire additional sites to enable them to welcome all learners back. In classrooms, it is important that schools improve ventilation (for example, by opening windows where it is safe to do so). Good ventilation is essential at all times in classrooms and particularly during this period. Schools should ensure all systems are working in their normal operating mode. Natural ventilation via windows or vents, where it is safe to do so, should be used as far as possible. Where centralised or mechanical ventilation is present, circulatory systems should be adjusted to full fresh air, if this is not possible systems should be operated as normal. Where ventilation units have filters present ensure enhanced precautions are taken when changing filters and advice must be sought from the Council's Corporate Estates Maintenance Team.

It is important that all the usual building checks are undertaken to make the school safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the COVID-19 outbreak, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Further information relating to necessary statutory check are included in Section 14 and the associated Health and Safety Risk Assessments.

Swimming pools

Notwithstanding the Welsh Government's announcement that swimming pools can consider opening from 10th August, all school swimming pools, jacuzzis, sauna/steam rooms and hydrotherapy pools must remain closed until the necessary risk assessments and maintenance programmes are put in place. This applies to use of such school facilities by the school or by any other external organisations.

We will write separately to schools with swimming pools and similar facilities in relation to risk assessments required to be completed prior to such facilities being brought into use.

Closomat toilets

Public Health Wales have advised that these are likely to be considered an aerosol generating procedure and therefore carry a higher level of risk of transmission and thus a higher level of control is needed. There is no specific guidance available for this type of facility at present and so the options for control for schools that have these facilities (on the limited information available currently) are:

1. Do not use
2. Risk assess the use - Use with PPE and allow time for air to settle before disinfection/cleaning and any further use (current dental guidance for Wales is 1 hour of allowing air to settle unless there are 12 air exchanges per hour - <https://gov.wales/providing-aerosol-generating-procedures-agp-non-covid-19-dental-patients-guidance>)

Schools with these toilets should include the use (or non-use) of such facilities in their risk assessments accordingly.

Key actions:

- Ensure mechanical ventilation systems are suitably set, checked and maintained.
- Make use of natural ventilation where possible.
- Ensure all statutory building checks are undertaken.
- Risk assess the use of swimming pools and such facilities prior to bringing them back into use.
- Risk assess closomat toilet use.

14. Health & Safety Risk Assessments

All schools are required to undertake COVID-19 specific Health & Safety Risk Assessments. The governing body has a duty to consult their workforce regarding health and safety matters and should involve them in the assessment and development of relevant control measures. Employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if not available, a representative chosen by staff. The employer must ensure that the risks are controlled so far as is reasonably practicable. This will include ensuring that a relevant risk assessment is undertaken, and control measures are implemented and monitored to ensure that they are effective. Schools and settings should share the results of their risk assessment with their workforce. Once this is reviewed by the Health and Safety team, consideration should be given to publishing it on their website to provide transparency of approach to parents, carers and pupils (HSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).



The Health and Safety Team can provide support and guidance to school leaders when required.

Schools and settings should take a risk-benefit approach when making decisions about learners' social interaction and play in schools. The Health and Safety Executive advises a risk-benefit approach, which aims not to eliminate all risk but to strike a balance, maximising benefit while ensuring that learners are not exposed to unnecessary risk. Schools should work with the Health and Safety team in the local authority to develop risk assessments around increasing operations and to seek support and guidance where required.

Schools must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, as they would for other health and safety related hazards. This is a risk led approach and is not about creating unnecessary documentation, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks. Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Compliance in any school will depend upon the suitability and sufficiency of the risk assessment and the arrangements to implement and maintain sensible, proportionate and effective controls. The risk assessment should translate into the specific actions that will need to be taken and will be influenced by site-specific factors. The risk assessment should be undertaken in collaboration with a relevant person with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to give sensible guidance about managing the health and safety risks at the school. Controls should be considered following the hierarchy of control approach and the assessment should consider what measures need to be implemented to protect the health and safety of all staff, learners, visitors and contractors.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of local authorities and schools as employers in the following guidance:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/sensible-leadership/school-leaders.htm>

The HSE will be undertaking spot checks on the measures schools have taken in order to open. Spot checks will take the form of an initial phone call to review the measures taken for reopening, to minimise spread of the virus causing COVID-19.

Calls made to schools will evaluate the school's knowledge and awareness of the relevant government guidance – 'Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term (Wales)' - and the control measures required under health and safety legislation. (Additional COVID-19 guidance for school science and technology activities is provided by CLEAPSS).

If a telephone call is received from the HSE, schools needs to demonstrate that they have an accessible risk assessment at hand, that they know the content of that risk assessment and have shared their risk assessments with the governing body and all stakeholders. Initial contact will be by telephone to discuss the processes and risk



assessments and responses will decide if a site visit will follow or not. Where the initial call raises concerns about a school's approach, it will be referred for a further intervention (which may include a visit to the school).

Inspectors will check that the school has carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place measures to ensure the school COVID-controlled in line with the latest government guidance.

The HSE appreciate that guidance is being updated regularly, and schools are working hard to respond to the changes. HSE inspectors are experienced at applying professional judgement and discretion and will seek to take a proportionate approach, focussing on what is reasonable and achievable in an evolving situation.

The HSE recognise that schools are working extremely hard to put in place safety measures. Most of the time advice from HSE inspectors will be enough to resolve any issues found, however if inspectors encounter serious risks, they will take enforcement action to ensure people's health and safety is protected.

It is imperative that all schools liaise fully with HSE inspectors regarding the spot checks to ensure they are COVID-controlled.

These calls were to start week commencing 7th September. If you are contacted by the HSE, please advise the Council's Health and Safety team.

To support schools a template has been devised and appropriate strategic risk assessments **MUST** be undertaken using the **COVID 19 School Re-opening and Risk Assessment Template Document in Appendix 2**.

(Note – this Template Document has been updated to reflect the latest guidance from Welsh Government. Updates are in red typeface. Schools who have already submitted their Risk Assessments do not need to resubmit – they will receive feedback from Health and Safety requesting the incorporation of these updated / additional items. Schools who have not yet submitted their Risk Assessments should use the attached updated Template Document).

Where required, further information can be obtained from the Council's Corporate Health & Safety team to assist you. Once your school's risk assessment has been completed, please ensure that this is shared with staff so that risks can be mitigated, ideally before the end of the summer term. Headteachers are encouraged to ensure that consultation on any changes to risk assessments that will be in place for the start of the autumn term commence with staff before the summer break, to ensure that those that are on term-time only contracts have adequate time to contribute.

Your school's completed COVID-19 risk assessment should be approved and signed off by the headteacher, the relevant subgroup of your governing body and your chair of governors and should have been sent to HealthandSafetyTeam@rctcbc.gov.uk by the **31st of August** at the very latest. These risk assessments will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Team, who will provide any necessary feedback, recommendations or



comments directly to the headteacher. To support swift feedback, please ensure that you provide suitable contact details and direct queries to the email address provided.

The designated planning days on the 1st and 2nd of September should have enabled all schools to plan for the term ahead and ensure that all staff are familiar with the risk assessments, and any revised processes and procedures, and control measures.

Schools must ensure that they comply fully with this requirement and seek further advice from the Council's Health and Safety team where this is needed. Further guidance is routinely disseminated to schools from Education, Human Resources and Public Health and Protection Directors to ensure that our headteachers have the most up to date information available.

Risk assessments should already exist for learners with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments should be updated as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing, while also remaining mindful of the additional distress learners may be experiencing due to COVID-19. If risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken in accordance with this guidance and local risk assessment guidance.

Key actions:

- Ensure that any amendments to the appropriate signage and demarcation lines installed for the June restart are checked against the new guidance.
- Engage with the Council Health and Safety teams to complete a revised COVID risk assessment.
- Ensure that Headteacher/governing body approved risk assessments are submitted to the local authority for approval
- Seek support from the Council's Health and Safety team if unclear about health and safety requirements.
- Ensure that all statutory compliance checks are undertaken e.g. legionella and fire alarm testing (please refer to the checklist in Appendix 3 for further information and ensure that this is completed and returned urgently to schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk)
- Review fire safety arrangements and put in place additional controls if different layout and movement restrictions affect evacuation.
- Update all traffic management plans to ensure that they are safe and promote social distancing
- Notify the Council's Health and Safety Team of any contact made by the HSE.

15. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is important to note Welsh Government currently recommends more extensive use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health and social care workers. Current guidance states that educational staff do not require PPE but apron and gloves should be used for intimate care. The advice for settings is to follow steps on social distancing (wherever practical to do so), handwashing, hygiene measures, and cleaning of surfaces. Please refer to the guidance issued by the Council and Welsh Government for further detail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-and-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

The current advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales is that face coverings are recommended for all members of the public over 11 years in indoor settings where social distancing cannot be maintained. Welsh Government has now extended that policy to include secondary schools, **in communal areas only**. This does not apply in the classroom where contact groups and other mitigating measures are in place to help minimise the risk of transmission. Please also refer to the 'Transport' section and 'Face Coverings' section of this guidance document for further information. Evidence suggests that changing habits, social distancing, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus.

Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- Children and young people whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way;
- Due to the individual needs of some learners, it may be the case that specific types of PPE will need to be used at different times of the day and for different activities. Settings must make clear the agreed arrangements for the use of PPE for each individual learner, which should be noted in their individual learning plan to ensure all staff are aware and use of PPE is consistent for individual learners by all staff.
- If a child or young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home, the supervising adult should wear a fluid-resistant surgical facemask



if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical facemask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn.

When undertaking intimate care the following should be undertaken:

- Gloves and aprons should be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.
- Fluid-resistant surgical mask and eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves, fluid repellent gown, FFP3 mask and eye protection are indicated when undertaking aerosol-generating procedures such as suction.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions

The local authority have supplied all schools with PPE for use when somebody displays symptoms. Additional PPE can be requested from the Council's Procurement team:

- PPE – Paula.griffiths@rctcbc.gov.uk / ProcOrders@rctcbc.gov.uk

It is important to remember that physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) are scientifically proven to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Hand hygiene is critical before and after all direct contact with a child or young person, and after cleaning equipment and the environment. There is therefore no need to use personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom/school settings, other than the wearing of face coverings in communal areas of secondary schools

If a member of staff wishes to wear their own face covering then they are at liberty to do so.

Please refer to Appendix 3 - General Guidance to School Staff Working - PPE & social distancing for further information.

Key actions:

- Ensure that there is adequate PPE, including emergency PPE. This must be collected from the central store in Ty Elai Council offices, once confirmation of your order is e-mailed to you.
- Ensure that sanitiser is distributed at key strategic points through the setting

- Make arrangements to ensure that there are adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies for dealing with the small numbers of children and young people.
- If your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus PPE must be used (please see Appendix 3 for further detail).

16. Face Coverings and Face Visors

16.1 Face Coverings

Within the school setting

On the 26th August additional advice from the Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was published following its review of the use of face coverings in schools. <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-face-coverings-children-and-young-people-education-settings>. TAG advise that while face coverings are likely to be of little value in children under the age of 11 years, the rates of infection and transmission increase from the age of 11 onwards and therefore face coverings could have a role in risk mitigation.

The Chief Medical Officer recommends, but does not mandate, the risk assessed use of face coverings in secondary schools in a range of settings where other physical controls cannot be or are unlikely to be maintained. This may include communal areas of schools where the physical layout means that contact groups cannot remain separated to the same degree. This will be a local decision for the school or setting depending on their assessment of the risk and in context of the local circumstances.

The Council strongly recommended that from the 10th September 2020, face coverings be worn by all secondary school based staff and secondary mainstream pupils when moving around common areas of school buildings including corridors, lifts, stairwells, toilets, canteen areas. Primary school staff are also strongly recommended to wear a face covering in communal areas (corridors, lifts, stairwells, toilets, canteen areas). This does not apply in the classroom where contact groups and other mitigating measures are in place to help minimise the risk of transmission. However, if learners or staff wish to wear a face covering in a classroom then they can do so. In respect of staff, face coverings can be removed when at their desk and when teaching, or in attendance at essential face to face meetings, where 2m social distancing arrangements are in place. For secondary school pupils, face coverings can be removed when seated in the classroom, participating in lessons and when outside of the school building. **The wearing of face coverings will not remove the need for employees and pupils to adhere to 2m physical distancing wherever possible and good hand hygiene but is an added safety measure to prevent virus transmission.** Individual schools will determine local arrangements for the wearing of face coverings to support infection



control, to be documented in the school's risk assessment. Further guidance is contained within the attached schools update document.

As part of the risk assessment process it is recommended that staff, learners, families and unions are engaged as a key stakeholder. There are some risks and harms of face coverings to be considered, including the potential for inadvertent virus spread when putting on or taking off, the need for supply, safe wearing, storage and disposal, and the risk of stigmatisation or bullying of those with medical exemptions, especially neurodiverse students, problems for those who lip-read, and adverse effects on learning, emotional engagement and communication of the masking of facial features. The following points should be considered.

- Some children and young people may need to be able to lip-read, or see people's faces, in order to communicate. . [The National Deaf Children's Society](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-face-masks-on-deaf-children) have provided [communication tips](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-face-masks-on-deaf-children) which staff may find useful - <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/the-impact-of-face-masks-on-deaf-children>
- Some children and young people with special educational needs may be distressed if the people around them wear face coverings.
- Face coverings are not a substitute for other protective measures such as good hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing where possible.
- In some instances, learners with medical or mental health needs, disability or impairment may not be able to tolerate wearing a face covering and this will require further discussions with parents/carers and more bespoke arrangements.

Learners must not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing face coverings. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival at school or home, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place re-usable face coverings in a separate plastic bag (within their school bag) for washing.

Not everyone will be able to safely wear a face covering and it is acceptable for such individuals to not wear a face covering (subject to discussions the school should hold with their parents / carers):-

Welsh Government guidance details that the requirement to wear a face covering applies to everyone aged 11 and over unless an exception applies. A reasonable excuse (exception) for an individual not to wear a face covering includes the following:-

- A person is not able to put on or to wear a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, or because of a disability or impairment;
- A person is accompanying somebody who relies on lip reading where they need to communicate;
- A person is escaping from a threat or danger and doesn't have a face covering;
- A person for whom the wearing of a face covering or mask triggers flashbacks to traumatic experiences.



Schools, in discussions with parents / carers and pupils, can consider whether an exemption does apply. In the event that an exemption is applicable, a face covering exemption card is available via the Welsh Government's website –

<https://gov.wales/face-covering-exemption-card>.

Schools should personalise and laminate these for their setting for the learners who are exempt from wearing a face covering.

The overall interests of the young person must be given priority in any assessments and there must be no risk of exclusion for any failure to wear a face covering as this is not currently mandated by Welsh Government.

Three-layer reusable face coverings for secondary schools (including home to school transport) will be supplied directly by the Council.

When using public transport or school transport

Secondary age learners travelling on dedicated school transport must wear a face covering, as learners cannot sit together in their year groups, but they are not a substitute for good hygiene. Not only will this measure help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 but also common colds and flu, which will also be a benefit.

A persistent refusal to comply with this requirement may result in a child's place on school transport being compromised. Schools should reinforce this message with parents/ carers and pupils.

One re-usable face covering per learner was initially delivered to the schools to be handed to those in year 7 and above for their first return trip home **(for the initial trip into school, drivers issued a disposable face covering for pupils to wear until they collected their reusable face covering)**. Replacements for lost or damaged face coverings are to be made available from a stock in schools.

Learners who travel to school or college on public transport must wear a three layer face covering as mandated by the Welsh Government. Further information can be found here <https://trc.cymru/school-transport>.

Learners must not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival at school or home, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place re-usable face coverings in a plastic bag for washing.

16.2 Face Visors

Outside the formal PPE guidelines, staff may request to utilise face visors during the school day. Where schools determine to allocate face visors to staff, appropriate supplies can be ordered from the following companies direct:



https://www.shop.screenotec.co.uk/?utm_source=Banner

<http://www.beatuscartons.co.uk/about-us/>

Key actions:

- Organise the school environment to ensure that social distancing can be maintained throughout a routine day.
- Distribute face coverings to secondary age learners.
- Advise parents/ carers/ pupils of the requirement for secondary age learners to wear a face covering on school transport and within the communal areas of secondary schools and that these will be provided by the school.
- Ensure that reasonable adaptations are made for learners that have medical or mental health issues, disability or impairment that would make wearing a face mask a challenge
- Advise parents / carers / pupils that school transport may be compromised for secondary age learners who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering.
- Sensitively advise parent/carers of washing requirements for reusable face coverings and of the requirement for them to be stored in a plastic bag when not in use.
- Provide covered bins for disposal of temporary face coverings.
- Remind learners not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them.
- Provide facilities for learners to wash or sanitise their hands immediately on arrival at school and regularly throughout the day.

17. School Uniform

All schools should encourage learners to wear a school uniform, although this is a matter for the governing body to determine. Eligible families should be reminded of their eligibility for the PDG Access grant.

18. Suspected Cases

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance:

<https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>



When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for **10 days**. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. Please refer to Annex C in the following guidance for further information

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf>

All children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to be tested in this scenario. Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. However, if self-isolation is the result of contact with a confirmed case, direction from Track, Trace and Protect or quarantine then isolation for the full self-isolation period should be adhered to for 14 days even if a negative test result is received.

A one page flowchart for schools outlining the actions to be taken in the event of a suspected or confirmed case within a school, or within the household of a pupil or member of staff is at Appendix 6C. (This was developed by colleagues in Caerphilly County Borough Council and has been adapted, with their consent, for use in Rhondda Cynon Taf).

Testing

Avenues for symptomatic individuals to obtain a test are outlined below:-

- i. **Testing information details can be found at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or by calling the free phone number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.** Welsh Government officials have developed an information [leaflet](#) specifically for education settings which provides detail regarding the wider Trace, Track and Protect programme at <https://gov.wales/education-settings-coronavirus-testing-and-contact-tracing-guidance>
- ii. The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), UK Government have provided each school and setting in Wales with a supply of home testing kits. Home test kits should **only** be offered to individuals in exceptional circumstances and when it is considered that an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. Please see appendix 5 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): WG guidance for schools and FE providers – using home test kits for further information.
- iii. Symptomatic critical workers, including teachers and education staff, may access tests at LHB run Community Testing Units (CTUs). The route through which tests can be accessed differs depending on the Local Health Board area. For Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board staff can contact 01443 443151 to request a test. **(Please DO NOT share this number). Staff must only use this route if they are symptomatic or living with an individual who has symptoms, and are unable to access a test through the online booking portal.**



iv. A dedicated COVID-19 test booking line has also been created for symptomatic Council key workers and their household family members, through the Council's Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit.

In order to access testing via this route you must :

- Have COVID-19 symptoms or be living with an individual who has COVID-19 symptoms; **and**
- Be a key worker for RCTCBC (you will be asked to provide your employee / staff number which is available on your payslip).

Key workers (which will include their household members) are defined as those who work in an:

- education setting e.g. teachers, caretakers, cleaners etc
- health and social care environment e.g. carers, social care workers etc
- Children or adults waiting placement
- Areas that require business continuity

If you meet the above criteria, a test can be booked by calling:

- 01443 494004 or 01443 494007 (Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm)
Or
- 07385389546 / 07385389571 / 07385389598 (Saturday 9am to 1pm and Sunday 9am until midday)

Personal details will need to be shared by Occupational Health with the NHS Test booking Team. Test results will come back directly to the person that has been tested and Occupational Health will not be able to chase up test results.

In the unlikely event of a pupil or member of staff refusing to take a test, advice should be sought from the Council's Public Health and Protection Department CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Symptomatic pupils

If a child displaying symptoms is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area, which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the welfare facilities while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate welfare facility if possible. The welfare facility should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else. They should not travel home on school transport or public transport.



Gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn if a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care. Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting. Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves or if the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. Please see the cleaning section for further information.

Key actions:

- Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance) and ensure compliance.
- Ensure appropriate PPE is used if there is a suspected case.
- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:- <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.**
- Provide symptomatic key workers (see definition above) with the Occupational Health contact numbers to facilitate them booking a test.
- Provide symptomatic teaching and education staff, with the LHB contact number only if they are unable to access a test through the online booking portal.

19. Confirmed Cases

In the event of a confirmed case, contact tracing will commence.

Contact tracing is done on an anonymised basis as default. Contact tracers will get in touch with contacts only if identified from a positive case and will only share who that person is, if permission is given. If the contact tracers deem other learners or staff as contacts (utilising the definition of a contact), they will request that information from the school and take forward that contact tracing (which includes informing others that they are contacts) as the experts.



It is not appropriate for schools to share information on potential COVID-19 cases in the school to wider staff, pupils or parents. Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) this is personal health information which is highly sensitive and shouldn't be widely shared. From a contact tracing perspective, contact tracers' actions are covered under the health specific article of GDPR, which is why they are able to request that information from sources such as schools (and also handle appropriately and sensitively in health-specific systems).

Contact tracers will get in touch with the school if there is a suspected cluster or potential outbreak, where they will ask for contact information from the school.

Pupils and staff should only request a test if they are symptomatic, not if they suspect contact with a potentially positive case.

In the event of a confirmed case in a school, contact tracing will be initiated by the Test, Track and Protect Service. Communication should only be sent to parents/carers following discussions with Public Health Wales and the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate. A process for submitting information for confirmed cases and template letters have been sent to all headteachers. The processes map for primary and secondary schools can be found at Appendix 6a and 6b respectively. The submitted form to the local authority ensures that all relevant departments are informed of confirmed cases and the case details are reviewed by senior officers in the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and Public Health and Protection on a daily basis, and all proposed decisions by schools are signed off and appropriate advice and guidance provided in a timely manner.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests **positive**, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting (i.e. **potential close contacts**) must be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 24 hours – this 24 hour period allows in-depth contact tracing to take place and deep cleaning to be undertaken to relevant areas. The other household members (including other children in the household) of that wider class or group / potential close contact do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>

Any child, young person or member of staff identified within the abovementioned 24-hour period by the contact tracing process as being a **close contact** of a confirmed case will be contacted by a contact tracer from the Test, Track and Protect Service to provide further advice and guidance relating to self-isolation. Any child, young person or member of staff identified as a close contact **must** self-isolate for a minimum period of 14 days since the last contact with the confirmed case. This is because it can take up to 14 days for the symptoms to develop.



A **close contact** is:

- someone within 1 metre of you with whom you have had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, you have coughed on, or been on other forms of contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer;
- someone within 2 metres of you for more than 15 minutes;
- someone you have travelled in a vehicle with, or seated near you in public transport.

Family household members of the close contacts (including other children in the close contact's household) are not required to self-isolate, but should follow the general social distancing guidance during the isolation period.

If a child is well at the end of the self-isolation period, they can return to school.

However, if anyone in the household of a close contact of a confirmed case develops any Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, they need to stay at home (10 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for the rest of the household), seek a test as soon as possible and follow the guidance at <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>.

Further detail on **how to apply for a test** is provided at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free phone number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm. Parent/carers should be asked to keep the school informed.

A **negative** test result does not always mean that a return to school is appropriate. For example, direct/close contacts with a confirmed case will still need to isolate for 14 days.

Where a child or member of staff is an **index case** (i.e. they developed symptoms independently of direct contact with a confirmed case), and they test negative then they can return to their setting and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If they test positive, they can return after 10 days isolation and their household and other contacts identified through contact tracing will have to remain in isolation for 14 days. Confirmation of their diagnosis should be requested and further advice sought from CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Key actions:

- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:-**
<https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.
- **Ensure compliance with the self-isolation period in the event of a confirmed case or close contact with a confirmed case**
- **Submit the confirmed case notification form to the local authority and use template letters issued to notify parents / carers (following discussions with Public Health Wales and the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate).**

- **Ask parents/carers of any close contacts to monitor their child for symptoms during the isolation period and keep the school informed.**

20. Test, Trace and Protect

The [Test, Trace, Protect strategy](#) published on 13 May was implemented across Wales from 1 June.

This strategy set out the next phase of Welsh Government's approach to tackling coronavirus; testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus, and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Test, Trace, Protect works by:

- testing those people who have coronavirus symptoms, asking them to isolate from family, friends and their community while taking a test and waiting for a result. People can apply for a test for themselves or someone in their household with symptoms. This includes adults and children including the under 5's. Information and [guidance](#) for staff and how to apply for a test can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#);
- tracing those people who have been in close contact with people that have tested positive for the virus, requiring them to take precautions through self-isolation. Further information on contact tracing and how it operates can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#);
- ensuring that if the symptoms are not due to coronavirus, individuals and their contacts can get back to their normal routines as soon as possible;
- providing advice and [guidance](#), particularly if the person who has symptoms or their contacts were previously in the 'shielding group' or the [increased risk](#) group.

By reducing transmission in our communities, and quickly identifying and isolating those at risk of developing COVID-19 following their close contact with a positive individual (e.g. a known contact or family member) we will support the wider opening of schools, colleges and early years settings.

Schools and settings should reinforce these messages and in particular, remind all those who show any of the symptoms to self-isolate immediately and book a test. Those living with someone showing symptoms should also self-isolate.

In the event of a positive test, a contact tracer will contact the person tested to help identify potential contacts. A second contact tracer will then get in touch with those



contacts and advise them to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact with the person who tested positive. **These people will only be required to take a test if they develop symptoms.**

People are considered as potential contacts if they were in contact with the person who has tested positive during a period beginning up to two days before symptom onset and ending when the case entered home isolation. This is based on current understanding of the main period of infectivity.

A contact is defined as someone who has had **close contact** during this period, specifically:

- within one metre of the person who has tested positive and has been coughed on, had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, or been in other forms of contact within one metre for one minute or longer;
- within two metres of the person testing positive for more than 15 minutes;
- having travelled in a vehicle with, or sat next to on public transport, the person who has tested positive.

Where staff have maintained social/physical distancing rules and adhered to hygiene measures during work and where required have used personal protective equipment (PPE) or worked behind an appropriate screen or partition, they would not be regarded as part of a contact tracing exercise for these purposes.

A positive test on site therefore does not require closure of that site. The process of testing and contact tracing is part of the 'new normal' and where schools and settings follow these guidelines carefully, there is no cause for alarm. The latest information can be found on the [Welsh Government website](https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings-html).

<https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings-html>

NHS COVID-19 app

The NHS COVID-19 app was launched on 24th September and people across Wales and England are encouraged to download the app to help stop the spread of coronavirus and protect themselves, their loved ones, colleagues and those who live in our communities. The app is free to download and is available to those aged 16 and over, and forms a central part of the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect programme identifying contacts of those who have tested positive for coronavirus.

The NHS leaflet is available via the following link:

<https://wales.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-wales/images/assetbox/6ee2935c-f2c3-42ee-9d38-ad8b3b24d1f1/asset1284.html>



The app works by logging the amount of time an individual spends near other app users, and the distance between them, so it can alert a person if someone they have been close to later tests positive for COVID-19 – even if the people do not know each other.

The app will advise individuals to self-isolate for 14 days if they have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It also has a check-in scanner to alert individuals if a venue they have visited is found to be an outbreak hotspot. It also enables individuals to check symptoms, book a test if needed and get their test results.

The app has been designed with user privacy in mind, so it tracks the virus, not people and uses the latest in data security technology to protect privacy. Nobody, including the Government, will know who or where a particular user is.

The app does not hold personal information such as name, address or date of birth, and only requires the first half of an individual's postcode to ensure local outbreaks can be managed.

This will help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area in order for local authorities to respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives.

As the app applies to people aged 16 and over, pupils in Years 11 (depending upon date of birth), 12 and 13 will be eligible to use the app.

If a pupil aged between 16 and 18 receives a notification during school hours that they have been in contact with a positive case, it will advise them to show the message to a trusted adult – usually a member of staff. Schools should tell app users to inform a member of staff if they get such an alert.

Staff need to follow the school's COVID-19 procedures if a pupil using the app is notified whilst at school that they have been in close contact with a positive case. The school should then follow its COVID-19 procedures as if that pupil had been present with another child in a class who had shown symptoms (see Section 19 above).

There is no need to change existing policies on the use of mobile phones by pupils due to the use of the app.

QR posters are optional and only need to be considered if schools host an event with external guests on their premises. A QR poster can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://gov.wales/nhs-covid-19-app-guidance-businesses-and-organisations>.

Key actions:

- **Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect process**
- **Encourage staff, parents / carers and pupils aged 16+ to download the NHS COVID-19 app**
- **Advise pupils who use the app to notify a member of staff if they receive an alert that they have had close contact with a person with symptoms**
- **Follow procedures regarding confirmed cases (Section 19 above)**

21. Potential Outbreaks

If there are multiple cases of COVID-19 in a school then experts from across the NHS and local authority will work together to prevent ongoing transmission within the school. This will involve identifying those exposed, and any child or staff member who is at increased risk and provide tailored infection control advice. Advice based on the assessment of each individual situation will be provided to support the school in preventing further spread.

The process should be handled sensitively and in confidence, for instance identities should not be revealed by senior leaders.

Building upon the Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (2020) Public Health Wales has provided specific advice regarding the investigation and management of clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 in educational settings so as to reduce the spread to other communities. Further information is provided at:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/>

The advice outlines what steps should be taken to protect individuals and communities where clusters and incidents are occurring, as well as reducing spread to other communities.

1. Identification of cases in possible cluster.
2. Gathering of minimum information.
3. Initial cluster management and risk assessment.
4. Identification of incident.
5. Incident management.
6. Escalation.



Identifying clusters and incidents of COVID-19

A potential **cluster** is defined as two or more cases of COVID-19 among learners or staff in an educational setting within 14 days or; an increased rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

A potential **incident, needing further investigation**, is defined as two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among learners or staff who are direct close contacts, proximity contacts or in the same 'bubble'* in the school/setting, within 14 days". * (This may be a class, year group or other defined group).

It is important to highlight that if only one person has been identified with a case of COVID-19 in a school or setting the regular Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) contact tracing process should be followed.

Cases in schools and settings will be identified by:

- Notification ('flagging') of individual confirmed cases who attend a school or setting through the national CRM contact tracing system;
- Direct notifications from other sources, such as schools and settings themselves, clinicians such as school nurses, local authorities, laboratories and the PHW Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC) Team;

After notification of a confirmed case who attends a school or setting the TTP team will contact the school/setting to assess whether the positive case attended during their infectious period and/or if it is likely the setting was the source of the infection for this case.

Gathering of minimum information and managing a cluster

Regional TTP teams will appoint a clear lead for the investigation of a cluster who work with the head of the school or setting (or nominated deputy) to gather a range of information related to the unique nature of the school/setting, the context and situation in which the cases have occurred and to establish if the Welsh Government advice for schools and settings is being implemented correctly alongside guidance on infection control measures/social distancing measures for staff and students (including the use of PPE if learners require personal care). A risk assessment will be undertaken and if an incident is not declared the regional TTP team will continue to work with the school/setting to manage and review the cluster.

Identification of an incident

If an incident is suspected in a school/setting, the PHW Consultant in Communicable Disease Control/Consultant in Health Protection (CCDC/CHP) will make urgent contact with designated senior colleagues in the local authority, PHW and Health Board (HB), in line with existing health protection arrangements. An urgent incident meeting (Incident Management Team (IMT)) is likely to be convened to which key individuals who are needed to investigate and manage the situation will be invited. Any immediate control measures needed will be implemented prior to this meeting. Urgent actions to



control the situation (such as class closures or whether widespread swabbing is required) will be agreed at this meeting.

The IMT will also consider whether, in rare circumstances, a formal outbreak needs to be declared.

When an outbreak is declared

Most clusters and incidents will be comprehensively dealt with using the steps outlined in this document however in rare circumstances a school / setting incident will be so complex it will require management under the formal structures of an Outbreak Control Team and managed as per the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales 2020.

- a. adjustments to how the school/setting is operating to facilitate infection prevention and control measures and social distancing;
- b. if further groups need to be asked to self-isolate (e.g. class groups, other functional groups or year groups);
- c. whether to undertake an enhanced investigation including testing of a wider group.

Management of an incident in a school or setting.

The management of an incident will be taken forward by the IMT based on the individual circumstances of the incident and the school / setting. The IMT will consider:

- a. whether to undertake an enhanced investigation including testing of a wider group;
- b. adjustments to how the school/setting is operating to facilitate infection prevention and control measures and social distancing;
- c. if further groups need to be asked to self-isolate (e.g. class groups, other functional groups or year groups);
- d. more detailed follow up of households of positive cases and/or further testing;
- e. targeted communications strategy including shielding messages for vulnerable contacts.

An incident will be declared over when there has been 28 days since the onset of the last confirmed case in the school/setting and the results of any possible cases in learners or staff in that time have tested negative.

22. PCR Antigen Testing

The rapid deployment of swabbing/testing is available to support outbreaks in schools/settings. The NHS Wales TTP Programme and Local Health Boards will facilitate PCR antigen testing for everybody in the school/setting contact group that are affected by the outbreak and everyone in the school/setting if it has been established that the setting has not followed Welsh Government guidelines for schools and/or Infection Prevention and Control measures.



The method for delivery and sampling of rapid antigen tests can be executed in a range of ways such as the deployment of Mobile Testing Units (MTUs), temporary testing satellites and drop off and collection routes. The most appropriate testing channel will be discussed and agreed between all stakeholders.

Further information can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/welsh-national-covid-19-test-approach-may-2020>

23. Antibody Testing

A programme of antibody testing started in a number of Rhondda Cynon Taf Schools. However, at present antibody testing for all school staff has been suspended. Updates are awaited regarding when or if this will be resumed.

24. School-based vaccination programmes

The UK's childhood immunisation programmes are highly successful in reducing the incidence of serious and highly infectious diseases such as measles and meningococcal infections. It is important that high levels of vaccination are maintained to prevent a re-emergence of these, and other, preventable diseases.

This autumn, preventing co-infection with flu and COVID-19 is a key priority to protect public health. Flu vaccination for primary school children will be especially important. Children are 'super spreaders' of flu and the nasal spray vaccine offered in this age group has been highly effective. Flu vaccination provides benefits to individual children and indirect protection this offers to the rest of the population. Increasing uptake in all eligible children would have a significant impact on reducing transmission of flu across all groups in the community.

A concerted effort is needed to substantially increase uptake in order to prevent unnecessary added pressure on the NHS and social care.

Headteachers and school staff across Wales have always been very supportive of school vaccination programmes. Maintaining these programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to, present many challenges. The practical support offered by schools to allow access to school premises for all school age immunisation sessions has never been more valued and important.

Key actions:

- Schools should engage with their local immunisation teams to provide immunisation programmes on site, ensuring these will be delivered in keeping with the school's control measures.



25. Learning

Welsh Government guidance on learning in the autumn term can be found at <https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

Further local authority guidance will follow in due course.

Guidance on COVID-19 and Physical Activity in Schools has also been issued by the NHS and Public Health Wales –

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/educational-and-childcare-settings/gui-003-guidance-on-covid-19-and-physical-activity-in-schools-final-version-2-0/>

It will be important that distance learning provision will continue to be made for learners who cannot attend school due their vulnerability or self-isolation requirements and that schools have well established contingency plans in the event of a further peak in COVID-19 or a more local lockdown.

During this time the Consortium will continue to support schools in curriculum delivery and recovery planning to help meet the needs of all learners. This work will be carried out in partnership with the challenge advisors and strategic improvement teams and will be centred around enabling schools to effectively deliver a ‘broad and balanced curriculum.’ The blended learning approach will be a model retained for implementing should there be a further national or local lockdown due to any further outbreak of Covid-19, which should be reflected in school Business Continuity Plans.

Every school must plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education within a broader framework of local restrictions. Welsh Government’s Learning Guidance clearly set out the priorities for schools and the need to provide teaching and learning in all operational scenarios, and schools’ planning must cover all the relevant elements of this (including RRRS). Schools could incorporate this planning as part of their Business Continuity Plans or as part of their School Improvement Plans; what is important is that this thinking and planning has been done and that it is in a format that is accessible and understood by the school and the wider school community.

Key actions:

- Ensure that well established contingency plans are in place in the event of a further peak in COVID-19 or a more local lockdown and that these are reflected in Business Continuity Plans and / or School Improvement Plans.

26. Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Specialist schools, PRUs and learning support classes should follow the same principles and guidance as mainstream schools. As much as possible, protective measures should be adhered to and class or contact group sizes should be small. Staff should use differentiated language to explain safety measures, and reiterate and reinforce key messages. Safe routines for access to toilets, hand cleaning, break, and lunch times should be put in place. Teaching resources should be used to aid understanding.

Risk assessments should already exist for learners with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. These risk assessments need to be kept updated as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing, while also remaining mindful of the additional distress learners may be experiencing due to COVID-19. If risk assessments are not in place, then they must be undertaken in accordance with this guidance and other key guidance documents e.g. LA guidance on complex health needs, positive restrictive intervention, etc.

For dual placed learners, schools should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the learner.

Further information relating to learners with ALN can be found at on the service website. All learners with statements of SEN should access their statutory entitlement as specified in their statement of SEN albeit that the method of delivery of statement provision may need to be modified in line with social distancing requirements and in consideration of the need for blended learning opportunities where appropriate. Access and Inclusion Services will be able to advise on the above.

27. Supporting the Wellbeing of Learners

These challenging and uncertain times have undoubtedly placed children and parents/carers under significant pressure. The support and guidance provided and the approaches adopted should take this into account so that children's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing is taken into consideration. Helping learners feel safe will be critical and this can be achieved through the provision of appropriate support, ensuring that learners are clear about operational arrangements and by ensuring that their voice is heard. Supporting children to adapt to a new and unfamiliar environment will be important and they should be encouraged to express any worries and concerns they have so that they can be supported in a developmentally appropriate manner. For children and young people who have experienced significant trauma and loss, appropriate pastoral support and guidance should be provided, including external agency support or school based counselling where appropriate. A range of resources is available on the Access and Inclusion Service website:

<https://www-staging.rctcbc.gov.uk/Preview/1/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/AccessandInclusiontoEducation/COVID19AccessandInclusionServiceAdvice.aspx>



The Attendance and Wellbeing Service have issued separate operational guidance on a changed approach for the service which will hopefully address issues of non-attendance quickly and efficiently in order to identify learners or families in need of wellbeing support via 'Wellbeing Response Visits'.

Resources are available to support children and young people's wellbeing. A Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit can be found on Hwb. This comprises a variety of online resources, which can help them through lockdown and beyond. It contains information on websites, apps, helplines, and more, which support mental health and well-being.

- Anxiety: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/agg9pn>
- Coronavirus and your well-being: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/ffkbs1>
- Crisis: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/4ypw1s>
- Keeping health: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/nz95en>
- Loss: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/lvy6hx>
- Low mood: <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/bi4vbc>

<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/e53adf44-76cb-4635-b6c2-62116bb63a9a/en>

28. Staff Wellbeing

As a local authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf is committed to supporting the well-being of all staff and senior leaders. It is natural that some staff may require more support than others during this period. Senior leaders will need to consider that some staff members might find it difficult to re-adjust following a period at home and may have developed anxious behaviours relating to the pandemic or their own health and wellbeing, or family members. Those with pre-existing issues that may have increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and others may well have experienced loss and bereavement.

COVID-19 makes it more important than ever that we acknowledge the need to provide a reflective space for staff to deal with and process the more challenging experiences of working with children, young people, their families and the systems around them. Leaders in schools need to provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues with them or their colleagues. Sharing experiences and discussing their feelings and emotions can identify areas where additional support is needed, and may well provide an opportunity for individuals to support their own well-being. Staff involvement in risk assessments and control measures will be important in reducing anxiety and ensuring a consistent approach. Effective communication, avoiding duplication of work and unnecessary demands on staff will be important to supporting staff wellbeing.

To support staff, the Council has already put in place the wellbeing helpline, which can give you support and guidance for both your mental and physiological wellbeing. The



wellbeing helpline can provide access to coaching, counselling, exercise programmes and physiotherapy to help you to stay as well as possible during these difficult times.

The helpline is available Monday-Friday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8:30 to 18:00 hours. You can access the Wellbeing Helpline service by either:

- emailing WellbeingHelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk
- calling any of the following numbers:

Craig	07384 910 525	David	07384 910 527
Sian	07384 910 524	Carys	07384 910 491
Kylie	07799 116 571	Luke	07824 496 496
Emma	07769 164 673	Nikki	07384 910 488
Gareth	07385 086 789	Corinne	07385 086 111
Kayleigh	07385 086 830		

There is also a whole host of wellbeing information and learning and development programmes on the RCTSource that can help you to plan your work, gain new knowledge and develop new skills (<https://rct.learningpool.com/>). This is in addition to all the usual support you can access through all the HR teams.

The Education Workforce Council's Code of Professional Conduct and Practice also provides good practice guides which may be of further assistance to staff: <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/>

Additional information on wellbeing support can also be accessed via the <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-support>

Key actions:

- Ensure a good work-life balance for school staff and ensure that rotas and timetables are appropriate.
- Ensure that there are clear processes and opportunities for raising concerns should they arise.
- Provide support for staff who have experienced particular trauma or who are experiencing enhanced anxiety as a result of the pandemic.
- Provide a reflective space for staff when this is required and provide opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions when appropriate.
- Ensure that communication is effective and involve staff in risk assessments so that risks can be effectively mitigated.
- Signpost staff to support mechanisms and guidance.
- Seek HR or occupational health involvement where required.



29. Safeguarding

Learners will have encountered different experiences and home environments during lockdown and all staff should be reminded of their safeguarding duties within the statutory safeguarding guidance for education settings Keeping Learners Safe and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The role of the designated safeguarding person (DSP) will be vital and all staff and learners should be informed of who the DSP is and how to contact them. Accessing a trusted adult, or the DSP, may be more difficult with social distancing so schools and settings should consider how learners could talk privately. Safeguarding children is a critical area of business and Emergency and Duty Teams will remain in operation to receive calls about children at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. Please report concerns to MASH and escalate in accordance with agreed local procedures.

30. Catering

School kitchens were fully open from the start of the autumn term and normal legal requirements apply regarding provision of food to all pupils who want it, including for those eligible for free school meals. Schools are required to deliver meals in accordance with the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) [Regulations 2013](#).

