*CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL*
# *RHONDDA CYNON TAF*
**COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Bydd cyfarfod o'r CABINET yn cael ei gynnal yn**
**Rhithwir**
**Dydd Iau, 27ain Ionawr, 2022 am 11.00 am**

**Dolen gyswllt: Sarah Daniel – Uned Busnes y Cyngor**
**(Rhif ffôn. 07385086169)**

**Os bydd cynghorwyr neu aelodau o'r cyhoedd yn dymuno cael cyfle i annerch y Cabinet am unrhyw fater ar yr agenda isod, rhaid iddyn nhw ofyn am gael gwneud hynny erbyn canol Dydd Mawrth, 25 Ionawr 2022. Rhaid iddyn nhw hefyd gadarnhau ai yn y Gymraeg neu yn y Saesneg y byddan nhw'n annerch.**

**Nodwch mai'r Cadeirydd biau'r penderfyniad i ganiatáu'r cais am annerch y Cabinet. Bydd pob cais yn cael ei ystyried ar sail y materion sy'n cael eu trafod ar yr agenda, buddiant y cyhoedd/y Cynghorydd ynglŷn â phob mater, a'r gofynion o ran y materion sydd i'w trafod ar y diwrnod hwnnw. I wneud cais, anfonwch e-bost i [UnedBusnesGweithredolaRheoleiddiol@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:UnedBusnesGweithredolaRheoleiddiol@rctcbc.gov.uk)**

### MATERION I'W TRAFOD

1. **DATGAN BUDDIANT**

   Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau yn unol â'r 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, mae **rhaid** iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. **COFNODION**

   Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd ar 13 Rhagfyr 2021 yn rhai cywir.

   **(Tudalennau 5 - 16)**

3. **CYLLIDEB REFENIW Y CYNGOR AR GYFER 2022/23**

Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol mewn perthynas â Setliad Llywodraeth Leol 2022/2023 a chanlyniadau cam 1 o ymgynghoriad y gyllideb, i gynorthwyo gyda'i drafodaethau wrth lunio'r strategaeth cyllideb refeniw ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2022/23.

4. **TREFNIANT ARFAETHEDIG I DDOD Â'R CYNLLUN DATBLYGU LLEOL DIWYGIEDIG PRESENNOL I BEN A PHARATOI CYNLLUN DATBLYGU LLEOL DIWYGIEDIG NEWYDD**

Trafod papur trafod y Cyfarwyddwr Ffyniant a Datblygu ar gynnydd y Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Diwygiedig.

5. **STRATEGAETH ATAL AR GYFER PLANT SY'N DERBYN GOFAL**

Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant o ran y strategaeth atal ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal.

6. **TRAWSNEWID GWASANAETHAU'R BLYNYDDOEDD CYNNAR YN RHCT**

Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant ar y cynnydd sydd wedi'i wneud ledled rhanbarth Cwm Taf Morgannwg o ran darparu system y blynyddoedd cynnar integredig yn rhan o Raglen Trawsnewid y Blynyddoedd Cynnar Llywodraeth Cymru a thrawsnewid gwasanaethau'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar yn RhCT.

7. **CANLLAWIAU NEWYDD I GYNHALWYR DI-DÂL YN Y GWEITHLE**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant

8. **CYD-BWYLLGOR CORFFORAETHOL – DIWEDDARIAD**

Trafod papur trafod y Prif Weithredwr ar gyflwyno Cyd-bwyllgorau Corfforaethol fel sydd wedi'i nodi yn Neddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021.

9. **ADNODDAU RHEOLI DIOGELWCH TOMENNI**

   Trafod papur trafod y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen sy'n ceisio cymeradwyaeth y Cabinet i sefydlu Carfan Rheoli Diogelwch Tomenni bwrpasol yn rhan o Wasanaethau Rheng Flaen.

10. **TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R CYNNIG ISOD YN BENDERFYNIAD**

    "Bod y cyfarfod hwn yn cadw aelodau o'r wasg ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd allan o ystafell y cyfarfod, dan Adran 100A(4) o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol (fel y'i diwygiwyd), yn ystod trafod yr agendwm nesaf, ar y sail y byddai'n debygol o olygu datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig yn ôl diffiniad paragraff 14 o Ran 4 o Atodlen 12A o'r Ddeddf."

11. **CYNLLUN RHEOLI ASEDAU CORFFORAETHOL – DIWEDDARIAD INTERIM**

    Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr Eiddo'r Cyngor ar y cynnydd wedi'i wneud yn erbyn themâu allweddol Cynllun Rheoli Asedau Corfforaethol 2018/23.

12. **REAL LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION**

    Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant; Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adnoddau Dynol a Chyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol ar weithredu'r cynnydd cynnar yn y Cyflog Byw Gwirioneddol ar gyfer darparwyr gofal cymdeithasol i oedolion y sector annibynnol yn Rhondda Cynon Taf ac unrhyw staff y Cyngor sydd wedi'u heffeithio gan y cynnydd, o 1 Chwefror 2022.

13. **DILEU DYLEDION NAD OES MODD EU CASGLU**

    Trafod papur trafod Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol ar ddyledion nad oes modd eu casglu, a'r gofyniad i ddileu symiau penodol yn unol â meini prawf adolygu llym.

14. **MATERION BRYS**

    Trafod unrhyw faterion brys y mae'r Cadeirydd yn eu gweld yn briodol.

**Cyfarwyddwr Materion Cyfathrebu a Phennaeth Dros Dro'r Gwasanaethau Llywodraethol**

**Cylchrediad:-**

**Y Cynghorwyr:**    Y Cynghorydd A Morgan (Cadeirydd)
Y Cynghorydd M Webber (Is-gadeirydd)
Y Cynghorydd R Bevan
Y Cynghorydd J Bonetto
Y Cynghorydd G Caple
Y Cynghorydd A Crimmings
Y Cynghorydd R Lewis
Y Cynghorydd C Leyshon
Y Cynghorydd  M Norris

**Swyddogion:**    Chris Bradshaw, Prif Weithredwr
Barrie Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol
Gaynor Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant
Louise Davies, Cyfarwyddwr – Iechyd a Diogelwch y Cyhoedd, a Gwasanaethau'r Gymuned
Richard Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol
Simon Gale, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu
Neil Griffiths, Head Of Financial Services - Community & Children's Services
Paul Griffiths, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Gwella
Christian Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Derek James, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu
Paul Mee, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant
David Powell, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo'r Cyngor
Andy Wilkins, Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET**
Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 13 December 2021 at 10.30 am Hybrid.

**County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance: -**

**Council Chamber**
Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber
Councillor R Lewis

**Virtual**
Councillor R Bevan    Councillor M Norris
Councillor A Crimmings    Councillor J Rosser
Councillor G Hopkins    Councillor C Leyshon

**Officers in attendance: -**

**Council Chamber**
Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development

**Virtual**
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr R Waters
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr A Griffiths, Service Director – Highways & Engineering
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms A Richards, Temporary Service Director - 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services

**82    Declaration of Interest**

Cllr R Lewis declared a personal interest item 8 as Governor of YGG Abercynon

**83    Minutes**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 15 November 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

**84    Cabinet Work Programme**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet Members with the updated work programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year which was also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 9th December 2021

He advised members that the following reports for consideration by Cabinet had been updated and this would reflect in the decision notice:

- Library Strategy and Action Plan added to March 2022
- Town Centre Strategy postponed to February 2022
- Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) postponed to February 2022

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the Work Programme for the 2021-22 Municipal Year with the amendments and receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

85      **Proposals for the Regeneration of Penrhys**

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report to members which set out the work being undertaken to explore options for the regeneration of the Penrhys Estate and surrounding area.  Members of the Cabinet were also asked to agree a framework for taking the work forward in partnership with Trivallis and the Prince's Foundation.

He continued that Officers of the Council have been working closely with colleagues in Trivallis to explore the opportunities to address both the issues around the immediate future of the existing residents who wish to remain on the estate but are in need of improved housing conditions and also to address how a wider investment and regeneration programme can be developed that ensures that the community at Penrhys has a long term, sustainable future.

The Cabinet Member Enterprise, Housing and Development commented that it he welcomed the further development to the estate and stated that it was important that the Authority continued to work with residents and tenants throughout the process to bring the plans to reality.

Following consideration by Cabinet it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the information provided within the report, and the work undertaken so far in considering options for the future of the estate and its community.
2. Agree the aspirations and objectives for the high quality regeneration of the estate and surrounding area as set out in the report as a focus for ongoing work.
3. Agree to the engaging of the services of the Prince's Foundation to work with the Council and Trivallis as a key partner in delivering against the aspirations and objectives with Trivallis being the lead procurement body.
4. Enter into a formal Collaboration Agreement with Trivallis to establish a framework to govern the respective rights and obligations of the Council and Trivallis in the delivery of the regeneration project.

86      **Progress Update On The Delivery Of The 'Llanilid' Strategic Opportunity Area**

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report to Cabinet to update them on the progress made since September 2017 when Cabinet considered and approved the Strategic Opportunity Areas report and the further

development of schemes and projects within the 'Llanilid' Strategic Opportunity Area

He referred members to section 5.9 of the report which outlined collaborative working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and the positive steps towards the delivery of new health care facilities in the area. He added that work is also well underway to develop a masterplan for the southern half of the SOA which comprises over 250HA of reclaimed former opencast mine

The Cabinet Member Enterprise, Housing and Development stated that this was one of the most important strategic sites in South Wales but also reminded members that it was a brownfield site so was not encroaching on Countryside areas. He added the project was of significant importance for South Wales

The Cabinet Member Adult Community Services and Welsh Language spoke as a Local Ward Member and welcomed the significant progress that had been made on range of infrastructure and noted that it was an important project to local residents as well as a large scale strategic project. He added that it was important to keep pace with the expansion of residential areas and welcomed the continuing developments on the Llanharan Link Road although moving towards less reliance on using our cars is crucial road transport is still key taking into consideration the size of the development plan. He commented that he was also pleased to see a robust public transport system was planned to keep pace with the development as it was a significant commuter area as well as Health care facilities to meet the current demands.

The Leader spoke positively of the Llanharan Link Road proposal with the potential to open up more development of the site to create further job opportunities

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

Note progress made since September 2017 in the development and delivery of projects and investment opportunities within the Llanilid Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA).

**87    21st Century Schools Programme - Planning of School Places South of the County Borough**

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation presented the report to members that updated them on the pressures on school places in the south of the County Borough, and for them to consider future planning and financial implications.

Members were advised that School places in the South of the County Borough have been carefully monitored over the last few years due to the number of housing developments being constructed in the locality, creating pressure on the capacity of schools in the area.

Members heard that the Council has taken action previously to alleviate the pressures by amending catchment boundaries and by providing additional accommodation on school sites to increase capacity. The Council continues to proactively manage the pressures and invest in schools through Band B of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation advised Cabinet that despite the interventions, capacity pressures at Y Pant School have become increasingly problematic. The considerable increase in housing developments in this area, as well as parents/carers making informed decisions to rent and purchase homes in the catchment areas of one of our highest performing schools, has placed undue pressure on school places at the school. The pressures have also been compounded through a recent catchment change made by the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation continued that there is a potential opportunity to increase the capacity at the school with relative ease, which would help alleviate pressures in the shorter term.

Officers in Corporate Estates have advised that that a simple 4-classroom block can be constructed at the rear of the school site, subject to gaining the relevant statutory consents, at an estimated cost of £900k. She added that it is also proposed that this block be designed and built to support the construction of another storey, at a later date, should demand for school places warrant this in the future.  As such, the relevant statutory consents were sought for a two-storey build to be constructed in two phases, which will future proof the capacity at Y Pant until a medium to long-term solution is found. The proposed expansion will create capacity for the short-term ensuring pupils within catchment can attend, thereby avoiding increased school admission appeals, higher school transport costs, increasing our carbon footprint and impacting on our pupils' wellbeing. Without the additional capacity the Council will face significant challenges in meeting its statutory duty for the sufficiency of school places.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion Services stated that there was unprecedented demand in the South of the County as a result of continued housing growth and recent changes in catchment areas and the plans in the report respond to that need.  at a school with an excellent reputation also allow strategic approach to development

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the recent changes that impact upon school places as detailed within the report.
2. Approve the measures required to manage the pressures in the short to medium term.
3. Approve the capital investment of circa £900k to build a new teaching block on Y Pant which can be funded from resources within the existing 3 year capital programme.

88      **21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Improve English Medium Primary Education Provision For Glyncoch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn**

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation provided Cabinet with a report to seek approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for the proposal to amalgamate the currently federated Cefn Primary and Craig-yr-Hesg Primary Schools by closing Cefn Primary and Craig-yr-Hesg Primary Schools and opening a new maintained community primary school on a new site. The report also requests approval to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case for three Mutual Investment Model (MIM Projects) to the Welsh Government.

She continued that the three projects are:

- A new Community Primary School for Glyncoch (replacing Cefn and Craig-yr-Hesg Primary Schools)
- A replacement Community Primary School for Maesybryn Primary School
- A replacement Community Primary School for Tonysguboriau Primary School.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation continued that submission of the Strategic Outline Business Case will be subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation in relation to the new community primary school proposed for Glyncoch.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools and transformation advised Cabinet that the projects outlined in the report serves to increase capacity and improve the quality of the English medium primary education provision available to learners in the Glyncoch area of Rhondda Cynon Taf and continues the Council's ambitious school modernisation agenda.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion spoke positively of the proposals and commented that existing schools in the Borough require a lot of investment. The proposals put before Cabinet will provide the opportunity for yet more Children and Young people and Communities to benefit from 21st Century School investments which has transformed education delivery in so many parts of RCT over the last decade.

The Deputy Leader also stated that this opportunity will improve and deliver fantastic facilities for Learners in the Borough.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the content of this report
2. Give formal approval to commence consultation with relevant stakeholders on the proposal to close Cefn Primary and Craig-yr-Hesg Primary Schools and open a new community primary school on a new site to serve the combined existing catchment areas of Cefn Primary and Craig-yr-Hesg Primary Schools
3. Note any proposal, should it be approved following completion of the required statutory processes, would be implemented by September 2026;
4. Subject to 2 above, give delegated authority to the Director of Education to make any minor changes that are required to the proposed consultation document (attached at Appendix B to the report) prior to its publication and the consultation commencing
5. Agree to a Strategic Outline Business Case for three proposed MIM Projects being submitted to the Welsh Government – the projects being a new community primary school for Glyncoch; a replacement community primary school for Maesybryn Primary School and a replacement community primary school for Tonysguboriau Primary School. Such submission to be subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation in relation to the new community primary school proposed for Glyncoch, noting that any that formal approval to proceed to deliver any new project will be brought back to Cabinet for further determination

**89    Proposed Welsh In Education Strategic Plan - Statutory Consultation Report**

The Director Education and Inclusion Services presented Members with the opportunity for them to adopt the proposed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) following the feedback received through the statutory consultation for the forthcoming ten years, up to and including 2032.

Cabinet were advised that the proposed WESP was subject to a comprehensive public statutory consultation that was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders for an eight week period.  The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee also formed part of the consultation process, following consideration of the draft WESP at its meeting on the 13th October 2021. In addition, the draft WESP was also considered by the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group on 19th July 2021. Cabinet were provided with an overview of the feedback within the report.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion commented that the document was hugely important with ambitious targets which we must strive to achieve. The Authorities investment in Welsh Medium Education proposed for the future will be key to meeting the ambitions.  She wished to add thanks to scrutiny for their engagement and welcomed future scrutiny in monitoring the delivery of the targets.

Following consideration of the WESP it was **RESOLVED** to:

1.  Consider the comments of the statutory consultation and determine if any amendments are required to the proposed WESP, in addition to the amendments undertaken to original draft WESP.
2.  Note the comments and observations of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group which considered the draft WESP on 19th July 2021 and the proposed WESP on the 8th December 2021, following the statutory consultation.
3.  Note the comments and observations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which provided feedback as part of the statutory consultation of the draft WESP on the 13th October 2021 and pre-scrutiny of the proposed WESP on the 8th December 2021, following the statutory consultation.
4.  Subject to 1 and 3 above, adopt the proposed WESP as the strategy that underpins the Local Authority's approach to achieve the ambitious target to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the proposed WESP for the forthcoming ten years, up to and including 2032

**90    Consultation Outcomes On The Education And Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024**

The Director Education and Inclusion presented the report to Cabinet on the stakeholder consultation outcomes on the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 and provided Cabinet with the opportunity to contribute to the non-statutory consultation process in respect of the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.

Members were advised that the pandemic shone light on the critical and invaluable role that our schools play in supporting our learners, their families,

and wider communities. The workforce has worked tirelessly and creatively throughout the pandemic to keep our learners and staff safe, maintaining continuity in learning and supporting the most vulnerable during a period of unprecedented challenge.

Cabinet were advised that the Strategic Plan sets out the direction for the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and schools for the next 3 years, describing the mission, vision and ambition for schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members were directed to the stakeholder responses detailed in the Consultation Report and advised that they have been used to inform changes to the revised strategic plan.  In light of the robust consultation processes and extended deadlines, it was therefore proposed that the timescales for implementing the strategic plan are amended from 2021-2024 (academic year) to 2022-2025 (financial year). The updated Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan sets out the high-level strategic actions the Directorate will take over the next three years.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion welcomed the report and commented that the strong foundations mean we should have every confidence in realising the ambitious of this plan.  She was pleased to see how the positive engagement had also been developed with stakeholders.  She also wished to thank scrutiny for their participation in the process of the delivery of the plan

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Consider the information provided in respect of the stakeholder feedback on the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.

2. Note the comments and observations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which provided feedback as part of the consultation process on the 13th of October 2021, and pre-scrutiny of the Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan on the 8th of December 2021 following the consultation process.

3. Approve the amended Education and Inclusion Services Draft Strategic Plan and agree to the slightly revised timescales for the plan's implementation from 2021-2024 (academic year) to 2022-2025 (financial year).

91      **Review of Learning Support Class Provision For Pupils with Significant Additional Learning Needs**

The Head of Inclusion Services presented the report to Cabinet with an opportunity for them to reconsider the proposal for the creation of additional mainstream Welsh medium Learning Support Class (LSC) provision for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) at Ysgol Garth Olwg following a report that was previously submitted in December 2019 requesting approval to consult with stakeholders regarding the proposal to create new LSC provisions in a number of RCT secondary settings. She continued that whilst approval was given and the consultation process was implemented. Unfortunately, the statutory process lapsed due to the Covid pandemic.

Members were referred to the proposal detailed in the report that a new Welsh medium Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant additional learning needs be established from September 2022 at Ysgol Garth Olwg to ensure the LA meets its new statutory duties to provide bi-lingual ALN provision. She added that the Local Authority does not currently have any dedicated Learning Support Class provision to support pupils with additional learning needs that wish to be educated via the medium of Welsh. From September 2021 it is the statutory duty of the Authority to work proactively towards establishing a fully bi-lingual system and therefore it is imperative that the above Welsh medium provision is put in place as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion Services supported the proposal for the creation of a Welsh medium LSC provision to support pupils with significant additional learning needs within the context of the School Organisation Code and the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Consider the information contained within this report.
2. Note the proposal for the creation of a Welsh medium LSC provision to support pupils with significant additional learning needs within the context of the School Organisation Code (2018) and the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme.
3. Formally approve to recommence consultation on the following proposal: To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN) at Ysgol Garth Olwg.

92      **Update On The RCT National Eisteddfod 2024 - Community Engagement**

The Service Director Community Services presented the report to Cabinet with an update on the work currently being undertaken in collaboration with National Eisteddfod officers in preparation for the 2024 Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf specifically in relation to community engagement.

Members were advised that preparatory work and discussions have been on-going and the Council appointed an Eisteddfod Project Officer at the end of 2019 to work closely with National Eisteddfod Officers to promote the festival and engage with communities. The pandemic limited the opportunities to engage directly with communities but during this period National Eisteddfod Officers applied for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to pilot a new strategy for community engagement in Rhondda Cynon Taf

As part of the project to develop a community strategy the National Eisteddfod has appointed a Community Development Officer whose role is funded by the NLHF. The aim will be to use culture and heritage to bring people together and to create opportunities through events and activities to engage with local people. She will work closely with the Council's Eisteddfod Project Officer

The Service Director Community Services continued that the National Eisteddfod's NLHF project is divided into 2 parts:

- Phase 1 of the project will target young people aged 16- 25 to make the Welsh language and the Eisteddfod relevant outside of the classroom and school – music will form an important element of this engagement. During Phase 1 older people will also be targeted as they often influence

family decisions. Events and activities celebrating the local area's heritage and culture using Welsh will be developed to attract this group. 5 events will be delivered between December 2021 and April 2022.

- Phase 2 of the project will see the delivery of a further 5 events between May and August 2022. At the end of this period, it is envisaged that the National Eisteddfod's Community Strategy will be finalised and that these events will help shape the National Eisteddfod in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Service Director Community Services concluded that the common aim is to ensure maximum involvement by communities and to promote the message that the Eisteddfod is for everyone and you do not need to be able to speak Welsh to enjoy and participate in its activities and events.

The Cabinet Member Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services thanked officers for the work in developing the Community Engagement Strategy and recognised that it was Socially and economically important. He was also pleased to see the work of the community engagement officer as it was vital to engage with communities who speak welsh and those who don't so was pleased to see the event being promoted as fully inclusive.

The Cabinet Member Enterprise Development and Housing echoed the comments and was pleased to see the event will be inclusive so all communities can participate.

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

93      **Regional Employability Framework**

The Service Director Community Services presented the report to members The purpose of the report is to gain Cabinet approval for the principle of a locally delivered, regionally coordinated approach to employability after European funding has ended.

Members were advised that all 10 Local Authorities in the CCR deliver employability programmes to support residents into employment or to help them progress to more sustainable or better paid employment.  The 2019 Cardiff Capital Region Employment and Skills Plan highlights the value and importance that employers place on 'employability' and the key role that it plays in helping residents into the jobs of the future.

European Funding is ending in 2022/23. In order to plan ahead and prepare for changes, Local Authority Lead Officers who sit on the Regional Skills Partnership Local Authority Cluster Group developed a discussion paper - 'Shaping Employability to Achieve the Vision of the CCR Employment and Skills Plan' which was set out in the report.
The Service Director Community Services continued that the Framework has been based on shared principles which reflect lessons learnt from 20 years of experience delivering employability projects.

Members were advised that it is not yet clear whether the same level of financial resource as is currently available from the ESF will be made available from the SPF. At this stage, the proposed Framework for Future Employability in the CCR is not a funding application – it is a strategic document setting out the principles of how employability activity should be delivered within the region and what it should seek to achieve. Any funding application/s will need to be scaled to the

resources available.

The Service Director Community Services concluded that with European funding coming to an end there is an opportunity to agree the principles of a regional approach to future employability that is consistent with the CCR Employment and Skills Plan. She added that the principles can form the basis of future regional applications for funding that will benefit individuals, communities and businesses across South East Wales.

The Cabinet Member Enterprise Development and Housing commented that Local Authorities across South East Wales have developed extensive expertise over the past twenty years in supporting their residents to improve their employability, develop their skills and gain and progress in work.  With European funding coming to an end there is an opportunity to agree the principles of a regional approach to future employability.  He added that there was huge opportunity to move to a Regional Employability Framework and that there is a vast amount of expertise with educational partners also.  He supported the recommendations in the report and stated that he welcomes additional information on funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund from UK Government as soon as possible.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Endorse the principle of a locally delivered, regionally coordinated approach to employability post-EU funding.
3. Approves the Framework for Future Employability in the Cardiff City Region (CCR) as outlined in sections 4.4 – 4.8 and Appendix A
4. Welcome information on funding from UK Government from the Shared Prosperity Fund as soon as possible

**94      Outcome Of Active Travel Consultation Exercise : Next Steps**

The Service Director Highways and Engineering presented the report for Cabinet to consider the outcome of a statutory active travel consultation exercise that the Council has recently undertaken, in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government.

This report asks Members to note the outcome of this exercise, the Council's response to the comments received and the next stage of the active travel consultation process, which is the submission of an Active Travel Network Map and supporting documents to the Welsh Government by no later than 31st December 2021.

For a period of almost 14 weeks, the Council conducted a public consultation exercise over a draft Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) for Rhondda Cynon Taf.  Members were referred to the detail of the outcome of the consultation in Appendix A of the report.  Members were advised that respondents were made aware during the consultation exercise that the details shown on the draft ATNM are considered as aspirational, that the Council will seek to deliver, but these details do not commit the Council to implementing any of them.

The Service Director Highways and Engineering continued that it is intended that the details shown in the final version of the ATNM, is to be submitted to the Welsh Government, together with the details in Appendix C of the report which represent the Council's aspirations for developing a safe and high-quality network of active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the next 5, 10 and 15 years.  He added that the outcome of the recent active travel consultation exercise will help to build upon the Council's achievements to date and inform the Council in its preparation of future bids for funding Community Routes and Safe Routes in Communities Schemes.

The Leader welcomed the report and was pleased to see the level of engagement received by the public.  He commented that due to the current network of highways it was difficult to create the links required as unfortunately we do not have the infrastructure that many towns and cities have.   He added the team are reviewing a number of potential routes and there are a number of highway routes that have commenced design work in RCT and with continued funding from Welsh Government, the plans within the report can be implemented

The Deputy Leader commented that there is a challenge in achieving mutual respect when using these routes as they are used by cyclists, walkers, disabled people, children and dog walkers and she noted that some cyclists taking part in the tour de France also use the route which was fantastic but reaching a mutual level of respect for the users was needed.

The Cabinet Member thanked the officers for inclusive consultation that reached a wide range of residents and organisations, especially representing those with visual impairments.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the comments received during the period the active travel consultation exercise was live and the response of the Council to these comments, including making proposed changes to the draft Active Travel Network Map – as set out in Appendix B.
2. Note the next stage of the active travel consultation process and endorse the submission of the final version of the Active Travel Network Map and supporting documents to the Welsh Government – by no later than 31st December 2021.

**95      Urgent Items**

None

**This meeting closed at 11.23 am**                                     **Cllr A Morgan**
**Chairman.**

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27th January 2022**

**THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES**

**AUTHOR: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)**

**1.0    PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1    This report provides Cabinet with information in respect of the 2022/23 local government settlement and the outcomes of the budget consultation phase 1 exercise, to assist with its deliberations in formulating the revenue budget strategy for the financial year 2022/23, which it will recommend to Council, for approval.

**2.0    RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1    Note that the procedures relating to revenue budget construction, the budget consultation process, and reporting to Council, are set out in the "Budget and Policy Framework" within the Council's Constitution.

2.2    To note and consider the outcomes of the budget consultation phase 1 process.

2.3    Review and consider the draft 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy, detailed in the attached Discussion Paper 'Appendix A'.

2.4    Consider and determine the level of Council Tax increase for 2022/23 which it would wish to build into the strategy to form the basis upon which a second phase of consultation will take place.

2.5    Agree the draft timetable for setting the 2022/23 revenue budget as set out at Appendix A2.

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2.6 Agree to receive feedback from the second phase of budget consultation in order to consider and determine the final budget strategy for submission to Council.

2.7 Agree that the Council continues to support the medium term financial strategy aimed at maximising ongoing efficiency in service delivery, targeted service transformation and other changes that maintain the financial integrity of the Council whilst still aiming as much as possible to protect jobs and key services.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The revenue budget for the financial year ending the 31st March 2023, must be constructed in accordance with the "Budget and Policy Framework" (contained in the Council's Constitution), which was agreed by Members in May 2002.

3.2 Under these arrangements, it is for the Council's "respective Chief Officers" to report to Cabinet, and for the Cabinet to then recommend a budget to Council, after having conducted an appropriate budget consultation exercise. I have reproduced the relevant sections of the Constitution at Appendix A1, for Members' information.

3.3 A draft timetable for agreeing the 2022/23 revenue budget strategy is attached at Appendix A2.

## 4.0 THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A BALANCED BUDGET STRATEGY FOR 2022/23

4.1 The Council's Senior Leadership Team have considered budget strategy options throughout the Autumn and alongside the significant and unprecedented impact which the pandemic has had across all our services.

4.2 I have reported on the implications of the provisional settlement and on our updated budget requirement to Council on the 19th January 2022 and set this out in detail in the discussion paper attached at Appendix A.

4.3 Based on the provisional settlement and alongside our updated base budget requirements reflecting the continuing increased pressures across many of our services, I have also set out a high level budget strategy option which has included a Council Tax increase of 1.00%.

4.4 The outcome from the Phase 1 budget consultation process is also now available for Cabinet to consider alongside the proposals.

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4.5     Clearly, there are many possible budget permutations open to the Council, but Members' overriding ambition will be to construct a balanced budget, that is equitable and fair to all by limiting any impact on our much valued service provision and where possible, provides for targeting resources to key service areas.

## 5.0    CONCLUSIONS

5.1     The Senior Leadership Team holds the collective view that the Council should commit itself to setting its 2022/23 revenue spending at a level which balances the desire for fair and equitable service provision, with the need to recognise the impact that excessive tax burdens can have on local households.

5.2     A translation of the Senior Leadership Team's recommended strategic approach into a high level budget for 2022/23 with a Council Tax increase of 1.00% is attached to this report.

5.3     Given that the financial resources currently available to the Council are finite and that indicative future local government settlements are likely to be challenging, the Senior Leadership Team believes that an ongoing, robust medium-term financial strategy is essential to ensure that our core public services continue to be improved.

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**27th JANUARY 2022**

**A DISCUSSION PAPER PREPARED BY THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM IN RESPONSE TO THE 2022/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT**

**AUTHOR: BARRIE DAVIES, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES (01443) 424026**

## 1.0    BACKGROUND

1.1    The Constitution sets out the procedure, which must be adhered to when setting the Council's annual revenue budget. It is a specific requirement of the Constitution that the Council's Chief Officers first report to the Cabinet, to advise Members on the issues involved (see extract of the Constitution at Appendix 1). Following due consideration of that report, and after having conducted an appropriate budget consultation exercise, it will then be for the Cabinet to determine a strategy and recommend a budget to Council, for final approval. A timetable for this process is attached at Appendix 2.

1.2    Prior to determining its preferred budget strategy for the financial year ending the 31st March 2023, the Cabinet must consider:

- The Council's own financial position.
- The financial and service implications of the Welsh Government's (WG) 2022/23 local government settlement.
- Our Cwm Taf – Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan 2018 -2023.
- The Council's Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.
- The level of demand and the statutory basis for delivery of services.
- The results of the General Budget Strategy consultation exercise.
- The critical role of the Council in responding to the pandemic and supporting and protecting our residents, businesses and communities.

1.3    If Members are to arrive at the best possible outcome for our residents, it will be important that an appropriate weighting is given to each of the key determinants in paragraph 1.2 above, so that relative resourcing and spending priorities can be properly determined.

1.4    Accurate and up-to-date information is readily available in respect of the Council's own financial position, and officers have now analysed the 2022/23 local government settlement from Rhondda Cynon Taf's perspective.

## 2.0    THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION

2.1    Members have continued to receive regular updates on the financial position and projections for this Council during 2021/22. A key starting point and important consideration is the annual statement of accounts. At the Council meeting on the 29th September 2021, I presented the Council's audited accounts, which reported General Fund Balances amounting to £8.505M.

2.2 Given the continuing financial pressures the Council is working under, it remains my view, that the Council should hold a minimum of £10M as General Fund Balances, (i.e. its working balance). This level is set given the context of the need for continued strong financial management that is felt to be essential to ensure that the Council maintains financial flexibility and stability going forward.

2.3 During the financial year 2019/20, our reserves were used to support our residents and businesses in the immediate aftermath of Storm Dennis. Whilst reducing our reserves below what I consider to be the minimum level, it was wholly appropriate that they were used in this way and for this purpose. I am satisfied that plans are in place to replenish General Fund Reserves to the minimum level over the period of our Medium Term Financial Plan, with £0.5M built into our base budget from 2021/22.

2.4 Members will be aware that in addition to General Fund Reserves, the Council also holds a number of earmarked reserves that are kept under continuous review and are assessed each year by Audit Wales. Members will be aware that included in these Reserves is a Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve that has successfully supported transitional funding as part of the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements. It has achieved this through helping to smooth the delivery of budget savings over a number of years, whilst still allowing an annual balanced budget to be delivered. The starting point for the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as at the 31st March 2021 is £3.619M. As part of our ongoing strategy, we have continued to identify and deliver savings in-year which means we have been able to increase the level of transitional funding available and the latest position is that this reserve has now increased to £4.607M (additional in year savings to date of £0.988M).

2.5 Audit Wales continue to emphasise that we must remain disciplined, if we are to maintain our long-term goal of driving forward continuous improvement of key services, though this becomes increasingly harder to achieve following a period of such severe financial pressures.

2.6 I believe the Audit Wales assessment is an accurate one and it is clear that Members continue to take their fiduciary duty extremely seriously as evidenced by the positive reports received from the regulators and the track record of budgetary control across services. The challenge, therefore, is to construct a prudent, equitable and fair revenue budget for the financial year ending the 31st March 2023. This must involve an approach which publicly demonstrates sound financial stewardship; which does not take unnecessary risks; which maximises income generation; continues to deliver (as far as possible, and where available) year on year efficiency savings and which delivers the services that are needed and we can afford, as well as protecting as many jobs as possible.


**3.0 THE 2022/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT**

3.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement in Wales for 2022/23 has followed the UK Government Autumn Budget and Spending Review (SR21) as announced on the 27th October 2021.

3.2 On the 21st December 2021, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government

Settlement. The Minister's statement and key data table is attached at Appendix 3.

3.3 The "headlines" of the Provisional 2022/23 Settlement are as follows:-

a. The overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2022/23 (of unhypothecated funding) at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 9.4% (+£437M).

b. The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 8.4**%** which is below the average all Wales increase. Settlement figures across Wales range from 8.4% to 11.2%.

c. No 'floor' protection has been included for 2022/23.

d. The Settlement figures for 2022/23 include transfers into the settlement in respect of Food and Residual Waste Management Gate Fee Support (£13.3M), Social Care Workforce Grant (£5.0M) and the Coastal Risk Management Programme (not applicable to this Council). The values for this Council are £2.430M and £0.408M respectively.

e. The Settlement also provides indicative all Wales settlement levels for the next 2 financial years, at 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25. The figures are indicative and dependent on NDR income over the period and on the funding provided to WG by UK Government.

f. Provisional figures and indicative estimates for a 3 year period are also included for specific grants, at an all Wales level. The Social Care Workforce Grant has been partially transferred into RSG as detailed above. This continues to fund our core base budget.

g. The Council's General <u>Capital</u> Funding allocation has reduced by £2.165M to £11.599M.

## 4.0    <u>IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2022/23 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT</u>

4.1 The provisional settlement indicates that our 2022/23 RSG and NDR funding will total £441.433M.

4.2 In anticipation of the 2022/23 local government settlement, the Council's service managers have constructed base budget requirements for next financial year. Those initial calculations provided for:-

- Estimated employee costs, pension costs and National Insurance Contribution levels;
- Non-pay (i.e. goods and services) inflation, including energy and fuel;
- Corporate financing requirements and levies; and
- Full year effects of any additional burdens imposed on the Council and the implications of demand led pressures.

4.3 The Provisional Settlement is at a higher level than the range modelled in the most recent Medium Term Financial Plan and recognises some of the intense funding pressures which are being experienced across local government in general but also within Rhondda Cynon Taf. It also importantly recognises the

critical role which local government continues to play in responding to the pandemic and protecting our communities and residents.

4.4     Members have continued to receive updates on the projections of the Council's revenue budget position for the period to 2024/25, as part of our Medium Term Service Planning arrangements. The latest of these assessments was considered by Council on the 29th September 2021 which, based on a range of modelled settlement levels, projected a funding gap of £9.3M (at +4% settlement).

4.5     As referenced at section 3, the provisional settlement provides this Council with an uplift of 8.4%.

4.6     Cabinet on the 15th November 2021 determined the Council Tax Base for 2022/23 at £77,707.00.  The impact on the modelled budget gap of our updated tax base can also now be reflected.

4.7     The combined effects of the above, including the transfers into the settlement, have resulted in additional resources available to the Council as shown in table 1.

Table 1 :  Additional Resources at Provisional Settlement

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| Additional Resources at Provisional Settlement (8.4%) | -      20,476 |
| Impact of Updated Tax Base | -           316 |
| **Additional Resources Available** | **-      20,792** |

4.8     Our base budget requirements for 2022/23 have continued to be reviewed since the preparation of the MTFP and a number of updates can now be made.

4.9     This has included notably the financial implications of increases to National Insurance Contributions payable by employers linked to the UK Government's Health and Social Care Levy (including the implications upon commissioned service providers) and the costs of funding the payment of the Real Living Wage to social care providers within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4.10    Further funding has also been identified and included in the Schools budget (ISB) to recognise the implications of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, in addition to funding (in full) for pay and non-pay inflation and pupil number changes.

4.11    It is evident that demand led cost pressures are being felt across many of our service areas, plus future pay and non-pay inflationary and supply chain pressures.  There are also additional cross cutting cost pressures such as energy, fuel and food in addition to the ongoing cost implications as a consequence of the pandemic.

4.12    In the MTFP, a number of risk items were identified and estimated in financial terms. In light of the above review and updates, it is now appropriate that these risks are removed from our base budget requirement for next year, albeit they will continue to be monitored as we go forward and continue to refresh our MTFP.

4.13    The impact of the above updates are summarised in table 2.  This is in addition to the required £28.5M of budget increases already factored into our MTFP and includes the budget requirements associated with the transfers into the settlement.

Table 2 :  Base Budget Updates

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| Health and Social Care Levy and Pay Costs | 4,700 |
| Food and Residual Waste Management Gate Fee Support | 2,430 |
| Real Living Wage / Ind Sector Costs | 3,000 |
| Schools (incl ALN and Pupil Numbers) | 2,016 |
| Other (incl Inflation, Specialist Accommodation and Waste) | 1,168 |
| Removal of Risk Items | - 1,548 |
| **Total Base Budget Requirement Updates** | **11,766** |

4.14    The combined effects of the above updates on the budget gap and following receipt of the provisional settlement are now shown in table 3.

Table 3 :  Revised Budget Gap 2022/23

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| Budget Gap at MTFP (4%) | 9,255 |
| Net Base Budget Requirement Updates | 11,766 |
| Additional Resources at Provisional Settlement | - 20,792 |
| **Remaining Budget Gap** | **229** |

4.15    This reflects the position which was reported to Council on the 19th January 2022 and it is against this backdrop that we must consider our budget strategy for 2022/23.

## 5.0    DEVELOPING AN EQUITABLE, DELIVERABLE AND BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2022/23

5.1    Notwithstanding the positive settlement from WG for 2022/23, it does follow a sustained period of real term reductions to our funding levels and more recently significant storm damage and the pandemic, and it is against this context that we need to develop a balanced budget for next year.  There remain significant pressures upon many of our services together with a limited ability to increase Council Tax income, and a low tax base. Within these parameters, we will therefore need to take appropriate decisions to ensure that next year's budget is equitable for all, does not compromise our financial stability and protects and develops our key services.

5.2    I touched upon the Council's overall financial position in Section 2 of the report. In my view, it is vital that we continue with the strategy we have adopted to date that takes account of the importance of sound financial management, including the level of General Fund balances and appropriate use of the "Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve" as transitional funding, whilst targeting any available resources toward our high priority, customer-focused public services.

5.3     Every year, there are certain corporate financial provisions that must be "top sliced" locally, <u>before</u> service budgets can be allocated. Next year will be no different. There will be a requirement for:

   a) A provision to meet levies from External Bodies;
   b) A provision for Capital Charges;
   c) A provision for all other "Miscellaneous Finance" items (Audit Fees, Insurance Costs, Bank Charges, etc.) which are non-specific to any particular Service Group; and
   d) Resources to fund the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

5.4     As part of our updated budget requirement, appropriate sums have been set aside for these corporate financial requirements.

5.5     Welsh Government support to fund costs arising as a direct consequence of the pandemic has continued through the 2021/22 financial year via the Hardship Fund.  WG have stated that they do not intend to continue to provide such additional support going forward and that councils will have to manage these implications through the additional resources provided in the settlement. The Council will need to monitor the financial implications closely moving forward, using any flexibility afforded within its available reserves to transition any permanent additional costs into the base budget over the medium term.

## 6.0     <u>COUNCIL TAX LEVELS</u>

6.1     This Council has always acted reasonably when setting its Council Tax, balancing the impact upon services and the ability of the public to pay, recognising that those eligible will receive support through the Welsh Government's Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). Our MTFP has been modelled based on an increase in Council Tax for 2022/23 of 2.65%.  This was consistent with the level of increase for the current year 2021/22.

6.2     Members will be aware that the costs of the CTRS impacts on the net income generated through any increase in Council Tax.  A 1% increase in Council Tax will generate an additional income for the Council of £1.195M (at the 2022/23 tax base level) but will also cost £0.253M in additional CTRS requirements. It therefore follows that a 1% increase generates a <u>net</u> additional income of £0.942M, or stated another way, 21% of any Council Tax increase is lost to support the increased costs associated with the Welsh Government's CTRS.

6.3     It is proposed that the level of Council Tax for next year now be remodelled and set at an increase of 1.00%.  This would align with the expectations of the Cabinet in terms of Council Tax levels and in light of the more favourable settlement, balanced against the reported ongoing pressures across our services.

6.4     The cost of reducing the level of increase to 1% from that previously modelled would be £1.554M.

## 7.0     <u>SCHOOLS BUDGET (ISB)</u>

7.1     Members have always viewed our schools as being a key priority and have ensured that they have been treated favourably in comparison with other council services.

7.2     The Schools Budget (ISB) is proposed to be increased to cover, in full, all pay and non pay inflationary costs, including increased NI costs associated with the Health and Social Care Levy.  Pupil number pressures, NDR increased costs, energy increases and Additional Learning Need delegated funding increases are also included.  Unlike other Council services there is no efficiency target or expectation albeit schools may need to take local action to absorb the financial implications of decisions taken locally.

7.3     In overall terms, the proposal sees the Schools Budget increase by £11.2M from £163.8M to £175.0M. This represents an increase of 6.8%.  Schools are therefore fully funded for 2022/23.


## 8.0     EFFICIENCY

8.1     Council services have for many years now delivered against ambitious efficiency targets, making considerable budget reductions without adversely impacting on front line service provision.

8.2     As part of the current year's budget strategy, efficiencies of £4.6M were identified and delivered albeit it was noted that the ongoing sustainability of delivering efficiencies at this level would need to be considered.

8.3     The pandemic has clearly impacted on our normal practises of considering our budget setting on a continuous basis, working across services in identifying efficiencies and budget reduction options and delivering on them early.  The focus of our service managers has clearly and appropriately continued to be prioritised on supporting and protecting our residents, businesses and communities.

8.4     Notwithstanding this however, our senior finance officers have continued to work alongside service managers and have again identified budget reduction measures which can be delivered without adversely impacting on our front-line services.  Indeed, at as the quarter 2 performance report presented to Cabinet on the 15th November 2021, we were able to release £988k of in year base budget reductions.

8.5     Whilst identification and delivery of efficiencies continues to be more difficult year on year without impacting on front line services and delivery, we have identified £4.9M which can be removed from our base budget requirement for next year.


## 9.0     BUDGET STRATEGY PROPOSALS

9.1     This Council has taken a proactive approach to dealing with the budget pressures it continues to face including delivery of saving proposals early with a clear focus maintained across the medium term planning horizon.  The Council has continued to deliver robust, balanced budgets and taken the opportunity to use our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service

Transformation Reserve, as transition funding, to sensibly support the overall budget strategy. This approach is one which I would recommend is continued.

9.2 The Cabinet have always been focussed on protecting our front line services and have taken any opportunities to prioritise or reallocate resources to areas of priority.

9.3 For 2022/23, the following proposals are set out for Cabinet's consideration.

a. **NDR Local Relief Scheme**

Cabinet have previously determined (13th February 2020) to implement a local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 providing relief of £300 per qualifying business, which would supplement the Welsh Government High Street and Retail Rate Relief Scheme. This local relief was increased to £350 per qualifying business for the 2021/22 financial year.

Welsh Government subsequently provided an enhanced level of support to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality sectors (linked to the impact of the pandemic), with that support continuing into 2022/23 with a 50% reduction in NDR liability.

It is now proposed that an additional £100k is added to the budget bringing the level of support available to businesses to £300k. The detail of this proposal will be subject to a separate report to Cabinet in February 2022, alongside details of WG NDR support.

The cost of this proposal is **£100k**.

b. **Climate Change and Carbon Reduction**

The Council's commitment to responding to climate change and carbon reduction is well documented, with the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group continuing to meet regularly since 2019. The initial work programme set out in December 2019 has been delivered alongside an ambition to be further impactful and a community leader in this area, recognising the wider role that our residents, businesses and partners must play.

The latest meeting of the steering group considered an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy and Implementation Plan, an updated Carbon Footprint report, Key Energy Generation Projects, progress with the Cardiff Capital Region Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) Strategy, the Biodiversity and Local Nature Partnership in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Active Travel Strategy, Measures and Issues in the County Borough.

This demonstrates the range and scale of work which the Council is already delivering. Examples of current investment includes a Carbon (energy) Reduction Programme (£1.6M), Taffs Well Spring (£0.5M), Biodiversity Projects linked to our living landscapes (£0.154M), an ongoing Tree Planting Programme (current year funding £0.050M) in addition to our Active Travel Investments (£4.5M), EV Infrastructure (£0.300M) and our 21st Century Schools Programme which is committed to achieving net zero carbon buildings and to BREEAM excellent standard.

In order to ensure that this delivery is maintained and enhanced wherever possible it is proposed that further base budget resources are set aside, alongside existing resources, for our work in this regard.

The cost of this proposal is **£500k**.

c. **Public Health and Protection Services – Additional Resources**

The Public Health and Protection service has continued to play a key role in ensuring the public health and wellbeing of our residents, communities and businesses, providing advice and guidance and delivering initiatives such as the Test Trace  Protect programme.

The additional investment proposed for the service (further to the additional £200k invested in 2021/22) will enable further consolidation, strengthening the team and providing future resilience for the service.

The cost of the proposal is **£200k**.

d. **Sustainable Social Services**

Our Social Services provision has been under extreme pressure throughout the pandemic coupled with resourcing issues across the sector generally.  It is acknowledged that we need to be developing different models of service provision, aimed at earlier intervention and prevention with a clear focus on impact and on positive outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.  Increasing demand and complexity of need requires additional investment to ensure services are sustainable for the future.

The additional investment will support the development of our workforce, including initiatives to build capacity, strengthen career pathways and develop our existing staff in critical service areas. It will support the remodelling and integration of community services with partners to help address ongoing and growing pressures in the health and social care system, ensuring people are safe and well cared for at home. Preventing children becoming looked after and reunification of families is a priority. Additional investment will be made in our preventative services to respond to complex needs and mental health needs as well as increasing capacity for placements to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people as close to home as possible.

The cost of the proposal is **£1,500k.**

e. **Minimum Rate of Pay - £10 Per Hour**

The Council has been a Real Living Wage employer for many years, paying our own staff in line with the appropriate rate, and has extended that commitment to paying a real living wage for all independent sector social care staff employed by our commissioned service providers (effective from the 1st December 2021).  The Real Living Wage was announced as increasing to £9.90 in November 2021 and this Council is

proposing to bring forward the implementation of this rate to 1st February 2022 (ordinarily the Council implements increases from 1st April following the announced increase).

It is proposed that we locally determine to further increase this level of minimum remuneration to £10 per hour and that this be effective from the 1st April 2022. This would apply to our own staff plus commissioned social care staff.

The cost of this proposal is **£550k**.

### f. **Funding for Investment**

The Council has already invested over £129M (over and above the normal Capital Programme) in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities since October 2015, the latest investment (£6.500M) being agreed by Council in September 2021.

This has delivered a vast range of new infrastructure developments and significant improvements to our existing assets across all areas of the Council and across all our communities.

In order to ensure that we maintain the pace of this ambition going forward it is proposed that revenue base budget (recurring) funding is identified to be used alongside resources which are secured from the ongoing early delivery of our medium term saving and efficiency plans.

The cost of the proposal is **£1,000k**.

### g. **Detached Youth**

The impact of the pandemic on young people across the County Borough continues to be seen and it is essential that we maximise the opportunity to ensure that we continue to engage as much as we can, providing much valued services and activities through a range of service provision models.

The cost of this proposal is **£75k**.

### h. **Car Mileage Rate**

Since 2015 (effective from 1st May 2015) the Council has applied a Car Mileage reimbursement rate, payable to staff who utilise their vehicles for work related purposes, of 35p per mile. It is proposed that this rate now be increased to 40p per mile.

The cost of this proposal is **£118k**.

### i. **Fees and Charges**

A final report on the proposed level of Fees & Charges for 2022/23 will be presented to Cabinet in February 2022.

The Council reviews the level of fees and charges on an annual basis in the context of the rate of inflation. The current level of inflation (CPI to December 2021) is 5.4%.

It is proposed that for the year ahead, the general rate of increase across our fees and charges is set at a lower level of 2.5%, with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying an uplift in line with inflation.

There are a number of proposed exceptions as shown in the table below.

| Area of Charge | Proposed Exception |
|---|---|
| Leisure for Life – Membership | Freeze (in line with prior decision) |
| Meals on Wheels / Day Centre Meals | Freeze (in line with prior decision) |
| School Meals | Freeze (in line with prior decision) |
| Car Park Charges | Freeze |
| Summer and Winter Playing Fees (sports clubs) | Freeze |
| 3G Pitch Hire | Freeze |
| Licenses (Hackney Carriage / Private Hire) | Freeze |
| Lido / Rhondda Heritage Park | Freeze |

The cost of this proposal (net of that assumed at latest MTFP) is **£44k**.

9.4 The implications of the above strategy proposals and the delivery of efficiencies identified at para 8 on the remaining budget gap position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 : Budget Strategy Proposals 2022/23

|  | £'000 |  |
|---|---|---|
| Remaining Budget Gap |  | 229 |
| Efficiencies | - 4,900 |  |
| NDR Local Relief Scheme | 100 |  |
| Climate Change and Carbon Reduction | 500 |  |
| Public Health and Protection Services | 200 |  |
| Sustainable Social Services | 1,500 |  |
| Minimum Rate of Pay - £10 Per Hour | 550 |  |
| Funding for Investment | 1,000 |  |
| Detached Youth | 75 |  |
| Mileage Rate | 118 |  |
| Fees and Charges | 44 |  |
| Council Tax at 1.0% | 1,554 |  |
|  |  | 741 |
| **Remaining Budget Gap** |  | 970 |

*9.5 Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve (Transitional Funding)* – We have for many years used our transition funding reserve sensibly as part of our balanced budget strategy, at a level which does not compromise the robustness of our budget and which can be replenished with some certainty, given our ongoing strategy of delivering savings early.

9.6 As previously referenced the reserve currently stands at £4.607M, having been replenished during this year (2021/22) by £0.988M to quarter 2. Accordingly, to address the remaining budget gap, it is proposed that an allocation of £0.970M is made from this reserve for 2022/23. This would facilitate a balanced budget for 2022/23 and would leave £3.637M in the reserve (subject to the year-end assessment of reserves). I am confident that processes are now sufficiently well embedded to ensure that savings are achieved in-year and that this reserve can continue to be replenished.

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| Remaining Budget Gap | 970 |
| Use of Transition Funding | - 970 |
| **Remaining Budget Gap** | **-** |

9.7 The above provides a robust and balanced budget strategy which can be recommended to Cabinet and Council.


## 10.0  MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

10.1 Whilst the focus for this report is necessarily on 2022/23, the pressures on our services means that our Medium Term Financial and Service Planning arrangements remain key to ensuring that financial stability is maintained as the cornerstone of our overall financial health as a Council.

10.2 The provision by Welsh Government of an all Wales multi-year settlement with indications of prospects for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is helpful for our medium term financial planning arrangements, notwithstanding the lower levels of indicative future year settlements will present us with a challenge. In this regard it is essential that we retain our focus across the medium term planning horizon and seek to ensure that we continue to manage our cost base effectively alongside future prospects for settlement levels.

10.3 The delivery of efficiency savings early and as part of our medium term planning has positioned us extremely well in our ability to respond to funding challenges and uncertainties and continues to contribute to the delivery of a lean, efficient and effective organisation.

10.4 The future quantum of such savings however, must be considered and reflected upon in light of what has been delivered to date (approx. £100M over the last 10 years) and what can reasonably continue to be delivered without impacting on our frontline services and having an unintended consequence elsewhere.


## 11.0  SERVICE PRIORITIES

11.1    Even after a period of significantly reduced resources and hence financial pressure on all services, this Council remains committed as far as it possibly can to continue to deliver its key services, stronger communities and social justice. The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 sets out that our key purpose is to provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous.

11.2    The Senior Leadership Team have had due regard to the plan in formulating the proposals set out in this report.

11.3    In addition to our revenue base budget requirements, opportunities also continue to be taken to deliver investment in key strategic areas through one off funding made available via a risk based review of earmarked reserves and through identification of in-year savings opportunities. The Council has already invested over £129M (over and above the normal Capital Programme) in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities since October 2015, the latest investment (£6.500M) being agreed by Council in September 2021.

11.4    A report setting out the updated capital programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 will be reported for Members consideration shortly. As was noted at Section 3, the Council's General Capital Funding allocation has reduced by £2.165M to £11.599M.


**12.0    2022/23 SERVICE GROUP BUDGETS**

12.1    The Council adopts a comprehensive budget challenge process involving finance officers and senior managers from each Service area, with a subsequent detailed review and assessment being conducted by the Senior Leadership Team, to ensure consistency and fairness across all service areas.

12.2    The 2021/22 revenue budget and the regular performance monitoring reports are available to the Cabinet, to act as a benchmark to evaluate service delivery options, priorities and savings proposals. It is, of course, important to note that the current year's figures are for information purposes only and are not meant to represent a base service requirement, or target. Indeed, budget provision for next year could be more, or less, than the 2021/22 levels, depending upon Members' decisions and spending priorities, and following the impact of the 2022/23 local government settlement.

12.3    All of our services completed service recovery plans through the pandemic with a return to a normal cycle of self assessment and delivery planning now reintroduced.  Funding will be a key consideration for these plans and the Senior Leadership Team's budget proposals are intended to underpin these actions.  This will allow the budget to be built "bottom up", on the basis of properly identified service need, within the framework provided by the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan and our own Corporate Plan.

12.4    Members will, of course, be keen to demonstrate that the Council is properly discharging all its statutory obligations, but with funding at a premium, will also wish to ensure that our services are being delivered in the most economic, efficient and effective manner. The basic principle which should, therefore, underpin the construction of the 2022/23 budget, is that Members will look to target adequate funding towards the delivery of our key services whilst, at the same time, ensuring that the resultant Council Tax levied next year is

reasonable and can be justified to our residents. Attached at Appendix 4 is an outline budget proposal, including efficiency and service funding requirements.

**13.0  THE 2022/23 GENERAL BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS**

13.1  As in previous years, the Council has been keen to consult with the public and other interested stakeholders on its general budget strategy and how services are delivered.

13.2  The proposed approach to budget consultation for 2022/23 is set out in the Cabinet report dated 18th October 2021.  It comprises 2 phases as follows:

**Phase 1** - provided residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to feedback their views on some of the key strategic building blocks used to construct the Council's budget.

**Phase 2** - once Cabinet have agreed a draft budget strategy, and in light of the provisional local government settlement, then this draft strategy will itself be consulted upon as part of Phase 2.

13.3  The Phase 1 Consultation report has been available to support the preparation of these proposals and is attached at Appendix 5.

13.4  The general budget consultation also incorporated the requirements to consult on discretions available locally for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (which has been used to inform the Council's decision on its scheme for 2022/23 as agreed by Council on the 19th January 2022).

13.5  In addition, specific consultation activity was undertaken with the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee and the School Budget Forum the minutes of which are attached at Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 respectively.

**14.0  CONCLUSIONS**

14.1  On the 21st December 2021, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement which showed this Council's increase in resources was set at 8.4%.

14.2  Whilst the Council's overall financial position remains sound, its level of General Fund Balances are not excessive. The Council must, therefore, retain its focus on restoring a minimum level of General Fund Balances of £10M, in order to mitigate any risk of future budget instability. Alongside this, there is the opportunity to pragmatically use the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as transitional funding without compromising the Council's financial stability, or reducing our General Fund Balances. As detailed in the report, the use of such transitional funding would produce a balanced budget for 2022/23.

14.3  This Council has continued to deliver year on year robust and balanced budgets alongside an investment programme supporting key priorities. The challenge remains however, for positive and proactive management from the Senior Leadership Team and clear direction from Cabinet to produce a financially

sustainable budget into the medium term in what continues to be an extremely challenging and uncertain financial climate.

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**BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES**

### 1. The Framework for Executive Decisions

The Council will be responsible for the adoption of its policy framework and budget as set out in Article 4. The policy framework and budget adopted by the Council will be based on that proposed by the Executive. Once a budget or a policy framework is in place, it will be the responsibility of the Executive to implement it.

### 2. Process for Developing the Framework

(a) The Cabinet, following detailed reports from respective Chief Officers, (following appropriate consultation with stakeholders) will present to Council, proposed plans, policies and the associated annual budgets. This will be done allowing adequate time for Council to deal with the matter and, if needed, refer the matter back to the Executive for further consideration.

(b) The Council will consider the proposals of the Cabinet and may adopt them, amend them, refer them back to the Cabinet for further consideration, or substitute its own proposals in their place. In considering the matter, the Council shall have before it the Executive's proposals and any related report from the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. Any amendments to the proposals of the Cabinet to be proposed by Members at Council may not be considered by Council unless notice of the proposed amendment has been given in writing, by fax or via e-mail (with the names of the Proposer and Seconder clearly stated) to the Proper Officer and signed by the Proposer not later than 5:00pm at least 8 clear working days (not including the date of the meeting) before the date of the Council meeting.

(c) Any proposed amendment by a Member of the Council to the proposals of the Cabinet and made in accordance with paragraph 2 (b) above shall only be accepted and submitted to full Council for consideration if in the opinion of the Proper Officer (in consultation with advice sought from the Monitoring Officer and sl5l Officer) it is deemed to be legal and within the competence of the Council.

(d) The Council's decision will be publicised and a copy shall be given to the Leader. The notice of decision shall be dated and shall state either that the decision shall be effective immediately (if the Council accepts the Cabinet's proposals without amendment) or (if the Cabinet's proposals are not accepted without amendment), that the Council's decision will become effective on the expiry of 5 working days after the publication of the notice of decision, unless the Leader objects to it in that period.

(e) If the Leader objects to the decision of the Council, he/she shall give written notice to the Chief Executive to that effect, prior to the date upon which the decision is to be effective. The written notification must state the reasons for the objection.

Where such notification is received, the Chief Executive shall convene a further meeting of the Council to reconsider its decision and the decision shall not be effective pending that meeting.

(f) The Council meeting must take place within 21 working days of the receipt of the Leader's written objection. At that Council meeting, the decision of the Council shall be reconsidered in the light of the objection, which shall be available in writing for the Council.

(g) The Council shall, at that meeting, make its final decision on the matter on the basis of a simple majority. The decision shall be made public in accordance with Article 4 and shall be implemented immediately.

(h) All policy and budget reports presented to Council for decision shall subsequently be presented to the next calendar Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

## **2022/23 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING TIMETABLE**

**20th July 2021**
**Cabinet** – Consider the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25

**29th September 2021**
**Council** – Consider the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25

**18th October 2021**
**Cabinet –** Consider the approach to Budget Consultation for 2022/23

**26th October to 7th December 2021 (6 Weeks)**

**Consultation (Phase 1) –** Budget Consultation Phase 1 (including Council Tax Reduction Scheme)

**21st December 2021**

**Provisional Local Government Settlement** - Receipt of provisional settlement figures further to WG Budget on the 20th December

**19th January 2022**

**Council Meeting**
– Report on the Implications of the Provisional Settlement
– Consider the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23

**27th January 2022**

**Cabinet Meeting** – Consideration of draft Senior Leadership Team budget strategy options and for Cabinet to formulate their draft budget strategy, taking into account feedback from Phase 1 of the Budget Consultation process

**28th January 2022 to 11th February 2022**

**Consultation (Phase 2)** – Consultation on the Cabinet's draft budget strategy

**28th February 2022**

**Cabinet Meeting** – To consider the feedback from the Phase 2 Consultation and to agree the Cabinet's final revenue budget strategy for recommending to Council (plus the Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25)

**1st March 2022**

**Final Local Government Settlement** – Receipt of final settlement figures

**9th March 2022**

**Council Meeting** – Cabinet to submit its 2022/23 Budget Strategy and Council Tax levels to Council

    **Council Decision :**

- Approve the 2022/23 Revenue Budget

- Approve the 2022/23 Council Tax (including necessary formal Council Tax Resolution)

- Approve the 2022/23 to 2024/25 Capital Programme

# Appendix 3

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

# WRITTEN STATEMENT
# BY
# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

**TITLE**      **Provisional Local Government Settlement 2022-23**
**DATE**      **21 December 2021**
**BY**      **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government**

Today, I am publishing details of the core funding allocations for local authorities for the forthcoming financial year through the Provisional Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlements for 2022-23 (the Settlement). I am also publishing Wales-level indicative core funding allocations for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Adjusting for transfers, the core revenue funding for local government in 2022-23 will increase by 9.4% on a like-for-like basis compared to the current year. No authority will receive less than an 8.4% increase. In 2022-23, local authorities will receive £5.1bn from the Welsh Government in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and non-domestic rates (NDR) to spend on delivering key services.

In addition to this, I am publishing information on revenue and capital grants planned for the following three years. For 2022-23, these amount to more than £1.1bn for revenue and over £700m for capital.  We are providing these indicative grant values now so local authorities are able to plan their budgets efficiently. This information will be further updated in the final settlement.

The indicative Wales-level core revenue funding allocations for 2023-24 and 2024-25 are £5.3bn and £5.4bn respectively – equating to an uplift in the first year of £177m (3.5%) and, in the second year, of £128m (2.4%). These figures are indicative and dependent on both our current estimates of NDR income over the multi-year settlement period, and the funding provided to us by the UK Government through the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Indications are that specific revenue grant funding will continue to be above £1.1bn annually for the duration of this multi-year settlement, and capital grants will be in excess of £700m each year.

As in recent years, our priorities continue to be health and local government services. This significantly increased Settlement will enable local authorities to continue to deliver the services their communities want and need as well as supporting national and local ambitions for the future, including responding to the climate and nature emergency and contributing to our Net Zero Wales plan.

This is a good Settlement for local government, including Wales-level core funding allocations for 2023-24 and 2024-25. It provides local authorities with a stable platform on which to plan their budgets for the coming financial year and beyond. We have worked closely with local government and we appreciate the pressures local government is facing. We will continue to protect local government, particularly at this difficult and challenging time.

In making decisions about the level of funding for local government, I have responded to the need to ensure that hardworking staff receive well-deserved pay rises in the future. In particular I have included funding to enable local authorities to meet the additional costs of introducing the real Living Wage for care workers as set out by the Minister for Health and Social Services yesterday. This allocation includes a transfer of £5m, for which the base of the Settlement has been adjusted, from the Social Care Workforce and Sustainability grant.

The funding provided through this Settlement also recognises the decision made around the 2021/22 teachers' pay deal and includes funding for the costs arising from the 2022/23 pay deal, which fall within this Settlement year. Accordingly, I will not be making any further funding available in-year in recognition of the 2022/23 teachers' pay deal, and authorities' budget planning must accommodate these costs in the light of this Settlement.

More widely on public sector pay, this Settlement includes funding to cover the increased costs local authorities will face arising from the UK Government's announcement to increase National Insurance contributions for employers.

Alongside the Settlement, we are continuing to provide funding to support local government to waive fees for child burials. This shared commitment ensures a fair and consistent approach across Wales.

In line with our focus on countering the effects of poverty, we remain committed to protecting vulnerable and low-income households from any reduction in support under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes, despite the shortfall in the funding transferred by the UK Government following its abolition of council tax benefit. We will continue to maintain full entitlements under our Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2022-23 and are again providing £244m for CTRS in the Settlement in recognition of this.

As I announced yesterday, I am maintaining the approach taken in 2021-22 and am continuing to freeze the non-domestic rates multiplier for 2022-23. I have provided an additional £35m in RSG in 2022-23 to offset the reduced income and a further £1m for the following two years. Through this Settlement, I am also continuing to provide £4.8m for authorities to deliver additional discretionary rates relief for local businesses and other ratepayers to respond to specific local issues.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act) provides for the creation and ongoing development of corporate joint committees to allow authorities to work together on specific functions such as transport, economic development and planning. Following one-off specific grant funding this financial year to support preparatory work, I am delivering ongoing additional funding to support the core operation of these committees though the Settlement.

A robust democracy is an essential feature of local government. In determining the overall Settlement, I have sought to recognise the need to build the capacity of electoral services to deal with Welsh electoral reform, following our reforms in the Act and to support our future work.

The progress of the pandemic and its ongoing impact on public services continues to be highly uncertain. The comprehensive spending review did not provide any additional financial support, which is a concern, especially following the emergence of the new Omicron variant. I have carefully considered how to manage pandemic support for local authorities and concluded the balance lies in providing funding in the first year through the Settlement. But in determining the overall Settlement, I have recognised the ongoing impact of the pandemic on services which authorities will need to manage.

I will continue to engage closely with local government through the WLGA.

I set out the position on capital funding for the Welsh Government as part of my budget statement on Monday. The capital funding we received from the UK Government was disappointing and is not sufficient to meet our ambitions to invest in Wales' future.

Following a review of our capital budgets, general capital funding for local government for 2022-23 will be set at £150m. This will increase to £200m for the following two years, including £20m in each year to enable authorities to respond to our joint priority of decarbonisation.

Attached to this statement is a summary table setting out the Settlement allocations (Aggregate External Finance (AEF)) by authority. The allocations are derived using the formula agreed with local government.  As a result of the formula and related data, the table shows the range of the funding allocations, from an 8.4% increase over the 2021-22 settlement to an 11.2% increase. Given the significant increases, I am not proposing to include a floor this year and have allocated all the available funding in this Settlement.

Further details will be sent to all local authorities and published on the Welsh Government's website: https://gov.wales/local-government-revenue-and-capital-settlement-2022-2023

While this is a good Settlement building on improved allocations in recent years, I recognise that this does not reverse the years of constraint as a result of overall austerity in public finances. Local authorities will still need to make some difficult decisions in setting their budgets and it is important they engage meaningfully with their local communities as they consider their priorities for the forthcoming year.

The setting of budgets, and in turn council tax, is the responsibility of each local authority. They will need to take account of the full range of funding sources available to them, as well as the pressures they face, in setting their budgets for the coming year.

This announcement commences the formal seven-week consultation on the Settlement. This will end on 8 February 2022.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns, I would be happy to do so.

## Summary Table

**2022-23 provisional Settlement – comparison of 2021-22 AEF (adjusted for transfers) and 2022-23 provisional AEF, and distribution of the 2021-22 Council Tax Reduction Schemes funding (distributed within AEF) (£000s)**

| Authority | 2021-22 adjusted AEF[1] | 2022-23 provisional AEF | % change on adjusted 2021-22 AEF | Rank | Council Tax Reduction Schemes (within AEF) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Isle of Anglesey | 104,872 | 114,549 | 9.2% | 12 | 5,240 |
| Gwynedd | 195,905 | 213,210 | 8.8% | 17 | 8,263 |
| Conwy | 167,356 | 183,308 | 9.5% | 5 | 9,189 |
| Denbighshire | 159,060 | 173,637 | 9.2% | 15 | 8,536 |
| Flintshire | 212,608 | 232,174 | 9.2% | 14 | 9,680 |
| Wrexham | 189,233 | 207,060 | 9.4% | 7 | 9,275 |
| Powys | 192,088 | 210,257 | 9.5% | 6 | 8,978 |
| Ceredigion | 110,006 | 119,419 | 8.6% | 19 | 5,126 |
| Pembrokeshire | 179,422 | 196,253 | 9.4% | 8 | 8,180 |
| Carmarthenshire | 285,262 | 311,597 | 9.2% | 11 | 14,006 |
| Swansea | 353,571 | 386,585 | 9.3% | 9 | 19,339 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 237,289 | 258,068 | 8.8% | 18 | 15,955 |
| Bridgend | 212,755 | 232,364 | 9.2% | 13 | 12,866 |
| The Vale Of Glamorgan | 168,128 | 186,011 | 10.6% | 3 | 9,088 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 407,050 | 441,433 | 8.4% | 21 | 21,005 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 101,493 | 110,616 | 9.0% | 16 | 5,627 |
| Caerphilly | 292,712 | 317,453 | 8.5% | 20 | 12,651 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 120,657 | 130,795 | 8.4% | 22 | 8,166 |
| Torfaen | 146,560 | 160,117 | 9.3% | 10 | 8,500 |
| Monmouthshire | 101,003 | 112,275 | 11.2% | 1 | 5,918 |
| Newport | 240,957 | 265,612 | 10.2% | 4 | 10,337 |
| Cardiff | 492,095 | 544,715 | 10.7% | 2 | 28,076 |
| **All Unitary Authorities** | **4,670,080** | **5,107,507** | **9.4%** | | 244,000 |

Note: Total may not sum correctly due to rounding
1.  2021-22 AEF adjusted transfers of £18.585m (at 2021-22 prices) into and out of the Settlement and for the latest, 2022-23 tax base.

## AVAILABLE REVENUE RESOURCES 2022/23 AND PROPOSED USAGE

|                                                      | **£'000** |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total resources available in 2022/23                 | 566,791   |
| **LESS:** Total resources available in 2021/22       | 527,903   |
| **INCREASE** in resources available in 2022/23       | **38,888** |

|                                                      | **£'000** |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| **Allocation of Resources**                          |           |
| Delegated Schools Budget                             | 11,182    |
| Education & Inclusion Services                       | 1,884     |
| Community & Children's Services                      | 15,032    |
| Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services       | 5,621     |
| Chief Executive                                      | 1,816     |
| Authority Wide Requirements                          | 3,353     |
|                                                      | **38,888** |

## PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

### Education & Inclusion Services

### Delegated Schools Budgets

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **163,784** |
|  |  |
| Increase | 11,182 |
|  |  |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **174,966** |

### Non-Delegated Budgets

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **31,941** |
|  |  |
| Base and Inflationary Pressures | 2,544 |
|  |  |
| General Efficiencies | (660) |
|  |  |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **33,825** |

| **Total Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **208,791** |
|---|---|

## Community & Children's Services

| | £'000 |
|---|---:|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **168,586** |
| | |
| Base and Inflationary Pressures | 16,815 |
| | |
| General Efficiencies | (1,783) |
| | |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **183,618** |

**Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services**

| | £'000 |
|---|---|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **60,372** |
| | |
| Base and Inflationary Pressures | 6,902 |
| | |
| General Efficiencies | (1,281) |
| | |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **65,993** |

**Chief Executive**

|  | £'000 |
|---|---|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **30,857** |
|  |  |
| Base and Inflationary Pressures | 2,992 |
|  |  |
| General Efficiencies | (1,176) |
|  |  |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **32,673** |

**<u>Authority Wide</u>**

|  | £'000 |
|---|---:|
| **Net Revenue Budget 2021/22** | **72,363** |
|  |  |
| Increase | 3,353 |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Proposed Net Revenue Budget 2022/23** | **75,716** |

| | |
|---|---:|
| **Use of Reserves (Transition Funding)** | **(970)** |

# BUDGETCONSULTATION2022/23

## (PHASE 1)

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC
## DECEMBER 2021

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

## CONTENTS

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## FIGURES AND TABLES

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Phase 1 Budget Consultation 2022/23.

- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 26th October to 7th December 2021.

- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders: online survey and other engagement tools via the Let's Talk Budget website; a series of outdoor events with "Quick Poll" questions being asked; online presentations and discussions with community and school groups; social media posts; email invitations to take part. These are explained in Section 3, Methodology.

- 247 full survey responses with received, with a further 472 responses to "Quick Poll" responses and 10 contributions to an open-text "Ideas" function on the website.

- Respondents were generally in favour of a Council Tax increase level of 2.65%, but by a narrower margin than in previous years (52% in survey and 65% in polls, compared to 76.8% overall in 2021/22).

- 72% of respondents agreed that the Council should provide sufficient resources to fully cover increased pay and non-pay costs in our schools.

- 87% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue to prioritise social services as a key area for additional investment.

- 51% of respondents agreed that fees and charges in RCT should be raised by the rate of inflation, whilst 37% believed any increase should be lower than the rate of inflation.

- Respondents were provided with a list of Council services and asked to choose which services they felt should be protected and prioritised for any additional resources in 2022/23.  The top five services that respondents most wanted to **protect and prioritise** were

    o  Children's Social Care Services (94.12%)
    o  Public Health (91.38%)
    o  Adult Social Care Services (89.83%)
    o  Schools (84.62%)
    o  Waste and Recycling Services (81.25%)

- 86% of respondents agreed with the Council's approach to efficiencies and 89% said that we should continue to expect our managers to deliver more efficient services.

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- 77% of respondents stated that the Council should continue with its strategy on reserves.

- Respondents were asked if they thought the Council should invest in a number of service areas. The majority of respondents agreed with investment across all areas, with the most support being shown for Flood Alleviation (91.29%), Recycling and the Environment (86.42%), Empty Properties (80.66%) and Climate Change (80.00%).

- Over 1000 people took part in the various engagement activities carried out during the consultation Phase 1.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of the Phase 1 Budget Consultation 2022/23.

1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process.

1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.

1.4 Section 4 provides the results from the consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Budget website.

1.5 Section 5 outlines the engagement that took place with young people.

# 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council undertakes a comprehensive approach to its annual budget consultation, involving a large number of residents and key stakeholders.

2.2 The widespread approach we use and the range of views we capture provides senior managers and Cabinet Members with the necessary information they need to set the budget for the year ahead. In addition, we have found that the vast amount of information we collect can also be valuable for service managers to use for their service planning and development.

2.3 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan has been used as a basis of planning our 2022/23 budget strategy consultation processes.

2.4 This report presents the findings of phase 1 of the budget consultation, where views were sought on:

- level of Council Tax increase

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- the resources allocated to our schools
- the Social Care Budget
- fees and charges levels
- protection and prioritisation of services for additional resources
- delivering more efficient services
- Council priorities, investment opportunities and Council reserves; and
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme

2.5     Phase 1 of the Council's budget consultation ran from 26th October to the 7th December 2021.

2.6     Phase 2 of the consultation will commence in January 2022 and will seek to obtain views on the proposed Budget Strategy for 2022/23.

## 3.     METHODOLOGY

3.1     The 2022/23 budget consultation has 2 phases.  This report presents the results of the first phase.  Phase 1 of the Council's budget consultation ran from 26th October to the 7th December 2021 and aimed to collect views on investment priorities, council tax levels and efficiency savings.  This report will be presented to Cabinet and Officers to consider the feedback received whilst developing a draft Budget Strategy for 2022/23.  Phase 2 will take place in the New Year and will engage with residents on this draft strategy.

3.2     The consultation approach used the new Let's Talk online engagement platform, which provides a user friendly and interactive form of engagement. The "Let's Talk Budget" project provided key information, key dates, documents, graphics and videos to outline the background to the Council's budget, in addition to a number of engagement tools to allow feedback, which included online polls, a survey and an ideas tool.

3.3     Social media was used to communicate the key messages to residents and service users and encourage engagement and feedback regarding the Council's budget and investment areas.

3.4     An email was sent to a range of key stakeholders to promote the consultation.

3.5     A number of outdoor face-to-face engagement events were re-introduced this year, after a temporary absence due to the pandemic. The Council's recycling trailer was used and Officers were on hand to outline the budget approach, answer questions and collect views.  The following engagement events took place during the consultation:

| Ynysangharad War memorial Park, Pontypridd | 17th November |
|---|---|
| Aberdare Town Centre | 24th November |
| Co-op, Treorchy | 1st December |

6

3.6     As with last year's "digital by default approach" we continued to consider those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.

- A telephone Consultation option is now in place for all Council consultations, through the Council's Contact Centre. The option allows people to discuss their views or as a minimum to request consultation materials.
- Individual call backs on request.
- Consultation freepost address for postal responses.

3.7     We also produced a plain English document of the budget documents, online and available on request.

3.8     A discussion and presentation was held with the Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG).

3.9     The consultation was also promoted to other groups, including the Disability Forum, Community Hubs and through Veterans Groups.

3.10    We used a number of methods to engage with young people, including online meetings with 3 secondary schools - St. John Baptist Church in Wales High School, Y Pant Comprehensive School and Treorchy Comprehensive School. The sessions were attended by members of the Consultation Team along with a finance officer. During the sessions the young people were shown a video outlining the budget challenges followed by a short presentation with discussion prompts and questions from the full budget consultation.

3.11    Budget content was also created and shared on the YEPS Instagram account through polls and stories.  The Council's Budget Content was also shared by YEPS' Facebook account.

3.12    The Council's Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and School Budget Forum were consulted (the minutes of which have not been included in this report).

3.13    In addition to the above, all members have had opportunity over recent months at Cabinet and through Full Council to engage in the ongoing work on the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

3.14    1,100 people were engaged in the phase 1 budget consultation.

# 4 Let's Talk Budget

4.1 The following section outlines the results from the main consultation activities, including those carried out on the Let's Talk Budget website.

4.2 There were three ways for page visitors to engage with the consultation. Firstly, the full survey, with questions provided by the Finance department of RCT. Secondly, a series of "Quick Poll" questions, which were based on a selection of questions from the main survey. Finally, there was an "Ideas" tool available, where respondents were invited to provide longer, free-text responses to a prompt.

## Survey Results

4.3 A total of 247 completed surveys were received, including the results from a small number of paper copies which were completed and handed in to RCT staff. For the purposes of this report, any blank responses to individual questions have been discounted. Therefore, all percentages quoted are a percentage of the total responses for that individual question.

### Schools Budget

4.4 72% of respondents agreed that the Council should provide sufficient resources to fully cover increased pay and non-pay costs in our schools.
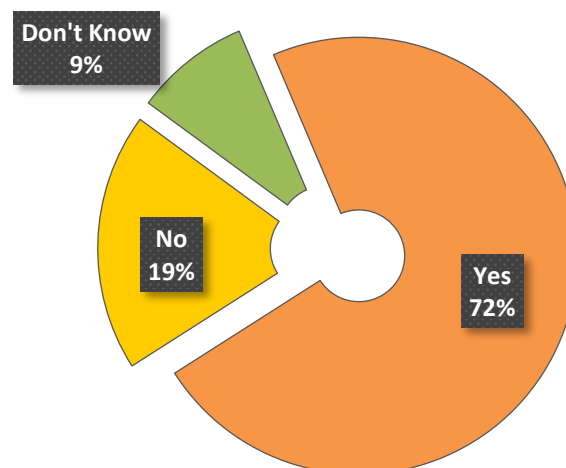


*Figure 1 - Schools Budget Increase*

## Social Care budget

4.5    87% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue to prioritise social services as a key area for additional investment.
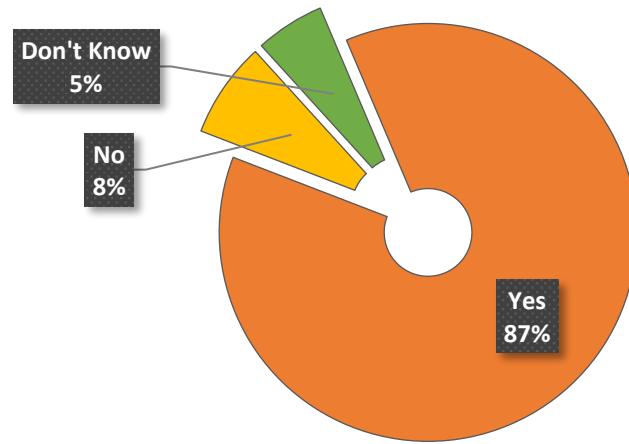


*Figure 2 - Prioritisation of Social Services for additional investment*

## Fees and Charges

4.6    51% of respondents agreed that fees and charges in RCT should be raised by the rate of inflation, whilst 37% believed any increase should be lower than the rate of inflation.
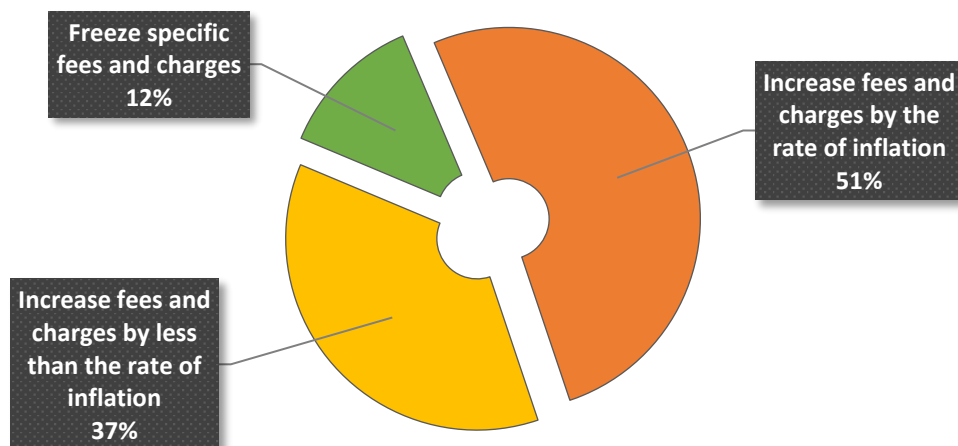


*Figure 3 – Increases to Fees and Charges*

9

4.7    12% of respondents stated that they believe certain fees and charges should be frozen. Respondents were asked to state which fees and charges they believe this should apply to, and a wide range of comments were received.

4.8    A number of respondents raised concerns that fees and charges are often too high already, and/or that the current economic situation has left families unable to afford any increases. There was support shown for means-testing or similar sliding scale charges being implemented, particularly for leisure services/ gyms. Very few comments supported rate of inflation or higher increases across the board, although as this contradicts the proportion expressed in the previous question, it is clearly more indicative of the tone and focus of this question than the general opinion of respondents.

4.9    The relative frequencies of themes are illustrated in the graphic, with a selection of comments presented below:



*Figure 4 – Comments on Fees and Charges*

10

<u>Overall</u>

*"Appreciate that income from fees and charges contribute greatly to the council's budget but with no pay increases for the majority of people and cuts in benefits then I question the affordability for residents and their capability to pay an increased amount."*

*"I think fees and charges need to take into account household income, some people will be more affected by increased fees than others"*

*"Review each fee/charge on its own merit, as raising some will not prove as efficient or welcomed as raising others."*

*"We must realise tha(t) decent services must be paid for."*

<u>Leisure</u>

*"Free access to pupils on free school meals - and their families to help them to feel good about themselves by having access to leisure they cannot always afford"*

*"The council has to charge but where possible support sports clubs who provide places for adults and children to take part in sport, most clubs are run by volunteers who give much time for free, additional cost could tip some clubs over the edge and have to fold"*

*"It is difficult to encourage people to make more use of facilities such as leisure and sports if the fees keep going up.  People are trying to be more healthy, so they should be frozen for leisure."*  (OPAG Member).

<u>Parking Charges</u>

*"Car parking charges need to be looked at, I understand drawing people into town centres but free parking??? Surely every revenue stream needs to be looked at?"*

*"Car parking in Pontypridd should not rise. We need to be encouraging people not to go out of town."*

*"Car parking charges are a barrier to independence as they make it harder for lower income people to access town centre facilities"* (OPAG Member).

**The full text of all comments received in the consultation are available for Cabinet and Officers to view.**

### **Council Services**

4.10    Respondents were provided with a list of Council services and asked to choose which services they thought should be protected and prioritised for

11

any additional resources in 2022/23 and those that should not be protected.  The results are shown in the graph and table below:
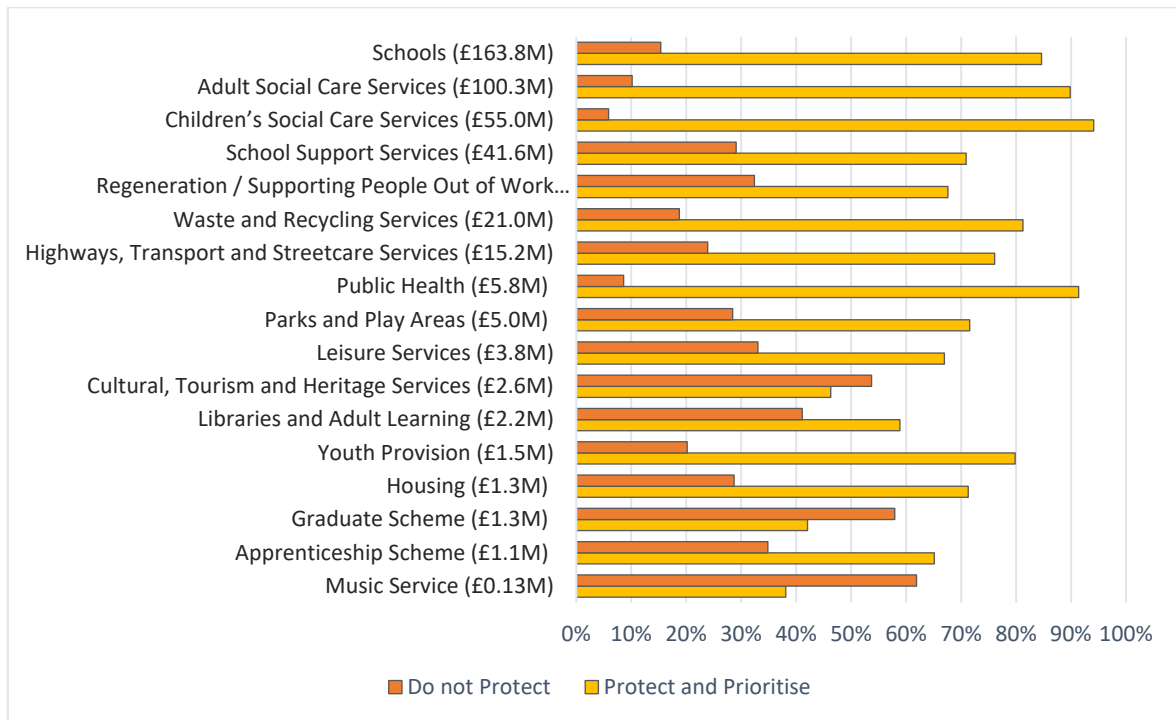


*Figure 5 – Services to be Protected and Prioritised*

| | Protect and Prioritise | Do not Protect |
|---|---|---|
| Schools (£163.8M) | 84.62% | 15.38% |
| Adult Social Care Services (£100.3M) | 89.83% | 10.17% |
| Children's Social Care Services (£55.0M) | 94.12% | 5.88% |
| School Support Services (£41.6M) | 70.91% | 29.09% |
| Regeneration / Supporting People Out of Work (£28.2M) | 67.59% | 32.41% |
| Waste and Recycling Services (£21.0M) | 81.25% | 18.75% |
| Highways, Transport and Streetcare Services (£15.2M) | 76.11% | 23.89% |
| Public Health (£5.8M) | 91.38% | 8.62% |
| Parks and Play Areas (£5.0M) | 71.56% | 28.44% |
| Leisure Services (£3.8M) | 66.96% | 33.04% |
| Cultural, Tourism and Heritage Services (£2.6M) | 46.30% | 53.70% |
| Libraries and Adult Learning (£2.2M) | 58.88% | 41.12% |
| Youth Provision (£1.5M) | 79.82% | 20.18% |
| Housing (£1.3M) | 71.30% | 28.70% |
| Graduate Scheme (£1.3M) | 42.06% | 57.94% |
| Apprenticeship Scheme (£1.1M) | 65.14% | 34.86% |
| Music Service (£0.13M) | 38.10% | 61.90% |

**Table 1: Services to be Protected and Prioritised**

12

4.11    Almost all the services listed had a majority of respondents agreeing that they should be prioritised and protected with the exception of the following 3 services:

- Music Service (61.90% **do not** protect)
- Graduate Scheme (57.94% **do not** protect)
- Cultural, Tourism and Heritage Services (53.70% **do not** protect)

The Graduate Scheme has not appeared on the list of Council Services separately in the past budget consultations.  However, from comments in previous years, in combination with the responses to later questions in the survey (please see point 4.28) it is apparent that there are lower levels of support for the Graduate Scheme than other council services.  In contrast, the Apprenticeship Scheme still has large support (65.14%), indicating a more positive feeling about its delivered outcomes.

OPAG members suggested that the apprenticeship scheme needs protecting as young people need the skills and opportunities they could develop from it.  They also suggested that there needs to be a balance between the Graduate scheme and the Apprenticeship scheme to make sure as many people as possible are included, *"if more apprentices are helped by the same amount of money, maybe phase out Graduate scheme for a year or two to provide more apprentice places"*.

4.12    The five services that respondents most wanted to **protect and prioritise** were

- Children's Social Care Services (94.12%)
- Public Health (91.38%)
- Adult Social Care Services (89.83%)
- Schools (84.62%)
- Waste and Recycling Services (81.25%)

**Council Tax**

4.13    Responses to the question "Do you think the Council should increase Council Tax next year by the same amount (2.65%) or less?" were almost evenly spilt. A narrow majority of 52% of respondents stated that they think Council Tax should be increased by 2.65%, whereas 48% of respondents stated that they believe the increase should be lower.
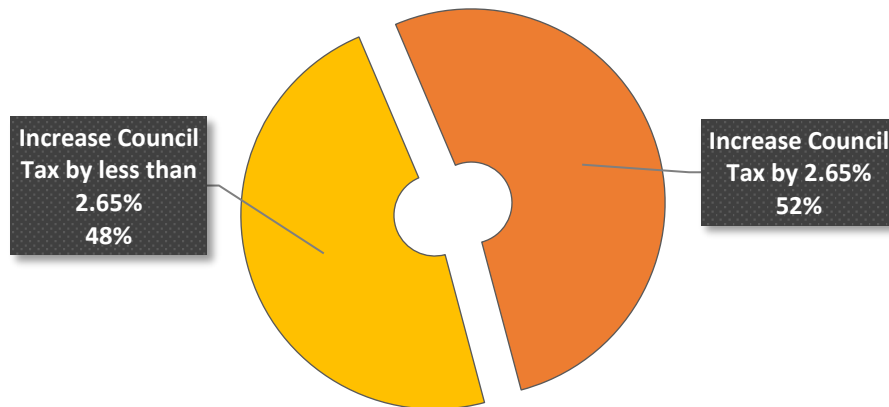
*Figure 6 – Council Tax Increase*

4.14    When asked for any general comments about Council Tax a number of respondents raised concerns that RCT has one of the highest rates in Wales already, despite low annual increases in recent years. Whilst there was general agreement that services rely upon the rate of Council Tax for funding, the majority of comments called for a freeze, reduction or very minimal increase on Council Tax. Some respondents urged that costs be lowered before income is raised, and others raised property banding as an area of concern.

A selection of comments are presented here:

Increase Council Tax by 2.65%

*"Council Tax should be increased, although consideration needs to be given to residents where they are not elig(i)ble for Council tax assistance such as reductions, benefits etc and where it may significantly impact on their income."*

*"Services need resourcing, they need paying for."*

*"2 .65% is fair(l)y low and is welcomed after the last 2 years"*

*"Taking into account the current rise in the cost of living 2.65% would be a fair Percentage with considerations for OAP's and single Parent family's"*

Increase Council Tax by less than 2.65%

*"It seems as a council tax payer we are getting less services primarily due to Covid so don't see why we should be paying more."*

*"People have barely survived financially through COVID, you can't make things even more volatile for them."*

14

*"There are already people not being able to pay their rent due to council tax rises in some areas of wales. This may just cause more people at risk of homelessness not being able to pay the increase in all areas of living atm."*

*"Council Tax is already a significant monthly cost per month for my household even with both myself and partner working. If it can be reduced/not increased by too much it would help so much."*

<u>Other</u>

*"Going by repair of walls, walkways and pavements[…] (many elderly using these). Nothing done after numerous requests. Would consider increase if these issues addressed."*

*"The council should re look at the banding. E.g., / Should consider how many occupants live in house. Why should one household with 6+residents pay the same as 2 residents. 6+ residents create far more rubbish etc. People living in garages, not paying for the services!"*

*"RCT is amongst the highest in Wales so any increases should be aimed at reducing that position rather than boasting about its individual % increases"*

A range of feedback was provided by OPAG members on the level of Council Tax, with a general feeling for a lower increase.

*"Wages are not rising as fast as cost of living, and people are still recovering from covid-19 impacts, so Council Tax should be kept down to off-set this."*

*"I can see it has to go up, but not quite as much, maybe about 2%."*

*"The increase in pension is lower."*

**<u>Efficiencies</u>**

4.15 Respondents were provided with the following statement regarding efficiencies and asked whether they thought this was a good strategy.

*"Each year in balancing our budget and ensuring the effective use of resources, all our service managers are required to contribute toward a council-wide efficiency (savings) target. This means that all of our services are becoming more efficient without impacting on front line services, and, over the past decade in excess of £100M of savings have been delivered that represents a reduction of 19% of the Council's budget."*

4.16 The majority of respondents thought this was a good strategy (86%) and 89% said that we should continue to expect our managers to deliver more efficient services in the future.

15

**Do you think this is a good strategy?**

**Do you think we should continue to expect our managers to deliver more efficient services?**

No
14%

Yes
86%

No
11%

Yes
89%
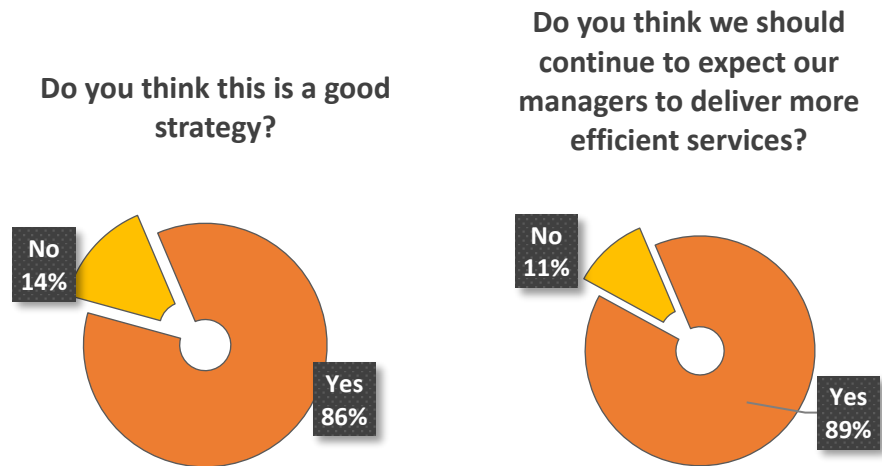
*Figure 7 – Efficiency Strategy Agreement*

4.17 Respondents were then asked if they had any suggestions for greater efficiencies within the Council, or examples of ways in which the Council is not currently as efficient as it could be. The word cloud/map below provides a simple illustrated snapshot of some of the key themes in the comments received.

4.18 The major theme that appeared in a high proportion of comments was Council staff working from home and what could be done with empty or very underoccupied Council buildings as a result. In general, respondents seem to be in favour of home/ agile working in future, without a return to full office occupancy, as a key efficiency measure. Combined with this, a number of comments received suggest selling or leasing Council-owned buildings as an income generation strategy.

4.19 In general, the majority of comments related to Council staffing and organisational policies, including Councillor expenses, senior management levels, use of consultancy and agency staff. A selection of comments on these and other key themes have been presented in point 4.20.

16

***Figure 8 – Comments on Efficiencies***

4.20    A selection of comments from respondents are included below.

Environmental Concerns

*"Energy efficiency and also reduction of printed materials."*

*"more encouragement for use of public transport. Add solar panels to council run buildings to help them go more green,"*

*"I think the Council should 'Invest to Save' investing in green and renewable energy and electric fleet to cut costs in the longer term."*

Agile Working/ Council Buildings

*"I think that there are huge savings to be made in the areas of agile working and more electronic communication (it would be interesting to see the reduction in office costs overall during covid) whilst having an impact on climate change - less travel etc."*

*"So many people are now very successfully working from home I think there should be much more office building rationalisation. There is no need to keep so many council buildings up and running. Town centre hubs I think are an excellent idea."*

*"Now it has been proven that quite a lot of staff can work from home, surely some of the buildings could be sold or leased to other businesses if leased agile work"*

There was general agreement from OPAG that the Council should continue with remote working, with this and improved technology to cut costs by divesting property/ leasing property/ reducing travel budgets/ hosting more online meetings and so on to be more efficient.

Digitalisation

*"move to more digital resident self-serve platforms and become paperless as less uses of Paper systems require so much less admin hours"*

*"Continue looking into digitalisation and use of data."*

Efficiency Difficulties

*"I think efficiency monitoring is important but continued pressure to cut costs can detract from the quality-of-service provision with direct implications for the lives of the children and families we aim to support."*

*"Efficiency does not always equate to cheaper and I think that is something that is clear in social services. The closure of services, such as support cafes and art workshops and the belief that existing workers can cover that loss of support is unrealistic, so while it looks like you are getting more from your workers for less money, the service users are the ones having less support and targeted time, which in my view reduces effectiveness and prolongs involvement."*

*"The reduction had had a massive affect on the front line and that is how money has been saved."*

Duplication

*"Better partnership working amongst certain service areas could reduce duplication of services and result in savings."*

*"Areas where there is duplication as it is not an effective use of resources"*

*"From my own experience more joined up working when dealing with highways issues. E.g., leaf clearance, culverts and drainage and coal tips seemingly involve three different Departments to a common issue affecting the road surface."*

18

<u>Senior Managers and Councillors</u>

*"more front-line staff to provide services and less senior managers"*

*"Councillor's expenses - extremely excessive indeed - have more remote meetings."*

*"cut down on the number of councillors"*

*"I agree managers should be a major part of the council wide-wide efficiency target, however, to the best of my knowledge, few if any of the service managers have had any formal and recognised training in regard to managerial qualifications (apart from the basic ILM course) which would include being responsible for very large budgets."*

*"the payment of expenses to councillors should be reviewed and all unnecessary and duplicated expenses be stopped. Only one councillor should attend a function/meeting."*

<u>Consultants/ Third Parties</u>

*"Another area to reduce costs would be to avoid employing consultants to undertake training, surveys and developments, etc. when the authority already has a variety of knowledge, skills and expertise within its existing workforce. Many staff within the council have worked their way up the ladder and are local people, so they are familiar with the needs of the communities, the services and the staff, so they are best placed to address them."*

*"Have their own supply agency for staff like the used to, this will save schools money in the long run. The council should not be using outside contractors for day to day running and employ their own staff,"*

*"Reduce over reliance on agency staff and consultants."*

*"Poor staff retention issues in social care are costly due to the need to rely on agency services ."*

**Council Reserves**

4.21    Respondents were asked if they think the Council should continue with the Reserves strategy, described as:

*"Reserves play an important part of the overall financial management of the Council. The Council's General Reserve balances at 31$^{st}$ March 2021 amounted to £8.5M following an approved in-year overspend of £0.2M for the last financial year (2020/21). The level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review and replenished going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the financial risks the Council faces."*

19

4.22    77% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue with this strategy.
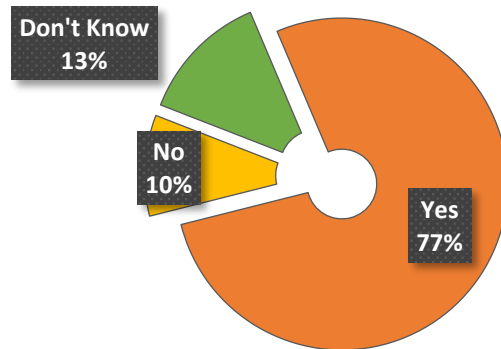


*Figure 9 – Council Reserves Strategy*

4.23    Respondents were invited to give any other comments they have on the budget.

These comments largely built upon themes and trends displayed in the open questions already discussed in this report, although a number of comments were received about council reserves as well as concerns being raised about a drive towards efficiency leading to service and staffing cuts.

Reserves

*"8.5 million pounds of RCT residents money is a large amount to be held in reserve the area of RCT could without doubt benefit from the realise of some of this money back into the community"*

*"There should be reserves in case of another pandemic or something else that can't be foreseen"*

*"I think you should explain what 'Council Reserves' are used for in general and practice."*

Efficiency

*"Seeking efficiencies from services in isolation may not be sustainable in the longer term as there is a risk the service areas meets the savings target and puts pressure on another area. The savings need to be considered across the service areas including where there is an interdependency. It needs a whole system approach."*

*"You can't expect managers to do more with less.....I am a manager for another LA and the increased work against capacity is extraordinarily high. It's not efficiencies, it's cuts."*

20

Staff/Employment

*"The Council should be far more transparent about things like staffing levels/ costs and other hidden things that not everyone understands, to make people realise the budget pressures in full."*

*"cut the top peoples pay and raise the pay for the ones that actually do the work for them"*

Social Care

*"As someone who doesn't have children, nor do I or my family require Social Services support, I do not want to pay more council tax towards this for those who do have children and for those who do require such services."*

*"Children's services are overworked and expected more of all the time. This is dangerous and needs priority spending"*

*"I feel home care domiciliary service should be reviewed as an area it is failing and should be more efficient in keeping people safe"*

Other Services

*"somewhere for the youth to attend, to keep them occupied, and reduce anti-social behaviour"*

*"Leisure services, social care, health, and education must be prioritised to protect people's well-being after the pandemic. The Music Service has a tiny budget compared to the overall spend, and must also be protected, as this is a vital part of children's educational experience and contributes to their achievement and well-being well out of proportion to the amount spent on it. …*

Other

*"Continue to invest in new community infrastructure such as new schools, road improvements, our parks, extra care and our town centres. We are seeing a big difference in our communities after an impressive investment programme over the past 5 years or so."*

*"I believe, overall the Council are doing a fantastic job in what are exceptionally hard times and need to be commended for doing so. Diolch Yn Fawr Iawn"*

*"Asking staff and residents their views on a regular basis is important so the Council's budget can be reviewed and changed as need be"*

*"Revenue budgets should come first, maintaining (including future proofing) what you have got is more important than any new projects."*

21

*"Instead of building a library which sits empty a lot of the time, and buildings in Pontypridd town centre that are still to let, why don't we use this money wisely on more important things. There are plenty of empty shops on the high street for business regeneration so let's make use of those first."*

### The Council's Priorities

4.24 The Council focuses on five key areas to maximise resources and deliver improved services.

> **Digitalisation** *(taking the opportunity new technology provides to deliver better services for residents, visitors, businesses and how we operate internally)*
>
> **Commercialisation** *(utilising our scale and expertise to deliver services for other organisations and customers and thereby generate income)*
>
> **Early Intervention and Prevention** *(investing in preventative services to deliver savings in the medium term)*
>
> **Independence** *(reshaping our services for vulnerable residents to ensure that we promote independence and deliver first class care services)*
>
> **Efficient and Effective Organisation** *(challenging our ongoing service delivery and driving out further efficiencies through for example, a reduction in administration costs and reducing property costs linked to new ways of working)*

4.25 Respondents were asked if they thought the Council should focus on these key areas. The majority of respondents agreed with all of the key areas, with the highest response being for Early Intervention and Prevention (90.98%).
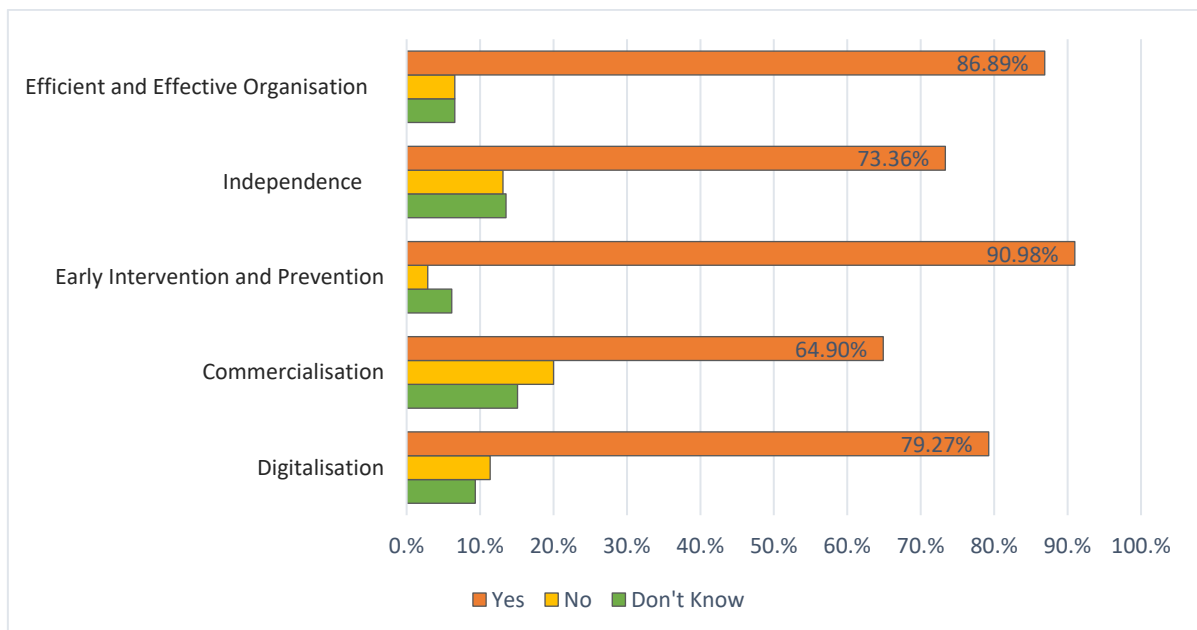


*Figure 10 – Council Areas of Focus*

22

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digitalisation | 79.27% | 11.38% | 9.35% |
| Commercialisation | 64.90% | 20.00% | 15.10% |
| Early Intervention and Prevention | 90.98% | 2.87% | 6.15% |
| Independence | 73.36% | 13.11% | 13.52% |
| Efficient and Effective Organisation | 86.89% | 6.56% | 6.56% |

*Table 2: Council Areas of Focus*

**Council Investment Opportunities**

4.26 Respondents were asked if they thought the Council should invest in a number of service areas. The majority of respondents agreed with investment across all areas, with the most support being shown for Flood Alleviation (91.29%), Recycling and the Environment (86.42%), Empty Properties (80.66%) and Climate Change (89%).
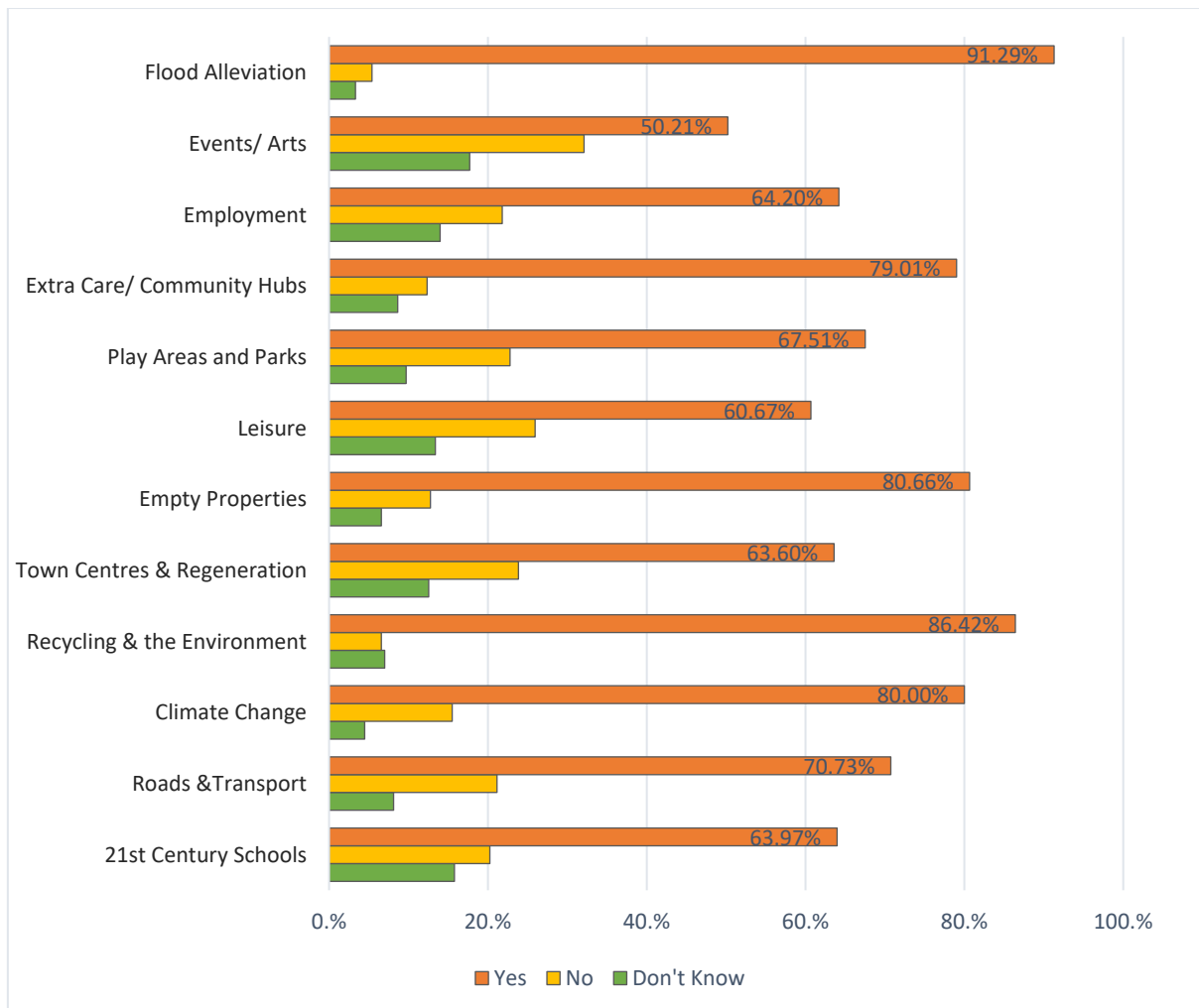


*Figure 11 – Areas of Investment*

23

Tudalen 73

| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| **21st Century Schools** | 63.97% | 20.24% | 15.79% |
| **Roads &Transport** | 70.73% | 21.14% | 8.13% |
| **Climate Change** | 80.00% | 15.51% | 4.49% |
| **Recycling & the Environment** | 86.42% | 6.58% | 7.00% |
| **Town Centres & Regeneration** | 63.60% | 23.85% | 12.55% |
| **Empty Properties** | 80.66% | 12.76% | 6.58% |
| **Leisure** | 60.67% | 25.94% | 13.39% |
| **Play Areas and Parks** | 67.51% | 22.78% | 9.70% |
| **Extra Care/ Community Hubs** | 79.01% | 12.35% | 8.64% |
| **Employment** | 64.20% | 21.81% | 13.99% |
| **Events/ Arts** | 50.21% | 32.10% | 17.70% |
| **Flood Alleviation** | 91.29% | 5.39% | 3.32% |

*Table 3: Areas of Investment*

4.27 A large proportion of comments received about Council investment priorities related to Flood Alleviation, which supports the figures above. Respondents showed concerns about the effectiveness of measures taken already and the rate of future measures against flooding being introduced. A large number of comments also related to Climate Change and the efforts that can/should be made in this area. Whilst some respondents were quite negative about environmental concerns, a majority listed energy efficiency, reducing pollution and electric vehicle charging infrastructure as main concerns.

The word cloud/map below provides an illustrated snapshot of some of the frequent themes in comments received about Council investments.

*Figure 12 – Investment comments*

4.28   The following are a selection of comments received on the Council's investment areas:

21st Century Schools

*"ensure maintenance budgets are used for maintenance and not other purposes"*

*"In relation to schools I believe they need to be funded, but it should be focussed on teaching, equipment, one to one support, pupil emotional well-being.  Once these areas are better funded then consider remodelling the buildings.  If however a building is not fit for use then yes I do believe money should be spent on it."*

*"Schools need to be updated to embrace and reflect the technology that will benefit pupils in the long-term. By investing in providing state of the art schools, the council is also investing in the education and long term prospects of the future generations."*

*"not sure about new schools, it's the teaching that is important more than the large showy school"*

Roads & Transport

*"I strongly disagree with investment in new /widening roads -this just encourages more people to drive and goes against what is needed.to make RCT a more attractive area to visit - yes we have some congestion in some areas at peak times but it is hardly chronic. More roads means more pollution, more habitat destruction, more bypassing of towns dependent on passing trade and more long term maintenance costs."*

*"Create dedicated "lay-by's" with rapid EV chargers along the main road infrastructure, to assist EV drivers who cannot charge at home. Being able to pull off road on way home from work to "top up " for 10 minutes would make a huge difference"*

*"Monies should be found to fund schemes such as the Rhondda Fach Relief Road extension to Maerdy and the Heads of the Valley road to stop outward migration of our young people and to attract industry to the valley to regenerate large tracts of land in the County Borough."*

*"No to new roads but maintain existing roads better!"*

Recycling & the Environment

*"I'm not sure if the above would include priority for investing in active travel and/or public transport but i think this has to be a key area of investment to create a cleaner, greener county which is accessible to everyone - not just those who own a vehicle"*

*"We need to stop spending on environmental issues, we are ,world wide, not even in the baby league. I.E., %1.1 of the world. Spend the money on Education for our children."*

*"The Council should prioritise investment in actions to combat climate change"*

Town Centres & Regeneration

*"The regeneration of (Aberdare) appears to be growing where other areas such as Aberdare Town is decreasing. It needs levelling up and it embarrassing to see Aberdare full of charity shops and food outlets. How is this bring residents to Aberdare. You need to put money in to get money out like you are doing in Pontypridd"*

*"town centre investment is really important.... over the past year with covid residents have had to look more locally for support in the towns and villages for shopping support its been the smaller grocers that have taken out deliveries allowed shopping over the phone etc...."*

*"Try to introduce better shopping facilities in smaller villages e.g Porth, where diversity of shops on offer has died."*

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Empty Properties

*"Re empty properties - is this beneficial to residents, those taking their first step on the mortgage ladder or are builders benefiting from this?"*

*"Is the Empty Homes strategy working? How man(y) new homes has it provided for individuals to live in?"*

*"How can the council spend more on graduates than housing?"*

Leisure

*"In respect of leisure, play areas and parks, I think developments here are important but given we are still just grateful to be out of lock down and able use what we have, I think that we can postpone developments in these areas to free up funds for other priorities."*

*"There are already some lovely parks in RCT for children to visit and I think spending more money on this area is an absolute waste. If we had sunshine for most of the year, I might feel differently. There are tonnes of places for children to visit already and children can play at home too."*

Extra Care/Community Hubs

*"More engagement for the elderly to tackle loneliness and isolation.  More support needed for unpaid carers and respite network.  We need more support needed also for families with disabled children and adults to support them in their day-to-day battles to keep afloat with the workload and financial difficulties they face."*

*"Investment in children and young peoples services as they have suffered most during this pandemic and I believe we could be sitting on a ticking time bomb, with young people suffering from major mental health issues as a result."*

*"I fully support investment towards the vulnerable but the Council needs to take care that it is the truly vulnerable that benefit.  Too many are not as vulnerable as claimed."*

*"Extra Care and Community Hubs should be created – the ones currently in use are fantastic, very valuable and encouraging more and more community activities."* (OPAG Member)

Employment

*"Appreciate benefit of apprenticeships but there is a limit to how many a Council should provide."*

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*"I think there are a surplus of apprentices and Graduates. There is already a very experienced workforce who could be utilised more efficiently."*

*"Investment in their current staff (as opposed to focussing solely on new staff) - allowing them to develop and assist in driving forward these priorities."*

*"I think the council should employ more Apprentices (t)o retain skills"*

<u>Events/Arts</u>

*"While events/arts are worthwhile, it is evidenced that without the prime audiences or users, they are no longer as popular. If they are to be invested in, they need to be made more attractive to a wider community and be more diverse in what they offer; however, this may not be enough to make them viable so the money may be better invested elsewhere."*

<u>Flood Alleviation</u>

*"Flooding is huge, many still aren't back in their homes. We need to devise a strategy to help victims, prevent future natural disaster events and be better for our climate altogether."*

*"perhaps if drainage was addressed, the flood wouldn't have been so catastrophic, so regular drain clearing, in particular the hardest hit areas."*
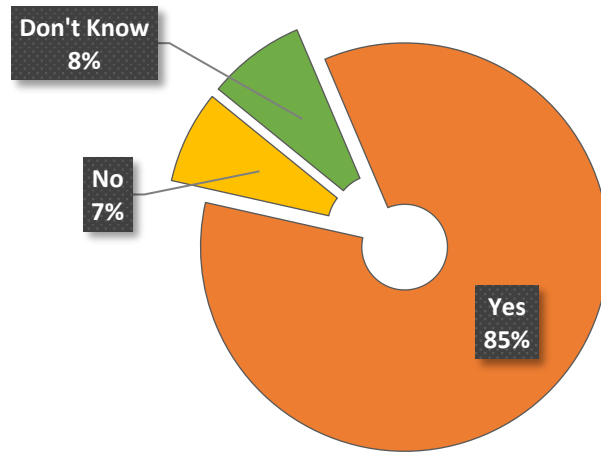
## **Council Vision and Purpose**

4.29    Respondents were asked whether they agree with the Council's vision and purpose, presented as:

**The Council's vision is***: "To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous".*

**The Council's purpose is***: "To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous".*

A very strong majority of respondents, 85%, agreed with this statement.

*Figure 13 – Council's Vision and Purpose*

### Council Priorities

4.30   Respondents were asked if they agreed with the three priorities of the Council, set out as:

· *Ensuring People: are independent, healthy and successful;*

· *Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play; and*

· *Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.*

4.31   Similar to the previous question, a very strong majority of respondents (87%) agreed with these statements.
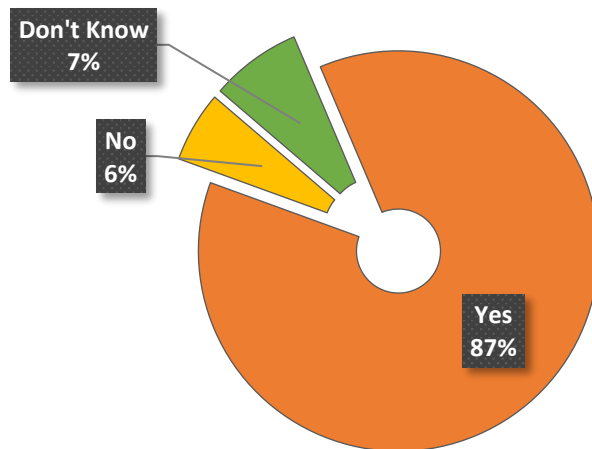


*Figure 14 – Council Priorities*

29

**Cross-cutting Principle**

4.32 Finally, respondents were asked whether they believe the Council fulfils its commitment to *'Living Within Our Means'* – *to ensure the Council uses resources economically, efficiently and effectively.*

4.33 Responses to this question were very mixed. Very close proportions (40% and 38% respectively) of respondents said Yes and No, whilst a sizeable proportion of 22% answered "Don't Know". This indicates a need for future explanations and demonstrations of how the Council is working towards this principle to be clearer.
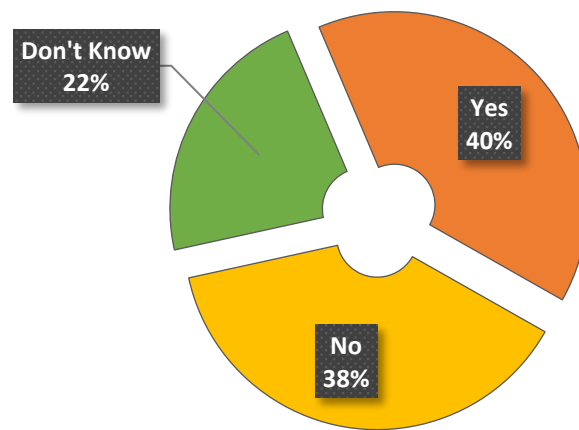


*Figure 15 – Is the Council 'Living Within Our Means"?*

## Poll Results

4.34 Four questions were available to respondents in the "Quick Poll" tool. In total there were 472 responses to these questions, although the majority of responses for the first question only, as the other questions were added to the site later in the consultation process.

4.35 These same questions were also asked of members of the public who visited our in-person events (described in Methodology section 3.5), so the results from those events are included in this section for clarity.

**Quick Poll 1: Council Tax Increase**

4.36 Respondents were asked *"In 2021/22 Council Tax in RCT increased by 2.65%. Do you think the Council should increase Council Tax by the same amount or less?".*

4.37 Of the 267 responses received, a majority of 64.8% (173) answered "Increase by 2.65%".
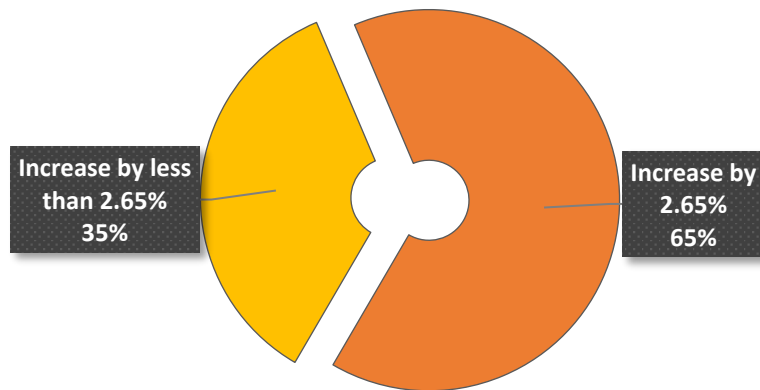
*Figure 16 – Quick Poll 1: Council Tax Increase*

### Quick Poll 2: Schools Budget

4.38  Respondents were asked *"Schools Budget - Do you think the Council should provide sufficient resources to fully cover increased pay and non-pay cost pressures in our schools?"*.

4.39  Of 80 responses, a very strong majority of 78.8% (63) answered "Yes".
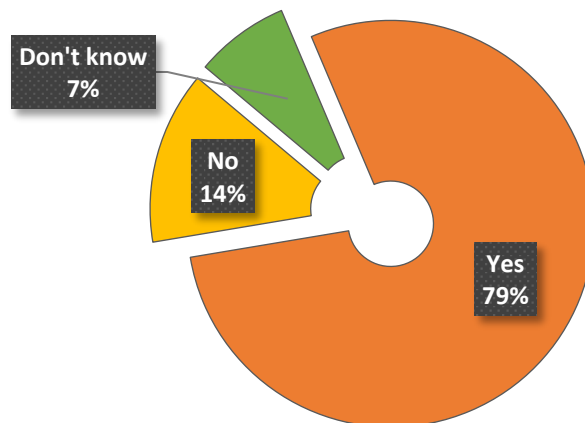


*Figure 17 – Quick Poll 2: Schools Budget*

### Quick Poll 3: Social Care Budget

4.40  Respondents were asked *"Social Care Budget - Do you think the Council should continue to prioritise social services as a key area for additional investment?"*.

31

4.41    Of 79 responses, almost all (96.2%, or 76) answered "Yes".
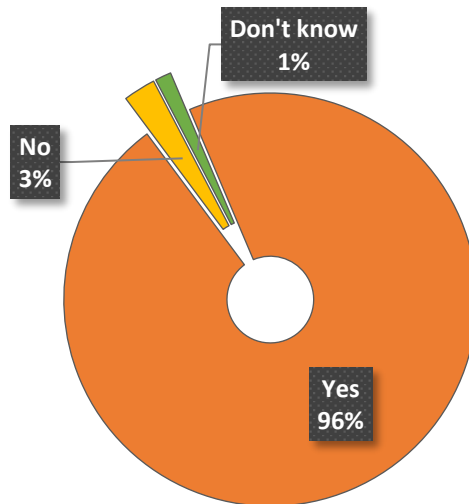


*Figure 18 – Quick Poll 3: Social Care Budget*

**Quick Poll 4: Fees and Charges**

4.42    Respondents were asked; *"The CPI rate of inflation at September 2021 was 3.1%. Do you think the Council should: Increase fees and charges by the rate of inflation, increase fees and charges by less than the rate of inflation, or freeze specific fees and charges?".*

4.43    Of 46 responses to this question, almost half (47.8%, or 22 respondents) answered that certain fees and charges should be frozen. 37% (17) of respondents agreed that fees and charges should be increased by the rate of inflation, and only 15.7% (7 respondents) stated that the rate of increase should be lower than the rate of inflation.
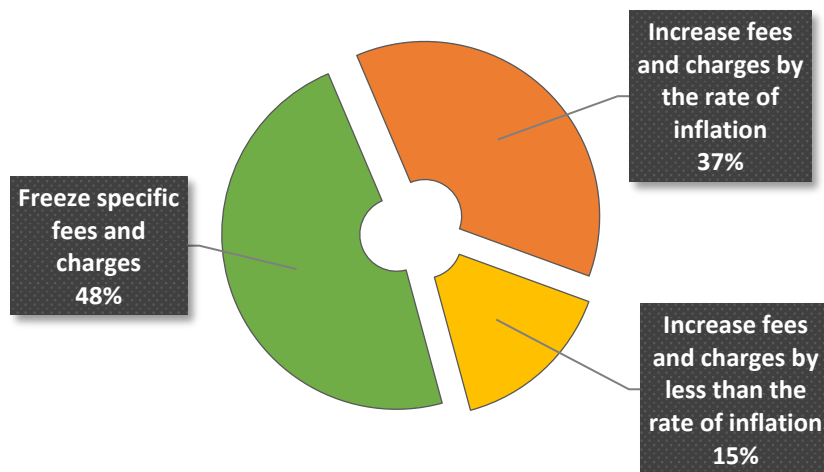


*Figure 19 – Quick Poll 4: Fees and Charges*

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## "Ideas" Tool Results

4.44 10 contributions were made to the Ideas tool on the Let's Talk Budget website, with the prompt *"Do you have any ideas how the Council can be more efficient (saving money without reducing services), or any examples of where we aren't being efficient?".* The responses varied in length and topic, with few common themes.



*Figure 20 – Screenshot of Ideas received on the Let's Talk Budget website*

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## 5.   VIRTUAL YOUNG PERSONS ENGAGEMENT

5.1   In previous years the Consultation Team have held face to face sessions with secondary schools and young people across the Borough. Due to the restrictions as a result of the pandemic again this year, virtual sessions were arranged in place of the on-site / face-to-face visits.

5.2   We engaged with 3 secondary school groups and held 3 virtual sessions via TEAMS.  We spoke to pupils from St. John Baptist Church in Wales High School, Y Pant Comprehensive School and Treorchy Comprehensive School.

5.3   The sessions were attended by members of the Consultation Team along with a finance officer. During the sessions the young people were shown a video outlining the budget challenges followed by a short presentation with discussion prompts and questions from the full budget consultation.

5.4   The questions were centred around Council Tax levels, Fees and Charges, Council Service Priorities, Efficiencies and the School budget. In total we engaged with 45 young people and a summary of their responses will follow in this section. The sessions were well supported by the teachers and all young people engaged well with the format.

### Council Tax

5.5   We asked the groups 'Should Council Tax be increased by 2.65% (the same level as the 2021/2022 increase) to keep services at current levels or should there be a smaller increase risking losing some services?'
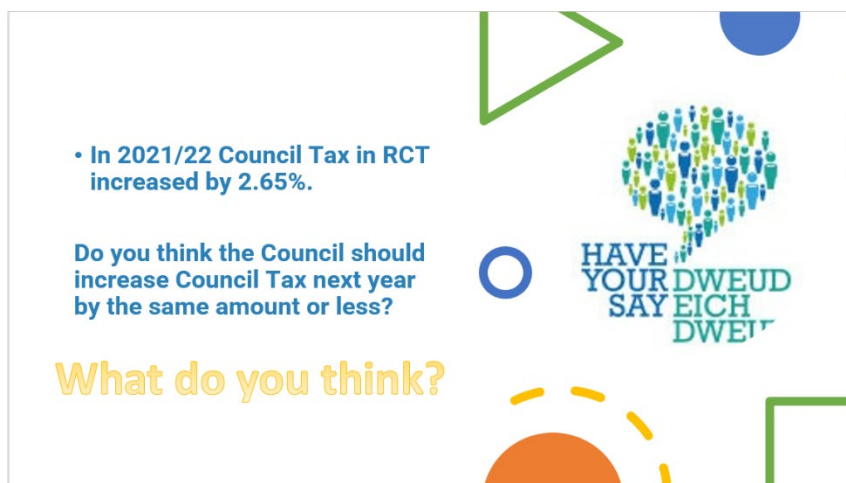


*Figure 21 – Council Tax presentation slide*

5.6   Of the 45 young people we spoke to, there was general agreement with increasing Council Tax by 2.65% again, although they were only in favour of this after seeking confirmation that core services would not be affected. Some young people fed back that Council Tax should have a lower increase or even remain at the current level and was based on the view

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that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on employment locally and therefore people may struggle to afford an increase.

**Comments included:**

*"Will the increase in Council Tax improve services or just maintain current services?"*

*"Would a lower increase cause reduction in services?"*

*"Increase by the same."*

*"It does add up after a while."*

*"Covid impact and loss of jobs."*

*"Less than 2.65% increase."*

*"Fair increase (2.65%) due to it being the least in Wales."*

### Fees and Charges

5.7    We asked the young people whether they felt there should be changes to a range of Council fees and charges, providing the options for fees and charges to be increased or decreased / frozen.



*Figure 22 – Fees & Charges presentation slide*

**Comments included:**

### Increase

*"Increase litter fines as we are going through an environmental crisis."*

*"Increase fines on litter because people don't seem to care and there needs to be a consequence."*

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**Decrease**

*"Cinema could decrease as by the time you buy food etc it can be expensive."*

*"Pontypridd Lido could be decreased so more people can use it."*

*"Decrease the fees for leisure centres because after lockdown people need to be able to access them for health and wellbeing."*

*"Decrease car parking fees to encourage people into town centres."*

**Freeze**

*"Sports club charges should be frozen. Health is important and needed to help protect the NHS with long term health implications."*

5.8    There seemed to be a general agreement with increasing charges for litter fines with the hope of deterring people from dropping litter and/or learning their lesson. Various comments also highlighted the need to freeze or decrease sports and leisure facilities so people could access these for their wellbeing. Car parking charges and entrance fees for cinema and Lido were also deemed important to decrease to encourage more usage.

**Other comments / questions:**

*"With fines that are charged, does 100% come to the Council, and how much did parking and litter fines generate for the Council in recent years?"*

*"We believe Ponty Lido should have a charge for adults, but this needs to be raised to ages 18+ as many students come families with living wages that haven't increased and the children under 18 don't necessarily have in income to pay for these activities."*

*"The car parking charges could damage the local community with local businesses seeing a drop in footfall. Although we do recognise there needs to be a charge."*

*"We agree that there needs to be a charge for the Park & Dare."*

*"Would workers in the area be given a discount for their parking fees for travelling to work?"*

**Council Service Priorities**

5.9    We asked all groups to identify which Council services were important to them. We provided a list of service areas and discussions were held around which ones the groups felt should be a priority and the levels of funding provided.

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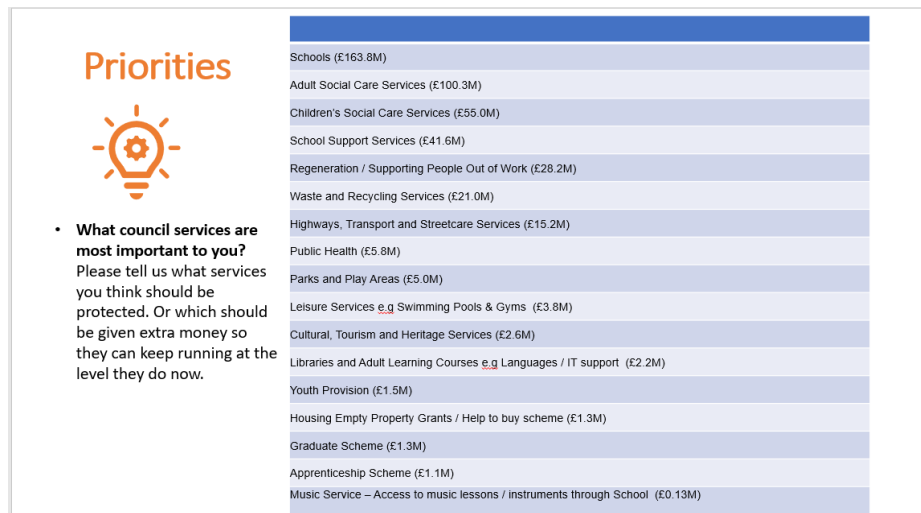
*Figure 23 – Priorities presentation slide*

5.10 The Music Services emerged as a strong priority amongst one group with members of the group discussing their own personal experience of using the Music service, they were all in agreement that the service would benefit from more funding, however another group disagreed and didn't see the service as a priority.

**Music Service – Access to music lessons / instruments through school**

*"Music services should have an increase in their budget – learning music helps with increased confidence and helps in school."*

*"The music service is very important in our school and we recognise that we get better provision than schools in Cardiff and Caerphilly etc. We believe this needs more funding."*

*"Perhaps decrease music services because it's niche."*

5.11 The Library Service was another service which saw a divide in opinion with regards to priorities.

**Libraries and Adult Learning Courses e.g. Languages / IT support**

*"Libraries should be protected, definitely adult learning. Libraries provide support and services to people. Adults can carry out applications for jobs etc."*

*"Decrease spending on libraries because you can get everything they offer online."*

5.12 Youth Provision was seen as a very important service to young people especially when it came to wellbeing. Questions were raised around the youth services budget and whether it would be better placed sitting in another service area such as leisure or the Library Service due to the use of Youth Services being primarily used for wellbeing.

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**Youth Provision**

*"YEPS are very important.  It's good to have an officer in School to talk to about wellbeing."*

*"Is there a way to reduce the budget of youth services to add to leisure services and the library services? These are the alternative provision young people are turning to for wellbeing etc."*

5.13 Apprenticeship schemes were identified as a consistent trend amongst the groups as an area of high importance and where funding is most needed. The groups all felt these schemes played an important part for young people who would look at alternatives to university.  It was also seen as a positive option for the Council.

**Apprenticeships**

*"We feel apprenticeships need more money as many students look for alternatives to university."*

*"Increase spending on apprenticeships because the more people in work the greater the income for the Council will be."*

5.14 Public Health was also identified by some of the young people as being a priority service area. Given the impacts of the global pandemic in 2020 young people felt that this required adequate funding to be able to manage the ongoing impacts of Covid-19. Feedback included:

**Public Health**

*"Public health budgets wouldn't have to increase if there were strong guidelines that were enforced by Welsh government (especially in relation to Covid-19)"*

*"Increase Public Health because it benefits everybody."*

5.15 Schools and Education were also a priority. The importance of being able to access a good education, along with extra-curricular provision with sufficient IT resources was the main reason for this being a priority for young people.