The eating area should be regularly cleaned in-between sittings and eating areas zoned. Staff should ensure that social distancing is maintained at mealtimes and that children should remain in their contact groups where possible. Where school numbers are such that staggered lunchtimes are likely to be very difficult to achieve in practice, more context specific catering solutions should be explored with catering teams. Possible solutions could include some portable lunchtime options and opportunities to eat within classroom and outside settings where appropriate.

Food should not be shared and lunch and break times could be staggered to support social distancing.

Young people should not be allowed to go off site unsupervised during lunch breaks.

To minimise the risk of transferring infection via cash handling, schools are encouraged to become “cash and cheque free” once reopened with the aim of becoming cash free during the autumn term. This will apply to all items purchased for cash or cheque within a school and includes (but not limited to) purchases such as schools meals, uniform, kit and equipment. Online payments are well established within Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC with all schools being enabled for dinner money payments. Please contact bankrec@rctcbc.gov.uk to set up appropriate options. Biometric systems (for schools that have them) will be in use for payments at the point of purchase.



Free School Meals

Details of arrangements for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals but are required to self-isolate are awaited from Welsh Government.

The Education Minister, Kirsty Williams announced on 15th October that the Welsh Government will guarantee free school meal provision for eligible pupils for all school holiday periods, up to and including Easter 2021. Provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be by means of a BACs payment as has previously been undertaken.

31. School Milk (n/a for secondary schools)

Schools should ensure that they contact Woosnam Dairies to advise them of order volumes.

Please email order volumes to: sian@woosnamdairies.co.uk

32. Breakfast Clubs/After School Clubs/ Childcare Provision

32.1 Breakfast Clubs / After School Clubs

In line with Welsh Government guidance consideration was given to the recommencement of breakfast clubs and after school provision (both school based after school activities and fee paying childcare clubs) following the phased return of all learners to school over a two week period in September. A staged approach to the re-introduction was to be adopted from 14th September following a review of the capacity of schools to meet demand whilst maintaining discrete contact groups and safe social distancing, where possible.

Breakfast Clubs

Following the closure of the online application period for breakfast club places a health and safety review was undertaken taking into account - the size of school halls, staffing provision and the high numbers of applications for breakfast club provision. The outcome of this evaluation raised concerns in relation to the additional challenges of breakfast clubs and the difficulties of keeping large numbers of pupils within their contact groups. This, when considered in light of the rise of COVID-19 cases within Rhondda Cynon Taf led the Council to conclude that it was not possible to safely re-open breakfast club provision from Monday 14th September as was originally intended.

We re-opened provision on the 28th September 2020 with a significantly reduced capacity. Places were allocated on a 'first come - first served' basis in relation to online applications which had already been made, and unsuccessful applicants were notified.



In the event of regular non-attendance by a pupil (**excluding** self-isolation and sickness absences), please reallocate the place to a pupil on the waiting list.

A further application process will be undertaken for the new Spring Term and parents will receive further details at the end of November 2020 regarding how to re-apply on-line.

After School Clubs

After 14th September, schools should only restart after school clubs or community usage of school buildings once appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken. Full and suitable additional cleaning regimes must also be in place in relation to such activities.

If a learner attends more than one setting, for example school and wrap-around or after school provision, the learner should remain in the same, small group across both settings wherever possible. Where that is not possible, they should remain in small consistent groups within both settings. Childcare providers in RCT have received guidance on how to manage social groupings and interactions with schools. We encourage all schools to liaise directly with childcare providers that cater for their pupils, so that risk assessments and other safety measures can be discussed and agreed.

32.2 Childcare

Childcare settings in RCT have been issued with operational guidance which supports them to fully reopen their childcare settings from September. They have been advised to engage with schools to ensure that everyone is clear on the measures in place to protect children and staff as far as reasonably practicable. There are two types of childcare settings that schools should be particularly aware of:

Childcare settings in dedicated buildings/spaces on school sites

These settings have been advised:

- To share their risk assessments and plans with the school to ensure synergy with school risk assessments
- To request a copy of the school plans/risk assessments, again to ensure that there are common measures
- To liaise with the school and agree a plan to ensure that there is access to their childcare building for children/parents/visitors when the setting is open
- To stagger opening/closing times where possible so that their children/parents are not on site at the same time as school pupils/parents

Childcare settings that use school halls/classrooms

These settings have particular challenges due to using shared spaces. Along with the points above, additional guidance includes:

- To be clear which items of school furniture/equipment can be used by the childcare setting and which areas of the school are accessible
- To ensure that all shared furniture and high usage items (such as light switches, door handles) are cleaned before and after every session

- To liaise with the school to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this additional cleaning to take place. This may mean the school allowing access slightly earlier than previously, or the setting amending their operational times if possible
- To agree with the school if additional storage is required to ensure that all cleaning materials, resources, toys, equipment are stored separately to that of the school

Key actions:

- Re-allocate available Breakfast Club spaces to pupils on the waiting list.
- Potential challenges in delivery should be raised with the local authority so that these can be resolved to support families and carers to access wrap around care at either end of the school day at the earliest opportunity.
- Undertake risk assessments prior to any after school club or community use of school buildings re-commencing and ensure appropriate cleaning regimes are in place.
- Where possible, keep learners who attend more than one setting, for example school and wrap-around / after school provision, in the same, small group across both settings. Have appropriate discussions with parents and other settings regarding risks and the management of them.

33. Educational visits

National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom is provided by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel. This guidance is endorsed by Welsh Government and is produced by a partnership of experts to help ensure that educational visits and activities are safe. Further information can be found at <https://oeapng.info/>

In accordance with Welsh Government advice, there should be no overseas education trips for children under 18 organised by educational settings.

Non-overnight domestic educational visits can resume in the autumn term (subject to local COVID-19 restrictions). Protective measures, such as COVID-controlled measures in places at the destination must be adhered to and visits should be thoroughly risk assessed to ensure they are safely undertaken.

As part of the risk assessment, schools will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure they have taken into account wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. Schools must consider the needs of all learners taking part in an educational visit, including their ability to comply with COVID safety measures at the venue, as well as being mindful in all instances of the safety of supervising staff. Schools

will also need to have contingencies in place should there be changes to national (Wales), regional or local coronavirus measures.

Key actions:

- Undertake appropriate risk assessments prior to arranging any educational visits.
- Take account of any local COVID-19 restrictions.

34. Effective Communication

Ensure early and effective communication with parents/carers.

Key actions:

- Tell children, young people, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.
- **Provide parents / carers with the following link to the testing process:- <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm.**
- Tell parents/carers that if their child needs to be accompanied to the education setting, only one parent should attend.
- Advise parents/carers, children and young people of the drop off and collection arrangements, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).
- Make clear to parents/carers that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely).
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of recommendations in relation to transport and the active travel recommendation, especially the requirement for all secondary age pupils to wear a face covering on school transport (unless exemptions apply).
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of the school's requirements in relation to the wearing of face coverings within the school building (unless exemptions apply).
- Ensure parents/carers are reminded of their responsibility to get their children to school safely.
- Communicate to staff about the plans (for example, safety measures, timetable changes and arrangements relating to arrival and departure times).
- Communicate early with the local authority and suppliers your support needs - for example, cleaning, catering, food supplies, PPE.
- Discuss with cleaning contractors or staff the additional cleaning requirements and agree additional hours to allow for this.

- Keep your governing body abreast of developments and ensure that all risk assessments have appropriate sign off.

35. Role of governing bodies

The governing body is responsible for its school at a strategic level. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities for the day to day operational management of their school. The governing body will need to be aware of the operational decisions being taken by the headteacher, and should be assured that an adequate risk assessment has been conducted, and that protective measures are in place to reduce risks to children, young people and staff. The headteacher and governing body must work collaboratively in deciding how the school will reopen the provision to all registered pupils.

Further advice for governing bodies is provided at

<https://gov.wales/information-school-governing-bodies-coronavirus>

The school should work together with the local authority and, where appropriate, diocesan authorities to ensure the services they will need to support their operation are in place.

36. Support

Regular updates will be provided but if you require further advice please do not hesitate to contact:

Nature of Concern	LA Officer
Strategic queries or significant concerns	Gaynor Davies
School organisation issues/emergency planning	Andrea Richards
Secondary school/all through school queries	Sarah Corcoran
Primary school or all through school queries	Tim Britton
ALN/special school and PRU queries	Ceri Jones
Attendance and Wellbeing Service	Daniel Williams

Staff, trade union and procurement issues	Richard Evans
Data, secondary finance or digitally excluded learners	Catrin Edwards
School finance queries, efsm payments	Stephanie Davies
Governing Body queries/emergency planning	Non Morgan
School catering and cleaning queries	Lisa Gorringe
0-4 childcare queries (excluding Flying Start)	Denise Humphries
Flying Start/YEPS queries	Jess Allen
Health and safety issues	Mike Murphy
Public health and protection matters	CoronavirusCouncilAdvice@rctcbc.gov.uk



APPENDIX 1

COVID-19 STAFF SELF-REPORTING RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment tool has been developed for you and your line manager to understand whether you may be at a greater risk of COVID-19. It will also help you and your manager to choose the right actions based on your level of risk.

We recognise that some questions on the toolkit are extremely personal. Therefore, you will only be required to advise your manager if you meet one of the categories of pregnancy OR to provide your overall score to your manager.

If you require support to complete this form your manager can refer you to Occupational Health.

In Wales, shielding will be paused from 16th August, this means that those staff that had previously been shielding may be able to return to the workplace. The decision to pause shielding has been taken by the Welsh Government (WG) on advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, as the level of the coronavirus in our communities is now low. The situation will be kept under review and the advice may change if transmission levels increase. The advice now is that people in the shielding category can return to work from 16 August, but they should continue to take steps to protect themselves from coronavirus by keeping a 2-metre distance from others and washing their hands frequently.

Wherever possible, you should work from home, however, there will be instances where due to your role this is either or no longer practical and in these cases your line manager will complete a workplace risk assessment, considering both the working environment and the activities you perform, and discuss the next steps with you. If your workplace is adequately COVID controlled, it will be appropriate for you to return to work; it may be that additional controls will be needed to the workplace and/or your activities to ensure the risk is acceptable. In some cases, it may not be appropriate for you to return to your normal workplace/work activities and alternative duties may be allocated/undertaken.

A COVID controlled workplace is where it is as safe as reasonably practical, where physical distancing arrangements are in place and effective, and there are adequate arrangements for regular cleaning and hygiene. *

Please be aware guidance for employers from Welsh Government is changing all time, this form will change in response to those changes.

Section 1: PREGNANCY	
Are you 28 weeks pregnant or over?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, to the above do you fall into the 'very high risk' category if so, your manager will discuss suitable home working arrangements where possible	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you BAME and pregnant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>NB For pregnant women, with underlying health conditions at any stage of pregnancy a more precautionary approach is prudent and women who are BAME should be included in the consideration and discussed between the employee and manager.</p> <p>Please complete Section 2 on the COVID – 19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration If NO, continue to section 2.</p>	

Section 2 – OTHER RISK FACTORS	
Please tick the score for any of the criteria that applies to you:	
Age 50-59	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
60-69	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
70+	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex at Birth - Male	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cardiovascular disease (on treatment for Hypertension, Irregular Heartbeat, Heart Failure, Previous Heart Attack, Stroke, TIA etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Diabetes Mellitus Type 1 or 2	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chronic pulmonary disease (including asthma, COPD, interstitial lung disease)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Chronic kidney disease (any stage 1-5)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sickle cell/Thalassaemia trait or other haemoglobinopathies	1 <input type="checkbox"/>



Section 2 – OTHER RISK FACTORS	
Please tick the score for any of the criteria that applies to you:	
Obesity (BMI >30 or waist circumference >33 (BAME female) > 34.5 (White female), >35 (BAME male), 40 (White male)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Has any member of your immediate family died from COVID-19 or been admitted to ITU for COVID-19	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Were you previously shielding and you had a letter from either the Chief Medical Officer, your consultant or GP advising you to shield.	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Please add up the numbers that you have circled and enter the Total Score here:	

Assessing your risk

Your total score will be used to assess your level of return to work risk in line with the following:

0-3 Low risk – Manager to review the Managers decision tree guide and continue current duties with adherence to best physical distancing and public health guidance
4-6 Moderate to High risk – Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide -Consider COVID controlled workplace and/or enhanced PPE & reasonable adjustments to job role, wherever practical
>7 Very High- Managers MUST Review the Manager’s decision tree guide- consider if the employee can work from home, lone working role or work in an environment that is COVID controlled. These should be NON frontline –Strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines

Please now complete the COVID–19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration which you should return to your manager.



COVID-19 Risk Assessment Return – Employee Declaration

Please complete this section and return to your line manager. Your line manager can then discuss this with you when planning your return to the workplace

Employee Name		Payroll No:	
Department		Employee Tel No.	
Manager's Name		Manager's Tel No.	
Section 1– Are you 28 weeks pregnant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Section 2 – Please enter the score for your Risk Assessment hear:	

Assessing risk

The total score section should be used to assess the level of return to work risk in line with the following:

0-3 Low risk – Manager to review the Managers decision tree guide and continue current duties with adherence to best physical distancing and public health guidance
4-6 Moderate to High risk – Managers MUST Review the Manager's decision tree guide -Consider COVID controlled workplace and/or enhanced PPE & reasonable adjustments to job role, wherever practical
>7 Very High- Managers MUST Review the Manager's decision tree guide- consider if the employee can work from home, lone working role or work in an environment that is COVID controlled. These should be NON frontline –Strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines

If the employee or line manager has any questions or concerns regarding the individuals score, and what this means in relation to a return to the workplace, then contact should be made with the following colleagues for advice:



1. **If you wish to discuss the score in connection with the work environment or work tasks you can contact a member of the Health and Safety team.**
2. **For queries regarding a medical condition or health concerns please contact the Occupational Health Unit. The manager may refer the individual employee to Occupational Health for a more in-depth assessment to validate their score and to seek advice on workplace adjustments.**
3. **If you have queries relating to a protected characteristic for example disability or BAME or would like information about reasonable adjustments, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team.**
4. **Any other employment matters can be discussed with your Employment Relations Team.**



RETURN TO WORK AGREEMENT

PLEASE NOTE - This form ONLY needs to be completed if the individual is unable to return to the workplace or needs workplace adjustments to return.

To be completed by the Line Manager in consultation with the Individual Employee

If the individuals risk assessment indicates that they are not able to return to the workplace or that adjustments (for example PPE) need to be provided, then this should be recorded in this document.

N.B. Due to the changing nature of advice surrounding the COVID-19 virus the individuals' ability to return to the workplace should be reviewed monthly OR when changes to guidance changes.

Section 2: AGREED ACTIONS - THIS WILL NEED TO BE REVIEWED MONTHLY			
Please record the agreed work plan and ensure you review these each month.			
Please outline what workplace adjustments have been made to minimise risk (this could include redeployment):			
Please state when new working arrangements will begin from:			
These arrangements should be reviewed monthly in line with Public Health Wales guidance.			
Employee Signature		Date	
Manager Signature		Date	



COVID Controlled Workplace

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) give guidance on measures that may need to be taken to ensure a workplace is COVID controlled, and this includes having arrangements in place to ensure physical distancing is maintained wherever possible and adequate cleaning and hygiene practices are adopted.

Some examples of the measures the Council has adopted to ensure its workplaces are as safe as reasonably practicable include:

- Instructing staff and others not to attend if they (or anyone in their household) has symptoms;
- Actively participating in Test, Trace, Protect;
- Reducing the number of people in a workplace at any given time;
- Introducing one-way systems etc. and the use of signs and floor markings;
- Limiting the movement of people in a building;
- Increased cleaning regimes for regularly touched items such as door handles;
- Provision of hand sanitiser at entrances and other key locations;
- Provision of screens and or barriers;
- Encouraging good hygiene practices with supporting signage;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation;
- Where people must work together, forming fixed teams;
- Providing additional personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face shields.

Note: this list is not exhaustive, there may be other controls adopted, and not all controls will be relevant in all workplaces. Each workplace is unique and will have its own specific control measures in place.

FAQ's

Appendix 1 provides FAQ's relating to the Risk Assessment



COVID-19 STAFF SELF-REPORTING RISK ASSESSMENT
Frequently Asked Questions

Background

This risk assessment tool has been developed for you and your line manager to understand whether you may be at a greater risk of COVID-19. It will also help you and your manager to choose the right actions based on your level of risk. It is based on the All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool which was developed in collaboration with clinicians, equality practitioners, community groups and workforce colleagues. Whilst these FAQs set out some of the areas, they do not cover everything.

<u>FAQs</u>	
<u>Access to Online Tool</u>	
Q1 How do I complete the risk assessment?	A1 The Risk Assessment has been forwarded to all staff with email addresses (both work and personal). For staff that do to have an email address their line manager will be able to provide a copy of the Risk Assessment document.



<u>FAQs</u>	
<u>Previous Risk Assessments</u>	
Q2 If I have already discussed with my line manager what my risks are and/or had a formal risk assessment, can I have another one?	A2 Yes, if any risk factors such as health conditions or the way you work, or your workplace setting have changed in any way we urge you to complete the risk assessment again.
<u>Risk Assessment Score</u>	
Q3 What if I don't agree that the risk assessment adequately represents my level of risk?	A3 If you are unhappy with the outcome of the risk assessment then this needs to be discussed with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with Occupational Health or seek advice from any of the HR support routes available, which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. If you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.
Q4 I fear that my risk score will lead to me being discriminated against now or in the future, what should I do?	A4. Employers have a duty of care to their staff and a legal duty to act upon the outcome of a risk assessment by taking appropriate mitigating steps to protect you from harm. The Risk Assessment is intended to protect you in the workplace, and we would advise that you complete the risk assessment and then have an open and honest discussion with your line manager to outline your concerns. If you feel as though you are being discriminated against in any way, then please contact the Equality and Diversity team for advice and support.



FAQs

Q5 I have been identified as high risk, but I want to carry on working he same situation?

A5 We understand why you would want to do this, it is commendable, but as your employer we have a duty of care to protect you in the workplace. Therefore, it is important to discuss with your line manager if your workplace can be made safe and if it practical for you to continue. Please remember, it is to protect you and other staff in the working environment.

FAQs

Discussion on your Risk Assessment

Q6 I do not wish to disclose my health concerns to my manager.

A6 The Risk Assessment is in place to protect you as a member of staff from potential harm from COVID-19. It is a personal self-assessment and it is important you discuss the outcome with your line manager. Every individual has a personal responsibility and managers have a duty of care to ensure their staff are safe within the workplace, but without you sharing this information, that will prove difficult for them to adhere to.

If for any reason have issues in supplying this information to your manager, please contact any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. In addition, if you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.

Q7 I have filled in the risk assessment, when should my manager meet with me to discuss it. What should I do?

A7 It is important that the results are acted on quickly. You may wish to raise directly with your line manager once you have completed the assessment, it is recommended that you e-mail your line manager with your concerns and arrange a date to meet. The discussion with your line manager is an important part of the risk assessment process.



	<p>If you are unhappy with the outcome of the risk assessment, then this needs to be discussed with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with Occupational Health or seek advice from any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment. If you are a member of a Trade Union, they will also be in a position to advise you.</p>
<p>Q8 I have filled in the risk assessment but am having difficulty in arranging a meeting with my manager to discuss it. What should I do?</p>	<p>A8 As your employer we have a duty of care to protect your health and safety at work and this includes understanding if you are at extra risk from COVID-19. If your line manager is unwilling to meet with you, it is recommended that you e-mail or phone your line manager with your concerns and arrange a date to meet. If following this your line manager is still unwilling to meet, you should seek advice from any of the HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment.</p>

<p><u>FAQs</u></p>	
<p><u>Discussion on your Risk Assessment</u></p>	
<p>Q9 How could I raise concerns if I disagree with the conclusions reached at the risk assessment discussion?</p>	<p>A9 Your HR team will also be able to support you as will your trade union representative</p>
<p>Q10 How often should I undertake an assessment?</p>	<p>A10 You should complete a new risk assessment whenever anything material changes such a change to a health condition or change to your working environment/tasks.</p>
<p><u>Allaying Staff Fears</u></p>	





<p>Q11 What if my risk relates to mental health?</p>	<p>A11 Arrange to meet with your line manager to discuss a stress risk assessment. More information can be obtained here:</p> <p>HS 19 Workplace Stress Policy</p> <p>You can also contact the Wellbeing helpline on any of the following numbers:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Craig: 07384 910 525</td> <td>David: 07384 910 527</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sian: 07384 910 524</td> <td>Carys: 07384 910 491</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kylie: 07799 116 571</td> <td>Emma: 07769 164 673</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Luke: 07384 496 496</td> <td>Gareth: 07385 086 789</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nikki: 07384 910 488</td> <td>Angelea: 07385 086 830</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corinne: 07385 086 111</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Craig: 07384 910 525	David: 07384 910 527	Sian: 07384 910 524	Carys: 07384 910 491	Kylie: 07799 116 571	Emma: 07769 164 673	Luke: 07384 496 496	Gareth: 07385 086 789	Nikki: 07384 910 488	Angelea: 07385 086 830	Corinne: 07385 086 111	
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Corinne: 07385 086 111													
<p><u>FAQs</u></p>													
<p>Q11 What if my risk relates to mental health? (cont'd)</p>	<p>There are a range of resources that are available to support your health and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 Compassion Starts with Me – HEIW • Public Health Wales – help and advice on looking after yourself and your loved ones during isolation. • https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/health-and-well-being-resources-to-support-you-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic 												



<p>Q12 Do I need PPE to keep me safe?</p>	<p>A12 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has stated ‘PPE for protection against coronavirus is generally only required for certain healthcare activities. In a non-clinical setting, there is no need to provide different PPE than you would normally have provided before the outbreak started.</p> <p>Your manager will have undertaken a risk assessment of your workplace and work activities and if additional PPE has been identified as being necessary, it will be provided, and you will be given information on how and when to use. If you have any concerns you should raise these with your line manager.</p>
<p>Q13 What if I am unable to physical distance in my role?</p>	<p>A13 Government advice on physical distancing is constantly being reviewed and the rules in Wales may be different to those in other parts of the UK. Our guidance will operate in line with Welsh Government guidance at the time.</p>
<p>Q14 A friend or family member has been seriously affected by COVID and this has heightened my concern and the need to shield, where can I get support?</p>	<p>A14 It is understandable that you will be concerned. It is important that you complete the Risk Assessment, to consider your own health and wellbeing status – your personal score gives an indication of your likely level of risk and the safeguards you should expect in your workplace setting. Then arrange a time to discuss any concerns you may have, with your line manager. It may also be appropriate for you to discuss your concerns with one of HR support routes available which are outlined in the Risk Assessment.</p>

<p><u>FAQs</u></p>	
<p>Q15 I have read conflicting news reports around the role of children as ‘super-spreaders’ am I placing my own and my family at risk by returning to work?</p>	<p>A15 The additional guidance and support below provides the latest up to date scientific advice on the risks associated with social contact and Covid19, to dispel some of the myths circulating in the news and elsewhere.</p>

<p><u>Additional Guidance and Support</u></p>	
<p>Q16 Where can I seek guidance and support?</p>	<p>A16 Further guidance is available from</p> <p>Information on antibody testing, prevalence and the low risk of children spreading Covid19</p> <p>SAGE</p> <p>Welsh Government:</p> <p>Guidance for employers and employees</p> <p>Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term</p> <p>Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term</p> <p>Guidance on protective measures in childcare settings</p> <p>Swansea YMCA and the Urdd have also produced guidance detached and outreach; and operation guidelines for youth work:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>YMCA detached and outreach youth Work</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>for WG Urdd COVID operation Guidelines</p> </div> </div>
	<p>HSE - General information and advice on health and safety and coronavirus</p>

APPENDIX 2

COVID 19 SCHOOL RE-OPENING AND RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE DOCUMENT

RCT Corporate Health and Safety Team

Version 3 – 18.08.20

1. Introduction

Since 29 June, schools in Wales have been offering their learners the opportunity to attend sessions to 'check in, catch up and prepare'. The Minister for Education announced on the 9th July that all learners would now return to school in the autumn term. Employers, schools and settings must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.

Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home;
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation;
- continue increased cleaning arrangements;
- active engagement with Test, Trace, Protect **strategy**;
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise **social and physical** distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable;

How contact **between learners, learners and staff and between staff** are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and should include:

- grouping learners together;
- avoiding contact between **separate** groups as much as possible;
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks, recognising this may not be possible or appropriate in all schools/settings;
- staff maintaining distance from learners and other staff as much as possible.

2. Guide to the document

This document has been produced to assist School Management with the development of a risk assessment and the introduction of controls to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in Educational settings. It is important that Headteachers /Managers go through and adapt the risk assessment for their own school or setting.

The existing/new controls listed are not mandatory but are provided as guidance on reducing the risk of transmission. Each school/setting must consider their own situation and adapt the assessment by editing the measures where appropriate and



adding any school specific controls. The hazard and controls listed are not an exhaustive list and can be amended to suit the individual circumstances within the setting.

The risk assessment template is intended for the control of the spread of COVID 19 only, there may be other site issues to consider prior to re-opening the setting. With this in mind, we have also included a brief 'Site Management Checklist' to assist you (see [page 59](#)).

3. Further Support and Guidance

Further advice and support in the preparation of the risk assessment can be obtained from the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team:

Healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Council has also produced a number of documents that have been previously circulated and can be accessed via the Source. These include:

- RCT Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools September 2020 VERSION 3
- **Manager's Guide to reoccupy buildings - Version 1 – May 2020 – Produced by Corporate Estates**
- **Managers Guide to Pausing of Shielding Requirement from 16th August 2020**

Advice and guidance regarding the management of COVID 19 is changing rapidly and it is essential that the most up to date guidance is followed. Welsh Government operational guidance can be found at:

- <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
- [Welsh Government - Operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19 V2 - 11-08-2020](#)

Subject specific COVID 19 risk assessment guidance e.g. D&T, Science and PE can also be accessed using the links provided below. Department Heads will be familiar with the various resources:

- <http://www.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Site (Username: **solar** password: **system20**)
- <http://science.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Science Site
- <http://dt.cleapss.org.uk/> - CLEAPSS Design and Technology Site



- <https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/afpe-launch-new-support-document-covid-19-interpreting-the-government-guidance-in-a-pesspa-context/> - Association for Physical Education



Some statutory inspections and building maintenance checks may have lapsed since the start of the pandemic. The checklist below provides a list of those items that may require attention prior to the site opening, any responses generating a 'No' response may require further action by School Management:

Site Management Checklist:

Site issue		Yes/No N/A	Further Action
1	Gas Boiler/Heating systems - Serviced/Inspected by a competent person?		
2	Fire Protection Systems – Alarms & Emergency Lighting maintained quarterly by Contractor? Fire protection systems are also checked by school management.		
3	Sprinkler Systems inspected/maintained by a Contractor? (as per frequency set out by the system) - Also checked by school management if necessary.		
4	Fire Extinguishers (FFE) – Have they been serviced annually by a competent person? Inspect FFE for any damage/discharged or removed units on a monthly basis.		
5	Fire Evacuation Procedures/Drills – Have any fire evacuation arrangements been revised to take account of revised site layouts/personnel?		
6	Legionella – Low use systems flushed/temperatures monitored by school management and maintained by Contractors?		
7	LEV Units (in D&T) – have they been inspected by a competent person? (required annually).		
8	Traffic Management – Review arrangements to account for social distancing and supervision/increase in private vehicles?		
9	First Aid – Do you have adequate no's of first aiders in view of possible staff shortages or alternative layout of the site?		
10	Lifting Equipment (e.g. lift hoists) have they been inspected by a competent person?		
11	Arrangements are in place for dealing with contractors when they arrive on site?		
12	Kitchen areas may have been unused since the start of the pandemic. Have the relevant statutory inspections and regular maintenance requirements been considered? (for example extraction units)		

For further information on statutory inspections in relation to the building, contact the **Council's Corporate Maintenance Section.**

Please complete this form and return to schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

COVID 19 Risk Assessment

Subject: COVID-19 School Premises Risk Assessment

Date of Assessment: Date

Assessor: Headteacher

School Name: SCHOOL NAME HERE

Hazard	People at Risk	Existing Control / New Controls	Additional Comments/Control Measures – School Specific
School drop off/Pick up – Infection control	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/carer pick up and drop off protocols have been considered to minimise adult to adult contact and avoid gatherings e.g. at the school gates (signs and floor markings made available from RCT) • Arrangements in place to supervise pupils arriving/leaving on contracted transport to ensure social distancing. • Arrangements in place to identify possible contacts on home to school transport provision for Track and Trace purposes. • Early Years classes will arrange for children to be dropped off and collected at the door/threshold of the setting where possible. • One parent encouraged to drop off/pick up. • Stagger drop off/collection times for contact groups. • Additional entrances/exits used to reduce gatherings at peak times where possible. • Parents/carers instructed not to attend school if symptomatic. • Temperature checks taken at arrival. • Where necessary, the School has a process for removing face coverings when learners and staff who use them arrive at school, e.g. a bin for disposal. • Handwashing/hand sanitiser available at all entrances. 	
Circulation Routes – Infection control	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where large numbers of pupils still need to move around the setting, alternative external routes have been provided where 	

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		<p>available and consideration is given to implementing a one-way system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor markings and signage is provided to assist with social distancing. • Doors kept open to encourage ventilation and to reduce physical contact. (where safe to do so – and not compromising fire safety, you may need to check the fire risk assessment to identify doors that can remain open). • Times for using stairs and corridors have been planned to ensure that use of common areas does not encourage gatherings. • Class times have been staggered to prevent large numbers moving around the premises at the same time. 	
<p>Classroom/Teaching Environment – Infection control</p>	<p>All Persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Welsh Government Guidance on control measures within the classroom for the various settings, use the link below: <u>Welsh Government - Operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19 V2 - 11-08-2020</u> • Pupils will stay in their class/group wherever it is possible throughout the day. • Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and those age 11+ should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. • Where possible pupils use the same desk and resources each day. Resources are placed in individual trays/bags and only essential items are brought in from home. • The use of outdoor space is utilised wherever possible. • Rooms have been organised to encourage social distancing, tables and chairs arranged to enable sitting side to side facing forward and not face to face. • Early years settings that host more than one contact group in a single room should consider the physical means that can be used to separate each group e.g. utilise furniture or screens • Arrangements put in place to avoid mixing with other groups. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary items have been removed from learning environments where there is space to store elsewhere. • Resources which are not easily washable or wipeable have been removed. • Arrangements in place for the use of the playground, including playground equipment. • Arrangements are also in place for social distancing in staff rooms and prep rooms. 	
Pupil and Staff Toileting – Infection control		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times are staggered where possible and consider the increased handwashing times that have been introduced. • Where possible, provide separate toilets for different contact groups. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly. • Signage is in place in each toilet to encourage adequate hand washing takes place. • Similar arrangements are also in place for staff toilets. • Automated soap dispensers should be used where possible and hands should be thoroughly dried, preferably using paper towels. Hand dryers should be avoided where possible. Paper towels should be disposed of in a lidded bin and not allowed to overflow. Bins should be emptied daily. 	
Spread of COVID - 19/Social Distancing Infection Control (General)	All Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows and doors are open to increase ventilation (where safe to do so and not compromising fire safety). • Where necessary, Corporate Estates have been consulted regarding safe use of mechanical ventilation systems. • Contact groups are kept apart where possible, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement of whole classes is avoided where pupils can stay in the same room and staff can move to different classes instead. Rooms used have been selected to enable this. • Appropriate signage is in place throughout the setting. • Arrangements are in place to manage break times including staggered times, alternative entrances, demarcation. • Staff responsible for younger learners should remain with set groups rather than interchange between different/a number of groups, although WG recognises this is not always possible with younger learners and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer. All staff should adhere to the social/physical distancing measures as far as possible with younger learners, but should adhere to those measures in their interactions with older learners, other staff members and visitors to the school. 	
Staffing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff who are clinically vulnerable have been assessed and suitable measures have been put in place to manage the risk e.g. ensure extra care is taken in observing social distancing. Refer to the Council guidance 'Update for Chairs of Governors, Headteachers, Managers & Staff – Shielding and Childcare Responsibilities' & Staff COVID19 Risk Assessment Tool. • Daily review of staffing levels takes place, including those in key safety roles to ensure the safe supervision and operation of the setting including premises management. • The use of shared staff spaces and staff rooms is minimised. 	
Catering/Lunchtime Arrangements – Infection control		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups of children can eat packed lunch or school meals within their own classroom setting. • Different groups mixing together during lunchtimes is avoided through staggered times with several sittings and/or use of additional areas and to help reduce queues. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time/resource provision for cleaning surfaces between groups in the dining hall. • Hand sanitizer gel is provided for pupils and staff to use immediately before collecting their lunch. • Social distancing is employed at meal collection points (the use of floor tape to demarcate areas may be useful) where this is not possible screens are installed where required between pupils and serving staff. • Additional meal collection points have been put in place to reduce queuing where necessary. • Alternative payment methods are being used to eliminate cash handling. • Tables and seating are moved apart to allow social distancing within the group. Where furniture is fixed and cannot be moved space is created by taping off/taking out of use alternate seating or placing screens. • A different entry and exit route are being used at dinner times where more than one door is available. 	
Pupils/Staff displaying symptoms whilst at school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements in place to deal with pupil/staff who develop symptoms whilst at the setting – Follow the WG guidance • https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf • An isolation room is available for pupils/staff. • If a learner develops symptoms whilst at school/setting, they should be sent home. However, they must not travel home on dedicated school transport. 	
Cleaning/Waste Disposal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contact surfaces which are fixed to the premises have been identified and are disinfected on a daily basis e.g. door handles, toilets, taps, handrails, external gates and dining room equipment. • Enhanced cleaning regime in place across the setting. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate cleaning supplies and facilities around the school are in place. • A Clear desk policy in place for all pupils and staff. • Tissues should be placed in a separate waste bin and disposed of safely. All rubbish should be removed daily. If any waste is suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19, it should be placed in a waste bag, held in a secure place for 72 hours then disposed of as other waste is. 	
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE is not required for routine class activities. • PPE may be required when carrying out intimate care, dealing with body fluids or a suspected case of COVID 19. For further guidance on PPE requirements refer to the RCT Schools COVID 19 PPE Guidance Matrix and associated links within the document. 	
Visitors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about visitor arrangements is displayed in a suitable place where necessary, including information about social distancing, hygiene and not attending if the person has symptoms. • Handwashing/hand sanitiser available at all entrances. • Reception areas have been reviewed to take account of infection control and allow social distancing including floor markings/barriers/reception screens. • Where possible, visitors are signed in/out by the receptionist. • A record should be kept of all visitors as this may be needed at a future point to assist the Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect strategy. 	
Fire Safety		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety arrangements and evacuation procedures have been reviewed to take account of the new COVID measures at the site, including the layout and possible changes in staff. • Procedures have been reviewed to include hygiene and distancing at assembly points. 	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new fire safety arrangements and procedures have been communicated with all staff and pupils (including new pupils and staff). See link below for specific fire safety advice for specific advice during the outbreak. https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/04/NFCC-advice.pdf 	
Training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have been instructed on the nature of COVID-19 and its transmission. The risk assessment together with any COVID 19 control measures have been brought to the attention of all teaching staff. Any staff briefings are also conducted with social distancing considerations. 	

The risk assessment should be signed by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors:

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Headteacher			
Chair of Governors			



Appendix 3

GENERAL GUIDANCE TO SCHOOL STAFF WORKING - PPE & SOCIAL DISTANCING

1. PPE - Rhondda Cynon Taf Council - Schools COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Guidance Matrix – V2 – 11-06-20

Introduction

It is important to remember that physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory **hygiene** (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) remain strongly evidenced to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Hand hygiene is critical before and after all direct contact with a child or young person, and after cleaning equipment and the environment.

There is therefore no need to use personal protective equipment (PPE) when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom/school settings. The list below covers when PPE may be required. Further guidance is available at:

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

Activity/Task/ Circumstance	Context	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask	Eye Protection
Routine Activities	No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.				
Suspected coronavirus (COVID-19)	If a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care.	√ Single use	√ Single use	√ Single use	X – Risk Assess
	When cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.	√ Single use	√ Single use		

Activity/Task/ Circumstance	Context	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Fluid- resistant Surgical Mask	Fluid Repellent Gown	FFP3 Mask	Eye Protection
Intimate Care	When providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.	√ Single use	√ Single use	X – Risk Assess			X – Risk Assess
	When undertaking aerosol generating procedures such as suction.	√ Single use			√ Single use	√ Single use	√ Single use (clean & re-use)
	When cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions.	√ Single use	√ Single use				

X Risk Assess = If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.



Guidance

The use of PPE by staff within education settings should be based on a clear assessment of risk, taking into account each individual setting and the needs of the individual learner. Schools, settings and local authorities already have risk assessments processes in place which should be used to identify the need for the use of PPE. Following any risk assessment, where the need for PPE has been identified, it should be readily available and provided. Further information has been provided by the [Health and Safety Executive](#).

Using PPE at work during the coronavirus outbreak

All staff should understand how to put on or remove PPE in the right order, safely dispose of the waste and use correct hand hygiene steps to reduce the risk of onward transmission of infection. Further guidance is available in Appendix 6 of the [Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Guidance](#).

In any case, hand washing should always be practiced before putting on and after removing PPE. Schools and settings should contact their local authority to obtain PPE to cover the above.

NB – For pregnant staff or those staff who have been off with Moderate Health Risks the above PPE guidance may be adjusted to take account of any medical risk assessment process that has been undertaken prior to a staff member returning to work.

Please refer to the link below for the full version of the Welsh Government Guidance – Keep Education Safe: Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings (COVID-19):

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

2. Social Distancing

Under Regulation 7a of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restriction) (Wales) Regulations 2020, Welsh Government have chosen to impose a legal requirement on workplaces to ensure that everything reasonably practicable is done to minimise transmission of



coronavirus. The key purpose of the Regulations is to minimise the risk of transmission of Coronavirus. Where contact or closer working is required, it is important that other measures are considered, for example:

- Washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap or use of hand sanitiser after close contact;
- Minimising the level of interaction;
- Physical barriers (including wearing Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided when required);
- Improved personal hygiene and reminders about the importance of good hygiene;
- Ensuring those with symptoms are isolated from other person's onsite until they can be collected.

Although the duty falls on the person responsible for management control, everybody in a workplace has a personal responsibility to comply with the 2 metre distance requirement wherever possible and practical to do so, to ensure that the risk of transmission of Coronavirus across Wales is reduced. WG have made it clear that while there is a requirement to take all reasonable measures to maintain a physical distance, it is about taking proportionate action where it is practicable to do so.

What constitutes a reasonable measure?













It will be for the duty holder of the school/childcare setting to justify the reasonable measures that they have adopted, and to demonstrate how they have considered that these are proportionate and minimise the risks faced by all persons who have to continue to attend work in their setting.













If physical distancing can be achieved, this would be considered a reasonable measure and this will play a part, along with other actions, to minimise community transmission. Where possible a 2 metre distance should be maintained between staff and any visitors. If practical to do so, staff should also maintain a 2 metre distance from pupils at the school or childcare setting.

However, it is recognised that due to the age and personal requirements of some pupils this will undoubtedly be difficult to achieve and therefore physical distancing is not in these cases considered a reasonable measure. If for any reason a member of staff cannot maintain suitable distance, PPE would need to be worn as per the above table, to provide a level of protection.

Appendix 4

SIGNAGE – description of signage to be received by schools July 2020

		
		
		 <p>White Tac</p>
		 <p>Double sided tape</p>

		 <p>Screens</p>
		 <p>Fence 2mtr banner</p>
		 <p>Gate no access sign</p>
		 <p>Cable ties</p>



Appendix 5

Coronavirus (COVID-19): WG guidance for schools and FE providers – using home test kits

Overview

It is essential that any pupil, teacher or staff member who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who share a household with someone who has symptoms, does not attend the school / setting and follows the self-isolation guidance and access a test at a testing site or at home using the [online booking portal](#).

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature: this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough: this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste: this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

In July we set out a commitment that by the autumn, all schools and FE providers will be provided with a small number of home testing kits to complement these main access routes. From 3 September onwards, all schools, settings and FE providers will receive an initial supply of 10 home test kits **which will be sent from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), UK Government**. Home test kits should **only** be offered to individuals in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

The best and fastest way for students or staff to access a test is to visit a testing site.



Purpose

This guidance is intended to support schools, settings and FE providers in offering home test kits. This commitment applies to all mainstream, PRUs, special, alternative provision and FE providers. It should be read alongside the rest of this guidance document.

Usual testing options

We recommend testing for those with a continuous cough, fever, or loss of or change in the sense of taste or smell.

If an individual has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested or to self-isolate.

When advising FE students to get tested, or advising parents/carers to get a school pupil tested you should advise them of the points below. You cannot require a child, young person or member of staff to get a test.

Booking a free coronavirus (COVID-19) test is done through the [online booking portal](#). This will then give you a range of testing options available in your local area. These will usually be:

- **Test centre** - Booking a test at a drive-in test centre is likely to be the fastest way to get a test. You should be aware of local test centres in order to advise staff, students and parents/carers.
- **Home test kit** – Staff, parents/carers and FE students can order a home test kit for themselves or up to three members of their household.

New ways to make accessing a test as quick and easy as possible are being added continually by NHS Test, Trace, Protect. Walk in local testing centres are shortly being opened in a number of locations. This network is continuing to expand to make it easier for people without cars to get a test.

Where these, or other testing options, are available in the local area, the portal will provide those options.



If a parent /carer, staff member or FE student does not have access to a computer or mobile phone/tablet, kits can also be ordered by calling 119. 119 can also be contacted for support at any point throughout the testing journey. 119 are able to provide support in up to 650 languages.

Individuals should self-isolate until they receive a negative result or, in the case of a positive result, for the period advised by the contact tracing team. You should ask parents/carers, FE students staff members to inform you immediately of the results of a test.

When to provide a test kit

Home test kits should **only** be offered in the exceptional circumstance that you believe an individual may have barriers to accessing testing elsewhere.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. The Welsh government is making it as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient.