**Schools**

*"Schools definitely need an increase in budget – the pupils feel that extra-curricular provision for schools would benefit and this could help replace youth services. School ICT needs to improve as well."*

5.16 Another priority identified across the groups was funding for housing grants / schemes. The ability to be able to access suitable housing options was seen as important by the groups and one that they felt could benefit from increased funding. Feedback included:

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**Housing Empty Property Grants / Help to buy scheme**

*"Why is housing a low priority in terms of budget – the pupils are led to believe there is a housing crisis in the locality. This is linked to the flood damages caused to properties in Pentre, where there was a clear shortage of housing to support families that were impacted."*

5.17 The remaining service areas also received individual comments throughout the sessions which have been noted below:

**Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care**

*"Protect social care because it's important to protect the vulnerable."*

**Regeneration / supporting people out of work**

*"Increase spending on job centres to help people into work."*

**Waste**

*"I use the train a lot as my mum doesn't drive.  There's lots of rubbish at the station.  Waste services are needed."*

**Highways, Transport and Streetcare Services**

*"Spending more on transport could encourage more (lorry) drivers, who are striking and in short supply for businesses that need them."*

**Climate Change**

*"Is the environment factored into this as well?"*

<u>**Efficiencies**</u>

5.18 We discussed the requirement for the Council to aim to be as efficient as possible and asked for the groups' views on this approach and if they had any ideas of ways in which the Council could become more efficient. The groups all felt that looking for ways to become more efficient was a useful task and lots of ideas and comments were generated.

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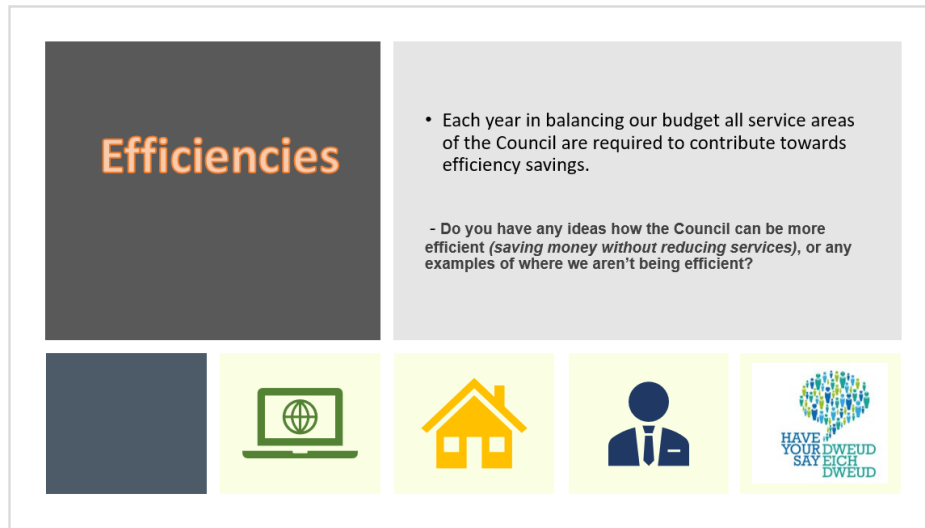
*Figure 24 – Efficiencies presentation slide*

5.19 **Feedback included:**

*"Increase checking on claimants to make sure they are entitled."*

*"Reduce spending on highway improvements."*

*"The sensors on lights (suggested by the Finance Officer as an example) don't work – no point them only coming on when you are already there."*

*"Improving school buildings would help save energy wastage."*
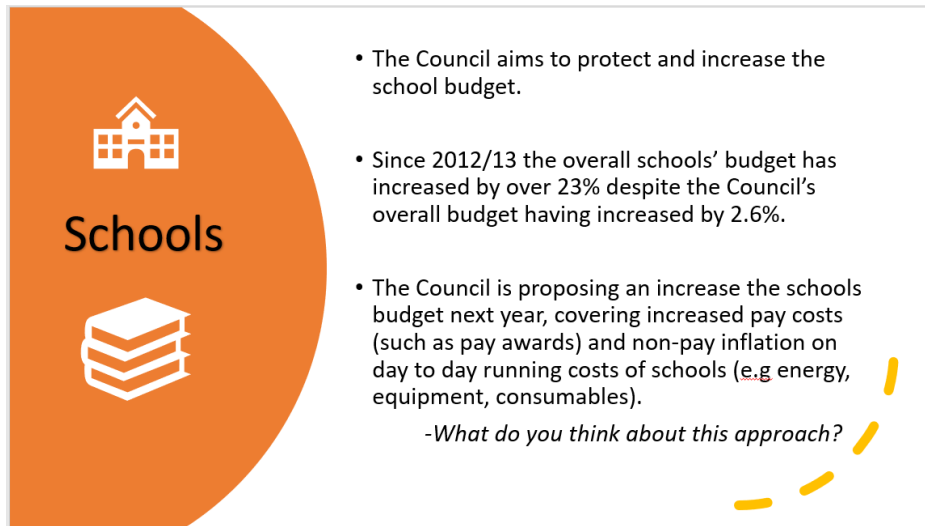
*"We believe an area needs to be maintained (grass verges being cut, tidiness and so on) to entice people to the locality."*

*"More (Council staff) working from home and therefore close buildings that aren't being used. Restructure employment working areas, have more communal hubs working areas for smaller companies."*

*"Roundabout's maintenance – could be left to go wild."*

**<ins>Schools Budget</ins>**

5.20 When asked whether the groups agreed with the Council's approach to protect and prioritise the Schools budget, all young people agreed with this. There was agreement that education is an important service area for young people and is something that should continue to receive adequate funding. The groups acknowledged that the increased budget could be used to provide better buildings and school equipment, specifically better IT, and Internet to give learners the best experience possible.

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***Figure 25 – Schools Budget presentation slide***

5.21 **Feedback included:**

*"All in agreement of increases to be proactive as education is key to the regeneration of the Upper Rhondda."*

*"The approach is fair, but there should be more spending on IT provision and the number of subjects on offer in schools."*

*"There's a waiting list for mental health support in schools. Demand has increased since Covid."*

*"The computers in the 6th form areas are very old and slow. There could be more money invested in tech in the schools."*

**Questions:**

*"Would the school model used in Tonypandy with a 3-16 school save the Council money by closing down local primary schools and moving them to Treorchy Comprehensive?"* Pupils are approximately 40% for and 60% against this type of scheme.

*"What are pay awards in schools?"* A "Higher rates of pay for staff."

*"Internet isn't fast enough. We have a lot of problems with school Internet. Is that part of the school budget?"*

A "It is part of the School budget - RCT's ICT group have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with RCT schools, this means the Schools pay RCT ICT for an agreed level of service annually. This agreement covers the fibre/broadband as well as anti-virus and other security software provisions. ICT in turn have a contract with BT to provide the fibre/broadband to schools, for which there is a minimum speed expected. Funding was also provided from Welsh Government's Hwb digital learning initiative to raise internet speeds in schools nationwide. If the speed is less than promised by BT then ICT would ask BT to resolve this, however it

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could be a technical or physical issue within the fabric of the schools causing a loss of speed. ICT recommend raising a call with their helpdesk who will investigate and resolve any problem they identify or take it up with BT if the speed at the entry point is lower than promised."

**Other comments and questions relating to the Budget, Consultation process, Volunteering, and the Welsh Language:**

5.22   Questions were raised about the replacement of trees cut down in the Heads of the Valleys redevelopment work.  Our Finance Officer responded this is a Welsh Government project, not RCT.

*"Younger pupils need more opportunities for this kind of activity (i.e., this consultation) where they feel listened to and valued."*

*"What about generating more income like tolls on the A470?"* A – "that would be Welsh Government's area. Councils throughout the UK have explored income-generating projects outside their core areas of expertise, with varying degrees of success".

*"Where is money being spent in relation to the Welsh language? This is an important issue in our school."* A – "recent consultations have taken place regarding the Welsh Language, results and reports will be available soon on the Council's website."

*"More bilingual signage, more bilingual books available in schools and libraries."*

*"Volunteering works inside an educational course where there is a qualification. We feel that asking pupils to volunteer after school is unrealistic as many pupils have part time jobs. Within the school we offer volunteering such as reading sessions etc."*

**Instagram and Facebook**

5.23   Budget content was created and shared on the YEPS Instagram account. 2 posts went out on November 5 and November 16 advertising the Budget Consultation and detailing how young people could take part.  There was a link to the Consultation's Let's Talk website which had a dedicated Budget project page consisting of web polls, an 'Idea' tool and the Council's main survey.  Young people were also informed that web polls would appear on Instagram Stories.

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*Figure 26 – YEPS RCT Instagram post*

5.24   Instagram stories received high numbers of views:

| Q1: 311 views |
|---|
| Q2: 359 views |
| Q3: 325 views |
| Q4: 236 views |

**Table 4: Instagram Story Views**

5.25   The stories each had a poll.

**Story 1:**
**Spending money on schools**

We have always aimed to spend as much as we can on our schools. Even though we have less money overall, the money we spend on schools has gone up.

43
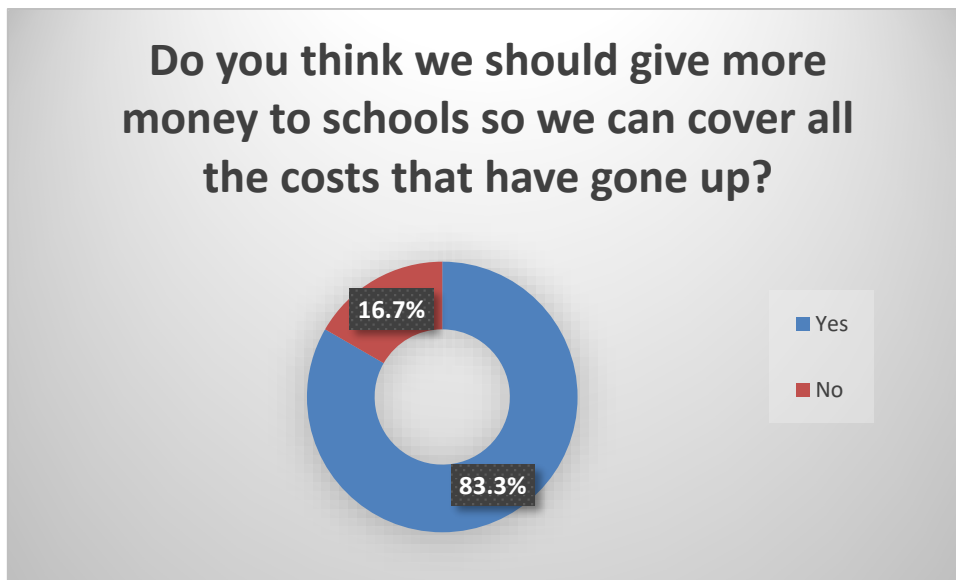
*Figure 27 – School Budget Instagram Story Poll*

5.26 Based on 30 votes, a high majority agreed that the Council should give more money to schools to cover costs.

**Story 2:**
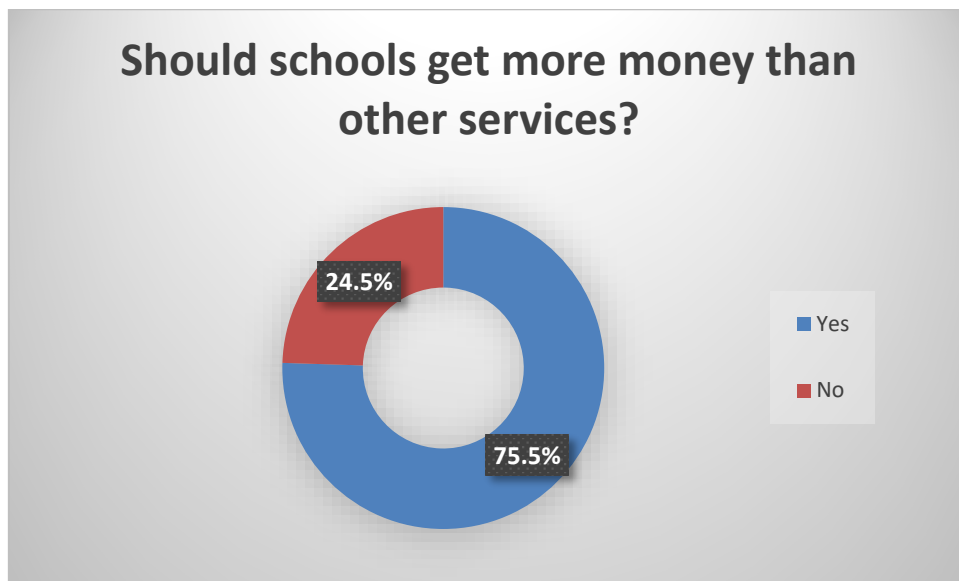


*Figure 28 – "Should schools get more money than other services?"*

5.27 Based on 49 votes, the majority agreed that schools should get more money than other services.

**Story 3:**
**Social Care**

5.28 We know that social services are really important in supporting the most vulnerable people, families and children in our communities. We prioritise more money to this service by employing more workers, supporting residential, home care, and fostering services to cope with increasing demand while investing in the social care workforce.

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5.29    Over the past three years, the budget for these areas has increased by £15M (around 11%).
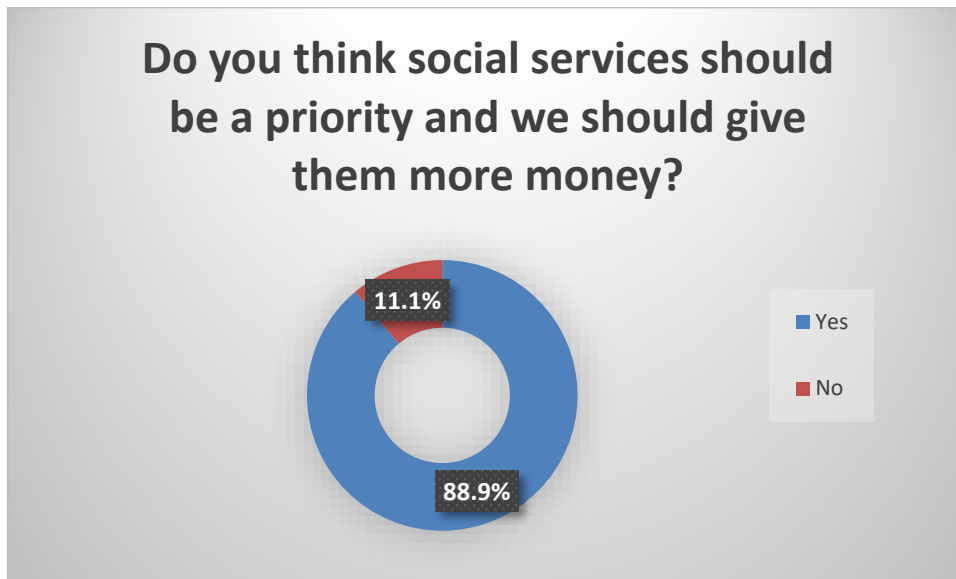


*Figure 29 – Social Services Instagram Story Poll*

5.30    Based on 18 votes, a high majority agreed that Social Services should be a priority.

**Story 4:**
**Council Tax**

5.31    Council Tax is money you have to give to your local authority to pay for things like schools, roads, social services and parks.  We had the lowest increase in Council Tax in Wales last year.  We think if we increase Council Tax by 2.65% next year we can keep services running as they currently are.
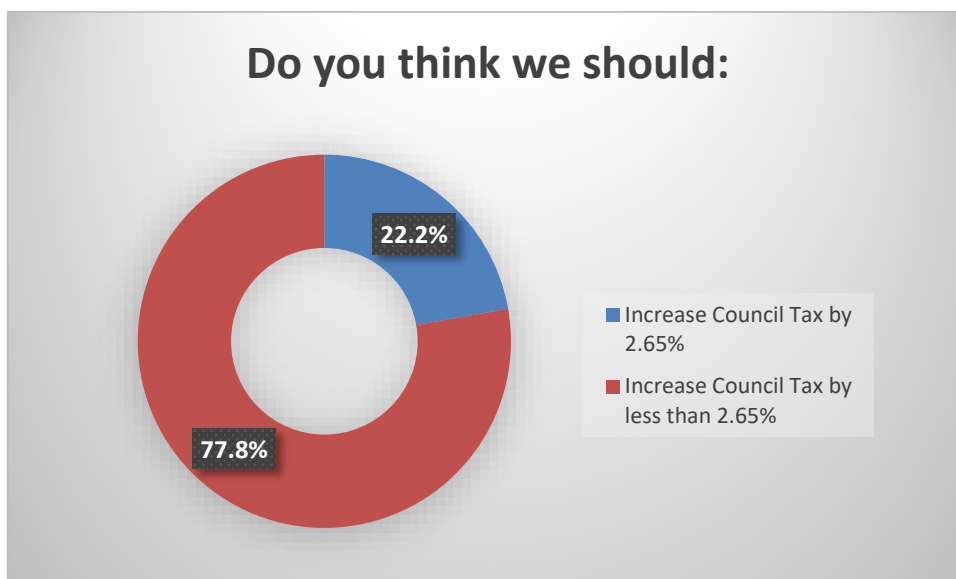


*Figure 30 – Council Tax Story Poll*

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5.32    Based on 9 votes, the majority felt that Council tax should be increased by less than 2.65%.

5.33    The Council's Budget Content was also shared by YEPS' Facebook account and received 7 likes and 8 shares.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**PHASE 1 BUDGET CONSULTATION (2022/23)**

**(EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 30 November 2021 at 5.00 pm.

**County Borough Councillors - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance in the Chamber:-**

Councillor M Powell (Chair)

Councillor R Yeo
Councillor G Thomas

**County Borough Councillors in attendance virtually:**

Councillor G Thomas      Councillor R Yeo
Councillor S. Rees-Owen   Councillor J Cullwick
Councillor G Caple        Councillor A Fox
Councillor H Boggis       Councillor S Evans
Councillor J Edwards

**Officers in attendance:-**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr T Jones, Service Director – ICT & Digital Services
Mrs S Handy – Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer

**Other County Borough Councillors in attendance:-**

Councillor M Norris – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Councillor M Adams – Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Co-Opted Members in attendance:**

Mr J Fish – Parent/Governor Representative

**Others in attendance:**

Mr G Lewis – Audit Wales

**33      Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Members to the first hybrid meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

**34      Apologies**

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors J. James and T. Williams.

**35      SCRUTINY RESEARCH FUNCTION**

The Members' Researcher and Scrutiny Officer referenced the research facilities that were available to Members within the Council Business Unit. Members were advised that if they have any specific queries to email them to Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk.

**36      Declaration of Interest**

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

**37      Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21st October 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

**Extract from the minutes**

**Budget Consultation 2022/23 (Phase 1)**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services provided Members with an overview of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation and updated Committee on the following areas:

- General Approach for 2022/23
- 2022/23 Budget Setting – key strategic building blocks
- Feedback requested from the Committee
    - 2022/23 Budget Setting – key strategic building blocks
    - Corporate Plan
    - Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Further to the Service Director providing an overview of the 'General Approach' and the '2022/23 Budget Setting – key strategic building blocks', Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions before moving onto the 'Feedback requested from the Committee' section of the presentation. The Service Director added that the overview of these two areas intended to assist Members in formulating their feedback, in line with the Committee being a consultee as part of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation process and in line with its Terms of Reference.

Councillor Cullwick requested clarity on whether the increase quoted in the social care budget over the past few years included inflationary pressures and if

demand / budget pressures are expected to increase exponentially in the future. Councillor Cullwick also sought clarity on whether there would be hidden costs in the Youth Service area as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and requested a further breakdown of the budgets for Cultural, Tourism and Heritage Services and Youth Provision. The Service Director fed back that the increases to the social care budget in previous years took account of inflationary pressures, with the 2021/22 budget being £155M. The Service Director added that significant on-going demand is forecast for social care services, this being exacerbated by the pandemic, and the Council is continuing its approach to deliver and invest in further developing early intervention and prevention approaches to help ensure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable residents and children and young people, and also ensuring the best use of resources. The Service Director went on to cover the Youth Service, indicating that the Service continues to work closely with schools and other Council Services to ensure the necessary targeted support is available and provided to young people, taking account of the unique circumstances posed by the pandemic, and that a further breakdown of the budgets will be circulated separately to the Committee.

Discussions ensued and Councillor Caple supported the key strategic building blocks set out and noted that Council Tax increases in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been the lowest in Wales over the past 4 years. Councillor Caple also fed back that the overall strategic approach set out has protected frontline services and is the right way forward for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

Discussions continued and Councillor Edwards sought further clarification on the budget for the Music Service. The Service Director fed back that the 2021/22 budget for the Music Service is £130k, with the Council and Schools working closely together to deliver the Service.

The Chair continued the discussion and requested clarity on how the expenditure requirement for services is determined and also the reason for the shortage in green recycling bags, noting that many residents in the Chair's area cannot obtain these bags. The Service Director fed back that services review expenditure requirements on an on-going basis taking into account service need and demand, income generation opportunities and the delivery of efficiency savings. The Service Director went on to cover green waste recycling bags, indicating that take-up has been positive and demand has been higher than anticipated, and arrangements are being made to purchase further bags. The Service Director added that he would request an update on the current position from the Service.

The Service Director continued with the PowerPoint presentation and sought feedback from the Committee on a number of areas:

- **Council Tax and Efficiencies:**
  Mr Fish, the Parent/Governor Representative, sought clarity on the basis of the 2.65% modelled Council Tax increase and whether this could be reduced subject to the provisional Local Government Settlement being announced by Welsh Government. The Service Director fed back that the modelled Council Tax increase, as included in the Council's latest Medium Term Financial Plan, has been informed by forecasted Welsh Government funding levels and the Council's forecasted expenditure requirements. The Service Director added that the level of Council Tax for next year will be reviewed following receipt of the provisional Local Government Settlement and updates to the Council's expenditure

requirements for 2022/23, and will be reported to Members for consideration.

Councillor Yeo wished to place on record his thanks to all Council staff and the excellent work that they do, and noted the positive position of services becoming more efficient without impacting on frontline services.

Councillor Cullwick noted the need to invest in Youth Service provision and requested what impact this would have on the 2.65% modelled increase in Council Tax. The Service Director fed back that from a Council Tax perspective, every 1% increase in Council Tax generates approximately £900k of additional income for the Council.

In respect of Council Tax increases, Councillor Yeo highlighted the need for caution as the economy recovers from the pandemic and on-going challenges on household income, for example, rising inflation and higher national insurance costs from April 2022, indicating the need to find the right balance. Councillor Thomas supported this position and noted that a significantly smaller proportion of the Council's budget is funded by Council Tax compared to the funding the Council receives from Welsh Government, and also stressed the importance to continue to identify and deliver efficiency savings.

- **School Budget:**
  Mr Fish, the Parent/Governor Representative fed back that the 2021/22 Teacher's pay award was partly funded by Welsh Government and the Council, with the requirement for schools to also part-fund an element of the increase. Mr Fish sought reassurance that the proposed 2022/23 funding for schools will fully cover pay increases. The Service Director fed back that the position being consulted upon includes the proposal for schools to be fully funded for pay and non-pay inflation pressures in 2022/23.

  Councillor Edwards emphasised the difficulties faced by children and young people during the pandemic and noted that the school budget should be sufficiently resourced moving forward and that it should be a Council priority.

- **Social Care Budget:**
  In respect of the Social Care budget, Councillor Fox emphasised the need for continued investment in this area and noted the need for more care staff.

  Mr Craig Jones, GMB Representative, agreed that frontline workers should be prioritised and that this funding should come from the UK Government.

  Councillor Yeo fed back that it was positive to note the inclusion of a specific consultation question in respect of social care and indicated that it is a challenging area for the whole country and investment in this area is crucial.

- **Council Service Priorities**:
  Councillor Cullwick fed back that the service areas of culture, tourism and

heritage should be prioritised and protected, and stressed the importance of these services over the next few years.

- **Council Reserves:**
  Councillor Thomas supported the Council's approach to the management of its reserves and their on-going replenishment. Committee Members agreed with this view.

### Council's Corporate Plan
The Service Director outlined the Council's Corporate Plan and requested feedback from Members on the following areas.

- **Corporate Plan:**
  Members noted their agreement with the vision and purpose set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- **Corporate Priorities:**
  Members noted their agreement with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.

- **Cross Cutting Principles ('Living Within Our Means') – to ensure the Council uses resources economically, efficiently and effectively):**
  The Chair requested an update to be provided to the Committee on the changing use of Council buildings and associated planning arrangements, linked to the on-going digitisation of services and virtual working. The Chair also fed back the need for more outdoor experiences in wider areas of the County Borough, for example, youth provision, and more engagement with the younger generation.

### Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- **Extended Payments –** Members supported the continuation of the 4-week extended payment period for people who return to work (provided they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks).
- **Disregard War disablement Pensions/ War Widow's Pensions –** Members supported the exclusion of the whole amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions when calculating Council Tax Reduction Scheme entitlement.
- **Backdated Claims –** Members supported the continuation of the backdated claims period of 6 months.

In respect of the extended payments, the Chair requested feed back on the cost implication if this was extended from 4 weeks to 6 weeks. The Service Director indicated that he would check and feed back separately to the Committee.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the views of Members as outlined above be fed into the consultation process.

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## SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM
### (DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM)
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the School Budget Forum held on  Tuesday, 23 November 2021 at 2.00 pm

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES**

| | |
|---|---|
| **PRESENT** | Councillor C Leyshon (Vice-Chair)<br>Councillor A Morgan<br>Councillor M Webber<br>Councillor M Norris<br>Councillor R Lewis<br><br>Ms S Mitchell – St Johns<br>Mr P Morgan, Glynhafod Juniors / Cwmaman Infants<br>Ms. L. Bailey, Tonysguboriau Primary<br>Ms K Retallick, Ysgol Nantgwyn<br>Mr S Roberts, Maesybryn Primary<br>Mr D Mogford, Maesgwyn<br>Mr A Roberts, Parc Lewis Primary<br>Ms B Cheetham, Y Pant Comprehensive<br>Mr R Evans, Y Pant<br>Mr Coole, Darran Park<br>Mr D Jenkins, Ty Coch<br><br><br>Ms C Jones – NUT Rep |
| **IN ATTENDANCE** | Ms G Davies<br>Mr P Griffiths<br>Ms C Edwards<br>Ms S Davies<br>Ms E Randall<br>Mr C Flynn |
| **APOLOGIES** | Councillor J Rosser (Chair)<br>Mr C Bradshaw<br>Ms A Richards<br>Mr D Davies<br>Ms G Powell |

| No | Discussion / Action | Action | By Who |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------|
| 28. | **BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23** | Noted | Paul Griffiths |

**BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23**

Following the School Budget Forum receiving an overview of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 as per the previous agenda item, with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, the Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services provided Members with an update in respect of the Council's Budget Consultation 2022/23.

The Service Director presented a series of PowerPoint slides covering the Budget Consultation 2022/23 and feedback was requested on a number of areas. Forum Members were informed that their feedback would be considered by Cabinet, alongside feedback received from all other stakeholders that engaged in the Phase 1 process, as part of Cabinet developing a proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for the 2022/23 financial year.

Forum Members were requested to provide feedback on the following questions.

**School Budget**
Do you think the Council should provide sufficient resources to fully cover increased pay and non-pay cost pressures in our schools?

- Forum Members agreed that the Council should continue to provide sufficient resources to cover increased pay and non-pay pressures.
- Forum Members also referenced:
  o The extra pressures that schools have faced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, and noting that such pressures will continue into the future.
  o Recognising that a good quality education is one of the key ways of taking people out of poverty.

**Social Care**
Do you think the Council should continue to prioritise social services as a key area for additional investment?

- Forum Members agreed that social care

should be prioritised by the Council as a key area for investment.

- A Forum Member also highlighted the specific need for on-going investment in Children's Services, with the work of schools and social services being intrinsically linked as part of ensuring appropriate support is in place for vulnerable learners.

**Council Service Priorities**

The Council provides a wide range of important services – which do you think should be most protected and prioritised for additional resources in 2022/23?

- A Forum Member provided specific feedback in respect of the Council's Youth Service, indicating the positive range of work the Service undertakes.

**Council Tax and Efficiency Savings**

Do you think the Council should:
Maintain as many services at the current level as possible even if it means a reasonable increase in Council Tax and the on-going delivery of efficiency savings to contribute towards closing the budget gap?
**OR**
Reduce service levels to close the budget gap and keep any increase in Council Tax / delivery of efficiency savings to a minimum?

- Forum Members fed back that the Council should maintain as many services as possible at the current level even if it means a reasonable increase in Council Tax and the on-going delivery of efficiency savings to contribute towards closing the budget gap.

**Council Reserves** (The continuation of a strategy whereby the level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review and replenished going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the financial risks the Council faces).

Do you think the Council should continue with such a strategy?
- The Forum agreed that the Council should

continue with its strategy in respect of Reserves.

**General Comments**
- Forum Members commented on the additional pressures placed on schools as a result of the pandemic and the importance of on-going support to enable the continuation of good quality education services.
- Forum Members also noted their appreciation for the support already being provided by the Council and welcomed on-going joint working to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following discussion, Forum Members **RESOLVED** to note the 2022/23 Budget Consultation and for their comments to be incorporated into the Phase 1 Consultation feedback.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27th JANUARY 2022**

**PROPOSED CESSATION OF THE CURRENT REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) AND PREPARATION OF A NEW RLDP WITH EXTENDED PLAN PERIOD.**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR BEVAN**

**Author; Owen Jones, Planning Services Manager**

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to firstly provide an update to Members on the progress of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP). This indicates that although considerable work has been undertaken, we have been unable to meet the formal Delivery Agreement.

1.2 The report then sets out the most appropriate way to comply with our statutory duty to prepare a Development Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Approve the cessation of the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2020 – 2030.

2.2 Approve the proposal to begin a new RLDP with an amended and extended Plan period of 2022 – 2037. This is with the understanding that the majority of evidence base collected to date and preparation processes undertaken, can be carried forward, updated or revisited as necessary.

2.3 Approve that the Draft Delivery Agreement (DA), that sets out the Community Involvement Scheme and Timetable for the preparation of the new RLDP, be put out to targeted and public consultation. This is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

2.4    Any appropriate and necessary amendments resulting from the consultation will be incorporated into a final DA. It is proposed that the recommendations in 2.1 and 2.2. above, along with the final DA, will be reported directly to Full Council in March. (This Full Council decision is required in order to seek agreement with Welsh Government to begin the preparation of the new RLDP).

## 3.    REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1    Considerable work has been undertaken on the preparation of the Revised LDP throughout the Covid pandemic. However, due to the restrictions this placed on the ability to fully engage with the public and commission the necessary consultancy advice, along with other external issues that have arisen; key elements of the RLDP preparation have not been completed within the formally agreed timescales.

3.2    Following consideration of all options, and in consultation with Welsh Government, it is proposed that we cease work on the current RLDP 2020 – 2030. In its place, we will begin a new RLDP, and this for the longer plan period of 2022 – 2037. This would allow for a Development Plan to be prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf that fully responds to the key issues we now face, with Climate Change and carbon reduction at its core and a full and strategic approach to a post pandemic and post Brexit County Borough.

## 4.    BACKGROUND

4.1    **Current RLDP Progress to Date**

4.2    Other Local Authorities in South East Wales who are working on their LDP, have experienced considerable slippage and postponements during this period. Despite the limitations the pandemic placed on the ability to commission consultants early in the preparation of the plan, on-boarding new staff and fully engaging with the public, considerable progress has been made on the Revised LDP and Preferred Strategy preparation to date. This includes:

4.3    **Major evidence base collation**;

- 19 Background Topic Papers, including analysis of the topic, up to date policy requirements for plan preparation and the identification of what further evidence is required on; housing, employment, retail, town centres, renewable energy, minerals, waste, climate change and carbon, natural environment, green wedges, well-being, transport and highways, tourism, gypsies and travellers, green infrastructure, culture heritage and Welsh language, leisure, land reclamation and special landscape areas.

- Preparation of a Settlement Assessment/Hierarchy Paper building a picture of evidence of all our towns and villages, what is in each one in relation to all LDP topics and also scope for development growth.

- Preparation of a draft Urban Capacity Study analysis for RCT, proactively looking at opportunities for development.

- Alongside professional consultants, preparation of the statutory Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and Habitats Impact Assessment scoping process (including Sustainability Appraisals, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, Welsh Language Impact Assessment and consideration of the WBFG Act and Environment Wales Act).

- A South East Wales Regional Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment has been commissioned and is underway, which will be followed by a specific RCT site specific assessment.

- Further evidence gathering and professional analysis is being commissioned on a number of Housing needs areas.

- A regional approach to identify suitable criteria for the assessment and identification of Green Wedges is ongoing.

- Working with two other Authorities to undertake bespoke evidence gathering to inform appropriate policy on Houses in Multiple Occupation.

- Discussion is in place with experts to undertake broad level development viability analysis across the County Borough.


**Candidate sites**

- Formulation of a comprehensive Candidate Site Assessment Methodology, and the subsequent Call for Candidate sites.

- An assessment of over 400 Corporate Estate sites to determine with their team which sites were to be submitted (being 34 in the end).

- These were part of the overall 220 sites submitted into the process by private landowners and developers for many uses and from 0.1 up to 100 hectares.

- Further undeveloped allocations from the current LDP will be added to this list, along with the most appropriate sites form the Urban Capacity Study

- The team are well underway on the comprehensive, detailed assessment of the sites.

**Strategy preparation**

- A number of 'Visioning' events have been prepared for, organised and undertaken. These were to determine the key Issues, Aims and Objectives to inform the Revised LDP. These were to determine more professional/personal/qualitative issues and objectives (beyond those in the ISA).

- There have been two engagement events with Officers from all sections of the Council, another two events with the specifically created Members Steering Group, another with the LDP Forum (set up for external key stakeholders and organisations), and a presentation to and discussion with, the RCT Climate Change Working Group.

- There has also been a 7 week RCT engagement for the Visioning process in July into August, consulting our identified organisations, all RCT staff, Members and general public alike, with online surveys and 'Lets Talk' RCT webpage platform utilised. There were over 60 full surveys completed and over 100 other individual comments received.

- The preparation of a Visioning Report is underway to gather, summarise and focus the significant information gathered above to appropriately evidence the next stages of the Revision process

- LDP Database. We have worked alongside colleagues in three other Local Authorities across the region to procure a bespoke LDP Database to record all representations to the RLDP; and for use by the Inspector.

- High level analysis of population projections that relate to actual housing number requirements and options.

- Evidence gathering from the two LDP Annual Monitoring Reports submitted in October for 2020 and 2021 brings forward further analysis of all LDP topic areas for RLDP preparation.

- Continued work with other departments to seek to incorporate all ongoing strategies and priorities into LDP Strategy preparation. Working alongside them to bring things forward that can help both parties and the Council collectively.

4.4    **Remaining Preferred Strategy Stage Tasks**

- Further evidence needs to be finalised in some key areas of housing need and market analysis, along with employment analysis and need. Including what we can undertake ourselves, with colleagues and also the need to procure externally.

- Candidate site assessment and analysis –more work is needed before we have a comprehensive picture of truly suitable sites that are also in the right locations; and to then meet our identified needs. This informs Strategy options.

- Finalisation of the Vision, Issues, Aims and Objectives Reports to also inform the Strategy options appropriately.

- Further consideration of the most appropriate Strategy and growth options to inform a final Preferred Strategy.

- Engagement with our forums such as the Member Steering group and LDP Forum.

- Once prepared, there is then further formal Integrated Sustainability Assessment required on these Strategy options and Preferred Strategy. Translation of the multiple documents referenced through this section would also need to take place (albeit incrementally).

5    **REASONS TO CEASE THE PREPARATION OF THE CURRENT RLDP 2020-2030 AND PREPARE A NEW RLDP FOR 2022 – 2037**.

5.1    As described above, we have not been able to accord with the Delivery Agreement (timetable agreed with WG) of the current RLDP as a number of tasks remain outstanding.

5.2    Discussions have taken place with the relevant officials at WG about the appropriateness of continuing with the current revision of the RCT LDP. The key issue is that the plan period agreed is up to 2030, with the adoption date being identified as early 2024. Any necessary extension of time now needed to prepare the agreed Revised LDP, would extend the adoption date into 2025. This would mean there is too short a time between adoption and the 2030 end of the Plan to deliver the land use allocations in it.

5.3    In technical planning terms, there is a clear concern in relation to one of the three 'Tests of Soundness' that the Planning Inspector will determine the RLDP upon. This considers whether they are confident that the RLDP can be implemented and delivered in this short time i.e. all its aims, objectives, strategy, and development of all site allocations.

5.4    It is therefore considered that the most appropriate option would be to cease preparation of the RLDP 2020 – 2030 and begin a new RLDP for 2022 -2037. Such a 15 year LDP plan period is standard.

5.5    Traditionally, much of an LDP evidence base has been trend-based analysis. However, many of the relevant circumstances relating to the LDP, and society in general, are continually changing throughout the ongoing covid pandemic. This has seen the need to consider a more evolving and uncertain evidence base. Many sectors and economic markets associated with the LDP are affected e.g. housing and commercial industries. As such, there is a need to stop and reset our understanding of things like the RCT housing market and more generally how people live their lives, how the retail world will operate, etc. This proposed new start date of the revision and the plan period will allow for a more up to date and appropriate collation and consideration of evidence.

5.6    Matters such as the Welsh Government planning Technical Advice Note 15 for flood risk also raises significant issues to consider and overcome in terms of allocation of sites and opportunities for development in our town centres.

5.7    Another issue that is relatively recent is how we address our responsibilities in relation to the regional supply of mineral aggregates for development (i.e. quarried stone).

5.8    Site delivery is another concern with regards to larger sites. It is likely that only the more small to medium sized sites could come forward in a shorter plan period. The 2037 end date could see more major strategic sites come forward to meet our needs, if necessary.

5.9    It is generally the case that the costs for preparing a RLDP would be very similar regardless of the length of the plan period. The 2037 end date would therefore allow more long-term benefits for the money spent, whilst taking away the uncertainty on spending on a shorter plan.

5.10   Furthermore, as set out above, giving due consideration to the evidence gathered to date, and the stages of engagement, consultation and call for candidate sites; it has been determined that the majority of this can be carried forward to the new RLDP. Some may need appropriate updating, whilst other procedural matters may need

formal re-running; albeit the processes already put in place would make things more straightforward.

**5.11    Proposed Delivery Agreement and Timetable**

5.12    As outlined above in section 2, Cabinet is requested to agree that we seek Council and WG approval to cease preparing the current RLDP and begin preparation of a new RLDP up to 2037. It is also considered that the LDP Member Steering Group is consulted on the proposals, and this likely between Private Cabinet and Cabinet meetings in January.

5.13    The DA for this new RLDP also needs to go out to targeted and public consultation in February before being reported back to Council for final approval. The proposed Draft DA is attached as Appendix 1 of this report and has two key elements; being the Community Involvement Scheme and Timetable. The Community Involvement Scheme identifies appropriate ways to engage and consult effectively with all stakeholders in the preparation of the RLDP process, including through online methods and this during the covid pandemic.

5.14    The Draft Timetable proposes to formally begin the 3.5 year RLDP preparation process in April 2022, following Full Council and Welsh Government agreement. Table 1 below indicates the key dates and timelines from April next year through to its earliest adoption in October 2025:

**Table 1; New RLDP Summary of Timetable.**

| Key Stage | Date |
|---|---|
| Preparation of the Pre-Deposit Stage of the Revised LDP including the Preferred Strategy | From April 2022 |
| Consultation on the Preferred Strategy | June/July 2023 |
| Preparation of the Deposit Revised LDP | From August 2023 |
| Consultation on the Deposit Revised LDP | July/August 2024 |
| Submit Revised LDP to Welsh Government | November 2024 |
| Independent Examination | April/May 2025 |
| Adoption | October 2025 |

**6    EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

6.1    One of the main purposes of this Cabinet Report is to seek permission to prepare a new statutory Revised Local Development Plan in a new timeframe. As set out in section 4 above, the RLDP is subject to a bespoke and overarching Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). This ISA will assess each and every stage of the preparation of the LDP. There are multiple legislative facets to this, including an Equalities Impact Assessment.

**7.    WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1    As above, the Cabinet Report is seeking permission to prepare a new RLDP, and it is subject to the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). Another key element of the ISA is to undertake a Welsh Language Impact Assessment and at each stage of the LDP.

**8.    CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

8.1    No formal consultation has yet taken place on the proposed new LDP. Once Cabinet approve the proposal, the new Review Report and DA will be placed out to targeted and public consultation.

**9.    FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1    The financial implication associated with this report remain in line with those agreed at the outset of RLDP preparation in September 2020. The overall cost of the preparation of the LDP (non staffing resources) is estimated to be £667,000. Considering banked reserves and continuing budgets, there is sufficient budget to cover these costs.

**10.    LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1    The new LDP will be prepared in accordance with The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended 2015), Planning Policy Wales 2018, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

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

*How the subject of the report will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities?*

11.1   The production of a Local Development Plan will help to deliver the Council's three main corporate priorities of building a strong economy, promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work. The production of this land-use plan will help to stimulate the local economy through market and social house building, as well as providing for employment and retail development across the County Borough. Working together to shape our communities will instil a sense of pride and allow people to live and work independently, wherever they so choose. The LDP will also help to deliver the transport infrastructure that keeps the Rhondda Cynon Taf working and moving, in a sustainable way that benefits current and future generations.

**How the Sustainable Development principle, i.e. the five ways of working has been considered?**

11.2   The Local Development Plan will be a key project demonstrating the 5 ways of working in action:

- Integration - the preparation of the LDP will be bring together all land use planning issues across the County Borough, involving our partners, residents, visitors, employers and service providers in the formulation of the Plan.

- Collaboration - the LDP will be a key collaboration project for the region enabling stakeholders including residents to work together to form a Plan for the County Borough.

- Involvement - preparation of the LDP will provide numerous opportunities to engage with our residents and customers, including the business community and ensuring that we are listening to a wide range of views to inform the plan and decision making process.

- Prevention - the LDP provides an opportunity to understand the root causes of issues and preventing them by being proactive in our thinking and understanding the need to tackle problems at source for example by undertaking needs assessments to inform our priorities.

- Long-term - the LDP will be all about planning for the future and taking a strategic approach to ensure the County Borough is sustainable and that we understand the future need and demand for sustainable development in the region and how that is best met.

**How the subject of the report seeks to maximise the Council's contribution to seven national well-being goals?**

11.3 The LDP will contribute to the seven well-being goals by working together with other public services and third sector organisations to improve the well-being of everybody in Wales. This new approach seeks to improve public services in a sustainable way, for the benefit of all. The LDP will help to ensure:

- A Prosperous Wales - the LDP will promote a productive, creative and low-carbon society that recognises the limits of our resources and global environment, by ensuring that our finite resources are used efficiently and proportionately. It will also help to develop a skilled, well-educated population to work within an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities for all.

- A Resilient Wales - the LDP will help to ensure that the region maintains and enhances a bio-diverse natural environment with healthy, functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience with the ability to adapt to change.

- A Healthier Wales - the LDP aims to help build a society in which people's mental and physical well-being is maximised through access to green space, and helps to foster an understanding of choices and behaviours that benefit future health.

- A More Equal Wales - the LDP will seek to enable people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. It also aims to help communities effectively tackle the loneliness and isolation that can often exist within many of them.

- A Wales of Cohesive Communities - the LDP, via the place-making principle, will help to foster attractive, safe, viable and well-connected communities that improve the well-being of all residents and visitors.

- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language - the LDP will support a society that promotes and protects our culture, heritage and Welsh language, whilst encouraging people to participate in the arts, sport and recreation.

- A Globally Responsible Wales - the LDP will contribute towards Wales being a nation which, when doing anything to improve our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being; will take account of whether doing such a thing makes a positive contribution to our global well-being.

**Any other national strategies the subject of the report is seeking to address.**

11.4 The Local Development Plan will need to be in general conformity with the aims and objectives of the National Development Framework, which sits above the LDP in the development plan hierarchy within Wales.

## 12. **CONCLUSION**

12.1 To conclude, it is recommended that approval is given to cease work on the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2020 – 2030.

12.2 It is then recommended that approval is given to begin work on a new RLDP with an amended and extended Plan period of 2022 – 2037. This is with the understanding that the majority of evidence base collected to date and preparation process undertaken, can be carried forward, updated or re-visited as necessary.

12.3 Approve that the Draft Delivery Agreement (DA), that sets out the Community Involvement Scheme and Timetable for the preparation of the new RLDP, be put out to targeted and public consultation. This is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

12.4 Any appropriate and necessary amendments resulting from the consultation will be incorporated into a final DA. It is proposed that the recommendations in 2.1 and 2.2. of this report, along with the final DA, will be reported directly to Full Council in March. The subsequent decision is required in order to seek agreement with Welsh Government to begin the preparation of the new RLDP.

**Other Information:-**

*Relevant Scrutiny Committee*

(Terms of Reference of each of the Scrutiny Committees to assist Officers with selecting the correct Committee.)

*Contact Officer*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

## AS AMENDED BY

## THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

## 27th January 2022

## REPORT OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR BEVAN

Item: **PROPOSED CESSATION OF THE CURRENT REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) AND PREPARATION OF A NEW RLDP WITH EXTENDED PLAN PERIOD.**

**Background Papers**

**Appendix 1 – Draft Delivery Agreement for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Revised Local Development Plan 2022 – 2037.**

**Officer to contact:  Owen Jones, Planning Services Manager.**

**Appendix 1 – Draft Delivery Agreement**

# Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

# Revised Local Development Plan 2022 – 2037

# Draft Delivery Agreement

## January 2022

# CONTENTS

RCTCBC Revised Local Development Plan Delivery Agreement

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. The Local Development Plan

1.1.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that Local Authorities prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Local Authority area. The document provides the development strategy and policy framework for the specified plan period. It is an important land use planning document, which will guide and control development, providing the basis of how planning applications are determined. Once adopted, the LDP provides certainty to the communities of the County Borough regarding where development will be located over the plan period. The LDP will also ensure that the principles of place making and sustainability are at the heart of the plan-making process, reflecting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.1.2. The Council has prepared a Review Report in which the progress of the existing LDP has been considered. The Review Report concluded that a revised LDP was required. This was approved by Council in July 2020. The Council is now preparing a Revised LDP which will cover the plan period 2022-2037. The first stage of this is to prepare a Delivery Agreement in line with Regulation 9 of the LDP (Wales) Regulations 2005. The existing LDP 2006-2021 will continue to be the mechanism for determining planning applications.

1.1.3. This Delivery Agreement has been prepared during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The Council will adhere to the Government Regulations regarding COVID-19; this includes social distancing and seeking innovative methods to consult during this time. Should additional opportunities arise during the plan preparation process especially where restrictions continue to be lifted, the Council will endeavour to respond to these.

## 1.2. What is a Delivery Agreement?

1.2.1. A Delivery Agreement (DA) is a project management tool that must consist of two parts, the Timetable and the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS). The purpose of the DA is to establish the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) early and full engagement and involvement in the preparation of the LDP. The Delivery Agreement must be produced prior to the formal preparation of the LDP, and forms an important and legal part of the process for the preparation of the Plan. Once approved the Delivery Agreement commits the LPA to produce or revise its plan in line with the timescale and community engagement processes.

1.2.2. The DA is comprised of the following sections:

**Section A – The Project Management Timetable** for the Revised LDP: The timetable details the stages in the preparation of the LDP and how the plan-making process will be project managed. It sets out in a realistic manner what the Authority can do in the timescale and with the budgetary and staffing resources available, as

RCTCBC Revised Local Development Plan Delivery Agreement

well as the corporate framework in which the plan will be prepared.  The timetable provides a clear indication of when each stage of the plan preparation process will take place.

**Section B – The Community Involvement Scheme**:  The Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) sets out the LPAs principles, strategy and mechanisms for early and continuous community stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the LDP.  The purpose of the CIS is to show how, who, and when the LPA will seek the views of its stakeholders including its communities, as the LDP progresses.  The CIS is written to maximise collaboration between the Council and its stakeholders, in doing so it will discharge its duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

1.2.3.    A glossary of terms can be found at Appendix 6.

## 1.3.    Stages in the Preparation of the Delivery Agreement

1.3.1.  The   preparation of the Delivery Agreement requires a number of steps that are set out below, along with their timescales:

•        Preparation of the Delivery Agreement (DA) document including the timetable and the Community Involvement Scheme. (December 2021)

•        Political reporting to Cabinet to seek approval of and to consult on the DA (January 2022)

•        Consultation of the DA (February 2022).

•        Amendments to the DA post consultation and preparation of the initial final document. (February 2022).

•        Cabinet approval of the amended DA following postponement (July 2020).

•        Political reporting of the DA and approval by resolution of the Council (March 2022).

•        Submission of the DA to the Welsh Government for approval (March 2022)

•        Publication of the approved DA and making the document available for public inspection and official start of the LDP process (April 2022)

•        Review the DA on a regular basis.

## 1.4.    Preparation of a Revised LDP

1.4.1.    In preparation of the Revised LDP, the Council will aim to achieve the following key outcomes;

- Support sustainable development and quality places based around the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes, aligned with national policy (set out in PPW) integrated with an SA/SEA/HRA, including Welsh language and the requirements of the WBFGA 2015.

- Be based on and underpinned by early, effective and meaningful community involvement in order to understand and consider a wide range of views, with the aim of building a broad consensus on the spatial strategy, policies and proposals.

- Be based on a robust understanding of the role and function of an area(s) including the functional linkages to areas beyond administrative boundaries.

- Be distinctive by having plans setting out clearly how their area will develop and change, giving certainty for communities, developers and business.

- Be resilient to climate change (using the latest UK Climate Projections, flood risk and vulnerability assessment data) and support the transition to a low carbon society in line with the latest carbon reduction targets and budgets as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act (Part 2). The principles of Placemaking, the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and the Energy Hierarchy as set out in PPW must be adhered to.

- Ensure the sustainable management of natural resources in accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and other relevant legislation.

- Deliver what is intended through deliverable and viable plans, taking into account necessary infrastructure requirements, financial viability and other market factors

- Be proactive and responsive with plans, kept up-to-date and flexible to accommodate change.

(Welsh Government, Development Plans Manual, Edition 3, March 2020)

1.4.2. Preparation of the Revised LDP will include consideration of a host of guidance, policy and legislation emanating from the European, national, regional and local level. The Revised LDP will also be guided by the aims and objectives set forth in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 entitled *Our Cwm Taf*. These are centred around having *thriving communities*, *healthy people* and a *strong economy*, with the cross cutting objective of *tackling loneliness and isolation*. The revised plan will also be influenced by the cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being goals and objectives within *Our Cwm Taf*, where they relate to land-use planning.

## 1.5. Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)

1.5.1.   The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (s.62) requires the LPA to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of its Revised LDP and report the findings as an integral part of the plan-making process. Policies in the plan are required to address those aspects of sustainable development that can be addressed through the land-use planning system. Consideration of social, economic and cultural implications should be fully considered.

1.5.2.   In addition to this, Local Authorities are required to comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulation, which require the formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the LDP.  The scope of the SEA is limited to environmental effects.

1.5.3.   Both first generation and Revised LDPs have to be subject to an SEA.  It is considered by the Welsh Government that an appropriate way of undertaking the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to incorporate it into the SA.  The SA incorporating SEA is a statutory requirement in the preparation of a Revised LDP, to fully assess the social, environmental and economic implications of the Plan's strategy and associated policies.  The process ensures that LDP policies reflect the principles of sustainable development, whilst taking full account of any significant effects of the Plan on the environment.

1.5.4.   The SA process should be fully integrated into the LDP process and reflected in the timetable alongside each stage of the plan preparation process.  There are elements of the SA/SEA process, which requires that specific work is undertaken and this needs to be clearly identifiable within the process.  These will be reflected in the timetable and engagement plan.

1.5.5.   There are 5 main stages in the SA/SEA process. These are set out below:
   • Stage A – Scoping.  This establishes the baseline evidence and sets the context and objectives.
   • Stage B – Appraisal of Alternatives.  Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
   • Stage C – Assessment of the Deposit Plan and preparation of SA Report
   • Stage D – Examination and Adoption
   • Stage E – Monitoring.  Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the development plan.

(Welsh Government, Development Plans Manual, Edition 3, March 2020)

## 1.6.   Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

1.6.1.   A Habitats Regulation Assessment is a legal requirement under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations').  The Local Authority must undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) in order to

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assess if the polices and proposals in the LDP will have any significant effect on the integrity of European designated sites.

1.6.2. The HRA will not be integrated with the SA due to different legislative requirements. Engagement and consultation with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be undertaken throughout the HRA process.

## 1.7. Evidence Base

1.7.1. With the production of a Revised LDP, there will be a corresponding need to update or renew a number of studies/documents contained within the current LDP evidence base, which underpins the plan. In line with previous AMRs, all contextual, policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the adoption of the LDP will also need to be given due consideration, as part of the evidence base updates. The list below illustrates those areas of evidence base documents that are likely to be required, as part of the LDP full revisions process:

- Population Data and Housing Forecasts
- Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Urban Capacity Study
- Settlement Boundary Review
- Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy
- Employment Land Review
- Retail Study Update
- Green Infrastructure Assessment
- Assessment of Environmental Constraints
- Public Open Space Assessment
- Renewable Energy Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Landscape

1.7.2. The list is not definitive nor exhaustive, as the need for additional evidence may present itself throughout the plan-making process.

1.7.3. Given that a number of local authorities within South East Wales are currently progressing revised plans, the Council will endeavour to explore possibilities for the joint commissioning of evidence base documents.

## 1.8. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

1.8.1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act received Royal Assent in April 2015. The Act requires public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work more effectively with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate

change. The Act sets seven well-being goals, which it requires public bodies to achieve. These are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales

1.8.2. It must be demonstrated that the LDP contributes to all of these goals, with the production of the SA alongside the plan providing an understanding of how this contribution can be maximised.

1.8.3. The Act also identifies 5 ways of working, which the LPA is required to demonstrate, these are 'long-term', 'involvement', 'integration', 'prevention' and 'collaboration'.

1.8.4. As a requirement of the Act, a Local Well-being Plan must also be produced; Rhondda Cynon Taf has the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan, 2018-2023, which has been summarised above.

**1.8.5.** Both the WBFGA and the Local Well-being Plan will be given full consideration through the plan preparation process, including when undertaking engagement.

1.8.6. **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040**

1.8.7. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 is the National development plan for Wales. It is the highest level development plan in Wales and the LDP will need to accord with the plan and reflect its aims and objectives.

**1.9. Tests of Soundness**

1.9.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a LDP is subject to an independent examination, to ensure that the Plan is 'sound'. The Revised LDP will be submitted to the Welsh Government, who will appoint an independent Inspector to examine the Plan. The Inspector will determine whether the Plan has been produced in accordance with the legal and regulatory requirements and whether it conforms to the Community Involvement Scheme.

1.9.2. The Inspector will further assess whether the Plan meets the preparation requirements and the three soundness tests, which are:

- Does the plan fit? – Is it consistent with all other plans?
- Is the plan appropriate? – Does the plan address the issues of the area?

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- Will the plan deliver? – Will the plan be effective?

1.9.3.   There is a fundamental need for a strong evidence base and consultation process. It is also essential to demonstrate the rationale behind the Plan's policies and to assess the outcomes.  The conclusions drawn by the Inspector in the final report will be binding on the LPA.  Unless the Welsh Government intervene, the LPA must accept the changes and accordingly seek to adopt the Revised Plan at full Council.

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# 2. THE TIMETABLE

## 2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. The Timetable is a crucial element of plan preparation. It ensures that the plan is produced efficiently and in a structured way. Timeliness is even more crucial during a full revision of the LDP, as the Local Development Plan Manual now sets out that the Welsh Government expect the delivery of a Revised LDP to take no longer than 3.5 years (3.75 incorporating slippage) from commencement to adoption.

2.1.2. There are two stages to the timetable, those that are definitive and those that are indicative. Definitive stages are those up to and including the statutory deposit period. These stages of the process are under the direct control of the Council and therefore the timetable is as realistic as possible. This part of the timetable is firmer as the project management of the process can be monitored and controlled more carefully. Every effort will be made to avoid deviations from the approved timetable during these stages. Where deviations are necessary, often due to factors outside of the control of the LPA, a period of slippage is built into the process and the LPA needs to seek permission from Welsh Government to invoke this period.

2.1.3. Indicative stages are the stages beyond the statutory deposit period. The Council has less control over the later stages of the process, as they are dependent on many factors such as the number of representations that need to be handled and the availability of the Planning Inspectorate. The indicative stages of the timetable will be subject to review as the LDP progresses, and the Council will endeavour to liaise with the Planning Inspectorate, informing them about the progress of the plan as it moves forward.

**Table 1** – Key Stages in the preparation of a Revised LDP

| Key Stage | Date |
|---|---|
| Preparation of the Pre-Deposit Stage of the Revised LDP including the Preferred Strategy | From April 2022 |
| Consultation on the Preferred Strategy | June/July 2023 |
| Preparation of the Deposit Revised LDP | From August 2023 |
| Consultation on the Deposit Revised LDP | July/August 2024 |
| Submit Revised LDP to Welsh Government | November 2024 |
| Independent Examination | April/May 2025 |
| Adoption | October 2025 |

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Further details on the projected timescales for plan preparation are set out in **Table 2.**

## 2.2. Management of the LDP Process

2.2.1. The Director of Prosperity and Development will hold overall responsibility for the delivery of the LDP. On a day-to-day basis, the Development Services Manager (Planning Policy) will be responsible for the management of the process. Under the Development Services Manager, the Planning Policy Team will be responsible for the preparation and production of the Revised LDP, with Member engagement and reporting at the relevant stages.

Resources

2.2.2. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring sufficient resources are available in order to efficiently and expediently deliver the LDP. The Planning Policy Team, which is responsible for the production and delivery of the LDP, consists of:

**Current LDP Team**

- Development Services Manager (Planning Policy) (Grade 15) x1
- Planning Policy Team Leader (Grade 13) x1
- Senior Planning Policy Officer (Grade 11) x 2
- Planning Policy Officer (Grade 10) x1
- Planning Assistant and Technical Officer (Grade 8) x 1
- Planning Assistant (Grade 9) x 1- Vacant

2.2.3. As well as the LDP team, officers and expertise will be drawn from various departments within the Council, throughout the LDP process. This is likely to include support from Development Management, Countryside, Highways, Housing, Regeneration, Education, Public Health, Legal and Democratic Services, ICT and Welsh Translation.

2.2.4. The LPA will also enlist professional expertise for specialist services required in the production of a robust evidence base, to support plan preparation. Whilst Council officers will endeavour to produce as much evidence as possible in-house, it will nonetheless be necessary to engage external consultants to compile those highly specialist and technical studies, required in the plan-making process. Where possible opportunities for joint commissioning of evidence base work will be explored.

2.2.5. The Delivery Agreement has been compiled on the premise of solely preparing a Revised LDP for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Council are however also committed to regional working, through the preparation of the Strategic Development Plan.

## 2.3. LDP Budget

2.3.1. An estimated budget of £600,000 will be required for the production and implementation of the plan. It is considered that a sufficient budget is achievable to enable the production of the plan, in line with the Delivery Agreement timetable.

| Stage | Estimated Cost |
|---|---|
| Delivery Agreement | Existing staffing and resources |
| Pre-deposit | £250,000 |
| Deposit | £167,000 |
| Submission and Examination | £200,000 |
| Adoption and Annual Monitoring | £50,000 |
| **Total** | **£667,000** |

| Revised LDP Budget Requirements (Non Staffing) | |
|---|---|
| **Evidence Base Requirements** | |
| Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environment Assessment Habitats Regulations Assessments | £70,000 plus Internal Staff Resources (Internal) |
| Housing Needs Assessment/ | Internal + Consultants/Software £20,000 |
| Local Housing Market Assessment | Internal |
| Population and Dwelling Projection Report and Economic Led Scenarios | Internal + Consultants/Software £20,000 |
| Urban Capacity Study | Internal |
| Candidate Sites Assessment | Internal |
| Employment Land Review | Internal + £25,000 Consultants |
| Retail Assessment | Internal + £25,000 Consultants |
| Infrastructure/Transport Needs Study | Internal + £25,000 Consultants |
| Leisure Study | Internal |
| Renewable Energy Study | Internal + £25,000 Consultants |
| Ecological Sites Identification | Internal |
| Greenspace Assessment and Open Space Assesment | Internal + £15,000 |
| Green Belt/Wedge Assessment | Internal + £10,000 |
| Minerals Assessment | Internal + £10,000 |
| Waste Assessment | Internal + £10,000 |
| Open Space Assessment | Internal |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment | Internal |
| Flooding – Strategic | Internal + £30,000 |
| Landscape | Dependent on need |
| Viability Assessments | Internal + £70,000 Consultants/Software |
| **Total Evidence Base** | **£355,000** |
| **Other Costs** | |
| LDP Database | £42,000 Purchase of software |
| Formal Mapping | Internal + £10,000 Consultants (ongoing) |
| Consultation material and events | Internal + £10,000 costs |
| Examination (Planning Inspectorate & Programme Officer) | £200,000 |
| Adoption, publication and ongoing Annual Monitoring | £50,000 |
| **Total Other** | **£312,000** |
| | |
| **Overall Total, (Non Staffing) Budget Requirement:** | **£667,000** |

2.3.2. The accrued, unspent LDP budget over recent years gives us a total pot of £502,000. The continuation of the annual budget of £68,000 per annum throughout the plan preparation period would then meet this need. It also allows scope for small shortfalls in estimated costs, unseen costs that may arise during the long production period of the Plan, and to meet a few ongoing commitments.

## 2.4. Risk Assessment and Management

2.4.1. The Council considers that its timetable is realistic and deliverable however the timescales involved, set by Welsh Government, are challenging, this is along with the further challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is inevitably some element of risk that cannot be foreseen, which could witness the plan deviate from the timetable, as proposed. More detail relating to risk and potential mitigation is outlined at Appendix 3.

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# 3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCHEME (CIS)

## 3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) specifies how the LPA intends to proactively engage with and involve local communities/stakeholders in plan preparation, as part of the Revised LDP. The CIS provides information to interested parties on how the Council intends to consult with interested parties and provides information and certainty on when and how people can have their say throughout the LDP process.

3.1.2. Rhondda Cynon Taf firmly believes that community and stakeholder engagement in the plan-making process is fundamental to the success of the Revised LDP. Community involvement will be the cornerstone in addressing any contentious issues that arise as part of the process, in addition to assisting with mediation. Such engagement will also serve to highlight the shared goals and aspirations for the County Borough and expose those areas of common ground upon which consensus can be built.

3.1.3. The Development Plans Manual, Edition 3, states that when preparing the CIS LPAs should:

- Create the conditions for early involvement and feedback at a stage when people can shape and influence the plan, based on the 5 ways of working, as set out in the WBFGA 2015
- Encourage the commitment from all participants to an open and honest debate on realistic development alternatives in search of broad consensus
- Recognise the need to adopt approaches/techniques for involving all elements of the community (age groups, local community action groups, hard to reach groups and protected characteristic groups) including business, which seeks to involve those not normally involved
- A one size fits all approach will not be appropriate

3.1.4 The LPA has prepared the Community Involvement Scheme during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Council will adhere to the latest Government guidelines and Regulations in terms of its consultation methods such as social distancing rules. The LPA will endeavour to engage the community in innovative ways and will keep the methods under review as the plan preparation is undertaken.

The CIS has been written with regard to achieving these principles.

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## 3.2. Lessons Learnt from the Previous Plan

3.2.1. During the preparation of the current LDP, various methods were employed to engage all interested parties.  Such methods included the provision of clearly written information, as well as the opportunity to discuss issues, in person, with Council officers.  It is considered that the previous methods of consultation were successful and did engage a wide range of individuals and organisations. This is evidenced by the amount of correspondence that the Council received during the process.

3.2.2. Since the original CIS however there have been numerous changes, which may make the consultation and engagement process even more effective.

3.2.3. The biggest change since the consultations on the previous plan, is the introduction of the Well Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act and the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan. Therefore the consultation approaches and methods used in the production of the new plan will be in conformity with these documents.

3.2.4. Social media has grown exponentially since the previous plan along with the Council's online presence generally, and the Council will investigate all opportunities for the use of this platform during the LDP process.

3.2.5. The Council further recognises the importance of obtaining the views of the younger generation, as such the Council would like to ensure greater engagement in this regard.  This has been made easier since the previous plan with the formation of the RCT Youth Forum.

3.2.6. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 some methods of involvement and consultation such as meetings in person and workshops may need greater consideration of how they will be organised, to ensure that Government COVID-19 regulations are met. The Council will explore ways of doing this, and these methods will be reviewed as Government guidance changes. Along with this the use of online methods will be used where appropriate.

3.2.7. During engagement events undertaken during 2021 the Council has successfully utilised video conferencing software such as Team and Zoom to undertake meetings, forums and other events. These methods have proven very successful and an efficient way of engaging a large number of people. The Council will continue to use these methods where appropriate.

3.2.8. Along with providing information on the LDP website the Council will also utilise online methods of consultation such as the Let's Talk page to engage as widely as possible.

## 3.3. Principles of Engagement

3.3.1. The Council is committed to ensuring meaningful community involvement, therefore the Council will ensure that the principles of engagement will conform to the following standards.

3.3.2. Along with the principles of the Well-being Act, the principles of the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan will also be reflected. This document states:

3.3.3. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has endorsed the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales. The principles and standards have been developed and endorsed by the Welsh Government to make sure that participation happens in consistent and effective ways.

1. **Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference -** Engagement gives a real chance to influence policy, service design and delivery from an early stage.

2. **Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose -** The people affected by an issue or change are included in opportunities to engage, as an individual or as part of a group or community, with their views both respected and valued.

3. **Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way -** The engagement process is clear, communicated to everyone in a way that is easy to understand within a reasonable timescale, and the most suitable method(s) for those involved is are used.

4. **Work with relevant partner organisations -** Organisations should communicate with each other and work together wherever possible to ensure that people's time is used effectively and efficiently.

5. **The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable -** People are well placed to take part in the engagement process, as they have easy access to relevant information that is tailored to meet their needs

6. **Make it easier for people to take part -** People can engage easily as any barriers for different groups of people are identified and addressed.

7. **Enable people to take part effectively -** Engagement processes should try to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants.

8. **Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective -** Appropriate training, guidance and support are provided to enable all participants to effectively engage, including both community participants and staff.

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9. **People are told of the impact of their contribution -** Timely feedback is given to all participants about the views they express and the decisions or actions taken as a result; methods and forms of feedback should take account of participants' preferences.

10. **Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement -** People's experience of the process should be monitored and evaluated, to measure its success in engaging people and the effectiveness of that participation. Lessons should be shared and applied in future engagements.

3.3.4. The Council is also developing Corporate Consultation Standards, which it will publish later in the year. Consultation during the LDP will be consistent with said standards.

## 3.4. Who should be Involved?

3.4.1. The LPA is committed to engaging with any person or organisation who has an interest in shaping the future of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The LDP, once adopted, will be used to guide development in the County Borough and will be a key decision making tool for the consideration of planning applications. The Council therefore encourages anyone who wishes to express their views, to do so as part of the preparation of the LDP. The Council will endeavour to ensure that the process is transparent, engaging and accessible to all.

3.4.2. The legal requirements for community involvement and public participation for the LDP are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended 2015). The Council intends to meet and where possible, exceed these requirements. A list of Specific and General Consultation bodies is set out at Appendix 2.

## 3.5. Equality

3.5.1 We aim to treat everyone with dignity and respect, and to operate in an equitable manner. The Council will make every effort to ensure that the plan preparation process is accessible to all. The Council will engage as widely as possible with all sectors of the community to reflect people from a range of backgrounds and identities. Where due to current COVID-19 pandemic restrictions it is not possible to undertake all consultations in person the Council will seek other appropriate methods of engagement to ensure that all members of the community are fully engaged in the process.