These testing routes are set out above, and should be used as the normal channels for accessing testing. If a child or staff member in your education setting becomes symptomatic, you should advise them to access testing through these routes.

However, in exceptional circumstances when you do not think a child or staff member would be able to access testing by these routes, you should consider using one of the provided home test kits to improve the chances that the individual will get tested.

Kits are suitable for people of all ages over the age of one. Members of staff should not carry out the sampling, parents/carers will be required to administer the test to those under 11. Full instructions on how to administer the test and what to do next are provided within each kit.



Kits should not be given directly to children; only to adults over the age of 18 or a child's parent/carer.

Kits should be stored securely at ambient room temperature (5-22°C).

Making an order for additional coronavirus tests

Schools and FE providers should order additional test kits if they have run out or are running out of test kits.

You can [order additional tests kits online](#)

<https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk>.

Kits will be supplied in boxes of 10.

You will be able to make a new order for test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you that your previous supply of test kits has been sent.

Schools and FE providers will need a Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place orders for test kits. This will be emailed to you by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Please call the Test, Trace, Protect helpdesk on 119 if you have not received your UON.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th DECEMBER 2020

POSITION STATEMENT – SCRUTINY OF FLOODING IN RCT DURING 2020

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with the opportunity to consider the detail (as outlined below) of the recent Scrutiny Enquiry session relating to the severe flooding which impacted across the County Borough during 2020 and to consider the next steps to be taken with this process.
- Detailed verbal accounts from local members (Appendix 1)
 - Written submissions by individual ward members or party groups (Appendix 2);
 - Report to Full Council and Power point presentation (25th November 2020)(Appendix 3)
 - Enclosed summary of information gathered over the last two months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Consider the information considered to-date from partners, Council Officers and local members
- 2.2 Support the emerging themes identified within this report and request for this information and the comments of members, including written submissions received through the scrutiny inquiry process, to be presented to the Chief Executive and Cabinet, for consideration as part of the internal review. In doing so consider any recommendations or comments committee may wish to make at this point in the scrutiny process.

- 2.3 Confirm committees request to scrutinise how the Council will respond to the Section 19 statutory report that the Council is required to undertake in respect of the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA);

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To summarise the scrutiny of the evidence received from partners, Council Officers and local elected members, with a view to agreeing comments and/or recommendations to be made to the Cabinet;
- 3.2 To present the information considered through the scrutiny process in advance of the interval review process being considered by Cabinet in December; and
- 3.3 For committee to also determine its scrutiny actions on this subject moving forward.

4. BACKGROUND & EVIDENCE PROVIDED FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook scrutiny of the Council's response to the severe flooding experienced during 2020 and at its meeting of the [14th October 2020](#) received a report and presentation from Council Officers on the scale of this weather event, the service and community response and lessons learned to-date.
- 4.2 Committee also welcomed representation from NRW in respect of their own organisation response to these challenging circumstances, which highlighted emerging themes, of the then yet-to-be-published NRW report into these events. The meeting can be viewed via the following link:-

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/Virtualmeetingsduringsocialdistancing.aspx>

- 4.3 To assist in their assessment of the information, Committee were also directed to the Local Flood Risk Management strategies for Rhondda Cynon Taf, in line with the statutory requirements, that the Council is responsible for developing.
- 4.4 At every stage of the review Committee has been directed towards the decisions of the [Major Incident Recovery Board](#) which was established by the Leader of the Council in February 2020, as part of his scheme of delegation. This highlighted the action and approaches taken immediately following the major weather incident, as declared by South Wales Police.
- 4.5 Committee resolved to hold a 'Scrutiny Inquiry Session' to hear the experiences of elected members whose electoral divisions were severely impacted by these flooding events. This session was held on the **9th November 2020** to where those local members of the wards most affected by the flooding were invited to relay their experiences. It was also agreed to again invite the key partners to the meeting to evaluate the events and responses to February's floods. Welsh

Water/Dwr Cymru and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) were in attendance to respond to scrutiny and challenge by committee members.

4.6 **A detailed account of the comments and observations made by local members at this session are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. Included within this section are the written submissions received from political groups and local members as part of this process.**

4.7 A detailed report and power point presentation (both attached at Appendix 3) were provided at [Full Council on the 25th November 2020](#) in order to brief all Elected Members on the operational response of the Council and the scale of this major weather event. This report also served to inform all members of the scrutiny work underway.

4.8 Members have received information via the NRW flood summary report which provides a detailed account of these flooding incidents, a recovery report and the land estate review ; these reports can be viewed on the NRW website;

<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/news-and-events/statements/our-response-to-storm-ciara-and-storm-dennis/?lang=en>

4.9 Members learned that in addition to the Council's Section 19 statutory report that the Council is undertaking into the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) there is also an ongoing internal assessment by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This review will focus on resources, support, improvements and engagement with relevant partners.

4.10 Scrutiny is advised that the opportunity is available through this process, for its findings, comments and recommendations including the information and evidence received to-date to be presented in advance of the Internal Review being considered by the Cabinet before the end of this calendar year.

5. **SCRUTINY BRIEFING/ ENQUIRY SESSION**

5.1 Following recognition of the need to provide the opportunity for local Members to express their views and personal experiences of these flooding events, Committee determined to convene a Scrutiny Enquiry Session to hear the views of local members as part of the scrutiny process.

5.2 On the 9th November 2020, an invitation was extended to councillors who have experienced incidents of flooding within their wards to attend an overview presentation which provided detail of the impact of flooding, contributing factors of flooding, action undertaken and the community resilience response. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee also had the opportunity to question the invited partners, namely Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru. The session lasted for three hours and twenty minutes and provided a strong evidence base for the scrutiny committee to continue its work.

- 5.3 Each local member had up to five minutes to present their views and subsequently eighteen members contributed oral evidence to committee. A detailed account of these representations are attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.4 In addition to this opportunity, the Chair extended an invitation to both Committee and local members to submit representations in writing, a message which was later reiterated at the Full Council meeting on the 25th November to all members of the Council. (Twelve submissions have been received and are attached at Appendix 2)
- 5.5 Subject to the consent of committee, it is proposed that the themes and commonalities arising from the verbal and written evidence should be referred to the Chief Executive and Cabinet for consideration in the context of the wider internal review currently taking place. It is also proposed that the issues highlighted should support future work undertaken by the committee, in particular scrutiny of the Council's Section 19 report.
- 5.6 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee may wish to maintain an interest in scrutinising the Council's flood risk management arrangements and emergency planning arrangements following the outcome of the Council's Internal review, taking forward scrutiny and monitoring of progress, including any quarter performance information in respect of these areas.

6. EMERGING THEMES FROM EVIDENCE RECEIVED

- 6.1 The scrutiny enquiry session sought to deliver upon a commitment made by the Leader of the Council to facilitate the engagement of local members in the 'lessons learned' work which the Council is already taking forward, but also as part of the development of future plans and severe weather response arrangements.
- 6.2 In addition to receiving oral evidence from 18 members, who were each allocated five minutes to present their experiences and observations, the Scrutiny Inquiry session facilitated presentations from Rhondda Cynon Taf Officers, Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru/ Welsh Water who were present to respond to queries raised by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in its formal role.
- 6.3 Whilst scrutiny is ongoing the common themes to have emerged from the inquiry session and the discussions of committee, as follows:-
- Overall there was much praise for the response to the February flooding from emergency services, community volunteers, neighbours and Council staff;
 - The views of members highlighted a number of areas where further work is needed and improvements could be made including communication with Elected Members and facilitating a better understanding of the Council emergency response procedures.

- The process has already identified the development of more precise forecasting by NRW which would enable early warning procedures to be delivered and to give communities time to respond. This was identified as a key ask by the Committee. (with the added caveat that there is a need to be as realistic as possible to identify major events);
- Members acknowledged that Storm Dennis was significant and its impact felt county wide. It was declared a major weather incident by South Wales Police and under these circumstances it was recognised that flooding cannot always be prevented. However, Members did feel that the risk can be managed and actions can be taken to minimise the harm caused by flooding as far as possible.
- The process has already identified the importance of training for Elected Members, particularly newly Elected Members, to identify roles and responsibilities in the case of flooding emergencies in addition to being able to signpost residents.

This detail was reported to the recent Council meeting and committee members may wish to develop these areas of thought.

6.4 Based on the written submissions from Elected Members the following matters have been raised:

- **Members recognise the huge effort of staff and the mobilisation of resources to respond to these unprecedented weather events.** Many contributions recognise the swift response of the Council on the ground to support communities in the aftermath of the storm.
- **The contributions made acknowledge the huge scale of this weather event.** Contributions from members recognised the unprecedented nature of the flooding which spread resources and the support efforts of the Council across a range of communities. They acknowledge that despite this logistical challenge, a positive effort was made by staff to respond with the required resources to support communities.
- **The capacity and capability of the current flood water infrastructure to cope with extreme weather events** - Much of the infrastructure was built to deal with 1:100 year flood events, however, these measurements have significantly changed in recent years. Communities need confidence that the Council, NRW and Dwr Cymru will invest to ensure that new and existing infrastructure will be future proofed to deal with more frequent extreme events;
- **The management of forestry, the mountainsides and private land** – a number of the flood events appears to have been caused by the way in which NRW has managed its commercial forestry business, clearing

hillsides of trees and leaving natural debris on the hillside, which has found itself in blocked culverts on the valley floor;

- **The first few days in the aftermath of Storm Dennis – communication with local elected members** - a number of members have referred to the immediate aftermath of the storm and being able to access information on the action of the Council to respond in their respective community;
- **The human impact of the Storm in terms of individual's mental health and well-being** – inevitably the experience of having your home flooded, destroying your personal effects and possessions and the impact that this has on your confidence of feeling safe and secure at home is considerable. We need to understand the long-term effects of this and ensure support is available;
- **What is the Country's long-term response to Climate Change? – Are we doing enough and at a sufficient pace to tackle this issue to protect future generations?** – National targets have been set and progress has been made to reduce our reliance on carbon fuels but not at the pace required to prevent future extreme weather events becoming even more prevalent and damaging;
- **The swift recovery response of the Council** – members recognise the recovery arrangements and support made available to residents and businesses and the swift way in which they were made deployed in challenging circumstances. The continued support made available to support residents and local members over the last nine months has also been acknowledged;
- **The majority of responses speak positively about the Council's response in challenging circumstances.** A number of responses deem the response of the Council to be effective and efficient.

6.5 Members agreement is sought to formally present this information in summary to the Council's Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to inform the findings of the Interval review in advance of Cabinet considerations.

6.6 Through the scrutiny process, evidence from partners has acknowledged the pressure placed upon the response of public agencies and emergency service as a result of the scale of the severe weather. Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water contributions also acknowledge that services and the response efforts were initially overwhelmed by the severity of the weather and the geographical spread of the impact.

- 6.7 Scrutiny has already indicated its wish to scrutinise and comment upon the Section 19 statutory reports on conclusion of the ongoing investigations that the Council is undertaking into the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The recommendations contained within this report seek committee's approval to formally request this opportunity.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The process of engagement with key partners and local members will continue to steer Scrutiny's consideration and methodology going forward.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Equality and diversity implications are to be considered as part of the Scrutiny review and subsequent recommendations to the Council's S19 report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of any subsequent recommendations made for winter weather arrangements going forward

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 11.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act asks public bodies to work better with people, communities and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle. The Council's approach to the implementation of the Act agreed by Cabinet is to make sure that its requirements are embedded into the everyday business.

- 11.2 Engagement with Stakeholders will inform the Scrutiny review will support the Working Group apply the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, namely, Integration, Collaboration, Long term thinking, Involvement and Prevention and maximise the contribution to the 7 national Well-being goals.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 This report summarises the scrutiny activity to date and the evidence available for scrutiny to consider. It is proposed that scrutiny considers the overarching issues emerging from the flooding event and considers any areas it may wish to make representations upon. Scrutiny may wish to utilise the opportunity for

the information gathered to inform the future response of the Council through its Section 19 report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th DECEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &

COMMUNICATION

Tudalen wag

DETAILED VERBAL REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY INQUIRY SESSION :-

Councillor T Williams (Aberaman South)

“The two villages Abercwmboi and Cwmaman, the whole place was flooded and patches were coming off the mountain. We had sandbag issues. Money has been spent since and we are waiting for more work to be done”

Councillor R Lewis (Abercynon)

“There were 3 principal areas of Abercynon were affected by the flooding, Wood Road, the top of Nant Y Fedw were overflowing and there was some river flooding in River Row. The culvert worked because the local authority has spent money on flood prevention measures. When residents refer to 1975, there is a perception that there has been little action taken since 1975, that we have known about this for the last two decades and Storm Dennis has been a wakeup call, but should we have been more investment in the culverts and rivers. Ten years of austerity has been difficult.

We set up an Emergency Centre, helped by residents and supported by local businesses. Residents put calls to us but we were overwhelmed by the event. Myself and Councillor E George have written to Council Officers regarding the Abercynon flooding and have had a speedy response. The issue of dredging has been raised”

Councillor E George (Abercynon)

“Opposite River Row there is a natural flood plain, would the banking levels of the river opposite reduce the natural flood plain?”

Councillor G Caple (Cymmer)

“Pumping Stations – The Rhondda ward flooded, one did work in Trehafod, one didn’t in Britannia. Welsh Water indicated that some highways maintained drains were blocked and the culvert was over flowing. The collapse of the river wall caused flooding. There are a whole range of questions.

On the 16th February 2020 there was constant communication with NRW and WW – At 2am the alarms went off in Trehafod and Britannia pumping stations. Are there lessons to be learned from the performance of the pumping stations?

Going forward it is vital that, with regards to the infrastructure around the pumping stations, all parties work together and explain to residents what actions are going to be taken to mitigate the risks. The river walls were smashed away, no help, no explanation, residents need to know.

Dredging – The river was dredged to quicken the flow. Three parties need to get together to inform local councillors and residents and find a strategy.”

Councillor K Morgan (Hirwaun)

“This represents residents and my own feedback during and since.

We feel unsupported by RCT, frustrations with calls to the Call Centre on the night. This meeting has been a long time coming and as local member I echo the residents’ frustrations. I had to chase the Highways van for sand bags. In the Major Incident Recovery Board it mentions the impact on hundreds of properties which were flooded, the damage to a number of culverts and NRW mention the River Cynon culvert which was “deemed a risk to public safety but on private land”.

In Rhigos there was flooding on Rhigos Road, which took the impact of the water coming over the sides of the river embankment from the River Cynon.

I feel unsupported as I am having to chase all organisations.

The NRW report didn't give the events justice and the Chief Executive of NRW stated that "The challenge is bigger than any one organisation can tackle alone."

We need an Independent Inquiry to scrutinise the reports from all those responsible"

Councillor P Jarman (Mountain Ash East)

"NRW have said that the floods in February 2020 were a once in a generation event and yet the maps of the flooding issued by the Environment Agency Wales 40 years ago are the same maps. The infrastructure in Mountain Ash has had very little attention. Why the similarities in 1979 and 2020?

Planning Development in a flood plain- I thank Mr Evans for his presentation – What authority does NRW hold in objecting to proposed developments in flood plains? NRW always say it's up to the local authority whether they grant or not, can you (NRW) formally object?

So much misery could have been relieved if you had displayed the skills to give evacuation warnings. With regards to the forward plans for Treorchy, Rhondda and Treherbert, have any local members been involved?

Mountain Ash – all the impediments of Glan Ffrwd, Mountain Ash was inaccessible for days. Is there ever intention of notifying residents that consultation had been employed by the local authority? Caegarw flooding – why wasn't I notified to co-ordinate and encourage residents to engage?

What is the process after this? Will we be debating the issue?

I have grave concerns regarding the lack of emergency plan for those Members newly elected in 2017. The plan on the website dates from 2011 which has been reviewed, on the 7th March, the new plan had been with SLT one week before. There is no emergency plan to rely on. No-one told me there was a flooding event in Mountain Ash, so how best are we to support our communities?"

Councillor A Morgan (Mountain Ash West)

"The response – the culverts became overwhelmed in the ward and the river was running through the centre. It was on a huge scale but thankfully no-one lost their life. Officers rang me and were with me from 10pm until 2.30am. Cars were being swept down the river in Pontypridd. At 2.24am I and the Council's Emergency Planning Officer were ringing staff to make sure they were all aware of the situation. By 6am, or before, most of the SLT and Emergency Planning Officers were already on hand and dealing with the emergency.

I went around the ward to meet with residents. No officers would have time to ring or email when it happened in the early hours but SLT responded by 6.30am. The Council quickly established the Major Incident Recovery Board.

Calls did get through to make the council aware of the flooding across the county borough. Sandbags did arrive but it was only then that staff realised that they were dealing with a major incident. Details of the Resilient Road funds to repair and future-proof key transport routes across RCT are available to read in the Cabinet reports.

I organised and held a public meeting in my ward and updated residents myself. Afterwards I made the decision to leave my ward and drive the 4x4 jeep, it took over an hour to get to Abercynon and we failed to get through the B4275. We were flagged down by a Fire Engine asking for assistance, a 7.5 tonne vehicle was lost in deep water on the A4059 and the Emergency Services couldn't get through. With the best intentions, some locations just couldn't be reached.

We need to look at events but we can't respond to a natural disaster, which needs local plans, understanding and partnership working.

Welsh Government is funding everything that the council submits but it will take a sustained approach. Staff did all they could on the day."

Councillor S Rees-Owen (Pentre)

"I saw the devastation. I was awoken at 3.30am and saw the videos.

The NRW report talks about better communication, Pentre was never vulnerable to flooding until the felling of the trees. Both residents and volunteers helped out.

Communications & Support – Local residents look to their local members for help and support. It's difficult to be able to support them without the information they need e.g. Facebook posts about people being awarded £500 grants and sessions for filling in forms but soon only Covid-19 related matters were reported, I had to chase up these matters and officers responses on behalf of residents.

Sandbags were lacking. The Call Centre advised that only those areas already flooded were eligible for sandbags. There was a lack of criteria.

I wasn't aware that the council had made the decision to stop the collection of household goods, I was told it had been withdrawn, although Mr Wheeler did collect the furniture.

We have had flooding since and things have improved. Mr Daniel Hitchings has gone above and beyond. When there is a forecast for bad weather I ask questions and I can communicate to residents.

Could Mr Owen Griffiths spend some time with us to go through his power point presentation he delivered in the meeting?

What the NRW report said to Pentre residents is the reason for the Independent Enquiry as there are many, many lessons to learn. Communication and Support need to be improved."

Councillor Weaver (Pentre)

"There was a blocked culvert.

I regularly contact residents to ask how they are, they are frightened of another flood. Work is still being carried out and residents need to be put at ease, to know that their homes will be safer, flood doors are a good idea.

Communication needs to be improved, it wasn't very good. I walked the streets with sandwiches. The Salvation Army helped and other religious groups in the main.

We need to feedback to our residents. They need support and Councillors need support to ease the stress, we are out on a limb. There is no-one to support me to support others.”

Councillor H Fychan (Pontypridd Town)

“Every resident and business deserves to have their say.

The key recommendation is to support an Independent Enquiry. In 5 minutes I can't do justice to the evidence and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee doesn't have the capacity to investigate without full information. Are we best placed to investigate ourselves?

As referenced by Councillor Jarman, we haven't looked at why the Emergency Plan was outdated which was a failing. We have received no training since the floods.

Why was there an IT upgrade that weekend? We couldn't access the numbers and emails etc. It was impossible to contact everyone. There are lessons to be learned such as a text alert to Members which would provide them quickly with the relevant links. It could be one message to everyone. Communication was not as good as it could have been.

Mr Owen Griffiths mentioned the volunteers and coordinators. I'm still not sure the Cabinet understood what a key role Councillors played. I contacted the Leader on the 16th February offering to coordinate support; I was asked not to do anything for 24hrs and not to contact Council officers but there must be someone to communicate with us. We set up a Community Centre with Councillor Powell and Councillor Eleri Griffiths, had it not been for that there would have not been a central support.

We heard from the Leader that there are no reserves, I understand the role of the authority is to better prepare. I must be able to explain to residents and businesses and protect them in the future. We need an Independent Inquiry.”

Councillor T Leyshon (Rhondda Ward)

“In lower Trehafod there was up to 4ft of water in homes. The pumps have been replaced but residents are not confident. The warnings and alarm systems came after the floods, this needs to be looked at. The height of the river is a concern, it came within inches of the top of the Trehafod wall. Natural Resources Wales always used to dredge the river, I would like to see that resumed.

Residents were the saviours of the day as was the community centre who opened their doors. We had IT connected to the community centre which was great. It worked well and we got Ipads out to residents.”

Councillor E Griffiths (Rhondda Ward)

“On the first day of the flooding I was unable to reach Trehafod so I took the opportunity to support Pontypridd and Trallwn. I came across Council Housing Officers which were of good support and by the time I reached Trehafod they had already put things in place. Volunteers helped greatly. I was expected to answer questions about council services such as could residents stay in their homes or did they need council accommodation? I had no training to deal with it. I had a phone a number of officers.

One recommendation is to look at communication so that information is passed on. I did expect there to be a community hub within 48 hours to share information. I and fellow councillors knocked on doors to check on residents, should be part of an Emergency Plan.

There was a meeting in Pontypridd on how to clean houses, Councillor Powell said it should have been given to everyone where there was filthy water. The information came from Public health Wales. I did receive communication from Welsh Water about the pumping station.

I must praise the volunteers. I have read the Emergency plan now, it does say it would bring the volunteers together, to work with them, the local network need to reinforce how they support their communities.

There is a strong case for an Independent Inquiry, to look at the role of the three large organisations. We need an overall picture of the situation.”

Councillor Webber (Rhydyfelin Central & Ilan Ward)

“With regards to Councillor Fychan’s comments about Cabinet and not being aware, please don’t assume we’re not aware.

My ward has been flooded many times in a year. Lots of families are from Newydd Housing who are responsible for some of the houses following the floods. Many homes need to have flood doors put onto their properties. The water took away a retaining wall in the ward.

Councillor Powderhill called by 3pm and by 9pm the community centre was open for families to safely bring their children. No one could expect to get through to the call centre.

The amount of culverts that are there, the ward below gets flooded which affects the cottages in Upper Boat as there’s an area in the river where its course changes but I don’t want to be an expert in this area.

We represent our communities to the best of our abilities but there are lessons to be learned. My ward is a lucky recipient of a Flood Prevention Scheme. I bought myself a megaphone with a siren to prepare for such events. I do suggest that NRW give people advance warnings as a number of individuals in my ward have been flooded.

I have to pay tribute to the staff, they worked themselves to the bone and they did their best.”

Councillor Bonetto (Taffs Well Ward)

“By the time Nantgarw got the warnings it was under water, the basement flats on Cardiff Road were flooded.

The community was fantastic, they set up sites for clothes and food distribution and thanks to the contractors Mr Owen Griffiths arranged.

On Sunday we couldn’t access Nantgarw, the only exit was on a dinghy. This has left the residents nervous and when it rains they live on their nerves. If higher defence walls are built it will only shift the flooding further down.

How can I reassure my residents? Every drop of rain that falls they start to panic. I thanks everyone who worked so hard.”

Councillor M Powell (Trallwn Ward)

“I was elected as a local member to Trallwn in 1999 and I know that lots of places are built on flood plains with pluvial flooding as an additional problem.

On Sunday, 16th February I was standing in Zion Street next to a senior council officer of the Council. I diverted the Housing Officer to Coedpenmaen Community Church to help. I was organising a 4x4 to help get people out. I asked for the Fire Brigade to come and rescue an elderly couple. One resident collapsed with a heart attack and died. I couldn’t get the emergency services to come in and help.

This needs to be resolved.

I asked for a leaflet to be provided and laminated so residents would know how to contact the relevant services and officers. Vehicles were left outside and without warnings were left in the wrong place and couldn’t be moved. The River Taff was swelling 800 cubic metres per second.

I’ll be supporting the call for an Independent Inquiry. This local authority has done nothing to protect the bridge which is our heritage.

I opened the Community Centre in Trallwn with little support from the local authority, initially until the end of the week, we used it for three and a half weeks supplying food to Pentre and the Rhondda ward. I note that Ynysybwl have not been included on the list today. Our communities helped each other.”

Councillor S Powderhill (Treforest Ward)

“Treforest had three different types of flooding. Officers were amazing and the culverts were cleared quickly. The blocking of the Castle Inn Bridge was caused by debris and objects and caused the flooding in Cardiff Road. Niagra Street and surrounding streets were flooded up to the first floor of the properties.

Our Officers were amazing, this was a National disaster. I knew where to go and what to do from day one. I set up the Community Centre that morning and there were many other councillors like me. These were unprecedented times.

How can we alleviate the flooding to Niagra Street, Egypt Street, Nile Street? If we build up the flood walls it will push the problem to Rhydyfelin and Hawthorn.

I look forward to the section 19 report. I thank the community, they are angry but all things in place we did an amazing job.”

Councillor E Webster (Treorchy Ward)

“There was major flooding in Column Street because the culvert failed and debris from the water course. This may be a case for litigation. The culvert isn’t suitable for the volume of water, there are serious problems and we are looking to get an additional backup system to give residents confidence.

There was flooding from Dumfries Street up to the main street to Stag Square, residents were unblocking one of the culverts.

I would like to thank Owen Griffiths for looking at measures on the mountainside so in future less water will come down into the system.

Swn-Yr-Afon – The river wall eroded and a sink hole opened up and took the ground away. Natural Resources Wales are denying it and no one is taking responsibility for the failing, meanwhile the hole is getting bigger.

High Street – This has been flooded three times and after the flash flooding Welsh Water assessed the pump house which functioned perfectly but that RCT drainage system couldn't cope as the drainage system blocked further up.

No one has accepted responsibility and residents need to know what needs to be done.

There are private individuals who have land on the mountainside and often lanes aren't adopted but the council won't take responsibility. I have cleared drains myself but responsibility needs to be taken for these assets.

The members Services line is great but isn't effective under these circumstances. Is the line fit for purpose?"

Councillor W Jones (Treherbert)

"We didn't experience anything like everyone else but the response from the Council was very quick. I have issues with NRW. We live at the top of the valley. The river wall is in terrible condition and the force of the water pulled the trees and rubble away and took it down the valley. I hope NRW will take responsibility."

Tudalen wag

APPENDIX 2

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM:-

1. ABERAMAN SOUTH (Cllr T Williams)
2. ABERDARE EAST (Cllrs S Bradwick & M. Forey)
3. ABERCYNON (Cllrs R. Lewis & E George)
4. CYMMER (Cllr G. Caple)
5. GRAIG (Cllr J Brencher)
6. LABOUR GROUP
7. MOUNTAIN ASH WEST (Cllrs A Morgan & W. Treeby)
8. PLAID CYMRU GROUP
9. RHONDDA (Cllr E. Griffiths)
10. RHYDYFELIN CENTRAL/ILAN WARD (Cllr M Webber)
11. TAFFS WELL (Cllr J Bonetto)
12. TREFOREST (Cllr S Powderhill)

ABERAMAN SOUTH

On 15th February, 2020 an amber weather warning was in place that was later upgraded to a red warning by the UK Met Office, meaning “danger to life”. The local authority of Rhondda Cynon Taf saw unprecedented levels of rainfall due to Storm Dennis, with over 1,000 properties being internally flooded. It was nothing short of a natural disaster, which I hope never occurs again in my lifetime.

In the days preceding Storm Dennis, I undertook pre-storm visits in Aberaman South to check flood risk assets were clear from blockage. Such as, the river adjacent to ‘Glynhafod Club’ which caused flooding approximately 30 years ago. However, it has received significant funding since I was elected as the local member – Nevertheless, it gives me peace of mind knowing they have been inspected by council staff prior to the onset of the severe weather. When I checked these locations there were no issues to report before 10pm.

Unfortunately, I was alerted to the possibility of flooding by local residents within Aberaman South a few hours later. So, I immediately informed the call centre to request sand bags once again to protect their properties. But, I found it difficult to get them despite only waiting around 4 minutes for someone to answer my phone call initially – it became increasingly more difficult afterwards due to the number of calls being made to the call centre. At 3am, I received another phone call with the heart-breaking news that many properties in Bronallt Terrace, Abercwmboi had been internally flooded. Also, their garages (located at the rear) had an ingress of water because of a substantial blockage to the culvert line on phurnacite land. Soon after this fire engines arrived to provide assistance, the council also attended but at this point it was little they could do.

A few days later, I was contacted by Sian Evans from the local authority’s Community Development team to provide assistance following Storm Dennis. On 20th February, 2020 she hosted an advice day alongside myself in Cap Coch Community Centre, Abercwmboi for flood victims within the electoral ward. It was evident from the advice day, support was required to help remove household items damaged during Storm Dennis such as carpets, flooring etc. Therefore, I co-ordinated a “clean-up” with the secretary of Abercwmboi FC, Steve Goodfellow with containers being provided by RCT Council. In addition, I organised a Citizen’s Advice van to help the local residents fill out flood funding applications.

Sian Evans, and myself worked closely together for weeks afterwards to ensure everyone got as much support as possible. But, I must say, the community spirit after such a traumatic experience was fantastic to witness.

The highways depot carried out remedial works in Mostyn Street, Abercwmboi with a new manhole being constructed to improve accessibility. Furthermore, over 100 tonnes of material was removed from the river bed near ‘Glynhafod Club’ – it included a large tree, which was stuck underneath the bridge due to Storm Dennis.

Lessons Learnt

I firmly believe, the local authority have taken a proactive approach since Storm Dennis occurred. For example, a few weeks ago sand bags were distributed in Bronallt Terrace, Abercwmboi following a yellow weather warning being issued.

Moreover, I was pleased to hear RCT Council had four bids pending/approved to upgrade flood defences in Aberaman South. The Welsh Government funded scheme will hopefully be delivered shortly.

Since Storm Dennis, I have managed to accelerate the remedial works required by the Coal Authority in collaboration with RCT Council, MP Beth Winter and MS Vikki Howells. The removal of silt has been ongoing for a few weeks, and it will cost approximately £130,000 in total. Also, they have provided industrial pumps within phurnacite land for inclement weather conditions whilst remedial works are being undertaken.

In conclusion, it appears the internal flooding to properties which occurred was unavoidable due to the amount of rain that fell in such a short amount of time. The sheer volume of water overpowered our highway drainage systems in Bronallt Terrace, Abercwmboi – even though it was upgraded twice, prior to Storm Dennis. However, I want to reassure the constituents of Aberaman South they have my full backing as local councillor to see further improvement works carried out to stop debris off the mountain washing down and blocking the culvert. Moreover, I will continue to fight their corner whenever possible to prevent future flooding events from happening.

Lastly, I just want to thank the Council Leader, Cllr Andrew Morgan for his continued support, during storm Dennis and since, also my thanks to all members of staff. From highway operatives to call centre workers.

Councillor T Williams

Aberaman South Ward Councillor

ABERDARE EAST

This is our response to the flooding that accrued in Aberdare East ward in the Cynon Valley

We will start with Gloucester St, a number of houses were flooded here, mostly the bottom end.

It was caused by the stream that runs at the back of the houses, Cllr Forey and myself along with residents would like to know how this stream flooded, yes, some parts of the stream run between residents' gardens, but it is mainly looked after by the council

This stream runs into the main river near the railway station

Cllr Bradwick was made aware of the flooding by residents while he was out seeing what was happening in the ward not council, he then made contact with the council and council staff did attend with sand bags

Our other concern is the stream that starts on the Mardey Mountain then flows into the ward of Aberaman North, in Maesyffynon Lane, this culvert is on both sides of each ward, we have both over many years have had concerns on this, many calls and emails have been sent regarding this

At the time of the flooding a few houses at the bottom of Wind St as you drive up Maesyffynon Lane were flooded, along with many houses in Cardiff Road, this is not the first time these houses have been flooded, we have lost count.

The problem what we have been told by residents is this stream goes under ground and into the river, but the outlet of this stream is well below the river level, so when the river floods the water backs up as it cannot get to the river

We have been told the flooded, culvert under the road was blocked, so what is going to be put in place to stop this happening again

Again Cllr Bradwick was informed by residents of their flooding, and he made calls and emails to the council, plus sandbags were supplied

We will leave it at this but are more than happy to attend any meetings over the flooding in Aberdare East Ward, and are willing to talk to officers

We both understand, that these floods were like once in a lifetime, but for residents it was total heart breaking

We would like to know what has been done and what will be done to resolve the problems

Just to say, Cllr Bradwick had just come out of hospital after major surgery on his shoulder, yet was hands on with residents

Aberdare East Ward Councillors

Councillors Steve Bradwick and Cllr Mike Forey

ABERCYNON

We write with reference to the flooding that occurred in our ward during Storm Dennis earlier this year.

We fully appreciate that Storm Dennis was an extreme weather event that caused damage across the whole of the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf. That being said, we would like to raise the plight of the residents in Abercynon Ward who had their properties flooded and had to move out for a long period of time. Many of them lost household belongings and personal items of great value.

Three principle areas in Abercynon Ward were affected by flooding as a result of high river levels and culverts that overflowed. These areas have experienced flooding on a number of occasions over the past ten to fifteen years. As one would expect, residents would like the Council to explore measures to prevent flooding in the future.

I will take each area of flooding in turn.

Wood Road

- Flooding occurred when a culvert burst at the top end of the street. This has occurred a number of times in the past ten to fifteen years following heavy rainfall.
- Flood water overwhelmed flood prevention measures that were installed within the past five years.
- The flood water reached a very high level due to the street laying in a 'basin' and the high railway embankment prevents water from flowing or draining away.
- A large water tank to the rear of the properties designed to take floodwater was empty during the storm.
- We ask that officers assess the condition of the culvert with a view to increasing its capacity to take more water. We also ask that Council officers explore the effectiveness of the flood prevention measures that were installed in the past five years.

The top of Nant y Fedw

- Flooding occurred due to an overflowing a culvert that takes the stream from above the road under Nant y Fedw housing estate.
- House No. 263 Abercynon Road was flooded due to the overflowing of a culvert and high water levels in the stream on and adjacent to the property's land. Residents have reported that a device designed to sound when flooding was imminent, did not function.
- Water flowed at a high speed and volume down footpaths at a lower level.
- The force of the water was such that residents had to smash down a wall in order to allow water to flow away.
- The floodwater overwhelmed flood prevention measures installed in the past five years.

- Properties at this location have been flooded on a number of occasions in recent years during heavy rainfall.
- We ask that officers investigate the condition of the the culvert with a view to increasing its capacity and also the effectiveness of the flood prevention measures that have been installed in recent years.

River Row

- Flooding occurred due to high river levels overtopping the river bank.
- This was compounded by the overflowing of the stream adjacent to the Park Road Path.
- Water pools in a number of locations in the street due to the poor road surface that is not aligned with drains. We ask that this is resolved by the resurfacing of the street.
- We ask that officers look at what improvements can be made to river bank flood defences working with Natural Resources Wales and also, working with Transport for Wales officers, seek to increase water capacity on the stream water course.

We know that Council Officers have been extremely stretched during 2020 due to Storm Dennis and the global Covid-19 Pandemic. We kindly ask that officers look at the matters raised in this letter to assess whether additional capital monies from the Welsh Government could be used to improve flood defences.

We would be very grateful if you and Council officers could look at the contents of the letter setting out the concerns of residents in our ward at what is an extremely uncertain and unprecedented time.

Abercynon Ward Councillors

Cllr Rhys Lewis

Cllr Elaine George

CYMMER (Written submission & Photographs)

1. WW admit that alarms in Trehafod and Britannia pumping stations sounded around 2 a.m. on the morning of 16th February, which alerted WW that there were operational problems at both pumping stations as the flood water increased.

2. Both Pumping Stations were visited, by an employee of WW, at around 7 - 7:30 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, 16th February. During the visits, the flood waters, in Trehafod and Britannia, drained away very quickly as the pumps were brought into action. Unfortunately, during the Intervening period between 2 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., over 40 homes were flooded in Trehafod and around 30 homes in Britannia.

3. In a Trehafod Flood Action Group liaison meeting held on Friday, 13th March, at the Heritage Park Hotel, WW suggested that, in Trehafod, RCT maintained highways drains were blocked, thus preventing floodwater flowing into the appropriate drainage network in order to be pumped away. They confirmed that these highways drains were unblocked between Storm Dennis and Storm Jorge.

Furthermore, in a telephone meeting between Chris Bryant M.P. and WW, held on Friday, 24th April, WW suggested that a culvert overflowed and contributed towards the flooding in Britannia, together with the collapse of the river wall. (I am informed by residents that the homes were flooded before the river wall collapsed. It was the force of the floodwater re-entering the river that caused the weakened river wall to collapse.) Furthermore, WW seems to suggest that RCT Council may not have maintained the culvert, which overflowed, thus contributing to the flooding.

WW also suggest that the river wall at Britannia should be reconstructed as a flood defence, even though the pumping station at Britannia is only around 10 years old and was built on the site of the old Lodge Public House (Britannia Hotel) in order to prevent a history of flooding at this location. As far as I am aware, there were no plans to install flood defences along the river banks.

As in the case of Trehafod, I am informed that floodwaters came through the drainage system and toilets and passed sewage into the properties.

4. WW has admitted that the capacity and power of the pumps in Trehafod may have to be increased, presumably due to the age of the pumping station equipment.

The other pumper station in Trehafod, based at Hafod Primary School, seemed to work effectively and prevented flooding in nearby streets, such as, Lewis St., Wayne St., etc., despite the unprecedented volume of water, at this location, which did not hydraulically overload the network and did not overwhelm the pumping station. (I know that Chris Bryant M.P. would be familiar with the pumping station at Hafod Primary, as he was involved in resolving potential flooding by enhancing and improving capacity, around 18 years ago, together with Yvonne Caple, who was a RCT Councillor at the time).

However, Britannia pumping station is a relatively modern construction, being around 10 years old. I believe that there has been no flooding at this location during this time.

5. A financial hardship payment, as a "gesture of goodwill", was given to residents of Trehafod, by WW, as an emergency payment of £1,000 ".....to enable you (the residents) to deal with the immediate aftermath of the flooding incident". Also, a GSS (Guaranteed Standard of Service) payment of approximately £200 was made by

cheque, equivalent to the annual sewerage bill. Furthermore, for those without home insurance, WW offered claims for property/internal damage using WW's insurers Willis.

Therefore, by implication a similar "goodwill gesture" should be made available to the residents of Britannia, as the circumstances are the same. After the Trehafod Flood Action Group meeting with WW, held on 13th March, I asked Steve Wilson if he would give due consideration to a similar compensation scheme for those residents of Britannia, whose homes were similarly devastated by flooding, as a result of Storm Dennis, and he kindly agreed to do so.

6. Also, In his correspondence to residents of Trehafod, Steve Wilson, Director of Wastewater Services, in his opening paragraphs, commented as follows, viz., "We are aware that parts of Trehafod suffered extensive and devastating flooding last weekend as a result of Storm Dennis.

We appreciate the heartbreak caused by this flooding, and while our investigations and monitoring system show the flooding was not caused by the local pumping station and that the station continued to operate as designed, the pumping station was simply overwhelmed by the unprecedented volume of water caused by the storm.

At no point was the pumping station switched off. Some customers noticed a Welsh Water technician visiting the station on 16th February. This visit was triggered by the pumping station alarm indicating that storm water levels were increasing.....

Our investigations show that the flooding was caused by the extreme weather hydraulically overloading the network which was simply unable to cope. It was not caused by the failure of the pumping station. While we do not accept liability and responsibility for the incident, we know the financial hardship caused by such incidents and this is why we are taking the steps.....to make things easier for you.... We will work with you and the local authority over the next few weeks and months to help restore your homes.....".

Surely, these well-meaning sentiments, agreeing to a compensation package for Trehafod, apply equally to residents of Britannia, and yet no compensation scheme or assistance has been forthcoming, in order to alleviate the financial hardship of residents in Britannia affected by flooding.

I believe that both WW and NRW are abrogating their responsibilities and abandoning the residents of Britannia, leaving RCT Council to consider repairing, enhancing and modernising the river walls and flood defences.

During Storm Dennis the river walls, including some of the gardens, between 5 & 8 Eirw Rd., were washed away, completely or partially (see attached photographs).

No. 8 Eirw Rd was eligible for a Flood Recovery Grant of £500, as flood water entered the house.

However, in the case of No. 7, for example, the resident was not eligible for £500 as no flood water entered the house, even though the river wall and garden has been washed away. Is there any discretion, under the regulations, to pay the Flood

Recovery Grant in such circumstances, due to the significant damage incurred to the property?

Furthermore NRW has stated that the walls were not flood defences but river/training walls, therefore the responsibility of the riparian land owner. The insurance companies have also stated that they will not bear the costs of repair to the river wall as they are regarded as flood defences.

A "catch 22" situation indeed.

I shall be obliged if, in due course, you will consider these circumstances and, perhaps, provide advice in relation to eligibility for an Emergency Assistance Payment Grant from Welsh Government, a Community Recovery Grant or Council Tax exemptions.

Councillor G Caple

Cymmer Ward Councillor









Jayne Brencher
The Graig Ward

Whilst residential properties in my ward were mainly unaffected by the extreme rainfall and flooding that occurred in Pontypridd in February, there has undoubtedly been a negative economic and social impact on the town, including businesses in the High Street area. Overnight the town became inaccessible and severe flooding in Taff St and Mill St impacted on all the town's businesses. During the night, we monitored the situation closely but I visited the next morning with Alex Davies-Jones MP after flood water lowered in Taff St. Speaking to various businesses across the town, it was clear that the destruction was overwhelming and a deep despondency of the town's future was expressed.

The loss of the pedestrian access into the Park via the Marks and Spencer bridge was also deeply felt. However, within hours a clean-up operation began by business owners and volunteers, supported by RCT staff and a strong community response became evident.

The role of GTFM as a means of communicating information and organisations such as the Town Council - itself severely impacted - became evident, but most importantly the enormous response of local residents and businesses which was to become an important factor over the coming days. RCT staff were able to focus on responding to extreme immediate emergency call outs and supported local efforts. This role strengthened as the days passed and RCT worked closely with local groups to establish a more co-ordinated support network.