## 3.6. Hard to Reach Groups

3.6.1. There are particular sections of the community that the Council wishes to ensure are involved in the LDP process, due to their specific needs and/or the fact that they have traditionally been under represented in the planning process.

3.6.2. The Council will make every effort to ensure that hard to reach groups are included in the process. Hard to reach groups include:
- Young people;
- People with disabilities;
- The elderly;
- Ethnic minorities;
- Gypsies and Travellers;
- People with learning difficulties;
- Homeless people; and
- Ex-offenders.

3.6.3. Clearly, hard to reach groups are by definition hard to reach and it is not always possible to predict which groups will, in fact, prove difficult to consult with. In order to ensure that the community involvement process is as all-inclusive as possible, the Council will monitor and review the statutory consultation periods throughout the process. Where it is clear that groups have not been represented, the Council will seek to invite such groups into the process.

3.6.4. The Council intends to work with its existing partners in the community and develop new partnerships where possible. The preparation of the plan will be closely linked with the work undertaken on the Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan, and where possible, utilise the partnerships that have arisen as a direct result of these plans.

## 3.7. Welsh Language

3.7.1. The Welsh Language Standards were published by the Welsh Language Commissioner as a set of legally binding requirements that have applied from the 30th March 2016. The principal aim of the Welsh Language Standards is to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English, thus ensuring greater consistency in Welsh Language services. The Standards therefore allow individuals to access services via the medium of Welsh, English or bilingually. The Council published *Strategaeth Hybu's Gymraeg/Welsh Language Promotion Strategy* in September 2016, which alongside the Standards, will be adhered to at each stage of the plan-making process.

## 3.8. SA/SEA

3.8.1. Although the SA/SEA approach should be integrated into the LDP preparation process, there are certain areas of work that need to be specifically prepared. Likewise, consultation on the SA/SEA process can be integrated with other LDP consultation periods however there are specific requirements for the involvement of certain consultation bodies.

3.8.2. The SEA Regulations identifies the following bodies that require consultation:
- Authorities with 'environmental responsibility', known as the Consultation Bodies. In Wales these are Natural Resources Wales and CADW (SEA Regulation 14);

- The Public (SEA Regulation 13 (2(b))); and
- Other EU Member States where the plan is likely to have significant effects on the Country.

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# 4. CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES

## 4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. The LPA will employ a number of consultation methods and techniques in order to facilitate community involvement throughout the plan-making process. All methods utilised have been devised in order to ensure effectual, efficient and wide reaching participation.

4.1.2. Whilst a number of different techniques will be used to involve the community as a whole, the Council will ensure the provision of clearly written information in accessible locations and ensure that there is the opportunity to discuss issues with members of staff. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Council will, where possible be available in person, subject to regulations set out by the Government such as social distancing. Where this is not possible the Council will seek alternative appropriate methods of engagement such as being available on the telephone and online, to ensure that the community can effectively engage with us in the process.

4.1.3. During engagement events undertaken during 2021 the Council has successfully utilised video conferencing software such as Team and Zoom to undertake meetings, forums and other events. These methods have proven very successful and an efficient way of engaging a large number of people. The Council will continue to use these methods where appropriate.

4.1.4. Along with providing information on the LDP website the Council will also utilise online methods of consultation such as the Let's Talk page to engage as widely as possible.

4.1.5. Listed below are some of the techniques that will be used to consult on the stages of the plan.

## 4.2. STEERING GROUPS

4.2.1. The LPA will host a number of discussion groups, focus groups and workshop sessions in a bid to maximise engagement and ensure a community-led approach, as far as possible. The input of other groups and organisations will also be key to the success of the Revised LDP and the same techniques will be employed to secure their input.

## 4.3. LDP Member Steering Group

**4.3.1.** The Council will establish a Member Steering Group, in order to guide the formulation of the Revised LDP. This will be made up of a number of appropriate members.

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## 4.4. LDP Officer Steering Group

4.4.1 In order to ensure that the Revised LDP is sustainable and deliverable, the Council will establish a LDP Officer Steering Group. The Group will consist of Council Officers with responsibility for areas including Planning, Highways, Engineering, Drainage and Flood Management, Biodiversity, Economic Development, Housing, Education and Public Health, although this list is not exhaustive. It is anticipated that a series of sub-groups will be created beneath the umbrella of the Steering Group, to assist in key areas of policy development.

## 4.5. Developer Forum

4.5.1. The LPA will also draw on the knowledge and expertise of those organisations involved in its unique Developer Forum. The Developer Forum was established in 2012, post adoption of the current LDP, to provide innovative solutions to overcoming barriers to housing delivery. Membership of the Forum comprises representatives of volume and local house builders (operating within RCT); the Home Builders Federations; Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) (operating within RCT); National Financial Institutions; the Federation of Master Builders; and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The LPA will work with the Forum to establish any obstacles to development that have previously been encountered and analyse any issues that emerge, to assist in the plan-making process, in relation to the Revised LDP.

## 4.6. LDP Forum

4.6.1. The Council is committed to working in partnership with the community as a whole throughout the plan making process. For this reason, it is proposed to establish an LDP Forum to assist in and inform the development plan process. The Forum will play an important role in ensuring that the LDP reflects the development needs and aspirations of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4.6.2. It is anticipated that the role of the Forum will be two-fold. Firstly, it will serve as a mechanism for discussion, which will allow open dialogue to take place between stakeholders on key issues of policy. Secondly, it will act as a control group for the various stakeholders in the development plan process. This Forum will be identified on a focus basis, incorporating further Council Members, Council groups, Specific and General Consultation bodies.

## 4.7. SA/SEA Working Group

4.7.1. The Council will set up a SA/SEA working group to help guide and inform the SA/SEA process.

## 4.8. Social Media and online presence

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4.8.1. Social Media presents an opportunity to reach a large number of people in an efficient manner. The Council will use its existing social media platform and other online platforms where appropriate to advertise news and stages of the plan. The use of social media will be in line with the Council's social media policy. The Council however will not accept formal consultation representations made through certain social media platforms which will be made clear on that particular social media platform when this restriction applies.

## 4.9. Website

4.9.1. The Council's website will be one of the main sources of information and utilised for consultation throughout the plan process. It will be updated with information about each stage of the plan-making process, as well as hosting all the documents prepared and contain contact information for the Planning Policy Team. The website will also host consultation stages of the plan and include information such as how to make a representation and provide the relevant forms needed to do so. The website will be kept up to date throughout the plan process.

4.9.2. During engagement events undertaken during 2021 the Council has successfully utilised video conferencing software such as Team and Zoom to undertake meetings, forums and other events. These methods have proven very successful and an efficient way of engaging a large number of people. The Council will continue to use these methods where appropriate.

4.9.3. Along with providing information on the LDP website the Council will also utilise online methods of consultation such as the Let's Talk page to engage as widely as possible.

## 4.10. Drop-in sessions during consultation periods

4.10.1. The LDP team will endeavour to be as accessible as possible during the LDP process. In order to assist in this, various drop-in sessions will be held during consultation periods of the LDP where they can accord with up to date Government guidance on COVID-19. It will be ensured that these will be in accessible locations and at convenient times.

## 4.11. Written Information

4.11.1. The Council will produce clearly written information throughout the process. The Council will also translate these documents in line with the Welsh Language Standards. Requests for these documents in different formats should be made to

the Council in writing. The Council will endeavour to make the written information as accessible as possible.

## 4.12. Document Availability (Deposit Locations)

4.12.1. During the various stages of plan preparation, electronic documents associated with the LDP full revision process will be available on the Council's website. Electronic representations forms will also be available on the website, at the relevant stages of consultation. Additionally, copies of these documents will be available at main Council offices and libraries; at the time of writing these are:

- Sardis House, Sardis Road, Pontypridd, CF37 1DU.
- Pontypridd One 4 All Centre and Library 1 Llys Cadwyn, Taff St, Pontypridd CF37 4TH
- Aberdare One4All Centre and Library, Green Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AG.
- Porth One4All Centre, and Library Porth Plaza, Pontypridd Road, Porth, CF39 9PG.
- Mountain Ash One4All Centre and Library Oxford Street, Mountain Ash, CF45 3HD
- Treorchy One4All Centre and Library Station Road, Treorchy, CF62 6NN
- Abercynon Library, Ynysmeurig Road, Abercynon, CF45 4SU.
- Church Village Library, Garth Olwg Community Campus, off St Illtyd's Road, Church Village, Pontypridd, CF38 1RQ.
- Ferndale Library, The Hwb, North Road, Ferndale, CF43 4PS.
- Hirwaun Library, High Street, Hirwaun, CF44 9SW.
- Llantrisant Community Library, Llantrisant Leisure Centre, Southgate Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8DJ.
- Pontyclun Library, Heol-y-Felin, Pontyclun, CF72 9BE.
- Rhydyfelin Library, Library Court, Poplar Road, Rhydyfelin, CF37 5LR.
- Tonypandy Library. De Winton Street, Tonypandy, CF40 2QZ.
- Mobile Library

4.12.2 The Council will keep these locations up to date on its website. Please note appointments might be needed to view documents due to Covid restrictions.

### 4.12.3 Principal Office

4.12.4 The Teams Principal office is located in Sardis House Pontypridd. At the start of the pandemic the LDP team began working from home. Homeworking is likely to continue and therefore appointments will need to be made to view documents or to meet with the LDP team in person. To make an appointment please call or email the team.

## 4.13. Direct Correspondence

4.13.1. Anybody who has an interest in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the LDP can and should be involved in the LDP process. The Council will host a consultation database, which will hold the contact details of any individual or organisation who wishes to be kept informed of the plan process. During the various stages of the process, the Council will make direct contact with individuals and organisations via email or letter. The Council will endeavour to reduce the amount of paper used during the LDP process and therefore will, where possible, require an email address from participants. It is however understood that not everyone has an email address and therefore these individuals will be written to via post.

## 4.14. Availability of the LDP Team

4.14.1. The LDP team will endeavour to be as accessible as possible throughout the LDP process. The team has a direct email address and telephone number. The team can be contacted during office hours, which are between 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

4.14.2. The Council will also endeavour to meet with community groups and/or residents as appropriate and where possible.

4.14.3. Contact details for the team are included at Appendix 1.

4.14.4. Set out above are the main consultation and engagement techniques that will be employed by the Council during the plan-making process. There will however inevitably be opportunities that arise during the LDP process to engage further with the public, especially as COVID-19 restrictions are gradually lifted. The Council will explore any opportunity to do so.

## 4.15. Interacting with the Council/Expectations of Consultees

4.15.1. For comments and/or representations to be made on the Revised LDP, it is essential that they are submitted during the specified timescales, to allow the LPA to give them due consideration. The timetable of relevant stages is set out earlier in the Delivery Agreement, which provides a guideline with regard to when involvement is sought. This will allow all views expressed to be considered and ultimately inform the plan-making process, where appropriate.

## 4.16. Representation forms

4.16.1. A standard representation form will be made available by the Council during consultation periods. The completion of key sections of this will be required to make a valid representation.

4.16.2. Should any personal details change from the point of initial contact, it is advisable to inform the LPA to ensure that you continue to remain informed of the Plan's progress. Additionally, the Council acknowledges that a change in land ownership details of Candidate Sites could occur during the process. Consequently, it is imperative that any such changes are communicated to the LPA, as a matter of urgency.

## 4.17. Consensus Building

4.17.1. The LPA will ensure that consensus is built via the engagement and consultation techniques referenced in the Community Involvement Scheme. In order to build a consensus, it is essential that stakeholders and all other interested parties are kept fully informed and engaged throughout the full revision procedure. This will be of particular importance at the outset of the process. It is however acknowledged that on occasion, consensus will not be achievable and a difference of opinion between various parties will prevail. As such, a clearly defined audit trail of decisions will be maintained, thus ensuring transparency in the decision making process.

## 4.18. Handling of Representations and Other Data

4.18.1. Representations which are received in the prescribed timescales will be handled in the following manner:
- Representation logged and given a representation number;
- Confirmation sent to representor in receipt of the representation;
- Representation and details of representor logged;
- All valid representations considered and responses formulated; and
- Local Authority's responses to representations recorded and published in accordance with the Regulations.

## 4.19. Data Protection

4.19.1. All personal information and data will be handled in line with the agreed Prosperity and Development Departments data protection and privacy policies.

## 4.20. Late Representations

4.20.1. For representations to be considered, the consultation responses for the specific stage will be required within a precise period. Late comments/representations will not be logged as valid if they fail to comply with the published timescales.

4.20.2. There may be extenuating circumstances in which a representation is submitted late, it will however be at the discretion of the LPA with regard to whether such

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comments/representations are accepted. The LPA faces a challenging timetable in the production of a revised plan; therefore, late representations have the potential to cause further and unnecessary delays, which would not be acceptable.

## 4.21. Monitoring and Review of the Delivery Agreement

4.21.1. It is proposed to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Delivery Agreement at each stage of the Local Development Plan preparation process. This will establish whether the LPA is meeting its objectives in terms of public engagement in the process, and whether or not the timescales, as indicated, are being met. This will be of particular importance during this time due to COVID-19 restrictions and the evolving nature of the situation. Where there is opportunity to improve the methods of engagement we will seek to do so. However any significant amendments to the community involvement scheme and any changes to the timetable will require formal Council and Welsh Government approval.

4.21.2. An updated timetable will be submitted to the Welsh Government, following the Deposit stage. This will provide the opportunity to specify a refined timescale for the 'indicative' stages of the timetable, once further details are known.

## 4.22. Monitoring and Review of the LDP

4.22.1. The Council will produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each year following the date of adoption, which will assess how effectively the policies and proposals of the plan are performing and highlight any need for modifications. The monitoring report will also include references to new or updated National Planning Guidance and any other relevant information. Once produced, the monitoring report will be made available to the public to view on the Council's website.

4.22.2. Following the adoption of the LDP, it is intended that the plan will be reviewed on a four-yearly cycle. A review of the SA/SEA baseline information and trends will also take place and feed into the revision.

## 4.23. Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.23.1. The Revised LDP will contain sufficient policies and proposals to provide the basis for determining planning applications. The selective use of SPG will be utilised as a means of setting out more detailed thematic policies or site-specific guidance on the way in which the LDP policies will be applied. SPG does not form part of the development plan but will be derived from policies contained within the plan, thus ensuring consistency in the policies/proposals that it supplements.

4.23.2. Following the adoption of RCTs current LDP, a number of SPG were produced to provide support to existing LDP policy. These were:
- Design and Place-making (March 2011)

- Design and Place-making: Access, Circulation and Parking (March 2011)
- The Historic Environment (March 2011)
- Design in Town Centres (March 2011)
- A Design Guide for Householder Development (March 2011)
- Affordable Housing (March 2011)
- Nature Conservation (March 2011)
- Planning Obligations (March 2011)
- Planning Obligations (Revised) (December 2014)
- Shopfront Design (October 2014)
- Development of Flats (June 2015)
- Employment Skills (June 2015)
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (May 2018)

4.23.3. A review of all the existing SPG documents, including ones prepared more recently, will form part of the LDP full revision procedure, with amendment or revised likely in most instances.

4.23.4. The Council will use SPG to cover detailed and numerical guidelines where it is considered that they may change during the lifetime of the plan. This will ensure that the LDP does not become outdated in the short term and will assist with the flexibility of the plan. Where SPG will aid the understanding of the LDP, it will be prepared and consulted on in parallel. It will not however be possible to prepare all SPG in parallel and in these circumstances, SPG will be subject to a separate formal process of consultation and adoption. A report of public consultation will be prepared in respect of each SPG document.

4.23.5. SPG cannot be formally adopted until after the Inspector's binding report has been received and it is clear that there will be no change in the policy approach.

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## 5. TIMETABLE AND PROPOSED METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

The information below provides a detailed breakdown of the plan making process, up to and including the submission of the LDP to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. It seeks to explain the purpose of the stage, who will be engaged and the Council's expectations of consultees. The subsequent stages in the process are not directly in the control of the Council and therefore may be subject to change.

**Table 2**

| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Pre-Deposit Participation (Regulation 14) including preparation of the Preferred Strategy | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preparation of detailed background papers of LDP topics<br><br>Review evidence base<br><br>Preparation of an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) Scoping Report – this report will encompass: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as well as the Wellbeing of future Generations Act, a Welsh language impact assessment, an Equalities Impact Assessment, a health impact assessment and the Environment Act.<br><br>Preparation of Issues, Objectives, Vision and Aims | April 2022-May 2023 | RCT Steering Groups<br><br>Specific Consultation Bodies<br><br>General Consultation Bodies<br><br>General Public | Workshops<br><br>Direct Correspondence via email/letter<br><br>Online presence such as through the internet, social media platforms and video conferencing. | Preparation of formal evidence base documents and reports on engagement.<br><br>Pre-deposit proposals and papers approved by Council and approval for public consultation | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>Officer Steering Group<br><br>Member Steering Group<br><br>Consultants<br><br>ICT<br><br>Translation |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preparation of strategy options and assessment of alternatives (Incorporating ISA requirements)<br><br>Preparation of Spatial Strategy and Preferred Options document<br><br>Preparation of the initial ISA Report<br><br>Habitats Regulation Assessment preparation. | | | | | |
| Call for Candidate Sites | June 2022-September 2022 | RCT Steering Groups<br><br>Specific Consultation Bodies<br><br>General Consultation Bodies<br><br>Other consultees<br><br>Public Landowners | Information made available on the Council's Website with Press Release<br><br>Corporate Facebook and Twitter Accounts and other appropriate social media platforms.<br><br>Direct correspondence via email and letter | Preparation of a Candidate Sites Register | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>ICT<br><br>Marketing and press<br><br>Translation |

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| | | Any other interested party wishing to submit land to the process. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Integrated SA/SEA** | | | | | |
| 5 week Statutory consultation on ISA Scoping report | July/ August 2022 | Statutory Consultation Bodies<br><br>ISA working group | Direct correspondence via email/ letter<br><br>Workshop/meeting | Consideration of representations on Draft ISA Scoping Report.<br><br>Preparation of formal evidence base documents. | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>Consultation Bodies (ISA Working Group)<br><br>SA/SEA consultants. |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Pre-Deposit (Preferred Strategy) Public Consultation (Regulation 15 & 16) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consultation on Pre-deposit Proposals and supporting documents including Preferred Strategy and the Candidate Sites Register | June/July 2023 (for 6 weeks) | RCT LDP Steering Groups Specific consultation bodies, General consultation bodies Other consultation bodies ISA Consultation bodies Any other interested party/general public. | Direct Correspondence via email and letter Documents placed on the Councils website Online presence such as through the internet, social media platforms, video conferencing and video sharing. Copies of all relevant documents placed in deposit locations Drop in sessions/ exhibitions/meeting where appropriate Documents sent to Specific and General consultation bodies | Preparation of formal evidence base documents Analyse and record representations received Details of responses received to be incorporated into a report of consultation (initial consultation report) Confirm/Amend Preferred Strategy. Approval of Pre-deposit proposals | LDP Planning Policy Team Elected Members ICT Translation team Events team Printing costs Marketing costs |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Pre-Deposit (Preferred Strategy) Public Consultation (Regulation 15 & 16) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Hard copies of the main documents placed in main Council offices and libraries (deposit locations)<br><br>Social media posts | for Deposit consultation. | |
| 6 week consultation on the initial ISA Report | June/July 2023 | As above | As above | Analyse and record representations received<br><br>Details of responses received to be incorporated into a report of consultation<br><br>Amend/update ISA as necessary | ISA working group<br><br>Consultants<br><br>And as above |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Preparation of Deposit Revised LDP (Regulation 16, 17, 18 and 19) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Likely Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preparation of Deposit Revised LDP | August 2023- June 2024 | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>Officer Steering Group<br><br>LDP Members Steering Group<br><br>Developer Forum<br><br>LDP Forum | Meetings<br><br>Workshop<br><br>Video Conferencing<br><br>Digital correspondence | Appropriate contributions to the Deposit Revised LDP. | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>Officer Steering Group<br><br>LDP Members Steering Group<br><br>Developer Forum<br><br>LDP Forum |
| Preparation of the ISA report and the HRA for the Deposit Revised LDP. | August 2023- June 2024 | LDP Planning Policy Team/ ISA Consultants<br><br>Officer Steering Group<br><br>LDP Members Steering Group<br><br>LDP Forum<br><br>ISA Working Group | As above | Appropriate contributions to the Deposit Revised LDP. | LDP Planning Policy Team/ ISA Consultants<br><br>Officer Steering Group<br><br>LDP Members Steering Group<br><br>LDP Forum<br><br>ISA Working Group |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Statutory Deposit of Proposals (Regulation 17, 18 and 19) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Likely Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Statutory consultation of the Deposit Draft LDP and supporting documents. | July/August 2024<br><br>(for 6 weeks) | RCT Steering Groups<br><br>Specific consultation bodies, General consultation bodies, Other consultation bodies<br><br>ISA Consultation bodies<br><br>Any other interested party including general public. | Direct correspondence via email and letter<br><br>Documents made available at deposit locations<br><br>All relevant documents published on the Councils Website with press release. Online presence such as through the internet, social media platforms, video conferencing and video sharing.<br><br>Documents sent to Specific and | Details of responses incorporated into a Report of Consultation.<br><br>Copies of representations placed in deposit locations and on website | LDP Planning Policy team<br><br>Internal consultees<br><br>ICT<br><br>Marketing and events<br><br>Printing costs |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | General consultation bodies<br><br>Corporate Facebook and twitter<br><br>Drop in sessions/ exhibitions/ meetings as appropriate<br><br>Site notices for site specific allocations | | |
| Statutory Consultation on the Deposit stage ISA report and the HRA. | July/August 2024 | As above | As above | As above | As above |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Submission of LDP for Examination (Regulation 18,19,22) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consider representations received and update consultation report

Update the ISA if necessary

Notify all relevant parties of submission

Submit the Deposit Draft LDP, ISA and HRA and other relevant documents to Welsh Government | Indicative date:

November 2024

(Actual dates to be agreed with PINS) | Welsh Government

Planning Inspectorate Wales

RCT Steering Groups

Specific consultation bodies

General consultation bodies

Other consultation bodies

SA Consultation Bodies

Those persons who have requested notification when the LDP is submitted

Any other interested party. | Direct correspondence via email and letter

Information/ statement provided on the Council's website of submission along with relevant documents

Hard copies of main relevant documents available at deposit locations | Updated Consultation report

Updated ISA if necessary

Report of Consultation reported to Council on Deposit plan and any focussed changes sought

Submission of Deposit LDP and supporting documents to Welsh Government | LDP Planning Policy Team

Printing costs |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Independent Examination (Regulation 23) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Notification of independent examination in line with regulation 23 | Indicative date:<br><br>February 2025<br><br>(at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the Examination)<br><br>(Actual to be agreed with PINS) | RCT Steering Groups<br><br>Specific consultation bodies<br><br>General consultation bodies<br><br>Other consultation bodies<br><br>Those persons who have made valid representations<br><br>Planning Inspectorate<br><br>Programme Officer<br><br>Any other interested parties | Formal notification given by direct correspondence and information provided on the Council's website<br><br>Notification of those who have made a valid representation | N/A | LDP Planning Policy Team<br><br>Consultants |

| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Independent Examination (Regulation 23) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Independent Examination | Indicative date:<br><br>April/May 2025<br><br>(Actual to be agreed by PINS) | All those interested individuals and organisations that have made representations at the Deposit Stage of the Plan<br><br>Planning Inspectorate | Round Table discussions<br><br>Formal written and oral submission | Inspectors report | Programme officer<br><br>Cost of examination<br><br>Administrative costs |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Receipt of the Inspectors Report (Regulation 24) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Receipt of Inspectors report | Indicative date: September/October 2025 (Actual to be agreed with PINS) | Any persons who has asked to be notified. RCT Steering Groups | Inspectors report made available on the Councils website Copies of the report made available in deposit locations Press release Corporate Facebook and twitter | Advise Council of receipt of Inspectors report | Cost of printing |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Adoption (Regulation 25) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Formally adopt the LDP as the Development Plan for the County Borough within 8 weeks of receipt of Inspectors Report | October 2025 | Those who have asked to be notified<br><br>Cabinet<br><br>Council | LDP, adoption statement and the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal report to be published on the Council's website<br><br>Documents available in deposit locations<br><br>Adoption statement sent to those who have asked to be notified<br><br>Press release | Full Council prior to final adoption | Costs of printing<br><br>Marketing |

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| Stage in the LDP Preparation Process: Adoption (Regulation 25) | Timescale | Who will be Involved | Methods of Engagement | Likely Outcomes & Reporting Mechanism | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Corporate Facebook and Twitter | | |
| Formal publication of the ISA Report | October 2025 | | As above | As above | Cost of printing |
| Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) | | | | | |
| Production of the Annual Monitoring Report | 31st October 2027 and annually thereafter | Any interested party | Published on the Council's Website

Send to Welsh Government | Cabinet/Delegated Cabinet Member | Staff

Translation

ICT |

**Appendix 1**

## CONTACT DETAILS

The Planning Policy Team can be contacted using any of the following methods:

**Email:  LDP@rctcbc.gov.uk**

Post:

Planning Policy Team

Floor 2

Sardis House

Sardis Road

Pontypridd

Rhondda Cynon Taf

CF37 1DU.

Telephone:  01443 281129

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## Appendix 2 – List of Consultation Bodies

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 defines General Consultation Bodies and Specific Consultation Bodies as follows:-

| General Consultation Bodies are: | Specific Consultation Bodies are: |
|---|---|
| - voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the LPA's area;<br><br>- bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the LPA's area;<br><br>- bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the LPA's area;<br><br>- bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the LPA's area;<br><br>- bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying out business in the LPA's area; and<br><br>- bodies which represent the interests of Welsh culture in the LPA's area; | - Natural Resources Wales<br>- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited<br>- insofar as the Secretary of State exercises functions previously exercisable by the Strategic Rail Authority, the Secretary of State,<br>- the National Assembly,<br>- a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the LPA,<br>- any person<br>(i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and<br><br>(ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the LPA (where known),<br><br>- if it exercises functions in any part of the LPA's area—<br>(i) a Local Health Board,<br>(ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989,<br>(iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986,<br>(iv) a sewerage undertaker,<br>(v) a water undertaker; |

The tables that follow comprise the Specific Consultation Bodies, UK Government, General Consultation Bodies and Other Consultees as required by LDP Wales. The tables also include parties who have either requested inclusion directly or been suggested as useful additions by third parties.

The Council undertook targeted consultation on the Delivery Agreement with stakeholders. Suggestions made for additional consultees have been added to this list following the consultation.

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These groups will play an important role in the development of the LDP and the Council will ensure that they are kept involved throughout the process.

It must be stressed that this list is not exhaustive or exclusive. The Council welcomes all suggestions, either directly from organisations themselves or individuals, on any interest group, organisation or body who may wish to be included on the database. It is anticipated that the list will grow continuously throughout the development of the LDP.

The Council maintains an LDP Consultation Database, which includes interested parties. The Council is happy to include any individual who wishes to be kept abreast of the LDP process.

Should any party/individual wish to be removed from the LDP databases, they should contact the Development Planning Team directly.

At stages of plan preparation, the Council will consult with those consultation bodies listed below:

**Specific Consultation Bodies:**

| Specific Consultation Bodies (including UK Government Departments) |
| --- |
| British Telecom |
| CADW |
| Cwm Taf University Health Board |
| Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy |
| Department for Transport |
| Dwr Cymru Welsh Water |
| Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust |
| Home Office |
| Ministry of Defence |
| National Gird Company plc |
| National Grid Wireless |
| Natural Resources Wales |
| Network Rail Infrastructure Limited |
| Office of the Secretary of State for Wales |
| Telecommunications Operators (inclusive of EE, Vodafone, O2, Three, Tesco Mobile, NTL, Open reach and Virgin Media) |
| Transco |
| Wales and West Utilities |
| Welsh Government (inclusive of the Planning Division) |
| Welsh Water |
| Western Power Distribution |

| South East Wales and Other Local Authorities and Bodies |
| --- |
| Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council |
| Brecon Beacons National Park Authority |
| Bridgend County Borough Council |

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| |
|---|
| Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Cardiff Capital Region |
| Cardiff Capital Region Strategic Planning Panel (when established) |
| City of Cardiff Council |
| Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council |
| Monmouthshire County Borough Council |
| Neath Port Talbot |
| Newport City Council |
| Powys County Council |
| Torfaen County Borough Council |
| Vale of Glamorgan |

| Town and Community Councils in Rhondda Cynon Taf |
|---|
| Gilfach Goch Community Council |
| Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council |
| Llanharan Community Council |
| Llanharry Community Council |
| Llantrisant Community Council |
| Llantwit Fardre Community Council |
| Pontyclun Community Council |
| Pontypridd Town Council |
| Rhigos Community Council |
| Taffs Well and Nantgarw Community Council |
| Tonyrefail Community Council |
| Ynysybwl and Coed y Cwm Community Council |

| Community Councils in Adjoining Authorities |
|---|
| Aber Valley Community Council |
| Blaengwrach Community Council |
| Coychurch Higher Community Council |
| Glyn Neath Town Council |
| Llanfrynach Community Council |
| Llangan Community Council |
| Nelson Community Council |
| Ogmore Valley Community Council |
| Pencoed Town Council |
| Pendoylan Community Council |
| Penllyn Community Council |
| Pentyrch Community Council |
| Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn Community Council |
| Peterston-Super-Ely Community Council |
| Tongwynlais Community Council |
| Welsh St Donats Community Council |
| Ystradfellte and Pontneddfechan Community Council |

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**General Consultation Bodies:**

| General Consultees – Voluntary Organisations in RCT |
| --- |
| Age Connects Morgannwg |
| Canolfan Maerdy |
| Citizen's Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff |
| Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services – Fernhill Youth Project |
| Home Start Rhondda Cynon Taff |
| Interlink RCT |
| Penywaun Building Communities Trust |
| TraVol Community Transport |
| Valleys Kids/Plant y Cymoedd |
| Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) |
| Wales Federation of YFC |
| Women's Aid RCT |

| General Consultees – Ethnic Minority Groups |
| --- |
| Friends, Families and Travellers |
| Gypsies and Travellers Wales |
| Showmen's Guild of Great Britain (Wales and Northern Ireland) |
| The Equality and Human Rights Commission |
| The Gypsy Council |
| The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (Wales) |
| Traveller Law Reform Project |
| Travelling Ahead |
| VALREC (Valleys Race Equality Council) |

| General Consultees – Religious Organisations |
| --- |
| Cardiff Buddhist Centre |
| Catholic Church in England and Wales |
| Evangelical Movement of Wales |
| Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Miskin, Pontyclun |
| Mountain Ash Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses |
| Muslim Council for Wales |
| Pontypridd Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses |
| Presbyterian Church of Wales |
| Representative Body of the Church in Wales |
| Rhondda Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses |
| South Wales Baptist Association |
| The Apostolic Church, UK |
| The Islamic Centre, Aberdare |
| The Salvation Army |
| Trealaw Quakers |
| UK Islamic Mission |
| United Reform Church |
| Wales Synod – The Methodist Church in Wales |

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| General Consultees – Disability Groups |
|---|
| Accessible Wales |
| British Deaf Association (Wales) |
| Disability Arts Cymru |
| Disability Law Service |
| Disability Resource Centre |
| Disability Rights Commission Wales |
| Disability Sport Wales |
| Disability Wales |
| Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee |
| Guide Dogs for the Blind |
| Learning Disability Wales |
| Mencap Cymru |
| MS Society Cymru |
| National Federation of the Blind |
| Partially Sighted Society |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff Access Group |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf People First |
| Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB Cymru) |
| Sense Cymru |
| Wales Council for Deaf People |
| Wales Council of the Blind |
| Whizz-Kidz |

| General Consultees – Arts and Culture |
|---|
| Arts Connect |
| Arts Factory |
| Cymdeithas yr Iaith |
| LMT Academy of Performing Arts |
| Menter Iaith |
| Model House, Llantrisant |
| Muni Arts Centre |
| National Centre for Learning Welsh |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts |
| Rhondda Theatre Group |
| Spectacle Theatre Ltd |
| Stagecoach Performing Arts, Pontypridd |
| Stardreams Musical Theatre Company |
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru |

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**Other Consultation Bodies:**

| Other Consultees as Stated in the LDP Manual | |
|---|---|
| Airport Operators- Cardiff Airport | Freight Transport Association |
| British Aggregates Association | Gypsy and Travellers Law Reform Coalition |
| British Geological Survey | Gypsy Council |
| Canal and River Trust | Health and Safety Executive |
| CBI | Home Builders Federation |
| Centre for Ecology and Hydrology | Institution of Civil Engineers |
| Chambers of commerce | Local community, conservation and amenity groups and Civic Societies- see separate list below. |
| Chartered Institute of Housing | Local Transport operators – See separate list below |
| Chartered Institute of Waste Management | Mineral Products Association Wales |
| Civil Aviation Authority | National Farmers Union of Wales |
| Coal Authority | National Grid |
| Commission for Racial Equality | One Voice Wales |
| Country Land and Business Association | Planning Aid Wales |
| Crown Estate Office | Police |
| Design Commission for Wales | Post Office Property Holdings |
| Disability Rights Commission | Public Health Wales |
| Disability Wales | Rail Freight Group |
| Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee | Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors |
| Electricity, Gas and Telecommunications Companies – see separate list below | RTPI Cymru |
| Environmental groups at a national and regional level –See separate list below | Sports Council for Wales |
| Environmental Services Agency (Waste) | Train Operating Companies- See separate list below |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission | Wales Council for Voluntary Action |
| Farmers Union of Wales | Wales Environmental Link |
| Federation of Small Businesses | Welsh Environmental Services Association |
| Fields in Trust | Welsh Language Commissioner |
| Fire and Rescue Services Welsh Ambulance Service South Wales Fire and Rescue Service | Welsh Water DWR Cymru |

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| Environmental Groups – Local, National and Regional | |
|---|---|
| Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) | The National Allotment Society |
| Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Natural Environment Research Council | The National Trust |
| Coed Cymru, Welsh Woodlands and Timber | The Open Spaces Society |
| Friends of the Earth (Cymru) | The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (Glamorgan) |
| Glamorgan Bird Club | Wales Environment Link |
| Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust | Welsh Environmental Services Association |
| Just Mammals Consultancy | Welsh Historic Gardens Trust |
| RSPB Cymru | Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust |

| Local Transport Providers including Rail | |
|---|---|
| Bus Users UK | Network Rail |
| Cardiff Bus Company | New Adventure Travel |
| Edwards Coaches | Stagecoach South Wales |
| First Call Travel | Thomas of Rhondda |
| First Cymru Buses | Transport for Wales |
| Globe Coaches | Traveline Cymru |
| Great Western Railway | TraVol Community Transport |
| Harris Coaches | Veolia Transport (including Bebb Travel & Pullman Coaches) |
| Keolis Amey | Village & Valleys Community Transport |
| N.A.T Group (South Wales) | |

| Local Community, Conservation Groups and Civic Societies | |
|---|---|
| Action for Hirwaun | Pontypridd Historical Society |
| Cynon Valley History Society | Pontypridd YMCA |
| Cynon Valley Ramblers | Rhondda Civic Society |
| Glamorgan Family History Society | Taff Ely Ramblers |
| Glamorgan Fungus Group | Valleys Steps |
| Hirwaun Historical Society | |
| Hirwaun YMCA | |
| Llantrisant and District Local History Society | |
| Mountain Ash YMCA | |
| Pontypridd and District Art Society | |

| Electricity, Gas and Telecommunications | |
|---|---|
| Arbed Am Byth | Ofgem |
| British Gas (Transco) (Wales) | SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy) |
| Celtic Energy | Western Power Distribution |
| Mobile UK | |

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| Education | |
|---|---|
| Cardiff University | University of Glamorgan |
| Coleg Morgannwg | University of South Wales |
| Coleg Y Cymoedd | WEA Cymru (Adult Learning Wales) |

| Housing Associations | |
|---|---|
| Cynon Taf Housing Association | Rhondda Housing Association |
| Hafod Housing Association | Trivallis Housing Association |
| Linc Cymru | Wales & West Housing Association |
| Newydd Housing Association | Welsh Federation of Housing Associations |
| Pobl Group/ Seren Housing | |

| Elderly Persons Organisations | |
|---|---|
| Age Alliance Wales | Care & Repair Cymru |
| Age Connects Wales | Older People's Commissioner for Wales |
| Age Cymru | |

| Ex-Offender Groups | |
|---|---|
| Apex charitable trust | Trailblazers |
| Nacro | Unlock |
| Probation service | Women in Prison |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Offending team | Working Chance |
| SOVA | Working Links |
| St Giles Trust | YMCA |
| Step Together | |

| Gypsy and Traveller Groups | |
|---|---|
| Cardiff Gypsy sites group | The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Group |
| Friends Families and Travellers | Travelling Ahead |
| Gypsies and Travellers Wales | Welsh Government Gypsy and Traveller Policy Officer |
| Gypsy Council | |

| Homelessness Organisations | |
|---|---|
| Crisis | Salvation Army |
| Cymorth Cymru | Shelter |
| Emmaus South Wales | Solar Cymru |
| Huggard | The Wallich |
| Llamau | YMCA |

| House Builders | |
|---|---|
| ASD Build | Jehu |
| Atlantic Dwellings | Kier Living |
| Barratt Homes | Leaders Romans Group |
| Bellway Homes (Wales) Ltd | Lewis Homes |
| Bovis Homes | Llanmoor Homes |
| Charles Church (Wales) | Lovells |
| Davies Brothers (Wales) Limited | Morganstone |
| Davies Homes | Persimmon Homes |
| Delta Property | Redrow Homes |
| Edenstone Homes | Swallow Hill Homes |
| Enzo's Homes | Taylor Wimpey |
| Federation of Master Builders | Tirion Homes |
| Harris Land and Development | WDL Homes |
| Home Builders Federation | |

| Planning Consultants and Land Agents | |
|---|---|
| Alan Stuckey Architects | Lichfields |
| Alder King | LRM Planning Ltd |
| Amity Planning | Mango Planning |
| Asbri Planning | Prospero Planning |
| Barton Wilmore | RPS |
| Boyer Planning | Savills |
| Boyer Planning | Stephen George architects |
| Capita | Stephen Waldron Architect |
| DPP Planning | The Urbanists |
| G Powys Jones | Turley |
| Geraint John Planning Ltd | WPM Planning and Development |
| Jenkins Best | WYG |
| Knight Frank | |

| Political | |
|---|---|
| Assembly Member for Cynon | Member of Parliament for Pontypridd |
| Assembly Member for Ogmore | Member of Parliament for Rhondda |
| Assembly Member for Pontypridd | Members of the European Parliament |
| Assembly Member for Rhondda | Plaid Cymru |
| Assembly Member for South Wales Central | The Welsh Conservatives |
| Assembly Member for South West Wales | The Welsh Liberal Democrats |
| Future Generations Commissioner for Wales | UKIP Wales |
| Member of Parliament for Cynon | Wales Green Party |
| Member of Parliament for Ogmore | Welsh Labour Party |

| Other Bodies | |
|---|---|
| Action on Hearing Loss | New Horizons Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Resource Centre |
| Active Travel Cymru | NFU Cymru |
| Active Wales | NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership |
| Addoldai Cymru (Welsh Religious Buildings Trust) | Planning Aid Wales |
| Arts Council for Wales | Planning Inspectorate, Wales |
| British Aggregates Association | Public Health Network Cymru |
| British Astronomical Association (Campaign for Dark Skies) | Ramblers Cymru |
| British Red Cross | Renewable Energy Association |
| British Trust for Ornithology | Road Haulage Association |
| British Waterways | Road Safety Wales |
| Chartered Institute of Housing (Cymru) | Royal Mail Property Holding |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | Royal Society of Architects in Wales |
| Community Land Advisory Service Cymru (CLAS) | Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings |
| Confederation of Passenger Transport | South East Wales Energy Agency |
| Confederation of UK Coal Producers | Sports Council for Wales |
| Consumer Council for Wales | Sustrans Cymru |
| Crown Estates Commissioners | TARMAC Ltd |
| Cwm Taf Public Services Board | The Civic Trust for Wales |
| DB Cargo UK (formerly EWS) | The Royal Mint |
| Energy Savings Trust Wales | Welsh Association of Motor Clubs |
| Football Association of Wales | Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) |
| Hanson Aggregates | Welsh Rugby Union |
| Living Streets (UK) | Young Builders Trust, Building Futures (UK) Ltd |
| National Federation for the Blind | |

| Children and Young People | |
|---|---|
| Action for Children | Save the Children Wales |
| Barnardos Cymru | Scouts Cymru |
| Children in Wales | The Arc Youth and Community Project |
| Girl Guiding Cymru | The National Library of Wales |
| Ethnic Youth Support Team | The Prince's Trust in Wales |
| Llwynypia Boys and Girls Club | Ty Hafan |
| National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Cymru | UpRising |
| Noah's Ark Charity Wales | Voices for Care Cymru |
| NSPCC Wales | Young Wales |
| Penygraig Boys and Girls Club | Youth Cymru |
| Play Wales | Youth Hostel Association England and Wales |
| Prince's Trust | |

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| Leisure and Tourism | |
|---|---|
| Ibis | Travel Lodge |
| Premier Inn | Visit Wales |
| Sport Wales Chwaraeon Cymru | Wales Activity Tourism Organisation |
| Tourism Wales | Wales Tourism Alliance |

| Commercial | |
|---|---|
| Aberdare Chamber of Trade | Institute of Directors, Wales |
| Business in Focus | Pontypridd BID |
| Business Wales (South Wales Regional Centre) | Retail consortium |
| Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| Chamber of Commerce | Town Centre Forums |
| Federation of Small Businesses, Wales | Treforest Growth |

## Appendix 3 – Risk Management

There are a few main likely outcomes of failing to proceed with LDP preparation as indicated:

The Assembly Government has reserve powers in relation to plan preparation and adoption, which it can use when local planning authorities are clearly failing to progress plan preparation.

Promoters of major development proposals may seek to pursue planning permission for their sites, in advance of consideration through the LDP and to the detriment of the proper long term planning of the Borough.

Some of the main risks to the LDP not proceeding in accordance with the proposed timetable are included in the table below

| Risk | Potential Risk | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| The publication of revised planning guidance by the Assembly Government | Changes needed to the content of the LDP | Ensure that the WG legislative programme is followed through the plan preparation and that the LDP is in general conformity with WG policy.<br><br>Liaise with WG colleagues throughout the LDP preparation process. |
| A reduction in the resources and budget available for the project | Timetable slippage | Ensure there is corporate support for the delivery of the LDP.<br><br>Consider additional resources available from the wider division |
| Any inability of Service Areas to provide necessary input as required; | Timetable slippage | Liaise with colleagues throughout the plan process to keep them informed of when their input will be required to allow them to forward plan |
| Unavailability of meetings and/or agenda time of Cabinet, Development Control Committees and Council, at the necessary times, to consider reports and approve necessary documents, or inability to agree plan proposals; | Timetable slippage | Liaise with Cabinet/Council office to consider timescales and take account of this is the timetable.<br><br>Ensure that the LDP is a Corporate priority. |

| Risk | Potential Risk | Mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Inability of translators or printers to deliver documents, plans and publicity material in accordance with the approved programme; | Timetable slippage | Liaise with colleagues in translation early to ensure they can take account of the translation needs of the LDP in there forward planning.<br><br>Consider additional resources and buy in where necessary |
| The volume or significance of responses to consultations being so great as to require a longer period than projected to respond to their implications | Extra time needed to process and respond to representations.<br><br>Timetable slippage | Early engagement and consultation with consultees to endeavour to build consensus.<br><br>Consider bringing additional resources |
| Political Change/ elections | Time table slippage or abortive work | Ensure that the Revised LDP is a Corporate priority |
| The ability of statutory consultees to respond within a set timeframe given their resource constraints. | Timetable slippage | Early engagement with the consultees to allow them to forward plan the periods when their input is required. |
| Legal challenge | Adopted LDP may be subject to challenge in the courts and quashed | Ensure that all the Regulations and legislation are adhered to. |
| Further lockdown due to COVID-19 | Unable to progress with LDP preparation | Limited mitigation. Staff are able to work from home in a reduced capacity, and online consultation would still be possible. This is still a considerable risk to fully accord with the timetable. |
| Unable to fulfil the CIS due to COVID-19 restrictions | Non- compliance with the CIS | Keep the DA under regular review and endeavour to adapt as necessary to ensure effective consultation |

## Appendix 4 – Profile and Characteristics of the Local Population

Population

| Population | |
|---|---|
| Total | 234,410 |
| Females | 119,775 |
| Males | 114,635 |

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| Age Structure | % |
|---|---|
| Aged 0-4 | 6.16 |
| Aged 5-7 | 3.47 |
| Aged 8-9 | 2.13 |
| Aged 10-14 | 5.92 |
| Aged 15 | 1.20 |
| Aged 16-17 | 2.49 |
| Aged 18-19 | 2.65 |
| Aged 20-24 | 6.90 |
| Aged 25-29 | 6.32 |
| Aged 30-44 | 19.46 |
| Aged 45-59 | 19.57 |
| Aged 60-64 | 6.59 |
| Aged 65-74 | 9.38 |
| Aged 75-84 | 5.55 |
| Aged 85-89 | 1.44 |
| Aged 90+ | 0.72 |

Cultural

| Ethnicity | % |
|---|---|
| White (British) | 96.29 |
| White (Irish) | 0.248 |
| White Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0.022 |
| Other White | 0.806 |
| Mixed (White and Black Caribbean) | 0.234 |
| Mixed (White and Black African) | 0.081 |
| Mixed (White and Asian) | 0.179 |
| Other Mixed | 0.146 |
| Asian/British Asian (Indian) | 0.279 |
| Asian/British Asian (Pakistani) | 0.113 |
| Asian/British Asian (Bangladeshi) | 0.045 |
| Asian/British Asian (Chinese) | 0.454 |
| Asian/British Asian (Other Asian) | 0.399 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (African) | 0.486 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (Caribbean) | 0.042 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (Other Black) | 0.029 |
| Other Ethnic Group (Arab) | 0.068 |
| Any Other Ethnic Group | 0.070 |

| Religion | % |
|---|---|
| Christian | 50.50 |
| Muslim | 0.45 |
| Buddhist | 0.22 |
| Hindu | 0.17 |
| Pagan | 0.09 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Sikh | 0.078 |
| Jewish | 0.037 |
| Other Religion | 0.27 |
| No Religion | 40.76 |
| No Religion Stated | 7.40 |

| Welsh Language Knowledge of Welsh (Aged 3+) | % |
|---|---|
| No skills in Welsh | 80.4 |
| Can speak Welsh | 12.3 |
| Can understand spoken Welsh only | 4.2 |
| Other combinations of Welsh skills | 3.3 |
| **Can Speak Welsh (of the 12.3% who can speak Welsh)** | **%** |
| Can speak Welsh but cannot read or write | 1.64 |
| Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh | 0.90 |
| Can speak, read and write Welsh | 9.71 |

Health

| Health Classification | % |
|---|---|
| Day-to-day activities limited a lot | 14.46 |
| Day-to-day activities limited a little | 11.38 |
| Day-to-day activities not limited | 74.15 |
| Day-to-day activities limited a lot (Age 16-64) | 6.86 |
| Day-to-day activities limited a little (Age 16-64) | 6.21 |
| Day-to-day activities not limited (Age 16-64) | 50.93 |

| General Health | % |
|---|---|
| Very good health | 44.85 |
| Good health | 29.66 |
| Fair Health | 15.87 |
| Bad Health | 7.42 |
| Very bad health | 2.17 |

| Provision of Unpaid Care | % |
|---|---|
| Provides no unpaid care | 87.35 |
| Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week | 6.68 |
| Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week | 1.95 |
| Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week | 4.00 |

Employment and the Economy

| Economic Activity (All Persons) | % |
|---|---|
| Economically active: Employee – Part-time | 13.40 |
| Economically active: Employee – Full-time | 35.58 |
| Economically active: Self-employed | 6.41 |

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| Economically active: Unemployed | 4.71 |
| Economically active: Full-time student | 3.08 |
| Economically inactive: Retired | 16.03 |
| Economically inactive: Student (including full-time students) | 5.76 |
| Economically inactive: Looking after home or family | 4.07 |
| Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled | 8.63 |
| Economically inactive: Other | 2.29 |
| Unemployed: Age 16-24 | 1.64 |
| Unemployed: Age 50-74 | 0.68 |
| Unemployed: Never worked | 0.85 |
| Long-term Unemployment | 1.93 |

| Economic Activity (Females) | % |
|---|---|
| Economically active: Employee – Part-time | 21.26 |
| Economically active: Employee – Full-time | 27.78 |
| Economically active: Self-employed | 2.95 |
| Economically active: Unemployed | 3.36 |
| Economically active: Full-time student | 3.34 |
| Economically inactive: Retired | 17.78 |
| Economically inactive: Student (including full-time students) | 5.45 |
| Economically inactive: Looking after home or family | 6.98 |
| Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled | 8.34 |
| Economically inactive: Other | 2.71 |
| Unemployed: Age 16-24 | 1.11 |
| Unemployed: Age 50-74 | 0.38 |
| Unemployed: Never worked | 0.66 |
| Long-term Unemployment | 1.51 |

| Economic Activity (Males) | % |
|---|---|
| Economically active: Employee – Part-time | 5.36 |
| Economically active: Employee – Full-time | 43.56 |
| Economically active: Self-employed | 9.95 |
| Economically active: Unemployed | 6.08 |
| Economically active: Full-time student | 2.81 |
| Economically inactive: Retired | 14.24 |
| Economically inactive: Student (including full-time students) | 6.07 |
| Economically inactive: Looking after home or family | 1.08 |
| Economically inactive: Long-term sick or disabled | 8.93 |
| Economically inactive: Other | 1.86 |
| Unemployed: Age 16-24 | 2.17 |
| Unemployed: Age 50-74 | 0.99 |
| Unemployed: Never worked | 1.03 |
| Long-term Unemployment | 2.37 |

| Economic Activity – Hours Worked | % |
|---|---|
| Part-time: 15 hours or less worked | 8.25 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Part-time: 16-30 hours worked | 20.87 |
| Full-time: 31-48 hours worked | 61.46 |
| Full-time: 49 or more hours worked | 9.41 |
| | |
| Males: Total | 52.11 |
| Males: Part-time: 15 hours or less worked | 2.53 |
| Males: Part-time: 16-30 hours worked | 4.76 |
| Males: Full-time: 31-48 hours worked | 37.20 |
| Males: Full-time: 49 or more hours worked | 7.60 |
| | |
| Females: Total | 47.89 |
| Females: Part-time: 15 hours or less worked | 5.71 |
| Females: Part-time: 16-30 hours worked | 16.11 |
| Females: Full-time: 31-48 hours worked | 24.25 |
| Females: Full-time: 49 or more hours worked | 1.81 |

| Economic Activity – Year Last Worked | % |
|---|---|
| In employment | 57.73 |
| Not in employment: Total | 42.27 |
| Last worked in 2011 | 1.05 |
| Last worked in 2010 | 4.20 |
| Last worked in 2009 | 2.78 |
| Last worked in 2008 | 2.14 |
| Last worked in 2007 | 1.61 |
| Last worked in 2006 | 1.49 |
| Last worked in 2001-2005 | 5.88 |
| Last worked before 2011 | 14.15 |
| Never worked | 8.96 |

| Employment by Industry | % |
|---|---|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 0.22 |
| Mining and Quarrying | 0.33 |
| Manufacturing | 12.56 |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 0.86 |
| Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 1.10 |
| Construction | 10.38 |
| Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles | 15.01 |
| Transport and storage | 3.90 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 5.00 |
| Information and communication | 1.76 |
| Financial and insurance activities | 2.97 |
| Real estate activities | 1.12 |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 3.33 |
| Administrative and support service activities | 4.08 |
| Public administration and defence, compulsory social security | 7.66 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Education | 10.10 |
| Human health and social work activities | 15.36 |
| Other | 4.19 |

| Occupational Groups | % |
|---|---|
| Managers, Directors and Senior Officials | 10.4 |
| Professional Occupations | 16.2 |
| Associate Professional and Technical Occupations | 11.3 |
| Administrative and Secretarial Occupations | 9.0 |
| Skilled Trades Occupations | 13.1 |
| Personal Service Occupations | 10.7 |
| Sales and Customer Service Occupations | 8.0 |
| Process Plant and Machine Operatives | 9.2 |
| Elementary Occupations | 11.4 |

Education

| Education – Qualifications<br>Highest Qualification Attained | % |
|---|---|
| No qualifications | 31.77 |
| Level 1 qualifications (1-4 GCSEs or equivalent) | 14.05 |
| Level 2 qualifications (5+ GCSEs or equivalent) | 15.65 |
| Apprenticeship | 3.53 |
| Level 3 qualifications (2+A-levels or equivalent) | 11.42 |
| Level 4 qualifications and above (Degree level or above) | 19.55 |
| Other qualifications (Vocational/work-related/foreign) | 4.02 |

Householder

| Household Space and Accommodation Type | % |
|---|---|
| Unshared dwelling | 99.981 |
| Shared dwelling: Two household spaces | 0.0085 |
| Shared dwelling: Three or more household spaces | 0.0104 |
| | |
| Household spaces with at least one usual residents | 94.637 |
| Household spaces with no usual residents | 5.3623 |
| | |
| Whole house or bungalow: Detached | 14.501 |
| Whole house or bungalow: Semi-detached | 26.546 |
| Whole house or bungalow: Terraced (including end-terrace) | 50.398 |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: Purpose-built block of flats | 6.625 |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: Part of converted/shared home | 0.985 |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment: In commercial building | 0.805 |
| Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure | 0.137 |

| Tenure | % |
|---|---|
| Owned: Owned outright | 36.46 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Owned: Owned with a mortgage or loan | 34.54 |
| Shared ownership (part owned and part rented) | 0.15 |
| Social rented: Rented from Council (Local Authority) | 6.86 |
| Social rented: Other | 6.86 |
| Private rented: Private landlord or letting agency | 12.38 |
| Private rented: Other | 1.27 |
| Living rent free | 1.48 |

| Household Composition | % |
|---|---|
| One person household: Aged 65 and over | 13.22 |
| One person household: Other | 16.76 |
| One family only: All aged 65 and over | 7.92 |
| One family only: Married or same-sex civil partnership couple: No children | 12.35 |
| One family only: Married or same-sex civil partnership couple: Dependent children | 13.77 |
| One family only: Married or same-sex civil partnership couple: All children non-dependent | 7.27 |
| One family only: Cohabiting couple: No children | 4.10 |
| One family only: Cohabiting couple: Dependent children | 5.19 |
| One family only: Cohabiting couple: All children non-dependent | 0.62 |
| One family only: Lone parent: Dependent children | 8.97 |
| One family only: Lone parent: All children non-dependent | 4.12 |
| Other household types: With dependent children | 2.12 |
| Other household types: All full-time students | 0.74 |
| Other household types: All aged 65 and over | 0.32 |
| Other household types: Other | 2.53 |

| Household Size | % |
|---|---|
| 1 person in household | 29.98 |
| 2 people in household | 33.78 |
| 3 people in household | 17.26 |
| 4 people in household | 13.41 |
| 5 people in household | 4.12 |
| 6 people in household | 1.16 |
| 7 people in household | 0.19 |
| 8 or more people in household | 0.09 |

| Number of Bedrooms | % |
|---|---|
| No bedrooms | 0.18 |
| 1 bedroom | 5.25 |
| 2 bedrooms | 22.57 |
| 3 bedrooms | 56.38 |
| 4 bedrooms | 13.23 |
| 5 or more bedrooms | 2.39 |

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| Household by Deprivation Dimensions | % |
|---|---|
| Household is not deprived in any dimension | 37.71 |
| Household is deprived in 1 dimension | 30.00 |
| Household is deprived in 2 dimensions | 25.84 |
| Household is deprived in 3 dimensions | 8.91 |
| Household is deprived in 4 dimensions | 0.54 |

*Note – A household is deprived in a dimension if they meet one or more of the following conditions:

- Employment: where any member of a household, who is not a full-time student, is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- Education: no person in the household has at least level 2 education and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- Health and Disability: any person in the household has general health that is 'bad' or 'very bad' or has a long-term health problem.
- Housing: the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating 1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

| Household Language | % |
|---|---|
| All people aged 16 and over in household have English or Welsh as a main language | 98.36 |
| At least one but not all people aged 16 and over in household have English or Welsh as a main language | 0.78 |
| No people aged 16 and over in the household but at least one person aged 3 to 15 has English or Welsh as a main language | 0.10 |
| No people in household have English or Welsh as a main language | 0.76 |

| Central Heating | % |
|---|---|
| No central heating | 1.27 |
| Gas central heating | 90.66 |
| Electric (including storage heaters) central heating | 1.78 |
| Oil central heating | 0.64 |
| Solid fuel (for example wood, coal) central heating | 1.97 |
| Other central heating | 0.66 |
| Two or more types of central heating | 3.02 |

Transport

| Car or Van Availability | % |
|---|---|
| No cars or vans in household | 27.07 |
| 1 car or van in household | 42.60 |
| 2 cars or vans in household | 23.40 |
| 3 cars or vans in household | 5.33 |

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| 4 or more cars or vans in household | 1.60 |

| Travel to Work | % |
|---|---|
| Work mainly at or from home | 1.61 |
| Train | 2.43 |
| Bus, minibus or coach | 2.32 |
| Taxi | 0.17 |
| Motorcycle, scooter or moped | 0.26 |
| Driving a car or van | 40.70 |
| Passenger in a car or van | 4.74 |
| Bicycle | 0.26 |
| On foot | 4.93 |
| Other method of travel to work | 0.27 |
| Not in employment | 42.27 |

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## Appendix 5 - WELSH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 444 | | | Aberaman North 1 |
| 243 | | Aberaman North | Aberaman North 2 |
| 841 | | | Aberaman North 3 |
| 413 | | | Aberaman South 1 |
| 288 | | Aberaman South | Aberaman South 2 |
| 245 | | | Aberaman South 3 |
| 992 | | | Abercynon 1 |
| 33 | | | Abercynon 2 |
| 506 | | Abercynon | Abercynon 3 |
| 1069 | | | Abercynon 4 |
| 923 | | | Aberdare East 1 |
| 586 | | | Aberdare East 2 |
| 736 | | Aberdare East | Aberdare East 3 |
| 273 | | | Aberdare East 4 |
| 1366 | | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 1 |
| 1166 | | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 2 |
| 432 | | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 3 |
| 451 | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 4 |
| 576 | | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 5 |
| 1886 | | | Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 6 |
| 1460 | | | Beddau 1 |
| 658 | | Beddau | Beddau 2 |
| 1753 | | | Beddau 3 |
| 1602 | | Brynna | Brynna 1 |
| 1371 | | | Brynna 2 |
| 501 | | | Church Village 1 |
| 1872 | | Church Village | Church Village 2 |

| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1907 | | Church Village | Church Village 3 |
| 813 | | Cilfynydd | Cilfynydd 1 |
| 737 | | | Cilfynydd 2 |
| 191 | | Cwm Clydach | Cwm Clydach 1 |
| 551 | | | Cwm Clydach 2 |
| 695 | | | Cwmbach 1 |
| 220 | | Cwmbach | Cwmbach 2 |
| 1537 | | | Cwmbach 3 |
| 742 | | | Cymmer 1 |
| 853 | | | Cymmer 2 |
| 96 | | Cymmer | Cymmer 3 |
| 83 | | | Cymmer 4 |
| 680 | | | Ferndale 1 |
| 652 | | Ferndale | Ferndale 2 |
| 471 | | | Ferndale 3 |
| 823 | | Gilfach Goch | Gilfach Goch 1 |
| 175 | | | Gilfach Goch 2 |
| 51 | | Glyncoch | Glyncoch 1 |
| 463 | | | Glyncoch 2 |
| 642 | | Graig | Graig 1 |
| 268 | | | Graig 2 |
| 1130 | | Hawthorn | Hawthorn 1 |
| 390 | | | Hawthorn 2 |
| 996 | | | Hirwaun 1 |
| 691 | | Hirwaun | Hirwaun 2 |
| 176 | | | Hirwaun 3 |
| 657 | | Llanharan | Llanharan 1 |
| 1609 | | | Llanharan 2 |
| 1649 | | Llanharry | Llanharry 1 |
| 257 | | | Llanharry 2 |

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| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1744 | | Llantrisant Town | Llantrisant Town 1 |
| 1812 | | | Llantrisant Town 2 |
| 1139 | | | Llantrisant Town 3 |
| 1736 | | Llantwit Fardre | Llantwit Fardre 1 |
| 1879 | | | Llantwit Fardre 2 |
| 1712 | | | Llantwit Fardre 3 |
| 1670 | | | Llantwit Fardre 4 |
| 534 | | Llwn-y-pia | Llwyn-y-pia 1 |
| 159 | | | Llwyn-y-pia 2 |
| 120 | | Maerdy | Maerdy 1 |
| 52 | | | Maerdy 2 |
| 1015 | | Mountain Ash East | Mountain Ash East 1 |
| 468 | | | Mountain Ash East 2 |
| 474 | | Mountain Ash West | Mountain Ash West 1 |
| 136 | | | Mountain Ash West 2 |
| 359 | | | Mountain Ash West 3 |
| 6 | | Penrhiwceiber | Penrhiwceiber 1 |
| 275 | | | Penrhiwceiber 2 |
| 429 | | | Penrhiwceiber 3 |
| 356 | | | Penrhiwceiber 4 |
| 579 | | Pentre | Pentre 1 |
| 1451 | | | Pentre 2 |
| 141 | | | Pentre 3 |
| 493 | | | Pentre 4 |
| 262 | | Pen-y-graig | Pen-y-graig 1 |
| 698 | | | Pen-y-graig 2 |
| 110 | | | Pen-y-graig 3 |
| 730 | | | Pen-y-graig 4 |

| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 101 | | Pen-y-waun | Pen-y-waun 1 |
| 15 | | | Pen-y-waun 2 |
| 1755 | | Pont-y-clun | Pont-y-clun 1 |
| 1904 | | | Pont-y-clun 2 |
| 1884 | | | Pont-y-clun 3 |
| 1171 | | | Pont-y-clun 4 |
| 1485 | | Pontypridd Town | Pontypridd Town 1 |
| 994 | | | Pontypridd Town 2 |
| 752 | | Porth | Porth 1 |
| 1280 | | | Porth 2 |
| 415 | | | Porth 3 |
| 539 | | | Porth 4 |
| 707 | | Rhigos | Rhigos |
| 709 | | Rhondda | Rhondda 1 |
| 480 | | | Rhondda 2 |
| 1297 | | | Rhondda 3 |
| 209 | | Rhydfelen Central/llan | Rhydfelen Central/llan 1 |
| 26 | | | Rhydfelen Central/llan 2 |
| 145 | | | Rhydfelen Central/llan 3 |
| 1308 | | Taffs Well | Taffs Well 1 |
| 1129 | | | Taffs Well 2 |
| 1497 | | Talbot Green | Talbot Green 1 |
| 438 | | | Talbot Green 2 |
| 1518 | | Ton-teg | Ton-teg 1 |
| 1651 | | | Ton-teg 2 |
| 1193 | | | Ton-teg 3 |
| 481 | | Tonypandy | Tonypandy 1 |
| 611 | | | Tonypandy 2 |

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| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 637 | | | Tonyrefail East 1 |
| 805 | | | Tonyrefail East 2 |
| 87 | | Tonyrefail East | Tonyrefail East 3 |
| 1641 | | | Tonyrefail East 4 |
| 577 | | | Tonyrefail West 1 |
| 1723 | | | Tonyrefail West 2 |
| 185 | | Tonyrefail West | Tonyrefail West 3 |
| 920 | | | Tonyrefail West 4 |
| 682 | | | Trallwng 1 |
| 1423 | | Trallwng | Trallwng 2 |
| 541 | | | Trallwng 3 |
| 554 | | | Trealaw 1 |
| 100 | | Trealaw | Trealaw 2 |
| 306 | | | Trealaw 3 |
| 604 | | | Treforest 1 |
| 839 | | Treforest | Treforest 2 |
| 937 | | | Treforest 3 |
| 487 | | | Treherbert 1 |
| 114 | | | Treherbert 2 |
| 248 | | Treherbert | Treherbert 3 |
| 286 | | | Treherbert 4 |
| 869 | | | Treorchy 1 |
| 745 | | | Treorchy 2 |
| 410 | | Treorchy | Treorchy 3 |
| 560 | | | Treorchy 4 |
| 860 | | | Treorchy 5 |
| 4 | | | Tylorstown 1 |
| 198 | | Tylorstown | Tylorstown 2 |
| 107 | | | Tylorstown 3 |

| WIMD Rank | | Electoral Division | SOA Lower Layer Name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1625 | | | Tyn-y-nant 1 |
| 668 | | Tyn-y-nant | Tyn-y-nant 2 |
| 149 | | | Tyn-y-nant 3 |
| 121 | | Ynyshir | Ynyshir 1 |
| 791 | | | Ynyshir 2 |
| 344 | | | Ynysybwl 1 |
| 705 | | Ynysybwl | Ynysybwl 2 |
| 1620 | | | Ynysybwl 3 |
| 639 | | | Ystrad 1 |
| 598 | | Ystrad | Ystrad 2 |
| 403 | | | Ystrad 3 |
| 131 | | | Ystrad 4 |

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**Appendix 6 - Glossary of Terms**

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Adopted Plan** | The final version of the Local Development Plan (LDP). |
| **Adoption** | The final stage of LDP plan-preparation, where the LDP becomes the statutory development plan for the area it covers. |
| **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** | The AMR is a yearly report that monitors and assesses the extent to which the strategy and associated policies within the LDP are being implemented. The document is used to determine whether any revisions to the LDP are necessary. |
| **Baseline** | A description of the present state of an area that can be compared with future data. |
| **Candidate Site** | A site put forward for consideration within the LDP. All candidate sites will be assessed against specific criteria to determine their suitability for inclusion within the Plan, as a potential allocation. |
| **Community** | People living in a defined geographical area, or who share other interests and therefore form communities of interest. |
| **Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)** | Sets out the project plan and policies of the LPA for involving local communities, including businesses, in the preparation of the LDPs. The CIS is submitted to the Welsh Government for approval, as part of the Delivery Agreement. |
| **Consensus Building** | A process of dialogue with communities and other interested parties to understand relevant viewpoints and to seek agreement, where possible. |
| **Consultation** | A formal process in which comments are invited on a particular topic or draft document, usually within a specific period. |
| **Council** | The 'Council' in this instance is taken to mean Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. |
| **Delivery Agreement (DA)** | A document comprising the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) timetable for the preparation of the LDP, together with its Community Involvement Scheme (CIS), submitted to the Welsh Government for agreement. |
| **Deposit** | A formal six week stage in the plan making process, whereby individuals/organisations can make representations on the LDP. Representations pertaining to the 'soundness' of the plan can be examined by the independent Inspector. |
| **Deposit Plan** | This is a full draft of the LDP that undergoes a formal consultation period prior to it being submitted to the Welsh Government for public examination. |
| **Development Control Policies** | A suite of criteria-based policies, which will ensure that all development within the area meets the aims and objectives set out in the strategy. |

| Term | Definition |
|------|------------|
| **Duly Made** | Representations to the LDP, which are made in the correct manner and within the specified consultation period, will be considered 'duly made'. |
| **Engagement** | A proactive process, that seeks to encourage the involvement and participation of the community and other interested parties in the decision making process. |
| **Evidence Base** | Reports, data and other information that provides the basis for plan preparation and the LDPs vision, objectives, policies and proposals, justifying the soundness of the policy approach of the LDP. |
| **Examination** | The examination in public of the Deposit LDP, Deposit representations, the report of consultation, the SA/SEA and the evidence base documents by the independent Inspector, appointed by the Welsh Government. |
| **Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)** | Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) relates to the assessment of the impacts of a plan (or project) against the nature conservation objectives of European designated sites for any likely significant effects. HRA also ascertains whether the proposed plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site. |
| **Indicator** | A measure of variables over time, often used to measure progress in the achievement of objectives, targets and policies. |
| **Inspector's Report** | The Report compiled by the Inspector at the conclusion of the LDP examination. The Inspector's Report, which is binding on the Council, contains recommendations on the content of the final LDP. The Council must adopt the LDP in the manner directed by the Inspector. |
| **Involvement** | A generic term that relates to community involvement, which includes both participation and consultation techniques. |
| **Local Development Plan (LDP)** | The LDP is a land-use planning document that includes the vision, objectives, strategy, proposals, policies and allocations for key areas of change/protection. Allocations, along with a number of other proposals are represented geographically on the LDP proposals map. The LDP is a statutory development plan that all LPAs in Wales are required to produce. |
| **Local Planning Authority (LPA)** | The LPA is the planning authority responsible for the preparation of the LDP, i.e. County or County Borough Council or National Park Authority. In this case, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. |
| **Local Strategic Partnership** | A partnership of stakeholders that comprises service providers, private, community and voluntary sector companies/organisations, that work in partnership to identify and meet local needs in a holistic way, typically through producing and employing community strategies. |
| **Objective** | A statement of what is intended, specifying the desired direction of change in trends. |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Participation** | A process whereby stakeholders and the community can engage directly with the plan-making process, to guide decision-making. |
| **Planning Inspectorate (PINS) (Wales)** | The Wales branch of the Planning Inspectorate is the independent body that will be responsible for the formal examination of the LDP. |
| **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)** | The document sets out the national planning policies for Wales, as produced by the Welsh Government. |
| **Pre-Deposit** | Stages of the preparation and consultation of the LDP before the Deposit Plan is finalised and approved by the Council. |
| **Preferred Strategy** | The preferred strategy sets out the broad, strategic direction for the LDP, inclusive of the preferred level of growth and the distribution for said growth, via the spatial strategy.  It also includes the vision and objectives of the LDP. |
| **Press Release** | Sent to the Welsh media, including newspapers, radio and television news stations, as appropriate.  Note:  Media may choose not to print or broadcast an item. |
| **Regulation** | The regulations that provide the framework for LDP plan preparation are set out in Welsh Statutory Instruments. |
| **Report of Consultation** | A consultation report is one of the documents that are required as part of the independent examination.  An 'initial consultation report' is also required at pre-deposit stage. |
| **Representations** | Comments received in relation to the LDP, either in support of, or in opposition to elements of its content. |
| **Review Report** | A document that provides an overview of those issues that have been considered as part of the full review process.  It identifies changes that are likely to be required to the LDP, based on evidence.  It further expresses the type of revision procedure to be followed in revising the LDP. |
| **Scoping** | A process of deciding the scope and level of detail of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), including the sustainability effects and options that need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used and the structure and contents of the SA report. |
| **Soundness Tests** | For an LDP to be adopted, it must be determined to be 'sound' by the independent Inspector.   The tests of soundness are set forth in PPW.   The three tests are consistency, coherence and effectiveness. |
| **Stakeholders** | Individuals whose interests are directly affected by the LDP (and/or SA/SEA) and whose involvement is generally through representative bodies. |
| **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** | Generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment, as applied to policies, plans and programmes.  The SEA Regulations require a formal *environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.* |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Strategic Development Plan (SDP)** | A Strategic Development Plan is a new plan in the development plan hierarchy in Wales, as introduced by the Planning (Wales) Act, 2015. It is a tool for regional planning, covering cross-boundary issues, such as housing and transport. |
| **Submission** | When the LDP, Sustainability Appraisal Report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment are formally submitted to the Welsh Government for examination by the independent Inspector, appointed by the Welsh Government. |
| **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** | Provides more detailed and/or site specific guidance on the application of LDP policies by supplementing certain policies. SPG does not form part of the development plan and is not subject to independent examination. |
| **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** | Tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. economic, environmental and social factors). Each LPA is required by S62 (6) of the 2004 Act to undertake sustainability appraisal of its LDP. This form of sustainability appraisal fully incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations. |
| **Sustainability Appraisal Report** | A document required to be produced as part of the sustainability appraisal process to describe and appraise the likely significant effects on sustainability of implementing the LDP, which also meets the requirement for the Environmental Report under the SEA Regulations. S62 (6) of the 2004 Act requires each local planning authority to prepare a report of the findings of the sustainability appraisal of the LDP. |
| **Sustainable Development** | Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). |
| **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** | The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation that requires public bodies, such as local authorities to put long-term sustainability at the forefront of their thinking to make a difference to lives of people in Wales. Local authorities must work towards the seven well-being goals and enact the five ways of working set out in the Act. |
| **Workshop** | Where members of the public have the opportunity to engage in group debates and practical exercises with a written or drawn 'output'. |

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES –
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PREVENTION STRATEGY 2022-2025**

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

**Author:** Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services

### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with information regarding the looked after children prevention strategy. The report includes an outline of the services we aim to develop to enhance our offer to families, and the resources that are required to make that possible.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1 note the information contained within this report and give formal approval to implement the proposed investment and service developments;

2.2 is asked to note the proposal that the Council sign up to the Charter for parents who are in care and leaving care which will be considered at a subsequent Corporate Parenting Board.

### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Children's Services plan to continue the work aimed at safely supporting families to stay together. A review of the prior looked after children strategy has highlighted that further work is required, some of which can be achieved via deployment of existing resources however, additional resources are requested to support the operational delivery of new services as set out below.

## 4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Children's Services' prevention duty is established in the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. In line with our legislative duty, and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, Children's Services have developed the following vision statement:

*Our purpose is to work alongside families to prevent problems from getting worse, to provide support, to safeguard and to improve children's well-being*

4.2 Children's Services record the child's right to a family life as the central driving principle to their prevention work.

4.3 An evaluation of the prior looked after children strategy took place during 2021. The evaluation was informed by a rapid research review, secondary data evaluation, a deep dive of 70 relevant cases, and focus groups, further information about the evaluation can be found at Appendix I. Overall, the evaluation found that the first looked after children prevention strategy had delivered important changes that have enabled the service to make progress. Those important developments are evidenced in the strong decision-making process that puts accountability for looked after decisions at the most senior level in the service, in practice standards that see the management of children's cases towards permanency without delay, and in the performance results where we can demonstrate a gradual reduction in looked after number (see para 4.4 below). However, there are four areas to build upon in order to sustain this and develop services further in a way that optimises our offer to families at risk of parent – child separation.

4.4 Acknowledging that it is a difficult and sometimes unpredictable area of business for the Council, that we will always prioritise our safeguarding duty, and that we face the uncertainty of the post pandemic impact for vulnerable families, it has been promising to see steady decline in the rate at which children become looked after in RCT. This is illustrated below:

CLA Numbers Trend Data
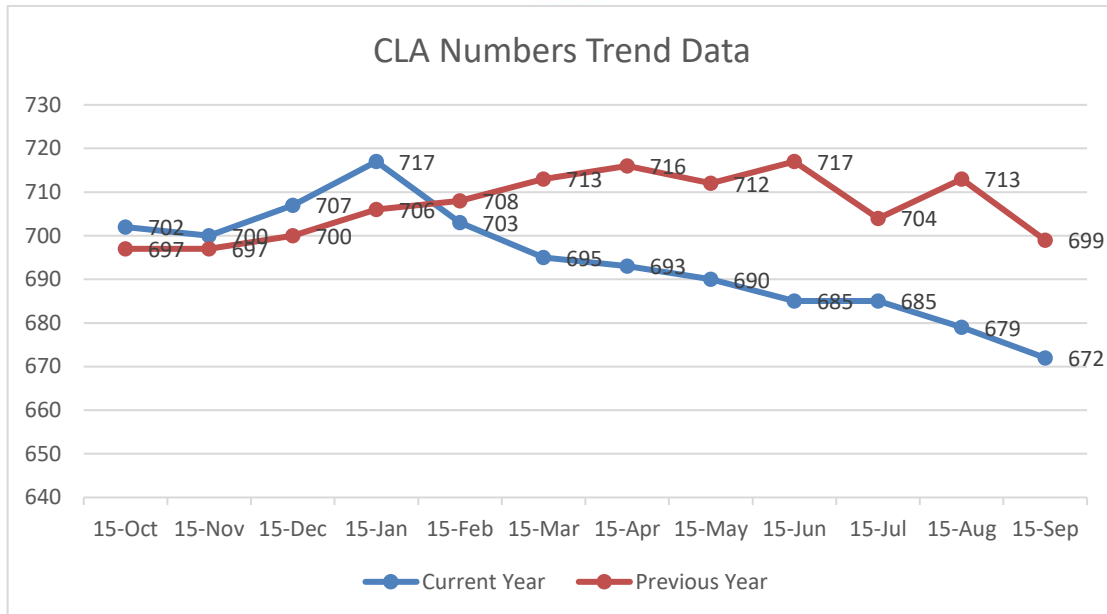
4.5 The fuller looked after prevention strategy and action plan is included at Appendix I. However, a summary of our 4 next steps is below:

| Four Improvement and development areas | Why do we want to improve this area? |
|---|---|
| **1. Model of Practice**<br><br>Development of a clear practice model for social workers and allied staff working with families referred to Children's Social Care for support, including to generate better engagement of families who are in 'pre-contemplation' (who have not yet come to the view that they need or want to change). This is a significant development and will require a step-change throughout the service. | • To ensure that staff have the guidance, support and skills to practice to a consistent and evidence based<br><br>• To be clear about the RCT model of practice<br><br>• To generate better engagement of families including those in 'pre-contemplation'<br><br>• To enable even more effective relationship-based and successful involvements with families<br><br>• To reduce the need for children to become looked after<br><br>• To attract and retain staff |
| **2. Better Pre-birth Services**<br><br>Development of a specific pathway and set of supports for families referred to Children's Social Care during a pregnancy to enable earlier intervention with parents considered to be very vulnerable before the child is born.<br><br>Linked with this, improvements to the support available to parents who have had a child removed from their care. A | • To improve the parents' resilience, reduce risk factors and reduce the need for infants to come into care<br><br>• To reduce the likelihood of parents who have had one child removed having subsequent children removed from their care<br><br>• To reduce the likelihood of care experienced parents being separated from their children |

| | |
|---|---|
| proposal has been developed called Magu- see 4.6 below. | |
| **3.Developing reunification**<br><br>Development of a more coherent and consistent approach to reunifying children home who have spent some time being looked after by the local authority. | • A more consistent approach will lead to more children being reunified successfully and reduced pressure on the looked after population |
| **4.Improve support for kinship carers and special guardians**<br><br>Strengthening of the support to be offered to children living with extended family - in kinship care and / or with a Special Guardian, including to their carers | • Reduce the likelihood of a breakdown in these placements with kinship carers and special guardians<br>• Improve outcomes for children |

### Better Pre-birth Services - Magu

4.6    In light of the investment requested in relation to improvement 2, additional information is provided. The fuller business case can be found at Appendix II. The term 'Magu' translates from Welsh as *'to bring up, rear, nurture, raise, gain'* and promotes the ongoing long-term nature of the support required to deliver better outcomes.

4.7    There is clear evidence in support of this proposal:

- High and increasing rates of children coming into care aged under one year of age, currently 34% of looked after children are under 1,
- 63% of new born children who became looked after are from families where older children had already been removed or were on the child protection register themselves,
- Identified as a gap in current service provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf in independent evaluation.

4.8    As is illustrated above, whilst Children's Services have seen the rate at which children become looked after reduce by 9%, the rate at which children under 1 become looked after has increased. This feature of the data was confirmed in the September 2021 performance report and is illustrated below. It has become a steady feature in performance reporting for more than 3 years.

| Age | Total 2019/20 | % of Admissions | Total 2020/21 | % of Admissions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 1 | 38 | 25% | 45 | 33% |
| Age 1 | 10 | 7% | 9 | 7% |
| Age 2 | 10 | 7% | 9 | 7% |
| Age 3 | 10 | 7% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 4 | 4 | 3% | 4 | 3% |
| Age 5 | 3 | 2% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 6 | 6 | 4% | 9 | 7% |
| Age 7 | 5 | 3% | 4 | 3% |
| Age 8 | 4 | 3% | 6 | 4% |
| Age 9 | 7 | 5% | 6 | 4% |
| Age 10 | 7 | 5% | 0 | 0% |
| Age 11 | 2 | 1% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 12 | 6 | 4% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 13 | 11 | 7% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 14 | 6 | 4% | 5 | 4% |
| Age 15 | 11 | 7% | 6 | 4% |
| Age 16 | 5 | 3% | 6 | 4% |
| Age 17 | 5 | 3% | 2 | 1% |
| **Total** | **150** | **100%** | **136** | **100%** |

4.9 The Magu project proposal is informed by the rapid research review aspect of the CLA evaluation, and local intelligence of 'what works'. It is aimed at addressing this area of need, and the traumatic impact for parents of repeat separation from their baby at birth. Worryingly, we have found high rates of care experienced parents in this cohort.

4.10 The development of Magu has coincided with the publication of Cascade research into the experiences of parents in care and leaving care. (The study can be found at: https://cascadewales.org/first-signatories-for-innovative-charter-announced.) The study found evidence highlighting the potential for stigma and discrimination, showing concerning levels of statutory intervention and separation, as well as variable and under-developed support services. The study concluded that urgent policy and practice attention was needed at national, local and individual levels to improve corporate parent support responses to parents in and leaving care.

4.11 The Council is asked to consider being signatories to the Charter for Parents who are in care and Leaving Care that is part of the plan for change in relation to the Cascade research that is highlighted above. The charter itself documents a promise of a fair and attuned supportive approach to parents who are in care or leaving care and will be considered at a future Corporate Parenting Board.

4.12 The establishment of Magu would provide strong assurance to care experienced parents that we can deliver against those promises. The proposed Project, if established, will deliver an integrated care pathway for pregnant women and their families across early intervention and edge of care services that focuses on building skills, resilience and reducing risk. A single agreed early intervention approach would deliver the opportunity to prevent children entering care at birth as well as provide consistency and continuity for families whose care requires step up to statutory intervention.

4.13 If the investment is supported, the performance of the service, once established will be monitored in the following ways:

| Early help: Resilience Families phases of intervention | Statutory / intensive phases of intervention |
| --- | --- |
| <ul><li>No of referrals to RFS accessing Magu intervention</li><li>No of families completing RFS Magu intervention</li><li>No of cases closed at end of Magu intervention</li><li>No of cases stepped up at end of RFS Magu intervention</li></ul> | <ul><li>No of referrals to Magu Team</li><li>No of referrals accepted</li><li>No women and families-disengaged</li><li>Outcomes: child's legal status at exit</li><li>Customer feedback for each intervention</li></ul> |

## 5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and the initial screening test has not identified any negative impacts. A fuller assessment will be carried out in the event that the funding proposal is supported. All of the services identified here are available to all families on a basis of risk and need irrespective of any protected characteristics.

5.2 The staff group will benefit from relevant training in this regard. The service and staff skill set will be attuned to reach families who most need the service and will do so in a way that over comes any socio - economic barrier. Supporting families to overcome barriers to improving well-being, accessing services and, where appropriate the workplace will be central to this work. Specifically, the service will seek to address and reverse any discrimination and stigmatisation experienced by parents who are in care and leaving care.

**6 WELSH LANGUAGE**

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been carried out and submitted for review. In the event that the proposal is supported, there will be actions associated with ensuring compliance with the Welsh Language Standards including seeking to appoint bi-lingual staff.

**7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 Staff and parents with experience of the services took part in a focus group to inform the overall evaluation of the former looked after strategy.

7.2 Care experienced young people have been involved in developing the charter that is embedded below. Charter for Parents who are in care and Leaving Care.

**8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 Financial modelling of the costs has been carried out, and the relationship between better outcomes for vulnerable children, safely reducing looked after populations and improved cost control is well established.

8.2 The proposals set out should provide a cost benefit (or cost avoidance) in alongside improving the outcomes for young people. Financial modelling in this regard however is extremely difficult and it is important that we evaluate the impact as the proposals are implemented and given time to deliver intended outcomes. Nonetheless, this gap in service provision cannot be closed within existing resources without standing down other essential services, therefore additional investment is required.

8.3 Whilst the overall cost of the Magu proposal would amount to £418k, it is proposed that the team be incrementally stepped up, alongside ongoing prioritisation and evaluation to ensure that the identified outcomes are being realised and to provide some flexibility of approach. In this way, we can fund from existing one-off resources and pending evaluation of outcomes, can then transition and mainstream into the Councils base budget on a fully informed basis. Some parts of the new service would need to be implemented in full immediately, such as the new model of practice and kinship carer/SGO support arrangements. The MAGU team can be introduced incrementally, and this approach may also be driven by constraints on available resources, particularly availability of qualified social workers.

8.4 Resources and flexibility provided by the Social Care Recovery Fund are available to supplement existing one-off resources to fund this in line with the aforementioned principles.

8.5 The additional investment is included below:

| Four Improvement and development area | Funding Source / New Cost |
|---|---|
| 1. Development of a clear practice model for social workers and allied staff working with families referred to Children's Social Care for support, including to generate better engagement of families who are in 'pre-contemplation' (who have not yet come to the view that they need or want to change). | Gr 14 Post to lead, and continuously develop<br><br>• £58,000 per annum |
| 2. Development of a specific pathway and set of supports for families referred to Children's Social Care during a pregnancy to enable earlier intervention with parents considered to be very vulnerable before the child is born. Linked with this, improvements to the support available to parents who have had a child removed from their care. A proposal has been developed called Magu | Team of 9 FTE social care professionals as per the business case in appendix x.<br><br>• £418,000 per annum |
| 3. Development of a more coherent and consistent approach to reunifying children home who have spent some time being looked after by the local authority. | To be delivered within existing resources |
| 4. Strengthening of the support to be offered to children living with extended family - in kinship care and / or with a Special Guardian, including to their carers | 1 FTE SW Gr 12; 1 FTE BS GR6; Kinship Cymru Contract<br>• Total additional ongoing resource estimated at £150,000 per annum |

8.6 Whilst the cost profile of incrementally implementing, as outlined above, will be largely led by the ongoing evaluation of outcomes and resource availability, it is estimated that approximately £300k would be required in year 1.

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**9      LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1    The proposed development will see the Council enhance its potential to deliver against its prevention duty to families. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

10.1   The implementation of the proposed changes to foster carer allowance allowances will make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan Vision of *'a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all";* as it will deliver against the specific priorities of *'People - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and 'Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'.*

10.2   It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

10.3   The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
- Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer
- Integration – Partner organisations have been invited to join the steering group and will continue to be involved. Particularly important in terms of integrating a seamless offer to vulnerable families with the Resilient Families Service, and Midwifery
- Collaboration – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal
- Involvement – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal

**11    CONCLUSIONS**

11.1   An evaluation of the previous looked after children strategy has taken place leading to   a new one with 4 key improvement areas

11.2   By implementing the Children Looked After Prevention Strategy, the Council is providing families with the strongest possible service model for reducing the risk of family breakdown and preventing avoidable entries to the looked after system.

**Other Information:-**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee**
Community and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Contact Officer: Annabel Lloyd, Children's Services Director**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

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

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES –
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PREVENTION STRATEGY 2022-2025**

**Background papers**

None

**OFFICER TO CONTACT:  Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services**

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# Rhondda Cynon Taf Looked After Children Prevention Strategy 2022-2025

## 1    Introduction

Supporting children and families to stay together safely and to thrive and providing effective supports for children who need to become looked after are two essential responsibilities and key aims of Children's Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). A review of the RCT Looked After Children Strategy (2018-2021) co-produced with the Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University identified many strengths within our Children's Services which reflect positively on the commitment, experience and expertise of the staff providing these services.

| The work leading up to developing this Strategy can be found here | |
|---|---|
| 1. Rapid Review of Literature and Secondary Data Analysis (interim report) | RCT Evaluation of LAC Strategy Interim R |
| | |
| 2. Summary: what we have learned from the deeper dive of cases and staff / service user interviews (final report) | RCT Evaluation of LAC Strategy Final Rep |

The review also identified **4 key areas** in which the service could continue to improve and develop, as outlined in the table below:

| Four improvement and development areas | Why do we want to improve in this area? |
|---|---|
| **1**. Development of a clear practice model for social workers and allied staff working with families referred to Children's Social Care for support, including to generate better engagement of families who are in 'pre-contemplation' (who have not yet come to the view that they need or want to change). | ▪ To generate better engagement of families including those in 'pre-contemplation' (who have not yet come to the view that they need or want to change).<br>▪ To enable even more effective relationship-based and successful involvements with families<br>▪ To reduce the need for children to become looked after |
| **2**. Development of a specific pathway and set of supports for families referred to Children's Social Care during a pregnancy to enable earlier intervention with parents considered to be very vulnerable before the child is born. Linked with this, improvements to the support available to parents who have had a child removed from their care. | ▪ To improve the parents' resilience, reduce risk factors and reduce the need for infants to come into care<br>▪ To reduce the likelihood of parents who have had one child removed having subsequent children removed from their care |
| **3**. Development of a more coherent and consistent approach to reunifying children home who have spent some time being looked after by the local authority. | ▪ A more consistent approach will lead to more children being reunified successfully and reduced pressure on the looked after population |
| **4**. Strengthening of the support to be offered to children living with extended family - in kinship care and / or with a Special Guardian, including to their carers | ▪ Reduce the likelihood of a breakdown in these placements<br>▪ Improve outcomes for children in care |

A more detailed rationale for these improvements can be found in the Looked After Children Strategy Review Report (March 2021).

It is projected that successful implementation of these improvements will lead not only to better outcomes for children and families but also to medium to long term savings, primarily in the form of:

▪ Better outcomes for children and families.

- Reductions in the number of children needing to become looked after or who need subsequent statutory interventions.
- Increases in the number of children who can safely 'exit' from care, either to return home to birth family members or into a form of long-term kinship care (with a Special Guardianship Order).
- Reductions in the number of placements that break down, either from kinship care or from failed reunifications home.

Including in the context of the Covid Pandemic, which is known to have increased the needs of and in some cases the risks within vulnerable families, failing to continue to develop services also risks the opposite i.e. increases in the number of children needing to become looked after or who cannot safely exit care or who experience the breakdown of a family placement.

In section 2 of this document, a 'Theory of Change' has been developed for each of the 4 priority areas, articulating: our basis for change; what we think we need to do to implement change; what the short-term indicators are likely to be of a successful change; and what are the medium to longer term outcomes we are aiming to affect through the change. The 2 latter elements will form the basis of our monitoring arrangements, to enable us to see the impact of our strategy over the next 1-3 years. It is anticipated that the first of the 4 priority areas (developing and implementing a practice model) will involve the greatest amount of collective effort and resources to effect transformational change, but also has the potential for the greatest impact.

# 2 Four Development Areas, Four Theories of Change

## 2.1 Area One: Development of a Clear Practice Model

| Rationale for Change | What this will involve? | What we expect to see in the short term if successful | What are we aiming for in the medium to longer term? |
|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Although the number of children becoming looked after has declined in recent years, there were signs of numbers growing again pre-Pandemic<br><br>■ More families are thought to have complex needs and to be under significant strain, including because of the Covid Pandemic<br><br>■ Working with families at the edge of care often requires successful engagement with parents who are misusing drugs or alcohol or who have significant mental ill-health or where levels of domestic abuse are high<br><br>■ The recent RCT review and evidence from elsewhere in the UK strongly suggests that relationship and strengths-based practice can make a significant difference to parental engagement in positive change<br><br>■ Research suggests that having a clear practice model is essential for enabling consistently good quality practice and embedding a relationship-based way of working with families<br><br>■ Too high caseloads can negatively effect the implementation of desired practice models | ■ A significant change in practice for many social workers, their team managers, senior managers and allied staff (particularly teams providing change programmes)<br><br>■ The development of an agreed practice vision and model with staff, with reference to the evidence base about 'what works' when engaging with families who need a social worker<br><br>■ Staged implementation with attention to pace (not too fast, not too slow)<br><br>■ Continued investment in social worker numbers, particularly non-agency staff, to enable caseloads that will allow for relationship-based as opposed to more 'arms-length' practice with families<br><br>■ More consistent and effective use of Family Group Conferencing and other methods to promote the engagement of family members when their child(ren) are on the edge of needing care<br><br>■ Whole system support for these ways of working e.g. assessments, reviews, case conferences<br><br>■ Senior leader support and modelling of the desired change | ■ Development & implementation of the model is undertaken with pace and in collaboration with staff who 'buy into' it<br><br>■ Staff can articulate the practice model and are enthusiastic and confident about working in this way<br><br>■ Caseloads reduce and staff describe having enough time to engage effectively with families<br><br>■ Staff describe being supported to deliver the model including through training and supervision<br><br>■ Families describe their engagement with social workers positively<br><br>■ Families describe how interventions build on their strengths (as well as addressing risks to the child(ren))<br><br>■ More families engage successfully<br><br>■ Colleagues in other agencies understand and support these ways of working<br><br>■ Plans, reviews and other documentation reflect the practice model | ■ Fewer children need to come into care<br><br>■ Families who remain together through an intervention can stay together in the longer term (have developed resilience) including that they do not require repeat statutory plans<br><br>■ Children and parents feel better supported including through improved relationships with their social worker<br><br>■ Social work practitioner skills develop including in relation to direct work, for example with the child, in collaboration with family support colleagues<br><br>■ Absence of 'blockers' in the whole system to these ways of working with families |

## 2.2 Area Two: Development of a Pre-Birth Pathway and Service

| Rationale for Change | What this will involve | What we expect to see in the short term if successful | What are we aiming for in the medium to longer term? |
|---|---|---|---|
| ■ There are relatively high numbers and proportions of infants (aged under 1 year) becoming looked after<br><br>■ Often the parents of these children are care or social care experienced. Some have had another child already removed from their care. Some have a learning disability or difficulty.<br><br>■ More has been learned since 2018 (when the last strategy was produced) about 'what works' in reducing the need for infants to come into care and to support improved resilience in these family units<br><br>■ For example intensive, 9 month interventions starting as early as possible in pregnancy, strengths based and solutions focused, drawing on a clear evidence-based programme of educative and therapeutic work (recognising the likely past trauma of parents), team around the family<br><br>■ Services as currently configured do not have the capacity to provide a good service in this area | ■ Re-focusing services on this important area<br><br>■ Some additional investment<br><br>■ Development of a specific pathway and support tools<br><br>■ Work with partner agencies to ensure that key areas of support they can provide are available relatively quickly to families<br><br>■ Key workers with the right skills to deliver much of the work themselves<br><br>■ Senior leader support over a sufficient period of time to protect the service as it develops<br><br>■ Enabling more referrals into the service of very vulnerable (first time) parents early in pregnancy<br><br>■ Starting work with parents as early as possible (in pregnancy) rather than relying on assessment only during this period | ■ The development of an effective, evidence-based and clearly signposted programme that can accept early referrals of very vulnerable parents around the perinatal period<br><br>■ Improved identification of very vulnerable parents at an early stage i.e. in pregnancy<br><br>■ Greater and earlier engagement of very vulnerable parents in change work (not just an assessment)<br><br>■ Improved understanding amongst social workers and referring professionals of the value and availability of this kind of early work with parents<br><br>■ Staff, parents and referring professionals describing feeling confident about the programme<br><br>■ All relevant agencies engaged with the programme | Amongst families referred to or known to social services in the perinatal period:<br><br>■ Improved child/parent attachment<br><br>■ Good / improved parenting skills and capacity<br><br>■ Good / improved parenting confidence<br><br>■ Reduction in risks to children, for example from domestic abuse, parents' substance misuse, parents' mental health<br><br>■ Reduced need for infants to come into care in their 1st year of life<br><br>■ Where infants do need to enter care, they achieve permanency quicker<br><br>■ Families are more resilient (i.e. need fewer or no child protection referrals) |

## 2.3 Area Three: Improving the coherence of reunification work

| Rationale for Change | What this will involve | What we expect to see in the short term if successful | What are we aiming for in the medium to longer term? |
|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Not all children who need to come into care can or should return home to birth parents. However, many can do so successfully, with the right support<br><br>■ The number of (successful) reunifications of children home to birth families after a period in care has been reducing in RCT in recent years<br><br>■ There is evidence of some positive and successful reunifications with good planning and parents well-engaged. This is particularly the case where the child has been taken into care relatively recently, under 6 months ago, or where the child is 'younger-aged'<br><br>■ Returns home for older children tend to be stimulated by a looked after placement breakdown and are less well-planned.<br><br>■ Overall, reunification practice is inconsistent<br><br>■ Staff have suggested that a clear strategy to inform and drive reunification work is lacking and that it is not sufficiently prioritised or practiced within the current system. | ■ Development of a clear evidence-based reunification strategy and guidance for staff<br><br>■ Development of appropriate incentives within the whole system to re-prioritise this work<br><br>■ Consideration and development of best practice for successful reunifications (at different child ages) | ■ Staff can consistently describe the reunification strategy and guidance<br><br>■ Staff feel able to prioritise this work and are (more) confident in this area of their practice<br><br>■ There are appropriate supports available to assist with returns home<br><br>■ There are more planned reunifications home, where appropriate and safe to do so | ■ More successful reunifications home for younger and older aged children<br><br>■ Increased numbers and % of children exiting care through reunification |

## 2.4 Area Four: Strengthening of support to children with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

| Rationale for Change | What this will involve | What we expect to see in the short term if successful | What are we aiming for in the medium to longer term? |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>The number of children with a SGO were growing steadily in RCT, but appear to have stalled slightly in 2019-20.</li><li>Acknowledging recent developments to enable SGO carers to receive support, messages from the staff suggest that a greater promotion of and support for SGOs in RCT is required.</li><li>Most care experienced children and their adoptive parents / carers will require support at some stage(s) of their development, including at key transitions. For example: recent research suggests very high levels of emotional health and wellbeing needs for children with a SGO or in kinship care or adopted compared with the general population.</li><li>Failing to provide such support risks worse outcomes for children and placement disruptions</li><li>It has been difficult to retain SGO-specific posts in the past, particularly as social workers in these roles get drawn into frontline practice / assessment only work. It is also generally difficult to recruit to social worker posts currently in RCT</li></ul> | <ul><li>Work with and provide guidance for frontline social work teams to support the consideration of SGO placements as early as possible in work with families, where appropriate</li><li>Develop, deliver and publish a core offer (for all SGO carers and families) including with reference to the pre and post-placement period e.g. training, signposting and peer support. With reference to recent WG Guidance, this must now include checking in with SGO carers at least once a year</li><li>Develop, deliver and publish a targeted offer of support for SGO families beginning to experience difficulties. This could include therapeutic parenting 'top up' training and support; life story work for the child; psychology consultations</li><li>Consider how best to provide these supports with reference to an in-house team (with a balance of social work qualified and unqualified support worker roles and/or other generic supports in the local authority (e.g. in house life journey workers with some capacity for work with SGO children) and commissioned (voluntary sector) supports</li></ul> | <ul><li>Social workers describe feeling confident about exploring SGO options, as appropriate, at an early stage in their work with families</li><li>SGO carers are more aware of the support offer available to them</li><li>Staff and SGO carers describe how the placement of the child with them is well-supported</li><li>Innovations in support are evidence-based and cost-effective</li></ul> | <ul><li>Better outcomes for children placed with special guardians including in relation to their:<ul><li>Emotional health and wellbeing</li><li>Educational outcomes</li></ul></li><li>Better outcomes for the whole family unit including better family functioning and parenting confidence</li><li>Fewer breakdowns from SGO care</li><li>More confidence in the SGO 'system' enabling more SGO carers to come forward to care for children</li></ul> |

# 3 Implementation Plan

## 3.1 Key principles of effective implementation of change within children's services

A key message from many recent evaluations of innovation in this field is that **transformative change is not easy to achieve** either for individuals or for organisations (for example: Bostock et al, 2017; Sheehan et al, 2018), also that it is important not to under-estimate the scale of change or adaptation needed in culture and working practices (Albers et al, 2020) whilst the whole system continues to need to respond effectively to families with very complex needs.

Key principles relating to more successful implementation of social work practice change are as follows:

1. That implementation plans should pay attention to 3 areas:
   - Practice innovation (what happens between workers and families).
   - Effective alignment of service pathways to the desired change, including: assessment, planning and review activity and documentation; and IT supports.
   - How the whole system supports the innovation, for example through: practitioner caseloads sustained at a reasonable level; heavily aligned training and practice supervision arrangements; multi-agency conference arrangements.
2. Effective, consistent leadership of change is required at all levels, including: modelling of the desired practice changes by all including senior leaders; sustained support for the vision for change; and effective, varied communications.
3. Performance management and monitoring arrangements that reflect the priority areas for change.
4. Attention to the pace of the implementation of change – not too fast, not too slow. Transformational change (for priority area one) is likely to take longer, up to 2-3 years.
5. Staged implementation including with reference to:
   a) Exploration – of the rationale for change and proposed change(s) with practitioners and team managers to create a burning platform for effective change and to ensure that there is a common language and framework of understanding. Essentially, they need to be brought on board, expecting always that some practitioners will embrace change quickly, others not.
   b) Design work – based on the local vision for change and the existing evidence base, to develop a practice and practice supervision model that is relationship-based and strengths-based.
   c) Initial launch – including with attention to aligned training and broader supports (e.g. toolkit) for practice; opportunities to celebrate along the way; IT and administration and pathways aligned.
   d) Full implementation / roll out with attention to the same as above.

**e)** Embedding – attention to sustaining change over a longer period of time.

Also worth considering with reference to Area One are:

- The need for some additional capacity in the system to drive the more detailed design work, and to keep it on track. All relevant staff will also need some ring-fenced capacity to be able to engage in more reflective work around practice development.
- Naming the change which may be useful, with support from staff, for example 'The RCT Way' or something similar.
- Consideration of all support services and worker contributions in the new system, for example with reference to 'who will do what' in a strengths and relationship-based model? Particularly across assessment, planning, PLO, interventions (with children, parents etc.). Research suggests that it is helpful if frontline social workers undertake some direct work with families, particularly the children, to stay involved.
- Careful design of the training programme alongside the more detailed work on the desired model, including with reference to existing worker skills and skills or experience 'gaps'. It will need to be 'rolling' to accommodate both waves of existing staff and newly recruited staff over time.
- The extent to which the new practice model should be articulated not just to staff, but to partner agencies and children and families.

**3.2     Starter Implementation Plan for Area One: Development of a Clear Practice Model**

| Time frame | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| July-October 2021 | Exploration - of the rationale for change and proposed change(s) with practitioners and team managers to create the right conditions for effective change and to ensure that there is a common language and framework of understanding. Essentially, they need to be brought on board, expecting always that some will embrace quickly, others not. | ▪ Identify additional capacity to lead the change and how staff can be involved. Is a Transformation Board needed?<br>▪ With all staff groups, at least once and in different ways e.g. written material, oral 'sessions'<br>▪ Using consistent materials articulating why this work is important and what the early thoughts are about the model<br>▪ Encouraging of dissenting as well as early adopter voices<br>▪ Facilitated by someone /people who are relatively senior who are advocates of the change<br>▪ Senior leader work on the key areas e.g. 'how will we model this ourselves?' + how can we ensure our performance systems monitor the important things? |
| November – December 2021 | Further design work – based on the local vision for change and the existing evidence base, to develop a practice and practice supervision model that is relationship-based and strengths-based. | ▪ Some of this work can be done during the stage above<br>▪ Should be involving of staff groups – could have design groups? E.g. for practice model, supports/toolkit, supervision<br>▪ It requires consistent leadership and 'checking back' with key stakeholders during the design phase<br>▪ Worth drawing in other agencies at this stage?<br>▪ Worth commencing work on the supports (see below) in this stage<br>▪ Leaders to begin modelling desired behaviours including through all comms<br>▪ Active comms required at this stage |

| Time frame | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| January – February 2022 | Initial launch – including with attention to aligned training and broader supports (e.g. toolkit) for practice; opportunities to celebrate along the way; IT and administration and pathways aligned. | ▪ An initial launch could be, for example, in one or more teams<br>▪ This should be treated as a pilot with reference to hearing practitioner views and adjusting<br>▪ Some supports will not be fully finalised. Staff should be appraised of this including what supports are being further developed<br>▪ Pathways and supports e.g. assessment, planning and review tools are likely to be critical potential blockers to a new way of working and therefore need development time |
| March – December 2022 | Full roll out – including with attention to all of the above | ▪ Comms, leadership, staff involvement, trouble shooting blockers are all important<br>▪ Roll out will take longer than you expect – you may need to repeat some training etc.<br>▪ Performance monitoring arrangements to be articulated during this time including regular (monthly) and irregular (e.g. audit) monitoring and review over time |
| January 2022 – December 2023 (approx.) | Embedding | ▪ Will be needed to sustain change over time<br>▪ Will need attention to leadership, comms, performance monitoring and blockers being actively addressed |

### 3.3 Starter Implementation Plan for Area Two: Development of a Pre-Birth Pathway and Service

| Timeframe | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| July – October 2021 | Further design of the service | ■ With reference to the key findings from the review and background evidence base paper, also existing service dimensions and pressures<br>■ Also with reference to the Theory of Change above, which may need adjusting<br>■ A Steering Group of interested leaders + Working Group including practitioners and possibly service users to further consider the design<br>■ Formulation of a detailed specification including: referral criteria and pathways; core and broader aspects of the service / model including use of practitioners; key tools for use by key practitioners delivering it; how a 'team around the family' model could be achieved (with reference to likely parent needs e.g. mental health, substance misuse, learning disability, care experienced etc.); costs and anticipated implementation aspects and monitoring arrangements<br>■ Consideration of what should be the key, consistently collected measures, e.g. of parent attachment, parenting capacity + how best to do this |
| November – December 2021 | Sign off of the service model | ■ Including with relevant partner agencies |
| January – February / March 2022 | Recruitment and/or redeployment of existing workers into a core team or service | ■ Ongoing comms with other aspects of the service and partners – see below for detail |
| April 2022 | Service goes live | ■ Comms will be needed to inform key partners, particularly community health and front-line social workers, what are the types of parent that the service would like to see – particularly pre-birth. This will be highly |

| Timeframe | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| | | significant if pre-birth referrals are desired (as research indicates they should be). |
| May 2022 – May 2023 | Service operational in pilot form | ■ Attention to ongoing support and/or 'protection' of the model from other demands<br>■ Attention to continuous feedback loops, particularly in relation to (type of) demand<br>■ Attention to evaluation of the pilot – setting this up and making sure that key data is collected regularly (e.g. key measures) as well as irregularly (e.g. feedback from service users and partner agencies/referring staff) |
| January 2023 | Review and learn | |

## 3.4 Starter Implementation Plan for Area Three: Improving the Coherence of Reunification Work

| Timeframe | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| July – October 2021 | Review existing reunification strategy and guidance | ■ Including with reference to the findings from this review<br>■ Including to identify its fit with the 'best practice' articulated in the review of evidence, and with reference to different aged children<br>■ Using a Working Group to drive this work<br>■ Reporting on what they find and what strategy / guidance they recommend should be developed or refined as a result<br>■ Articulating as precisely as possible how much change is envisaged and in what areas / for what ages of child etc.<br>■ Reporting on how ideas about how best to incentivise and support this work in practice |
| November – December 2021 | Develop the new / refreshed strategy and guidance | ■ Including with groups of staff from all relevant aspects of the service<br>■ Including with key partner agencies<br>■ Develop arrangements for monitoring the change(s) that are desired in detail |
| January 2022 | Launch | ■ Including with 'briefings' for all staff and stakeholders (written and oral, more than one of each) |
| February 2022 – December 2022 | Implementation | ■ Continuous monitoring including regular (data) and irregular (e.g. audits) reporting |
| January-February 2023 | Review and learn | ■ Using regularly collected and some additional data as required |
| March – December 2023 | Embedding | ■ With reference to the findings (above) and ongoing, possibly slightly adapted monitoring arrangements |

### 3.5 Starter Implementation Plan Four: Strengthening Support to Children in Kinship Care including SGOs

| Timeframe | Block of Work | Detail |
|---|---|---|
| July – September 2021 | Finalise the plans to develop SGO support | <ul><li>Development work with social work teams and 'legal'</li><li>Development of the core and targeted early help offer for SGO carers and children with reference to the existing Welsh Government guidance / requirements and broader evidence base e.g. Kinship Model</li><li>Core SGO Support Team development including how roles / budgets will be utilized (across assessment and support work) to generate more effective support work including exploration of what can be commissioned cost-effectively from specialist providers e.g. online therapeutic training; peer support</li><li>How other services and supports can be drawn in appropriately to support SGO carers, e.g. life story work, recognizing that not all generic family support will be appropriate for this group</li><li>Recruit at least 1 more worker (potentially 2 more) to enable a team of 2-3 focusing on SGO Development and Support work</li></ul> |
| October – December 2021 | Implementation begins | <ul><li>Begin implementation of the work of the team and identify key monitoring methods</li></ul> |
| January – December 2022 | First full year of implementation | <ul><li>First year of full implementation</li></ul> |
| January-February 2023 | Review and learn | <ul><li>Review first year of full implementation and revise SGO Support Strategy</li></ul> |

## 4    Resources

The areas of the strategy and implementation plan that have implications for (additional) resources are as follows:

| Area | What | Approximate resources required |
|---|---|---|
| **One** | Capacity to drive the more detailed work on the practice model design and implementation, and to keep it on track | 1 middle manager post for 18-24 months (a currently vacant post may be used for this work) |
| | Facilitation of senior team modelling and leadership of this agenda | 1 external facilitator 0.5 day every 2 months for 18 months = 6 days total inc prep approx. £5K |
| | Staff training existing training budgets be redirected? It will need significant coordination. | To be considered in the early phases but will include a proportion of existing budget |
| | Caseloads at a reasonable level | To review in March 2022, no additional costs estimated currently as the problem with regard caseloads is thought to relate to vacant posts (that need filling) |
| **Two** | Implementation of a new pre-birth pathway and discreet service for very vulnerable (first time) parents

*Note this service should be located within existing intervention services | Based on a similar innovation in a similarly sized local authority area (Calderdale) start up costs (in the first 12-18 month period) are estimated at £300K per year including overheads with ongoing running costs estimated at £210K per year including overheads and inclusive of approximately 3.5 FTE non-social work qualified staff (family support or early years workers), senior worker manager role, supervision, training, and overheads.

An RCT business case is in development - Magu |

| Area | What | Approximate resources required |
|------|------|-------------------------------|
| **Three** | Small additional costs associated with middle manager time required to develop and promote embedding of the reunification strategy | Approx £20K<br><br>*Family support services will also be required to support reunifications home in all / almost all cases |
| **Four** | At present there is no dedicated resource for SGO support, resources are required to coordinate reviews of support plans and respond to Special Guardians / provide attuned support. Kinship Cymru are providing attuned / sign posting support at present at no cost. | 1 FTE business support and SGO support SW.<br><br>Anticipate commission to kinship Cymru should charitable funding changes impact on service |

The three key areas of investment (one, two and four) are projected to lead to cashable savings over time, in terms of:

- **For Area One (practice model and improvement)** a small reduction in the need for children to become looked after or to require a repeat statutory plan. Based on the experience of a recent similar transformation programme in Hampshire, a conservative saving represented by approximately a 12% reduction in the number of children needing to become looked after or requiring repeat statutory assessments or interventions are projected. The recent Covid-related dip and projected 'surge' post-Covid may need to be taken into account by way of baseline against which any change may be measured.
  - A 12% reduction in the number of children requiring to become looked after in RCT, based on 179 children becoming looked after in 2019-2020 (21) and an average cost per child of becoming looked after for an average of 2.21 years of £129,647[1] = **£2,722,587.**
  - A 15% reduction in the number of children requiring at least one subsequent Care and Support Plan based on (recent whole 12 month period no. children per year with a second or further plan). The average cost of a Care and Support Plan for a period of 1 year is £3,402, based only on the case holding social worker costs[2].
- **For Area Two (pre-birth pathway and service for very vulnerable parents)**, a small reduction in the number of children who need to be looked after aged 0-1 year is projected. In addition to this small reduction, we are also projecting that there will be a

[1] Source: New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database (2019) https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis/
[2] Ibid

greater proportion of infants with a Care and Support Plan who require no further statutory intervention in the 12-18 months following an intensive intervention. Relatively conservative reductions are projected based on experience from other similar pilot programmes in the UK showing how intensive early support either assists families to remain safely together in a more sustainable way, or shines an early spotlight on unacceptably risky parenting. However, for those infants who cannot remain living safely with birth parent(s), permanency will be achieved at an earlier stage, with the result that adoption will be a more viable option and savings as a result of that early exit from the care system. This is an area that will require careful monitoring to ensure that, at the very least, the costs of the service are being re-couped in the form of savings through reduced number of infants coming into care and the likelihood of further savings from more resilience in families that do stay together as well as earlier permanency for children who do come into care..

- **For Area Four (Reunification)** a reduction in the number of children who need to remain looked after (through. increased numbers of children able to return home). As above, the costed benefits of only 10 such children successfully reunified would be 10 X average looked after child costs for 2.21 years at £58,664 per year = approximately **£1,296,474.**
- **For Area Four (SGO and kinship care support)** a reduction in the overall number of children looked after based on more children being supported into SGO care. The reduction in costs associated with remaining looked after may be offset to a certain extent by increases in the costs of supporting such SGO and kinship care placements. However, where relatively low-cost preventative supports are pro-actively offered, there is also an assumption that some SGO or kinship carers may be able to cope well without the need for more expensive supports or allowances from the start or at a later stage of the family placement. By providing pro-active, well-targeted support, some placements will be prevented from disrupting. The costed benefits of only 10 such additional new SGO placements or placements prevented from disrupting would be 10 X average looked after child costs for 2.21 years at £58,664 per year = approximately **£1,296,474.**

## 5      Measurement and evaluation proposals

Success in relation to the implementation of these 4 key development areas should be measured in part by incorporating within our regular performance monitoring arrangements (data collection, staff surveys etc.) the key measures from Theory of Change documents above (from the final 2 columns).

However, it will be important also to have more detailed monitoring of the process of change with reference to the implementation plans above, including to identify at an early stage whether and to what extent progress is 'off track'. This should be undertaken by a Transformation Programme Board or Group.

Finally, some of the measures of success for this strategy will not be capable of being measured in a very regular way and will require periodic 'deeper dive' reviews or evaluation. For example, over and above the number of children entering care, it will be important to understand the extent to which practice is becoming more strengths and relationship-based and whether and how it does in fact lead to a greater proportion of resilient families.

Tudalen wag

# The Magu Project – Delivering specialist intensive pre-birth support across Early Intervention and Edge of Care Services in RCT

## October 21

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**Background**

In September 2020, Children's Services commissioned the Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University to evaluate the progress to date in implementing the RCT Looked After Strategy written in 2017. Carried out between October 2020 and March 2021, the evaluation sought to measure the extent to which current services, arrangements and pathways support the achievement of two key aims of the strategy, namely:

1. Continuing to improve edge of care supports for families to safely prevent children from needing to become looked after.

2. Safely helping children to leave statutory care to go home or into a SGO / adoptive / kinship placement and to support them to thrive there.

A range of evaluation activities including rapid research into "what works"; analysis of management data; case file sampling; interviews with parent/carers and young people and interviews with Children's Services staff were employed to inform the findings and suggested recommendations within the Evaluation Report.

The Evaluation found that whilst early progress had been made in the reduction of the number of children becoming looked after aged under 1 year, the numbers had begun to rise again:

> **Relatively high numbers and proportions of infants (under 1's) coming into care**. In the years 2016 to 2018, a high proportion of children became looked after aged under 1 year (29% in 2016-17 climbing to 34% in 2017-18). In 2019-20, the proportion of children coming into care aged under 1 year reduced significantly to 22% of the total. However, latest data up to January 2021, indicates that numbers are rising again, at 34% and are higher than the same period in the previous year. The trend shows that this age group continues to have the highest number of admissions. A detailed examination of the most recent figures suggest that the highest number of under 1's becoming looked after are brought into care within the first week after their birth.
>
> The case file sampling (of children becoming looked after) found that 63% of the 'new-borns' who came into care after an edge of care intervention were from families where older children had already been removed or were on the child protection register themselves. 37% were a 'first child' and the concerns were due to the parent having been in care or subject to a child protection plan herself, and parental mental health, drug use and/or learning disability concerns.

*IPC (2021) 'Evaluation of the Looked After Children Strategy. Final Report: What have we learned and where to go next?* p.10

The evaluators highlighted a recent study by Broadhurst et al, (2018) that has cast a spotlight on a growing trend of local authorities to issue care proceedings at or soon after the birth of a child. This study raised concerns about what is described as a 'typically short window for pre-birth assessment' which means that prospective parents who are known to be vulnerable do not have enough opportunity to work purposefully on their parenting skills before the child is removed from their care. A recent study of the 'Positive Choices' Programme in Calderdale undertaken by IPC identified the potential for more effective intensive interventions with very vulnerable prospective parents *during* pregnancy (Burch et al, 2020).

The evaluation report went on to identify the Council's provision of pre-birth services as a suggested area of development, providing the following rationale:

> **Review and development of pre-birth services** that can prevent separation at or soon after birth.
>
> *Rational* - A gap identified in RCT is earlier work/specific programmes with parents of unborn children and 'newborns' at risk of harm and removal at or around birth. Referrals for this cohort have been increasing and local data indicates that many under 1s who become looked after do so as newborns within their 1st week. Research suggests that intensive, targeted work with very vulnerable parents during pregnancy and perinatally can have a significant positive effect. Timing of interventions (starting during pregnancy rather than at birth) seems to be critical.
>
> IPC (2021) *'Evaluation of the Looked After Children Strategy. Final Report: What have we learned and where to go next?* p.5

### Scoping pre-birth service models

As a result of the Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University evaluation and of the 2017 RCT Looked After Strategy, the Head of Edge of Care and Service Development and the Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience undertook exploratory meetings with the following project teams in Bridgend, Newport and Swansea to research the models of pre-birth service delivery in place in these local authorities:

- Baby in Mind (Bridgend) 12.3.21
- Jigsaw (Swansea) 23.3.21
- Baby and Me (Newport) 13.4.21

Meeting with project staff from each of the three local authority areas was helpful in being able to gauge the approaches taken at a strategic level as well as gather an insight into the experiences of implementing a specialist bespoke service at an operational level. Whilst there were commonalities in the approaches there were also

key differences in the way in which the services were structured and governed. Across the three areas the following key principles and considerations were identified:

- Referral at the earliest opportunity is key to securing the best outcomes;
- A multi-disciplinary approach including Midwives, Social Workers, Parenting Workers, Intervention / Support Workers provides the best support;
- A longer term approach is required – from point of referral through to up to 1 year old;
- Clear midwifery pathway and case management responsibilities need to be defined and agreed upfront;
- Step up arrangements at stage a pregnancy is viable need to be clear if support has already begun and provide continuity for families;
- The siting of a pre-birth support service needs to be considered to minimise the potential impact on progress as a result of transition between teams for families requiring step up.

**Demand for a pre-birth service in RCT**

***Performance Information***
Children's Services data from August 21 indicates increasing demand in the following areas:

➢ Assessment of unborn children where there are child protection concerns carried out by Children's Services statutory teams

- 2018/19-146 assessments of these 55, child protection enquires
- 2019/20- 229 assessments of these 60, child protection enquires
- 2020/21-222 assessments of these 81, child protection enquires

➢ Pre -birth Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

- 2018/19- 68 ICPC 59 children registered at birth 87%
- 2019/20- 75 ICPC 68 children registered at birth 90%
- 2020/21- 80 ICPC 70 children registered at birth 90%

➢ Children looked after between 0-1, parents with history of Children's Services intervention, i.e., care or child protection register experienced (CPR)

- 2018/19- 65, 38% within a week of birth, 20% care experienced parent 28% CPR experienced parent
- 2019/20- 50, 46% within a week of birth, 40% care experienced parent 40% CPR experienced parent
- 2020/21- 55, 38% within a week of birth, 50% care experienced parent 75% CPR experienced parent

➢ Children looked after current 10/15 year age group

- 2020/21 69, 27% of children from this age group came into care between the ages of 0/3 years and continue to be CLA

### *Miskin Service data*
WCCIS data indicates 81 unborn babies were referred to Miskin Younger Teams (0-10 years) between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2021. Outcome data is available for 66 children:

- 11 (16.7%) were in care at the end of Miskin involvement (9 already had in care status at time of referral).
- Therefore, 83.3%, 55 were living at home or with appropriate family members at the time of Miskin involvement ended.

**NB** these referrals were made at a much later point in pregnancy typically 28 weeks+ affording a very brief period of time to work with parents to affect change. The intention is to extend capacity and improve outcomes through the proposed Magu model providing an integrated care pathway for pregnant women and their families across early intervention and edge of care services, that focuses on building skills and resilience and reducing risk.

### *Cost of Foster placements*
Set out below are the current costs to the Council for a foster placement for a young child as well as the costs of parent and child placements used to inform decisions often within the Court arena about whether parents can safely care for their children.

### 0-3 year old internal placement per annum (most babies placed with in house carers)

| Narrative | RCT In House Fostering | |
|---|---|---|
| | Weekly Cost 21/22 | Full Year 21/22 |
| Child Allow (0-4 years) | £ 194 | £ 10,088 |
| Carer Fee | £ 181 | £ 9,412 |
| Total | £ 375 | £ 19,500 |

### Parent and child placement

| Narrative | Independent Sector Fostering | |
|---|---|---|
| | Average Weekly cost | Average Full Year Cost |
| Parent Cost | £ 833 | £ 43,299 |
| Child cost | £ 792 | £ 41,167 |
| Total | £ 1,624 | £ 84,465 |

Management information and current Miskin performance would suggest there is demand for an early intervention approach that would provide the opportunity to prevent children entering care at birth and potentially remaining looked after throughout their childhoods.

Investing in a specialist pre-birth service offers the opportunity to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families particularly those for whom the Council is or has been a corporate parent.

In addition, there are potential savings to be made on placement costs, and also on more hidden resources which include Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers capacity and likely reduced demand in other parts of the Children's Service such as placements, Child Protection Conferences and Edge of Care services.

## Existing opportunities in RCT

It became evident early on that there were existing resources in RCT that if reconfigured could assist in delivering a comprehensive response to the current challenge of reducing the relatively high numbers and proportions of infants (under 1's) coming into care. These resources in the form of both staff and existing service delivery pathways spanned both the Resilient Families Service and Edge of Care services in Miskin / IFST and could be further enhanced by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service in the provision of targeted youth work support for pregnant women under the age of 25 years. The following existing resources were identified as having a part to play in the creation of a systems approach to delivering effective pre-birth support services:

*Pathways*
- RFS Midwifery and Health Visiting Pathways
- IAA and RFS work to track and support families pre-birth

*Service arrangements*

- Miskin / IFST model of working, delivering intensive family focused evidence based interventions which aim to improve parenting capacity to enable families to care for their children with the minimum statutory intervention. Services are currently delivered through individual, family, and group work
- Miskin strength-based Solution Focused Approach and Motivational Interviewing techniques.
- The Therapeutic Families Team (TFT) a multidisciplinary team, offering consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions to children and families.

*Staff*
- RFS Specialist Midwives
- RFS Health Visitors
- RFS Parenting Workers
- RFS Intervention Workers

- YEPS Youth Engagement and Progression Workers
- YEPS Transitional Support Workers
- YEPS Youth Homelessness Worker / Emphasis Worker
- YEPS Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers
- Miskin/IFST Consultant /Social workers,
- Miskin/IFST Intervention Workers/Support Workers
- IFST Specialist Substance misuse workers
- IFST Health Visitor/Midwife
- Therapeutic Families Team Therapists and Psychologists

Whilst there is a range of existing resource in place to support a systems approach, additional capacity is also needed to create a small bespoke specialist team to deliver intensive targeted work with very vulnerable parents during pregnancy and perinatally.


## Proposal

It is proposed that the Magu Project is established to deliver an integrated care pathway for pregnant women and their families across early intervention and edge of care services, that focuses on building skills and resilience and reducing risk. A single agreed early intervention approach would deliver the opportunity to prevent children entering care at birth as well as provide consistency and continuity for families whose care requires step to statutory intervention. The term 'Magu' translates from Welsh as *'to bring up, rear, nurture, raise, gain'* and promotes the ongoing long term nature of the support required to deliver better outcomes.

### *Intervention*
The service will deliver evidence based interventions to achieve the best outcomes for families:

- RFS and Miskin, currently use a common operating model which is strengths based, relational approaches and are trained in the same parenting programmes e.g., gro brain.

- The RFS Parenting Team are trained in the use of a range of formal licenced parenting programmes including 'Welcome to the World' which has well evidenced outcomes for both parent and child including
  - Improving attunement and bonding
  - Improving parental wellbeing
  - Improving knowledge and skills in breastfeeding and practical care of babies
  - Parents reflect on their own values and their hopes and fears for the future and begin to understand the needs and intentions of their baby

  This programme is accessed during pregnancy. Topics include empathy and loving attentiveness, infant brain development, healthy eating choices, breast-feeding, infant care, managing stress and difficult feelings, promoting self-esteem and confidence, and the couple relationship.
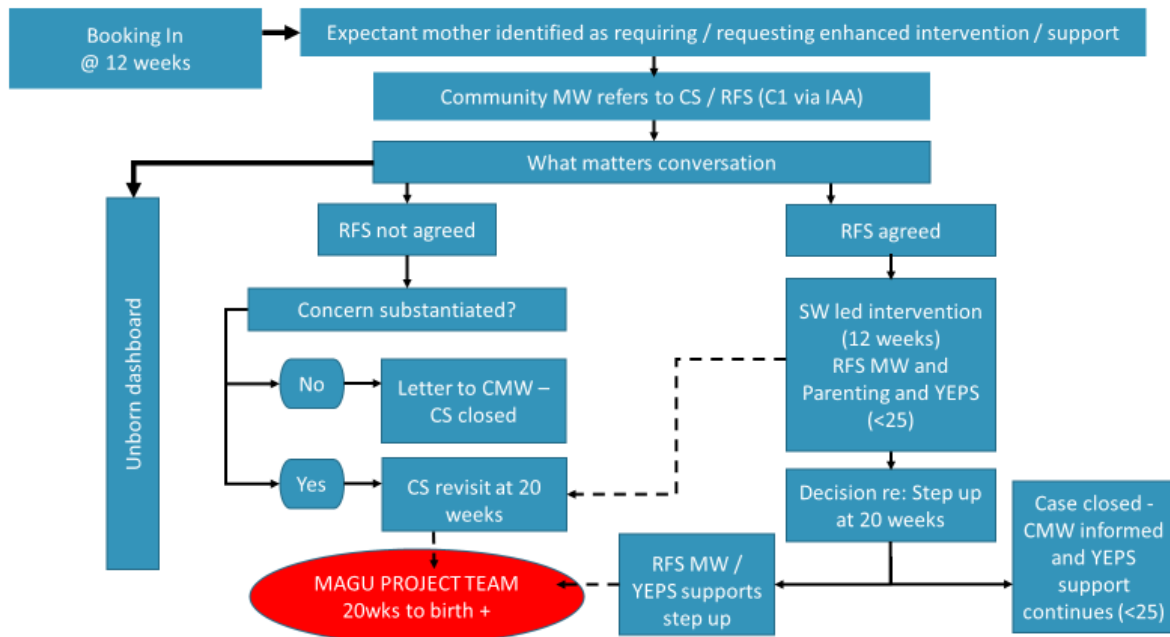
- A whole family systemic approach to deliver a structured, intensive, accessible programme of learning, role modelling and tailored support

- Offer very intensive support as required to ensure that risks can be closely monitored and managed

- Use Family Group Meeting to identify and build on any family supports including who can help when the baby is born

- Work with partners and families to change the culture from presumption of failure to one of seeking success

- 8 weeks before birth, produce a detailed parenting assessment to guide short, and medium future work

Research and evaluation of similar projects indicate such an approach can:
- Improve child to parent attachment
- Improve parenting skills including being able to manage behaviour when frustrated and life is difficult
- Reduction in risk factors such as domestic abuse, substance misuse or exploitative friendship groups
- Improved resilience amongst parents i.e., parenting without risk or crisis for a sustained period of time
- Better adult/child interactions and the child more likely to remain with their birth parent

### *Pathway*
Whilst all Children's Services Teams and Health colleagues have a part to play in the successful delivery of the Magu Project, operational delivery mechanisms will be managed by the Resilient Families Service and the Miskin Service. The diagram below identifies the proposed care pathway that focuses on early engagement and supported transition between teams and professionals:

**Booking In @ 12 weeks** → **Expectant mother identified as requiring / requesting enhanced intervention / support**

**Community MW refers to CS / RFS (C1 via IAA)**

**What matters conversation**

**Unborn dashboard**

**RFS not agreed**

**Concern substantiated?**

No → **Letter to CMW – CS closed**

Yes → **CS revisit at 20 weeks**

**MAGU PROJECT TEAM 20wks to birth +**

**RFS agreed**

**SW led intervention (12 weeks) RFS MW and Parenting and YEPS (<25)**

**Decision re: Step up at 20 weeks**

**RFS MW / YEPS supports step up**

**Case closed - CMW informed and YEPS support continues (<25)**

In order to accommodate the requirements of this pathway the following service changes are required in the Resilient Families Service, the IAA Team and the Miskin Service:

*Resilient Families Service / IAA Team*
- Existing RFS Midwifery Pathway is amended to request that Community Midwifery refer all women requiring or requesting support (including safeguarding concerns) to the IAA Team at 12 weeks following booking in appointments.

- RFS automatically extend intervention period to full 12 weeks for pregnant women to maximise the opportunity to remove of barriers to engagement (e.g., housing, finance, health etc) and to start parenting preparation work.

- An additional Social Work post is created in RFS to provide capacity to delivery of social work led specialist early intervention supported by RFS Midwives, RFS Parenting Team and YEPS for women under the age of 25.

- During this time, RFS Midwives provide a single point of contact for Community Midwives, to ensure there is regular communication between Children's Services and Health in relation to the RFS Family Plan and interventions being delivered.

- Enhanced step up arrangements are established to support case handover and ensure continuity of interventions i.e., parenting preparation work started in RFS can be carried on by the Magu Team.

*Miskin Service*
- The creation of a Magu Team, to deliver intensive specialist support, based on the existing service model within Miskin and managed within that service.

Interventions would be led, directed, and monitored by the Consultant Social Worker and delivered by a combination of Intervention Workers and Social Workers depending on the level of risk and need. The proposed team would comprise of the following eight posts:

- o 1 x Consultant Social Worker
- o 1 x Principal Social Worker
- o 1x Social Worker
- o 4 x Intervention Workers
- o 1 x Business Support

- The team would create the opportunity of intervention earlier in pregnancy to deliver a combination of evidence based interventions, parenting programmes and practical advice/support and consequently a chance to effect change pre-birth and improve the quality and timeliness of decision made about children most at risk.

- The service would be particularly relevant for women and their partners that have experienced or who are at risk of repeat removals of children from their care as well as pregnant care experienced young women.

- The team would be led by a Consultant Social Worker to provide capacity to deliver specialist social work led evidence based interventions to 'parents of unborn children and 'new-borns' at risk of harm and removal at or around birth'.

- The intervention plan would be supported by Intervention and Support workers within the team alongside other specialist workers including therapist and health staff within TFT and IFST.

- The work would inform decisions about parents' ability to look after their children safely and meet their needs. This would include the necessity for care proceedings or Child Protection registration.

- The service could provide support after the birth of the child for an agreed maximum period and ensure appropriate step down arrangements through existing processes.

**Finance**

Whilst the reconfiguration of existing services and amendments to service delivery pathways will support the establishment of the Magu Project, additional capacity is required to create the Magu Team to provide specialist intensive pre-birth support for those families requiring statutory intervention. The table below offers a breakdown of the proposed costs:

| Post | Grade 21/22 | Hrs / Week | FTE | Cost with pay review |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CONSULTANT SOCIAL WORKER** | GR14 | 37 | 1.00 | 59,466 |
| **PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER** | GR13 | 37 | 1.00 | 55,513 |
| **SOCIAL WORKER (1 RFS and 1 Miskin)** | GR11/12 | 37 | 2.00 | 105,097 |
| **INTERVENTION WORKER** | GR9 | 37 | 4.00 | 156,816 |
| **BUSINESS SUPPORT** | GR6 | 37 | 1.00 | 29,158 |
| | | | | |
| **TOTAL REVISED SALARY BUDGET 2021/22** | | | **9.00** | **406,050** |
| **Associated Staff Costs at £1.5k per FTE** | | | | **12,000** |
| **TOTAL** | | | | **418,050** |

**Evaluation**

It is proposed that the new Magu Service is evaluated following the first full year of operation to assess the impact the service has had. Measures will include:

**RFS**
- No of referrals to RFS accessing Magu intervention
- No of families completing RFS Magu intervention
- No of cases closed at end of Magu intervention
- No of cases stepped up at end of RFS Magu intervention

**Magu Team within Miskin**
- No of referrals to Magu Team
- No of referrals accepted
- No women and families-disengaged
- Parents' status – e.g., care experienced (CLA), Child Protection Register (CPR), Care and Support Plan (CASP) history, previous children removed from their care
- Outcomes child's status at conclusion of Magu intervention CLA, CASP, CPR, RFS (utilising, current Miskin format - post intervention 6 and 12 months)
- Customer feedback for each intervention

**Conclusion**

Addressing the significant number of children removed from parents care at birth, is a clear priority in RCT. The creation of the Magu Project provides the opportunity to provide a continuum of support for pregnant women and their families from the earliest opportunity to prevent the need for statutory intervention. Investing additional resources now alongside existing efforts to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time, will deliver cost saving longer term benefits to the Council.

The service delivery pathway the Magu Project offers will improve both the quality and timeliness of decisions that need to be made for those children most at risk. Tailored and intensive support throughout pregnancy and beyond offers the means to enhance parenting confidence and capability in the longer term, securing positive outcomes for children and families.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF EARLY YEARS SERVICES IN RCT**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

**Author(s): Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience**

1.  **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1   The purpose of the report is to brief Cabinet on the progress made across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region towards the delivery of an integrated early years system as part of the Welsh Government's Early Years Transformation Programme and the transformation of Early Years services in RCT.

2.  **RECOMMENDATIONS**

     It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1   Note the regional progress made since July 2017 in delivering the Welsh Government's Early Years Transformation Programme.

2.2   Note the progress made in RCT since July 2019 in delivering transformed Early Years services in RCT and the findings of the Stage 1 external evaluation of the new delivery model being piloted.

2.3   Note that this report has been subject to pre-scrutiny by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2021 and the representations made by Committee Members are set out in section 10.7 of this report.

3.  **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the transformation work to date, especially in light of the impact Covid-19 has had on the delivery of Early Years services.

## 4. BACKGROUND

4.1 In July 2017 a report was presented to Cwm Taf Public Services Board requesting consideration be given to the adoption of a common set of regional principles to support the integrated delivery of the following initiatives in partnership with Welsh Government:

- Children First
- Early Years Co-Construction Project, and
- Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder

4.2 In support of establishing a co-ordinated strategic approach across the region, under the regional vision of **'Providing the right support, to the right people, at the right time, in the right place'**, the Public Services Board agreed a set of principles that included the following early years specific actions:

a) A single integrated approach to early intervention is developed across Cwm Taf that focuses on the principles of building of resilience; applies vulnerability profiling data to support the targeting of services; delivers an integrated Early Years system through improved collaboration on approaches to Team Around the Family (TAF).

b) An Early Years Vulnerability Profile (0-7 years) is developed to identify the level of need of families and piloted in RCT as an alternative to the geographically based eligibility criteria of Flying Start.

c) Information sharing arrangements are introduced to enable the secure and appropriate inclusion of Health data in the Early Years Vulnerability Profile.

d) Health visiting services provided by the UHB are jointly commissioned across Cwm Taf with a new service specification that reflects these principles and subsequent developments; delivering a model of Universal progressivism.

e) That a Cwm Taf governance structure be agreed for the integration of the Early Years system.