Of prime concern, however, was the situation in households directly affected in the town area such as Sion St and Berw Rd immediately bordering the town.

All local members in the wider Pontypridd area co-ordinated efforts and the Treforest and Trallwn Community Centres established themselves quickly as centres for flooded residents and over the following days they provided a critical support network.

Local churches and volunteers must also be commended for their huge efforts over the following weeks. Hot meals were provided by Coedpenmaen Baptist Church and other local churches in addition to support from the Mormon church which was celebrated later.

Donations came from across the UK and clothing became such an issue that through social media we were able to establish the need for cleaning items (humidifiers etc.) to focus donations. The health and safety aspects of cleaning properties were quickly highlighted and RCT officers were able to offer advice.

The presence of a lady from Save the Children fund helped in the disaster relief operation and local volunteers should be commended for their professional approach supporting our officers and staff.

Once personal well-being and alternative accommodation for those effected was established and all residents checked by local members and RCT staff, issues emerged relating to insurance and volunteer solicitor William Watkins attended the Trallwn Centre on behalf of Capital Law to give free advice on insurance issues. RCT mobile library also visited to offer advice to residents and at Trallwn we set up Citizens Advice - and they, with RCT officers, were able to navigate those affected through the grant processes and other post flooding challenges.

It is notable that all local members worked closely together and regular meetings with RCT officers were established at the centre until officers were able to move the remaining donations and allowed the centres to continue their normal functions. The outcomes were that, as a result of this extraordinary response, affected families were not only receiving practical support but were really moved and warmed by the responses from within the town and beyond.

This community spirit was again evident with the Covid 19 volunteer groups that sprang up across the area and there is growing confidence in the community that the town is resilient enough to cope with anything!

Lessons learned

- The vital need for quick response coordination which would include the Pontypridd Town Council and community centres and local volunteer groups-a contact network and emergency response strategy constantly updated with key partners.
- Communications with volunteers etc through local media and social media coordination to avoid misinformation and data security –names and addresses of those needing support were sometimes shared openly.



Date: 12th November 2020

RE: RCT Labour Group's Response to Storm Dennis

We are writing to you to provide an overview of some of the RCT Labour Group Member's experiences and feedback on the truly devastating weather events in mid-February, which not only saw residents and businesses affected by flooding on an unprecedented scale, but also saw a significant amount of the Council's own infrastructure sustaining damage, including highways, river walls, culverts and bridges. This was, of course, exacerbated by the landslip at Llanwonno/Tylorstown, which saw 60,000 tonnes of material fall away from the mountainside, thankfully at no loss of life.

With almost 1,500 of our residents and businesses affected, Storm Dennis brought the worst flooding episode that Rhondda Cynon Taf has ever witnessed, and this was also the case in a number of communities spread across England and Wales. The weather event has since been classified as a 1-in-290 year event that brought a month's worth of rain in just 48 hours, with 160mm of rain falling in Maerdy between midday on the Friday and Sunday, 16th February – this was the highest level recorded in Wales and was closely followed by recordings in Hirwaun. The scale of the event prompted the Met Office to issue the highest level (Red) weather warning which poses a severe risk to life and prompted a major incident to be declared in RCT by the emergency services. This was clearly an extraordinary weather event.

It is evident from the initial investigations that the causes of the flooding were complex and multifaceted, with pluvial flooding prevalent in a number of communities in the northern areas of the County, and river flooding the primary cause in more southern areas. The two are, however, inexorably linked, with the significant rainfall further up the valleys driving the three rivers situated in the County to record their highest levels for a generation – including the River Taff, which broke a 40 year record by 80cm in reaching a level of over 5m.

With regards to the Council's response on the night, crews did largely attend the vast majority of calls, with some responses (particularly during the early parts of the night) particularly swift and others many hours later, although we fully recognise that this was due to the sheer volume of calls being received from across the entire County. Several main artery roads were rendered impassable due to deep flood water, which also hampered crews in getting to some locations. Furthermore, in some instances, the severity of the flooding was so great that Council staff could do very little even when they did attend. Some Members have relayed that even with Council

staff and emergency services attending the scene and pumping water, the volume of rainfall was so great that the actions had little to no effect.

The consensus amongst Members of this Group is that whilst the Council did take the necessary steps to prepare for the weather event by sourcing additional Highways and Call Centre staff, as well as additional plant and machinery via external contractors, the intensity of the weather event and their widespread nature created challenging circumstances for the Council and emergency services.

It is our view that, given the severity and the scale of the damage and destruction caused by Storm Dennis, that the Council's response in the aftermath of the event was timely, effective and concentrated the help and support it provided in the right areas. Through the establishment of the Major Incident Recovery Board, the £1.5m released from the general reserves and the further £500,000 were able to be allocated to supporting priority individuals and households via initiatives such as the Community Flood Recovery Grant – Hardship Payment and four weeks of free school meals; small and medium-sized businesses through the £1,000 payments and the provision of skips to those internally flooded; and emergency infrastructure assessments and works. We would also like to recognise the hard work of Council staff and Officers in assisting those who had been affected both on the night and over the course of the following weeks and months.

It is widely accepted that the increasing impact of climate change is likely to mean that we experience more severe weather events more often. It is important that the Council now focuses on potential courses of action that can be taken forward to mitigate the risks of such devastating flooding occurring again in the future – both in preparedness for such events through the further development of a comprehensive programme of flood defence works (which we note to already be ongoing), and also in terms of responding to major instances of flooding.

To conclude, while the Council took the necessary steps to prepare in advance for the impact of Storm Dennis, this was clearly an event that none of us have ever experienced previously and it is vital that – in light of the factors outlined above – the necessary lessons are learned to inform the future planning and response. We would welcome the Council bringing forward a detailed plan of investment over the next 3-5 years in addressing these key flooding areas within the Council's responsibility; but also progressing discussions with both NRW and the Welsh Government about wider river flood protection assets. The Council needs to use this as an opportunity to review all of its functions and responses to such a major event.

Submitted on behalf of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Labour Group

13th November 2020

RE: Local Submission from the Councillors for Mountain Ash West

We are writing jointly to share our local experience during the unprecedented flooding events caused by Storm Dennis on the weekend of Saturday, 15th and Sunday, 16th February.

We were first made aware of flooding issues in the Glenboi area at around 10:15pm – due to the horrendous weather and torrential rain. At this point, we experienced no issue in getting through to the Council's call centre and reporting the incident, which was promptly attended by the Council's Highways crews. We also made a 999 call to the South Wales Fire and Rescue service responded to to assist in pumping water.

Despite Highways Officers checking the pumping station at the location, which was working at maximum capacity, and the Fire Engines in attendance pumping the water with 2 appliances, the water levels continued to quickly rise due to the sheer volume of the rainfall. At around midnight, Emergency Planning Officers were contacted as we became aware of further issues of flooding arising in other locations across Mountain Ash and evacuations were needed.

By the early hours of the morning, the situation had sadly deteriorated further, with significant flooding of some key routes in and around Mountain Ash, including the town centre and Miskin Road, as well as a section of the major A4059 route, meaning it was almost impossible to get in or out of Mountain Ash by the early morning.

In all of the local cases of flooding that we reported, the Council's crews did attend, albeit in some cases it was many hours later due to the sheer volume of calls that were being received on a County-wide basis. Furthermore, the flooding was so severe in some instances that there was little that staff could do even when they did attend.

In the days following the flooding, we had a number of site visits with Council Officers and Natural Resources Wales, and we are pleased to see that progress is being made in carrying out some of the repairs and improvement works. Whilst work is only being carried out at a few sites so far, we are aware that investigations and design works at many other sites across RCT are ongoing and will need to be prioritised as part of the Council-wide programme.

In both of our experiences, it was certainly the worst flooding episode in Mountain Ash that either of us can recall. We both share the view that we were able to contact the Council until around midnight to report issues and Officers responded as well as they possibly could, especially before the situation drastically turned for the worse across the County at around 12am-1am as the storm intensified.

In terms of the recovery, the use of the library bus supported by CAB was something that was well received by residents as a point for information. Residents clearly remain anxious whenever there is bad weather so the Council needs to lay out a programme of flood alleviation works for the next 2 to 3 years.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Andrew Morgan
Councillor Wendy Treeby

Mountain Ash West

November 2020

Plaid Cymru Group Submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to the Floods

Unprecedented. Devastating. Traumatizing.

Those are the three most often used words in relation to the floods that hit so many communities across RCT this year. And we weren't the only communities affected, with similar scenes being seen across the country.

All Councils affected have been overwhelmed, and it has been estimated that at least £500m more is needed in the next decade if Wales is to avoid significant flooding.

Unfortunately, though for those communities affected, many of the questions they have remain unanswered nine months on, with some suffering further floods as recently as August. Every time there is now heavy rainfall, people are naturally anxious. Nothing done to date has alleviated their fears.

A number of reports have either been published or are pending, but it is clear that they are limited in scope and are conducted by the organisations themselves rather than by an external agency. We believe, as do thousands of residents, that there must be an independent inquiry to bring together all those reports, scrutinise them and bring together the evidence and experiences of residents and businesses. It is the only way that we can secure the answers and justice for the residents and businesses affected.

At the recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 November 2020, we were limited to a maximum of 5 minutes to present our views. It should be noted this was the only time we have been asked for our evidence, though we have asked for the opportunity to do so a number of times since February. This is not sufficient if the Council is serious about learning lessons from its response to the floods, to help inform future investment as well as response in an emergency situation.

Why should there be an inquiry?

Limitations of Section 19 reports

The reports referenced in section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act do not differentiate between a major incident of flooding and more localised flooding. We believe this to be inadequate in light of the severity of the flooding that occurred in RCT this year.

In effect, the act also asks Councils to investigate themselves as part of the process, something which is surprising given the important role Local Authorities also play in flood prevention.

Businesses and residents affected do not have any opportunity to input their own experiences as part of this process and submit evidence. Again, given the scale of

what occurred, this means that all reports published or are pending are limited in what they will reveal. Video footage and photographs would greatly help investigators to better understand what happened in each of the locations affected, as the reasons differ widely and include potential lack of maintenance of drains and flood defences, failed pumps, trees been cut from mountainsides and debris left in rivers and much much more. The only way we can plan to prevent flooding in the future is by understanding what happened. Only an independent inquiry will be able to achieve this, by taking a holistic overview of what took place and why, and also, if anything could have been done differently that would have prevented homes and businesses from being affected to the extent they were. It would also help us understand the Council's preparedness for floods, as well as response to the floods this year and help us learn lessons for the future.

Climate Emergency

In 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. The Future Trends report, published in 2018, predicted that by 2030 the predicted potential impacts on Wales include flooding, coastal changes, drought, shortages of water, risks to health and wellbeing from high temperatures, and risks to nature.

An independent inquiry would help us understand the role the changes to the climate played in the flooding and determine what actions we need to take now – rather than in years to come – in response to climate change. It would also help determine how we should best invest to prevent flooding. RCT Council are taking some steps to try and prevent some further flooding but these are sticky plaster solutions rather than permanent ones. We need a plan that takes into account both the whole of RCT, and arguably the whole of Wales if we are serious in responding to the Climate Emergency.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015

We are fortunate to have in place in Wales the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, meaning that all public bodies – including Local Authorities and Natural Resources Wales – must embed the act in all that they do. Obviously, the 2010 act does not take this into account, and therefore is focused on finding out what happened in a local area at a point in time rather than also being focused on future outcomes. An independent inquiry would need to apply the principles of the act to their work, making it a much more worthwhile and insightful process than simply a Section 19 report.

Impact on physical and mental health

An independent inquiry needs to include looking at the impact the floods have had on the health and wellbeing of residents affected, both children and adults. The Section 19 report looks at the material elements, eg, if pumps drained properly but it does not in any way look at the human side of the impact. As local Councillors representing areas affected, we have seen with our own eyes the toll the floods have

had on the physical and mental health of children and adults. There is a long-term impact that needs to be considered, and none of this is being looked into at present.

Impact to the local economy

Many of those affected had been costed out of insurance or did not have cover for flood damage. This has had a huge financial impact on them, and also means they are either not able to secure insurance for the future or are facing extremely high premiums. We must look at how we can support businesses and residents in these areas, so that if the worse happens again in the future, they are protected.

Many businesses that were flooded are also lacking confidence in the way the reasons for the floods are being addressed, and are now considering re-locating to an area where there is a lower risk of floods. Given the importance of businesses as employers, especially in an area such as the Treforest Industrial Estate, it would be a huge blow to an area that already has high unemployment and high dependency on food banks. This would further increase child poverty in the area.

Conclusion

Whilst it is intended that our five minute presentations will feed into the Section 19 report, given the limitations of what we could present in such a short time and that no in-depth evidence has been sought from us nor the residents and businesses affected, it is clear that the report will not be able to take into account the many issues that the local communities have raised. It will mainly relate to technical matters and will be limited in being able to help us understand how the Council responded, and the lessons that we need to learn. Hence the need for an independent inquiry.

The precedence for commissioning an Independent Investigation was made in the first National Assembly for Wales in 2000.

The Environment, Planning and Transport Committee under the Chairmanship of Richard Edwards AM commissioned an Independent report to LEARN any relevant lessons and INFORM future policy on waste disposal in Wales. This is known as the Purchon Report on the Nant Y Gwyddon Landfill Site dated 12th December 2001.¹

Like flooding there was a regulatory framework covering waste disposal but it did not stop that committee with the full support of Sue Essex AM - the then Government Minister who had portfolio responsibility - from supporting an independent Investigation to learn the lessons and drive forward policy in Wales

The terms of reference were set by the Committee in consultation with the Minister and used as headings to format the final published report. The infamous Tip was operating throughout the investigation but closed following the publication of a very

1

<https://senedd.wales/Committee%20Documents/Independent%20Investigation.%20Nantgywyddon%20Landfill%20Site.%20Investigator's%20Report-12122001-29740/3c1086e5000c772400005cdd0000000-English.pdf>

damning report. Many agencies regulating the hazardous waste at a national and local level were held to account in the final report, as was RCT and its predecessor Council. The Environment Agency, Audit Commission, Wales Office and National Assembly also had questions to answer.

There is a striking comment highlighted in the report in relation to information being withheld by public bodies who relied on “commercial confidentiality “to defend their position.

“When seeking to investigate matters of great public interest, where virtually all the business concerns public money and where the risks, financial, health and environmental, fall on the public, and its purse, lack of transparency is unsatisfactory”.

The report also says,

“ The procedure was entirely new and required a degree of innovation, tolerance, flexibility, patience and good will from all those involved “ and also “ The search for facts, relevant data and opinion is never easy and in the UK we are not used to non-adversarial governance or inquiry procedures. The National Assembly for Wales has sought to conduct an entirely open investigation and I feel honoured to be part of that approach in the early days of the Assembly’s history. “

We hope that this brief reminder of the innovative way that the first Assembly, in its infancy some two decades ago, dealt with a very high profile environmental disaster in the Rhondda will persuade the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet to use all its influence to support an independent inquiry.

We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain if we allow for proper scrutiny of the floods and our preparedness and response. Those affected must be given the opportunity to have their say, and receive the answers they deserve about why the flooding occurred. This will help us better understand how to prevent flooding in the future, as far as is possible, and inform where investment is needed. It will also help inform how best to support the children, adults and businesses affected in a cohesive and joined up way as well.

Importantly and crucially, it would help us as a Council to understand if we could have done anything differently, before, during and after the floods. None of the reports currently underway or published will provide that honest and frank assessment which is essential if we are serious about learning lessons for the future.

Appendix A:

Evidence sent to Cllr Heledd Fychan from affected residents and businesses, and why they believe an independent inquiry is essential, as part of the campaign for an Independent Inquiry.

"I've been left with bronchitis since the floods. I'm still on antibiotics and steroids I'm not well at all they wanted me to go into hospital yesterday but I said I can't because my son is gonna uni on Monday and I've got two other children. Now we are in lock down I'm not good with my mental health either"

"I honestly feel like this experience has pushed me to the brink. It's been one of the worst things I've ever experienced and still affects me every day in some way. Even filling in this survey and thinking back to it all I've cried. I had 6 weeks off work with stress, I can't sleep or relax when it's raining badly. I don't know if I'll ever be the same again, I've spoken to many neighbours who all agree it's like we have PTSD. The mental and emotional stress of the whole situation has absolutely shocked me, I've always regarded myself as a very strong person but this almost broke me. Waking up at 5am to the sound of running water and going downstairs to dirty water pouring in your house and looking out the window to see a literal river raging past your house and taking cars with it, with absolutely no warning at all, it makes me sick to my stomach thinking about it even now. How are we ever supposed to relax in our homes again when there's bad weather? We can't trust NRW or RCT for that matter. My sense of safety in my home has been robbed from me and my family. We've been moved into an unfurnished flat in a strange area and then we went into lockdown as well, we literally have a bed and a tv because we lost everything else and then with lockdown getting furniture was practically impossible. Then on top of all that stress we have the stress of trying to rebuild our houses and lives, deal with insurance companies who are basically soulless monsters in some cases, source 2 new cars. If I ever had to go through this again... well, I don't think I could. I'd be in a psychiatric hospital. They need to protect us before they take more of us and more from us than they already have, we can't survive another instance like this."

"I'm disabled the help we received we zero we had to do all the work ourselves."

"I feel extremely let down by authorities, we have been forgotten about and no one wants to own up to their part in what has happened. The council think that by giving some money it will go away and welsh water/natural resources won't take won't accept liability, and I as the innocent party am now paying the price, I have had no help off anyone because I've had insurance which is unfair as I've done the correct thing. I have lived in Treforest for nearly 12 years and loved it up until that night, I no longer wish to live in the area if no one can help prevent this from happening again but will not be able to sell now and am stuck there."

“Our eldest daughter (20) has been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of the flood. She is on medication, receiving counselling and although she tried, she has been unable to return to work and as a result has had to leave her post with BT. Her wellbeing is very much our focus. We cannot believe that we have never had that much rain before, there must be a more rational explanation. Someone is responsible, we are desperately worried that this may happen again. We need reassurance that steps will be taken to prevent another disaster. Anxiety levels are high every time it rains.”

“In some respects The lack of support from the local authorities as far as they are concerned we have insurance so that’s our problem bear in mind many insurance companies have got out paying out or underpaying. The lack of any report, any sign of prevention, even just answering our questions or having a meeting. I have to reassure my wife and young children it won’t happen again and I honestly cannot tell them that it won’t. Also I would really want to know why major funding campaigns were set up separately rather jointly as we are all RCT and we were all affected.”

“We needed advice on what to do to the house (in absence of insurance company guidance). This advice was very difficult to get despite contacting RCT many times. They responded once our local councillor expedited our request. We are now very anxious each time it rains. We need answers to whether this was a natural event or whether there is blame. If there is blame, then we will hopefully rest easier during future rain storms as we would live in hope that lessons would have been learnt.”

“We had a lot of presence from council, dwr cymru and NRW etc in Treforest immediately following the flood. Almost 6 months on much of the discussion seems to focus further up the valley and Treforest residents and effect in Treforest (not Pontypridd Town or Pentre) is largely forgotten. We would like to safeguard our house by moving entrance ways to the property to higher ground, is funding or can funding be made available to strengthen personal flood defenses.”

“It was very traumatic when it happened - it has caused my mental health to worsen and I live in fear that when I am able to move back that it will happen again. Where I am living now I feel isolated and alone -trying to cope one day at a time to stop myself from feeling suicidal And depending on people to chat with on phone Especially past few months due to COVID not able to visit my elderly parents or friends and family.”

“I would like to know what happened that night. It wasn’t just the rain it was something much more significant that morning on the 16th February. We are devastated and will always live that nightmare. Also Financially it’s devastated me bringing up two children of GCSE ages on my own.”

“The stress and financial effects of having my business closed due to flooding has affected me greatly I have never had time of work before but haven't worked now for four and a half months and I'm one of the lucky ones that had the builders in straight away regardless of covid.”

"Yeah since being in the floods I haven't long come off medication because I had newmonia and chest infection several hospital visits and tests and they said it was because I was up to my waist in water now I've been left with bronchitis for rest of my life"

"I also lost my car in the flood. It's been a Very stressful time. I am a single person. I am now living with my parents In a small 1 1/2 bedroom house. I am still going to work. The whole experience has been horrific and very upsetting."

"Because of covid Prehaps the council could have helped with priority supplies of plaster etc that would have helped immensely. I am extremely worried about the increase and availability of insurance for next year."

"it has been an horrific time for myself and family. We have had to move out while repairs are taking place as the house was unlivable. It will be 6 months in total before we will be able to return"

"It has tipped our life's upside down, our 3 children's houses were effected too, to see that much water and devastation in our house has been horrendous and it's hasn't helped with Covid 19"

"We are concerned about the impact on resale of our home (We has planned to sell this year) as well as insurance premiums and of course the impact of future floods on our home and our lives"

"It's destroyed our lives, the difficulty with the insurance is unbelievable, 5 months on and nothing done at property, they are looking to knock down 7&8 Rhyd-Yr-Helyg and rebuild"

"Just that I think it could have been prevented and someone has messed up somewhere and we need answers, my dads last months should have been in his own home not in a Temp house"

"There was no help we was left to fight the floods ourselves with our neighbors .if wasn't for my neighbours helping me I would have been in more mess"

"The level of response for Trefforest was less than anywhere else, they had council employees cleaning the park before helping with peoples houses!!!"

"How it's turned out lives upside down. Petrified when we have bad weather. Kids asking are we going to flood again. Living in fear."

"Haven't cleaned up the roads and pavement after the flood and haven't collected the sand bags from Trehafod all over the pavement"

"We lost our pet. Our dog was downstairs. Our children are traumatised knowing she suffered and drowned. We want answers"

"It was one of the worst experiences ever which is still going on.. mentally, physically and emotionally draining."

"We took the brunt of the water because we were directly in its path we have left our home structurally unsafe"

“Just the devastation it caused to the community and the community spirit shown by everyone was superb”

“my car was written off. I am £600 out of pocket from car hire charges because it was a natural event”

“We are still in temporary accomadation that one night has kept us from our home and neighbours”

“I just hope nobody else goes through it,my wife was in tears,all of our family photos are gone.”

“I never want to experience this again abd I am scared to return to my home when it's finished”

“The lack of sympathy that was shown by the council left us for 3 days with nothing”

“I have lots to say, including being insured is irrelevant. We are not in our home.”

“It's been the worst experience ever and would never want to go through it again.”

“I live on my own and I was petrified as it was on the fourth step of my stairs. No warnings. Middle of the night. Rescued by boat the officers were brilliant!”

“Felt like we were on our own watching all our treasures going down the drain”

“It's just heart breaking and mentally put strain on our family.”

“Was not alerted quickly and not enough time to move possessions”

“Council did nothing till it was too late.”

“Not enough support no am or mp in sight”

“It's really bad and stops your life”

“I have mental health issues since the floods. Please help me.”

“If I may share my experience briefly - my business is located within Rizla House (the former Rizla factory building) in one of the units to the rear, north facing side. We look out to the substation which separates us from what is known as Power Station Hill i.e. Tonteg Road. We were therefore in the 'firing line' when the flood water came and had around 14 inches of water inside our unit which resulted in a great deal of the equipment stored there being affected and around three months of work to save the vast majority of it! I remember watching the aerial images of the river rising and seeing the path that the flood water took. I noted that the river breached its bank at the rear of the small industrial estate at the other side of Power Station Hill, known as Taf Business Centre. This breach was adjacent to the old transport cafe at the rear of the site. In the days following, I did a little recce of the area and observed that contractors had been at work in that exact area on the river bank installing perimeter fencing. Now, I cannot prove that they did anything to compromise the bank there, but it did seem at the time that there were less trees there and that the bank was perhaps a little lower compared to images found on Google Street View from a couple of years prior. Regardless, of any issues of

liability, it is clear to me that this section of the river bank needs building up in the same way as has been done further along Tonteg Road - opposite the Hutchings Vauxhall and other car dealerships. At no point did the flood water breach the built-up embankment there. Thank you once again and here's hoping that answers are found and something can be done to protect residents and businesses from such catastrophic events in future”

“While our area of Hawthorn was not actually flooded, it was a ‘close’ call. Mentally it caused myself (even while with family in NZ) and neighbours, many hours of worry watching the water ‘lap’ at the very top of the flood bank, near us!!

It still does worry me personally, as of course this could/will re-occur??I would support an Independent enquiry because -

a. Worst flooding in my living memory and I am 70 years old

b. Overall COST financially of the floods to the tax payer AND the negative impact this has on our RCT area. Seeing photos of the town centre under several feet of water.

c. The impact mentally, physically and financially to residents and businesses on the area. Again, on a negative note many businesses may be considering relocating? These businesses need to know things will not be ‘brushed under the carpet’. We want them to be convinced and confident to remain in RCT.

d. No political bias. A party majority, would likely result in actual or perceived bias!

e. Independence infers fairness, truth, facts AND no ‘bulls..t

f. ‘Scotch’ rumours replace them with facts

g. Result in recommendations which can be audited and properly action planned/supervised.

h. If needed, not only genuinely learn from any errors but also, bring people/organisations to account.”

“We are at Lewis St Pentre and we were flooded in February and high water levels in June.....

The trees were removed from the mountain in Pentre and when we had rain the brash washed into the culvert blocking it so the water overflowed into the lower streets of Pentre

We had been renovating for a year and we were moving in in 3 weeks time, then got flooded so we're unable to move in until the end of May.

We were not insured as the house was classed as empty so not able to insure an empty property

WE ARE LIVING IN FEAR OF MORE FLOODING EVERY TIME IT RAINS!!!”

RHONDDA

Additionally I would like to re-iterate the point I raised verbally during the meeting regarding the situation in Trehafod specifically. I attempt to capture them here:

1. As a councillor I was unprepared for the events and unfamiliar with the expectation on local councillors during an emergency situation in my ward. Based on this I would like to see a thorough training programme implemented.

2 Local councillors were the only people available on day 1, 2 and 3 in Trehafod to be a liaison between the population and council services. We were seen as representatives of the council by local volunteer groups and by members of the public. We were expected to know what was going on, what help was available, what the council could or could not provide. Access to this information was slow and difficult to come by, leading to frustration for myself as a councillor and frustration for local people.

3 Dealing with the anger and upset that was expressed by local people was difficult and potentially explosive. This should be considered in any future training provision

4 I feel strongly that local volunteer networks and councillors should be a key part of recovery work post emergency. This doesn't not seem to be planned for by the local resilience forum nor by RCT emergency plan with the content in these plans being far more strategic. Work is needed on a Community level to ensure there is a network of people ready to kick in with relevant training and designated tasks in such events. These volunteers could also potentially be active in monitoring local issues that are relevant to emergency situations.

5 Having one central point of contact was not sufficient for the needs of councillor and volunteers trying to help families in desperate conditions. Direct contact details of key individuals that were available to support, were known about through ad-hoc means and due to coincidence.

There is far more to share in terms of wider impact of the floods, that is relevant to all named agencies as well as agencies not currently part of a section 19 investigation, such as the local health board. This is why I support an independent enquiry.

My comments are offered in the spirit of learning and developing strong robust provision for the future. This is essential considering the climate change context. I am aware how hard everyone worked during this period and how many are still working now to deal with the aftermath of Storm Denis. It is important now that we identify what worked and what improvements can be made. I also recognising that people -officers, councillor and community volunteers worked as hard as they could during these hard times and am grateful for this.

Eleri Griffiths
Cynghorydd Ward y Rhondda Ward Councillor

Response to Storm Dennis in Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan Ward

As has been said a number of times, the flooding events of February this year through three named weather events brought unprecedented levels of destruction and damage to communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf, with Storm Dennis seeing the worst flooding episode in a generation.

Communities in the constituent parts of the County were impacted – including many across the length and breadth of RCT that had no previous experience of flooding, and this extended across the Rhondda, the Cynon Valley and Taff Ely. Unfortunately, areas in the Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan ward, which I represent, were also affected by Storm Dennis.

It is important that in reflecting on the flooding events that we recognise the scale and magnitude of the event that impacted our communities earlier this year – Storm Dennis has been classified as a 1 in 290 year weather event. Many areas in the south of the County were impacted by river flooding – and the monitoring gauge for the River Taff at Hawthorn showed that the water levels were at their highest in over forty years and a full 80cm higher than the records for the 1979 floods.

This was a truly exceptional weather event that placed a significant pressure on many communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf through widespread devastation, with almost 1,500 homes and businesses affected. I would like to record my thanks to all of the Council staff who provided support and assistance to those residents and businesses affected by flooding, both on the night and over the days, weeks and months that followed. This has, of course, been made all the more difficult by the global COVID-19 pandemic which followed shortly after.

It is my view that the response from the Council in the Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan ward on the night was prompt and effective in assisting and offering advice to the residents affected. Furthermore, my own experience and that of my residents, has been that information from the Council in the aftermath of the event was relayed in a clear and swift way, particularly concerning the financial support available to those who had suffered internal flood damage via the Community Flood Recovery Grant – Hardship Payment and also in terms of the updates of the Major Incident Recovery Board.

Councillor Maureen Webber
Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan

TAFFS WELL WARD

February's Storm Dennis reaped considerable damage to both Taff's Well and Nantgarw. All basement flats and rooms were under at least 4foot of water in Cardiff Road, Taff's Well. The local Park was under feet of water which destroyed the changing rooms, kitchen and Playgroup cloakroom, consequently emergency accommodation had to be found for the Playgroup to continue.

Nantgarw was badly hit and only 10 houses were not under water, all downstairs in these homes were destroyed. Residents were vacated from their homes via dinghies as there was no other way to access these homes.

Reports from residents were that by the time they received the warning of flooding they were already under about 4-5 feet of water with no time to remove any of their possessions to higher ground. Many of the residents were not insured and this as caused considerable stress and anxiety in trying to get their homes back to being fit to live in. Some houses are only just having work started on them and many still living in rented accommodation away from their Community.

These homes are situated on a flood plain, flooding was not caused by culverts or drainage but by the sheer amount of water from the river, residents are constantly living on their nerves and when heavy rain fall's they are terrified that they will back in the same situation as the beginning of the year.

My question is what can be put in place to help alleviate any future flooding of the flood plain as NRW have stated that to build higher river banking will only push the problem down further towards Cardiff

Residents need some reassurance that something will be put in place to help mitigate any future flooding that may take place and feel secure that they can go to bed at night without worrying of further flooding.

Councillor Jill Bonetto
Taffs Well Ward Councillor

Councillor Steve Powderhill Elected Member for Treforest Ward (Submission & Photographs)

Dear Chair, thank you for the invitation to write to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I have as you are aware had the opportunity to speak to the committee and at to Cabinet at their meeting.

I would like to put on record my thanks to officers for the assistance I had on the Saturday Afternoon and subsequent early hours on the Sunday and throughout the period following the devastating flood and also for answering my queries about what actually happened in my ward.

Saturday afternoon 15th February

Having had warnings about the heavy rainfall we had been receiving and were due to receive even more I inspected my ward and paid particular attention to areas which are prone to flooding.

One of these was Cemetery Road Glyntaff which was already showing signs of flooding. I walked through the flood and went up behind the Crematorium to a culvert which is prone to block.

It had blocked and try as I did alone I failed to clear it and had to call out Streetcare for emergency assistance. Up to our waists in water we managed to clear the culvert and stop the water which was flooding Cemetery Road. I will attach photographs.

We cleared the debris from the numerous street drains which had quickly blocked with pine needles and blocked university traffic which was still driving through the flood causing waves to potentially flood the homes.

On this occasion Streetcare had saved the street from flooding but as it is a regular occurrence it will need to be addressed, I believe it already has agreed proposals for the work to be done.

I returned home to change and shower.

That evening the warnings got more severe, I had already posted Emergency Telephone numbers on Social Media so my community had the information to hand.

I had spoken to a residents of Cardiff Rd stating my concerns and that time the answer was in forty years we haven't flooded but my concerns still stood.

I went to bed hoping that this storm would pass by but as we all know it didn't. I was contacted in the early hours by residents who were devastated the river had burst its banks flooding Egypt St, Nile St, Niagra St and Cardiff Rd. I contacted my neighbouring ward elected member who I work closely with and we discussed the implications.

As I had been contacted by Egypt St Residents I went to Cardiff Rd first to make sure they were awake and prepared but it was too late the Castle Inn Bridge had blocked with debris and trees and caused the river to flood the street, which was also subject to a problem with a culvert officers informed me at a later date. Cardiff Road was completely blocked to traffic.

I then went to Egypt St I had to walk from Broadway because of the flooding. This was absolutely devastating cars completely submerged and houses flooded completely. Emergency services were in assistance. We made sure everyone was out of the properties, some of these house were student houses and bedrooms were downstairs a very worrying fact. I contacted the Community Centre and they opened up to setup an emergency centre. Everyone who needed emergency accommodation was transported there where officers had already set up and started ringing around. Again the professionalism of officers helped us enormously.

Throughout the day and followings weeks we continued to work as a community through the emergency centre to take and distribute donations of food, clothing, cleaning products and household goods.

This was without doubt the most devastating incident of my elected member tenure but not the first time I have seen the floods because as a professional newspaper photographer I had covered them before but it was the very first time I have had to deal with them as a community leader and representative and I can assure you that it is a very heavy burden to carry and hopefully it will be the last time I have to.

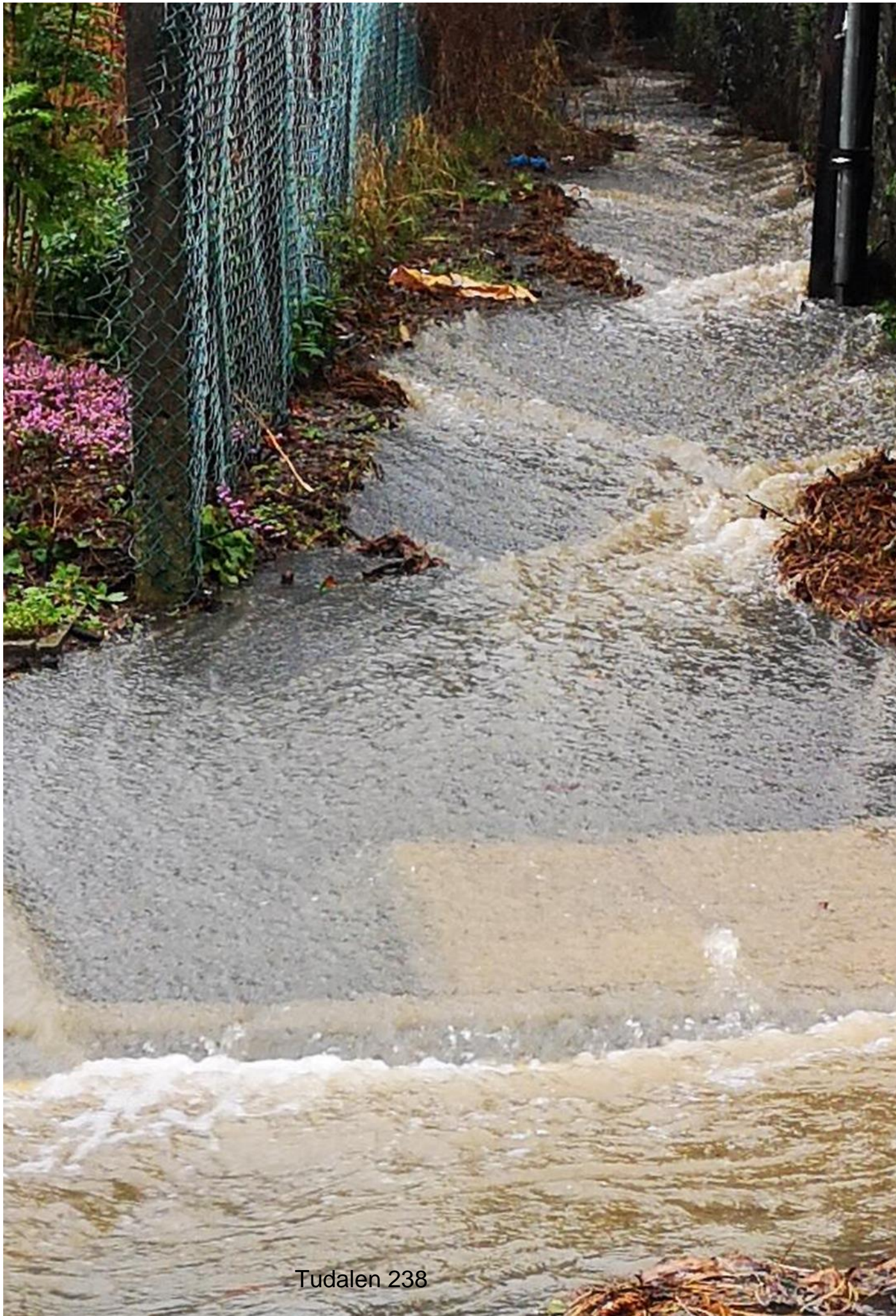
I do not need an enquiry to tell me how and why my ward suffered these floods I already know.

I need answers from NRW, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC, Dwr Cymru and Welsh Government to ensure that should anything like this "190 year occurrence" ever happen again we have done our best to protect the homes, businesses and lives.

I want the section 19 reports to enable me to be able communicate with my ward and give them them the assurance we will within our powers do everything we can to stop this happening again.

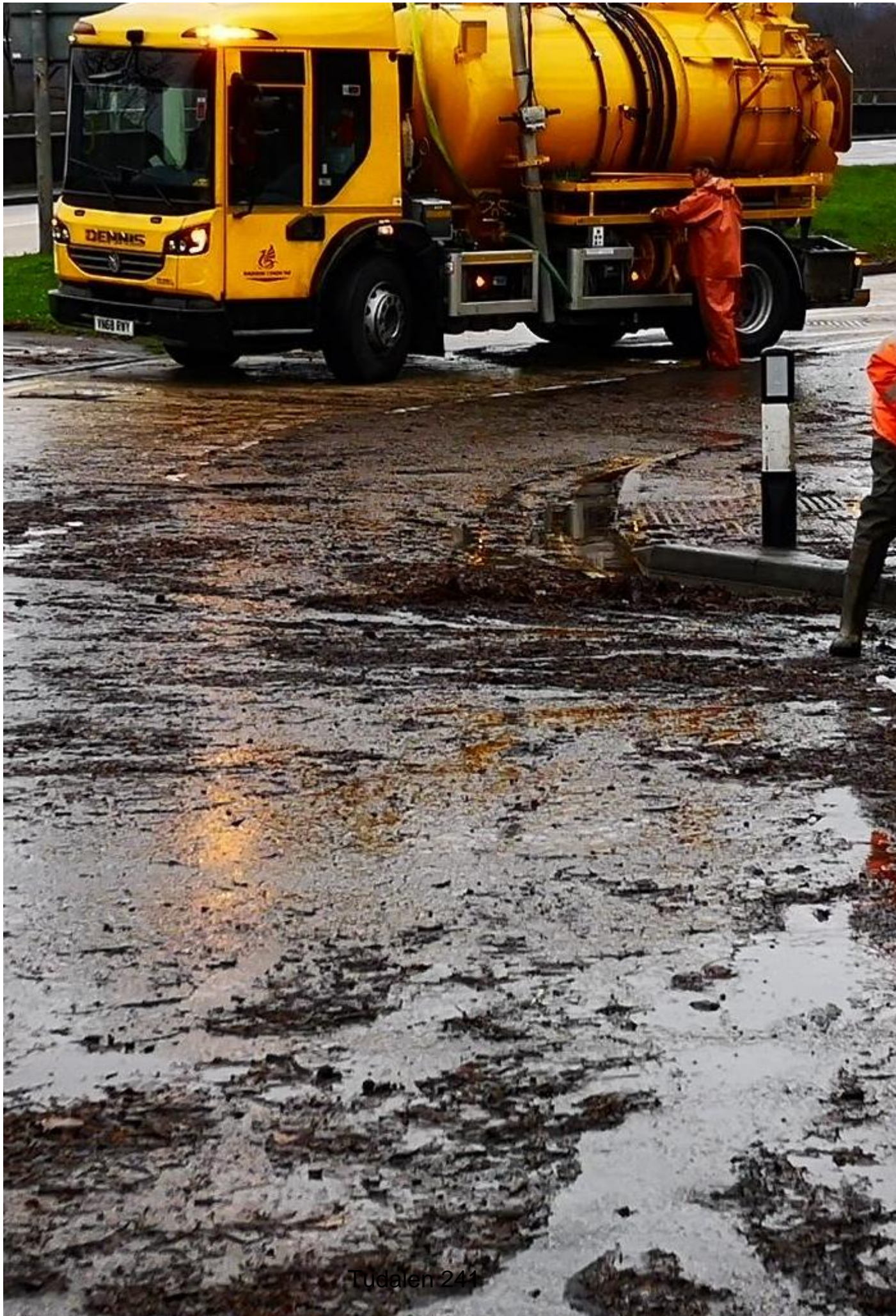
Thank You

Cllr Steve Powderhill
Treforest

















Tudalen wag

APPENDIX 3



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

25th NOVEMBER 2020

FLOODING IN RCT DURING 2020

**JOINT REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT &
FRONTLINE SERVICES AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
& COMMUNICATIONS**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with the opportunity to consider information relating to the severe flooding which took place across the County Borough during 2020 and update members on the work which has been undertaken to date by the Council in response.
- 1.2 This report seeks to appraise members of the recently published Natural Resources Wales report which provides important detail in respect of the flooding which hit Rhondda Cynon Taf following Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis earlier this year.
- 1.3 Members are reminded that this report is distinctly separate from the current work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee taking place, which seeks to scrutinise and challenge the work of the Council and partners in response to this unprecedented weather event.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the presentation received from Officers and within the body of this report.
- 2.2 Consent to receive at a future meeting of Council, the Section 19 statutory reports on conclusion of the ongoing investigations that the Council is undertaking into the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA);
- 2.3 Note that Cabinet will consider a report in December setting out a number of key actions from the lessons learned work undertaken, including the internal Officer reviews and the work of scrutiny; and
- 2.4 Notes the ongoing scrutiny work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on this subject.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In response to a previous commitment made by the Council Leader, this report seeks to provide the opportunity for all members to consider the issues associated with the severe flooding experienced during 2020.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In February 2020, some of the worst storms on record hit Rhondda Cynon Taf and the flooding that occurred following Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis affected almost one thousand five hundred homes and businesses. Further flooding hit the County Borough on the weekend of 29th February 2020 from Storm Jorge and again for a fourth time in June 2020.
- 4.2 As part of the Council meeting, members will receive information on the event preparation, an overview of the impact of the event and details of the Council's recovery response.
- 4.3 Members may wish to note that, in line with the statutory requirements, the Council is responsible for developing Local Flood Risk Management strategies for Rhondda Cynon Taf; the key legal framework is:-

A. The ***Flood and Water Management Act 2010*** (hereafter, the Act) make provisions for the management of flooding and coastal erosion in England and Wales. The Act provides powers to, and makes requirements of, the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Local Lead Flood Authorities (LLFA);

B. **Section 6 of the Act** defines the roles and responsibilities of 'Risk Management Authorities', which include all 22 Welsh local authorities (who act as LLFA). The Act also places a duty on local authorities to develop and implement Local Flood Risk Management Strategies to set out objectives for managing local flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses;

- C. **Section 19 of the Act** sets out the responsibility of a LLFA to investigate a flood event:
- (1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate—
 - (a) Which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - (b) Whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
 - (2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must—
 - (a) Publish the results of its investigation, and
 - (b) Notify any relevant risk management authorities

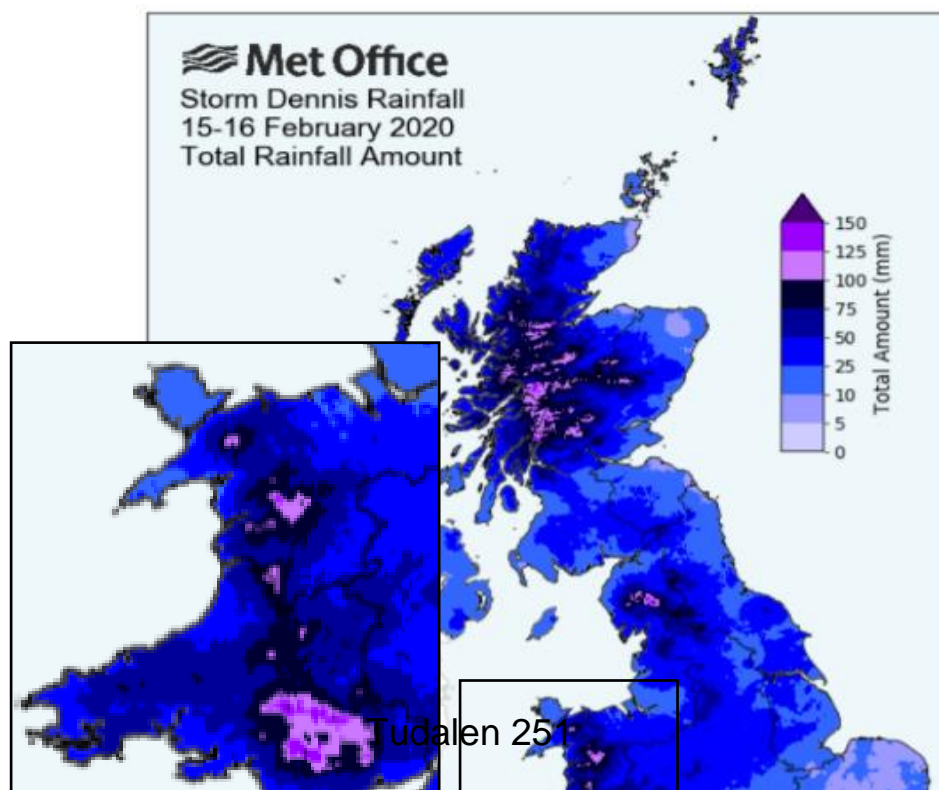
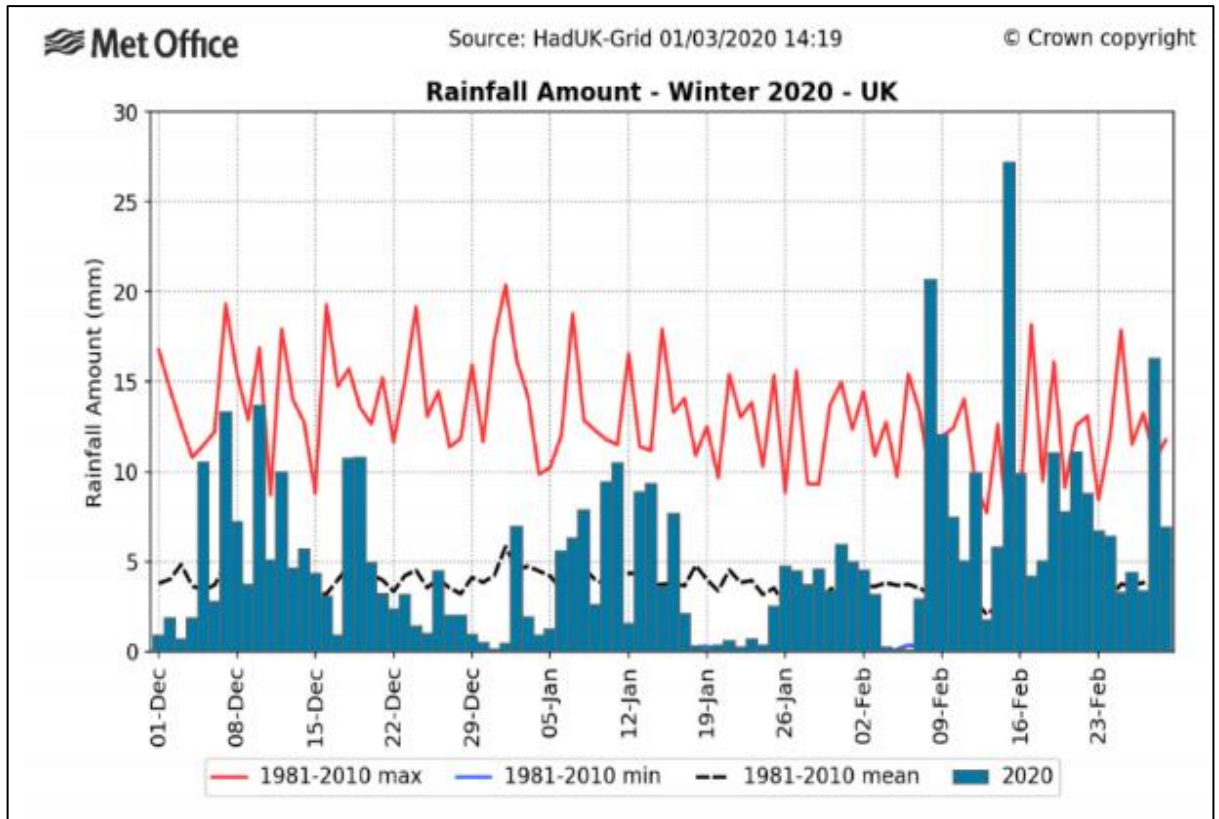
4.4 Storm Dennis was the tenth storm event to Impact the authority since the start of the winter in August 2019 and was the fourth named storm that impacted the authority during the 19-20 storm season. The Council received initial warnings related to Storm Dennis on the 11/02/2020 providing 4 days' notice of this weather and a further 5 warnings were issued by the Met Office.

Warning Level	Event	Date of issue	Time	Likelihood	Impact	Range Rainfall (mm)	Range Wind Gusts (mph)
Yellow	Wind	11/02/2020	10:34	Medium	Low	N/A	50-60
Yellow	Rain	11/02/2020	11:36	Low	Medium	100-120	N/A
Yellow	Wind	12/02/2020	10:24	Medium	Low	N/A	50-60
Amber	Rain	13/02/2020	10:57	Medium	Medium	100-120	N/A
Amber	Rain	15/02/2020	11:07	Low	High	100-120	N/A
Red	Rain	16/02/2020	06:10	High	High	100-140	N/A

- 4.5 It should be noted from the table that the forecast fluctuated from day to day, turning amber during the morning of Thursday 14th February with medium likelihood and medium impact. On the morning of Saturday 15th the likelihood dropped to low but the impact became high. The worst impacts of the storm were felt through the night of Saturday 15th February into the early hours of Sunday 16th. The red warning was issued at 06.10hrs on Sunday morning, several hours after the worst impacts of the storm had passed RCT.
- 4.6 As part of the event preparation, RCT undertook asset inspections on 300 Critical infrastructure sites. This included culvert inlets, manholes and outfalls. In preparation the Council increased the number of standby work crews and equipment with an additional 18 work gangs being co-ordinated. The Council deployed an additional 2 Drainage Sub Contractors as reactive teams with specific equipment to support the Council's response over the course of the weekend. To support residents, increased resources were deployed within the Council contact centre in preparation for high call numbers and these were further stepped up as the enormity of the event unfolded. In preparation additional sandbags were filled with approximately 500 ready for deployment,

supplies were constantly replenished but deployment was impacted by the fact that many roads were simply impassable due to deep flooding.

- 4.7 Key weather messages were communicated to residents in line with the severity of the weather warnings received.
- 4.8 Storm Dennis Rainfall Totals indicate the rainfall levels between **100 – 149mm** in parts of RCT.



- 4.9 Demonstrating the unprecedented nature of this weather event, the level of the River Taff in Pontypridd peaked at 5.2M, 0.8M more than the last record at 4.4M in 1979. This severity was mirrored across the County Borough.
- 4.10 The combined number of properties flooded during storm Dennis was 1476, comprised of 1070 residential properties and 406 commercial premises. The main causes of flooding are as follows;
Fluvial (Main River); 380 residential, 319 commercial.
Pluvial (Watercourses/culverts); 690 residential, 87 commercial.
- 4.11 Under the FWMA 2010;
NRW is the Risk Management Authority responsible for managing the flood risk for Main rivers. RCT is the Risk Management Authority responsible for managing the flood risk for Surface Water, Groundwater and Ordinary watercourses. Other parties also have a role as risk authorities, i.e. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water will manage the risk associated with their apparatus and the Highway Authority (RCTCBC) is risk manager for highway related flooding.
- 4.12 It can be seen from the data that the majority of commercial flooding emanated from river flooding; predominantly Pontypridd town centre and Treforest Estate, whereas the predominant source of residential flooding was from ordinary watercourses and culverts, which was widespread.
- 4.13 As LLFA, the Council is carrying out 28 flood investigations, which include liaison with residents and businesses affected by internal flooding to understand the detail of the causation factors. Evidence from local members via the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also be considered and these investigations will inform the statutory S19 Reports which will cover 19 significant areas of flooding across the county borough, including cases of fluvial flooding as well as pluvial.
- 4.14 Members are also directed towards the discussions of [Major Incident Recovery Board](#) established by the Leader of the Council in February 2020, as part of his scheme of delegation, which sought to ensure an Authority-wide approach in the delivery of services and the prioritisation of resources following the major weather incident declared by South Wales Police.
- 4.15 In response to the Major Incident and in addition to the direct physical response to dealing with the flooding and its impact on infrastructure, homes and business premises, the following proactive actions were initiated:
- The Council supported temporary accommodation for almost 40 households (90 people, including children) the majority of those households that remain self-financed via their Insurance Companies to find alternative/ temporary accommodation;
 - Proactive visits were undertaken by Environmental Health Officers to food and other businesses to give positive sign off to re-open;
 - 4 Community Rest Centres were established;

- 150 + Volunteers worked alongside the authority;
 - 4 Donation and Distribution Centres established;
 - 910 Households were provided Food Parcels;
 - The Council funded Hardship Payments were established, which provided a total of £0.660M of financial support to residents and businesses, with the Council also administering a Welsh Government funded Flood Relief Scheme that provided £0.565M of financial support to residents;
 - White Goods H&S Testing established to distribute donations;
 - Provided free skips to flood hit residents to dispose of storm damaged household goods and furniture;
 - Recovered scores of abandoned and flood hit vehicles left obstructing highways after storm waters abated;
 - Removed thousands of tons of debris and silt from highways, parks and public spaces.
- 4.16 Since February the Council has undertaken significant surveying activities to support the delivery of an Accelerated Capital Programme with projects valued at £6.7m. The Council has also undertaken critical repairs to several Ordinary watercourse networks
- 4.17 The exceptional storm events created unprecedented damage to infrastructure across RCT. Damage consisted of landslips, scouring of foundations to bridge structures, damage to bridge structures from debris impact, scouring and collapse of retaining / river training walls, blocked and collapsed culverts, blocked surface water inlet and outlet structures and deterioration of highways, especially country lanes.
- 4.18 Since this period and despite the coronavirus pandemic, staff, consultants and contractors have been working to repair and rectify damage to all infrastructure and assets.
- 4.19 Over 380 highway structure assets have been inspected and assessed after the storms with over 160 of these structures requiring repairs. Some have been relatively minor repairs that have been completed e.g. Sion Street, Pontypridd, some works are being undertaken on site, some works involve significant design works and are scheduled to be undertaken over the next two years. The larger bridge structures are currently under discussions / designs with various bodies. Examples of these larger structures include Ynysyngharad Park footbridge which commenced on site in October 2020, White Bridge (Berw Rd) and Castle Inn are under discussions with Cadw and Welsh Government.
- 4.20 Numerous landslides occurred with Tylortsown Tip making the national news in February where over 30,000 cubic metres of the hillside slid into the river valley. Phase 1, i.e. the installation of the temporary surface water system has been completed with Phase 2 and 3 currently on site i.e. the removal of the material from the river valley and the reinstatement of the river to its pre-landslip line and level. Phase 4 which will be for the future remediation of the hillside is currently scheduled to commence in 2021. Over £0.5M of works have also commenced on the other tips owned by the Council to repair storm damage, with a number

already being completed and the remainder scheduled for completion later this year subject to weather.

- 4.21 A number of significant culverts and surface water drainage systems have been cleared with over a 1000 tonnes of rubble removed and there is ongoing surveying and cleaning of culverts with over 50km already covered. Damaged surface water inlet / outlet structures are being repaired on a prioritised basis and these include Pentre which saw significant flooding. Localised repairs and improvements to the surface water drainage system have been undertaken and more strategic flood prevention schemes are being developed for future implementation in high risk areas. An accelerated programme of 47 flood alleviation schemes will be undertaken this year at a cost of around £6.7M. This compares with historic annual spend of the order of £0.8M. A significant pipeline of flood alleviation work is being developed and promoted for WG funding in subsequent years including activity related to Property Level Flood Resilience.
- 4.22 It should be noted that with over 700km of culverted watercourses in RCT, the scale of the challenge is enormous and much of the culverting is under private houses and through private land where the owners have riparian responsibilities to maintain the culverts within their land ownership. In parallel and despite the Covid Emergency a huge programme of highways investment and refurbishment is taking place which includes significant lengths of rural roads which were badly affected by the storms.

5. COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The increasing threat of climate change means that extreme weather events are likely to happen more frequently and there will be an increasing need for local authorities and the public to adapt and prepare for these conditions.
- 5.2 This report seeks to ensure the engagement of all members in this challenge.
- 5.3 As part of the Council presentation members will receive information which sets out the following:-
- Storm Dennis Context
 - Event Preparation
 - The Impact of the Event
 - The Council's Response and Recovery
 - Emerging themes and areas for future development
- 5.4 Members will also receive a summary on the work of the Council to respond to these matters and the progress to date in key areas.

6. SCRUTINY PROCESS AND THE IMMEDIATE EMERGING THEMES

- 6.1 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee is currently scrutinising the Council's response to the severe flooding experienced during 2020 and at its meeting of the [14th October 2020](#) received a report and presentation from Council Officers on the scale of this weather event, the service and community response, and lessons learned to-date.
- 6.2 This meeting also received a presentation from Natural Resources Wales, which outlined the unprecedented scale of Storm Dennis, Storm Ciara and the wet winter weather during 2019/20 which resulted in the unprecedented levels of flooding across a series of locations in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Members also received evidence on the response of the organisation in these challenging circumstances and emerging themes, of the then yet-to-be-published NRW report into these events. The meeting can be viewed at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/Virtualmeetingsduringsocialdistancing.aspx>
- 6.3 Following discussion Scrutiny resolved to hold a scrutiny inquiry session on the 9th November 2020 to bring together the main responder agencies, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water with local councillors from affected areas, to receive more in depth evidence and information to support this scrutiny process.
- 6.4 The scrutiny enquiry session sought to deliver upon a commitment made by the Leader of the Council to facilitate the engage of local members in the 'lessons learned' work which the Council is already taking forward, but also as part of the development of future plans and severe weather response arrangements.
- 6.5 In addition to receiving oral evidence from 18 members, who were each allocated five minutes to present their experiences and observations, the Scrutiny Inquiry session facilitated presentations from Rhondda Cynon Taf Officers, Natural Resources Wales and Dwr Cymru/ Welsh Water who were present to respond to queries raised by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in its formal role. The session lasted for three hours and twenty minutes and provided a strong evidence base for the scrutiny committee to continue its work.
- 6.6 Whilst the Scrutiny review is ongoing the common themes to have emerged from the inquiry session are as follows:-
- Overall there was much praise for the response to the February flooding from emergency services, community volunteers, neighbours and Council staff;
 - The views of members highlighted a number of areas where further work is needed and improvements could be made including communication with Elected Members and facilitating a better understanding of the Council emergency response procedures.

- The process has already identified the development of more precise forecasting by NRW which would enable early warning procedures to be delivered and to give communities time to respond as a key ask. (with the added caveat that there is a need to be as realistic as possible to identify major events);
 - Members acknowledged that Storm Dennis was significant and its impact felt county wide. It was declared a major weather incident by South Wales Police and under these circumstances it was recognised that flooding cannot always be prevented. However, Members did feel that the risk can be managed and actions can be taken to minimise the harm caused by flooding as far as possible.
 - The process has already identified the importance of training for Elected Members, particularly newly Elected Members, to identify roles and responsibilities in the case of flooding emergencies in addition to being able to signpost residents.
- 6.7 The evidence provided by each ward member will be collated and, in conjunction with any subsequent written correspondence, will be used to inform the conclusions and recommendations of the scrutiny review.
- 6.8 Members are reminded that the Council presentation is a distinct element of business, which seeks to ensure that all members are provided with the same opportunities as the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be briefed upon the operational response of the Council and the scale of this major weather event.
- 6.9 The Scrutiny committee will consider the content of submissions and information received from partners and local members through the evidence session at its next meeting, before determining independent comments or recommendations for considerations by Cabinet.
- 6.10 Scrutiny will also be provided with the opportunity to consider Section 19 statutory reports on conclusion of the ongoing investigations that the Council is undertaking into the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

7. REVIEW BY THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM REQUESTED BY CABINET

- 7.1 Earlier this year the Leader of the Council requested the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team to undertake an internal review and evaluation of the Council's response to major flooding.
- 7.2 This review is considering the planning activity undertaken to prepare for adverse weather warning, the activity that went on during the night in response to the arising emergency; and the immediate response to the emergency.

- 7.3 The review is also considering the response in the days and weeks following and the longer term response over the last nine months to ascertain and reflect what the Council did well and what could we have been done differently that would have further improved our planning or the response of the Council.
- 7.4 This review is planned to be reported to Cabinet before the end of this calendar year. Cabinet will consider this review alongside the comments of the scrutiny process, in particular the views of the local members, which were facilitated through the scrutiny enquiry session. Before agreeing specific actions, Cabinet will consider the content of both the internal review and the scrutiny processes.
- 7.5 At a later date Cabinet will also consider the Section 19 statutory reports on conclusion of the ongoing investigations that the Council is undertaking into the February Floods as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

8. NATURAL RESOURCES WALES RESPONSE

- 8.1 As a result of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 certain changes have been made to the NRW role and remit. It now has new operational responsibilities in relation to coastal erosion and a wider oversight role for all flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales.
- 8.2 This new allocation of responsibilities is also consistent with Natural Resources Wales' role; in relation to the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 which allocates specific responsibility for conducting assessments in relation to mapping and planning the risks of flooding from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs to Natural Resources Wales, as well as providing guidance to Local Authorities on these matters for flooding from other sources.
- 8.3 Independent of the Council's scrutiny process and Section 19 reporting duties, NRW has produced its own overarching flood summary report which takes in a factual report, a flood review, a recovery report and land estate review ; these reports can be viewed on the NRW website; <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/news-and-events/statements/our-response-to-storm-ciara-and-storm-dennis/?lang=en>
- 8.4 There are a number of salient points related to RCTCBC which are worthy of note;
- The Data Summary paper confirms the exceptional nature of the Storm events coming on the back of a very wet winter and giving rise to record rainfall and river levels during the wettest February since records began in 1862. Storm Dennis is recorded as having delivered 72% of the monthly rainfall in 24 hours at its rain gauge between the Cynon and Rhondda Fach catchments. The River Taf at Pontypridd recorded river levels at 78cm higher than the previous records during the floods of 1979 with a volume of water equivalent to an Olympic sized swimming pool flowing past every 3 seconds.

- Record levels of Flood Warnings were issued by NRW across Wales during February and 3130 properties were flooded across Wales; approximately half of which were in RCT.
- NRW asserts that their river flood protection measures did not fail but acknowledges that they were overwhelmed by the exceptional volume of water.
- They note increasing levels of risk around climate change with their defences established to deal with 1 in 100 year storms and the likelihood that exceedance events will become more frequent.
- They also highlight that detailed consideration is needed related to how society and government deals with climate change and asserts that building flood walls higher is not the answer.
- NRW has published a paper titled; Natural Resources Wales Land Estate Management Review and this has particular implications for Pentre and Mountain Ash where there is a public perception that elements of the flooding are attributable to deforestation and leaving tree debris known as brash on the hillside.
- This paper, which involves investigation and independent reviews of the land management activities concludes that the general practices were accorded with best practice, but highlighting 10 key recommendations and actions for changing their current approach.
- The review states;

“As part of the land management review, we have also looked at the management of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate land above Pentre in Rhondda Cynon Taff to determine any contribution land operations may have had on flood impacts in this area. This also informed our immediate recovery work.

The review found that our operations at the site above the village were in keeping with standards of good forestry practice and, that these operations were not likely to have been the primary cause of the flooding in Pentre.

We want to assure the community that we will continue to work with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to understand the causes of the flooding in Pentre in February and what can be done to help protect at-risk communities in the future. We will continue our engagement with residents and business owners as these investigations progress.”

- NRW identifies that their defences protected 19,000 properties from flooding (including 1,000 within RCT) with the number of flooded

premises being far lower overall than during the storms of 1979. That said, they identify areas where lessons can be learned related to flood warnings, out of hours capacity, more holistic organisational response, actions in the lead up to a response and recovery, adapting land management approach to help reduce the risk of flooding

8.5 The NRW reports are not statutory reports but they represent a significant body of work that has been undertaken by one of the main Flood Risk Management Authorities operating in RCT. As the body responsible for managing the government estate in RCT they have responsibility for around 30% of the total land mass of the entire county borough.

8.6 The Council as LLFA will consider the content of these reports alongside its own investigations in developing the statutory S19 Reports. It should also be stated and acknowledged that a partnership approach has been developed between the Council and both NRW and DCWW in establishing proactive and complementary responses to imminent flood risks and in working in partnership to develop strategies to reduce the risk of future flooding.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

9.1 The process of engagement with key partners and local members will continue to steer the Council's consideration and methodology going forward.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Equality and diversity implications are to be considered as part of the Scrutiny review and subsequent recommendations to the Council's S19 report.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of any subsequent recommendations made for winter weather arrangements going forward

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

13. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

13.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act asks public bodies to work better with people, communities and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle. The Council's approach to the implementation of the Act agreed by Cabinet is to make sure that its requirements are embedded into the everyday business.

13.2 Engagement with Stakeholders will inform the Scrutiny review will support the Working Group apply the Sustainable Development principle of the Act through the five ways of working, namely, Integration, Collaboration, Long term thinking, Involvement and Prevention and maximise the contribution to the 7 national Well-being goals.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 This report demonstrates the progress undertaken by the Council to evaluate the response to these unprecedented weathers, to inform the statutory reporting requirements of the Council and provide a strong evidence base to for the Council to reflect upon what it did well and what can be done differently to further improve planning and the future response of the Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

25th NOVEMBER 2020

**JOINT REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT &
FRONTLINE SERVICES AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
& COMMUNICATIONS**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



Contents

Storm Dennis Context

Event Preparation

Impact of the Event

Response and Recovery

Storm Dennis - Context

Storm Dennis was the **10th Storm Event** to Impact the authority since August 2019.

Storm Dennis was the **4th Named storm** that impacted the authority during the 19-20 storm season.

Initial Warnings related to storm Dennis were received on the 11/02/2020 **4 Days Notice**

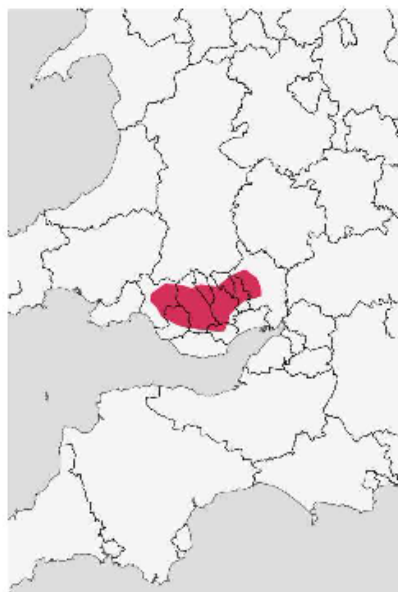
A further **5 warnings** were issued gradually increasing in Likelihood and Impact

Tudalen 264

Warning Level	Event	Date of issue	Time	Likelihood	Impact	Range Rainfall (mm)	Range Wind Gusts (mph)
Yellow	Wind	11/02/2020	10:34	Medium	Low	N/A	50-60
Yellow	Rain	11/02/2020	11:36	Low	Medium	100-120	N/A
Yellow	Wind	12/02/2020	10:24	Medium	Low	N/A	50-60
Amber	Rain	13/02/2020	10:57	Medium	Medium	100-120	N/A
Amber	Rain	15/02/2020	11:07	Low	High	100-120	N/A
Red	Rain	16/02/2020	06:10	High	High	100-140	N/A

Red warning
Rain

Between
06:10 Sun 16 Feb 2020 and
11:00 Sun 16 Feb 2020



Storm Dennis is expected to bring further heavy rain for a time on Sunday morning, increasing the likelihood of high impacts.

What to expect

- Danger to life from fast flowing or deep floodwater
- Extensive flooding to homes and businesses is likely
- Collapsed or damaged buildings or bridges
- Road closures and bus and train service delays and cancellations
- Dangerous driving conditions because of spray and flooded roads
- Loss of power and other essential services, such as gas, water, mobile phone service
- Communities could be completely cut off by floodwater, perhaps for several days

Further details

Prolonged, heavy rain will continue until mid-morning, easing slowly into the middle of the day. This rain will bring event totals to between 100 and 140mm over higher ground in south Wales.



Issued at 06:10 Sun 16 Feb, 2020
 For enquiries regarding this warning please contact the Met Office Weather Desk
 Phone: 0370 900 0100 E-mail: enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk
 Visit: www.metoffice.gov.uk/premium/hazardmanager

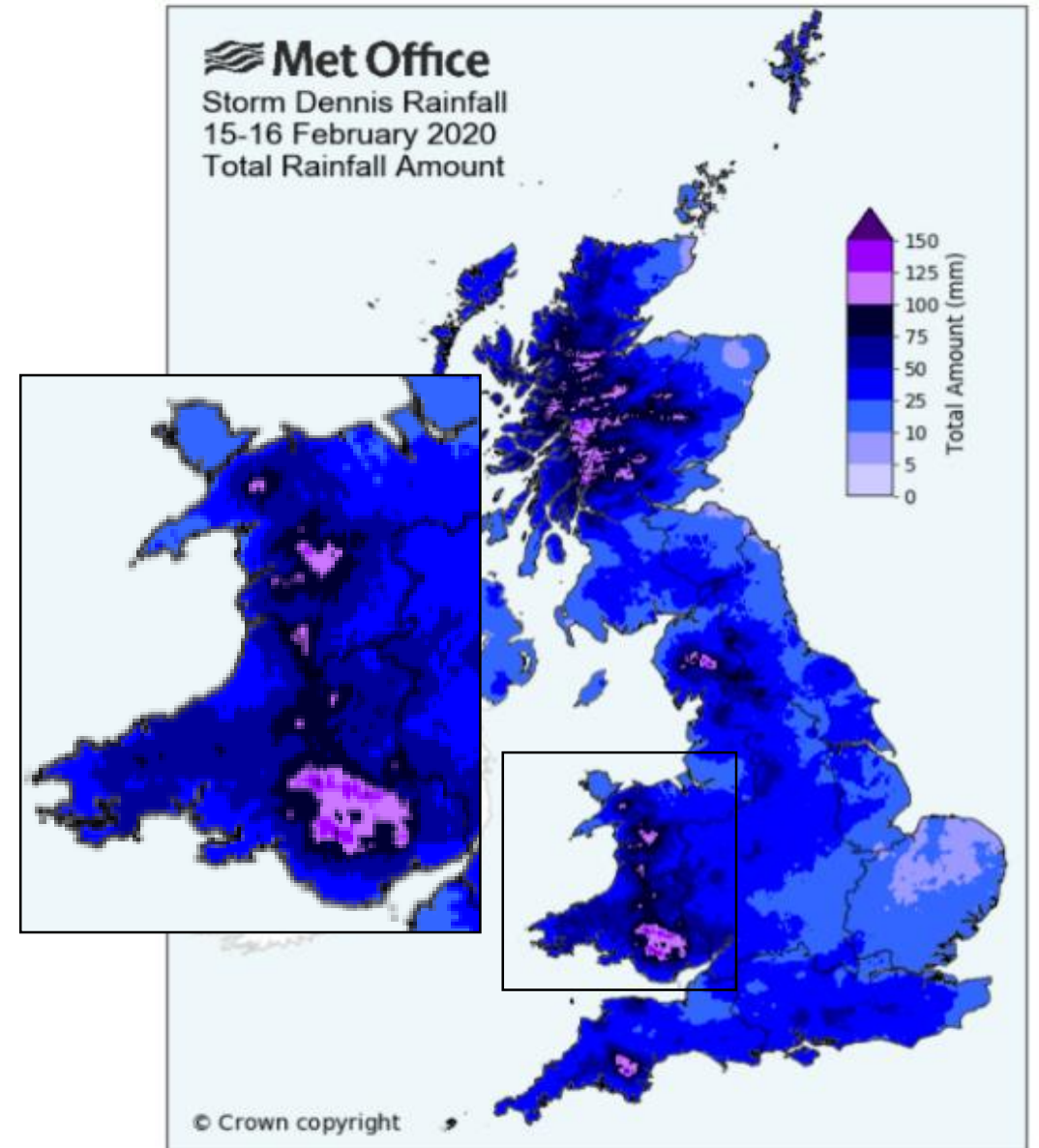
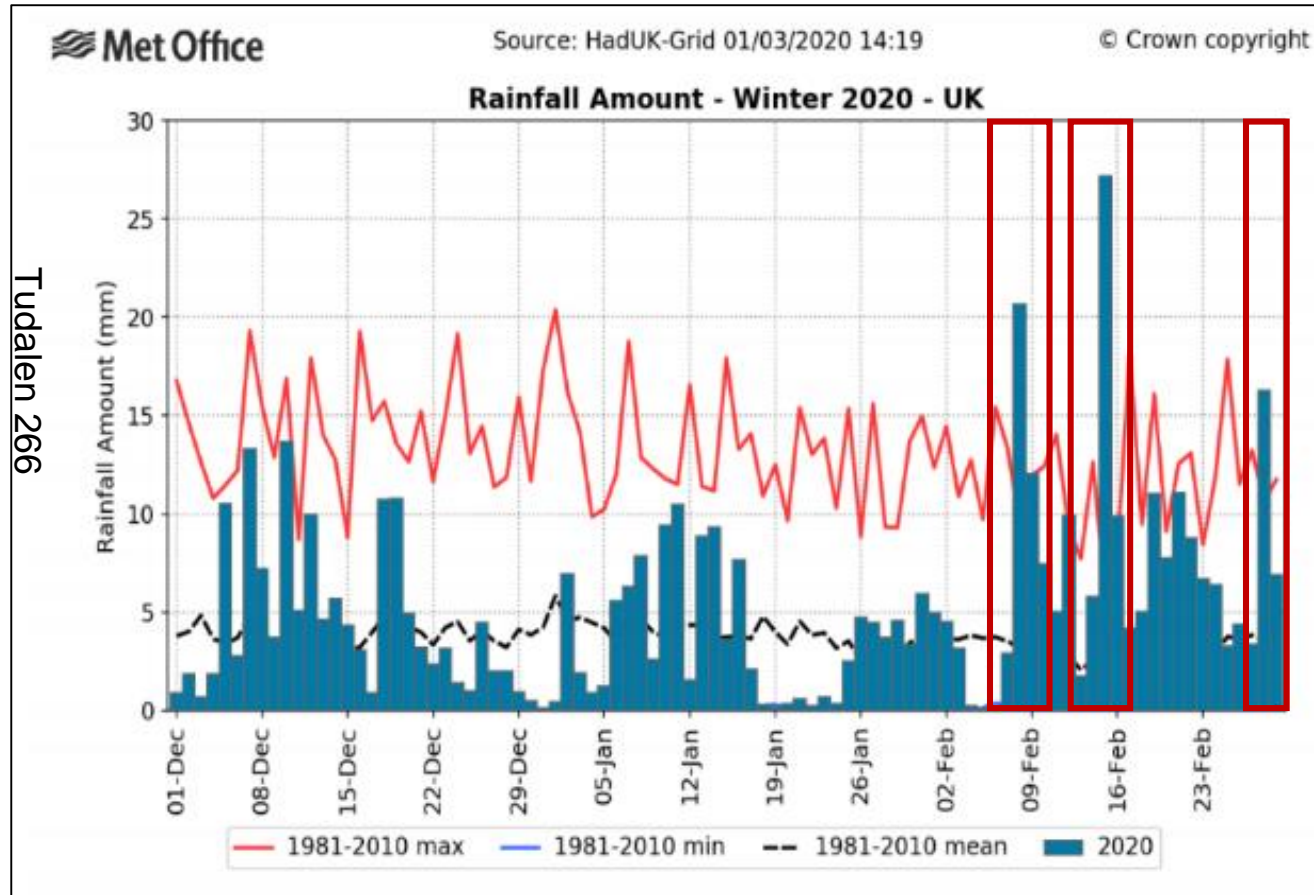
Event Preparation

- RCT undertook asset inspections on **300 Critical infrastructure** i.e. culvert inlets, Manholes and Outfalls
- RCT increased the number of standby work crews and equipment – **18 additional work gangs**
- RCT deployed **2 Drainage Sub Contractors** as reactive team's with specific equipment to support the councils response
- RCT further **increased the resources** available within the Council contact centre in preparation for high call numbers.
- Additional **sandbags** were filled approximately **500** ready for deployment



February Storm Events

Tudalen 266



Storm Dennis Rainfall Totals indicate the rainfall levels between 100 – 149mm in parts of RCT

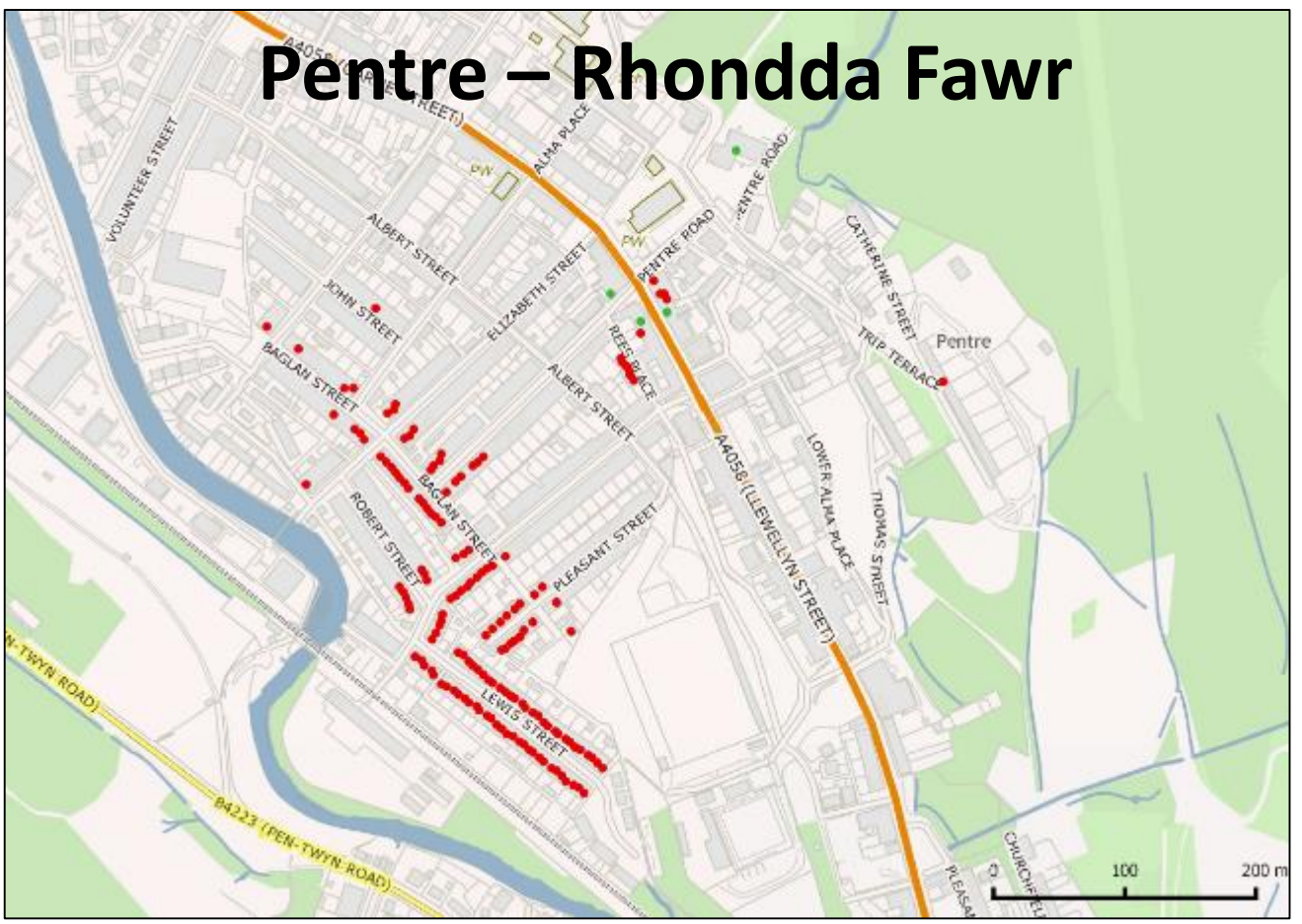
Pontypridd Town Centre



Treforest Industrial Estate



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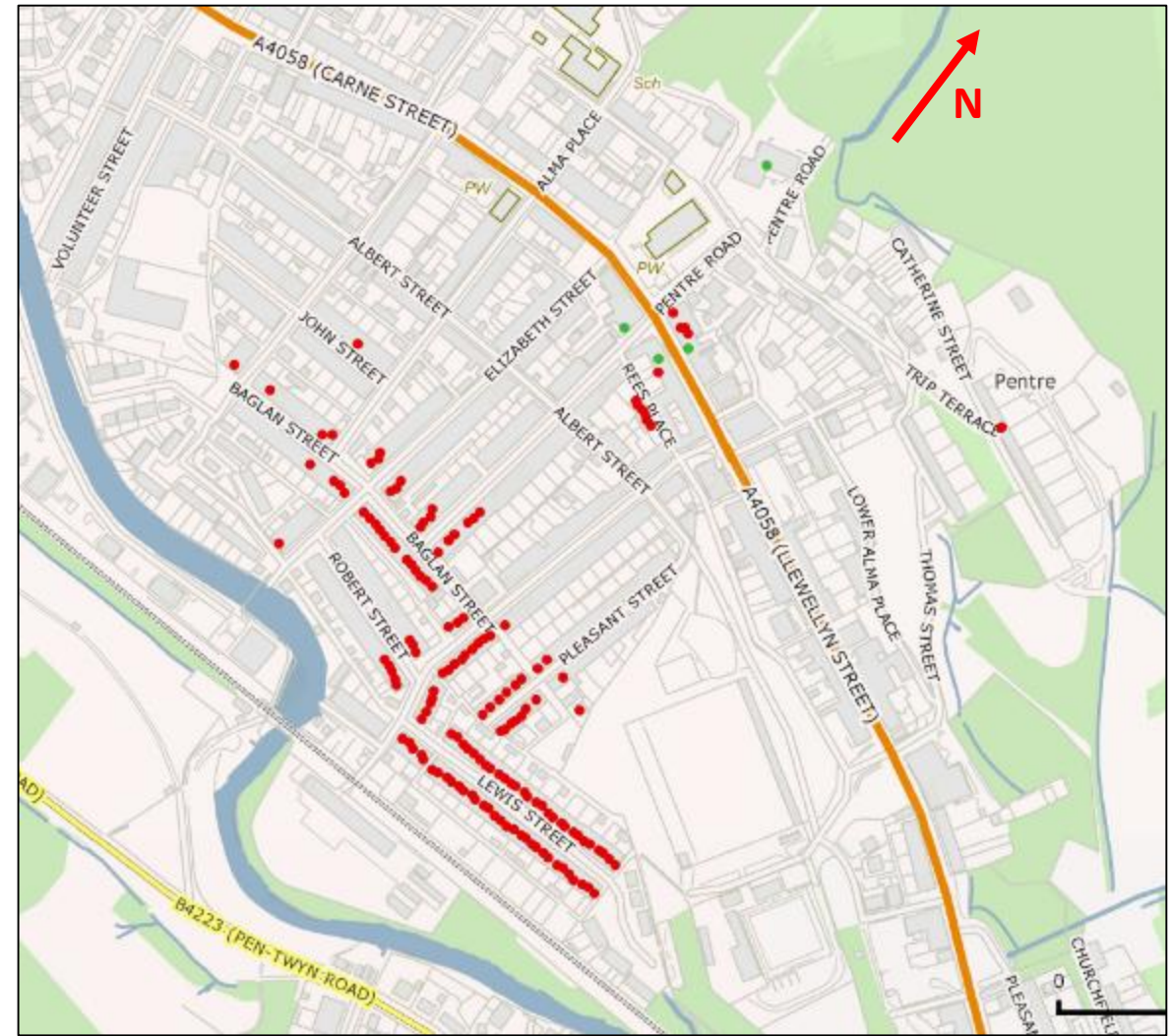