4.3 The PSB also confirmed the commitment of partners in Cwm Taf to progress the development of these principles into a practical proposal

to deliver an integrated Early Years system in Cwm Taf, to be piloted in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Recognising early years as a priority for the region, commitment was also given to the removal of any potential barriers to information sharing across organisations and to extend the further development of proposals to include Bridgend CBC, given the changes to UHB boundaries.

4.4 The Council's Cabinet endorsed the proposals to transform the Early Years System in RCT in July 2019 including approving the plan to adopt a phased approach to providing funded childcare based on assessed need that is not limited to existing Flying Start postcode areas. As the proposals to pilot an integrated Early Years system in RCT had implications for the national Flying Start Programme, approval was required from Welsh Government Ministers. Cabinet Members also approved the submission of a formal proposal to Welsh Government seeking Ministerial support to pilot further changes to the Early Years system in relation to the introduction of a needs based approach for childcare and changes to health visiting.

4.5 The formal request for Ministerial approval was submitted in December 2019 and approval to proceed was granted in February 2020 however this was on the condition that a hybrid model of childcare delivery was implemented; the geographical eligibility had to remain as well as the needs based eligibility proposed.

4.6 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Board oversees the wider transformation work across the region, providing strategic direction and leadership and reports progress to the PSB. The most recent update was provided to the PSB in October 2021.

## 5. **PROGRESS WITH REGIONAL WORKSTREAMS**

5.1 The ambition of the Welsh Government Early Years Transformation Programme is to deliver on the vision which is set out in Prosperity for All "to create a truly joined-up, responsive system that puts the unique needs of each child at its heart". This means every service that families and young children come into contact with being clear how they can best support child development in the broadest sense. It will target parents as early as possible and sustain support where it is needed. Investing in the early years is an investment in the economy and workforce of the future.

> 'We want children from all backgrounds to have the best start in life. Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and maximise their chances of leading a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling adulthood, enabling them to participate fully in communities, the

workplace, and contribute to the future economic success of Wales.'

Prosperity for All – the National Strategy (Welsh Government)

5.2     The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Board oversees this work at a regional level and provides strategic direction and leadership to deliver on the following objectives:

- To explore how early years services might be re-configured,
- To explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally,
- To work together to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way,
- Focussing on coordination of services, planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs,
- To identify barriers to integration and remove them.

5.3     The Early Years Integration Transformation fund was introduced by Welsh Government in 2020-21 and made available to Pathfinder regions. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Board is responsible for managing this grant funding across the region to ensure it supports the delivery of the regional objectives aligned to the principles agreed by the PSB. The 2021-22 allocation for Cwm Taf is £359,730, based on the 0-7 population figures for RCT and Merthyr which is used to fund activities in the following four areas of work:

- Key roles – Regional Transformation Lead Officer and Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme Lead Officer
- External evaluation of the pilot delivery model in RCT – Stage 2
- Provision of wellbeing support to increase resilience and address inequalities resulting from impact of COVID-19
- Attachment Research project

5.4     A separate grant of £50k from Welsh Government supports the joint work underway on the development of the Early Years Vulnerability Profile and is used to provide additional technical capacity in the Education Systems Team in RCT.

5.5     Bridgend CBC joined Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as part of the regional Early Years Transformation Board in 2018-19, formally becoming part of the Welsh Government's pathfinder programme earlier this financial year. As a pathfinder area, Bridgend will receive a local co-ordination grant this financial year to support the mapping, scoping and visioning work required by Welsh Government. Following completion of this work any regional Transformation Grant funding awarded by Welsh Government for 2022-23 onwards will include additional monies to account for the 0-7 population figures in Bridgend.

5.6   Whilst the majority of the operational transformation work is taking place in RCT, there are also two key research and development activities taking place across the region.

**Attachment Research Project**

5.7   The first stage of the Attachment Research Project work led by Merthyr Tydfil on behalf of the region commenced in 2020-21, including delivering baseline training to the wider workforce across the region on identifying attachment difficulties.

5.8   The Parent Infant Foundation was commissioned in March 2021 to map existing services and interventions which support and/or treat the attachment relationship; consult with parents; undertake training and skills audit of the workforce; provide recommendations on approaches and future practice across the region.

5.9   This research has been subject to significant interest from other parts of Wales and from Welsh Government due to its breadth and scope across the Early Years services.  It is recognised and accepted that children's development does have a significant impact on the life trajectory of children, and for those whose development is impaired in these early stages can mean they can go on to be our most complex and most costly cases as they grow and progress through the systems be these Health, Social Services or Education.

**Vulnerability Profiling Project an Information Sharing Arrangements**

5.10  The aim of the Early Years Vulnerability Profiling Project is to develop a profile that facilitates the *"Early identification of children aged 0-7 who are at risk of not meeting the developmental milestones necessary to progress effectively through the early years as a result of the socio-economic and health factors they and or their families face"* in order to offer an alternative to geographically based eligibility criteria for early years services. This project builds on the experience and successful application of Vulnerability Profiling by Local Authorities to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people aged 7-16 years.

5.11  Overseen by an established Steering Group, this work is now progressing on two project fronts and activity is split between two separate workstreams:

**Workstream 1** is the First 1000 days focused Health profile which considers a larger list of data sets that have been submitted to SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage) at Swansea University for analysis. This information will be combined with data SAIL already hold

to produce a geographical map of risk factors and provide precedence rates that suggest the likelihood of future vulnerabilities.

**Workstream 2** is concerned with the development of an Early Years Vulnerability Profiling model to be piloted in RCT that can add key data sets from Health to the existing LA vulnerability profile able to identify individual children and families likely to be in need of enhanced support to be piloted as an alternative model to support the planning and targeting of Early Years support. The work to date has focused on the technical considerations and the physical transfer of electronic data between CTM UHB and RCTCBC, in order to facilitate the testing of an initial profile in 2021-22.

5.12    To support this development work, Data Disclosure Agreements are in place between RCT CBC and CTM UHB with a view to WASPI Information Sharing Protocols being developed in the near future.  The findings of the qualitative research undertaken by EMPOVA to gather citizen's and professionals' opinions about data sharing will be used to inform the way in which this work is communicated to both the public and professionals alongside information governance considerations.

5.13    Merthyr Tydfil has been developing its capacity around the Capita system and has been working alongside key individuals in RCT in order to benefit from the learning and work piloted by RCT and CTM UHB.

## 6.    <u>PROGRESS IN RCT</u>

6.1    In preparation for delivering an integrated Early Years system for 0-7 year olds across RCT and piloting a new Flying Start delivery model, the reorganisation of the Council's Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service was required. This was undertaken in 2018 and reported in detail to Scrutiny Committee in March 2020. The costs of the  reconfiguration of Council services were met within existing budgets, through the flexible use of Community and Children's Grant funding and the recommissioning of services.

6.2    The new approach being piloted in RCT builds on the pre-existing Resilient Families Service and sees the delivery of a new Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme alongside the delivery of universal parenting support, early language support and a hybrid childcare delivery model.

6.3    An Early Years appraisal is undertaken for all families referred to the Resilient Families Service with a child 7 years or under. This enables the needs of younger children to be reflected in the Family Plan and where appropriate a package of support includes enhanced early years interventions. This work is undertaken by members of the Programme Flexibilities Team who provide specialist Early Years appraisal,

Education Psychology assessment and therapeutic intervention. This team also hosts specialist posts commissioned by the Council from Health including Specialist Health Visitors, CNN's, Midwives, Speech and Language Therapist, a Sensory Occupational Therapist and also the Regional Early Years Transformation Programme Lead.

**Parenting**

6.4     A universal Parenting Offer was implemented in April 2018, making support available for any parents in RCT with a child up to the age of 18 years and specialist support for parents with children with additional needs.

6.5     Following a public consultation in 2020 to identify the needs of parents as result of covid-19 and lockdown, parenting support services were recommissioned in February 2021 to provide an opportunity for the Council to deliver a multi-faceted response to the needs of parents, facilitating universal access to information advice and guidance and tailoring bespoke interventions that acknowledge the individual experiences of families. The feedback from the public survey is detailed in section 8 of this report.

6.6     As a result, any family in need of parenting support can engage in open access provision, informal parenting support or formal parenting programmes, all delivered both virtually and from community venues across RCT. A spot purchasing arrangement is also being introduced, supported by an approved supplier list which will enable informal parenting support to be delivered by locally based community groups and organisations.

6.7     In addition to this, the Resilient Families Service Parenting Team offer bespoke one to one parenting support for families, working with RFS as part of a comprehensive package of family support. In 2020-21 the RFS Parenting Team worked with a total of 513 families. Of these families:

•   445 received support as part of their RFS Family Plan
•   56 received support as part of a statutory Care and Support or Child Protection Plan
•   12 received ongoing support as part of RFS exit strategy plans – to ensure they were fully confident to employ new techniques and strategies

As a result, 474 parents received one to one support, 16 parents received a mix of one to one and group support and 25 received group support only. Of those parents completing sessions 80% reported

positive improvements in their confidence to meet their children's needs.

6.8 In addition to one to one support the RFS Parenting Team also delivered 16 virtual Parenting Programmes. Of these programmes 14 were formal evidenced based covering the 0-18 age range and two were specialist programmes for parents of children with ASD.

**Childcare**

6.9 A hybrid approach to the delivery of childcare is currently being employed in RCT as a stipulation of Welsh Government approval for the implementation of the pilot. This comprises funded childcare places (2.5 hours a day, 5 days a week during term time) for children aged 2-3 years living in Flying Start postcode areas, and also the provision of short term funded childcare places for children outside of Fling Start postcode areas with an assessed need. This need is assessed by the Resilient Families Service and offered as part of a co-ordinated package of support to families in line with available places at that particular time. The original intention was to take a fully costed phased approach over a 3 year period to transfer from a postcode eligibility to a needs based model, however the hybrid approach directed by Welsh Government whilst costing significantly more has not been accompanied by additional funding. Therefore, currently in order to provide funded childcare for children with an assessed need living outside of Flying Start areas, vacant Flying Start places are utilised. Unfortunately, this does not provide the level of flexibility required to ensure the provision of funded childcare is available to every child identified as benefitting from it. Whilst additional covid funding from WG has eased this situation recently, this is only a short term solution.

6.10 In 2020-21 there were 845 children aged 2-3 years living in a Flying Start postcode area and therefore eligible to be offered a Flying Start funded childcare place, however only 71.5% of families took up the place. This is substantially less than the 93.6% take up rate in 2019 and attributable to the current climate post pandemic where parents would prefer children remain home in light of local covid-19 infection rates. Additional focus has been placed on supporting the take up of places given the important role childcare can play in assisting children's developmental progress that is likely to have been affected by the restrictions of lockdown.

6.11 This has meant that there have been places available for allocation to those children living outside of Flying Start areas who have been assessed as requiring a funded childcare place as part of their family's involvement with the Resilient Families Service. A total of 99 children received this funded childcare since 1st January 2021, with 42 children currently in placement at the time of writing this report.

**Enhanced Health Visiting**

6.12 The Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme replaces the previous Flying Start contract with Health and commissions the deployment of Family Health Visitors to provide universal access to enhanced health visiting services when required. The Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme was launched in October 2020 despite the additional pressures and restrictions placed on partners having to adapt services in response to the pandemic. Adopting an approach of universal progressivism, this service is providing all families across RCT with children aged 0-5 years with the opportunity to access an enhanced level of Health Visiting contacts as required, regardless of geographical location. The universal offer delivered by Family Health Visitors provides the contact visits as described in the Healthy Child Wales Programme, with the additionality of an antenatal contact, as well as a contact at 20 months to undertake a Schedule of Growing Skills (SOGs) assessment. The assessments provide extra opportunities to identify developmental needs of children and inform the targeting of wider early years services and family support interventions delivered via the Resilient Families Service (RFS) in addition to the wider health support.

6.13 Since the introduction of the new Family Health Visiting programme in October 2020, Health Visiting referrals to RFS have been lower than anticipated. A joint LA/UHB Strategic Management group has been established to review the data and identify and implement measures to improve referral rates. The measures included training for all Health Visitors jointly facilitated by Council and UHB staff; the production of a new leaflet for HV's to share with families to explain the service changes and support available; and revisions made to the data recording templates and reporting procedures to improve data quality and timeliness.

6.14 The above has led to a steady increase in the number of referrals being made to RFS and families being supported, from 139 (October 2020 – April 2021) to 168 (April 2021 – September 2021), however they still remain far lower than expected (current referral rates are 1.6% of children registered for the programme as opposed to 32% of registrations recorded as having a FRAIT score below 20 and therefore expected to require some additional support). One possibility for the low referral rate is that families are accessing RFS as self referrals as opposed to HV referrals, however regular Contract Monitoring meetings and Strategic Management Group meetings are taking place to look to address this as a priority.

**Early Language and Communication**

6.15 The delivery of both universal and targeted early language and communication interventions is undertaken by the Council's Talk and Play Team (TAP) that sit within the Resilient Families Service. Supported by the RFS Speech and Language Therapist the team undertake a specialist Wellcomm assessment for children identified as experiencing language delay by Health Visitors during their 20 months SOGS assessment. For those children scoring in the 'red' or 'amber' range on the Wellcomm assessment the TAP Team will undertake a block of early language intervention working with parents and children together. The team employ the Adult Child Interaction (ACI) approach 'Be Here Be Clear' which is a relational approach to supporting parents to support their own child's language and communication development which reinforces opportunities to build secure attachments.

6.16 In 2020-21 the Talk and Play Team (TAP) received a total of 132 referrals for early speech and language intervention via RFS. TAP undertook 107 Wellcomm Assessments with children of which less than 30% resided in Flying Start areas. This supports the rationale for extending Early Years services beyond the geographically determined parameters of Flying Start programme. Following TAP Team intervention 67% of children and 59% of parents showed positive improvements. As this is a new approach this data provides a baseline against which future performance can be measured. In addition to the one to one support provided, the TAP Team delivered Song and Rhyme weekly drop in sessions on Zoom, a Baby Babble programme and a Recycle, Reuse & Rebuild craft programme, engaging 35 families.

6.17 The demand on the service has significantly increased this year with 163 referrals made between 1st April and 31st August 2021; a 56% increase on the referral rate for the preceding 6 month period. Of the 84 children identified as having speech language and communication delays following Wellcomm assessment, 81% (68) scored within the red and 19% (16) scored within the amber categories, indicating a need for direct intervention.

7. **MEASURING IMPACT AND OUTCOMES**

7.1 To ensure the impact and outcomes of the pilot approach in RCT are effectively measured this work is subject to a three stage external evaluation, the first of which was completed by Miller Research in April 2021. The Stage 1 report evaluates the pilot since its launch, reviews the progress of implementation so far and the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. The key findings are summarised below and the full report and can be found in Appendix 1.

   a. The pilot and its objectives appear fit for purpose and highly coherent with the policy context. It meets the explicit requirement

for the coordination and integration of existing early years programmes and the close cooperation of the local authority and health board.

b.  Progress has been made against the objectives of the pilot, which remain coherent and relevant to the policies and needs. As the programme is in the early stage of delivery there is still much to be done to fully realise the objectives, such as the removal of barriers that have been identified.

c.  The resources available are adequate in the eyes of stakeholders. Through collaboration and coordination, the existing skills, knowledge, and experience of staff is being better deployed to meet the needs of families and organisational needs. Where there are identified gaps, training is being provided to address them. The majority of funding for the pilot is being met with existing budgets, with transformation programme funds being used to support some aspects and develop regional working. There are deliberate management processes in place with governance structures including all teams involved.

d.  As the approach is built on the integration work that has already happened in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, notably the establishment of the Resilient Families Service, delivery has begun successfully. Services are available to all in RCT with access determined by assessment of need. Reservations amongst stakeholders, notably over workforce capacity, have been overcome. COVID-19 has been a disruption but only with a similar impact as would have been the case on the sector without the pilot approach. The rapid adoption of remote communications has facilitated greater cooperation at the strategic level although there are concerns that there will be a greater strain on services due to the pandemic.

e.  At this stage there is already some evidence of the outcomes of the pilot. The distinction between generic and Flying Start health visiting has been removed, with caseloads shared across the workforce. All Health Visitors are now able to offer the same range of support, including an additional antenatal visit and a visit at 20 months for the SOGS assessment. There is evidence of the presence of new families receiving support who previously would not have been eligible due to where they live.

7.2  The commissioning for Stage 2 of the external evaluation is underway with a view to this work being completed by the end of the financial year. Stage 2 will focus on rigorous evaluation of the systems and processes underpinning the pilot delivery model.

7.3 A third stage of evaluation is planned for 2022-23 which will be a summative evaluation concerned with measuring the outcomes for service users and the impact on services and policy of the new delivery model and will mark the end of the pilot phase. The findings of this Stage 3 evaluation will inform local discussion about the adoption of this model on a regional footprint as well as formal discussions with Welsh Government about implications for national policy.

## 8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

An Equality and Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

## 9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

There are no Welsh Language implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

## 10. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Consultation with parents and families was undertaken prior to the implementation of a universal parenting offer across RCT in April 2018. At this time parents reported wanting to see more informal support tailored to their needs that they could access in their local communities. They also requested support for specific elements of parenting such as managing behaviour and supporting the educational needs of their children.

10.2 A 'Parenting through Covid-19' Survey was created and public consultation undertaken in September 2020. The survey was accessible via the Consultation page on the Council's website and a link to it was promoted via the Council's social media platforms, the Family Information Service, WICID.tv and YEPS social media platforms. Council partners and commissioned providers were also approached to promote the survey and encourage parents they are in contact with the complete it.

10.3 A total of 200 individuals responded to the survey which asked questions about how, when and where they felt parenting support should be available; what barriers they faced to accessing support; specific support that would be helpful at different stages; specific help they require; what they may have received in the past that was helpful; and their suggestions for improving support. Key headline findings include:

- 58% said they would like to access online support with only 36% reporting they would like to be able to join a group

- 76% would like to see parenting support available advertised on local facebook groups and 59% would like to see it advertised in school settings
- 48% reported they did not know where to look for support
- 27% found the times support was available as a barrier to accessing it and 23% found the support did not meet their needs
- 69% with a child aged 4-11 felt they needed help to support their child's emotional wellbeing and mental health and this rose to 71% for those with children aged 11+
- 64% wanted support that was tailored to their family's needs

10.4 Analysis of this survey feedback was used to inform the detail within the new service specifications for parenting support as part of the formal procurement of revised parenting support services as set out in section 5 of this report.

10.5 Consultation with service users and stakeholders about the Early Years Transformation goals and their experiences of the pilot approach in RCT is ongoing. Informal consultation takes place on a regular basis with families receiving Resilient Families Service interventions and the UHB are currently developing a service user engagement strategy which will include gathering feedback on the new Health Visiting / RFS pathway in RCT. A regional survey is currently taking place for parents with children aged 0-7 years across Cwm Taf Morgannwg to seek their views on the support received during their child's early years and how they would like to continue to be involved in the Transformation Programme.

10.6 Consultation with partners including; health, education, housing providers, childcare and play providers, and third sector organisations takes place on a termly basis via the Resilient Families Service Provider Forum meetings, and also on a one to one basis during contract monitoring visits. All commissioned partners are signed up to providing universal access to family support services as set out in the Council's Resilient Families Programme.

10.7 The contents of this report were subject to pre-scrutiny on 8th December 2021, by the Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. In considering the report, Members conveyed their support for the work being undertaken in RCT in the delivery of needs based Early Years services especially in light of the potential vulnerabilities of grant funding. The Committee voted to make formal written representation to Cabinet in support of the direction of travel towards a fully needs based approach and away from the 'postcode lottery' of Flying Start.

11. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

11.1 The cost of Cwm Taf Morgannwg developments is being met from regional grant funding received as part of the Welsh Government's Early Years Transformation Programme. This funding is managed by RCT on behalf of the region.

11.2 There are no additional costs to the Council incurred as a result of the pilot work underway in RCT as these costs are being met from existing grant funding as part of the Children and Communities Grant the Council receives from Welsh Government.

11.3 As with all grant funding there is a level of risk to the Council should this funding be withdrawn at a future time, however the Welsh Government remains committed to the transformation of Early Years services within the wider anti-poverty and early intervention and prevention agendas.

11.4 The Children and Communities Grant offers far more flexibility than the Council has previously had to move funding where it is required to meet identified need, therefore should a reduction in the grant occur the Council remains in a good position to re-allocate funds to priority areas. As a result of Covid-19 the delivery of flexible early years services is a clear identified priority for both the Council and Welsh Government.

## 12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from this work; however consultation with Welsh Government is ongoing via both the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Transformation Board and the Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder Programme to ensure transformation proposals do not contravene grant funding conditions.

12.2 The following legislation has been considered in relation to the development of the transformation pilot:

**The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:**

- Putting an individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being
- Supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of this care and support
- Increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need
- Strong partnership working between all agencies and organisations.

**The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:**

- A more equal Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales

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

13.1 The implementation of the new Early Years System for RCT contributes to the Council's corporate priority that People are independent, healthy and successful, by improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do by:

- working in partnership with Welsh Government, strive to reduce child poverty, providing services that encourage and build resilience of children and their families.

13.2 The Early Years System has been developed in full consideration of the sustainable development principles. The work also supports the Council to contribute to all of the seven well-being goals:-

- **A prosperous Wales:** children who receive support at the earliest opportunity are more prepared for adulthood and achieving prosperous futures.

- **A resilient Wales:** children who are given every opportunity to meet their developmental milestones and overcome barriers to developing skills are prepared with the space to grow and the tools to build resilience throughout life.

- **A healthier Wales:** access to enhanced support that is not restricted by geographical boundaries supports all children who need it to meet their developmental milestones and develop social skills, enhancing their emotional wellbeing.

- **A more equal Wales:** by delivering services based on an assessment of need as opposed to being limited by geographically based eligibility criteria ensures that those children and families most in need of support have access to it irrespective of where they live.

- **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means to share community resources in order to be responsive to need and build resilience.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the freedom to progress through the early years in the language of their choice learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.

- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to effective early years opportunities are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible adults.

## 14. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

14.1 This report has provided Members with details of the progress made across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region towards the delivery of an integrated early years system as part of the Welsh Government's Early Years Transformation Programme and the transformation of Early Years services in RCT.

**Other Information:-**

*Relevant Scrutiny Committee*
Children and Young People

*Contact Officer*
Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

## AS AMENDED BY

## THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

## 27TH JANUARY 2022

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF EARLY YEARS SERVICES IN RCT

**Background Papers**

The provision of Early Years Transformation in RCT – Stage 1 External Evaluation Report – Miller Research, July 2021

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# The Provision of Early Years Transformation

## Stage 1 Evaluation

Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CBC

Version/ Publication Date July 2021

The Provision of Early Years Transformation: Stage 1 Evaluation, Version 1

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**Glossary**

| Acronym/Key word | Definition |
|---|---|
| Capita system | A single management information system to capture all assessments, appraisals and support packages offered to families, enabling accurate record keeping and transparency of processes undertaken. |
| Cheltenham tool | A tool utilised by Health to ensure parity of caseloads across the Family Health Visiting Service. This tool allocates workforce numbers according to levels of deprivation. |
| Children and Communities Grant (CCG) | An umbrella initiative that brings together the funding for seven existing Welsh Government programmes and supports local authorities to deliver the services they provide more strategically through the flexibility of these individual programmes. |
| Early Years Integration Transformation Programme | A co-construction programme involving nine pathfinder Public Service Boards. The programme aims to test a more coherent, integrated and focused approach to the early years, to ensure that children from all backgrounds have the best start in life. |
| Families First Programme | A universal programme for families with children aged 0-25 that aims to improve the design and delivery of local authorities' family support services, by offering support that caters for whole families, rather than individuals within families, and by co-ordinating the organisations working with families, so that families receive joined-up support. |
| Flying Start Programme | A targeted early years programme for families with children under the age of four years who live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. |
| Formative evaluation | A type of evaluation used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an intervention's processes and target areas for improvement. |

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| Healthy Child Wales Programme (HCWP) | A universal health programme for all children up to the age of 7 years that sets out the planned contacts children and families should receive from health visitors and other health professionals, from the time of maternity service handover up to the first years of schooling. |
| Public Service Board (PSB) | Public Services Boards improve joint working across all public services in each local authority area in Wales. |
| Resilience Matrix Tool | An assessment tool that focuses on a family's resilience levels. The information gathered from the assessment will be used to inform a Family plan that aims to build a family's resilience levels and remove any barriers that are limiting positive change. |
| Resilient Families Service (RFS) | RCT CBC's recognised approach to delivering the early intervention and prevention agenda across RCT.  The service aims to provide bespoke support for families up to 12 weeks to build their resilience with a single point of access and a single referral system. |
| Schedule of Growing Skills (SoGS) assessment | An approach to measuring child development through the assessment of nine key areas: Passive Posture, Active Posture, Locomotor, Manipulative, Visual, Hearing and Language, Speech and Language, Interactive Social and Self-Care Social. |
| Summative evaluation | A type of evaluation that focuses on an intervention's impact or efficacy through careful examination of project design and management. It is primarily outcome focused and most often undertaken at the end of the project, when the program or intervention is stable. |
| Team Around the Family (TAF) | An early intervention and prevention service that aims to work with families to help them identify their strengths and needs. TAF supports families by offering advice, guidance and support, coordinating with other agencies when |

| | appropriate. (Superseded in RCT by Resilient Families Service) |
|---|---|
| Theory of Change | An evaluation approach that outlines the causal linkages in an intervention. The process entails defining long-term goals then mapping backwards to identify necessary preconditions. |
| WellComm speech and language assessments | A toolkit designed to help early years settings identify children from six months to six years old who might be experiencing delays in speech and language development. |

## Executive Summary

i.    In 2017, Cwm Taf PSB and Welsh Government began working together in what would become the Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme. This programme is designed to address concerns around the coordination of early years services. In recognition of the steps already taken to address this, Cwm Taf became the first 'pathfinder' area for the programme, to develop and pilot an integrated approach based on local contexts.

ii.   As part of the transformation programme, a new Flying Start delivery model is being piloted in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) that will see the delivery of a Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme, alongside the delivery of universal parenting support, early language support and a hybrid childcare delivery model via the Resilient Families Service.

iii.  This Stage 1 evaluation report assesses the pilot since its launch, reviews the progress of implementation so far and the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board area.

iv.   The pilot and its objectives appear fit for purpose and highly coherent with the policy context. It meets the explicit requirement for the coordination and integration of existing early years programmes and the close cooperation of the local authority and health board. Policies the pilot is directly relevant to are:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2016
- Prosperity for All
- A Healthier Wales
- Regional Strategy for Children, Young People and Families
- Children and Communities Grant
- Healthy Child Wales Programme

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v.       There is a clear need for the pilot approach from these policies and it is evident to stakeholders that specific circumstances in RCT also present a driving need. When compared to Wales as a whole and the wider UK, RCT has amongst the highest levels of child poverty with rising levels of social, communication and mental health issues amongst children and young people, high rates of children looked after on the child protection register and high numbers of children leaving school with no qualifications. In summary the rationale for the pilot is:

- To address the vision set out in Welsh Government policy and programmes
- To provide equality of access by extending support from a geographical, postcode-based approach to a needs-based approach
- To meet the high-level of demand for support services in the local area
- To deescalate vulnerable families in need of support, preventing the move up to statutory services
- To reach the families with the most complex needs
- To provide a unified service for children and families with a single point of access

vi.       The core objectives of the pilot are:

- To explore how early years services might be re-configured.
- To explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally.
- To work together to deliver services in a coordinated, integrated, and timely way.
- To coordinate services, planning, commissioning, and identifying and addressing needs.
- To identify barriers to integration and remove them.

vii.       Progress has been made against the objectives, which remain coherent and relevant to the policies and needs. As the programme

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viii. The resources available are adequate in the eyes of stakeholders. Through collaboration and coordination, the existing skills, knowledge, and experience of staff is being better deployed to meet the needs of families and organisational needs. Where there are identified gaps, training is being provided to address them. The majority of funding for the pilot is being met with existing budgets, with transformation programme funds being used to support some aspects and develop regional working. There are deliberate management processes in place with governance structures including all teams involved.

ix. As the approach is built on the integration work that has already happened in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, notably the establishment of the Resilient Families Service, delivery has begun successfully. Services are available to all in RCT with access determined by assessment of need. Reservations amongst stakeholders, notably over workforce capacity, have been overcome. COVID-19 has been a disruption but only with a similar impact as would have been the case on the sector without the pilot approach. The rapid adoption of remote communications has facilitated greater cooperation at the strategic level although there are concerns that there will be a greater strain on services due to the pandemic.

x. At this stage there is already some evidence of the outcomes of the pilot. The distinction between generic and Flying Start health visiting has been removed, with caseloads shared across the workforce. All health visitors are now able to offer the same range of support, including an additional antenatal visit and a visit at 20 months for the SOGS assessment. Stakeholders have commented on the presence of new families receiving support who previously would not have been eligible due to where they live.

xi.      The longer-term impacts will take considerable time to become evident. There are a range of deep-seated changes expected that provide a fundamental difference to the population of RCT. The goals go far beyond the stated objectives of the pilot reflecting the vocational nature of the sector.

**Recommendations**

xii.      The experiences stemming from the pilot's early stages of implementation has provided several recommendations for future delivery of the pilot, as well as the requirements for a future evaluation, including monitoring requirements. These are fully explained in section 10 of the report.

xiii.      The recommendations for future delivery of the pilot are to:

- amend the Resilience Matrix scoring system to improve accuracy.
- increase communication between services at all levels.
- protect the availability of training.
- review health visitor referrals into Resilient Families Service

xiv.      The recommendations for future evaluation are to:

- continuously monitor and gather data.
- prepare stakeholders for stage 2 evaluation in early 2022.
- conduct a stage 3 impact evaluation once a significant period of delivery has passed.

# 1.      Introduction

1.1      In recent years Welsh Government has worked with local authorities, health boards and the third sector to instigate a range of early years programmes. These provide children and their families with the support and guidance they require to have the best start in life and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

1.2      As a result of these programmes, there have been improvements in the provision of services and take up of support by families. There has, however, been concern that the approach to early years lacks coordination, minimising positive impacts on children, their families and the wider community.

1.3      In 2017, Welsh Government recognised the steps Cwm Taf PSB had been making to address these concerns and both parties began actively engaging in early years co-construction. This has since developed into the Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme with Cwm Taf coming on board as the first 'pathfinder' PSB. Individual approaches towards integration in the early years sector are being developed and piloted in each PSB in the programme based on the context of their own geographic areas.

1.4      As part of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, a new Flying Start delivery model is being piloted in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT). This new pilot approach will see the delivery of a Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme alongside the delivery of universal parenting support and early language support and a hybrid childcare delivery model via the Resilient Families Service.

1.5      To ensure the impact and outcomes of the approach are effectively measured, Miller Research was commissioned by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) in December 2020 to undertake Stage 1 of the external evaluation.

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1.6 The purpose of this Stage 1 report is to evaluate the pilot since its launch, review the progress of implementation so far and the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board area. The findings are to be considered by all three local authorities in the health board, RCT, Merthyr Tydfil, and Bridgend as well as the Welsh Government.

1.7 In addition to serving as a standalone evaluation in its own right, Stage 1 also involved the development of an evaluation framework and a plan for a Stage 2, making recommendations for how and when this future evaluation should take place.

*Report structure*

1.8 The remainder of the Stage 1 report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the methodology for the evaluation
- Chapters 3-7 present the evaluation team's findings, grouped by the sections of the logic model produced as part of the evaluation. These sections include:
  - Policy drivers
  - Needs and objectives
  - Inputs
  - Activities and outputs
  - Outcomes and impacts
- Chapter 8 presents the impact and counterfactual options appraisal and sets out the approach to be undertaken in Stage 2 and later.
- Chapter 9 presents the evaluation team's conclusions for the Stage 1 evaluation.
- Chapter 10 contains the recommendations for the pilot moving forward.

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## 2.     Methodology

2.1     Stage 1 is a formative evaluation, exploring what works and why, the challenges and enablers for delivery of the pilot and lessons learned to date, as well as developing a robust, evidence-based approach to a summative, impact evaluation of the pilot. The methodology combines several approaches, with Theory of Change used predominantly.

2.2     Evidence was gathered through semi-structured qualitative interviews and a supplementary survey. In total the evaluation conducted 31 interviews with strategic and operational stakeholders. The topic guides are included in Annex C.

2.3     The supplementary survey was employed to further the reach of fieldwork. Pilot leads were conscious of the difficulties in attempting to conduct fieldwork with health and local authority staff during a Lockdown period of the COVID19 pandemic in early 2021. The survey was designed to allow stakeholders unable to commit to a full interview the chance to respond to key evaluation questions. Ultimately, most stakeholders contacted were able to participate in an interview with just five electing to respond via the survey.

2.4     A logic model (Annex B) was constructed, laying out the outline of the pilot, demonstrating the causal link between effects and the pilot activity laid out on Theory of Change principles, starting with impacts and outcomes, and working backwards including how they relate to the original project context and objectives.

2.5     From the logic model an evaluation framework (Annex A) was developed that sets out specific questions for evaluation and the identified indicators that will help answer those questions. The framework sets out the type of data, the likely source, and whose responsibility it is to gather the data.

2.6     Both the logic model and the evaluation framework were tested with a workshop of strategic stakeholders. This workshop gave an

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opportunity for the stakeholders to comment on these vital evaluation tools and for the evaluation team to clarify their understanding.

2.7    This report contains the findings for the Stage 1 evaluation. The proposed evaluation approach to Stage 2 is contained in a separate document.

## 3. Policy

3.1 This section sets out the policies driving the need for the pilot in RCT. The pilot is either a direct response to policy demands or has been shaped by the circumstances that they create. The policies range from pan-Wales legislation to more local formal strategies.

3.2 The policies were identified through the document review and from conversations with stakeholders.

3.3 Overall, there is a clear driving vision for the pilot, stemming from national policy adopted into local delivery. As expected, strategic stakeholders were very clear on this vision and how the pilot fits within the policy framework. Frontline delivery staff were also aware, though to a more limited extent, and usually focused on their area of delivery.

*Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*

3.4 The Well-being of Future Generations Act aims to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Circumstances in the early years of a person's life can make a large impact on the seven Well-being Goals and much can be done during this time. As a result, The Act makes it compulsory for public bodies, including local authorities and health boards, to think long-term. The Act explicitly states that this is to be done through improving integration and collaboration between services and by working better with communities.

3.5 Stakeholders mentioned particular alignment of the pilot with the goals for a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales, and a more resilient Wales. These goals have acted as drivers for decision making during the planning stages.

*Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2016*

3.6 The underlying aim for this Act is to make the care and support that people in Wales receive personal to their needs. It sets out four

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principles to ensure that the right help is delivered at the right time by setting out a person's right to a needs assessment if it appears that they have a need for support services. The four principles are:

- Well-being
- People
- Partnership and integration
- Prevention

3.7     The pilot is consistent with these principles, as it seeks to improve the well-being of children and their families, assessing needs on an individual basis and taking account of the opinions of families. It aims to then deliver better services that address the needs highlighted in assessments, by coordinating services and the staff delivering them. The focus on prevention is outlined as an effective way of working for early years.

*Prosperity for All*

3.8     Prosperity for All is the national strategy for Wales, published in 2017. Similar to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Prosperity for All works in the long-term context to build a Wales where everyone has a good quality of life, living in strong, safe communities.

3.9     The strategy recognises early years as the first cross-cutting priority area: areas with the greatest potential to contribute to long-term prosperity and well-being. It explicitly lays out that public services will 'build on our current early years programmes and create a more joined-up, responsive system that puts the unique needs of each child at its heart.'[1]

3.10    The pilot approach is one response by the local authority in RCT and Cwm Taf health board to fulfil this obligation, bringing separate

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[1] Prosperity for All: the national Strategy, 2017, p.23
https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2017-10/prosperity-for-all-the-national-strategy.pdf

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programmes together. The pilot builds on previous work undertaken by RCT to integrate its own early years sector by incorporating other stakeholders, such as the health board, into the approach for the first time.

*A Healthier Wales*

3.11 A Healthier Wales is Welsh Government's action plan, which resulted from a Parliamentary Review of the Long Term Future of Health and Social Care. It recognises that there are determinants of health wider than just the NHS, including an individual's early years. The plan calls for the coordination of health and social care, involving NHS, local authority, and other organisations, working together in an integrated way.

*Regional Strategy for Children, Young People and Families*

3.12 The Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) is committed to delivering a range of strategic intentions across the region, including delivery of the goals of the legislation and national strategies discussed above. The regional strategy is built on the shared vision to increase the resilience of families and communities, providing the best possible environment for families, children, and young people, and a shift to early preventative action and away from more complex care.

3.13 The pathways identified in the regional strategy to improve outcomes are providing universal services at the right time, promoting well-being and resilience, early intervention when difficulties emerge, and the targeting of intensive support for those in most need. Three year objectives for the strategy include information sharing, coordination, cooperation, integration of services, and enhancing joint arrangements for all partners.

3.14 The regional strategy is guided by national policy direction as well as through a shared construction with Cwm Taf. Both local authorities of RCT and Merthyr Tydfil share similar outlooks in designing early

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services to be based on the needs of the communities that receive them.

3.15    It is a natural choice to trial the integrated approach of the pilot in RCT as the local authority has recently undergone major transformation, reorganising, and integrating its services. As part of this, the early years has been made into a cross-cutting agenda, no longer within a separate department, that is a priority across the local authority. Most stakeholders, save a few high-level strategic stakeholders, are not able to distinguish between the integration caused by the pilot and the previous integration undergone within the local authority. Rather, it is seen as a single process naturally progressing through all aspects of RCT. This blurring of distinctions is aided by the clear alignment of the pilot with the regional strategy of the PSB.

*Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme*

3.16    In recent years Welsh Government has worked with local authorities, health boards and the third sector to instigate a range of early years programmes to provide children and their families with the support and guidance they require to have the best start in life. There are concerns across Wales and within Welsh Government that this approach has lacked coordination, which has minimised the potential positive impacts such an approach could have on children, families, and communities.

3.17    Welsh Government recognised Cwm Taf's efforts with coordination and integration and in December 2017 the PSB became Welsh Government's early years integration co-construction partner, with the aim of developing an early years integration model that could subsequently be rolled out more widely. It became apparent that developing a single model for roll-out across Wales would not be possible due to different circumstances between local authorities. Eight further 'pathfinder' PSBs were signed up to develop their own approaches based on the specific contexts of each area.

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3.18    The transformation programme has provided funding to facilitate the integration of early years within PSB areas, including services delivered by local authority, health board, and third sector. The pilot in RCT was initiated prior to transformation programme funding being announced and the cost of it was met within existing budgets as a result of internal service reorganisation undertaken by the Council. In Cwm Taf the transformation programme funding has been used to support aspects of the pilot and to develop regional working. Reflecting the additional year of work compared to the other pathfinder areas, allowing for greater mapping and the building vital relationships across the sector, the pilot delivery area for the Cwm Taf PSB is larger and more ambitious than the other pathfinders and the only one to cover an entire local authority footprint.

*Children and Communities Grant*

3.19    The Children and Communities Grant brings together seven Welsh Government programmes that address the needs of children, young people, families, and vulnerable people. The programmes are:

- Childcare and Play
- Communities for Work Plus
- Families First
- Flying Start
- Legacy Fund
- St David's Day Fund
- Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People

3.220    Of these, Families First, Flying Start, and Childcare and Play are the most relevant for the Early Years Transformation Pilot within RCT. The pilot is deliberately designed to ensure there is no duplication of funding by coordinating the delivery of the programmes together. The individual needs assessment is designed to improve access to the programmes for those in need.

*Healthy Child Wales Programme*

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3.21    The progressive universalism philosophy of the Healthy Child Wales Programme has been adopted by the early years sector in general. The levels of universal, enhanced, and intensive support are seen as useful labels to describe the services and the appropriateness of delivery. Local authority, health and other stakeholders have used them to explain to the evaluation how the pilot is seeking to improve access to universal services across RCT and ensure those in need of enhanced and intensive intervention are identified and supported quickly.

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## 4.    Needs and Objectives

**Needs**

4.1    To justify the resources inputted into a project, there needs to be a clear rationale. This includes identifying areas which exhibit market failure and which the pilot can address, but also areas of opportunity and strength that the pilot can exploit and enhance further. Once these needs are identified, it can be established whether they will be met by the objectives of the pilot.

4.2    The need for the pilot was identified through the review of policy documents and discussion with stakeholders at an operational and strategic level, whilst its objectives were contained in the Business Plan.

4.3    The needs for the early years pilot in RCT are contained in the evaluation logic model (see Annex B). Looked at collectively, the rationale for the pilot is as follows:

- To address the vision set out in Welsh Government policy and programmes
- To provide equality of access by extending support from a geographical, postcode-based approach to a needs-based approach
- To meet the high-level of demand for support services in the local area
- To deescalate vulnerable families in need of support, preventing the move up to statutory services
- To reach the families with the most complex needs
- To provide a unified service for children and families with a single point of access

4.4    On completion of the documentation review and qualitative interviews with stakeholders, it is evident that the need to address the strategic direction stemming from Welsh Government policy is a strong driver

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of the pilot. The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (for more detail see section 3) in particular were cited as key policies. Specifically, the principle of prevention was outlined in both acts as an effective method to achieve the goal of reducing the levels of vulnerability amongst families in Wales. The adoption of this approach is evidenced in RCT through the integration of a restorative, solution-focused approach to work amongst its operational staff.

4.5     The targeting of services via population assessments is also prominent in the legislation, with collaboration and coordination between services and organisations highlighted as an essential condition in order to achieve successful targeting.

4.6     The central rationale behind the implementation of the pilot in RCT is the shift in approach from providing support based on a family's postcode, to support based on need. Stakeholders emphasised that service users do not fit into specific geographical boundaries and that "vulnerability is not postcode based." (Operational Stakeholder, 2021). The unfairness and lack of equality stemming from the previous arrangements of Flying Start support was cited as exacerbating issues within the local area, with certain houses on the same street eligible and others not. A key aspect of this shift to a needs-based approach has included the transference of Flying Start standards and quality to previously non-Flying Start services.

4.7     Recent research by Loughborough University indicates that, of the UK nations, Wales has the highest levels of child poverty. Specifically, the areas of Cardiff and RCT have the greatest percentages of children living in poverty in Wales, at 35%.[2] Furthermore, there is a rising number of social, communication and mental health issues amongst

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[2] Loughborough University; Centre for Research in Social policy (CRSP), *Compilation of child poverty local indicators.*

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children and young people in RCT. The borough has high rates of children looked after on the child protection register and high numbers of children leaving school with no qualifications.

4.8     In coherence with the preventative approach adopted in RCT, a clear rationale for the pilot is averting families from escalating up to statutory services. Given the high level of vulnerability identified in RCT (see 4.7), it is imperative that families are given the tools at an early stage to cope with difficulties, thus preventing them from reaching a crisis point. This involves nurture and interaction between support staff and children and families before any breakdown.

4.9     As well as preventing families from escalating up to statutory services, there is also a need to support those who have stepped down from social services. In the absence of this support there is a risk that families can relapse and require subsequent escalation back up to statutory services. By supporting families who have 'stepped down', it ensures stability as staff will continuously work with them on safeguarding issues, keeping support on an even keel. Furthermore, it allows families to remain safe and engaged.

4.10    The ability to reach families identified as requiring additional support to prevent the escalation of complex needs is a significant driver behind the early years pilot in RCT. Given the wide range of potential difficulties experienced by children and families, including parent-child relationships, maternal or paternal mental health difficulties and the effects of domestic abuse, coupled with the importance of the first one thousand days of an infant's life, there is a need to offer flexible support at an early stage that reflects the situation of the family. Considering the barriers experienced by these families there is a danger that they will not engage with the support on offer and will repeatedly make poor judgments contrary to their own interests. Therefore, there is a need to empower families to make the right decisions and own their support plan, to help them develop their own resilience.

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4.11    The need for a unified service, with a single a point of access was widely cited by stakeholders. The pilot is seen as a necessary development to enhance the RFS, already established in RCT, to allow it to be a true unified service. Previously, under the TAF structure the offer of support was fragmented with different services delivered and managed in a different way, inevitably resulting in families receiving varied quality in support. The limited communication between services meant that there was a lack of awareness amongst operational staff of the range of support available to families, as well as who would be best placed to offer that support. This highlighted the need for a delivery of services that offered a more fluid, time-efficient approach to families.

**Objectives**

4.12    The core objectives of the pilot are as follows:

- To explore how early years services might be re-configured.
- To explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally.
- To work together to deliver services in a coordinated, integrated, and timely way.
- To coordinate services, planning, commissioning, and identifying and addressing needs.
- To identify barriers to integration and remove them.

4.113   Overall, the objectives of the pilot in RCT are coherent and relevant to the policies and needs outlined above. Furthermore, they appear suitable to achieve the intended outcomes and impacts that will be explored further in subsequent sections. Stakeholders have stated the pilot's capacity to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families yet recognise that many of the benefits stemming from the new way of working will emerge over the longer term.

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4.114 Reflecting on the delivery of objectives at this early stage of implementation, it is evident that services are being delivered in a more coordinated, integrated, and timely way in comparison to previous arrangements of delivery. Nonetheless, it is also clear that there remains a lot to be done to ensure services are fully coordinated and integrated. Additionally, whilst the pilot has already met the aim of identifying barriers to delivery, such as Health Visitor access to the RFS system, several of those barriers are yet to be overcome.

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# 5. Inputs

5.1    Inputs are the resources available to an intervention to carry out its activities. This evaluation aims to identify the key inputs / resources that are available to RCT and whether the resources will enable the pilot to carry out its activities and achieve its objectives effectively.

*Funding*

5.2    As a pathfinder for the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme, Cwm Taf PSB has access to the Early Years Transformation Funding grant. For the pilot in RCT this funding is used to support aspects of the new approach and develop regional working. It is focused on mainstreaming changes in the coordination of existing funding rather than create a reliance on continued additional grant funding. This use of the grant funding appears to demonstrate a commitment to making lasting change through the pilot.

5.3    The early years services themselves are funded through existing programmes and policies, discussed in section 3, with the grants used flexibly to meet the needs of children and families in RCT and the programme requirements. Because of this, stakeholders are confident that the funding for the pilot is sufficient. There is concern that funding from the Transformation Programme will cease before the pilot approach has been fully embedded. This uncertainty is caused by the annual nature of funding from Welsh Government with confirmation of grant funding often coming late.

*Skills, knowledge, and experience*

5.4    The pilot approach utilises the skills and knowledge of the early years sector within RCT and the wider Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. The Cwm Taf PSB has a reputation for innovation, taking national programmes and delivering them to meet the specific needs of their communities.

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5.5    Related to the skills and knowledge of the individuals and services involved in the pilot is the legacy of integration work in RCT. Stakeholders in some cases were not able to define a boundary between previous reorganisation in RCT and the new pilot approach, viewing it as a logical continuation of the same process. The recent experience of the RFS in coordinating an integrated approach is of great value to the pilot and should serve as an aid in overcoming barriers.

5.6    Additional staff have been appointed in the form of a Regional Early Years Transformation Programme Lead Officer and a Health Programme Lead. The Regional Early Years Transformation Programme Lead oversees the Pathfinder integration work across Cwm Taf and works to coordinate all partners across the region. They facilitate and manage the attachment research project, workforce development and support ongoing communication across the three local authority areas and the University Health Board. The Health Programme Lead is a Band 7 Health Visitor, whose role is to support the leadership and change management required for the pilot approach. The health lead also supports the health visiting teams of Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend by communicating the learning from the pilot in RCT. They lead on the Resilience and Well-being Health Programme and the delivery of the Family Health Visiting service in partnership with RCT council. As these posts are funded through the Transformation programme the uncertainty of the annual grant is a cause for concern.

5.7    Skills and knowledge of staff are being boosted by additional training (see section 6 below), designed around the identified needs of children and their families. It appears that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience in a highly skilled workforce for the pilot. Both strategic and operational stakeholders do not feel any concerns and the available training makes them confident that any need will be able to be addressed.

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*Management and Governance*

5.8    The pilot is being managed with deliberate processes. The reorganisation of health visiting has been managed by using the Cheltenham acuity tool to reallocate caseloads fairly in line with local demographics. This is done to ensure a balance with health visitors operating on a GP practice footprint. The Capita One software system is used for data recording and sharing information. Stakeholders feel this is an effective data system and is already showing a need for the pilot outside of former Flying Start areas. There is also significant capacity for data analysis in RCT.

5.9    Governance is carried out through close collaboration between the teams involved. Both RCT council and the health board are working together to oversee delivery. Multi-agency panel meetings are held to ensure collaborative decision making, to put in place the right plan for families. This is a departure from apportioning a percentage of time and outcomes to specific programmes, and instead puts the needs of end beneficiaries first.

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## 6.    Activities and Outputs

6.1    Activities are the actions of the pilot: how it is deploying the resources discussed above. This evaluation assesses the planned activities of the pilot in RCT, specifically, why they have or have not taken place, how well they have been implemented, and any barriers that have affected delivery or are likely to in the future.  Stemming from the activities are the pilot's outputs. These encompass the key targets for measuring delivery and are outlined later in this section.

6.2    The activities of the pilot in RCT can be broken down into:

- Delivery of the Project Plan
- Volunteer and staff activity
- Overall spend
- Outreach and communication
- Record keeping.

*Single assessment and referral process*

6.3    The single referral and assessment system of the Resilient Families Service forms a central part of the pilot activity in RCT that is seeking to achieve a consistent approach across services. Whether it be from schools, health visitors or via self-referral, children and families are referred through a single front door to the central point of the Resilient Families Service. Subsequently, they are assessed by an RFS assessment officer, where the level of resilience and needs of the family are established. Brokerage officers then plan and meet with different services within the community to explore the potential avenues to meet those needs. They carry out appraisals to remove known barriers to increasing resilience levels (e.g., housing, finance education) and put together a support plan tailored to the family. Following a handover meeting, where families sign off on the support plan, the intervention worker liaises with the relevant services according to the plan. Progress is measured by tracking change in the family's Vulnerability resilience scores at the start and end of support.

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The matrix is broken into four sections, identifying strengths and needs over a range of areas: environment, vulnerability, resilience and adversity with a score of 1-4 on each category. Finally, the evaluation at the end of the intervention period determines whether the family requires additional support, with the option of a 6-week extension (up to a maximum of 12 weeks) if necessary.

6.4    Despite stakeholders recognising the robustness of this process, staff disagreeing on a best course of action for families has been an issue. For instance, the plan does not always reflect what the assessment workers believe to be the best options for intervention. Assessment workers were also frustrated about a lack of notification on the outcomes for families following their handover to intervention workers. Those spoken seemed unaware that, thanks to shared systems, they are able to access that information independently.

6.5    Although RFS has existed for several years, the role of the pilot has increased the profile and engagement with RFS. Additionally, there are more services available through RFS. This contrasts with the previous Team Around the Family arrangements where, due to the distinction between Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, amongst other factors, families had limited access to some services and received multiple assessments.

*Approach to service delivery*

6.6    The actions of the different services that directly deliver the pilot are crucial in ensuring that families with complex needs receive the support they require. As a result, the planning of services in RCT has centred on the realignment of services based on the needs of children and families. Staff no longer promote services such as parenting and early language to families, instead receiving referrals of families that actually need support. Delivering early language and communication support according to need has been a key target of the pilot. Now, if any child in RCT (regardless of whether they live in a Flying Start area or not) is categorised as 'delayed' following a SoGS assessment at 20

months, they receive a WellComm screening that decides the appropriate forms of intervention and engagement and schedules an assessment of progress post-intervention. This is in contrast to the arrangements prior to the pilot, where all children in a Flying Start area turning 21 months would receive a WellComm assessment, regardless of need.

6.7     Inevitably, this approach has resulted in some programmes having a lower number of assessments each month, but assessments are instead more appropriately targeted. In the case of speech and language, there are now a lower number of WellComm assessments in Flying Start areas and a higher proportion of those carried out requiring intervention. There has been no reduction in number of assessments overall with a high proportion of referrals coming from areas previously illegible for support.

6.8     The commissioning of services within RCT, whilst altered, has not changed dramatically with a more formal tendering process introduced in place of rolling contracts. Most services are operated internally within the health board and local authority. In the instance of childcare, services are operated by a mix of private providers and public services.

6.9     Staff within RCT have focused on a restorative, strengths based, solution-focused approach to delivering services. This has entailed preventative work with families to reduce the need for them to require statutory intervention. There has also been an adoption of a 'family approach' amongst those delivering services, highlighting the positive aspects of the parent's interactions with their child to build their confidence in their parental abilities and encouraging them to continue to make the right decisions over the long-term.

6.10    The delivery of free childcare services has been the issue most misunderstood by families. Unlike all other services in RCT, the eligibility of families for free childcare is still limited to those who live in Flying Start areas. Families who live in non-Flying Start areas can

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access to free childcare as part of a wider package of support. This is conditional on an RFS assessment and agreement at the RFS panel meetings that resources are available. If approved, they will be given a termly placement which can be renewed following review at the end of the term.

6.11    Within RCT, stakeholders are working towards achieving sign off, granting universal access to needs based free childcare. Currently, a flexible method determined by surplus supply of places, is being implemented, with a ten percent flying start discretionary fund deployed to pay for those families that are not eligible. Placements are also maintained if the child has additional learning needs.

*Management and arrangement of delivery*

6.12    The new delivery arrangements of the pilot in RCT have led to a significant shifting of resource and responsibilities within the local authority and health board area. The removal of the Flying Start Health Visitor role and the creation of the universal Family Health Visitor role within the Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme, has included a widespread reallocation of health visitors, with many families being assigned a new health visitor. However, according to stakeholders, families received limited information about the changes to the health visiting service, and as a result, were anxious about the reorganisation. Furthermore, there has been a concern that due to this lack of familiarity, families are having less contact with their health visitor and are thus not seeking out support they need. This is compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has restricted contact between families and support staff.

6.13    Similarly, this reorganisation of health visiting has resulted in a change in health visitor caseloads. The number of new families taken on by a health visitor was determined by the number of intensive cases respective health visitors had. Following this reorganisation, there has been concern surrounding the significant increase in caseloads for certain health visitors, which combined with staff

sickness, has put strain on the service. Furthermore, some staff have had to go through periods of shielding due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to staff having to cover families across the whole borough, instead of previously 'East' or 'West' RCT. Overall, operational stakeholders stated that the situation is manageable as long as working from home arrangements are still in place. However, as soon as regular face-to-face visits with families resume, there is a risk of teams becoming inundated.

6.14    There has been widespread participation in training amongst staff in RCT to ensure efficient and effective delivery of support services. Courses have ranged from general childcare training to child protection training. Some have been very popular; a recent Elklan training course was fully booked. Training is complimented by monthly team development sessions and mandatory training on a yearly basis, depending on staff roles.

6.15    Staff in RCT have access to a bespoke offering of training through 'The Source', an online training library linked with the Open University. Following approval from management, staff can request training and be allocated a place on the course. Operational stakeholders stated the importance placed on training across the local authority, with participation maximised by the offering of courses on evenings and weekends. There was recognition that some courses were better than others at adapting to online delivery.

*Communications and engagement*

6.16    Pivotal to the successful delivery of the pilot in RCT is information sharing between different organisations. With the introduction of RFS, and subsequently the pilot, there has been reduced silo working amongst services. The discussion of a family's case at the weekly RFS panel meeting has proved to be an important forum where services communicate with each other on which core RFS team would be best placed to meet the need of the family. Management meetings, provider forums and community updates have also

strengthened collaboration. Across services, pre-existing relationships between individuals has served as a key building block to this enhanced communication, as individuals know who to contact in different organisations.

6.17    Information sharing between nurseries and schools is particularly important with children facing an important transition between the two settings. For instance, the 'team around the child' meetings involving the child's key worker, nursery supervisor and parent enables handover support. This information is then used to help transition the children. Additionally, communication between Flying Start and non-Flying Start settings in the field of childcare is improving. Stakeholders working in Flying Start childcare settings are now starting to receive notes on why non-Flying Start families are receiving childcare and what other support they are accessing from RFS. This, in turn, helps staff in those Flying Start settings provide the most effective support to children who live in non-Flying Start areas.

6.18    The use of Capita One as a single management information system enables those providing services through RFS to have an overview of what other services the families have accessed and forms an important part of the overarching drive for increased communication and coordination between services. Following the pilot's implementation, the Capita One system now includes formerly flying start services that have now become universal. The use of Capita One by the RFS Health Team as well as the core RFS teams ensures the varying services in RCT can talk as one team.

6.19    Consequently, staff are getting access to more advice and guidance to establish whether there are other, better-placed services available to provide support, or alternatively, to ensure they are not duplicating the work of other services. However, despite these best practice examples of communication, there is a sentiment amongst staff that more could be done to further enhance collaboration, particularly at a strategic level.

**Outputs**

6.20 Outputs are the direct products of the pilot's activities and form the key indicators for measuring delivery. They are evidenced by the monitoring data collected by the services that make up the pilot.

6.21 Monitoring data is being captured by all services involved, to inform individual service delivery and the delivery of the pilot as a whole. The output data relevant to the external evaluation is listed in the table below.

6.22 Due to the comprehensive nature of existing monitoring this Stage 1 evaluation does not recommend any additional data gathering by services for the evaluation. To do so would increase the burden on pilot staff without yielding additional value.

**Table 6.1: List of outputs**

| OP.1 | Number of referrals |
|---|---|
| OP.2 | Origin of referrals |
| OP.3 | Number of re-referrals |
| OP.4 | Percentage attendance rate |
| OP.5 | Resilience scores |
| | **Services delivered** |
| OP.6 | Number of families supported |
| | **Health Visiting** |
| OP.7 | Average Health Visitor numbers of Universal, Intense, and Enhanced |
| OP.8 | Number of interventions delivered by RFS Health Visitors |
| | **ELC** |
| OP.9 | Number of WellComm assessments |
| OP.9a | Number assessed as Red, Amber, Green |
| OP.10 | Number of Talk and Play sessions |
| OP.10a | Number attending Talk and Play sessions |
| OP.11 | Number of drop in sessions delivered |
| OP.11a | Number attending drop in sessions |
| OP.12 | Number of children with improved communication skills |
| | **Parenting support** |
| OP.13 | Number of programmes/ sessions delivered |
| OP.13a | Number attending each Tier |

| OP.13b | Attendance rate |
| OP.14 | Number of parents reporting improved parenting skills |
| | **Childcare** |
| OP.15 | Number of places Flying Start/outside Flying Start families |
| OP.16 | Foundation phase profiles |
| OP.17 | Attendance rate |

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## 7. Outcomes and Impacts

7.1 The effects of the pilot include its outcomes (the medium-term change arising from the outputs of its activities) and its impacts (the longer-term and much more indirect change, partially arising from the pilot).

7.2 As outcomes appear sooner after delivery, they relate more directly to services than impacts. They reflect process and structural elements as well as wider attitudes and perceptions by key stakeholders. The impacts, in contrast, are more fundamental to the population of RCT and reflect back to the original policy drivers.

**Outcomes**

*Short-term increase in families receiving support*

7.3 If the identified need is true, that there are families outside of previous service boundaries eligible for support, there is expectation to see an increase in service demand as these families begin accessing them. The increase will be visible from monitoring data gathered by the pilot. As the pilot effectively increases resilience within the communities of RCT, this increase should not continue into the long term.

*Families supported who previously didn't have access to Flying Start*

7.4 A strong motivation to adopt the pilot approach is that the fixed geographic boundaries for Flying Start do not reflect the changing circumstances of the communities in RCT. Whereas pockets of deprivation stay relatively fixed in other local authorities across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board, the areas of deprivation in RCT can vary year to year.

7.5 A key outcome of the pilot will be for families who need, but previously have been unable, to access Flying Start type services, to be supported. Stakeholders will be able to inform the later stage evaluation whether this has been the case. Early signs point to an increase in the number of new families accessing services that have not done so before. So far stakeholders have commented on a

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changing profile amongst those accessing services but feel this has been the result of a dramatic short-term change due to COVID-19 (see section 7.20 below).

*Early identification of complex needs*

7.6    With its focus on preventative intervention delivered at the earliest possible moment, success for the pilot will mean early identification of often complex needs. Operational staff have stated that they are seeing more complex cases than before the pilot, alongside a drop off of families who simply wanted to access what services were available not what they needed.

*Support targeted where there is need*

7.7    One criticism of previously designed programmes has been that it provides access to support for those who are not in need. The support is offered through other eligibility criteria, such as address, and so delivery figures do not represent the true potential impact that targeted delivery can make. It is important for the success of the approach that support is targeted where there is actual need, based on individual case assessment.

7.8    There is evidence that needs have been better identified since the start of the pilot. Services are developing appropriate programmes to deal with identified need rather than simply offering a generic programme of support.

*Support for pilot approach across different services*

7.9    For the pilot to be successful it will need the support of all the services involved. This is likely to include an element of self-fulfilment as service buy in leads to initial progress, generating additional support. An important factor in measuring this outcome will be the opinions of stakeholders from across the different services.

*Professionals able to refer to appropriate support*

7.10    Working together, professionals will be increasingly aware of more
        specific support that can be provided through referral. The universal
        availability of a single point of assessment and referral will enable
        referrals to be made more easily, effectively, and with confidence. In
        later stages of the evaluation, the opinions of professional
        stakeholders will be investigated, to determine whether the support on
        offer within the pilot is appropriate for the needs of the children and
        families they work with.

        *Support from parents*

7.11    One concern raised by stakeholders was the possibility of RFS being
        considered the same as social services by the public and carrying a
        stigma of statutory intervention. As RFS is central to the pilot this
        would result in families rejecting support and not engaging with the
        wide range of services.

7.12    Publicity for the pilot encourages cooperation and portrays the RFS
        as a helping hand. If successful, then engagement should be high.
        Feedback from parents and figures of attendance will demonstrate
        whether the pilot has the support of parents.

        *Perceived externally as a single service*

7.13    The perception of early years support from outside the sector is an
        important test for the pilot. The purpose of integration is to improve
        the experience and impact of services on children and their families. It
        will be a testament to the pilot's efforts, if, from an external
        perspective, the different services are seen as a single joined up
        organisation. This will rely on wide ranging buy in to the pilot across
        the sector and effective communications between separate branches.

        **Impacts**

7.14    The impacts are the deep-seated changes expected, which have
        been repeatedly described as the most important by stakeholders.
        Everyone interviewed for the evaluation expressed a desire to see
        impacts that made fundamental improvements for the population of

RCT. This reflects the vocational nature of the sector with goals going beyond the stated objectives of the pilot. Measuring impacts with a standalone evaluation is difficult, as they will only become evident in some cases after a considerable length of time. It depends on monitoring at key milestone moments, such as when children start school, and long-term observation of cases. No stakeholders within RCT or the wider Cwm Taff Morgannwg region expect to see them emerging soon. The impacts remain important however, as they represent the core improvements brought about by the pilot approach.

*Improved child and parental well-being*

7.15 An impact that can be evidenced early on will be an improvement in the well-being of children and their parents. The interventions delivered by the pilot have the potential to make rapid changes to individuals and will be evidenced by the pilot monitoring and stakeholder feedback.

*Reductions in disruptive child behaviour, dysfunctional parenting and co-parenting conflicts, and improved parental mental health*

7.16 After the initial surge of demand, and the delivery of effective support to those in need in RCT, there should be a reduction in disruptive child behaviour, dysfunctional parenting, and improvements in parental mental health as the resilience of families is increased. The pilot approach will identify these changes through its delivery.

*Long-term indicators*

7.17 Over the coming years the following impacts should emerge:

- Reduction in health inequalities across communities
- Reduced rate of poor mental health in children and young people
- Reduction in the impact of ACEs/ increased resilience
- Reduced numbers on Child Protection Register
- Reduced rate of Children Looked After (CLA)

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- Increased number of children meeting expected development milestones
- Reduced number of exclusions from school

**External factors and unintended consequences**

7.18    Longer term effects are more easily affected by external factors beyond the control of the pilot. External factors will also play a role in how the pilot is able to proceed with its activities.

*COVID-19*

7.19    The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a large impact on the pilot. The entire early years sector workforce has had to adapt to remote working, childcare settings have had to be closed through lockdowns, and more families are in need of support. As a consequence of COVID-19 the Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme was temporarily halted, resuming in the second half of 2020 with a reduction in the grant funding available to pathfinder areas. This delayed the initial start of the pilot.

7.20    Stakeholders who deliver frontline services have noticed a change in the profile of those in need and seeking support. Qualitative feedback suggests that, in addition to those experiencing long-term deprivation in RCT, there has been an increase in need from less deprived communities as the pandemic has impacted on employment and mental health.

*Fewer life changing effects*

7.21    One potential unintended consequence of the pilot's more efficient delivery of support is the reduction in life changing effects coming from interventions. Some stakeholders pointed to the likelihood of more limited effects on individual children and families as services are more targeted and delivered in shorter time frames. The cumulative effect of separate targeted interventions for individual issues was held by strategic stakeholders to counter this risk. Re-referrals to RFS may

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be required and are not seen as a failure for the pilot unless individuals are repeatedly referred for the same reasons.

## 8.    Counterfactual

8.1    Later evaluation stages will involve an impact evaluation, to determine whether an intervention caused a particular outcome. Broadly, this involves two main tasks: determining whether something has happened, and determining whether the pilot was responsible. The first task requires the measurement of change using descriptive statistics or narrative, whilst the second requires finding a means of estimating the counterfactual – what would have occurred had the pilot not taken place.

8.2    True empirical impact evaluation is often considered the gold standard for exploring and measuring effect, but it is not always feasible to undertake. Key factors when considering the feasibility of an empirical evaluation are the scale of the impact of the intervention, data availability, and potential comparison groups.

8.3    The 'scale of impact' is an assessment of how large an effect a driver of interest (e.g. the pilot's activities) is likely to have on the impacts. Theoretically, there is a direct relationship between the pilot's activities and its impacts, illustrated by the evaluation model (see Annex B). Although this suggests that an empirical evaluation is therefore feasible, external factors can confound things. Wider health, social, and economic conditions will play a role in the final impacts, making the relationship between the driver and the outcome of interest more complex.

8.4    Data availability in many respects is the strongest factor in the feasibility of an empirical impact evaluation for the pilot. The driver of interest is distinct from normal practice and the effects measurable, with the data comparable to measurements before intervention. The presence of equivalent datasets for Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend, and elsewhere in Wales, makes it possible to construct a quasi-experimental non-equivalent comparison group.

8.5    A true randomly sampled control is not possible due to the scale of the pilot and its deliberate non-random nature. The pilot has been designed to address specific conditions present in RCT and covers the whole local authority area. The causes of need are diverse and prone to confounding external factors, reducing the robustness of a comparison with a control group. As support in the pilot is targeted it would also be unethical to withhold intervention in any identified case for the purpose of a counterfactual. A control group consisting of those who have no need to receive support is not comparable.

8.6    An attempt at an empirical impact evaluation for the pilot approach would fall short of required criteria and weaken the validity of any conclusions. For the reasons above, it is not the approach suggested for the evaluation.

**Suggested approach**

8.7    In this context, a later stage evaluation of the pilot should take a non-experimental approach. Such approaches are not 'true' impact evaluations, which take potential non-policy causes for observed change into account, but they can provide quantitative evidence to estimate the net impact of the pilot. This, along with qualitative data that provides evidence of how and why the pilot works or could be improved, will provide useful insight into the effects of the pilot.