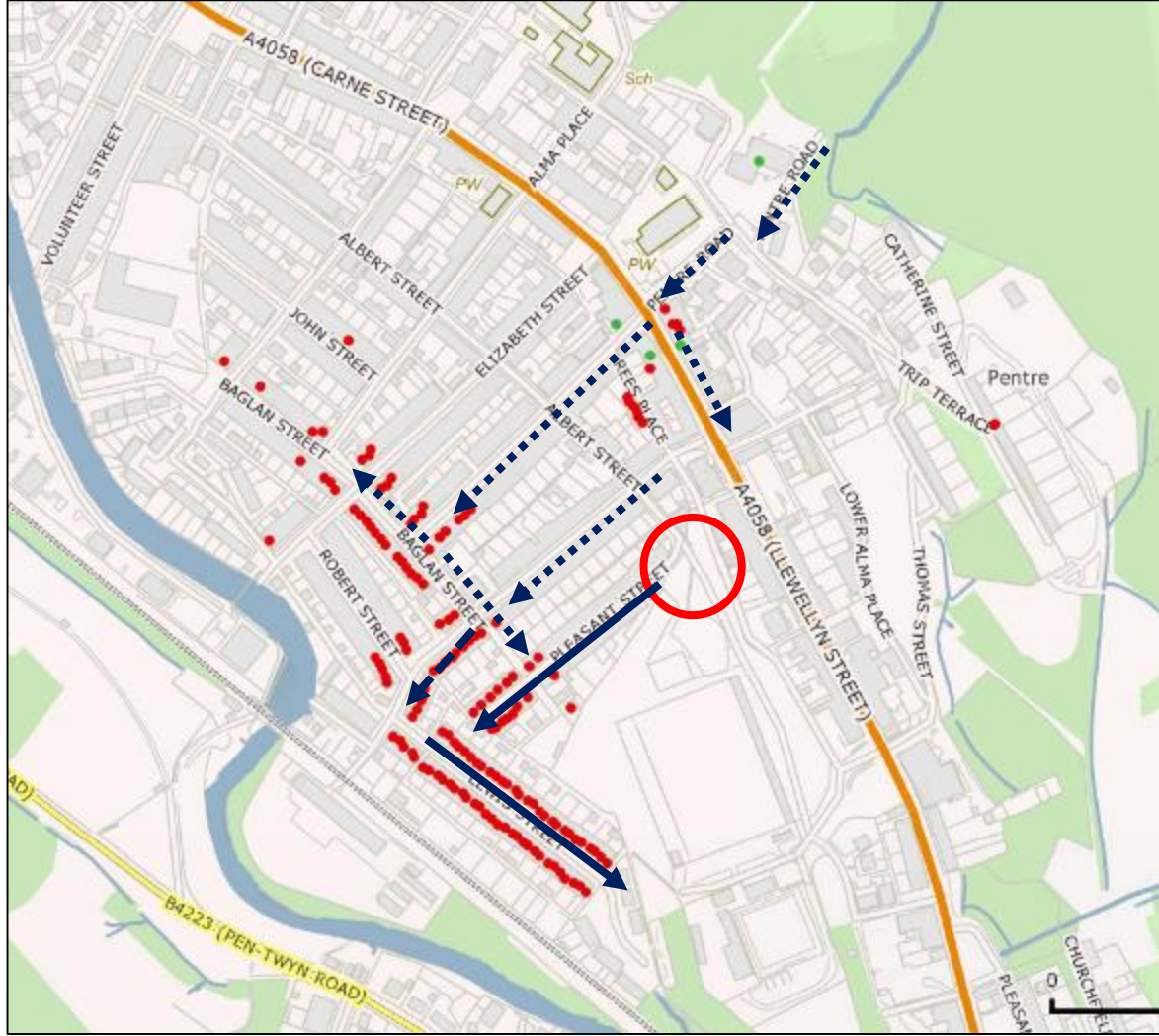
Item Type	Answer
Residential Properties	159
Commercial Properties	10
Primary Source	Pluvial (Ordinary Watercourse)



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Pentre Upper Catchment





Emergency Response

- RCT's resources at various centers responded to 1030 Reports of flooding
- Significant Volunteer worked alongside the authority some 150k support was provided by Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff Council, Distribution Centres established
- 910 Households were provided 5 Additional teams of Sub contractor with heavy plant i.e. Recycler and Camera Team
- Hardship Payments were established
- White Goods H&S Testing established to distribute donations

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Short Term
0 - 3 Months

Medium Term
3 - 12 Months

Long Term
12+ Months



Emergency Repairs

- Removed approximately **400 Tonnes of Debris** from ordinary watercourses
- Inspected approximately **19km** of Ordinary watercourse infrastructure
- Repaired 10 collapses within Ordinary watercourses

Over pumping deployment

- Deployed around 8 High capacity Pump units within key locations
- Requested the NRW deploy 2 additional pumps to the Pentre community

Asset Inspections & Critical Defect Repairs

- Removed approximately **600 Tonnes of Debris** (Totalling 1000 tonnes) from ordinary watercourses
- Surveying approximately **30km** (Totalling 50km) of ordinary watercourse infrastructure
- Delivery of an Accelerated Capital Program covering **47 FAS Projects** Valued at **£6.7m**
- Undertaking critical repairs to several works

Tudalen 274



Short Term
0 - 3 Months

Medium Term
3 - 12 Months

Long Term
12+ Months



Winter 2020-21 Preparation Flood Investigation Areas & Section 19 Investigations

28 Investigation areas where identified through a

- Stockpiling Sandbags and Flood Sax to support winter responses
 - No of Receptors Internally Flooded
- Advanced deployment of a Number of Pump units within High risk locations
 - Geographical location i.e. Catchment interactions
- Updated Pre event inspection Programs
 - Existing Study Areas

Approximately 19 Invest
publication of a Section



Approximately 63
not located

the

Internal
area

Lessons Learnt from National Mapping & Plans to Actual

Long Term
12+ Months

- FRAW Mapping

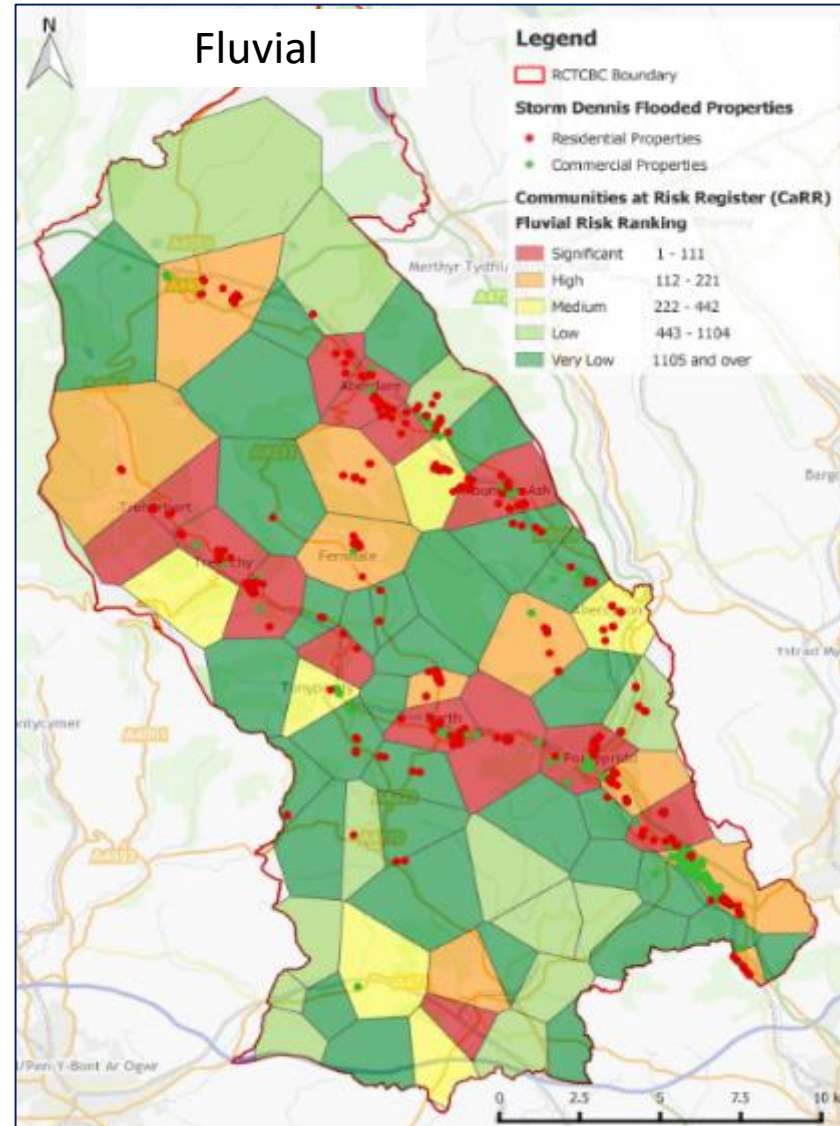
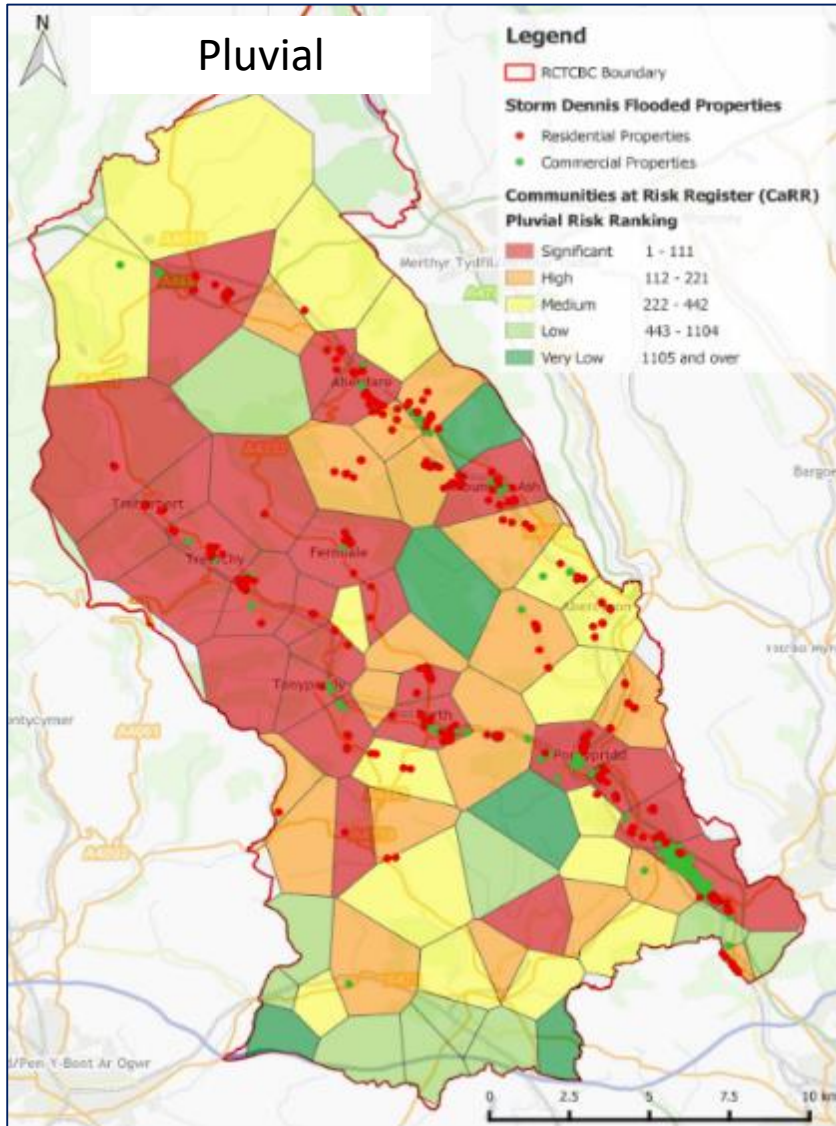
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Lessons Learnt from National Mapping & Plans to Actual

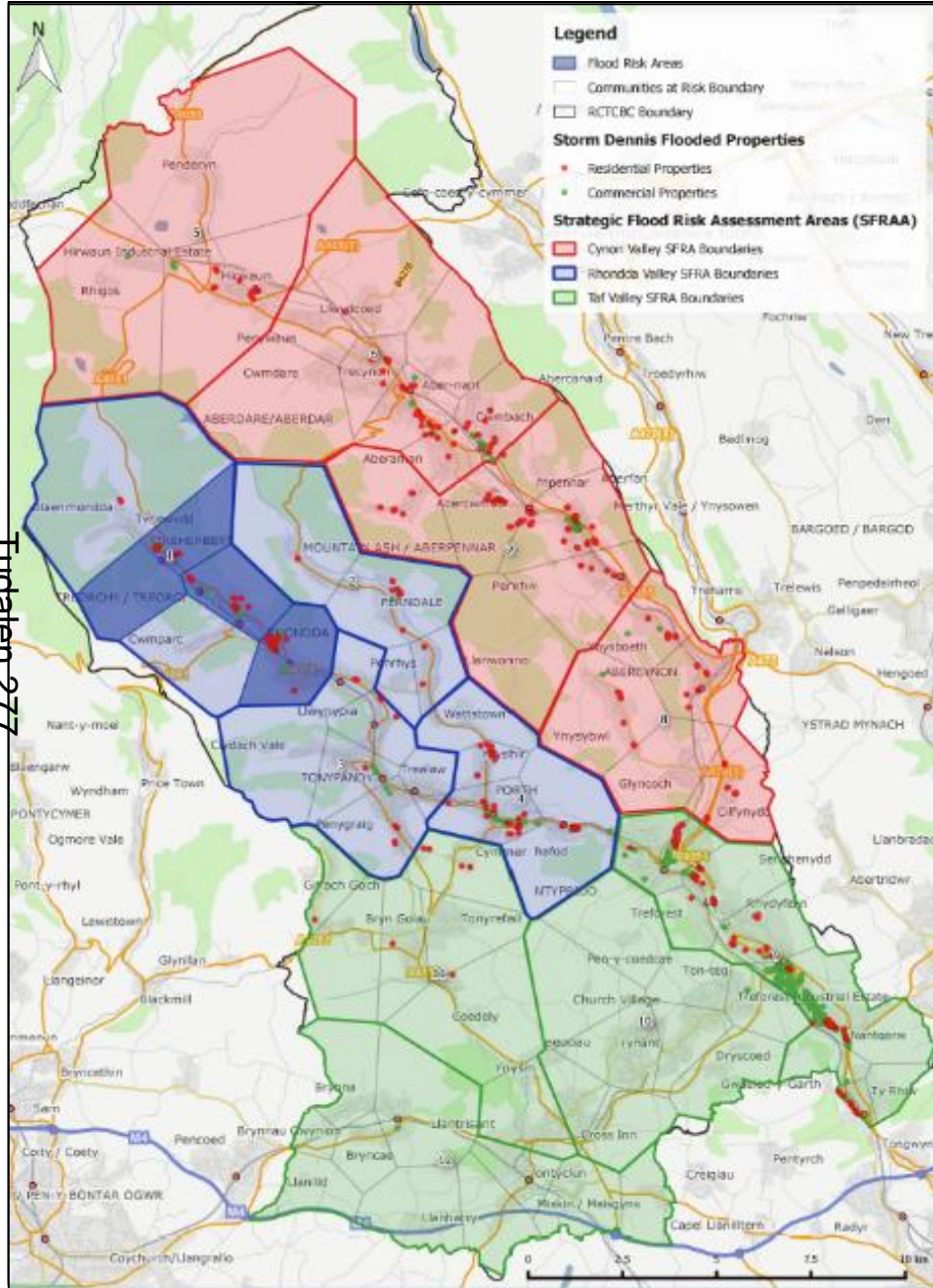
- Communities at Risk Register (CaRR)

Long Term
12+ Months



Development of Strategic Flood Risk Management in RCTCBC

Long Term
12+ Months



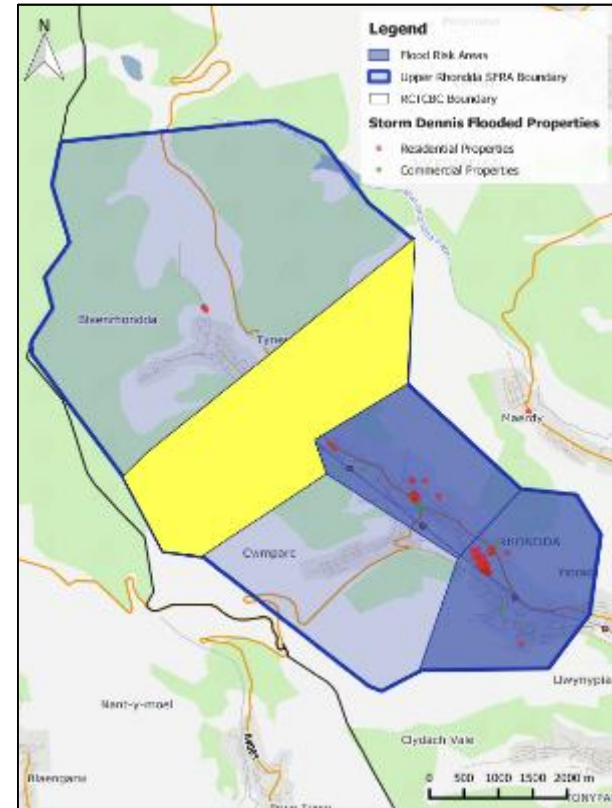
12 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Areas (SFRAAs)

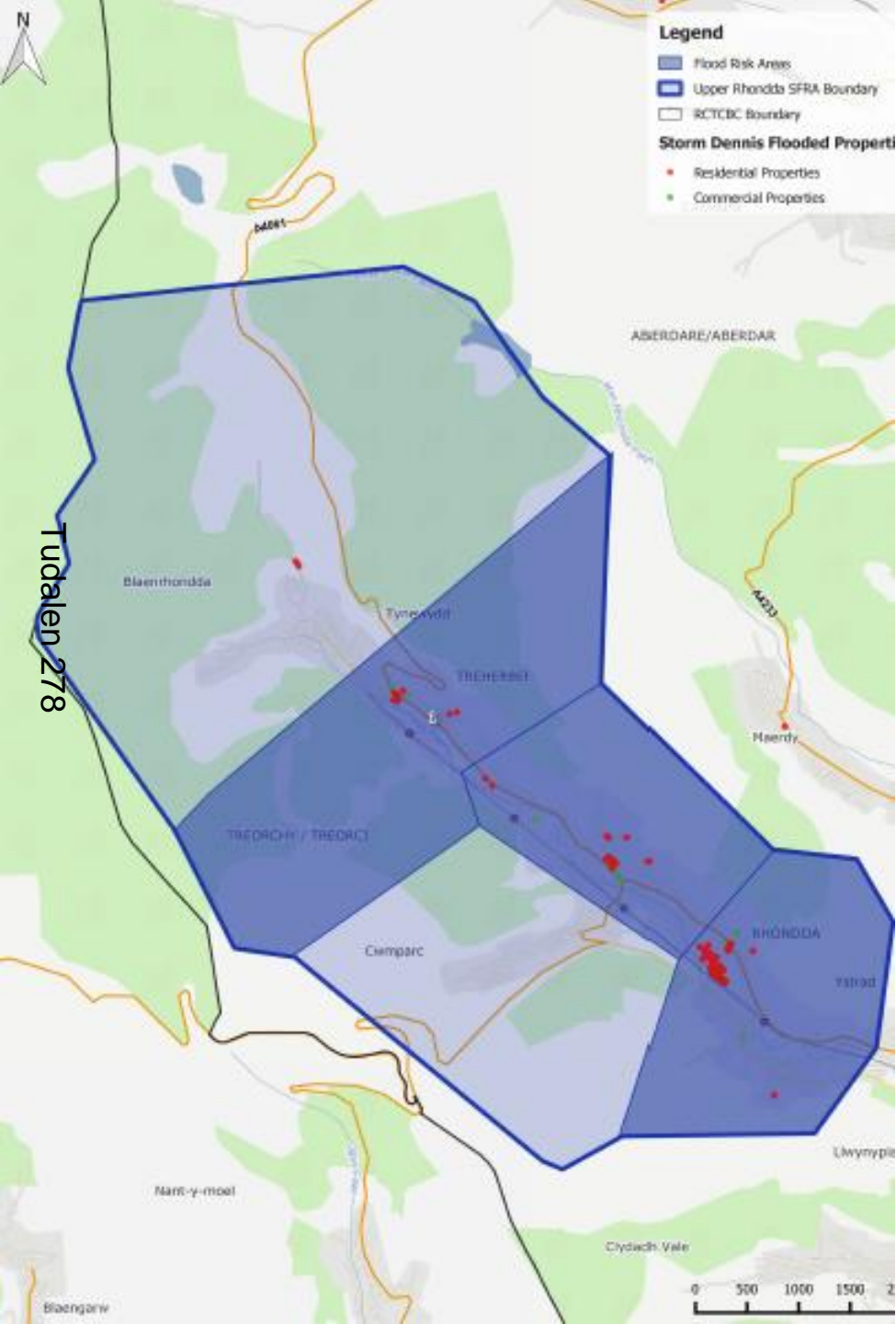
Approximately 30% of RCTCBC land cover is owned by NRW Forestry

Upper Rhondda Strategic Flood Risk Assessment currently being developed

3 Flood Risk Areas as identified within the PFRA lies within the Upper Rhondda

- Rhondda 1
- Treorchy 3
- Treherbert 6





Pilot Study: Suitability of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) in the Upper Rhondda Valley

The outcomes of this pilot study include;

1. Development of a high-level understanding of the **nature and severity** of flooding within the study area
2. Undertake a high-level assessment of the key areas known to have been affected during both **storm Dennis and the June thunderstorms**
3. Produce a concise report setting out the findings of the investigation (as per item 1 & 2) and the likely measures which would be appropriate given the **nature of flooding, type of property impacts and the potential costs** in delivering PFR.
4. The report will provide clear advice regarding **successful delivery approaches for PFR, providing best practice, guidelines, key risk and limitations** associated to delivering a PFR scheme.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR)

Prevention and resilience measures

...possible buys valuable time to raise/move your belongings...

...late electrical

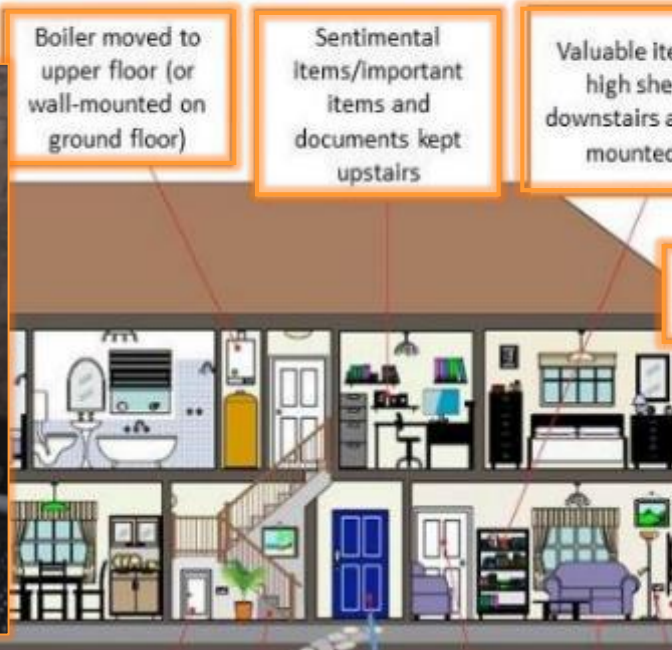
Boiler moved to upper floor (or wall-mounted on ground floor)

Sentimental items/important items and documents kept upstairs

Valuable items high shelves downstairs and mounted



Tudalen 279



kickboards

Fridge on raised plinth

Easily accessed storage for flood barriers and blocks

Permeable paving surface on pathway

Lightweight doors with rising butt hinges

Electrical sockets raised

Flood Barriers can protect garage... but try to move vehicles to high ground as soon as possible!

Sump pump to remove water

Bottom two steps made of concrete and with removable carpet

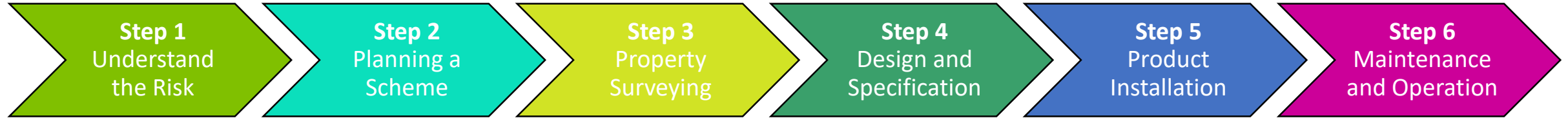
Flood resistant front door

Tiled floors with waterproof adhesive and waterproof grout

Resilient plaster, or plasterboard laid horizontally

Permeable paving surface on driveway

Six Steps to Flood Resilience



Tudalen 280

Check NRW's
National Flood
Hazard & Risk Maps



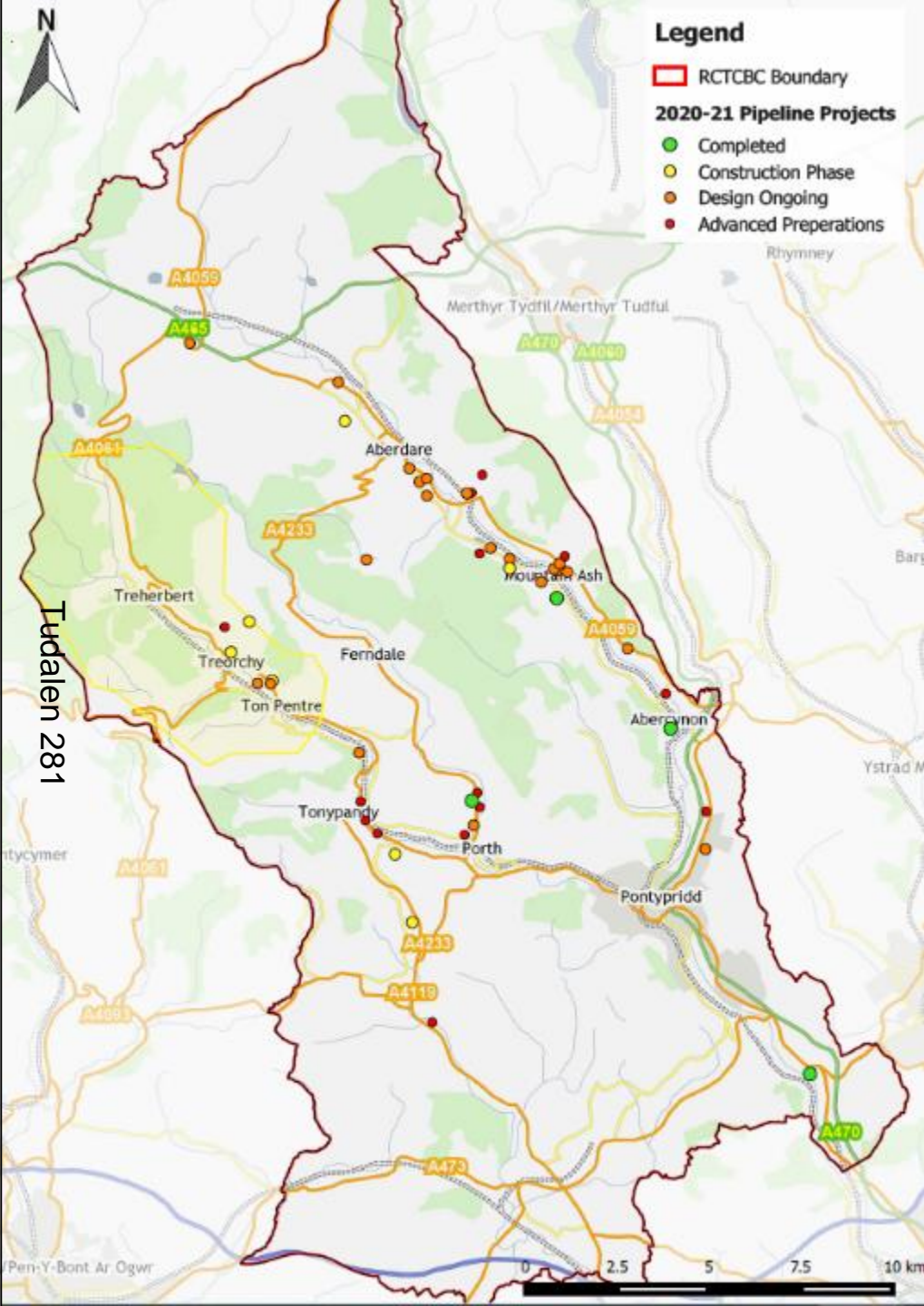
Independent flood risk property
surveys by competent and
qualified professionals.



Product selection, design and
installation from a list of approved
suppliers

Environment Agency **PFR Framework** –
RCTCBC Sign-up





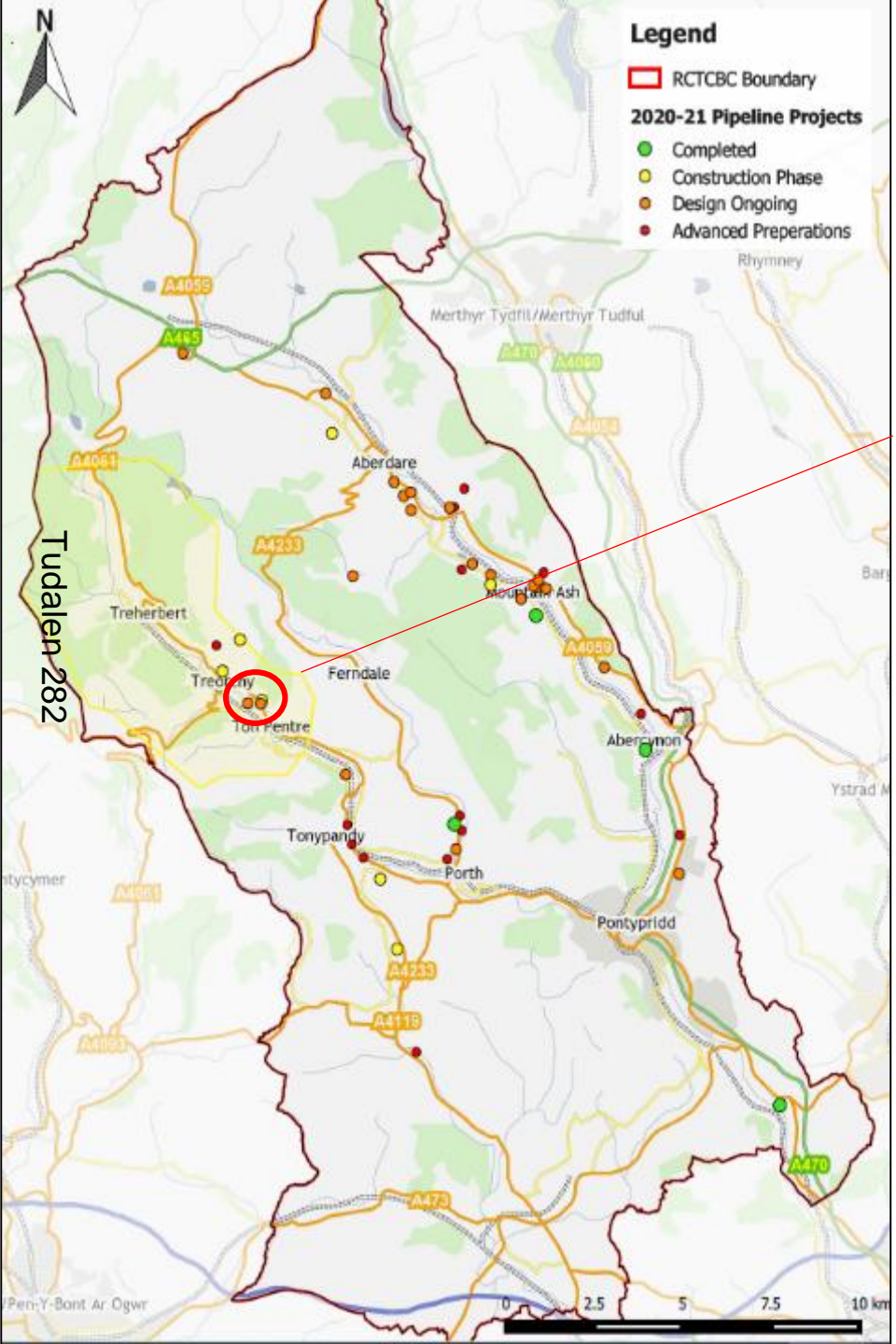
Active and Future Flood Alleviation Schemes

4-year programme

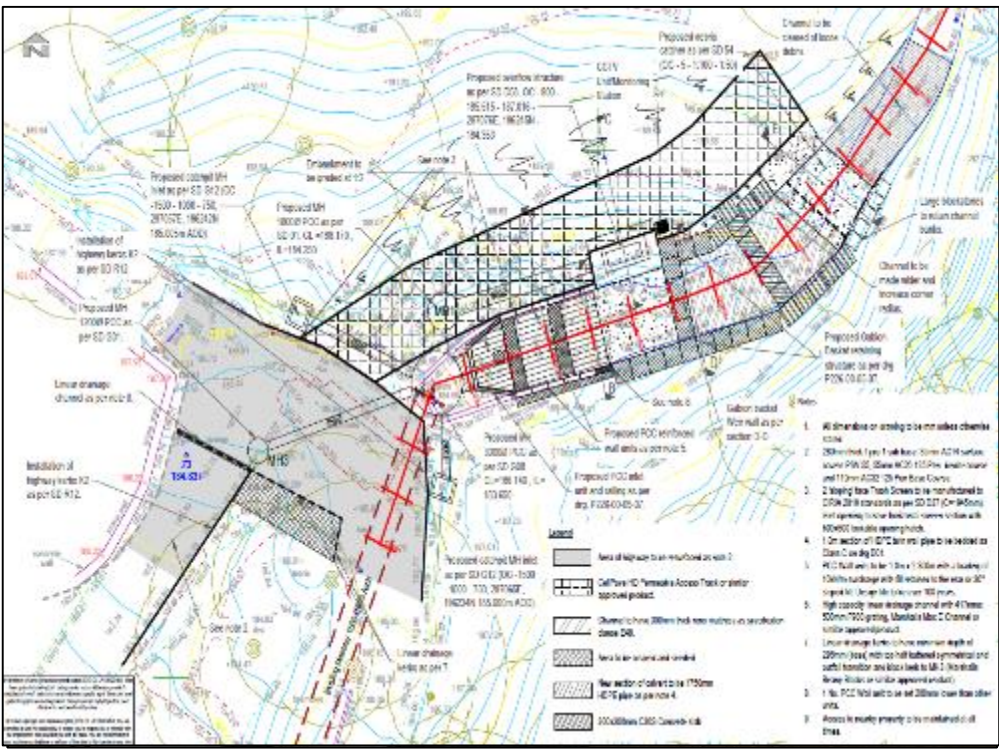
Grant Type	Number of Projects	Completed	Construction Phase	Design Ongoing	Advanced Prep
Mixed Grant	2	£700,000		1	0
Non Grant	3	2	£190,000	1	0
Resilient Roads	16	£2,610,000		14	0
Small Scale Works	20	£2,060,000		5	11
Welsh Government Pipeline	9	£7,170,000		7	0

TOTAL	50	4£12,730,000	28	11
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NB: Further projects likely to be added upon completion of Flood Investigation reports



Pentre Road, Pentre - Inlet Upgrade



Status: Construction

Grant: Small scale works

Description: Upgrades to the existing inlet structure with the placement of an upper debris platform and overflow route

Cost: £300,000

Fig 2: Existing drainage network of the upgraded works

Properties Benefitting		
Homes	Businesses	Total
217	10	227

Structures

350 individual Structures assets were surveyed following storm Dennis

The number of Structures assets are still being verified and under review on a priority basis however the cost of damages is estimated to be **approximately £50 million**

Priority schemes:

- Berw Road Bridge
- Castle Inn Footbridge
- Ynysangharad Park Footbridge
- Feeder Pipe Footbridge
- Blaen y Cwm Road
- Scour repairs to other bridges completed or commissioned, such as Merlin Bridge
- Campbell Terrace culvert repairs
- Afon Dar and Tramway Culverts, Aberdare – debris removal and scour repairs



Blaen y Cwm Road
Ynysangharad Park Footbridge



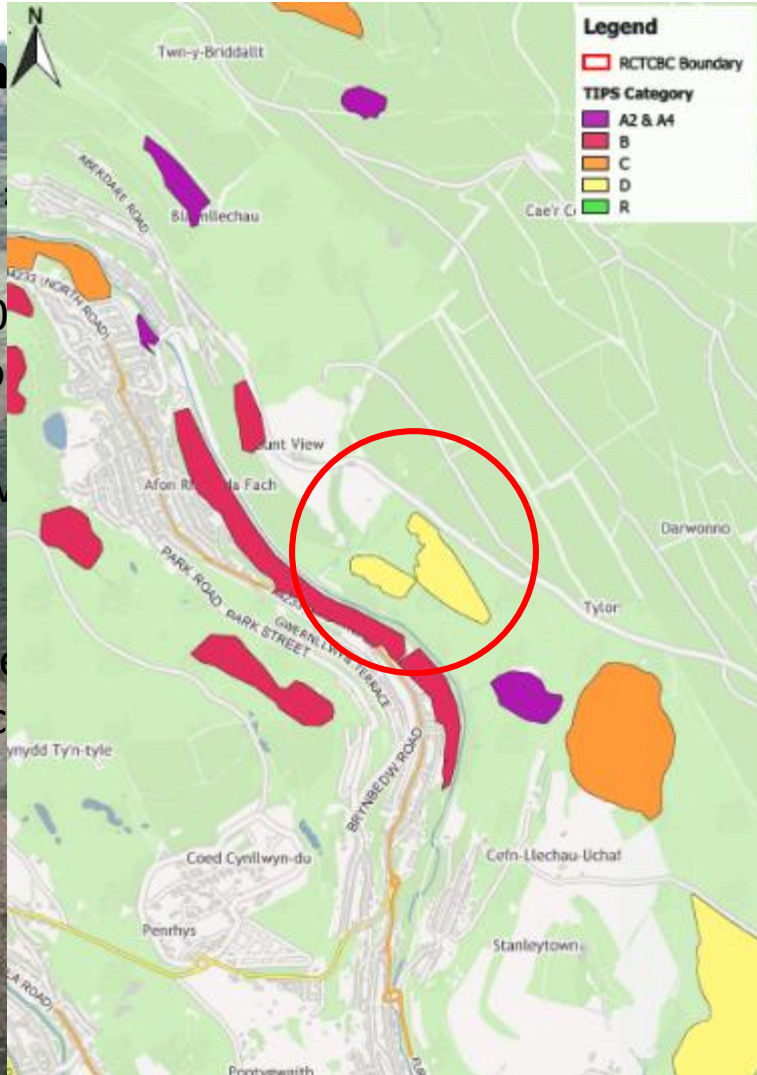
TIPS – Tylorstown Landslip

16th Feb 2020 part of Tylorstown TIP became unstable and slid down the hillside, **over 60,000 tonnes** remain on the valley floor

Short Term: Emergency

Estimated Costs: £10M +

- Remove 60,000 tonnes of debris from the valley floor
- Restore the river channel to its original level
- Reinstate the footpaths and incorporate some new ones



Long Term: Critical Safety Works

Estimated Costs: £10M +

- Undertake stabilisation and remediation works to the Upper Tip
- Full reinstatement of walking and cycle routes and links to the community

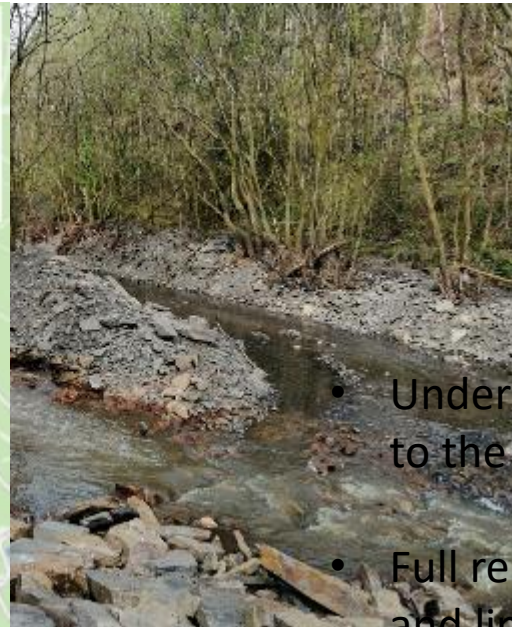


Fig 2: Reinstatement of river channel completed beginning of Oct 2020

Any Questions





RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9TH DECEMBER 2020

WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: DRAFT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR - DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to

- (i) Update Members on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which is currently awaiting Royal Assent (anticipated to be granted in early 2021);
- (ii) to consider draft regulations which would be made under that legislation in respect of the establishment and operation of CJCs; and
- (iii) seek Members feedback on the consultation initiated by Welsh Government in respect of those draft regulations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider and provide their feedback on the [Welsh Government \(WG\) Consultation document](#), attached at Appendix 2 to the report, which relates to draft regulations that would establish the South East Wales CJC and then exercise the following functions across the region; (1) economic well-being, (2) strategic development planning, and (3) developing transport policies; and
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to convey the comments and responses of committee members to the WG prior to the consultation closing.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The formation of CJC's as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill will alter the landscape and governance of how certain functions are undertaken by the constituent councils making up the CJC across the South East Wales Region. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources
- 3.2 WG have published [draft regulations](#) which would establish the South East Wales CJC and set out how the CJC would operate. They have initiated a consultation on those regulations which ends on 4th January 2021.
- 3.3 WG have said they welcome input to ensure the regulations are shaped by local authorities to ensure they reflect local/regional requirements. Members therefore have the opportunity, through the consultation, to provide any feedback they have in relation to the draft regulations and CJCs more generally.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill introduced into the Senedd in November 2019 included (in Part 5) provisions to create via regulations a vehicle for consistent regional collaboration between principal councils - CJCs. The provisions also enable the constituent principal councils to invite participation by partners from other sectors in the work of CJCs through a process of co-opted membership. The constitutional and governance arrangements as well as the functions of the CJC will be set out in the regulations establishing them. The Bill sets out what the regulations will provide for to enable the effective establishment of CJCs. However, the Bill does not detail the specific functions of a CJC or how it will be governed. This is all done via the regulations.
- 4.2 Welsh Government (WG) maintain that the model of CJCs, outlined later in the report, builds on the best that has already been achieved in the development of regional arrangements in different parts of Wales.
- 4.3 WG's aim is to ensure there are consistent, resilient and accountable regional arrangements for the delivery of three important functions (i) strategic land use planning (ii) strategic transport planning and (iii) economic development. This approach is seen as all the more important given the COVID 19 pandemic as ways are found to help Wales recover.
- 4.4 Importantly WG recognise that collaboration is not new to local government, principal councils have been collaborating effectively in a range of areas for a long time. None more so than this Council of course, with Rhondda Cynon Taf playing a significant role in established

collaborations across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg footprint and wider South Wales region. Several of these collaborations, they say will be easily accommodated by the Corporate Joint Committees. Others require a less consistent approach across Wales and will continue to use existing governance arrangements.

- 4.5 WG believe that by establishing CJC's through regulations it will provide more coherence and less complexity in the approach to regional governance arrangements in exercising the three functions proposed. Their aim is to reduce complexity and duplication of effort and resource. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources.

5. KEY FEATURES OF A CJC

- 5.1 In contrast to other joint committee structures, CJCs will be separate corporate bodies and legal entities to their constituent councils which will be able to directly employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and be directly responsible for exercising functions.
- 5.2 A CJC will not be the only vehicle through which local government can collaborate but the intention is to provide local government with a powerful new tool where appropriate.
- 5.3 CJCs aim to offer a consistent approach to strategic planning and delivery at a scale where it makes sense to do so. WG believe they will help to align the key strategic decisions which underpin the sustainable development and transformation of regions as a whole.

Functions

- 5.4 CJCs will have functions that cover economic well-being, strategic planning (LDPs will remain with LAs) and transport.
- 5.5 The economic wellbeing power is potentially wide-ranging and significant, but how far it is used will be determined by a CJC. The suggestion is that the current city and growth deal strategic functions would be transferred to CJCs.
- 5.6 Concurrency of functions has been a concern to some LA's, as they want to ensure a local economic development function as well as a regional one. The draft regulations make clear that this is a 'matter for each CJC in response to local and regional needs'.
- 5.7 School improvement' (although in the Bill) does not feature as an early priority for inclusion in the CJCs consultation document. The Bill specifies that CJCs will include only the 4 listed functions in the Bill (which are existing statutory or voluntary regional functions). CJCs can voluntarily make a request to Ministers to add specific functions to a CJC. A future Welsh Government could however add other functions to a CJC via future

legislation which would amend Section 74 of the Bill (the section specifying the 4 CJC functions).

Membership

- 5.8 The membership of a CJC will be the Leaders of the constituent local authorities ensuring Leaders are at the centre of the decision making process.
- 5.9 Leaders, following advice/recommendations from any relevant subcommittees, will be responsible for making final decisions relating to the functions exercised by a CJC.
- 5.10 The CJC, via the Leaders, will be able to co-opt additional members (either cabinet members or other partners) to it or any of its sub committees (if it has chosen to establish any) as it sees fit and should it wish to do so. Such membership can be co-opted with or without voting rights and voting rights can be ascribed to all of the functions of a CJC or to specific functions only.
- 5.11 The expectation would be that the CJC would use the flexibility to co-opt members to ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement relevant to the functions which they are exercising.
- 5.12 National park members (Brecon Beacons NPA in relation to this authority) must also be a member when dealing with SDP functions

Establishing Corporate Joint Committees

- 5.13 The primary route for establishing CJCs, or expanding the functions they are responsible for, is at the request of local government.
- 5.14 Welsh Ministers can instigate the establishment of CJCs in relation to a limited number of specified functions only. These functions are in relation to Strategic Development Planning and Regional Transport Planning; plus the CJCs will be given a power to do things to promote the economic well-being of their areas. There is already consensus that working at this scale makes sense in terms of these functions - aligning economic development, transport and land use planning approaches to develop successful regional economies and encourage local growth. It is intended that CJCs will enable the consolidation of existing regional arrangements. It also enables the rationalisation of regional working approaches in legislation for planning and transport.

How a Corporate Joint Committee will operate

- 5.15 The detail on how a CJC operates in practice will be determined by the members of the CJC itself.
- 5.16 This flexibility will enable the CJCs to differ between geographical areas to meet the different needs and ambitions of their region.
- 5.17 A CJC will be a member of the 'local government family' and, where appropriate, will largely be subject to the same powers and duties as principal councils in the way that they operate. The intent is to avoid as far as possible making CJCs do things in a manner that local government

would be unfamiliar with or to create new and unfamiliar procedures, obligations, powers etc. which might increase administrative burdens.

Sub committees

- 5.18 A CJC will be able to establish sub committees to support it to exercise its functions should it wish to do so.
- 5.19 It will be for each CJC to decide if it wishes to have sub-committees, and who sits on them. However it might be reasonable to expect (although it is not required) for a CJC to have sub-committees for each of its main functions and that these sub-committees might engage broadly and involve a range of relevant stakeholders.

Voting

- 5.20 Voting will operate on a 'one member one vote' basis, however, once established, a CJC could adopt alternative voting procedures should they wish
- 5.21 Some member authorities remain concerned that OMOV is not equitable or fair given the different sizes of authorities which would undermine accountability.
- 5.22 The model of a CJC and its subcommittees offers a fusion between the need to involve partners and the need to ensure decisions are coherent across functions and maintain democratic legitimacy. As stated above, it is the CJC, consisting of all Leaders from all constituent authorities (plus co-opted members if Leaders choose) that would make final decisions with a view to ensuring coherence across the functions. Statutory decision-making powers over the specified functions will be vested in the CJC and therefore the leaders who make up the CJC (and possibly any other members who may be co-opted). In reality, however, to ensure accountability and political support, leaders will inevitably need to ensure their councils have considered and endorsed proposed regional plans prior to agreeing them at a CJC, as is the case currently with growth and city deals. The regulations and CJC constitutions will need to consider dispute resolution arrangements and should plan to respond to a 'worst case scenario' where there is disagreement or disengagement from one or more constituent leaders/councils.

Staffing / Resources

- 5.23 CJC's will have the flexibility to agree the staffing and resourcing required and to determine the approach it takes to such matters.
- 5.24 For example a CJC will be able to employ and recruit staff in its own right; make agreements to have staff placed at the CJC's disposal; and undertake secondments (in and out) to enable CJC's to discharge their functions.
- 5.25 CJC's must 'appoint' a Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Governance Officer (however, these could be provided by a constituent authority, or seconded etc).

Funding

- 5.26 CJsCs will be funded by their constituent councils, in proportions that they will be able to determine.
- 5.27 A CJC will be required to calculate its budget requirement, set out how that requirement is to be met and keep proper accounts. In calculating its budget requirements a CJC will be able to take into account any other funding streams it might receive. The draft regulations state the CJC members (leaders) must unanimously agree a budget and that 'constituent' councils must pay a proportionate amount. If there is a disagreement on the proportionality of funding, Ministers have powers of direction.
- 5.28 As with local authorities CJsCs will be required to keep proper accounting records and to prepare annual accounts in accordance with existing local government legislation.
- 5.29 The draft regulations provide outline arrangements and timescales for the determination of budgets. The proposed deadlines in the draft regulations will require further exploration to ensure that they align with council budget setting processes and timescales.

Scrutiny

- 5.30 The regulations state that CJsCs must set up an overview and scrutiny committee.
- 5.31 Scrutiny will be essential to ensure accountability back to authorities and wider councillors.
- 5.32 There has been some discussion amongst officials as to whether a 'sub-committee' of the CJC is an appropriate scrutiny vehicle, or whether authorities should set up a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee or individual councils should scrutinise their leader and the CJC directly.
- 5.33 Irrespective of any joint scrutiny arrangement, individual council scrutiny committees would be able to seek to scrutinise regional bodies as they do now. A balance will need to be struck however in managing multiple scrutiny demands on senior CJC staff and members across several constituent authorities' scrutiny arrangements. Concern has been expressed by the WLGA and Officer, on the lack of clarity at this stage, around this important element of the democratic process.

Timing

- 5.34 CJsCs must meet for the first time by the end of September 2021. Although this would likely be an initial meeting and some bedding in of arrangements will be required.

Costs

- 5.35 The consultation document notes that the Minister would be prepared to provide set-up costs to support CJsCs. The accompanying Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) outlines the financial implications of 'Doing Nothing' and 'Establishing CJsCs'. The RIA notes that it is difficult to

accurately estimate, as it depends on how ambitious CJC's may wish to be and whether they would have limited core staff/overheads, perhaps provided by an authority, or recruit their own senior staff. The RIA uses a range of sources to estimate costs, including previous RIAs for strategic planning panels, the existing programme office costs for current city and growth deals and benchmarks for senior staff.

6. REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CJCS AND CONSULTATION

- 6.1 During the past 18 months WG have been engaging on plans for CJC's with various stakeholders, such as the WLGA Partnership Council and Executive Board, Lawyers in Local Government, the Society of Welsh Treasurers, the WLGA LA Economic Development & Regeneration Officers Network, HR Directors and the Wales Growth/City Deal regions.
- 6.2 The Draft Regulations, as described above, were published on Monday 12th October. These have been issued for consultation (with a closing date of 4th January). A copy of the draft regulations (applicable to the South East Wales region) are appended at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 6.3 WG have said they welcome input to ensure the regulations are shaped by local authorities to ensure they reflect local/regional requirements. The WG consultation document relating to the regulations is appended at Appendix 2 to the report. Appendix 3 contains the specific questions WG are seeking feedback on through the consultation.
- 6.4 An additional set of 'Regulations of General Application will be issued for consultation in the New Year. It is envisaged these will cover what existing legislation and wider statutory duties might apply to CJC's, such as the sustainable development duty and Welsh Language Standards. Statutory guidance will also be produced.
- 6.5 Members therefore have the opportunity, through the consultation, to provide any feedback they have in relation to the draft regulations and CJC's more generally.
- 6.6 Members are asked to note that the Cabinet will also considered the WG consultation and draft regulations at its meeting on 17th December 2020. This report proposes a separate response to the consultation and recommends delegating authority to the Chief Executive and Leader to respond to the Council on behalf of the Cabinet.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality or diversity implications aligned directly to this report. WG have however published an Integrated Impact Assessment in respect of the draft regulations which can be accessed [here](#). It is planned that CJC's would be subject to the Equality Act 2010 and Welsh Language Standards.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned specifically to this report however the planned introduction of CJs will and the level of detail available in respect of these is set out in the accompanying [Regulatory Impact Assessment](#) to the regulations (referenced in para 5.35 above).

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS & LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The relevant legislation linked to the introduction of CJs and how they would operate is set out in the body of the report.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 10.1 WG say in developing the CJC mechanism for local government regional collaboration there is a particular emphasis on applying the sustainable development principle. In particular, building resilience for the long-term and ensuring the proposals are grounded in collaboration and integration of objectives with local government. The proposals for regionalisation of some local authority functions reflect the ways of working as they are intended to enable local authorities to plan for the longer term and require collaboration and joint working between local authorities. The proposals also support further integration of services and pooling of often limited resources and expertise, providing a greater level of capacity and capability overall and providing space for strategic thinking and planning that has been largely squeezed out in individual local authorities.
- 10.2 In addition to ensuring the sustainable development principle and five ways of working underpin its approach and they have also considered how a regional approach can maximise our contribution to the well-being goals. In doing so they say CJs put in place a new framework to enable local government to make their contribution to the goals more effectively. This means the direct contribution of CJs to achieving the goals is limited, but the indirect contribution will be much more significant.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 CJs will have functions that cover economic well-being, strategic planning (LDPs will remain with LAs) and transport. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government,
- 11.2 WG have published draft regulations which would establish the South East Wales CJC and set out how the CJC would operate. They have initiated a consultation on those regulations which ends on 4th January 2021.
- 11.3 WG have said they welcome input to ensure the regulations are shaped by local authorities to ensure they reflect local/regional requirements.

Members therefore have the opportunity, through the consultation, to provide any feedback they have in relation to the draft regulations and CJs more generally.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th DECEMBER 2020

**ITEM: WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: DRAFT REGULATIONS TO
ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL
SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR - DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

Background Papers

Freestanding Report.

2021 No. (W.)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
WALES**

**The South East Wales Corporate
Joint Committee Regulations 2021**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 enables the Welsh Ministers, by regulations to establish Corporate Joint Committees. These regulations establish the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee, and the following functions will be exercised by this body:

- (1) economic well-being function,
- (2) strategic development planning function, and
- (3) developing transport policies.

There are 5 Parts to these Regulations.

Part 1 establishes the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee, and its area.

Part 2 introduces Schedule 1 to the Regulations. This Schedule contains the constitutional arrangements for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

Part 3 sets out the membership of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee. In accordance with this Part, the body will comprise 10 council members, a member from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, and may include co-opted members with or without voting rights.

Part 4 identifies the functions that will be exercised by the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee. This Part also introduces Schedule 2 to the Regulations which contains further detail about the function of developing transport policies.

Part 5 identifies how the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee is to be funded.

2021 No. (W.)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
WALES**

**The South East Wales Corporate
Joint Committee Regulations 2021**

<i>Made</i>	***
<i>Laid before Senedd Cymru</i>	***
<i>Coming into force</i>	***

The Welsh Ministers make these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (relating to consultation conditions) have been satisfied.

Title and commencement

1. The title of these Regulations is the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021, and they come into force on ***.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

“the Brecon Beacons member” (“*aelod Bannau Brycheiniog*”) has the meaning given by regulation 7(1);

“CJC area” (“*ardal CBC*”) has the meaning given by regulation 4;

“constituent council” (“*cyngor cyfansoddiadol*”) means—

- (a) Cardiff county council;
- (b) Monmouthshire county council;
- (c) Blaenau Gwent county borough council;
- (d) Bridgend county borough council;
- (e) Caerphilly county borough council;

- (f) Merthyr Tydfil county borough council;
- (g) Newport county borough council;
- (h) Rhondda, Cynon, Taff county borough council;
- (i) Torfaen county borough council;
- (j) The Vale of Glamorgan county borough council.

“co-opted member” (“*aelod cyfetholedig*”) has the meaning given by regulation 8(2);

“council member” (“*aelod cyngor*”) has the meaning given by regulation 6(2);

“executive officer” (“*swyddog gweithredol*”) has the meaning given by paragraph 5 of Schedule 1;

“member” (“*aelod*”) means—

- (a) a council member;
- (b) the Brecon Beacons member;
- (c) a co-opted member;

“National Park Authority” (“*Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol*”) means an authority in Wales established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995(1);

“senior executive member” (“*prif aelod gweithrediaeth*”) means—

- (a) in the case of a constituent council operating a leader and cabinet executive, the executive leader;
- (b) in the case of a constituent council operating a mayor and cabinet executive, the elected mayor;

“standing orders” (“*rheolau sefydlog*”) means the standing orders made under paragraph 10 of Schedule 1;

“strategic planning functions” (“*swyddogaethau cynllunio strategol*”) means—

- (a) the functions of the South East Wales CJC under Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004(2) (see regulation 11), and
- (b) any functions incidental or conducive to the exercise of those functions;

“voting member” (“*aelod â phleidlais*”), in relation to any question to be decided by the South East Wales CJC, means—

- (a) a council member;
- (b) where the question relates to the exercise of strategic planning functions, the Brecon Beacons member;

(1) 1995 c.25

(2) 2004 c.5

- (c) a co-opted member entitled to vote on the question by virtue of regulation 8(6).

PART 1

Establishment and area

Establishment

3.—(1) There is established a body corporate to be known as the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (“the South East Wales CJC”).

(2) The South East Wales CJC has the functions—

- (a) conferred on it by these Regulations, and
- (b) conferred or imposed on it, or delegated to it, by any other enactment (whenever passed or made).

Area

4. The South East Wales CJC area comprises the areas of the constituent councils.

PART 2

Constitution

Constitution

5. Schedule 1 makes provision about the constitution of the South East Wales CJC.

PART 3

Membership

Membership and council members

6.—(1) The members of the South East Wales CJC are—

- (a) the 10 council members,
- (b) the Brecon Beacons member (but see regulation 7), and
- (c) any co-opted members (see regulation 8).

(2) The senior executive member of each constituent council is a council member.

(3) A person ceases to be a council member of the South East Wales CJC if the person ceases to be the senior executive member of a constituent council.

(4) Where there is a vacancy in the office of senior executive member of a constituent council, the

constituent council must appoint a member of the constituent council to act as council member of the South East Wales CJC until such time as the vacancy is filled.

Brecon Beacons member

7.—(1) The Brecon Beacons member must be appointed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (“the Authority”).

(2) The Authority may only appoint as Brecon Beacons member—

- (a) the chairman of the Authority,
- (b) the deputy chairman of the Authority, or
- (c) the chairperson of a committee with responsibility for planning matters as may be established by Authority.

(3) But the Brecon Beacons member is a member of the South East Wales CJC only in relation to the exercise of strategic planning functions.

(4) The Brecon Beacons member ceases to be the Brecon Beacons member if that person ceases to hold an office mentioned paragraph (2).

Co-opted members

8.—(1) The council members may appoint other members to the South East Wales CJC.

(2) In these Regulations, a member appointed under paragraph (1) is referred to as a “co-opted member”.

(3) In any question to be decided by the South East Wales CJC, the number of votes which may be cast by co-opted members may not exceed—

- (a) the number of votes which may be cast by council members, or
- (b) where the question relates to the exercise of strategic planning functions, the number of votes which may be cast by council members and the Brecon Beacons member.

(4) A co-opted member is appointed—

- (a) for a period determined by the council members, or
- (b) if no period is determined, until the appointment is terminated by the council members.

(5) Where a period is determined under paragraph 8(4)(a), the co-opted member’s appointment may nevertheless be terminated by the council members before the end of the period.

(6) The council members, when appointing a co-opted member—

- (a) must determine whether the co-opted member may vote at meetings of the South East Wales CJC, and
- (b) may determine that a co-opted member is permitted to vote only in relation to such matters as the council members may specify.

PART 4

Functions

Economic well-being

9. The economic well-being function is granted to the South East Wales CJC (see Part 5(1) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).

Transfer etc. of function of developing transport policies

10.—(1) The function of developing policies under section 108(1)(a) and (2A)(a) of Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000(2) (“the 2000 Act”) is, in respect of the area of each constituent council, to be exercised by the South East Wales CJC, and not by the constituent councils.

(2) The 2000 Act applies in relation to the South East Wales CJC and its constituent councils subject to the modifications in Schedule [2].

(3) The Regional Transport Planning (Wales) Order 2014(3) is revoked.

Strategic planning functions

11. The South East Wales CJC has the function of preparing a strategic development plan (and accordingly Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 applies to the South East Wales CJC (see in particular sections 60K to 60N of that Act).

Subsidiary powers

12.—(1) The South East Wales CJC may do anything—

- (a) to facilitate, or
- (b) which is incidental or conducive to,

the exercise of its functions.

(2) Things which may be done under paragraph (1) include—

(1) This will be updated to reflect the relevant section.
(2) 2000 c.38.
(3) 2014 No. 2178 (W. 212)

- (a) incurring expenditure;
 - (b) charging fees;
 - (c) acquiring or disposing of property or rights.
- (3) But the South East Wales CJC may not borrow money.

PART 4

Funding

Calculation of budget

13.—(1) In relation to each financial year the South East Wales CJC must calculate the aggregate of—

- (a) the expenditure which the CJC estimates it will incur in respect of the financial year in the exercise of its functions (including expenditure on administration and other overheads);
- (b) the amount which the CJC considers appropriate to raise for contingencies arising in respect of the financial year;
- (c) the amount which the CJC considers appropriate to be held as a reserve to meet expenditure it considers will be incurred in respect of future financial years;
- (d) any amount which the CJC considers is necessary to meet liabilities outstanding in respect of any earlier financial year.

(2) In relation to each financial year, the South East Wales CJC must also calculate the aggregate of amounts it estimates it will receive from sources other than the constituent councils and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

(3) In relation to a financial year, where the amount calculated under paragraph (1) exceeds the amount calculated under paragraph (2), the amount of excess is the South East Wales CJC's budget requirement for the financial year.

(4) The South East Wales CJC must calculate its budget requirement—

- (a) in relation to its first financial year within two months following the first annual general meeting ;
- (b) in relation to each subsequent financial year, no later than 14 February in the preceding financial year.

(5) The South East Wales CJC may revise its budget requirement.

Funding of budget requirement

14.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must determine the amount of its budget requirement for a financial year attributable to functions other than strategic planning functions (including an appropriate proportion of administration costs and other overheads).

(2) The amount determined under paragraph (1) must be paid to the South East Wales CJC by the constituent councils, and the proportion of that amount payable by each constituent council is to be determined by the unanimous agreement of the council members.

(3) The South East Wales CJC must determine the amount of its budget requirement for a financial year attributable to strategic planning functions (including an appropriate proportion of administration costs and other overheads).

(4) The amount determined under paragraph (2) must be paid to the South East Wales CJC by the constituent councils and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, and the proportion of that amount payable by each constituent council and by the Authority is to be determined by the unanimous agreement of the council members and the Brecon Beacons member.

(5) Where agreement cannot be reached as to the proportions payable under paragraphs (2) or (4), the Welsh Ministers may by direction specify the proportion payable by each constituent or each constituent council and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, as the case may be.

Accounts

15.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must—

- (a) keep proper accounting records, and
- (b) prepare accounts in respect of each financial year in accordance with directions given by the Welsh Ministers.

(2) The directions which the Welsh Ministers may give include directions as to—

- (a) the information to be contained in the accounts and the manner in which the accounts are to be presented;
- (b) the methods and principles in accordance with which the accounts are to be prepared;
- (c) additional information that is to accompany the accounts.

Name

Title of Minister, one of the Welsh Ministers

Date

SCHEDULE 1 Ref

Constitution

Chairperson

1.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must appoint a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among its council members.

(2) The appointment of a chairperson and vice-chairperson is to be the first business transacted at the first annual general meeting of the South East Wales CJC.

(3) The South East Wales CJC must, at each annual general meeting—

- (a) confirm the continuing appointment of the chairperson and vice-chairperson, or
- (b) appoint a new chairperson, vice-chairperson or both from among its council members.

(4) A person ceases to be chairperson or vice-chairperson if the person ceases to be a council member of the South East Wales CJC.

(5) A person appointed as chairperson or vice-chairperson may at any time resign that office by notice in writing given to the other members.

(6) If a vacancy arises in the office of chairperson or vice chairperson, an appointment to fill the vacancy must be made at the first meeting of the South East Wales CJC held after the vacancy has arisen.

(7) If the office of chairperson is vacant, the vice-chairperson may carry out the functions of chairperson until the vacancy is filled.

No remuneration payable to members

2. No remuneration is to be payable by the South East Wales CJC to its members.

Staff

3.—(1) The South East Wales CJC may make such arrangements for staffing as it considers appropriate (but see paragraphs 4 and 5).

(2) Where the South East Wales CJC appoints staff under sub-paragraph (1), they are to be appointed on terms and conditions (including conditions as to remuneration) substantially similar to the terms and conditions of officers within a constituent council undertaking reasonably comparable responsibilities as the South East Wales CJC may determine.

(3) The South East Wales CJC may enter into an agreement with—

- (a) another corporate joint committee (within the meaning given by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021);
- (b) another devolved Welsh authority (within the meaning given by the Government of Wales Act 2006(1)),

for the placing of staff of the South East Wales CJC at the disposal of the other committee or the authority for the purposes of that committee or authority's functions, on such terms as may be provided by the agreement.

(4) A devolved Welsh authority (within the meaning given by the Government of Wales Act 2006) may enter into an agreement with the South East Wales CJC for the placing of staff of the authority at the disposal of the South East Wales CJC for the purposes of its functions, on such terms as may be provided by the agreement.

(5) No agreement may be entered into under subparagraph (3) or (4) unless every member of staff to whom it relates has been consulted.

(6) Where a member of staff of the South East Wales CJC is placed at the disposal of another devolved Welsh authority by virtue of an agreement under subparagraph (3)—

- (a) for superannuation purposes, service rendered by the member of staff is service rendered to the South East Wales CJC, and
- (b) for the purposes of any enactment relating to the exercise of the other devolved Welsh authority's functions, the member of staff is to be treated as a member of staff of that authority.

(7) Where a member of staff of a devolved Welsh authority is placed at the disposal of the South East Wales CJC by virtue of an agreement under subparagraph (4), for the purposes of these Regulations and any other enactment relating to the exercise of the South East Wales CJC's functions, the member of staff is to be treated as a member of staff of the South East Wales CJC.

Transfer of staff

4. Where a member of staff appointed by the South East Wales CJC has been transferred to the CJC from a constituent council, the provisions of the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006(2) other than regulations 4(6) and 10 apply to the transfer, whether or not it is a relevant transfer for the purposes of those regulations.

(1) 2006 c.32
(2) S.I. 2006/246

Executive officers

5.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must appoint—

- (a) a Chief Executive,
- (b) a Monitoring Officer,
- (c) a Chief Financial Officer,
- (d) a Chief Governance Officer,

(referred to collectively in these Regulations as “executive officers”).

(2) For further provision about the officers mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) see the [Corporate Joint Committees (General Provisions) (Wales) Regulations 2021].

Proceedings and voting

6.—(1) No business is to be transacted at a meeting of the South East Wales CJC unless—

- (a) the chairperson attends the meeting, and
- (b) no fewer than 70% of the voting members attend.

(2) In any question to be decided by the South East Wales CJC, other than a decision as to the proportion payable under regulation 14(2) or (4), each voting member has one vote and the question is to be decided by simple majority.

(3) If a vote is tied the matter is not carried (subject to sub-paragraph (4)).

(4) If a vote is tied on any question relating to the exercise of strategic planning functions the chairperson has the casting vote.

(5) The voting procedure set out in this paragraph may be substituted by an alternative procedure if every voting member agrees.

(6) An agreement to substitute an alternative voting procedure may apply to—

- (a) every vote of the South East Wales CJC, or
- (b) votes on such questions as may be specified in the agreement.

(7) Where an alternative voting procedure is to be agreed in relation to every vote of the South East Wales CJC, the reference in sub-paragraph (5) to “every voting member” includes each co-opted member entitled to vote on any question by virtue of regulation 8(6).

(8) Where an alternative voting procedure is to be agreed in relation to votes on such questions as are specified in the agreement, the reference in sub-paragraph (5) to “every voting member” includes only those co-opted members as are entitled to vote on the specified questions.

(9) Where an alternative voting procedure is to be agreed in relation to—

- (a) every vote of the South East Wales CJC, or
- (b) a vote on a question concerning strategic planning functions,

the reference in sub-paragraph (5) to “every voting member” includes the Brecon Beacons member.

(10) Where an alternative voting procedure is agreed, it must be set out in the standing orders.

Meetings

7.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must hold an annual general meeting in each financial year on a date determined by the CJC.

(2) But the annual general meeting held in the first financial year must be held before the end of September 2021.

(3) The annual general meeting held in the first financial year is to be presided at by the council member for Blaenau Gwent county borough council until the chairperson is appointed (and accordingly the chairperson is to preside at the remainder of the meeting).

(4) The South East Wales CJC may hold other meetings on dates determined by the CJC.

(5) An extraordinary meeting of the South East Wales CJC may be called at any time by a voting member (including any co-opted member entitled to vote on any question by virtue of regulation 8(6)).

(6) The chairperson (or vice-chairperson if the chairperson is not present) must preside at any meeting of the South East Wales CJC.

Financial years

8.—(1) The first financial year of the South East Wales CJC is the period beginning with [date regs come into force] and ending with 31 March 2022.

Sub-committees

9.—(1) The South East Wales CJC may establish sub-committees.

(2) A sub-committee may exercise, on behalf of the South East Wales CJC, only those functions as are determined by the South East Wales CJC (but see paragraphs 12 and 13).

(3) The South East Wales CJC must specify the membership and procedures of any sub-committee.

(4) The South East Wales CJC may appoint persons who are not members of the CJC to a sub-committee

and a sub-committee need not include any members of the CJC (subject to sub-paragraph (5)).

(5) Where a sub-committee exercises strategic planning functions the Brecon Beacons member must be a member of the sub-committee.

(6) The procedures of a sub-committee must be set out in the standing orders.

Standing Orders

10.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must make standing orders for the regulation of its proceedings and business so far as not regulated by these Regulations or any other enactment (whenever passed or made).

(2) The standing orders may be varied or revoked and replaced.

Code of conduct

11. The South East Wales CJC must establish a code of conduct as regards the conduct of its members and its members of staff (including the executive officers), and may vary, revoke or replace such a code.

Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

12.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must establish a sub-committee (known as the overview and scrutiny sub-committee) to—

- (a) review and or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any of the South East Wales CJC's functions;
- (b) make reports or recommendations to the South East Wales CJC or its executive officers with respect to the discharge of any of those functions;
- (c) make reports or recommendations to the South East Wales CJC or its executive officers on matters which affect the corporate joint committee's area or the inhabitants of that area;
- (d) exercise such other functions and the South East Wales CJC may determine.

(2) The standing orders must include provision regulating the manner in which the overview and scrutiny sub-committee exercises its functions.

Governance and Audit Sub-Committee

13.—(1) The South East Wales CJC must establish a sub-committee (known as the governance and audit sub-committee) to—

- (a) review and scrutinise the South East Wales CJC's financial affairs;
- (b) make reports and recommendations in relation to the South East Wales CJC's financial affairs;
- (c) review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the South East Wales CJC;
- (d) make reports and recommendations to the South East Wales CJC or its executive officers on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements;
- (e) oversee the South East Wales CJC's internal and external audit arrangements;
- (f) review any financial statements prepared by the South East Wales CJC;
- (g) exercise such other functions and the South East Wales CJC may specify.

(2) The standing orders must include provision regulating the manner in which the governance and audit sub-committee exercises its functions.

SCHEDULE 2 ^{Ref}

Modification of Transport Act 2000

1. Part 2 of the 2000 Act applies in relation to the South East Wales CJC and its constituent councils with the following modifications.

2. Section 108 (local transport plans) is to be read as if—

- (a) for subsection (1) there were substituted—

“(1) The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (“the South East Wales CJC”) must develop policies, to be implemented under subsection (1A), for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within its area.”;
- (b) after subsection (1) there were inserted—

“(1A) Each local transport authority in Wales whose area falls within the area of the South East Wales CJC must carry out their functions so as to implement the policies developed under subsection (1).”;
- (c) for subsection (2A) there were substituted—

“(2A) The South East Wales CJC must also develop policies for the implementation by the local transport authorities in its area of the Wales Transport Strategy.”;
- (d) after subsection (2A) there were inserted—

“(2B) Each local transport authority in Wales whose area falls within the area of the South East Wales CJC must carry out their functions so as to implement the policies developed under subsection (2A).”;

(e) for subsection (3A) there were substituted—

“(3A) The South East Wales CJC must prepare a document to be known as the regional transport plan containing its policies under subsections (1) and (2A).”;

(f) for subsection (5) there were substituted—

“(5) In this Part “regional transport policies”, in relation to the South East Wales CJC, means policies developed under subsection (1).”

(g) after subsection (5) there were inserted—

“(6) In this Part, references to the area of the South East Wales CJC are to be interpreted in accordance with [regulation 4] of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021.”;

(h) the heading of the section were “Local and Regional Transport Plans”.

3. Section 109A is to be read as follows—

“109A Approval of regional plan

(1) The South East Wales CJC must submit its regional transport plan to the Welsh Ministers for their approval.

(2) If the Welsh Ministers refuse to approve the plan—

(a) they must give the South East Wales CJC a statement of their reasons for its refusal, and

(b) the South East Wales CJC must prepare another regional transport plan and submit the plan to the Welsh Ministers for their approval.

(3) If the Welsh Ministers approve a plan under this section, the plan has effect when the approval is given.

(4) The Welsh Ministers may approve a regional transport plan under this section if (but only if) they consider—

(a) that the plan is consistent with the Wales Transport Strategy, and

(b) that the policies contained in the plan are adequate for the implementation in the South East Wales CJC’s area of the Strategy.”

4. Section 109B is to be read as follows—

“109B Further provision about the regional plan

(1) The South East Wales CJC must keep its regional transport plan under review and alter it if it considers it appropriate to do so.

(2) The South East Wales CJC must in particular review the plan as soon as practicable after the publication of the Wales Transport Strategy or any revision of it.

(3) The South East Wales CJC must replace its regional transport plan not later than five years after the date on which the plan was approved under section 109A.

(4) Section 109A applies to a replacement plan as altered as it applies to a plan as originally prepared.

(5) The South East Wales CJC shall be taken to have complied with subsection (3) if (but only if)—

- (a) it submits its replacement plan to the Welsh Ministers for their approval under section 109A before the end of the five year period mentioned in subsection (3), and
- (b) the Welsh Ministers approve the plan under section 109A (whether the approval is given before or after the end of that five year period).

(6) If the South East Wales CJC fails to comply with subsection (3) because it fails to submit its replacement plan to the Welsh Ministers before the end of the five year period mentioned in that subsection, the South East Wales CJC must replace its regional transport plan as soon as practicable after the expiry of the five year period.

(7) If the South East Wales CJC fails to comply with subsection (3) because the Welsh Ministers refuse to approve a plan submitted to them under section 109A, it must replace its regional transport plan as soon as practicable after the refusal.

(8) As soon as practicable after its plan, or its plan as altered, has been approved under section 109A, the South East Wales CJC must—

- (a) publish the plan or the plan as altered in such manner as it thinks fit, and
- (b) send a copy of it to such persons (if any) as may be specified in guidance under section 112(1).

(9) The South East Wales CJC must also—

- (a) ensure that a copy of its regional transport plan is available for

inspection (at all reasonable hours) at such places it thinks fit,

- (b) give notice, by such means as it thinks expedient for bringing it to the attention of the public, as to the places at which a copy of it may be inspected, and
- (c) supply a copy of it (or any part of it) to any person on request, either free of charge or at a charge representing no more than the cost of providing the copy.”

5. Section 109C is to be treated as if it were omitted.

6. Section 112 is to be read as follows—

“112 Regional plan: supplementary

(1) In carrying out its functions under sections 108 to 109B, the South East Wales CJC must have regard to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers concerning—

- (a) the content of the regional transport plan,
- (b) the preparation of such plans,
- (c) the alteration and replacement of such plans, and
- (d) the publication and making available of such plans as originally made and as altered or replaced.

(2) Subsection (3) applies in relation to the development of policies under section 108(1) and the implementation under section 108(1A) of those policies.

(3) The South East Wales CJC, or a local transport authority within the area of the CJC (as the case may be), must have regard to the transport needs of disabled persons (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) and of persons who are elderly or who have mobility problems.”

7. Section 113A is to be treated as if it were omitted.

8. Section 113B is to be read as follows—

“113B Directions concerning regional plan

(1) The Welsh Ministers may give general or specific directions to the South East Wales CJC as to the manner in which it is to carry out its functions under sections 108 to 109B.

(2) The Welsh Ministers may give general or specific directions to a local transport authority whose area falls within the area of the South

East Wales CJC as to the manner in which they are to carry out their functions under section 108.

(3) Directions given under subsection (1) may include in particular directions as to the timetable in accordance with which the regional transport plan or alterations to the plan must be prepared.

(4) Directions given under subsection (2) may include in particular directions as to—

- (a) the action required to be taken to implement the policies contained in the regional transport plan;
- (b) as to the steps required to be taken to remove the effects of action which is incompatible with those policies.

(5) Directions under this section—

- (a) must be in writing;
- (b) may be varied or revoked by further directions under this section.

(6) The Welsh Ministers must consult—

- (a) in relation to a direction under subsection (1), the South East Wales CJC,
- (b) in relation to a direction under subsection (2), the local transport authority concerned,

before giving, varying or revoking the direction.

(7) The Welsh Ministers may consult any other persons they consider appropriate in relation to giving, varying or revoking a direction under subsection (1) or (2).”

Tudalen wag

Number: WG41255



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Regulations to establish Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs)

Date of issue: 12 October 2020
Action required: Responses by 4 January 2021

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

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Overview	Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) are being proposed to be established by regulation to exercise a number of principal council functions. We would like your views on the detail of the regulations to establish the CJCs.
How to respond	This is a written, electronic consultation. Questions can be found at appropriate points within each section and also at the end of this consultation document. You are welcome to choose how you respond, you can: complete the online form; download the form and complete manually and post to us at the address provided; or send via email.
Further information and related documents	Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.
Contact details	For further information, please contact: Local Government Transformation & Partnerships Division Local Government Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ e-mail: LGPartnerships@gov.wales
Also available in Welsh at:	This consultation document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. The Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. The Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by the Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

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For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or
0303 123 1113
[ICO Website](https://www.ico.org.uk/)

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Foreword by the Minister for Housing and Local Government

Our world, post Covid-19, will be different. The pandemic has compelled public services and all levels of government in Wales to do things differently. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating and harmful in so many ways, there has been a tremendous amount of innovation, creativity and flexibility shown by the public sector, including local authorities and volunteers throughout Wales which we would like to build upon.

Collaboration has been a key feature of the Covid-19 response and it will also be key to our recovery.

As part of this approach I wish to bring more coherence to, and strip out some of the complexity of, regional governance arrangements - strengthening local democratic accountability by ensuring that it is local elected members making decisions together about local government services, for the benefit of their citizens and communities.

These regulations will establish Corporate Joint Committees, as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill currently before the Senedd.

The model of Corporate Joint Committees builds on the best that has already been achieved in the development of regional arrangements in different parts of Wales. It learns from experience elsewhere in the UK and in the wider world. I am determined to protect and develop the ability of local authorities to engage with local communities and work as locally as possible. We have learned from experience that our ability to act locally is best defended when local action can be complemented by regional action where the nature of the service demands this and where scarce resources need to be shared.

We need to ensure that we have consistent, resilient and accountable regional arrangements for the delivery of strategic land use planning, strategic transport planning and economic development. We were working with our partners in local government to enable this approach before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, but it is now all the more important as we seek ways to help Wales recover.

Collaboration is not new to local government, principal councils have been collaborating effectively in a range of areas for a long time. Several of these collaborations will be easily accommodated by the Corporate Joint Committees. Others require a less consistent approach across Wales and will continue to use existing governance arrangements.

Establishing Corporate Joint Committees through these regulations will provide more coherence and less complexity in the approach to regional governance arrangements in exercising the three functions proposed. Corporate Joint Committees offer opportunities to streamline existing collaboration arrangements, and provide the clarity and consistency I know principal councils have been seeking. The aim is to reduce complexity and duplication of effort and resource. I hope the establishment of these four Corporate Joint Committees will also provide the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local

democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources.

Local government Leaders and officers have been engaged throughout the development of the Corporate Joint Committee proposals and these regulations and I have welcomed and valued their input. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the constructive engagement which has shaped both the Bill and these regulations. I am committed to continuing to work with local government on implementing and further developing CJsCs and look forward to receiving thoughts and views through this consultation process so we can make sure we get this right.

Julie James MS
Minister for Housing and Local Government

SECTION ONE – Introduction

What are Corporate Joint Committees?

In contrast to other joint committee structures which exist in statute, Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) will be separate corporate bodies which can employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and undertake functions. A CJC when established will have specific functions vested in them.

CJCs will provide a more consistent approach by local government for strategic regional governance, planning and service delivery; offering a mechanism in which principal councils can work collaboratively and at scale to plan and deliver the key strategic functions that will be needed to respond to and recover from the recent Covid 19 pandemic. CJCs will build on the new behaviours, commitments and collaboration that has occurred during this time helping further develop and lock in the transformation of organisational working. CJCs will help to align the individual front line community based service delivery with the collaborative and strategic actions required at a regional scale to drive recovery, to re-build and to re-invest in modern local economies.

Background

The Minister for Housing and Local Government began discussing the concept of CJCs with local government Leaders through the Working Group on Local Government¹ (the Working Group) in early 2019. This Working Group had been established following the consultation on the Green Paper Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People² in 2018. The objective of the Working Group was to develop a sustainable future for local government and local services without recourse to the comprehensive mergers of principal councils which had been indicated in the Green Paper and opposed by local government.

As part of this, the Working Group reviewed existing regional working arrangements in local government and the appetite and priorities for increased future collaboration.

In June 2019, the Minister for Housing and Local Government published the recommendations of the Working Group³. The recommendations covered a number of areas including shared services, voluntary mergers, powers and flexibilities, diversity in local government, and the mutual respect agenda.

One of the key recommendations was related to the joint desire to create a consistent mechanism for regional working which would retain local democratic accountability; consistency of delivery; and simplification of collaborative arrangements:

Working Group on Local Government - Recommendation 3: That Welsh Ministers should include provisions within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill for a consistent mechanism for regional working.

¹ The Working Group on Local Government was created to develop a shared agenda for reform to ensure the sustainability of local service provision through appropriate structures and processes within the framework of democratic accountability

² [Consultation Outcome - Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People](#)

³ [Working Group on Local Government Recommendations](#)

In order to ensure the delivery of this recommendation, a Local Government Sub Group of the Partnership Council for Wales⁴ was established to provide the necessary leadership and oversight for this work.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill (the Bill) introduced into the Senedd in November 2019 included (in Part 5), as a response to the recommendations of the Working Group, provisions to create via regulations a vehicle for consistent regional collaboration between principal councils - CJsCs. The provisions also enable the constituent principal councils to invite participation by partners from other sectors in the work of CJsCs through a process of co-opted membership.