8.8    The approach recommended is to:

- Use suitable existing datasets as a benchmark to estimate what would have happened without the pilot.
- Conduct before and after analysis of data gathered from qualitative interviews carried out by the evaluation. This self-reporting of behaviour change by stakeholders will be sufficient evidence given the expected scope of the shorter-term effects.
- Use quantitative data gathered by the pilot itself and wider stakeholders to evidence long-term impacts.

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# 9. Conclusions

9.1 The conclusions in this section are structured using headings adopted from the EU Better Regulations framework. The evaluation logic model (included in Annex B) illustrates how these headings relate to its various components.

*Coherence and relevance*

9.2 The design of the pilot approach and its objectives appear to be fit for purpose and highly coherent with the policy context. The pilot meets the explicit requirement stated in policies for the coordination and integration of existing early years programmes and the close cooperation of the local authority and health board.

9.3 The pilot is deliberately relevant to the needs of the communities of RCT. Stakeholders feel that it is a welcome change to develop an approach that takes account of the specific circumstances of RCT that previous approaches were unable to do.

*Efficiency*

9.4 Feedback from stakeholders and a review of literature suggests that the pilot is being delivered efficiently. The approach is built on the integration work that has already happened in RCTCBC, and in many ways is the natural continuation of this process. There were initial reservations amongst the operational stakeholders, based on fears over sufficient workforce capacity, but these have been mostly overcome through use of the Cheltenham tool and additional training.

9.5 COVID-19 has disrupted the frontline delivery of services. The pandemic would have made a similar impact on the sector without the pilot approach and processes have adapted well to the challenges. The shift to remote communications has been of some benefit as it has facilitated greater cooperation between strategic stakeholders.

*Effectiveness*

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9.6     At this stage of the pilot there is some evidence about the outcomes and impacts to assess how effectively it is being delivered. The distinction between generic and Flying Start health visiting has been removed, with caseloads shared across the workforce. All health visitors are now able to offer the same range of support, including an additional antenatal visit and a visit at 20 months for the SOGS assessment. Stakeholders have commented on the presence of new families receiving support who previously would not have been eligible due to where they live. It is too soon to evidence what long-term impact this will have on the communities of RCT.

9.7     There remain high levels of concern on the wider applicability of the pilot approach from stakeholders in RCT and the rest of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. The pilot has been designed to address the specific conditions of RCT and utilises systems that are not present elsewhere. There are lessons applicable to the wider area, mainly in relation to the factors critically considered in designing the approach including the coordination of existing systems to address localised issues.

## 10.    Recommendations

10.1    The experiences stemming from the pilot's early stages of implementation has provided several recommendations for future delivery of the pilot, as well as the requirements for a future evaluation, including monitoring requirements.

**Recommendations for future delivery of the pilot**

*Amend the Resilience Matrix scoring system*

10.2    Stakeholders involved in the RFS assessment and referral system stated the need to update the scoring system of the Resilience Matrix. Furthermore, the questions asked by assessors and intervention workers are open to interpretation and are in the past-tense. Staff reported having to paraphrase the questions posed to families to make them easier to understand, at the expense of accuracy. By updating the questions of the evaluation tool to make them more user-friendly, families will produce more genuine responses that will improve accuracy and thus help provide the most effective support possible.

*Increased communication between services at all levels*

10.3    Although communication between organisations, services and families has been continuously improving following the implementation of the pilot, there is a need for further improvement to ensure the objective of delivering coordinated and integrated services in RCT is realised. This includes notifying families of any service change affecting them and delivering key messages through a community engagement team using a common language that is understood well by all.

10.4    There should be more frequent updates and meetings between Health and Local Authority to ensure that any changes that need to be addressed are made quickly. Furthermore, staff at a strategic level needs to frequently communicate with staff on the ground to ensure that at an operational level know, everyone is aware of what is going

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on, including preliminary findings from delivery to-date. By entering into this dialogue, staff on the ground can provide valuable insight and knowledge from the ground-up that can be fed into decisions going forward.

*Protecting availability of training*

10.5     Similar to the pilot's approach to communication, there are already strong processes in place enabling staff to access training, to the benefit of children and families. However, with training budgets limited, there needs to be a wide availability of courses, alongside management encouraging staff to upskill to allow the specific, complex needs of families to be met.

*Review HV referrals into RFS*

10.6     Under current arrangements, RFS receive information from health visitors via basic paper forms, due to health visitors not having access to the RFS system. As a result, health visitors are unable to track the family's progress once they refer them to RFS. Moreover, RFS staff are often guarded in what they feel they can share with health visitors. This, combined with a lack of suitable IT equipment for health visitors, highlights the need for health visiting to be more fully integrated with RFS.

**Recommendations for future evaluation(s)**

*Continuously monitor and gather data*

10.7     In order to measure the 'true' impact of the pilot activity in RCT it is necessary for data to be continuously monitored and gathered throughout the implementation period. This includes a range of measures and indicators across services, at multiple levels of delivery (see evaluation framework). By continuing to monitor and gather data on early years activity it will enable stakeholders to ascertain the net change in outcomes for children and families pre and post pilot delivery. Furthermore, it will highlight areas of delivery that require additional refinement or wholesale changes.

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*Prepare stakeholders for stage 2 evaluation in early 2022*

10.8    We recommend that there is a second stage of evaluation in early 2022 to enable the pilot's early outcomes to fully emerge. The method for the stage 2 evaluation is outlined in a separate companion document.

10.9    Stakeholders should be made aware of the Stage 2 plan and their participation encouraged at this time.

*Stage 3 will be required to start to evaluate impacts*

10.10   As defined by the Theory of Change, the impacts of an intervention are not felt immediately following implementation, but instead are realised in the long-term. Therefore, we recommend a third stage of evaluation to determine whether the intended impacts have come to fruition, alongside any unintended impacts.

10.11   In this pilot project, it is imperative that a stage 3 evaluation is only conducted after a significant period of delivery has passed, so as not to confuse all immediate outcomes with the overall trend of effects. For instance, due to the increased availability and efficiency of services stemming from the pilot, there is an anticipated increase in the number of children and families receiving support. However, the anticipated longer-term impact is that families become more resilient and independent following support, leading to a decrease in the number of overall referrals into support services in RCT.

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**Annex A Evaluation Framework**

| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Policy** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| P.1 | Wellbeing of Future Generations Act | | What policies drive the pilot? | Literature review |
| P.2 | Social Care and Wellbeing Act | | | |
| P.3 | Prosperity for All | | Has there been a change to the policy environment since the start of the pilot? | |
| P.4 | A Healthier Wales | | | |
| P.5 | Regional Strategy for Children, Young People and Families | | | |
| P.6 | Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme | | | |
| P.7 | Children and Communities Grant | | How does the pilot contribute towards policy objectives? | |
| P.8 | Healthy Child Wales Programme | | | |
| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
| | **Need** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| N.1 | To create an integrated Early Years system for RCT | | What is the need for the pilot? | Literature review and qualitative fieldwork |
| N.2 | To address inequalities of delivery in Early Years services in RCT | Assessment of need across RCT | | |
| N.3 | To implement a support system focused on prevention and resilience | | What market failure or need does it address? | |

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| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N.4 | To address specific community profiles of RCT | Assessment of need across RCT | | |
| N.5 | To address needs of families and children as individuals | Assessment of need across RCT | How is the pilot different from other solutions? | |
| N.6 | To create an accessible service | | | |
| N.7 | To reach the most complex needs at the earliest point | | Why do beneficiaries need the pilot? | |
| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
| | Objectives | | Evaluation question | Source |
| OB.1 | To explore how early years services might be re-configured | | What were the project objectives? | Literature review and qualitative fieldwork |
| OB.2 | To explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally | | What did beneficiaries expect to get from the intervention? | Qual fieldwork |
| OB.3 | To work together to deliver services in a coordinated, integrated and timely way | | Why were those objectives chosen? | Qual fieldwork |
| OB.4 | Focusing on co-ordination and services, planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs | | Did the project objectives meet the identified needs or market failure? | Literature review and qualitative fieldwork |
| OB.5 | To identify barriers to integration and remove them | | Why was this organisation the right one to deliver on the objectives and meet the identified needs? | Qual fieldwork |

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| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Inputs/Resources** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| IN.1 | Finance | Tracking of spend | What resources are being input to achieve the objectives? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| IN.1a | Transformation Grant | | | |
| IN.1b | Local Authority funding | | | |
| IN.1c | Health Board funding | | | |
| IN.2 | People | Details of people involved | Are the inputs sufficient to achieve the objectives? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| IN.2a | Children and Young People Service | | | |
| IN.2b | Resilient Families Service | | | |
| IN.2c | Early Intervention and Prevention Commissioning Team | | | |
| IN.2d | Service Planning and Transformation Team | | How effective have the inputs been? | Qual fieldwork |
| IN.2e | Programme Flexibilities Team | | | |
| IN.3 | Assets (Buildings, technology, equipment, natural environment) | Details of assets used | | |
| IN.4 | Governance – systems of scrutiny and accountability | Business plan and related documents | | |
| IN.5 | Intended beneficiaries | | Are the inputs relevant to the objective? | Qual fieldwork |
| IN.6 | Management – processes of planning and delivering | Business plan and related documents | | |
| IN.7 | Project plan / business plan including time table and schedule | Business plan and related documents | | |
| IN.8 | Communications and marketing / awareness raising plan | Details of plan / materials | | |
| IN.9 | Monitoring and evaluation processes | | | |
| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |

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| | Activities | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Activities** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| A.1 | Single referral system via RFS | | Are the activities an effective use of the resources to deliver the desired outputs? | Qual fieldwork |
| A.2 | Single assessment system via RFS | | | |
| A.3 | Pilot a new Flying Start delivery model | | What has been delivered? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| A.4 | Health visiting reorganisation | | | |
| A.4a | On a GP practice footprint | | Who delivered the activities? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| A.4b | Balanced caseloads | | | |
| A.4c | Training | Records of training delivered | How well were the activities delivered? | Qual fieldwork |
| A.5 | Parenting support | | | |
| A.6 | Early Language and Communication support | | Was the activity good value for money (and time)? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| A.6a | SoGS at 20 months to inform more evidence based WellComm assessment | Records of SoGs and WellComm numbers | | |
| A.7 | Needs based childcare support | | | |
| A.7a | Allocating additional childcare places to the standard of Flying Start settings | | Did the activities meet the needs of beneficiaries? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| A.8 | Communications and engagement (internal and external) | Copies of comms | | |
| | | **Monitoring** | **External evaluator** | |
| | **Outputs** | | Evaluation question | Source |

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| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OP.1 | No. of referrals | | What is the contribution of each activity to the outputs? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| OP.2 | Origin of referrals | | | |
| OP.3 | No. of re-referrals | | | |
| OP.4 | % attendance | | | |
| OP.5 | Resilience scores | | | |
| **Services delivered** | | | | |
| OP.6 | No. of families supported | Data monitoring by the pilot | What progress has been made towards achieving the outputs? | Desk review |
| | **Health Visiting** | | | |
| OP.7 | Average Health Visitor numbers of Universal, Intense, and Enhanced | | | |
| OP.8 | Number of interventions delivered by RFS Health Visitors | | | |
| | **ELC** | | | |
| OP.9 | No. of Wellcomm assessments | | | |
| OP.9a | No. assessed as Red, Amber, Green | | | |
| OP.10 | No. of Talk and Play sessions | | What has gone well? Best practice / case studies | Qual fieldwork |
| OP.10a | No. attending Talk and Play sessions | | | |
| OP.11 | No. of drop in sessions delivered | | | |
| OP.11a | No. attending drop in sessions | | | |
| OP.12 | No. of children with improved communication skills | | | |
| | **Parenting support** | | | |
| OP.13 | No. of programmes/ sessions delivered | | What challenges or barriers have been encountered in achieving outputs? | Qual fieldwork |
| OP.14 | No. attending each Tier | | | |
| OP.15 | Attendance rate | | | |

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| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OP.14 | No. of parents reporting improved parenting skills | | | |
| | **Childcare** | | | |
| OP.15 | No. of places FS/outside FS families | | What is the profile of the beneficiaries? Is this what was expected? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| OP.16 | Foundation phase profiles | | | |
| OP.17 | Attendance rate | | | |
| | | **Monitoring** | **External evaluator** | |
| | **Outcomes** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| OC.1 | Short term increase in families receiving support | Monitoring by the pilot | What are the outcomes of the pilot? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| OC.2 | Families supported who previously didn't have access | Monitoring by the pilot | | |
| OC.3 | Early identification of complex needs | Monitoring by the pilot | | |
| OC.4 | Support targeted where there is need | | Does the project meet the needs? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| OC.5 | Support for pilot approach across different services | | | |
| OC.6 | Professionals able to refer to appropriate support | | How do the outcomes address the identified needs? | Qual fieldwork |
| OC.7 | Support from parents | Monitoring by the pilot | | |
| OC.8 | Externally seen as a single service | | Did the pilot deliver what was expected? | Qual fieldwork |
| OC.9 | Unintended consequences? | | | |
| | | **Monitoring** | **External evaluator** | |
| | **Impacts** | | Evaluation question | Source |
| IM.1 | Improved child wellbeing | | What are the longer term impacts of the pilot? | Desk review |

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| | | Monitoring | External evaluator | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IM.2 | Improved parental wellbeing | | | and Qual fieldwork |
| IM.3 | Reductions in disruptive child behaviour, dysfunctional parenting and co-parenting conflicts, and improved parental mental health | | What lasting behaviour change has occurred because of the pilot? | Qual fieldwork |
| IM.4 | Reduction of health inequalities across communities | | | |
| IM.5 | Reduced rate of poor mental health in children and young people | | How much does the pilot contribute to the impacts? | Desk review and Qual fieldwork |
| IM.6 | Reduction in the impact of ACEs/ increased resilience | | | |
| IM.7 | Reduced numbers on Child Protection Register | | How does the pilot contribute to meeting the needs / policy aspirations? | Qual fieldwork |
| IM.8 | Reduced rate of Children Looked After (CLA) | | | |
| IM.9 | Increased number of children meeting expected development milestones | | How likely are the desired impacts in the future? | Qual fieldwork |
| IM.10 | Reduced number of exclusions from school | | | |
| IM.11 | Unintended consequences? | | | Qual fieldwork |

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### Annex B Logic Model

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| | POLICY DRIVERS | | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | IMPACTS |

| OP.10 | No. of Talk and Play sessions |
| OP.10a | No. attending Talk and Play sessions |
| OP.11 | No. of drop in sessions delivered |
| OP.11a | No. attending drop in sessions |
| OP.12 | No. of children with improved communication skills |
| | Parenting support |
| OP.13 | No. of programmes/ sessions delivered |
| OP.13a | No. attending each Tier |
| OP.13b | Attendance rate |
| OP.14 | No. of parents reporting improved parenting skills |
| | Childcare |
| OP.15 | No. of places FS/outside FS families |
| OP.16 | Foundation phase profiles |
| OP.17 | Attendance rate |

Relevance

Coherence

Efficiency

Effectiveness

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**Annex C Topic guides**

# Scoping Interview Topic Guide

To be completed ahead of the interview:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Interviewer:** | |
| **Interviewee:** | |
| **Interviewee Role:** | |
| **Date:** | |

**Introduction (MR):**

*Miller Research has been commissioned by Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CBC to undertake an external evaluation of the changes produced as part of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Rhondda-Cynon-Taff (RCT).*

*Miller Research's commission is the first of a two-phase programme of evaluation of the new delivery model being piloted in RCT.  This first phase is a formative, scoping evaluation, which includes:*

- *Reviewing the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB footprint as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Programme*
- *Reviewing progress so far in implementing the new Flying Start delivery model pilot in RCT, and*
- *Producing a comprehensive framework and plan for a full external evaluation of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Stage 2.*

*As part of the evaluation, we are undertaking initial scoping interviews with key stakeholders, which will contribute to our initial understanding of the context and will directly inform a draft logic model for the transformation programme.*

1. Please outline your role in [relevant organisation] and your involvement in the early years agenda.

2. How would you define the scope of the Early Years Transformation Programme?  What is it trying to achieve? How does it differ from early years provision in place previously? *Probe for the role of the Flying Start delivery model being piloted in RCT.*

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3.  What factors (policies, organisational structures, service re-configurations, previous programmes or initiatives etc) have contributed to or enabled the Early Years Transformation Programme?

4.  What have been the main challenges to date in planning and implementing the Early Years Transformation Programme? How have these challenges impacted on progress?

5.  Who have been the key organisations/stakeholders in the Early Years Transformation Programme? What role have they each played?

6.  What has been the role of the Early Years Integration Partnership? What has been the role of the Cwm Taf Early Years Co-construction Board? How, if at all, do these two bodies overlap?

7.  How does the Early Years Transformation Programme align with the shared regional strategy for supporting children, young people and families?

8.  What progress has been made in the pilot of the Flying Start delivery model? *Probe for barriers/challenges and enablers for delivery.* What impact is this having on children and families?

9.  What has been the role of the Resilient Families Service in the pilot of the Flying Start delivery model?

10. What will success look like for:

    - the Early Years Transformation Programme?

    - The Flying Start delivery model pilot?

11. What existing indicators or measures (qualitative/quantitative) could be used to quantify or determine the level of success for:

    - the Early Years Transformation Programme?

    - The Flying Start delivery model pilot?

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12. What additional information or data needs to be collected to evidence the success of the Early Years Transformation Programme/the Flying Start delivery model pilot?

13. Who do we need to talk to as part of this stage 1 scoping evaluation of the Early Years Transformation Programme/the Flying Start delivery model pilot?


**Thank you for your time.**

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## Fieldwork Topic Guide

| Name | |
|---|---|
| Organisation | |
| Role | |
| Date and Time | |
| Interviewer | |

**Introduction (MR):**

*Miller Research has been commissioned by Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CBC to undertake an external evaluation of the changes produced as part of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Rhondda-Cynon-Taff (RCT).*

*Miller Research's commission is the first of a two-phase programme of evaluation of the new delivery model being piloted in RCT. This first phase is a formative, scoping evaluation, which includes:*

- *Reviewing the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB footprint as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Programme*
- *Reviewing progress so far in implementing the new Early Years / Flying Start delivery model pilot in RCT, and*
- *Producing a comprehensive framework and plan for a full external evaluation of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Stage 2.*

*As part of the evaluation, we are undertaking interviews with stakeholders to learn how the pilot has progressed so far, how success can be measured and develop a collaborative approach to later evaluation stages.*

**[Please reassure all participants that their contribution is anonymous and notes are being taken by typing only]**

1. Please outline your role in [relevant organisation] and your involvement in the delivery of the Early Years pilot in RCT.

2. What is the need for the Early Years Delivery Pilot?

3. In your words, what is the pilot seeking to achieve?

4. How can success be best measured?

5. With regards to services delivered how:
   a. are they planned?

      b.  are they commissioned?
      c.  are needs identified?

6. From your perspective, can these be improved?

7. How are you working differently now from before the start of the pilot?

8. What effect is this having on:
    a. staff?
    b. families?

9. What data are you tracking?

10. How is information shared between different organisations?

11. When will the impacts of the new delivery model be seen?

12. What happens if the piloted delivery model is unsuccessful?

13. Which aspects of the pilot are critical for its outcomes?

14. Are there any external factors that will affect the pilot?
    a. If so, what are these?
    b. How can these be best utilised? (for positives)
    c. How can these be overcome? (for negatives)

15. Thank you for your time, is there anything else you would like to add at this time?

## Survey

Miller Research has been commissioned by Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CBC to undertake an external evaluation of the changes produced as part of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Rhondda-Cynon-Taff (RCT).

Miller Research's commission is the first of a two-phase programme of evaluation of the new delivery model being piloted in RCT. This first phase is a formative, scoping evaluation, which includes:

- Reviewing the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB footprint as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Programme
- Reviewing progress so far in implementing the new Early Years / Flying Start delivery model pilot in RCT, and
- Producing a comprehensive framework and plan for a full external evaluation of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Stage 2.

As part of the evaluation, we are seeking responses to the following questions from stakeholders involved in the pilot. Your responses will by anonymised for analysis and reporting.

1. Please outline your involvement in the delivery of the Early Years pilot in RCT.

2. In your own words, what is the pilot seeking to achieve?

3. From your perspective, what improvements has the pilot made to Early Years services so far?

65

[ ]

4. What improvements are necessary to the way the pilot is delivered?

[ ]

5. What effect is the pilot having on:
   a. staff?

[ ]

   b. families?

[ ]

6. What data are you tracking?

[ ]

7. What measures can be used to assess the pilot?

[ ]

8. When will the impacts of the new delivery model be seen?

9. Thank you for your time, is there anything else you would like to add at this time?

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**GUIDANCE FOR UNPAID CARERS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**27th JANUARY 2022**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS, CLLR M WEBBER**

**Author: Mari Ropstad, Service Manager – Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments**
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1.  **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet endorsement for the staff guidance (Appendix 1) that is specifically designed to inform unpaid carers in the Council workforce about the support available to them to help manage and balance work and caring responsibilities, and to clarify this support formally for managers

1.2. The report also presents the business case to Cabinet for introducing a new leave of absence for employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities.

2.  **RECOMMENDATIONS**

    It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1. Endorse the Working Carers Guidance (Appendix 1) and support its implementation.

2.2. Endorse additional specific paid leave arrangements for unpaid carers within the workforce of up to 5 days per annum.

2.3. Endorse the pursuit of a recognised accreditation scheme for working carers '

3.  **BACKGROUND**

3.1. According to the 2011 Census, there were 3 million people in the UK juggling work and unpaid care, out of a working age carer population of around 4.3 million.

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3.2. More recent research[1] by Carers UK from 2019 suggests the number of working carers was far higher at 4.87 million people – or 1 in 7 of all workers but the Carers UK (The State of Caring report) published at the end of 2021 suggests the pandemic has increased the number of carers in the general population to 1 in 4.

3.3. Nearly half a million people (600 people every day) – have given up work in the past 2 years as a result of caring. Those aged 45 and over were more likely to do so, with women more likely to do so earlier and care for longer than men.

3.4. There are no figures available on the number of unpaid carers within the RCT workforce as this is not recorded on HR records. However, using current workforce figures provided by HR and the findings from 3.2 estimated projections are:

| 1 in 7 workers | 1,556 carers in RCT |
|---|---|
| 1 in 6 workers | 1,815 carers in RCT |
| 1 in 5 workers | 2,178 carers in RCT |
| 1 in 4 workers | 2,723 carers in RCT |

Of note in RCT around 74% of the workforce are female, and the largest staff group is aged 45-54 (around 32%), which is the prime age to become a carer. Given this staff demographic the actual numbers of carers are likely to be higher than in the general working population.

3.5. In April 2021, the Welsh Government introduced a new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers. The Strategy contains four key priorities for public bodies to implement through their work and services. The fourth requirement is a new addition compared to previous Welsh Government strategies:

WG priorities for Local authorities

I. **Identifying and recognising carers -** *all carers deserve to be recognised and supported to continue to care.*

II. **Supporting life alongside caring -** *all carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care and have a life beyond caring.*

III. **Providing information, advice and assistance -** *it is important that all carers receive the right information and advice when needed and in an appropriate format.*

IV. **Supporting carers in education and the workplace –** *employers and educational / training settings should be supported to adapt their policies and practices enabling carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.*

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[1] "Juggling work and unpaid care: A growing issue", 2019, report by Carers UK.

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3.6. Carers Wales define working carers as: *"Employees with unpaid caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of relatives or friends who are older, living with a disability or seriously ill and unable to care for themselves."*

3.7. In RCT a working group was convened in spring 2021 comprised of representatives from the People Development team, the Diversity team, HR and Adult Services to scope the possibility of introducing more specific support for unpaid carers within the RCT workforce (also referred to as working carers).

3.8. The working group conducted a SNAP survey with staff across the Authority in June 2021 to understand staff experience and consider priorities for support. The outcome of the survey is attached as Appendix 2 but in summary:

- Most respondents were not aware or not clear on what support they could access as unpaid carers now or in the future.
- Most unpaid carers have used flexible working and annual leave to manage their caring role alongside their paid work.
- 65% of respondents rated the challenge of managing paid work and caring as 3 or 4 on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all challenging and 5 being extremely challenging).
- There is evidence of differences in the way unpaid carers feel supported by their line managers. Rating the support provided; 34% said their manager understood their needs very well, whilst 21% said their manager did not understand their needs well at all.
- The biggest support managers could provide seems to be allowing flexibility in work and showing understanding of the caring role.
- Specific carers leave, time off to attend hospital appointments and increased flexibility in work were the most frequent suggestions for what RCT could do to further support carers, followed by clearer procedures and guidelines, and increased understanding among managers.

3.9. In response to the survey findings a draft Working Carers Guidance has prepared by the working group (Appendix 1). The guidance suggests small adjustments that could be explored within the workplace to support unpaid carers. It provides a pro forma for employees and managers to guide discussion around caring responsibilities and introduces an opportunity to join the RCT Working Carers Mailing List, managed within the Adult Services Carers Support Project, to receive useful information and advice.

3.10. The working carers guidance pulls together all existing leave arrangements currently available for staff in RCT including flexible working, emergency leave, parental leave, bereavement and the additional leave purchase scheme (see page 5 for the full table of additional leave arrangements that are currently available for unpaid carers to manage their responsibilities alongside work

3.11. The UK Government has recently published its intention to introduce unpaid carers leave as a statutory right, and it is proposed that the RCT Cabinet recognises the significant impact caring responsibilities can have on employees and endorse the recommendation to complement the existing leave arrangements already in place to include access to 5 paid leave days per annum to specifically support the following events as identified in the UK Government's published statement on carer's leave (see Appendix 3) to support carers make provision:

- Where a dependent has been taken seriously ill or is hospitalised.
- Making arrangements for long term care following serious illness or discharge from hospital.
- Relocation situations (i.e., to or from the cared for person's home or into residential care).
- Attending benefit or legal appointments on behalf of the cared for person.
- Accompanying the cared for person to hospital appointments.

3.12. We are unable to accurately predict the financial impact of introducing paid carers leave as the number of paid carers in the RCT workforce is unknown. However, absence figures for 2019/2020 relating to Emergency Leave (where the highest rates were bereavement or Coronavirus-related) identify 1,794 days lost. Of note, a large proportion of the workforce are eligible for Emergency Leave and this figure does not appear excessive or indicate misuse. Emergency Leave is closely linked to how we are proposing Carers Leave would operate and therefore a significant increase in paid leave requests would not be expected.

3.13. The following table identifies the approach taken by other Local Authorities etc. in Wales for information. The table illustrates that most have already introduced a carers policy with the addition of the paid time off facility

| Local authority | Do you have a standalone Carer's Policy for staff? | Do you offer paid leave for staff who are unpaid carers? | Do you have any data regarding the uptake of paid carers leave? | Do you participate in any kind of benchmarking or employer forum for unpaid carers (e.g., Employers for Carers or Carer Friendly Employer)? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blaenau Gwent | Yes | Yes | Last year 5 (out of 161) carers took leave with an average | Yes, Carer Friendly Employer |

4

| | | | of 3 days each | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caerphilly | Yes | Yes, 22h 12mins (3 days) | | No |
| Carmarthenshire | Yes | Yes | | Yes, Employers for Carers |
| Ceredigion | Yes | Yes | | Yes, Employers for Carers |
| Swansea | No | No | | No |
| Cardiff | Yes | Yes | | Yes, Employers for Carers and Carer Confident Accreditation Level 2 |
| Denbighshire | Yes | Yes | | Yes, NEWCIS |
| Flintshire | Yes | Yes | | No |
| Gwynedd | Yes | No | | No |
| Anglesey | Yes | Yes, 5 days paid, discretion to offer 5 further days unpaid | | No |
| Merthyr Tydfil | No | No | | No |
| Newport | Yes | Yes, 22 hours | | Yes, Carer Friendly Employer |
| Pembrokeshire | Yes | Yes | | Yes, Employers for Carers |
| Torfaen | Yes | Yes, 5 days | | No |
| Hywel Dda Health Board | Yes | Yes, via special leave | | Yes, Employers for Carers (and Carer Confident Level 1) |
| Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board | Yes | Yes, 5 days | | No |
| Welsh Ambulance Service | Yes | Yes | | Yes, Employers for Carers |
| South Wales Police | Yes | No | | Yes, Employers for Carers |
| North Wales Police | Yes | Yes, 5 days | | Yes, Employers for Carers |

3.14. Further to the proposed provision for working carers in the Council the working group also recommends that Cabinet endorse the pursuit umbrella membership of 'Employers for Carers', managed by Carers UK, which aims to "ensure employers have the support to retain and manage employees with caring responsibilities". Membership would provide access to online resources, training, consultancy etc. (see Appendix 5) in addition to umbrella membership that extends beyond RCT Council to include local small and medium businesses (SMEs) with less than 250 employees, District Councils and health partners of any size in the Borough

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3.15. Estimated rates (exc. VAT) for the membership is £3,500 per annum which will include access to the accreditation scheme

## 4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1. There are no immediate equality and diversity implications associated with this report. An Equality Impact Assessment may be required if the Working Carers Guidance is agreed prior to implementation.

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1. This report has been prepared by the working group with staff members from a wide range of service areas and departments represented

5.2. The recommendations have largely been derived from the findings of a staff SNAP consultation survey completed during the summer of 2021.

5.3. Third sector organisations including Carers Trust South East Wales and Employers for Carers have contributed their knowledge and expertise on working carers to inform the working group.

5.4. Research and best practice guidance from a variety of sources has been used to inform the proposals in this report, including Welsh Government, Employers for Carers, Centrica, Carers UK and Carers Trust.

5.5. If approved by SLT, the Working Carers Guide will be forwarded to the Disability and Carers Network for their consideration prior to the next steps

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no direct financial implications associated with rolling out the Working Carers Guidance proposed by this report.

6.2. It is difficult to predict the uptake of paid Carers leave. However, it may be viewed as like Emergency Leave, which a large proportion of the workforce are already eligible for. HR information suggests Emergency Leave is not excessively used, and Carers Leave would have notable restrictions and eligibility criteria. Limited data from other Local Authorities suggest paid Carers Leave is not misused. Evidence from other organisations indicate benefits from supporting carers including staff retention, reduced unplanned absences and improved productivity.

6.3. Membership and accreditation of Employers for Carers (EfC) will incur a small annual cost as set out in point 3.15 above. For more information on the benefits of EfC membership see Appendix 5.

**7.    LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

7.1.    The UK Government has published their intention to introduce statutory unpaid carer's leave (Appendix 3).

**8.    LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

8.1.    There is a strong direct link to the Council's purpose: *"To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous."* Further there are links to the Corporate priorities as follows

- People: by ensuring carers in RCT are able to remain independent, healthy and successful by remaining in work·
- Prosperity: by supporting businesses in RCT to attract and retain employees that are carers through effective guidance and support.

8.2.    In addition, there are links to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act:

- *A healthier Wales:* A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

- *A more equal Wales:* A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).

8.3.    Supporting unpaid carers in the workplace also links to Priority 4 in the Welsh Government's National Plan for Unpaid Carers: "*Supporting carers in education and the workplace – ''employers and educational / training settings should be supported to adapt their policies and practices enabling carers to work and learn alongside their caring role*."

Additional information associated with this report

**Appendix 1:**      Draft Working Carers Guidance

**Appendix 2:**      Summary of staff survey results

**Appendix 3:**      Statement from UK Government on the intention to introduce statutory carer's leave

**Appendix 4:**      The business case for supporting working carers

**Appendix 5:**      Employers for Carers membership benefits

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS, CLLR M WEBBER**

**GUIDANCE FOR UNPAID CARERS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Background papers:  None**

**Officer to contact:**

**Mari Ropstad, Service Manager – Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments**

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| Version | |
|---|---|
| Last revision date | |



Y Berthynas Waith
Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf, gweithio gyda chi, gweithio gyda'n gilydd

gweithio'nwell
workwell

Employee Relations
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, working with you, working together
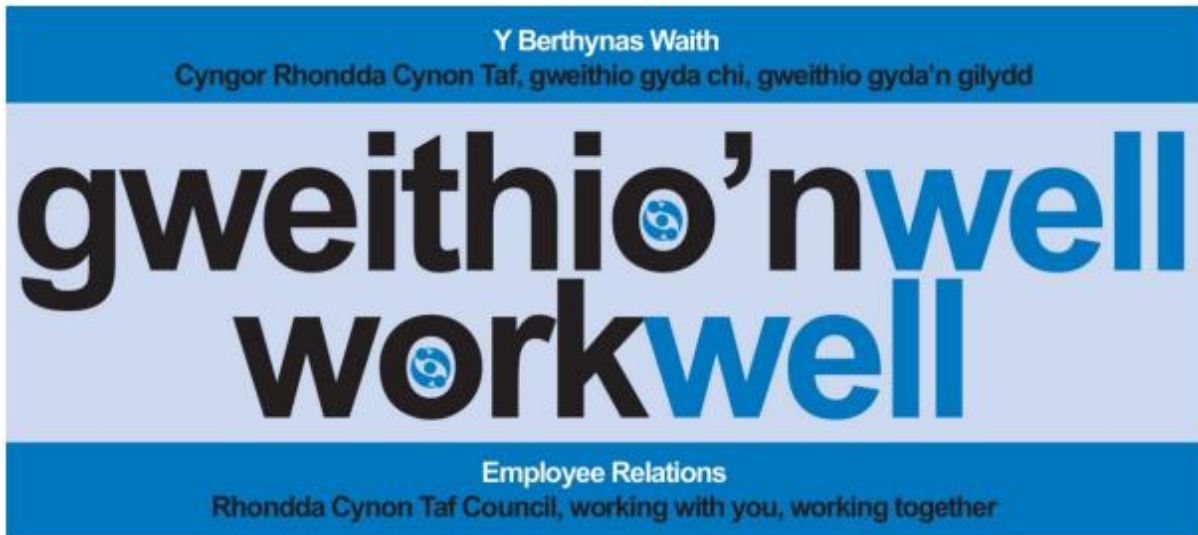
# **Working Carers Guidance**

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

# Contents

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## Purpose of guidance

This guidance has been developed to address the needs of unpaid carers working for the Council. The Council intends this guidance to support employees with caring responsibilities and enable them to balance these effectively with their employment responsibilities. It also ensures that managers apply a consistent and equitable approach in supporting employees who are unpaid carers.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council:

- Values the skills and loyalty of their employees.
- Affirms that employees of the Council will not be discriminated against because of their caring duties.
- Ensures all working carers are aware of the support and benefits available to them as employees and as unpaid carers.
- Is committed to supporting employees with caring responsibilities in maintaining a work-life balance.
- Will willingly work in partnership with employees who have a caring responsibility to explore viable options to support them in their employment.
- Ensure that caring responsibilities is not a barrier to the recruitment and retention of staff.

## Introduction

The terms 'unpaid carer' and 'working carer' are used throughout this guidance to describe employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities in addition to their employment role. This is not the same as Care Workers, who are paid to carry out care work, however Care Workers may have additional caring responsibilities separate from their paid employment and would in that case also be considered an unpaid carer or working carer.

It is the employee's responsibility to inform their manager of any caring responsibilities  so that the appropriate support can be discussed and provided. All discussions regarding the caring role will be kept confidential.

This guidance aims to set out:

- The support available to unpaid carers in the workplace.
- How working carers can join the RCT Council Working Carers Mailing List.
- The leave of absence arrangements available to unpaid carers.
- How line managers and working carers can agree a Carer Support Plan.

_Definition of an unpaid carer_

"CARERS LOOK AFTER FAMILY, PARTNERS OR FRIENDS IN NEED
OF HELP AND SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENT LIVING,
BECAUSE THEY ARE ILL, FRAIL OR HAVE A DISABILITY.

THE CARE THEY PROVIDE CAN BE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL OR
EMOTIONAL. THIS DEFINITION INCLUDES YOUNG CARERS AND
PARENT CARERS OF DISABLED CHILDREN.

THE TERM CARER INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE
A RELATIVE AND WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE LIVING WITH THE
PERSON THEY CARE FOR. THE CARE THEY PROVIDE IS NOT PART
OF AN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AND IS UNPAID EXCEPT FOR
CARERS RELATED ALLOWANCES".

The Council appreciates the demands that caring responsibilities can make on the employee. We recognise the importance of supporting employees whilst they are caring so that they can successfully manage the balance between home life and employment responsibilities.

'Caring responsibilities' can take many forms; long term, short term or on an emergency basis.

It must be recognised that carers may find themselves in very difficult, challenging situations and their requests should be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

_Carers rights at work_

Employees who are carers have the following rights, subject to certain conditions and qualifying periods:

- The right to request flexible working.
- The right to time off in emergencies.
- The right to unpaid parental leave if you have a child.
- The right not to be discriminated against or harassed under the Equality Act 2010, if they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic, for example a disability.

In the appendices of this guidance you will find additional suggestions for supporting carers at work. This includes:

- A guide to support arrangements that line managers and teams might implement for unpaid carers. Although many seem like small adjustments they can make a huge difference (Appendix 2).
- Organisations and projects that might offer additional support for unpaid carers (Appendix 2).
- A form to complete to join the RCT Working Carers Mailing List to receive relevant information and updates that could help you in your caring role (Appendix 3).
- A form to complete to register with the RCT Carers Support Project if you are an unpaid carer who lives in RCT (Appendix 4).
- A suggested format to use for discussions between employees and line managers about caring responsibilities (Appendix 5), including a template for a Working Carer Support Plan that can be put in place. Although these discussions may also happen more informally, employees and line managers are encouraged to explore how the employee can be supported to balance their caring role and paid work.

## **Existing leave arrangements**

In order to support unpaid carers, RCT Council have a number of existing policies and procedures which should be used to achieve a balance between paid work and the unpaid caring role.

The various options available are set out in the handy guide below. All RCT policies are available on RCT Source under 'A to Z Policies' (you do not need logon details to look at polices on  RCT Source, https://rct.learningpool.com/); or from your manager, HR or trade union. A decision tree to help managers and unpaid carers determine which type of support is best suited to their needs is included in Appendix 1.

## Flexible working

- The Work and Families Act 2006 gives unpaid carers as well as parents, the right to request flexible working.
- Flexible working could include flexi-time; compressed hours; shift swapping; staggered hours; job sharing; part-time working; term-time working.
- More information on how to request flexible working, eligibility criteria and the impact on employment terms and conditions can be found in the *Right to Request Flexible Working Policy.*

## Emergency paid leave

- RCT Council offer employees with a caring responsibility the opportunity to take "reasonable time off" to deal with emergencies involving a dependant.
- Examples could include: the dependent is ill or involved in an accident; to make longer term care arrangements; unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements; sudden onset of caring role.
- Carers can apply for up 5 days over a rolling 12-month period, but only one day can be taken at a time.
- Full details are available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

## Emergency unpaid leave

- Unpaid carers can request emergency unpaid leave in writing to their line manager. This is not a statutory right but nevertheless offered by RCT Council to people with dependants.
- More information can be found in the *Leave of Absence P*olicy.

## Unpaid parental leave

- Parents are entitled by law to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.
- Parents who have worked for the Council for at least one year can take to up to 18 weeks parental leave per child, and it must be taken in a block of one week or more, up to a maximum for 4 weeks in a year.
- More information is available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

## Paid berevement leave

- RCT Council offer paid bereavement leave from the date of death of certain close relatives to the day after the funeral.
- In some cases it can also be used for other relations if the employee is responsible for the funeral arrangements.
- Full details are available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

## Purchase of annual leave

- It is possible to purchase additional annual leave, up to a maximum of 10 days per year (pro rata for part time employees).
- More information is available in the *Purchase of Additonal Leave Scheme*.

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## Communication

Raising awareness via good communication will help ensure that the working Carers within the Council are aware of the Working Carers Guidance, helping to build a supportive culture, encouraging and enabling a two-way dialogue between line managers and working Carers.

We will communicate new developments around support for Carers, signposting information and information regarding any new initiatives to staff via:

- The Disability and Carers Network
- Staff Briefings
- Intranet and Internet
- Carers Support Project
- Working Carers Mailing List (joining form in Appendix 2).

Information for new employees is included in the documentation issued as part of their induction process. This information will be subject to review and updated where appropriate by the Service Manager for Carers.

Abuse of Provisions

Any abuse of the provision of the carers support arrangements will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

## Equal Opportunities

All carers in the workforce should be treated fairly and offered the level of support dependent on their caring situation and work commitments. They should be well informed of the policies in operation for supporting carers. These policies should be accessible to all carers regardless of the post held or their age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief.

Employees with caring responsibilities will have the same opportunities in career progression or to stay in work with the Council regardless of their responsibilities outside work.

*For further information please contact:*

- Human Resources, via your respective HR support officer.

- The Equality and Diversity Team, equality@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 444531.

- The Carers Support Project, carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 281 463.

## Appendix 1: Decision tree

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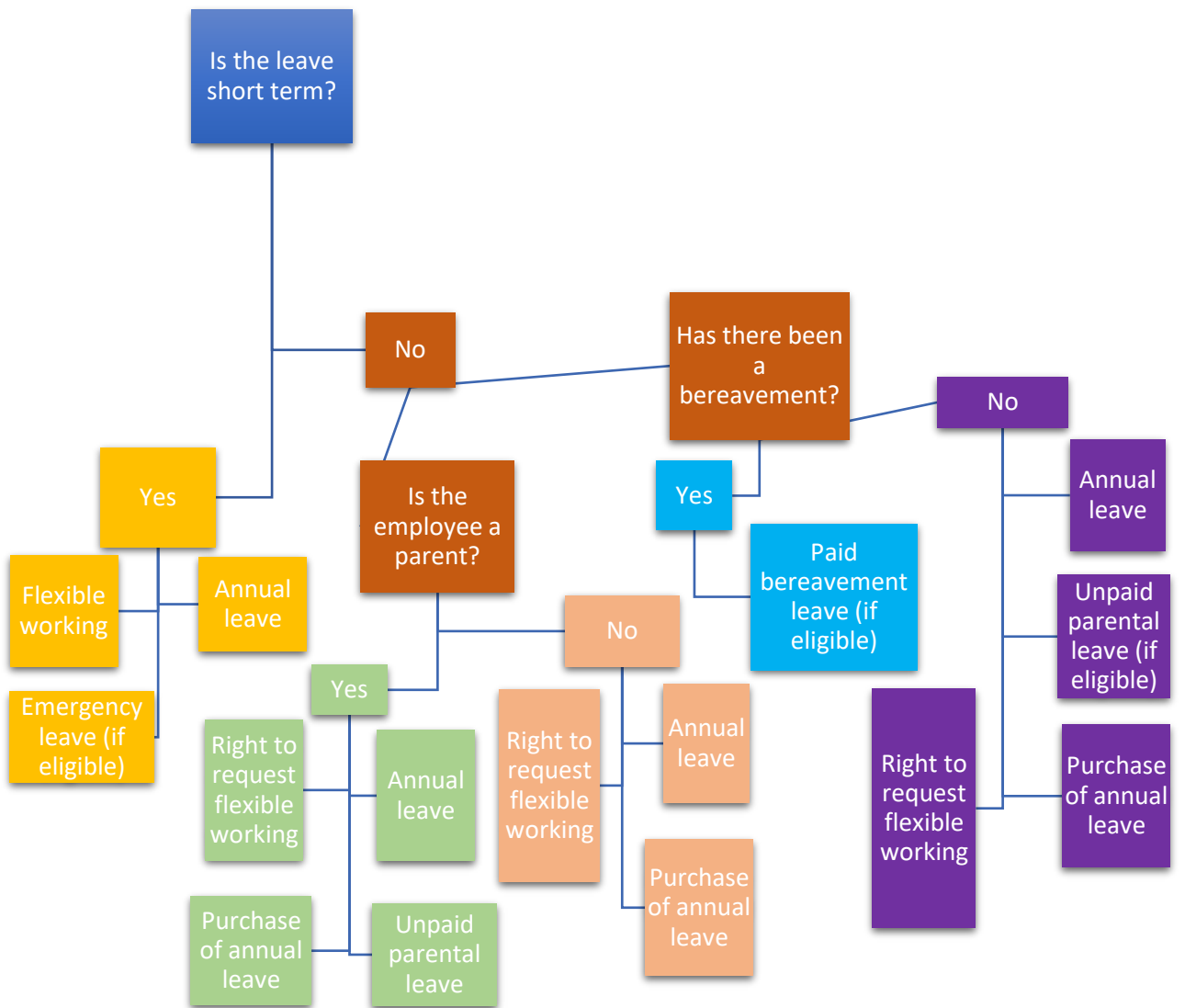
<u>**Appendix 2: Guide to support options for unpaid carers**</u>

**GUIDE TO SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR UNPAID CARERS**

Working carers are not always aware of the support available to them. Many working Carers will benefit hugely from relatively small adjustments to the working environment and building a Carer Friendly culture is invaluable to allow Working Carers to manage their responsibilities. This guide includes information on what support managers and teams can offer unpaid carers in the workplace, as well as suggestions for other places unpaid carers can access support.

**Use of Telephone/e-mail**
Subject to discussion with their line manager, carers should be allowed reasonable use of personal telephone/e-mail to keep in regular contact with the person they provide care for, without permission from their line manager *on each occasion*.

If necessary, the employee and manager are encouraged to agree on a system for recording how often this provision is used.

**Time out**
At times of crisis, when carers are experiencing heightened levels of stress and anxiety, the opportunity to take *'time out'* away from their desk or workstation is sometimes valuable. Discussions should take place between the employee and their line manager to ensure support and provisions are made available for this.

**Home and agile working**
Following the Covid-19 pandemic, many people transitioned to home working either full time or with some office days throughout the week. This can provide greater flexibility for working carers and allow for a better balance between work and home life. Agile working might also allow work to be undertaken in an office which is more convenient for the working carer than the actual base. Although no firm decisions have been made regarding a future model of work, it is likely home working will remain available for at least some of the working week for employees whose roles allow it. Working carers are encouraged to discuss their personal situation with their line manager to find a solution that works for both parties.

**RCT Carers Support Project**
The Carers Support Project based within RCT Council can offer information, guidance and support to carers living in the Borough. Some of the services the Project can provide are:

- Regular newsletters designed to keep you up to date about issues, services and new developments that may affect Carers, or the person being cared for.

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- The Carers A-Z – an annually printed guide to services in within Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

- Training and information sessions designed to help Carers in their caring role, varying from learning how to lift safely and stress management techniques to providing updates on Carers Rights.

- Carers groups and forums.

- Counselling service.

- Carers Emergency Card.

- The Council's MoreCard giving you discounted access to the council-run leisure services.

- Support, advice, and guidance.

To register with the Project please contact the Carers Support Project on 01443 281 463 or email carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk.

**Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit**

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit is a support service and helps to ensure people are fit to undertake the work that is asked of them, and to protect and promote the health of our employees.

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit is a confidential service assessing fitness for work, offering the medical opinion and advice on how to manage medical conditions in the workplace, but the employment decisions are a management responsibility. The unit provides a range of support services such as:

- Health surveillance
- Physiotherapy including ultra sound scanning and injection therapy.
- Wellbeing assessment and support.
- Counselling Service.
- Management of new and existing health problems.
- Health promotion such as influenza vaccinations.
- Lifestyle Screening.
- Sickness absence referrals.
- Pension fund referrals.

The Occupational Health unit can provide support and advice to all staff and managers. Services can be accessed by the following routes:

- Self-Referral- All staff and Elected Members can self-refer for physiotherapy and mental health support.
- Management referrals-for sickness absence referrals, support in work, guidance/advice on managing illnesses including reasonable adjustments etc and health surveillance etc.

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- Emergency response-for early interventions for staff/managers who have been involved in traumatic events.

The wellbeing line is the gateway to several support services including self-referrals for wellbeing assessments, physiotherapy, as well as being somewhere to chat if you need to. You can contact the wellbeing line on 01443 424100 or wellbeinghelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Confidentiality is a fundamental part of the relationship between the Health Professional and the employee. Medical information is not shared with any other person/organisation without your written consent, except in extreme circumstances.

**Useful contact details**

| Organisation | Telephone | Email/website |
|---|---|---|
| RCT Carers Support Project | 01443 281 463 | carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk |
| RCT Council Adult Social Services | 01443 425 003 | |
| Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit | 01443 424 100 | wellbeinghelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk |
| Carers Wales | 029 2081 1370 | https://www.carersuk.org/ |
| Carers Trust | | https://carers.org/ |
| Citizen Advice Bureau | 0800 702 2020 | https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/ |

**<u>Appendix 3: Joining form – Working Carers Mailing List</u>**

## JOINING THE WORKING CARERS MAILING LIST

Name:                                      Department:

Job Title:                              Primary work location:

Preferred e-mail address:

Home Address:

Briefly tell us the nature of your caring role (please **<u>do not</u>** include any identifiable data, such as names etc.):

|  |
|---|
|  |

**Privacy Statement**

Any information provided within this form is done so on a voluntary basis. If you no longer wish to participate in the Working Carers Mailing List you may withdraw your consent at any time, with no consequences, by contacting the Working Carers Mailing List.

Your information will be treated as confidential but may be shared with relevant Council departments, partner organisations and when required by law. For further information on how we use your personal information, please visit our service privacy notice here [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice](www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice) and our data protection pages here [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection](www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection)

By joining RCT Council's Working Carers Mailing List I agree to be kept up to date with carer information and developments that may be of interest to me in my caring and working role. I understand that my details will not be passed on to any third parties and I can opt out at any time by contacting the Working Carers Mailing List.

    ☐ Yes                              Signed:
    ☐ No                                Date:

**Please send your completed form to the Working Carers Mailing List within the Carers Support Project at <span style="color:red">[new email to be set up]</span>**

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## Appendix 4: RCT Carers Support Project Referral Form

**Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project Identification & Referral Form**

| Self-Referral ☐ | Individual/Organisation Referral ☐ | Date: |
| | Name and organisation details: | |

**Your details, the Carer:**

| Title: | First Name: | | Surname: | | |
| Address: | | | | | |
| Postcode: | | DOB: | | | |
| Telephone No.: | | Mobile No.: | | | |
| Email: | | | | | |
| Ethnicity: | | Male: ☐ | Female: ☐ | Other: ☐ |
| (Office Use Only) WCCIS No.: | | | | | |

**Details of the person you care for:**

*Please ensure that the cared for person has given consent for their details to be provided*

| Title: | First Name: | | Surname: | | |
| Relationship: | (e.g. your wife, son etc.) | | | | |
| Address: | (If different from above) | | | | |
| Postcode: | | DOB: | | | |
| Telephone No.: | | Mobile No.: | | | |
| Email: | | | | | |
| Details of your caring role | | | | | |
| Ethnicity: | | Male: ☐ | Female: ☐ | Other: ☐ |
| (Office Use Only) WCCIS No.: | | | | | |

**Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project Statement:**

The Carers Support Project provides information and support to Carers living in RCT. By registering with the Project you will receive regular newsletters, a Carer A-Z Directory, access to training & information sessions, the Carers Counselling service, discounted access to the council run leisure services, and support, advice and guidance from the Project.

**I would like information about a Carers Assessment**      ☐

Carers' assessments are a way of identifying your needs as a carer, looking at your role as a carer, how being a carer affects you & any help you may need.

**I would like to be referred to the Carers Counselling Service**      ☐

This service is provided by RCT Carers Project and is a free telephone or face to face counselling service provided by qualified counsellors and available to local Carers in RCT.

**I would like my "Welcome Pack" sent through**: Post ☐   Email ☐ *(Please indicate)*

Your "Welcome Pack" will contain our newsletter, an A-Z guide, information about our service and information about local services to you.

**Office Use Only:**

| Is this a Y.A.C.(Young Adult Carers) application? | | Has the YAC Assessment Worker been notified? | |
| | Yes ☐    No ☐ | | Yes ☐    No ☐ |
| Date referral processed: | | CSP Officer Initials: | |

Please return this form to: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk or Freepost RTZL-AGUH-JHUU 10-12 Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, CF37 2BW or contact 01443 281463

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**WORKING CARER SUPPORT PLAN**

This is a suggested format to use for discussions between employees and line managers about caring responsibilities. A Working Carer Support Plan template is provided at the end. Although these discussions may also happen more informally, employees and line managers are encouraged to explore how the employee can be supported to balance their caring role and paid work.

Before meeting with the line manager, the working carer should complete the first part of the form below. This will help direct the discussion and will form the basis of any agreed support going forward.

A suggested structure for the discussion is set out below.

**We appreciate that some people may decide that they do not wish to share some details of their caring roles.** However, the more your manager can understand about your caring responsibilities the better placed they will be to offer support. These are some areas that your manager should cover at the interview.

**Background questions**

Who is being cared for (relative/partner) and why do you need to provide support e.g. because of age, illness or disability (please do not provide any identifiable data, such as names etc.)?

Are you the only carer or do you share responsibility with others?

Where does the caring take place, e.g. in your home or at the home of the person being cared for or elsewhere?

If it is away from home, how much travelling is involved?

What is the nature and extent of your caring responsibilities?

How much time is involved?

How long have you been caring for this person and is it a temporary or a long-term arrangement?

How do your caring responsibilities affect your work? Both on good days and also on not so good days where support is breaking down.

**Areas where support at work may be available**

Is it appropriate to consider any changes to working patterns, hours of work or place of work on either a short or longer-term basis?

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**Taking leave at short notice**

Do you sometimes need to take leave at very short notice?

What is the likely frequency?

What is the likely purpose of the leave?

Do you sometimes need to take small amounts of leave, e.g. to accompany the person you care for to medical appointments?

**What is the likely frequency of the time off you require?**

Will this be planned or at short notice?

**Do you need to make and/or receive private telephone calls in relation to your caring responsibilities?**

This may be accommodated in a number of ways, depending on the work location. Examples are: allowing the employee to make reasonable use of personal mobile phones away from the immediate office or work area; enabling the employee to use a manager's office at a convenient pre-arranged time.

The employee will normally be expected to make personal calls at their own expense, except in a genuine emergency.

**OTHER:**

Are there any other ways in which RCT Council can offer support?

## TEMPLATE WORKING CARER SUPPORT PLAN

| Name | Job Title |
|------|-----------|
| Department | Line manager |
| Contact Details ( Work ) | Contact Details |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | |

This is a record of the reasonable adjustments agreed between the employee and their line manager with regards to the employees responsibilities as a carer as defined within the Working Carers Guidance.

The purpose of this agreement is to:

- ensure that both the employee and the employer have an accurate record of what has been agreed;
- minimise the need to renegotiate reasonable adjustments every time the employee changes job, is relocated or is assigned a new manager within the organisation; and
- provide the employee and their line manager with the basis for discussions about reasonable adjustments at future meetings.

This agreement may be reviewed and amended as necessary:

- at any regular one-to-one meeting;
- at six-monthly and/or annual appraisals;
- before a change of job or duties, or the introduction of new technology or ways of working; or
- before or after any change in circumstances for either party
- Service redesign

This is a live document and should be reviewed regularly by both the employee and line manager and be amended as appropriate. Line managers and employees are encouraged to reach agreement on any changes and thoroughly balance the needs of the employee with the needs of the business. Expert advice from third parties, such as occupational health advisers may be needed before changes can be agreed and implemented.

It is important to remember that treating everyone the same does not mean that everyone is treated fairly. The Equality Act 2010 requires people to be treated differently according to their needs by making reasonable adjustments for them.

| Who is being cared for? And is this a temporary or long term arrangement? | Are you the only carer? Or do you share this responsibility? |
|---|---|
| | |

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| Where does the caring take place? Do you have to travel to undertake your caring responsibilities? | On average how much of time per week do your caring responsibilities take. |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| My responsibilities as a carer impact on my work in the following ways. |
|---|
|  |

| I am requesting the following support to allow me to continue to fulfil my role within RCT Council while undertaking my responsibilities as a carer. |
|---|
|  |

| When things are breaking down this impacts on my working day as follows: |
|---|
|  |

| **Emergency contacts** |
|---|

| Relative | Social Worker |
|---|---|
| Friend / Neighbour |  |

| I will let you know if there are changes to my situation that have an effect on my work and/or if the agreed adjustments are not working. We will then meet privately to discuss any further reasonable adjustments or changes that should be made.

If you notice a change in my performance at work or feel that these reasonable adjustments are not working, I would be happy to meet you privately to discuss what needs to be done. |
|---|

|  |
|---|
| **To be completed by line manager** |
| Advice sought from Occupational Health or HR |
| Which flexible arrangements are already being utilised |
| If all requests for support cannot be made please specify why |
| Support Plan Agreed |
| An up-to-date copy of this form will be retained by the employee, line manager and HR department.<br><br>A copy of this form may also be given to a new or prospective line manager with the prior consent of the employee. If the employee changes job, is relocated or is assigned a new manager, the new manager should review and discuss the adjustments outlined in this agreement. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employee's signature** | |
| **Date** | |
| **Manager's signature** | |
| **Date** | |

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**APPENDIX 2**

# STAFF CARING SURVEY

## JULY 2021

**Findings**

In total 272 respondents completed the survey, which was circulated by email only. We know that this only reaches about one third of the Council's workforce. Of the 272 respondents, 70% stated they were currently an unpaid carer, with 28% not currently caring and 2% unsure.

| Question | Yes | No | Unsure |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Are you aware of the support you could access if you did have to care in the future?* | 27% | 47% | 26% |
| *Are you aware of the Disability and Carers Network?* | 33% | 60% | 7% |
| *Are you aware of the Carers Support Project?* | 46% | 50% | 4% |

*How challenging do you find it to manage your RCT role and your caring responsibilities?*



Scale answer (1 = not at all challenging - 5 = extremely challenging)

3 (71) — 38%
4 (50) — 27%
2 (32) — 17%
5 (27) — 14%
1 (9) — 5%
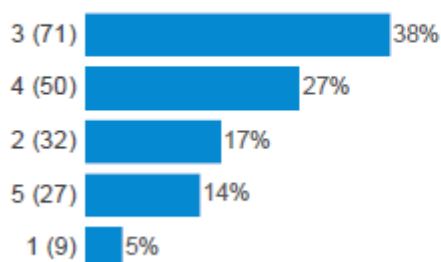
*Have any of the following helped you manage your caring responsibilities alongside your RCT role?*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Flexible working** | 78% |
| **Annual leave** | 72% |
| **TOIL** | 34% |
| **Paid emergency leave** | 27% |
| **Unpaid leave** | 8% |
| **Unpaid parental leave** | 2% |

Respondents were asked what other support they have received from their manager to help them manage their paid work and caring role. The answers, given in free text comments, have been catergorised below with some examples given:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Flexibility; variation in workload; changing shifts** | 27 |
| **Understanding; empathy; emotional support** | 19 |
| **Take leave at short notice** | 10 |
| **Supervision; discussions; opportunities to talk** | 9 |
| **Reduction in hours (temporary or permanent)** | 2 |
| **Manager not aware of caring role; have not asked for support** | 13 |
| **No other support; little support** | 23 |

*"Working from home means I am not restricted to "normal office hours" when there are times when I have to take a succession of breaks during the day or a longer break than is usual. In my case this is only occasional and not the norm but it reduces anxiety knowing that this is an option if need be so that I can still fulfil my work duties!"*

*"I haven't told my manager about my caring role. I have only become a carer due to a situation arising in lockdown."*

*"My line manager is excellent and allows me a great deal of flexibilty. Without this I couldn't work and would have to claim benefits. My previous department was also very good, allowed me to reduce my hours and have parental leave to use for the summer holidays to care for my autistic son."*

*"No other support. I have found it extremely difficult to access emergency leave when I have needed it and have been refused in the past. Purchase additional leave at extra cost to myself."*

_How well do you believe your line manager understands the needs/ how to support / issues faced by unpaid carers?_

**Scale answer (1 = Very well - 5 = Not very well)**

| Response | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1 (61) | 34% |
| 5 (38) | 21% |
| 3 (34) | 19% |
| 4 (26) | 14% |
| 2 (23) | 13% |
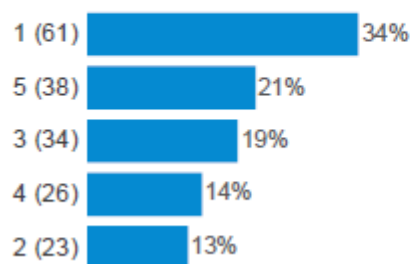
*In your opinion, what more can we do as an employer to support unpaid carers within our workforce*?

The responses to this free text question have been categorised below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Reintroduce flexi time; increased flexibility; earlier start and later finish times** | 29 |
| **Carers leave; time off for hospital appointments** | 29 |
| **Take leave or time off at short notice; easier access to emergency leave** | 15 |
| **Clearer guidelines for managers; Carers Policy; specific procedures for supporting carers** | 15 |
| **Increase understanding among managers; awareness and training for managers** | 10 |
| **Working from home** | 8 |
| **Sufficient staffing to support absences in teams** | 5 |

*"It would be easier if there was a set out procedure for unpaid carers to access support from RCT. I am not sure of what I am able to access and able to ask my manages for support in. Different departments seem to deal with scenarios differently. Emergency leave is not always forthcoming."*

*"From a personal point of view, I feel that in specific diagnosed conditions there could be more leeway to allow for hospital appointments etc rather than using annual leave which is meant to be used for work - life balance. Also re-instate Flexi time and then I would not need to take leave."*

*"More flexible. Apparently, there are just a number of emergency leave available. For the last almost 6 years I had to use my annual leave to look after my mother / father and this gives me very little time for myself, almost none. More flexible emergency / carer leave available."*

*"I think if there could be some facility whereby carers could register their caring responsibility, they would feel more comfortable in asking for support when they needed it."*

*"Continue with the ability for flexible working /agile working and home working opportunities to enable the hours lost through additional support can be recuperated - at present the process doesn't impact my work targets as I am able to work later or earlier to catch up on any time lost to provide support."*

**Conclusions**

- Most respondents were not aware or not clear on what support they could access as unpaid carers now or in the future.

- Most unpaid carers have used flexible working and annual leave to manage their caring role alongside their paid work.
- 65% of respondents rated the challenge of managing paid work and caring as 3 or 4 on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all challenging and 5 being extremely challenging).
- There is evidence of differences in the way unpaid carers feel supported by their line managers. Rating the support provided, 34% said their manager understood their needs very well, whilst 21% said their manager did not understand their needs well at all.
- The biggest support managers could provide seems to be flexibility in work and showing understanding of the caring role.
- Specific carers leave, time off to attend hospital appointments and increased flexibility in work were highlighted as the most frequent suggestions for what RCT could introduce to further support carers, followed by clearer procedures and guidelines and increased understanding among managers.

Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

# Carer's Leave Consultation

## Government Response

# Contents

# Introduction

This Government is committed to enabling a high skilled, high productivity, high wage economy that delivers on our ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to work and grow a business. As we build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government will bring forward measures to ensure the UK has an employment framework which is fit for purpose and keeps pace with the needs of modern workplaces. These measures will increase participation, protect vulnerable workers, take a smarter approach to enforcement of employment law, and build on the strengths of our flexible labour market to support jobs.

Increasing participation will be a central part of the Government's plans to build back better as we learn lessons from the last 16 months. We will legislate to support participation in the labour market including introducing carer's leave, neo-natal leave and pay and extending redundancy protection for new mothers. We are also committed to taking steps to further encourage flexible working and to make it easier for fathers to take paternity leave.

Juggling caring responsibilities and work can be challenging and can limit the participation of unpaid carers in the labour market. Women, who are often still the primary carers within families, tend to be disproportionately impacted. In response to this challenge, a commitment was made as part of the Government's wider agenda on carers in the Carer's Action Plan 2018 to 2020 to consider the question of dedicated employment rights for carers alongside existing employment rights.[1] The 2019 Government manifesto further committed to introducing a week of leave for unpaid carers.

To fulfil this commitment, the Government launched a consultation on carer's leave in March 2020, which recognised that unpaid carers face particular challenges in balancing work and caring responsibilities that may warrant a specific new employment right to time off from work. Evidence suggests that there are around five million people across the UK providing unpaid care by looking after an elderly or disabled family member, relative or friend. Nearly half of unpaid carers are also in work.[2] As a result of the UK's ageing population, we expect the number of people who rely on informal care, and the number of people who provide this invaluable service to continue to increase.[3]

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented change to the lives of everyone in the UK. Even more so than before, many individuals and families are balancing work with other responsibilities. In this context, the Government's commitment to creating a new leave entitlement of one week of additional leave for unpaid carers is even more necessary than before.

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[1] Carer's Action Plan 2018 to 2020. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carers-action-plan-2018-to-2020.

[2] Department for Work and Pensions, Family Resources Survey, 2017/18. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-201718.

[3] Brimblecombe et al. (2018), 'Unpaid care in England: Future patterns and potential support strategies'. [online]. Available at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/cpec/assets/documents/Economics-of-caring-2018.pdf

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The pandemic has also put huge pressures on businesses. As part of the Government's plan to build back better, we want to enable businesses to create and maintain engaged, diverse, and productive workforces. Employees who feel more in control of their personal and working lives are more likely to be happier and less stressed in work, with better employee health and wellbeing. We recognise that this new right to carer's leave will have some costs to business from employee absence. But we also expect employers to benefit from greater employee loyalty, engagement and motivation, a reduction in staff turnover and recruitment and training costs, increased productivity, and an improved perception of them by their workforce and customers.

We received over 800 responses to the consultation from a range of stakeholders and individuals. We have considered these further, in particular in light of what we have learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and will introduce a new leave entitlement for unpaid carers through legislation when parliamentary time allows. This new entitlement will apply to Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), as employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland. The Government will continue to engage and work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive.

# Section 1: A new right to Carer's Leave

This section sets out a high-level summary of responses alongside the detail of how the new carers leave entitlement will operate. Consultation responses have been considered along with what we have learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

> **There was clear support across the range of respondents to introduce a new leave right for unpaid carers. Therefore, the Government will introduce such a right for unpaid carers to take up to one week (5 working days) of unpaid leave per year.**

## Who would be eligible?

The consultation sought views on how eligibility for carer's leave might be defined. It considered whether an employee should have to work for a minimum period before qualifying for the leave, whether the right to leave should depend on the carer's relationship with the person being cared for, and whether the person being cared for should have particular qualifying needs.

Having evaluated the consultation responses, the new entitlement to statutory carer's leave will:

1. be available to the employee irrespective of how long they have worked for their employer (a day one right);

2. rely on the carer's relationship with the person being cared for, which should broadly follow the definition of dependant used in the right to time off for dependants – a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, a person who lives in the same household as the employee (other than by reason of them being their employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder) or a person who reasonably relies on the employee for care; and

3. depend on the person being cared for having a long-term care need. This would be defined as a long-term illness or injury (physical or mental), a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, or issues related to old age. There would be limited exemptions from the requirement for long-term care, for example in the case of terminal illness.

## What could the leave be used for?

The consultation set out a wide range of examples for when it might be appropriate to make use of a new right to carer's leave. These included providing personal support, helping with official or financial matters, or accompanying someone to medical and other appointments.

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Based on the support for a broad definition of what the leave might be used for we will set out that carer's leave can be used for providing care or making arrangement for the provision of care for a dependant who requires long-term care.[4] While Government does not intend to put strict rules around the length of care need, we maintain that it is important for carer's leave to focus on long-term care needs.

We heard calls in the consultation responses for improvements to existing provisions for parents to take time off work to care for children. The Government believes that the right to take carer's leave is not the appropriate place to address potential changes to parental leave entitlements. The Government will, however, consider changes to different forms of parental leave and flexible working and bring forward proposals when the time is right.

## How can the leave be taken?

The consultation set out two options for how one week of carer's leave per year per employee might be taken – either as a single block of one week, or more flexibly in individual days.

We heard strongly in the consultation responses that there were advantages to carers being able to take the leave in individual days, with more respondents commenting on the advantages of this option (for both employers and employees) than disadvantages. It was evident that this flexible option went much further in meeting the needs of unpaid carers who are balancing employment with caring responsibilities. Whilst there are some disadvantages for employers associated with this option, mainly a greater administrative burden as more leave requests would be made, these did not outweigh the benefits for employees. There are also benefits for employers including a more engaged workforce and less disruption to the business due to the likelihood that employees are off work for shorter periods of time.