The constitutional and governance arrangements as well as the functions of the CJC will be set out in the regulations establishing them. The Bill sets out what the regulations will provide for to enable the effective establishment of CJsCs. However, the Bill does not detail the specific functions of a CJC or how it will be governed. This is all done via the regulations.

Part 5 of the Bill provides for the establishment, through regulations, of CJsCs by two routes:

- at the instigation of two or more principal councils. Two or more principal councils can request that the Welsh Ministers make regulations establishing a CJC for their areas in relation to any of the functions they exercise. The Bill sets out how this to be done and any conditions necessary.
- at the instigation of Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Ministers can establish a CJC to exercise functions without a request from principal councils, but only in relation to certain functions or functional areas which are specified on the face of the Bill.

This consultation is in relation to the establishment of CJsCs through the second route, that is, at the instigation of Welsh Ministers, in relation to the functions set out in Section 6. The consultation seeks views on the draft regulations – hereafter referred to as the Establishment Regulations.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government has confirmed her intention to bring forward regulations to establish the first CJsCs – that is one for each of the four regions described in Section Two below – by April 2021. The Bill provides that there must be consultation before Establishment Regulations can be made and that consultation can take place before commencement of the Bill. This formal consultation process therefore is taking place alongside the passage of the Bill through the Senedd and will be subject to that process.

⁴ The Local Government Sub Group of the Partnership Council was created to take forward a programme of work based on recommendations of the Working Group on Local Government and other issues related to local government reform

This consultation

This consultation is seeking your views on the draft Establishment Regulations which will create four regional CJsCs across Wales to exercise functions relating to strategic development planning and regional transport planning; they will also be able to do things to promote the economic well-being of their areas.

The aim is to ensure these Establishment Regulations provide for the core aspects of the establishment and operation of the four CJsCs, and are flexible enough to respond to the specific circumstances in each area. It is, therefore, important to recognise that the detail of implementation could differ between CJsCs.

Once established, and where the constituent principal councils wishes them to, these CJsCs would be able to exercise other functions in the future. It is important therefore that these Establishment Regulations provide the appropriate foundations to support this. Any future transfer of functions would be subject to further consultation and any necessary legislation at that time.

It is important to note for the purpose of this consultation that while there are four separate sets of Establishment Regulations, one for each CJC, the content of each separate set of regulations are substantially the same and we are therefore consulting on those regulations as one. Any reference to the Establishment Regulations, unless expressed otherwise, is a reference to all four draft sets of regulations. Similarly the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in Section 9 which accompany the regulations have been drafted as single documents relating to all four sets of Establishment Regulations.

Alongside the Establishment Regulations for each CJC there will be a set of regulations that will apply generally to all the CJsCs, setting out the detail of their governance and administrative arrangements and the legislative framework within which they will operate. Such regulations will be necessary to support the implementation of the Establishment Regulations. In this consultation paper where necessary these will be referred to as 'Regulations of General Application'. It is our intention to continue to work with local government on the content of the Regulations of General Application.

While these Regulations of General Application are not subject to this consultation, in order to put the Establishment Regulations in context, we have sought to indicate throughout what we think might be provided for within those Regulations of General Application, subject to the outcome of this consultation. This is not however intended to be a definitive or exhaustive description of the Regulations of General Application.

SECTION TWO – Approach to developing the regulations

Principles applied

Two key principles underpin the development of the Establishment Regulations for CJs:

- A CJC should be treated as a member of the ‘local government family’ and, where appropriate, should largely be subject to the same powers and duties as principal councils in the way that they operate. The intent is to avoid as far as possible making CJs do things in a manner that those in local government would be unfamiliar with or to create new and unfamiliar procedures, obligations, powers etc. which might increase administrative burdens
- The detail on how a CJC operates in practice should be left to the determination of the members of the CJC itself. This flexibility will enable the CJs to differ between geographical areas to meet the different needs and ambitions of their region.

Consultation Question One:

a) What are your views on CJs being subject to broadly the same powers and duties as principal councils?

b) Do you agree that CJs should have broadly the same governance and administrative framework as a principal council provided that this is proportionate? Please give your reasons.

c) Do you agree that members of CJs should have appropriate discretion on the detail of constitutional and operational arrangements? Please give your reasons.

Stakeholder engagement and co-production

The Minister for Housing and Local Government has held extensive discussions on the CJC proposals with local government Leaders, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and with wider public service stakeholders who will be impacted by the development of CJs. This co-development of the Establishment Regulations, and any accompanying Regulations of General Application, is aimed at ensuring they are fit for purpose and deliver on the intended outcomes of simplification and consistency of governance structures.

The mechanisms used for political engagement have included:

- The Working Group on Local Government
- The Partnership Council for Wales
- Local Government Sub Group of Partnership Council
- WLGA events including WLGA Executive Board, WLGA Council meetings, regular scheduled Ministerial meetings with the WLGA and meetings with a number of the WLGA political group Leaders
- Individual meetings with principal council Leaders
- Principal council Leaders in regional groupings

The Minister and officials have also engaged with Chief Executives via the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

In addition to political and Chief Executive engagement, there has also been joint working between officials to co-develop the detail which has informed these regulations. Such engagement has been forthcoming and welcomed by both Welsh Government and local government to ensure that the regulations meet the needs of principal councils, add value and do not unintentionally cut across other arrangements.

The Lawyers in Local Government Group (LLG) has been actively engaged on co-development of regulations relating to governance, audit, standards and scrutiny issues of CJs.

The Society of Welsh Treasurers (SWT) has been equally involved in considering detail of finance and funding regimes for CJs.

Local government and WLGA officers have also worked alongside Welsh Government officials in the functions to be transferred to a CJC. The opportunities and implications of the CJC model have been discussed in detail in order to help co-develop the Establishment Regulations and any Regulations of General Application.

From March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic slowed this engagement because of more urgent priorities to support local government in its planning and delivery of essential services, especially for the most vulnerable in society.

Engagement with local government on CJs was resumed in July with Leaders, with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the WLGA and local government officers, including LLG and SWT leads and also function-specific experts in areas such as transport and planning.

The Local Government Sub Group of the Partnership Council for Wales has provided oversight throughout the process, providing joint Ministerial and local government ownership.

Approach to determining the area of each CJC

The Bill allows for flexibility in relation to the area a CJC covers, and the Minister for Housing and Local Government has worked with local government Leaders to understand their desired footprint for the regional CJs being put in place under these first four sets of Establishment Regulations. It is important that this footprint was agreed with local government in order to provide an agreed baseline position for regional working that we can collectively build on for the future.

The WLGA political group Leaders wrote to the Minister in March 2020 to set out the local government view that the footprint for the CJs within these Establishment Regulations should be based on the existing city and growth deals geography.

Therefore, in line with the local government expressed preference, the Establishment Regulations have been prepared to reflect this request as follows:

CJC Area	Constituent Principal Councils	National Park Authorities*
Mid Wales	Ceredigion County Council Powys County Council	Brecon Beacons
South West Wales	Carmarthenshire County Council Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Pembrokeshire County Council Swansea County Council	Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast
North Wales	Conwy County Borough Council Denbighshire County Council Flintshire County Council Gwynedd Council Isle of Anglesey County Council Wrexham County Borough Council	Snowdonia
South East Wales	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Bridgend County Borough Council Caerphilly County Borough Council Cardiff Council Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Council Newport County Borough Council (more commonly known as Newport City Council) Rhondda, Cynon, Taff County Borough Council Torfaen County Borough Council The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council	Brecon Beacons

* As the Establishment Regulations include functions relating to strategic planning the regulations make provision about the membership of the committee by the National Park authority for that National Park. The National Parks have been included here to illustrate this membership.

Consultation Question Two:

These CJC areas have been agreed by local government Leaders as the most appropriate to reflect the functions being given to CJC's by these Establishment Regulations. Do you have any comments or observations on these CJC areas in relation to these functions or the future development of CJC's?

The content of the Establishment Regulations

The Establishment Regulations cover:

- The main governance and constitutional arrangements
- Finance, funding and budgetary matters
- Provisions for staffing and workforce
- The functions which will be exercised by the CJs

It is noted however that as these areas might overlap to a certain degree the regulations will not directly reflect these headings. However for the purpose of the consultation on the Establishment Regulations, the consultation has been set out against these four broad headings.

Regulations of General Application

As was indicated in the introduction, it is proposed that there will be Regulations of General Application to accompany and support the Establishment Regulations. The content of those regulations remains subject to the outcome of this consultation and ongoing discussions with local government. The Regulations of General Application, as with the Establishment Regulations, will be underpinned by the key principles in Section two, particularly the ambition for CJs to be treated as part of the 'local government family'.

The Establishment Regulations set out what each CJC can do and some of the key aspects of their governance, finance and staffing. The Regulations of General Application will deal with the detail of how they will work, and where and how existing local government legislation will apply to them.

Consultation Question Three:

- a) Do you agree with the approach to the development of the regulations for CJs as outlined in this consultation? Please give your reasons.**
- b) We have indicated throughout this document what may be included in the Regulations of General Application, subject to the outcome of this consultation. Whilst the Regulations of General Application are not the subject of this consultation, in order to inform their development we would welcome your views on anything else which should be covered?**

SECTION THREE – Governance and constitutional arrangements for CJs

The Establishment Regulations provide the core constitutional structure to enable the CJC to establish itself. This structure will need to be underpinned by further detail in the Regulations of General Application, for example in any proposed application (with or without modification) of relevant local government legislation.

Composition

The Establishment Regulations set out that each CJC will be comprised of a number of principal councils and the principal council areas combined will form the area of the CJC (the CJC areas set out in Section Two). The Establishment Regulations provide that a CJC will be run by a committee of its members and it will be the CJC which will be responsible for delivering the functions exercised by it and taking the necessary decisions required to deliver those functions. A CJC will be accountable to its constituent principal councils. Its members will report back to those principal councils and will respond to questions and scrutiny. However the CJC will have powers delegated to it and will make timely decisions without the need for ratification by its constituent principal councils.

Membership

In line with the requirements of Part 5 of the Bill, and previous discussions and consultation with local government, the Establishment Regulations provide that the CJs will comprise of the Leaders (defined in the regulations as the senior executive member) of the constituent councils. Each member will be a member of the CJC until they cease to be the Leader of the constituent council.

The Leaders will decide whether additional representatives from within its constituent councils or other organisations will be invited to be members of the CJC. The Establishment Regulations therefore provide the CJC with the flexibility to co-opt such members to the CJC as it may determine necessary and appropriate to exercise its functions effectively. A CJC will be able to determine / agree the terms of membership of any co-opted member – e.g. voting rights, role, contribution towards funding etc.

Where the function of preparing a Strategic Development Plan is to be a function of a CJC, and any part of a National Park is in the area of the CJC, the regulations must make provision about the membership of the committee by the National Park authority for that National Park. The Establishment Regulations include providing the CJs being established with the Strategic Development Plan functions. The Establishment Regulations therefore provide for membership of the relevant National Park authority on each of the four CJs.

It will be for the relevant National Park authority (or authorities in the case of the South West Wales CJC) to nominate the appropriate representative from either the Chair, Vice Chair of the National Park authority or Chair of the National Park authority Planning Committee. The membership of the National Park authority, as specified in the Establishment Regulations, is prescribed (and therefore limited) to the exercise of the Strategic Development Plan functions of the CJC only. However a CJC may decide to co-opt the National Park authority, under such terms as they see appropriate, to support the delivery of other functions should they wish.

Consultation Question Four:

- a) **Do you agree with the proposed approach to membership of CJsCs including co-opting of additional members? Please give your reasons.**
- b) **What are your views on the role proposed for National Park Authorities on CJsCs, as described above?**

It is proposed that the Regulations of General Application will expressly prohibit staff of a CJC being members of a CJC, one of its constituent principal councils or a member of the National Park Authority. This approach to disqualification is consistent with those relating to the disqualification of principal council staff in relation to the membership of principal councils.

Voting arrangements

A CJC will be established on a 'one member one vote' basis. However, the Establishment Regulations also provide for a CJC once established to be able to adopt alternative voting procedures should they wish to do so.

In developing the Establishment Regulations it was considered whether there should be a minimum or maximum number of members (including co-opted members) of a CJC. In order to maintain the maximum flexibility for CJsCs it was not considered that this would be appropriate. However the Establishment Regulations do provide that a CJC is limited in the number of co-opted members with votes, but only in so far as that the number of votes which may be cast by co-opted members may not exceed the number of votes cast by council members, or in relation to strategic planning functions, council members and the National Park member(s).

The Establishment Regulations also provide for a quorum of no fewer than 70% of the voting members. The quorum for principal councils is currently 25%. However in considering the issue of quorum for a CJC it was felt that it should be set at sufficiently high a level to balance the need for the CJC to be able to exercise its functions effectively and the need to ensure that decisions of the CJC are representative of the majority of the voting members. This ensures the democratic accountability of all voting members.

Consultation Question Five:

- a) **What are your views on the proposed approach of 'one member one vote' and the flexibility for CJsCs to adopt alternative voting procedures?**
- b) **What are your views on the proposed quorum for CJsCs?**
- c) **What are your views on the proposed approach to voting rights for co-opted members to a CJC?**

Sub committees

The Establishment Regulations provide that a CJC will be able to establish sub committees to support it to exercise its functions should it wish to do so.

It will be for each CJC to decide if it wishes to have sub-committees, and who sits on them. However it might be reasonable to expect (although it is not required) for a CJC to have sub-committees for each of its main functions and that these sub-committees might engage broadly and involve a range of relevant stakeholders.

With this in mind it will be possible for CJs' sub-committees to consist of members of the constituent principal councils other than those members on the CJC itself - for example a relevant member or relevant portfolio holder of the principal council's executive – though it should be possible for this to be the case, particularly for example where the Leader is also the relevant member.

Other partner organisations may also be invited/co-opted to be sub-committee members should a CJC wish to do so. Again the terms of such membership will be for the CJC to decide and agree with the partners being co-opted.

Consultation Question Six:

- a) What are your views on CJs being able to co-opt other members and/or appoint people to sit on sub-committees?**

Statutory guidance (issued under part 5 of the Bill) will provide further advice for CJs on consideration of wider involvement of partners in their work. The intention, as outlined in section seven, is for the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to apply to CJs as they do to its constituent councils and so the ways of working around collaboration, involvement and taking an integrated approach will be particularly important to consider.

Consultation Question Seven:

- a) Do you agree that the approach to co-option of members would enable wider engagement of stakeholders in the work of a CJC?**
- b) What might be needed to support CJC members in the involvement and engagement of appropriate stakeholders in their work?**

Standing orders

It is proposed that the Establishment Regulations require that a CJC must make standing orders for the regulation of its proceedings and business. The Establishment Regulations include some core requirements for standing orders, for example regulation of the CJs procedures. Subject to the outcome of this consultation we would expect any further detail on what the standing orders must provide for could be set out in the Regulations of General Application, for example approaches to appointing staff or dealing with issues of misconduct.

Code of conduct

The Establishment Regulations require all CJs to adopt a code of conduct for its members and staff. Subject to the outcome of this consultation the detail of the content of such a code may be provided for in the Regulations of General Application. For example this might include ensuring CJs are relevant authorities for the purposes of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000, which will bring them within the ethical framework for local government which that Act establishes. This would also bring them into the scope of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

Consultation Question Eight:

- a) Do you agree that members and staff of a CJC should be subject to a Code of Conduct and that the code should be similar to that of Principal Councils? Please give your reasons.**
- b) What are your views on the adoption of a Code of Conduct for co-opted members?**
- c) Should all co-opted members be covered by a code i.e. those with and without voting rights?**

Liability of members

A CJC is a corporate body in its own right and the members will be taking decisions on functions which are theirs and theirs alone. In light of this, in the event of a claim or legal action we believe it would be inappropriate for liability to be allocated / apportioned to each constituent council. A CJC should therefore be required to indemnify its members (have its own indemnity) for the decisions they take. The CJC should hold the liability, rather than individual members, employees or others discharging functions on their behalf. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, such matters are likely to be included in the Regulations of General Application.

Scrutiny and governance

In presenting the proposals for CJCs it is considered important that the structure and approach to a CJC seeks to maintain and support the democratic accountability of local government.

The Establishment Regulations provide that each CJC is required to put in place appropriate scrutiny arrangements. Such arrangements should be at the discretion of the CJC. The Establishment Regulations also require that a CJC has an Audit and Governance Committee. Through the Regulations of General Application, and subject to the outcome of this consultation, it will be necessary to ensure that any scrutiny committee has the appropriate powers and safeguards, for example as is provided for in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000; and also the relevant requirements to take in to account the views of the public and a duty on the CJC to respond, for example section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000 and section 62 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. We also believe that the Regulations of General Application should include provision so that any scrutiny committee does not include a member of the CJC (or one of its sub-committees), that it could include members (including non-executive members) of the constituent principal councils, that scrutiny committees will be able to source independent advice from experts and that membership should seek to take account of political balance in the constituent principal councils.

As well as having scrutiny arrangements we consider it appropriate that a CJC should be subject to more general oversight of their work. Section Four below for example includes matters relating to CJCs and the Auditor General.

In addition it might be considered appropriate for CJC to be subject to the same performance and governance regime as principal councils, as is included in Part 6 of

the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, for example to undertake annual self-assessments on their performance and to seek external views through a panel of peers on their performance. This would be addressed in the Regulations of General Application.

Ancillary Powers

To complement the specific functions transferred to the CJC the Establishment Regulations, also provide the CJC with the power to do anything to facilitate or which is incidental or conducive to the exercise of its functions.

SECTION FOUR – Finance, funding and budgetary matters

The approach to finance, funding and budgetary matters in the regulations has been developed to reflect discussions with the Partnership Council Finance Sub Group (FSG) and Distribution Sub Group (DSG), with the Society of Welsh Treasurers and representatives of the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA).

The development of these regulations has been undertaken in line with the Good Practice Guide on Hypothecated Funding for Local Government and the guidance in the Legislation Handbook on assessing (and making provision for) the financial implications of primary legislation.

The Establishment Regulations make provisions relating to the funding of a corporate joint committee. Broadly speaking the Establishment Regulations make provision requiring a CJC to calculate its budget requirement, sets out how that requirement is to be met and requiring the CJC to keep proper accounts.

The Establishment Regulations require that a CJC calculates its budget requirements for each financial year to include the amounts required to exercise its functions; as well as for contingencies, for reserves, and outstanding liabilities. The intention is that a CJC must be sufficiently funded to deliver its specified functions/activities, including expenditure associated with administrative costs and overheads.

In calculating its budget requirements the Establishment Regulations require a CJC to take into account any amounts it estimates it will receive from sources other than its constituent councils and National Park members. Where the estimated expenditure for each annual year exceeds the funding received from other sources this will form the budget requirement of the CJC.

The Establishment Regulations require the CJC to calculate its budget requirement annually by 14 February preceding the relevant financial period. This is to align with the principal council budget setting process.

In practice the constituent principal councils will require the CJC to provide an indicative or provisional budget requirement to facilitate their own budget preparations. Although not provided for in regulations, the constituent principal councils may request this by 30 November preceding the relevant financial period (in line with current practices) and a CJC should be prepared for this.

In terms of the first year of operation however it will not be possible for a CJC to set its budget in this way. It may also be difficult for a CJC to ascertain what its initial budget may be as it will depend on its ambition in exercising its functions in its first year. It is proposed therefore for the Establishment Regulations to provide a reasonable timescale to set the first year's budget requirement, that is, within two months following the first meeting.

The Establishment Regulations do not prescribe any formula basis for funding of a CJC. The Establishment Regulations provide that the CJC will decide how the budget requirement will be met by the constituent principal councils (or in the case of the strategic planning functions by the National Park authority and the constituent principal councils.)

In the absence of unanimous agreement by the constituent councils and National Park member(s) on the amount payable), the establishment regulations provide for the amounts payable by the constituent principal councils (and National Park authority) to be directed by Welsh Ministers.

Consultation Question Nine

- a) **What are your views on the proposed approach for determining the budget requirements of a CJC?**
- b) **What are your views on the timescales proposed (including for the first year) for determining budget requirements payable by the constituent principal councils?**

The CJC will be the accountable body for the funding provided from constituent principal councils and or directly received from any other funding streams

The Establishment Regulations enable CJCs to pay towards expenditure incurred or to be incurred in relation to carrying out its functions as it may determine. A CJC is also enabled to charge fees relating its specified functions. The regulations also enable CJCs to provide assistance by way of grant or contributions, to include repayable assistance, to support functions exercisable by them.

The Establishment Regulations require CJCs to keep proper accounting records and to prepare annual accounts in accordance with Welsh Ministers directions. It is proposed that these directions and the Regulations of General Application will ensure that CJCs are subject to the usual principal council checks and balances – including the financial duties and rules which require councils to act prudently in spending, which are overseen and checked by a Responsible Chief Finance Officer, and to ensure transparency, that annual accounts are published. For example the Regulations of General Application might require a CJC to follow proper (accounting) practices such as those specified by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, as amended or reissued from time to time.

The funding from constituent principal councils will be held and managed by the CJC. It is proposed that the Regulations of General Application will require the CJC to manage the funds under the same financial management arrangements as local government bodies in Wales. This might include for example, being subject to appropriate accounting and audit arrangements, as set out in the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, and in compliance with the mandatory Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Such an approach will provide independent and objective assurance regarding the effectiveness of the CJC's risk management, control and governance processes.

The intention is that through the Regulations of General Application all funding decisions taken by the CJC will be subject to review through annual external audit, which will undertake cost benefit analysis and assess the extent to which resources have been used economically, efficiently and effectively in delivering its services and activities. This will be in addition to the requirements on performance and governance set out in part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which are also intended to apply.

Consultation Question Ten

- a) Do you agree that CJs should be subject to the same requirements as principal councils in terms of accounting practices? Please give your reasons.**

- b) Do you agree that the detail of how a CJC is to manage its accounting practices should be included in the Regulations of General Application? If not what more would be needed in the Establishment Regulations?**

SECTION FIVE – Staffing and workforce matters for CJs

The approach to staffing and workforce matters has been developed to reflect the discussions at Partnership Council's Local Government Sub-Group and with principal council HR Directors and reflects the key principles set out in Section Two.

The Establishment Regulations provide for CJs to be able to employ and recruit staff in their own right; make agreements to place staff at the disposal of other devolved Welsh Authorities and have staff placed at the CJC's disposal; and undertake secondments (in and out) to enable CJs to discharge their functions. The intention is that there is flexibility for each CJC to determine the approach it takes to staffing, and for that approach to evolve over time as CJs potentially take on further operational as well as strategic functions.

As part of the approach to treating CJs as part of the 'local government family' the Regulations of General Application will seek to ensure that the provisions in law relating to staffing which apply to principal councils will also apply to CJs. It is important in this regard that any legislation which is applied to CJs provides any necessary rights for, and obligations on, the individual (or does not impose lesser rights or obligations) how-so-ever employed by the CJC (direct employment, secondment, loan, contract etc.).

It is intended that the detail which underpins the employment or loan of staff will sit within the Regulations of General Application with a view to ensuring that as publicly employed individuals officers of a CJC are:

- subject to the same / similar requirements of transparency / accountability etc. as employees of principal councils or any other public appointments.
- afforded similar or the same benefits as officers of principal councils
- subject to the same / similar restrictions on political activities (CJC will be required to have a code of conduct for employees).
- indemnified in the discharge of their duties on behalf of the CJC.

Terms and conditions

It is not intended that the terms and conditions for staff employed by the CJC be left entirely to the discretion of the CJC as they are to a principal council. The Establishment Regulations therefore provide that staff employed by the CJC are to be appointed on the same or similar terms and condition (including conditions as to remuneration) as officers appointed to one of the constituent councils undertaking substantially similar or the same responsibilities. Such matters will be determined by the CJC.

The aim is to ensure that CJs do not adopt significantly different arrangements to the majority of their constituent principal councils, supporting the interchange of staff and collaborative working where possible. This approach will also ensure that a CJC is not used as a vehicle to erode (or indeed inflate) pay structures through the transfer of staff / functions to a CJC and where there is deviation / difference such deviation / difference is clear and transparent.

Where not otherwise provided for within the adopted terms and conditions it is the policy intent that the Regulations of General Application will require a CJC to prepare, annually, a statement setting out the authority's policies on the remuneration of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.

Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) and Staff transfers

The draft Establishment Regulations provide that where a member of staff appointed by a CJC has been transferred to a CJC from a constituent council, TUPE principles will apply.

This is not intended to predetermine if a CJC should directly employ the staff required to undertake a function – the nature of the staffing (employed, loaned or contracted) should remain a matter for the CJC to decide.

This approach is in line with The Code of Practice on Workforce Matters⁵ (also known as the 'two tier code'). It is intended that the two tier code will be applied to a CJC itself, via the Regulations of General Application, and to any relationship between a principal council and a CJC in the delivery of its functions (save where otherwise covered by regulations).

Consultation Question Eleven:

What are your views on the proposed approach to staffing and workforce matters?

Executive Officers

The Establishment Regulations require a CJC to appoint a number of statutory "executive officers" namely a Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Governance Officer. The intention in this case is for a CJC to be able to directly employ, commission services or have relevant staff loaned from a constituent council to fulfil these roles as the CJC may determine.

The detail around the roles and responsibilities of these Executive Officers would be similar to the roles within principal councils, and subject to the outcome of this consultation the detail would be contained within the Regulations of General Application. For example:

- **Chief Executive** – The Regulations of General Application are likely to provide that the Chief Executive of a CJC will be subject to the same rules, procedures and proceedings as a Chief Executive of a principal council. The Remuneration of a Chief Executive of a CJC will be subject to the same arrangements as for a Chief Executive of a principal council i.e. be subject to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

⁵ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/circular-code-of-practice-on-workforce-matters.pdf>

- **Monitoring Officer** - The Regulations of General Application are likely to provide that the Monitoring Officer of a CJC operate in the same or similar way to that outlined for 'relevant authorities' in s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Depending on the arrangements for the ethical framework relating to members of the CJC who are members of principal councils or national park authorities and co-opted members this officer may also play an equivalent role to that set out in Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- **Chief Financial Officer** - The Regulations of General Application are likely to require a CJC to ensure the effective use of public money and have responsibility for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Responsible Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for reporting on the financial management and assurance of the CJC.
- **Chief Governance Officer** (interim title) - The Regulations of General Application are likely to provide for the role of the Chief Governance Officer - a role equivalent to a Head of Democratic Services for principal councils. It is not intended however for a CJC to be required to have a Democratic Services Committee, and therefore the regulations will not apply / extend any of the related functions / roles within the Local Government Measure 2011 to the Chief Governance Officer of a CJC.

It is intended that all executive roles within a CJC will be afforded the same statutory protection and indemnity as principal council statutory officers.

Consultation Question Twelve:

What are your views in relation to CJCs being required to have or have access to statutory "executive officers"?

Standing Orders

The Establishment Regulations require CJCs to adopt standing orders to govern its proceedings and business (so far as not regulated by the Establishment Regulations). Such standing orders might include the procedures for the appointment and dismissal of, and taking disciplinary action against, a member of staff of the CJC (how-so-ever appointed). The detail of what is required within the standing orders however, subject to the outcome of this consultation, will be included in the Regulations of General Application.

Trade Unions

Trade Union recognition by public bodies in Wales is a Ministerial priority. We would therefore expect that CJCs would work under the same Social Partnership approach that exists between Trade Unions and principal councils. We would welcome views on how this might be achieved, for example through guidance or the adoption of a constituent councils Terms and Conditions.

Consultation Question Thirteen:

Do you have any other views on provision for staffing or workforce matters within the establishment regulations?

SECTION SIX – The functions to be exercised by the CJs

The Establishment Regulations set out which functions the CJs being established will exercise.

In the first instance all four of the CJs established in these regulations will be exercising the following functions:

- The function of preparing, monitoring, reviewing and revising of a Strategic Development Plan (SDP). These functions are set out in Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Bill).
- The function of developing a Regional Transport Plan – that is the functions of developing policies for transport in, to and from the CJC area and developing policies for implementing the Wales Transport Strategy. These functions are set out in the Transport Act 2000.
- The economic well-being function as provided for in Part 5 the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. That is the power to do anything which the CJC considers is likely to promote or improve the economic wellbeing of its area. This will enable the principal councils, should they wish, to evolve the current regional approaches to the City and Growth deals into the CJC structures.

While the Bill provides for improving education to be one of the functions that Welsh Ministers can specify a CJC exercises this function is not provided for in these Establishment Regulations. Welsh Ministers have been clear that consideration of the role of CJs in the area of improving education is something that would evolve over time and further discussion was required with principal councils about the desired approach.

However, as previously stated, the constituent councils of these CJs may apply to Welsh Ministers to have the function of improving education (or any of their other functions) conferred on their CJC once the relevant provisions in the Bill enabling an application by principal councils to be made have commenced. In future, therefore, there may be divergence in what each of these CJC does. Any future proposals to add (including to omit or modify) principal council functions to a CJC would be subject to formal consultation as set out in the Bill.

In the case of the economic well-being power, and in relation to future functions that a CJC may exercise, it may be necessary for a CJC and its constituent councils to operate the powers concurrently. The CJC will need to agree a process with its constituent principal councils for agreeing how this might operate in practice including but not limited to the specific activities within the scope of the agreement, how agreement will be achieved, reviewed and how disputes may be resolved.

Arrangements for managing concurrent functions are not provided for in regulations. This is a matter for each CJC in response to local and regional needs and is in line with the approach to enable flexibility and local determination where possible. The Welsh Government intends to provide guidance to CJs and its constituent principal councils on this matter.

In relation to the strategic planning function, the details of the procedures for making and revising strategic development plans will be set out in the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021, a consultation on which is being undertaken in parallel with this consultation. Should you wish to make any representations about those procedures, please do so via that consultation.

Consultation Question Fourteen:

- a) Is it clear what functions the CJsCs will exercise as a result of these establishment regulations? If not, why?**
- b) Do the establishment regulations need to say more on concurrence, if so what else is needed, or should that be left to local determination?**
- c) In your view are there any functions which might be appropriate to add to these CJsCs in the future? If yes, what?**

Discharge of functions

We intend to ensure that a CJC can arrange for the discharge of its functions as it sees fit except where decisions cannot be delegated from a CJC (see below). This could be through sub-committees, officers, other CJsCs, other principal councils and joint committees.

The Establishment Regulations explicitly address some of this, for example providing for the establishment of sub committees and enabling delegation of functions to them. However it is likely that much of the detail will be included in the Regulations of General Application. We would want to ensure a CJC has a scheme of delegation similar to that required of principal councils under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The content of the scheme of delegation will be for the CJC to determine and it might include delegation to sub-committees, CJC members and / or staff appointed to deliver the functions of a CJC (howsoever appointed).

We have already discussed that the Establishment Regulations enable CJsCs to adopt a sub-committee model should it wish to do so including to delegate some of its functions. It would be for the CJC to determine the arrangements, including membership and voting rights, of its sub-committees as it sees fit.

While there is broad discretion on what a CJC can chose to delegate to a sub-committee we believe there are a small number of decisions which need to be made by the CJC itself. For example: agreement of budgets; the adoption or approval of plans or strategies (including the Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan); and consideration of any reports required by statute. It might be appropriate for the Establishment Regulations therefore to prevent the delegation of such matters and we would welcome your view on this as part of this consultation.

Consultation Question Fifteen:

Do you think the regulations should provide for anything to be a decision reserved to the CJC rather than delegated to a sub-committee? If so what?

Approach to transfer of the exercise of these functions

The Establishment Regulations provide that a number of functions currently being exercised by individual principal councils will now be exercised by these CJsCs.

It will be important to understand the implications of the transfer of the exercise of these functions in terms of staff and resources and to consider how the transfer of the functions can proceed in an efficient and effective way. In line with the co-development approach which we have adopted to date, the Welsh Government will wish to work with principal councils, and the CJsCs once established, to support this transition process.

As an example, principal councils are currently responsible for developing local transport plans, and the function of preparing a transport plan will be transferred to each of the CJsCs to undertake on a regional basis – a Regional Transport Plan. Arrangements will need to be put in place to ensure an effective transition from local to regional arrangements.

It may be that in certain circumstances the transfer of the exercise of a function, and therefore the point at which the CJC is required to undertake that function, may be later than the point at which the CJsCs are established. This would also allow for a period of implementation and for the CJC to establish itself, as discussed later in this document.

For strategic planning there are no existing arrangements in place at a regional level so they do not give rise to the same need for transition arrangements. A CJC will be expected to commence delivery of these functions as soon as is reasonably practicable and as soon as the procedural regulations are made. It is important to note that principal councils will retain their existing function of preparing local development plans.

CJsCs will also have the economic well-being function from the point at which they are established. It is recognised that there are existing structures and arrangements at a regional level which promote and encourage economic well-being and it will be for the CJC and its constituent councils to consider the transition of existing regional arrangements such as the City / growth deals should they chose to bring these activities within the remit of their CJC. However, we would be interested to consider how the Welsh Government might be able to facilitate or support any transfer in this regard. We would welcome views as part of this consultation, particularly what issues might require resolving in moving from the current Joint Committee approach to a CJC

Consultation Question Sixteen:

What are your views on the approach to transfer of the exercise of functions to these CJsCs?

SECTION SEVEN – CJs and duties as a Public Body

As has been discussed previously one of the underlying principles in the development of the regulations establishing CJs is that CJs should be treated as part of the 'local government family' in determining how they should operate.

The intention is that CJs should also be treated more generally as a 'public body' and would therefore be captured by, or required to meet duties under, a number of existing pieces of legislation.

This might include for example:

- **The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** – which provides for a single principle ('the sustainable development principle') to guide the exercise of functions of specified public bodies to consider how they are meeting the needs of current generations without compromising future generations, to better address long term challenges such as inequalities of outcome.
- **The Equality Act 2010** - which makes it unlawful to discriminate against those persons with a protected characteristic under the 2010 Act. The Act places a 'due regard' duty (Public Sector Equality Duty) on public bodies to ensure that advancement of equality of opportunity is a key consideration when carrying out their functions. The Act also provides for a Socio-Economic Duty (proposed for commencement in Wales in 2021) which requires specified public bodies, to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.
- **The Welsh Language Standards** – which gives Welsh-speakers improved, enforceable rights in relation to the Welsh language. They do this by imposing standards on organisations in relation to service provision, policy making, operations, promotion and record keeping.
- **The Environment Act 1995** - which places a duty on certain public bodies to have regard to the purposes for which National Parks were designated.
- **The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Section 6)** – which requires a public authority to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems,
- **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** – which makes provision about contributing to the eradication of child poverty, and about arrangements for the participation of children in decisions that might affect them.

Where possible, and subject to the requirements of the relevant legislation, the application of relevant legislation in this case will be done through the Regulations of General Application rather than the Establishment Regulations. However we would welcome your views on the intended approach.

Consultation Question Seventeen:

What are your views on CJs being subject to wider public body duties as described above?

SECTION EIGHT – Implementation

The Establishment Regulations require that each of the CJs established must hold its first meeting by the end of September 2021.

Although it will be possible for a CJC to meet as soon as these Establishment Regulations come into force, it is accepted that a CJC will not be fully operational on day one and that it will take a short period of time for a CJC to take the necessary decisions, to make the necessary arrangements, and to develop its capacity to be able to exercise its functions effectively.

For example it is likely that the early meetings will focus on matters such as the election of the chair and deputy chair, appointing statutory officers, adopting codes of conduct and standing orders, agreeing wider membership and any committee structures and putting in place appropriate financial systems.

The frequency of meetings will be left to each CJC to consider as is appropriate to their own requirements and it may be that the frequency of meetings change as the CJC evolves and becomes more established.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government has previously committed in discussion with the Partnership Council, Local Government sub group to support local government in establishing these CJs. Subject to agreement this might include supporting CJs in meeting their set up costs in the short term as was recommended in independent research commissioned to support the development of the RIA which accompanies this consultation⁶. It might also be appropriate to provide some support in advance of any CJC being established to support the transition process.

Consultation Question Eighteen:

- a) **The Welsh Government is keen to continue working closely with local government and others on the establishment and implementation of CJs. Do you have any views on how best we can achieve this?**
- b) **In your view, what core requirements / components need to be in place to ensure a CJC is operational, and exercising its functions effectively?**
- c) **In particular, what do you think needs to be in place prior to a CJC meeting for the first time, on the day of its first meeting and thereafter?**

Guidance

It is recognised that whilst regional working is not new for local government the CJC model is. It may be helpful therefore to provide guidance to support the establishment of CJs. Initially the intention would be to focus on guidance around the constitutional, governance, finance and staffing arrangements with function specific guidance provided at a later date as and when required.

⁶ [Collaboration between local authorities in Wales Report](#)

The approach to the development of the CJC model to date has been one of co-development and collaboration with local government. The intention is to continue with this approach in the implementation of the Establishment regulations and in the development of any guidance to CJsCs.

Consultation Question Nineteen:

- a) Do you think it would be helpful for the Welsh Government to provide guidance on the establishment and operation of CJsCs?**
- b) Are there any particular areas which should be covered by the guidance?**

General

Consultation Question Twenty:

- a) How can the Welsh Government best support principal councils to establish CJsCs?**
- b) Are there areas the Welsh Government should prioritise for support?**
- c) Is there anything that CJsCs should/should not be doing that these Establishment Regulations do not currently provide for?**

SECTION NINE – Supporting Documents

To help assess the potential impact of establishing the CJsCs outlined above we have published the following draft documents in support of the regulations:

- A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)
- An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Regulatory Impact Assessment

The Regulatory Impact Assessment assesses the potential costs and savings, and the benefits and dis-benefits associated with establishing, through regulations, these CJsCs.

The options that have been considered in preparing the RIA are:

- Option 1 – Do nothing. That is that the policy is not implemented, regulations are not made and CJsCs are not established.
- Option 2 – Implement the policy and establish CJsCs by regulations.

The RIA focusses on the core administrative costs of establishing and operating a CJC and the delivery of the functions specified in the regulations. The RIA has been presented to reflect the scope for local discretion that the regulations provide. Much of the costs within the RIA will depend on the decisions made by each CJC in the way that it operates and governs itself within the flexibilities the regulations allow.

The RIA therefore presents a range of estimated costs set around a possible minimum and maximum which seek to reflect the flexibilities and that give a sense of the potential costs associated with the range of administrative arrangements which CJsCs could put in place. It has not been possible to assess definitively all potential costs, particularly on all stakeholders, but we would expect CJsCs to consider the costs and benefits and impacts on different stakeholders prior to taking action.

A breakdown of the assumptions which underpin the RIA can be found in paragraphs 12-32 of the RIA, and a breakdown of the costs and benefits can be found in paragraph 43-145 of the RIA.

Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment Summary has been undertaken to assess the most significant impacts, positive and negative of establishing these CJsCs via regulations. A summary of the conclusions of this assessment has been published as part of this consultation along with details on the monitoring and evaluation of the proposal.

We would welcome your views on the context of these document, especially the Regulatory Impact Assessment as to determine if the costs and benefits provided are fair and reasonable.

Consultation Question Twenty One:

- a) Do you agree with our approach to, and assessment of, the likely impacts of the regulations? Please explain your response.**
- b) Do you have any additional/alternative data to help inform the final assessment of costs and benefits contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment? If yes, please provide details.**

**Consultation
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Email / telephone number:

Your address:

Summary of consultation questions

Consultation Question One:

- a) **What are your views on CJsCs being subject to broadly the same powers and duties as principal councils?**
- b) **Do you agree that CJsCs should have broadly the same governance and administrative framework as a principal council provided that this is proportionate? Please give your reasons.**
- c) **Do you agree that members of CJsCs should have appropriate discretion on the detail of constitutional and operational arrangements? Please give your reasons.**

Consultation Question Two:

These CJC areas have been agreed by local government Leaders as the most appropriate to reflect the functions being given to CJsCs by these Establishment Regulations. Do you have any comments or observations on these CJC areas in relation to these functions or the future development of CJsCs?

Consultation Question Three:

- a) **Do you agree with the approach to the development of the regulations for CJsCs as outlined in this consultation? Please give your reasons.**
- b) **We have indicated throughout this document what may be included in the Regulations of General Application, subject to the outcome of this consultation. Whilst the Regulations of General Application are not the subject of this consultation, in order to inform their development we would welcome your views on anything else which should be covered?**

Consultation Question Four:

- a) **Do you agree with the proposed approach to membership of CJsCs including co-opting of additional members? Please give your reasons.**
- b) **What are your views on the role proposed for National Park Authorities on CJsCs, as described above?**

Consultation Question Five:

- a) **What are your views on the proposed approach of 'one member one vote' and the flexibility for CJsCs to adopt alternative voting procedures?**
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- b) **What might be needed to support CJC members in the involvement and engagement of appropriate stakeholders in their work?**

Consultation Question Eight:

- a) **Do you agree that members and staff of a CJC should be subject to a Code of Conduct and that the code should be similar to that of Principal Councils? Please give your reasons.**
- b) **What are your views on the adoption of a Code of Conduct for co-opted members?**
- c) **Should all co-opted members be covered by a code i.e. those with and without voting rights?**

Consultation Question Nine

- a) **What are your views on the proposed approach for determining the budget requirements of a CJC?**
- b) **What are your views on the timescales proposed (including for the first year) for determining budget requirements payable by the constituent principal councils?**

Consultation Question Ten

- a) **Do you agree that CJsCs should be subject to the same requirements as principal councils in terms of accounting practices? Please give your reasons.**
- b) **Do you agree that the detail of how a CJC is to manage its accounting practices should be included in the Regulations of General Application? If not what more would be needed in the Establishment Regulations?**

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What are your views on the proposed approach to staffing and workforce matters?

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Welsh Language Questions

Consultation Question Twenty Two:

- a) We would like to know your views on the effects that establishment of CJsCs would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- b) What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Consultation Question Twenty Three:

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy for the establishment of CJsCs could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

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