As such, the Government will introduce a carer's leave entitlement that is available to be taken flexibly, either in individual day or half days, up to a block of one week.

## How would the leave be requested?

There were mixed responses to whether employees should be required to give notice before taking carer's leave. We saw respondents were roughly split equally between those who supported a requirement to give notice and those who did not. A relatively high proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. We heard from a number of respondents who supported a notice period that requiring notice was broadly reasonable, but that in emergencies it should not be required.

The Government considers that attaching a notice period to carer's leave is reasonable, given it is intended for planned caring responsibilities and that there is already a separate existing

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[4] This may also include providing care for someone who reasonably depends on the employee for care while their primary unpaid carer is taking respite.

right to time off for dependants to provide leave in emergency situations which can be taken with no notice.

Based on this, employees will be required to give notice ahead of taking carer's leave. The notice requirement will be in line with that of annual leave, where an employee must give notice that is twice the length of time being requested as leave, plus one day. To enable employers to manage and plan for absences, employers will be able to postpone, but not deny, the leave request for carer's leave. The grounds on which they can do so will be strictly limited to where the employer considers that the operation of their business would be unduly disrupted. Employers will be required to give a counter-notice if postponing the request to take Carer's Leave.

## What evidence would be required?

The consultation suggested that it would be appropriate for employees to self-certify their entitlement to carer's leave. It asked how often they should be asked to do so and what evidence they may be asked to provide to support their application.

The importance of a light-touch, non-burdensome process for employees and employers alike was evident in the consultation responses. Over three quarters of respondents agreed that employees should self-certify their eligibility for carer's leave.

Based on the challenges raised in relation to asking for and managing sensitive personal or medical information relating to a third party, we will not introduce any evidence requirements when an employee self-certifies their entitlement to carer's leave. A false application can be dealt with in the same way as a false claim for sickness absence or any other disciplinary matter.

## Employment Protections

As is the case with other leave entitlements, it is important that employees cannot be penalised at work for making use of carer's leave. The Government will therefore protect those taking carer's leave from detriment. Dismissals for reasons connected with exercising the right to carer's leave will be automatically unfair dismissal.

## Implementing Carer's Leave

The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing worker's rights as we build back better from the pandemic.

Legislation to introduce carer's leave as a day 1 statutory employment right will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows, alongside other measures which will also support unpaid carers. These measures will include making it easier for people to work flexibly by

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making it the default unless employers have good reason not to, where the Government is committed to consulting on policy proposals.

# Section 2: Analysis of Consultation Questions

## Response Breakdown[5]

We saw a total of **840 responses** the consultation on carer's leave. The majority of respondents were individuals – 615 in total (**73%**). Of these individuals the majority were in employment – 547 individuals.

Businesses who responded were categorised by size (large, medium, small and micro).

Of those respondents in the 'Other' categories the main sub-groups were Charities or Carers Groups, those who are carers themselves, and Local Authorities or Councils.

Of the 10 respondents who identified as a Business Representative Organisation/Trade Body, 3 respondents were local County Councils, and 2 respondents were NHS Trusts.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of respondents**
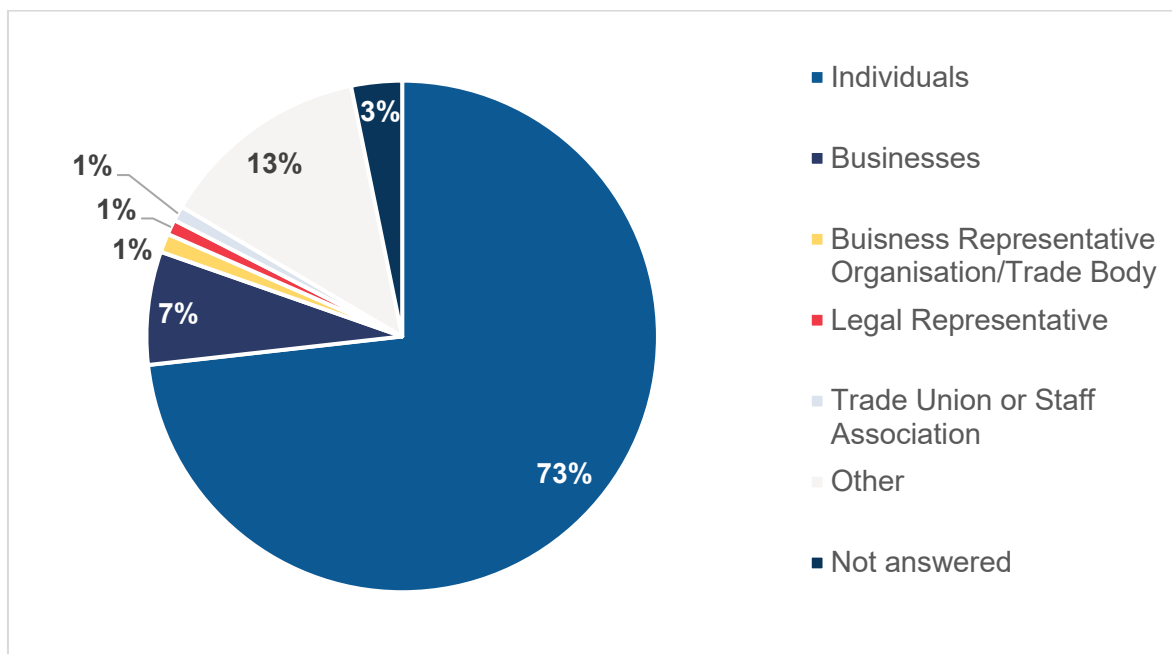


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**Figure 2: Breakdown of individuals by employment**



Pie chart:
- Employed: 65%
- Self-employed: 4%
- Unemployed: 3%
- Retired: 5%
- Not looking for work: 3%
- Other: 7%
- Not answered: 14%
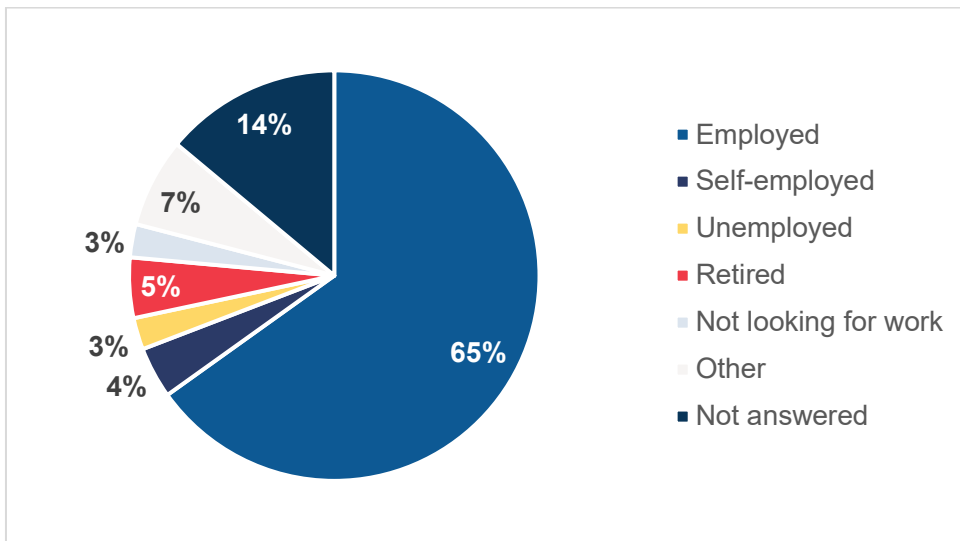
**Figure 3: Breakdown by Business Size**



Pie chart:
- Large: 72%
- Medium: 8%
- Small: 12%
- Micro: 8%
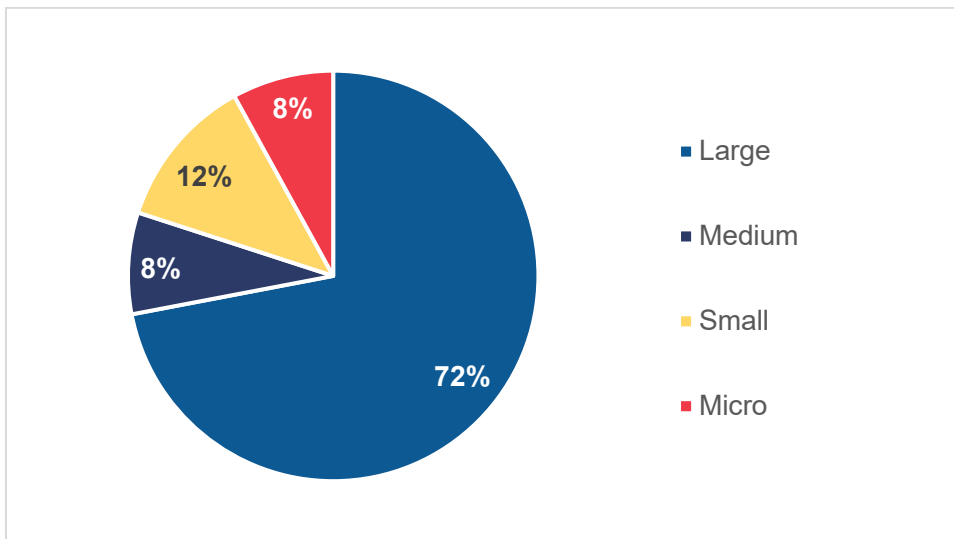
**Figure 4: Breakdown of 'Other' category**
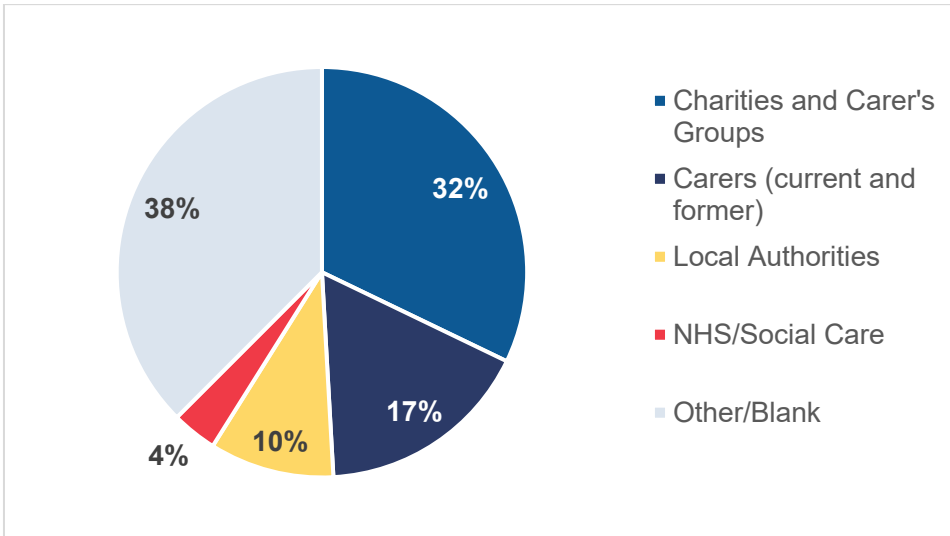
# Existing employment rights and practices

*The consultation set out that there are several existing employment rights and practices that can help people to balance work and other responsibilities. This question sought to understand which specific needs one week of carer's leave could meet and identify gaps in the existing framework it could fill.*

**Question 1: Have you or your employees used any of the below options to take time out of work to fulfil caring responsibilities?**

There were **790 responses** to this question. **617 respondents** provided details on their experience of these existing rights.

**Figure 5: Use of existing rights for caring responsibilities**[6]

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[6] Respondents were able to select more than one answer to this question.
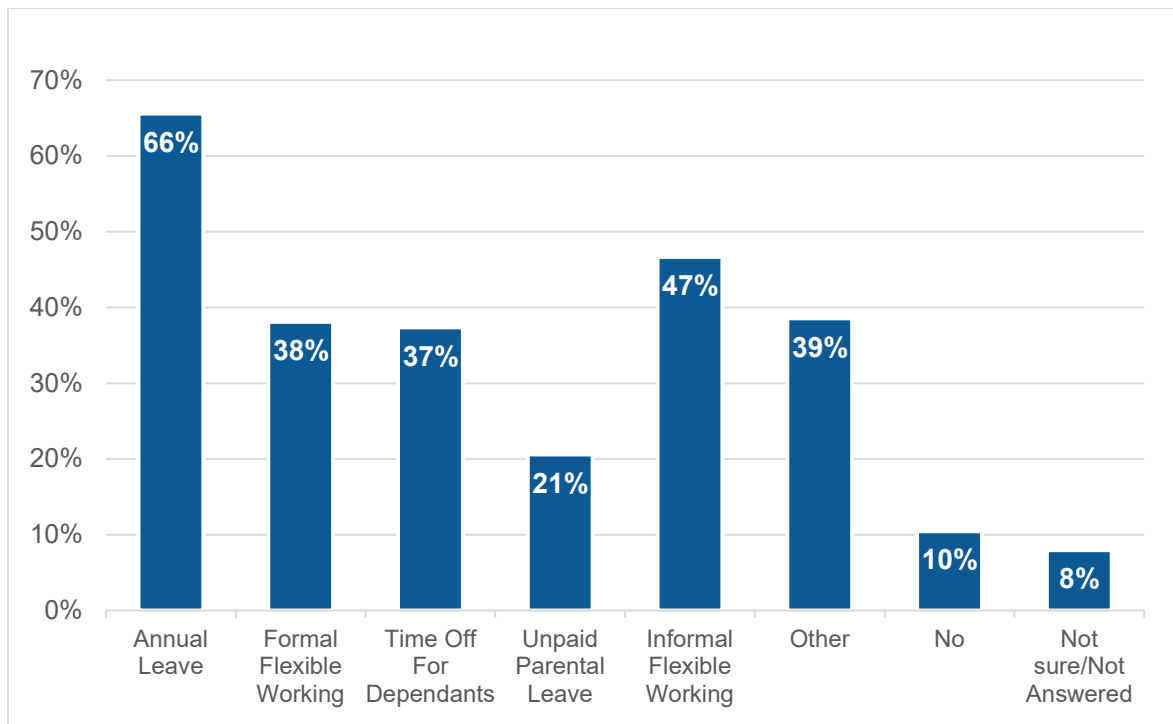
Annual leave was found to be most common leave entitlement used by those currently or previously balancing caring and work. Often this was used for caring because other options were not available (for example, flexible working) or because respondents could not afford to take unpaid leave.

Respondents noted a lack of clarity and a lack of awareness of what support is available for carers across the existing right entitlements. Taking leave for caring often has to be negotiated with an employer which can be difficult.

Some businesses already offer a form of carers leave. This ranged from offering flexibility depending on individual circumstances to offering a paid carer leave entitlement.

# Who would be eligible to take Carer's Leave

*The consultation set out that eligibility to take carer's leave should be based on facts that are clear to both the employee and employer in order to avoid confusion. The proposed new entitlement to carer's leave would apply to employees only, in line with existing employment rights such as the right to time off for dependants.*

## Relationship between the employee and the person cared for

The consultation proposed that the definition for carer's leave should broadly mirror dependant relationships under the right to time off for dependants, meaning a person could take leave to care for:

- A spouse or civil partner
- A child
- A parent
- A person who lives in the same household as the employee (otherwise than by reason of being their employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder)
- A person who reasonably relies on the employee for care

**Question 2: Do you agree that this provides an appropriate definition of caring relationships for the purpose of Carer's Leave?**

There were **840 responses** to this question. **630 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 6: Agreement with proposed definition for dependant relationships**
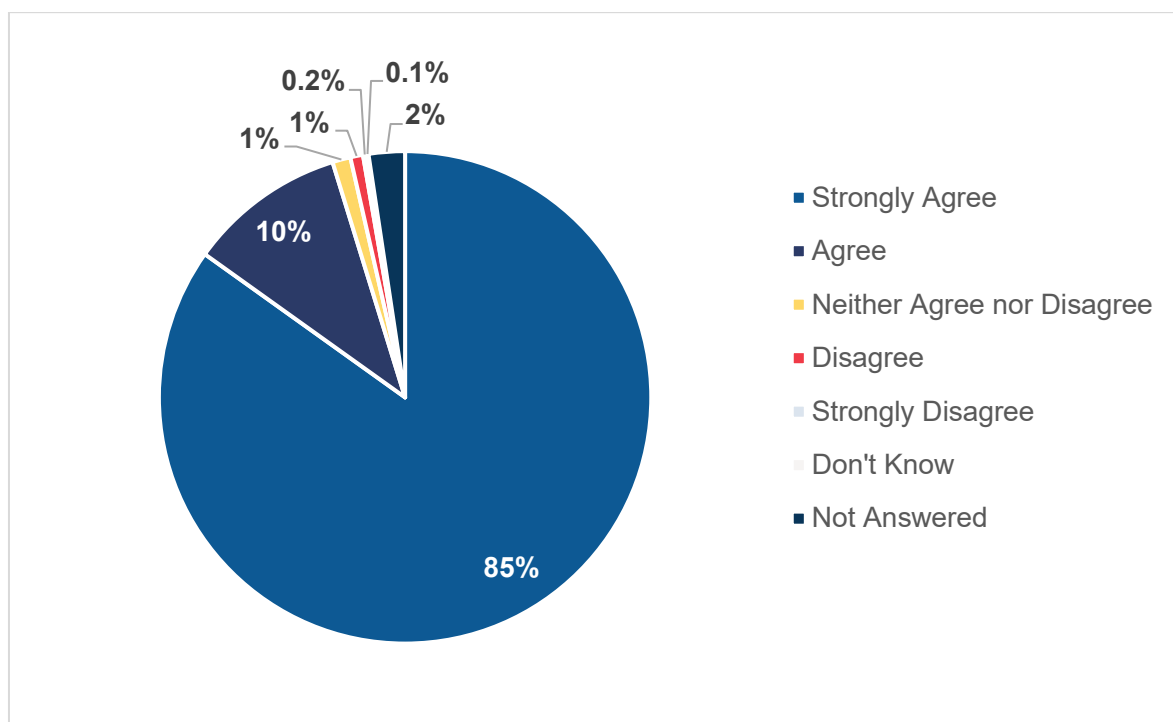
**95%** of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the proposed definition of caring relationships is appropriate for carer's leave. We saw comments from respondents who agreed that mirroring the definition of 'dependant' in the right to time of for dependants would provide consistency for both employees and employers.[7]

**Question 3: Are there other caring relationships that you think should be considered for inclusion within the scope of Carer's Leave?**

There were **512 responses** to this question.

A wide range of other caring relationships were suggested in response to this question. These included siblings, grandparents, all family members, partners, boyfriends and girlfriends and parents-in-law.

However, it was noted that the inclusion of 'a person who reasonably relies on the employee for care' is sufficiently broad to cover the wide range of caring relationships that were suggested.

Many respondents used this question to express their agreement for the proposed definition and highlight that they did not have any further suggestions or that they were not sure if any further relationships should be considered for inclusion.

## Care need

The consultation proposed restricting carer's leave to those caring for individuals with physical or mental health problems, disability or issues related to old age where the care need is likely to last for a longer period of time (such as six months or a year).

It was also proposed that some specific care needs should automatically qualify for the purposes of carer's leave regardless of their duration. These would mirror those conditions which are automatically treated as a disability from the day of diagnosis under the Equality Act 2010 (Cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis and also automatically apply in situations of terminal illness.

**Question 4: Which conditions on care need do you believe are appropriate for Carer's Leave?**

There were **750 responses** to this question. **339 respondents** provided an answer when asked to specify the length of care need.

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[7] Carer's UK response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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**Figure 7: Appropriate conditions on care need for Carer's Leave**
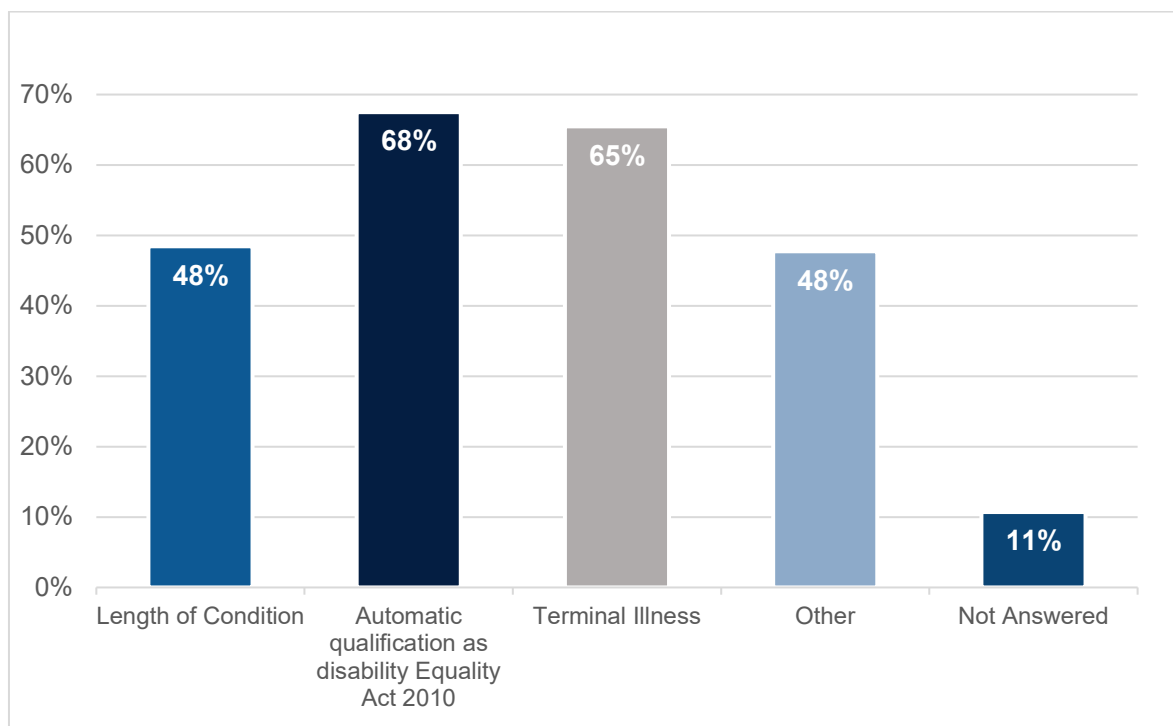


Over half of respondents were supportive that conditions which are automatically treated as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and terminal illness qualify for carer's leave regardless of duration.

There were some concerns raised in response to this question on imposing a condition on carer's leave based on the length of time for which someone is in need of care (for example, 6 months or a year). A number of charities put forward reasons why they disagreed with a condition on the length of care need. These included that caring needs are fluctuating, and the length of care need may be difficult to determine from the outset.[8] Concerns were also raised that some disabilities and conditions are difficult to assess, and it is not always known how long care will be required at the point when someone takes on caring responsibilities.[9]

Some responses to the consultation from businesses also reflected that a condition on the length of care need was arbitrary and does not account for the nature of many conditions. A number of businesses highlighted that they do not require a condition on care need in their existing carer's leave policies.[10]

The Government will therefore take a broad approach to defining long-term care need, with limited exceptions from care being long-term.

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[8] Carer's UK and MS Society responses to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[9] Rainbow Trust Children's Charity response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[10] Four large business responses to the Carer's Leave Consultation.

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**Question 5: If you do not believe that any conditions about care need are appropriate, please explain why and comment on any other conditions which might be appropriate.**

There were **219 responses** to this question.

The majority of respondents to this question disagreed that there should be any conditions about care need. Reasons for this included that there are a wide range of caring relationships and activities and that being too prescriptive risks not including this broad spectrum. Respondents noted that all individual care needs are different and as such suggested that carer's leave should be broad and flexible enough to account for this broad range.

## Qualifying Period

The consultation sought views on an appropriate qualifying period for carer's leave. This information was important to help the Government to understand how we can best support employers and employees to plan ahead, whilst recognising that the need for care can arise at any given time.

A qualifying period means that an employer would need to be continuously employed by their employer for a given period of time in order to be eligible to take carer's leave. A 'day one right' means that the employee would be able to take carer's leave, with appropriate notice, from the beginning of their employment.

**Question 6: Which qualifying period do you believe is appropriate for Carer's Leave?**

There were **814 responses** to this question. **547 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 8: Support for Carer's Leave to be a Day 1 right**
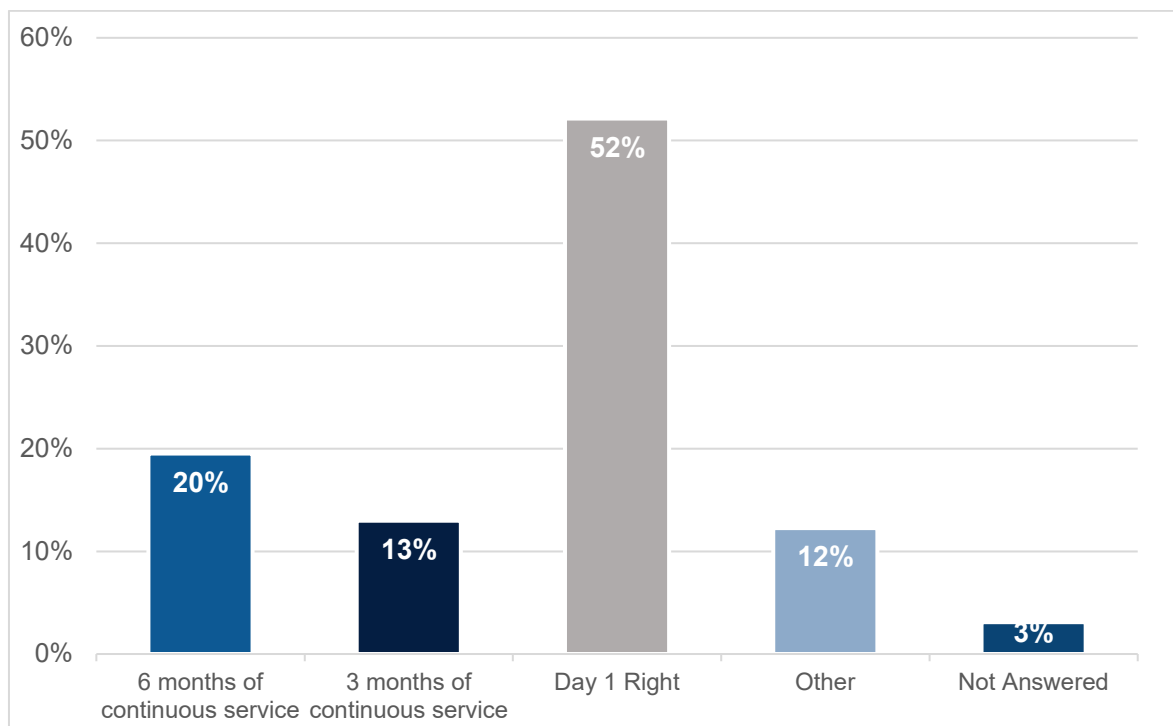


Over half of respondents supported carer's leave being a day 1 right. A significant number of respondents who favoured a day 1 right identified the fact that caring responsibilities cannot be paused for a period of time while an employee completes a qualifying period. Respondents also suggested that knowing an employer is carer-friendly is important to carers when applying for a new role[11] and that enforcing a qualifying period would not be consistent with the ambition of the policy to help more carers stay in employment.[12]

There was a split in responses from businesses, with **50%** of business respondents suggesting that carer's leave should be a day 1 right. **12%** of businesses said that there should be a 6-month continuous employment requirement, while **18%** said this requirement should be 3 months.

The arguments for requiring a minimum qualifying period included giving employers some protection from the leave being misused, that employees should have passed their probation period and demonstrated their commitment to the employer before being entitled to carer's leave and that a qualifying period would deter people from taking advantage of the leave entitlement for reasons unrelated to caring.

Other suggestions for alternative qualifying periods included that there should be no qualifying period (i.e. a day 1 right)[13], that the qualifying period could be in line with the company's probation policy or a longer qualifying period of one year. Those who suggested a one-year continuous service qualifying period noted that this is in line with unpaid parental leave.[14]

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[11] Carer's Trust response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[12] Large business response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[13] Note that 35 respondents who selected 'Other' then specified that Carer's Leave should be a Day 1 right.
[14] Two large business responses to the Carer's Leave consultation.

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# What the leave can be taken for

*The consultation sought views on what carer's leave should be used for, acknowledging that caring comprises of a wide range of activities. The consultation therefore set out broad definition of 'caring' for the purposes of carer's leave.*

The consultation set out that it could be appropriate for an individual to take carer's leave for one, or a combination, of the below reasons (which are commonly recognised types of caring):

- **Providing personal support**, such as keeping an eye out for someone, keeping them company and staying in touch.

- **Providing practical support**, such as making meals, going shopping for them, laundry, cleaning, gardening, maintenance and other help around the home.

- **Helping with official or financial matters**, such as helping with paperwork, dealing with 'officials' (also over the phone and the internet), paying bills/rents/rates, collecting pension/benefits.

- **Providing personal and/or medical care**, such as collecting prescriptions, giving medications, changing dressings, helping them move around the home, getting dressed, feeding, washing, bathing, using the toilet.

- **Making arrangements**, such as dealing with social services or the voluntary sector, moving someone into a care home, making home adjustments or adaptations.

The consultation also asked for views on whether carer's leave should be able to be used to accompany someone to appointments.

**Question 7: Do you agree with the proposed reasons for taking Carer's Leave?**

There were **814 responses** to this question. **649 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 9: Agreement with proposed reasons for taking Carer's Leave**
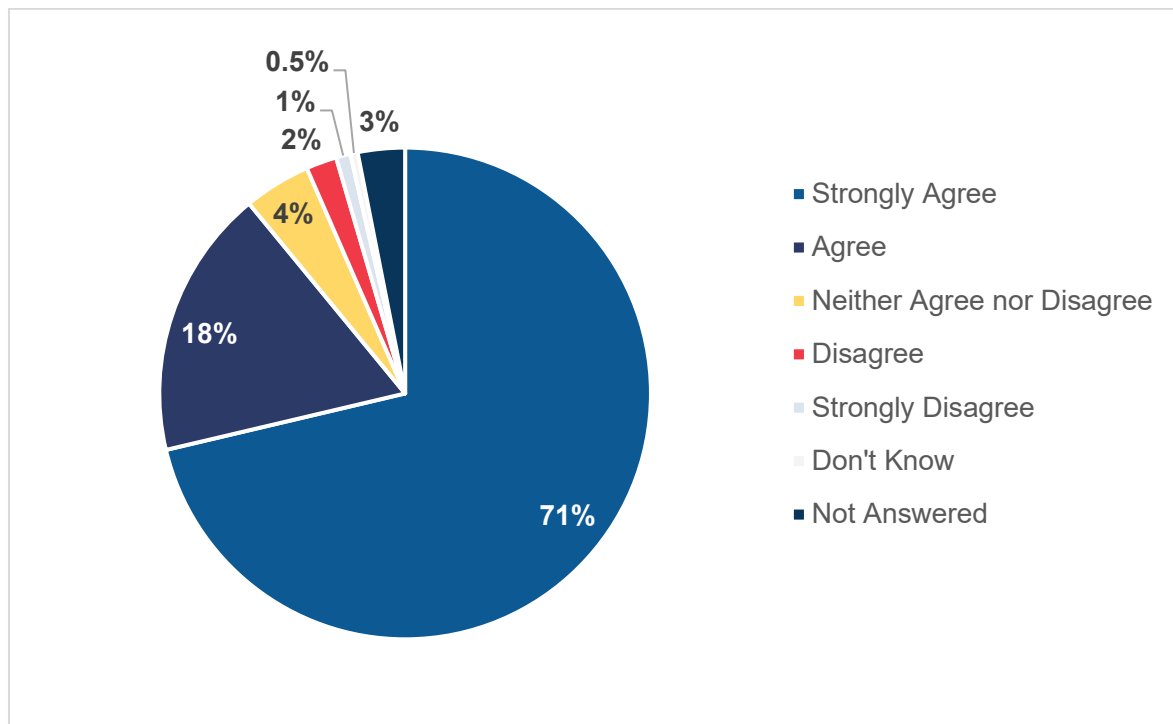


**89%** of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed reasons for taking carer's leave. Respondents who agreed with the proposed reasons were supportive of the broad approach taken to defining what carer's leave could be used for and agreed that the suggested tasks were in line with their caring responsibilities.

There was significant support for appointments to be included in the remit of carer's leave, with **over 50%** of those who provided reasons for their answer highlighting that accompanying someone to an appointment was an important aspect of caring. It was also noted that this is an activity for which many unpaid carers currently rely on annual leave.[15]

A range of reasons were provided by those who disagreed with the proposed reasons for taking carer's leave (**3%** of respondents). These included that the proposed reasons for carer's leave should not be limited to a prescribed list but should be available for any reason. A limited number of respondents felt that the proposed reasons were too broad and should be limited to formal arrangements (e.g. medical appointments). We also heard limited support for other existing rights to be used in these circumstances, for example annual leave or flexible working. We heard some concern that 5 days of unpaid leave would not be sufficient to cover the number of appointments and other caring responsibilities that unpaid carers carry out.

Overall, there was clear support for the proposed reasons for taking carer's leave and for appointments to be included in this remit.

**Question 8: Are there any other reasons that you think should be included?**

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[15] Chartered Institute for Personal Development response to the Carer's Leave consultation.

There were **381 responses** to this question.

A range of suggestions for other reasons were provided from respondents. These included respite for carers, emergency leave or unexpected circumstances, time off for bereavement after the loss of a cared for person, advocating on behalf of someone, supporting someone while in hospital or recovering after a hospital stay.

## What the leave cannot be taken for

The consultation set out that the purpose of carer's leave is to help people who struggle to remain in work due to caring commitments by offering them further flexibility to provide care. It was suggested that both *childcare* (other than where the child has a disability of other longer-term care need) and *short-term care needs* should be out of scope of carer's leave as there are existing leave entitlements that are available for these situations.

**Question 9: Do you agree that childcare (other than where the child has a disability or other longer-term caring need) should be out of scope for Carer's Leave?**

There were **808 responses** to this question. **543 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 10: Childcare out of scope of Carer's Leave**
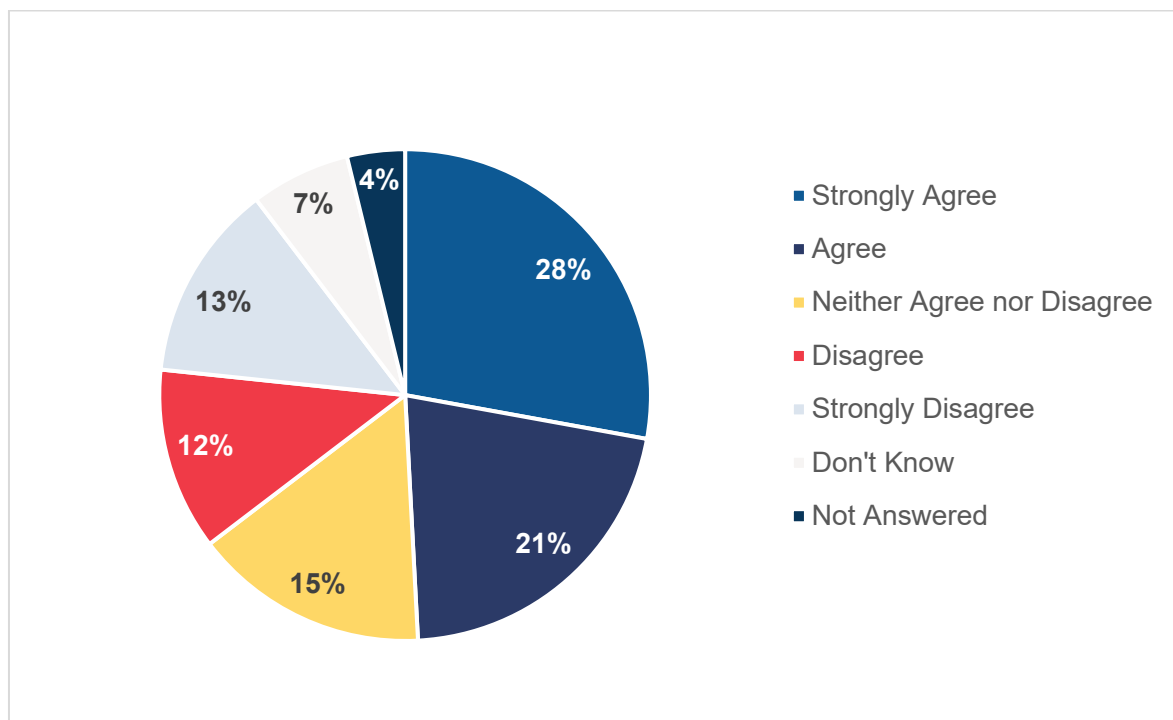


49% of respondents agree that childcare, other than where the child has a disability or long-term care need, should be out of scope of carer's leave. **25%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while **26%** gave a neutral response or did not answer the question.

The primary reason given those who agreed that childcare should be out of scope, other than where the child has a disability or long-term care need, was that every day childcare is covered

by other family-related policies and entitlements. We saw this agreement across different respondent types, including individuals, businesses and 'other' (which included a number of charities). It was acknowledged that childcare responsibilities are different to other caring responsibilities in a number of ways and should therefore be addressed separately. However, while there was broad agreement from a number of stakeholders that everyday childcare should not be within scope of carer's leave, there were calls for Government to reform parental leave policies and to bring forward measures to improve existing childcare provision.[16]

Those who strongly disagreed or disagreed provided a range of reasons for this response. These included that short-term illness in children often require parents to take time out of work and that not all childcare is emergency leave, therefore falling under the right to time off for dependants. We heard that working parents sometimes use annual leave or sick leave to care for their sick children. We also heard that there may be circumstances which fall between unpaid parental leave and the right to time off for dependants.[17]

**22%** of respondents provided a neutral response to this question, including both 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know'. Reasons for these responses included that often it was dependant on individual circumstances, for example whether there are other family members who could support with childcare.[18] Others felt this question was not relevant to their situation or were unsure about whether other forms of leave would cover everyday childcare, for example unpaid parental leave.

Government recognises that during the period in which the consultation on carer's leave was open at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, many parents were under the additional pressure of managing home schooling their children alongside working from home. We also heard and have noted the calls made for changes to childcare provisions and parental leave entitlements. As set out in the next steps section of this response, Government will also respond to the July 2019 consultation on parental leave and pay later this year.

### Question 10: Do you agree that caring for a person with short-term care needs should be out of scope for Carer's Leave?

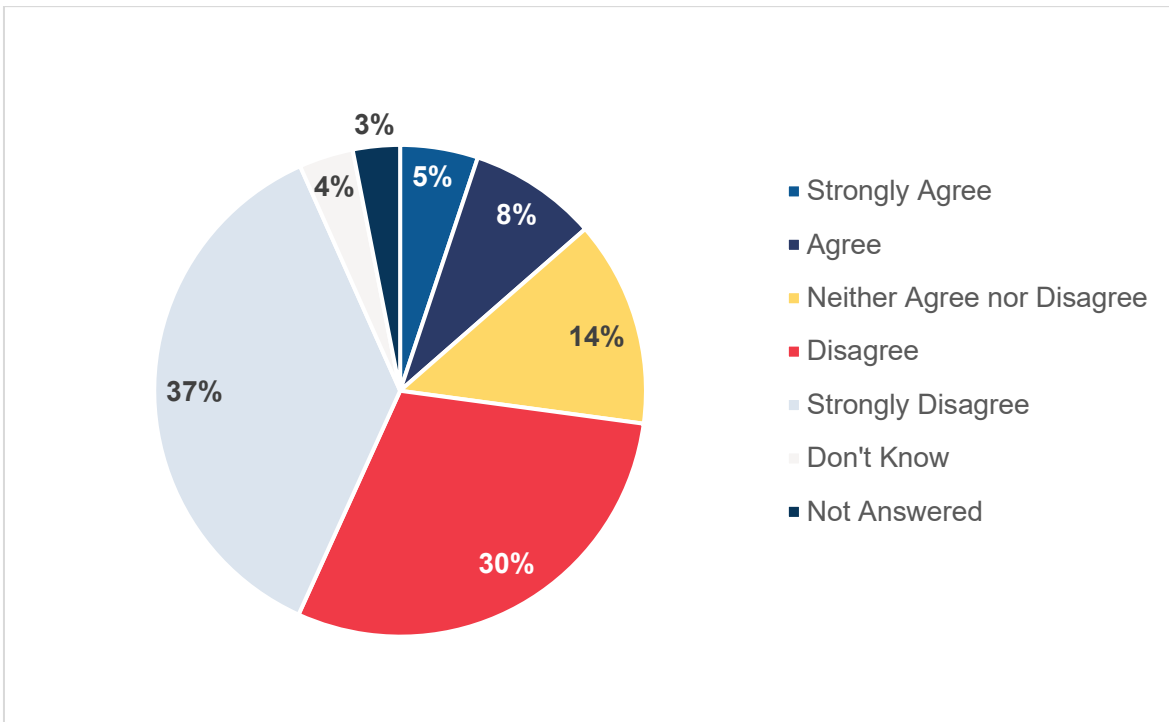There were **814 responses** to this question. **592 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 11: Short-term care needs out of scope of Carer's Leave**

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[16] Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[17] Close the Gap response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[18] Individual response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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Pie chart:
- Strongly Agree: 5%
- Agree: 8%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 30%
- Strongly Disagree: 37%
- Don't Know: 4%
- Not Answered: 3%

**67%** of respondents disagreed that short-term care needs should be out of scope of carer's leave.

We heard a range of arguments for why short-term care need should be in scope of carer's leave, these included that using carer's leave should be based on the intensity of the care need, rather than the length and that the length of care need can often be difficult to determine.

A limited number of respondents agreed that short-term care needs should be out of scope, highlighting that other leave entitlements would apply in these situations, for example, the right to time off for dependants. The Government maintains that the objective of carer's leave is to support those providing care for someone with a long-term care need. It is particularly these long-term ongoing care needs that make it difficult for carers to balance their work and caring responsibilities. In emergency situations the right to time off for dependants provides employees with a leave entitlement to take time off work. Where the short-term care need is foreseeable (e.g. supporting someone who does not usually require care as they recover from a broken arm or minor operation) annual leave can be taken.

### Question 11: Are there any other circumstances or activities which Carer's Leave should not be taken for?

There were **287 responses** to this question.

A range of other circumstances and activities were suggested which carer's leave should not be taken for. These included emergencies, going on holiday, mild ill health (e.g. common cold), kinship carers (excluding circumstances where the child has a disability or long-term care need) and for bereavement. Government broadly agrees with these suggestions where other leave entitlements are more appropriate, for example annual leave for holiday purposes or time off for dependants in the case of emergencies.

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# Evidence

*The consultation set out that the Government believes that it would be appropriate for employees to self-certify their eligibility for carer's leave in the first instance. The questions on evidence sought views on this and what evidence might be appropriate if required.*

To ensure that the leave is used for its intended purposes and the right is not abused, the consultation set out that it could be reasonable for employers to request further evidence if they so wish. Such evidence could relate to the care need (the condition of the person being cared for) or the specific activities that the leave was used for.

Any abuse or deliberate misuse of the right to take carer's leave would be covered by a company's internal disciplinary policy.

**Question 12: Do you agree that an employee should in the first instance be able to self-certify their eligibility for Carer's Leave?**

There were **822 responses** to this question. **526 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 12: Agreement that in the first instance employees should self-certify**
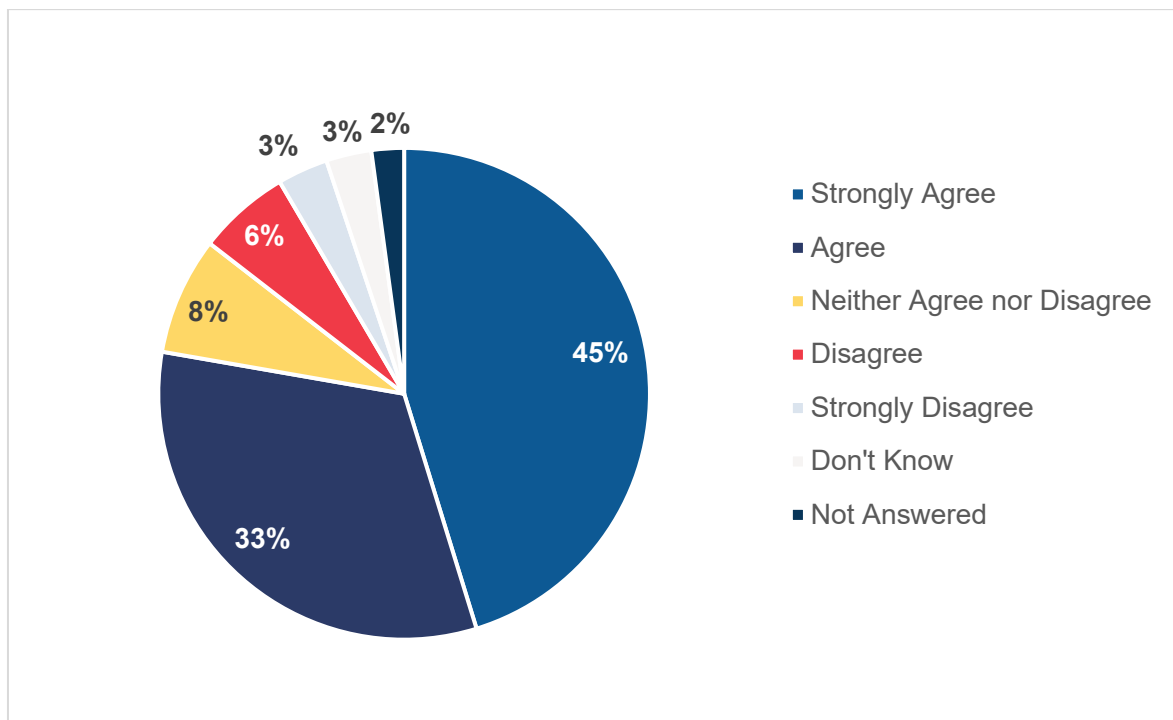


**78%** of respondents agreed that employees should be able to self-certify their eligibility for carer's leave, while only **9%** disagreed.

Given the sensitive nature of many caring situations, it was felt by respondents that the process for taking carer's leave should not be overly onerous or bureaucratic which could

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make accessing the leave difficult for those who need it.[19] A light-touch and reasonable approach would make carer's leave accessible, and not put undue stress on carers when they sought to make use of the leave. We heard that employees themselves are in the best position to identify whether they need to use carer's leave for their caring responsibilities and given the entitlement is unpaid it is unlikely an employee will seek to use the leave if there is not a genuine care need.[20]

There was limited concern that enabling employees to self-certify to take carer's leave would be open to abuse and that an evidence requirement would be needed to prevent any misuse of the leave. We also heard comments that in order to encourage more open conversations between employers and employees, carer's leave should be on the managers' approval following a discussion.

## Question 13: If you strongly agree or agree, how often do you think an employee should self-certify their eligibility for Carer's Leave?

There were **710 responses** to this question. **368 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 13: Support for employees to self-certify each time they request Carer's Leave**
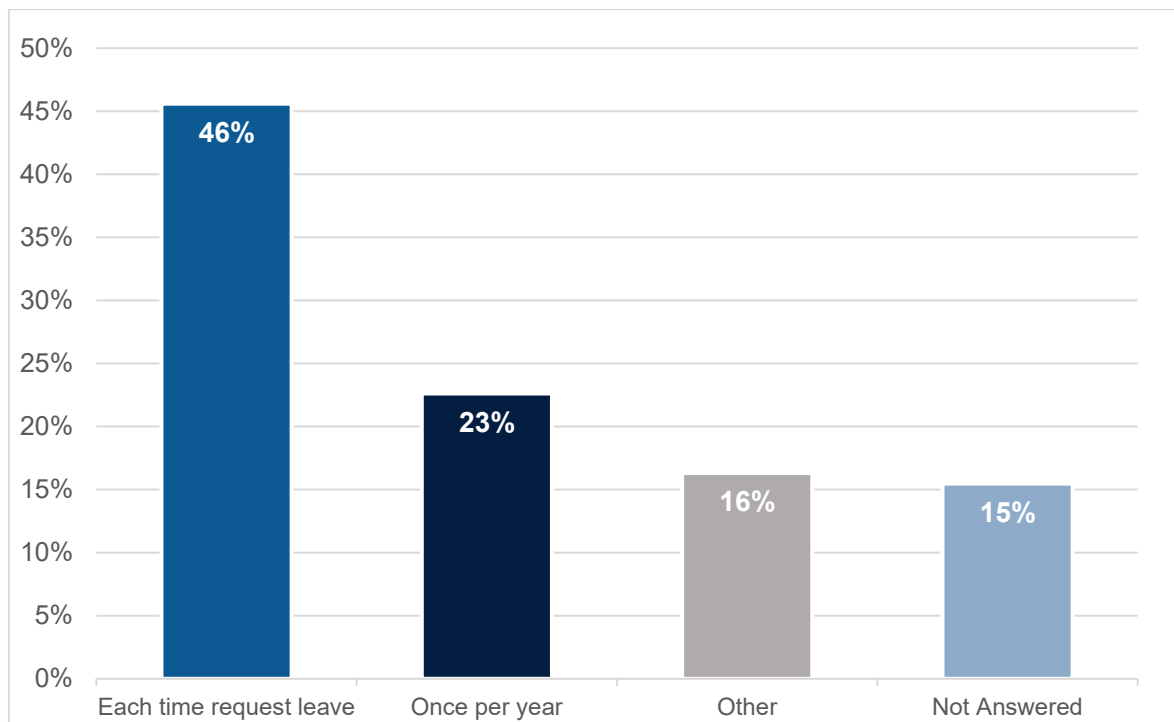


Most respondents favoured self-certification each time the leave is requested, stating that this was a reasonable approach. We heard that caring responsibilities are difficult to predict, which would make self-certifying once per year difficult. It was also felt that the reasons taking carer's leave may change and as such open and honest conversations between employers and

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[19] NASUWT response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[20] Close the Gap response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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employees are important in making sure the employee is best supported.[21] Self-certifying each time an employee needs to take carer's leave could act as a prompt to enable this conversation and review with an employer.

Those who favour self-certifying once per year provided a range of reasons, including that this would be less of an administrative burden than requesting the leave each time it is taken. It was also suggested that carers could self-certify once per year, or if their caring role changed.

Other suggestions included self-certifying once, when an employee becomes a carer, on a quarterly basis, or when circumstances change. Others suggested that it would be situation dependant or should be based on individual needs.

**Question 14: Do you agree that an employer should be able to request further evidence if they are not satisfied with the self-certification?**

There were **808 responses** to this question. **538 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 14: Agreement that employer should be able to request further evidence if they are not satisfied with the self-certification**
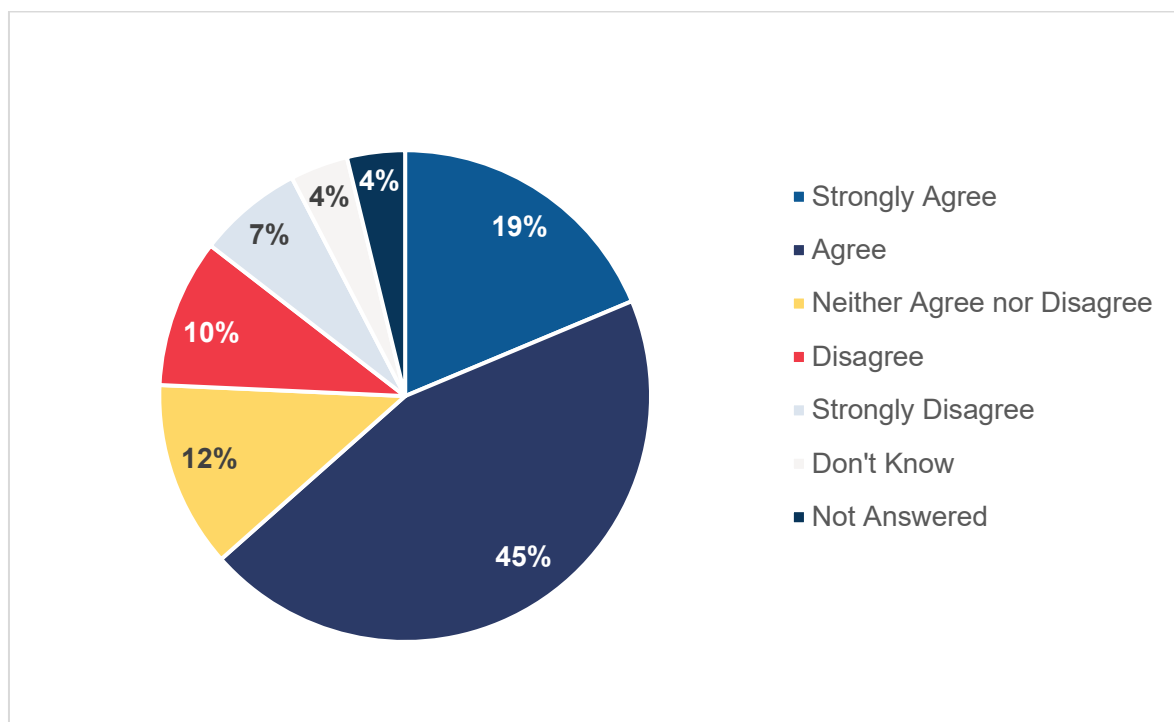


**64%** of respondents to this question agreed that employers should be able to request additional evidence if they are not satisfied with the self-certification. This would provide some protection for employers should they feel the leave was being misused. However, in the comments provided on this question we heard strongly that the evidence requested should be reasonable and appropriate and handled sensitively. We heard that requesting evidence

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[21] Muslim Women's Network UK response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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should be by exception, rather than the rule.[22] We also heard support for evidence requirements not to be specified and left open for what is likely to be the minority of cases.[23]

Arguments from those who disagreed (**17%**) included that as this is an unpaid entitlement to one week of leave, the risk of abuse is low.[24] Building trust between employers and employees was raised by several respondents as important, noting that an evidence requirement could undermine this. We also heard that employees are able to self-certify for one week of sick leave without a requirement to provide evidence, which could be mirrored for carer's leave.

**Question 15: If agree or strongly agree, please describe what evidence could be provided to demonstrate:**

- **The need for care (of the person being cared for)?**

- **What activities the leave is used for?**

There were **474 responses** to this question.

Respondents to this question suggested a range of evidence that could be used to demonstrate the care need and the activities the leave would be used for. Hospital or doctor's appointment letters were widely suggested as was evidence related to benefits that demonstrate a care need, including Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Carer's Allowance.

In addition to suggestions of evidence, a number of respondents also raised challenges with providing evidence to demonstrate care need and that the leave would be used for. In particular, we heard that not all carers carry out activities that involve any form of official evidence, for example a doctor's note. The challenges associated with proving evidence are covered in further detail in the following question.

**Question 16: Please comment on the key difficulties or challenges associated with providing and appropriately handling evidence, including data protection issues related to information about a person's health.**

There were **532 responses** to this question.

A significant number of respondents raised issues of data confidentiality relating to information about the dependant or cared for person. There was clear concern around ensuring that consent was in place before any information could be shared with an employer related to the dependant, with some respondents noting that not all cared for people would be able to provide consent for their information to be shared.

We heard that employers would need to carefully navigate GDPR requirements to ensure they were acting within the law if holding sensitive personal or medical data relating to a third party (i.e. the dependant rather than the employee). It was suggested that any evidence

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[22] Carer's UK response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Close the Gap response to the Carer's Leave consultation.

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requirements should be light touch to ensure that employers hold only minimal information on the personal situation of the carer and the person/persons who depend on them for care.[25]

One employer noted resource and capacity may be required within in organisations to ensure the relevant teams have the correct skills and experience in handling data of this sensitive nature. Additional steps would need to be taken by employers to manage this data. For example, this might include undertaking data protection impact assessments, clearly defining the purpose of the data and considering how it would be lawfully handled, training teams in collecting and handling the data and maintaining records to document the usage of this data.[26] Government heard that this could put additional burdens on employers.

Concerns were also raised around the different types of caring relationships and situations, with several respondents highlighting that not all caring relationships are easily evidenced and may not have a paper trail.[27] Many are of an informal nature where evidence, for example, a doctor's letter or appointment confirmation, is not available.

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[25] Carer's UK response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[26] Deloitte response to the Carer's Leave consultation.
[27] Carer's UK response to the Carer's Leave consultation.

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# How the leave can be taken

*The consultation set out the Government's proposal to introduce one week of unpaid carer's leave per year. Provided that the employee gives notice and meets the eligibly criteria, they should be granted the leave by their employer.*

## How the entitlement would apply

It was set out in the consultation that the number of days available to take would apply to the individual employee and would be pro-rated for part time work. The entitlement would not be capped at a maximum number of weeks over a certain number of years.

## How the leave would be available to take

The consultation sought views on how the leave entitlement could be offered flexibly to carers while balancing the impact on employers of staff being away from work and administering the leave. Two options for how the leave could be accessed were set out:

- As a single block of one whole working week (pro-rated for part-time employees)
- As individual days or half-days, up to one whole week (pro-rated for part-time employees)

**Question 17: Please comment on the pros and cons for employees and employers, if the leave was available to take as a week of unpaid leave, available to take as a *single block*?**

It was notable in the consultation responses that there was limited support for the leave to be available to take a single block, with several respondents unable to provide any pros for employees of taking the leave as a single block. We heard that while a week of leave may be suitable for a small number of carers, this would be very situation dependent, and the majority would benefit from a more flexible leave entitlement.[28]

Government heard significant concerns with the option of taking carer's leave in a block of one week. Suggestions for cons for employees of taking the leave as a single block included a lack of flexibility which does not reflect the needs to working carers, employees being forced to take more time off than they need and that the leave entitlement would be used on one single occasion, without allowing time away from work for caring responsibilities at other times of the year.

For employers, we heard that there may be an administrative benefit with only one leave request per employee, per year, making it easier to manage operational requirement and workloads.[29] However, we also heard that employees may be away from work for longer than they need to be, meaning employers need to arrange and bear the cost of cover for longer

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[28] Anonymous Trade Body response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[29] Government notes that this may be the case for some, but not all, employers.

than they may otherwise have needed to. It was also suggested that staff are likely to take other forms of leave throughout the year to fulfil their caring responsibilities.

**Question 17: Please comment on the pros and cons for employees and employers, if the leave was available to take as a week of unpaid leave, available to take as *individual days*?**

We heard very strong support in the responses to this question for carer's leave to be available to take as individual or half days, up to a block of one week. Responses suggested that this would be workable and the best option for both employees and employers.

Suggestions for pros for employees included flexibility to balance work and caring by enabling employees to take leave as when it is required, tailored to the needs of the cared for person. We also heard that taking the leave flexibly would enable carers to provide care over a number of weeks, rather than being restricted to one week which is in line with many caring relationships being ongoing and long-term. This option would also create less of a financial burden for carers as the unpaid leave can be spread throughout the year, rather than an employee losing a week of earnings.

A number of respondents to this question noted that they could not see any cons to this more flexible option. Others noted that if the leave was available to take in individual days, it would be possible for carers to take a full week off if this was required. We also noted that while increased flexibility is favourable, there are calls for the leave to be paid.

It was also noted in the responses that a number of employers who already offer carer's leave (either paid or unpaid) allow for it to be taken flexibly. Suggestions for pros for employers if the leave were available to take as individual days included that employees will not be on leave for longer than is required, causing less disruption to the business and that in many cases it may be easier to arrange cover for shorter periods of time (e.g. one day) or cover may not be required. We also heard that employees whose needs are better met are likely to feel more engaged and better able to balance their work and personal lives.

We saw fewer responses when asking for cons for employers, but noted it may be more difficult for some employer to manage the leave being taken flexibly, with more requests to take the leave adding to the administrative burden (for example in managing the payroll).

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# Requesting the leave

*The consultation sought views on if it would be appropriate to require employees to give notice before taking carer's leave.*

The consultation set out that the Government wants to balance helping employers to deliver carer's leave by giving them the opportunity to plan for staff absences and making the administrative burden proportionate, with the need among carers to respond to changing circumstances.

**Question 18: Do you agree that an individual should be required to give their employer notice ahead of taking Carer's Leave?**

There were **809 responses** to this question. **694 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 15: Requiring employees to give notice ahead of taking Carer's Leave**
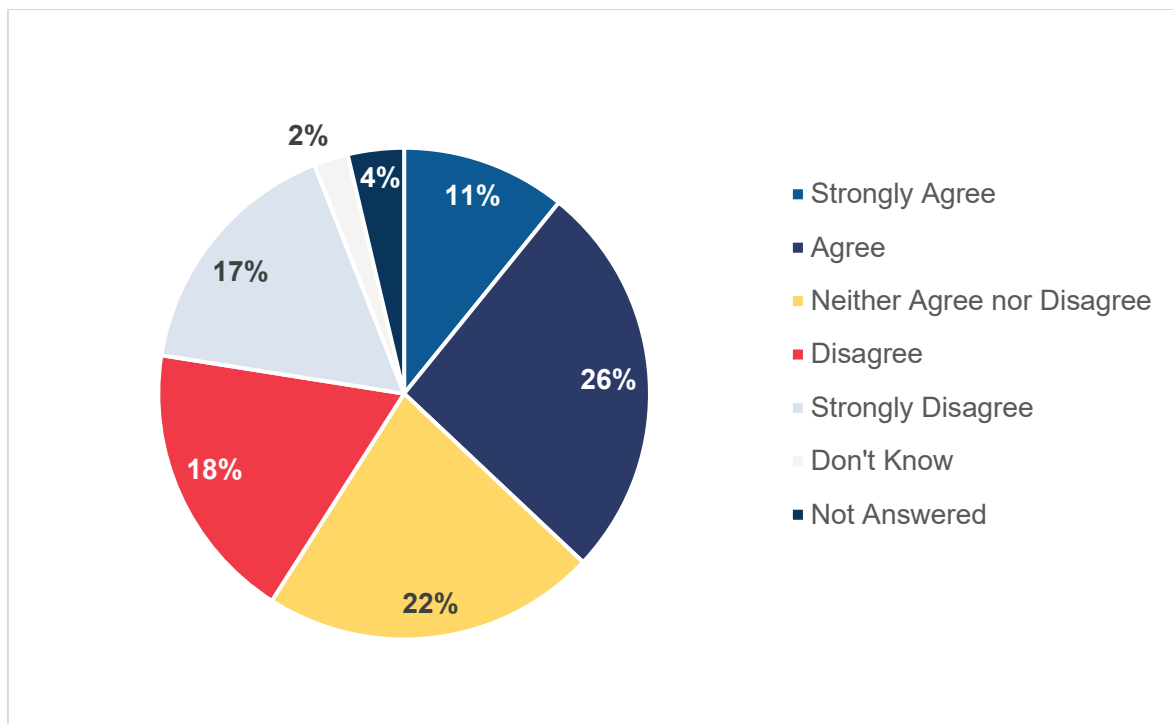


There were mixed responses to the question of whether employees should be required to give notice ahead of taking carer's leave. **37% of respondents** either agreed or strongly agreed that notice should be given, while **35% of respondents** disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When broken down further, analysis showed that **35% of individuals** agreed that notice should be given, while **36% of individuals** disagreed. **51% of businesses** agreed that notice should be given, while **20% of businesses** disagree.

Many respondents who were in favour of a notice period highlighted that this allows employers to plan, manage their business needs and arrange cover when needed. In many cases this was felt to be reasonable and differentiates carer's leave from the right to time off for

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dependants.[30] It was noted that some employers may choose to take a more flexible approach to a notice period.

We heard in many responses that whether it was reasonable to require a notice period would depend on the circumstances. Several respondents felt that employees should be encouraged to give notice whenever possible, but that in emergencies employees should be able to take leave without notice.[31] This was also reflected in many of the answers provided by those who neither agreed nor disagreed with giving notice ahead of taking carer's leave.

Of those who disagreed that a notice period should be required, the majority highlighted that notice cannot be given in emergency situations and raised the unpredictable nature of caring responsibilities.

**Question 19: If you strongly agree or agree, what do you think a reasonable notice period would be for a block of one week of Carer's Leave?**

There were **468 responses** to this question. **263 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 16: Notice period for a block of one week of Carer's Leave**
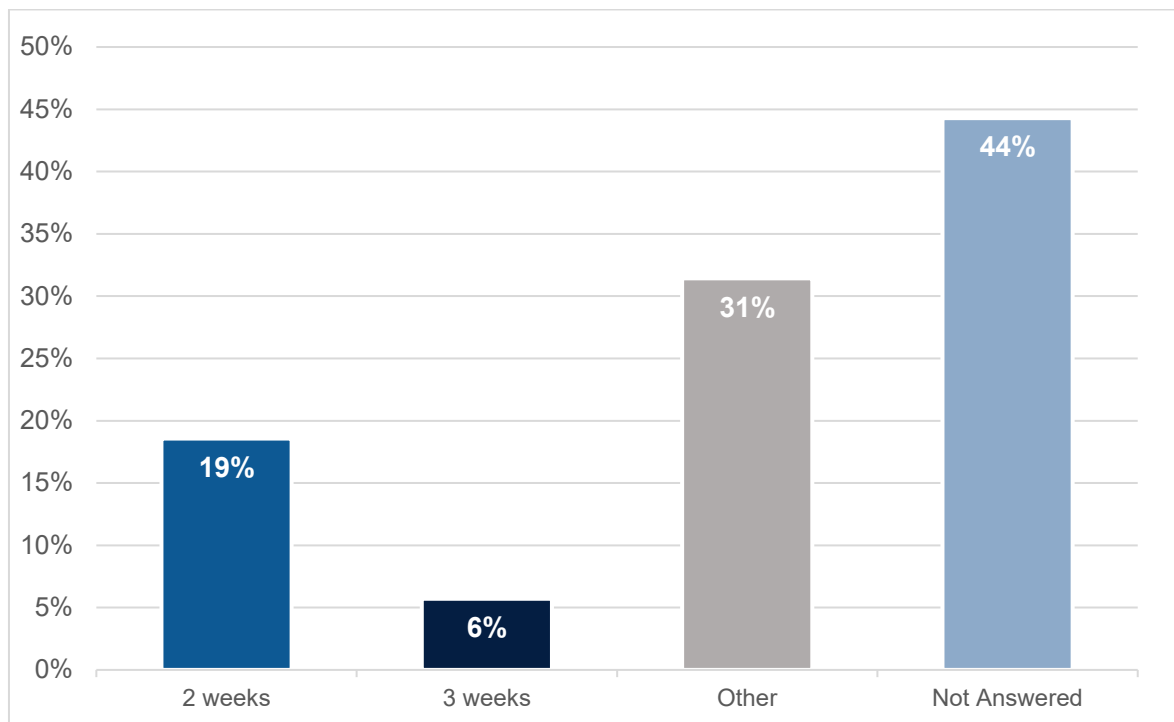


The reasons provided for selected 2- and 3-weeks' notice for one week of leave were broadly similar, with many noting that this would provide employers with sufficient time to plan or arrange cover. One legal firm suggested that there could be an option for the employee to give

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[30] Parkinson's UK and Carer's UK response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[31] MS Society response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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shorter notice but for the employer to extend it for up to three weeks if the employer cannot reasonably accommodate the employee's request within the shorter notice period.[32]

Several respondents suggested that it would be reasonable for the notice period for carer's leave to be in line with that required to take annual leave, as this is familiar to both employee and employer.[33]

Other suggestions for an appropriate notice period included 1 week, 1 day, as much as possible and none at all.

**Question 20: If you strongly agree or agree, what do you think a reasonable notice period would be for a single day of Carer's Leave?**

There were **503 responses** to this question. **252 respondents** provided reasons for their answer.

**Figure 17: Notice period for a single day of Carer's Leave**
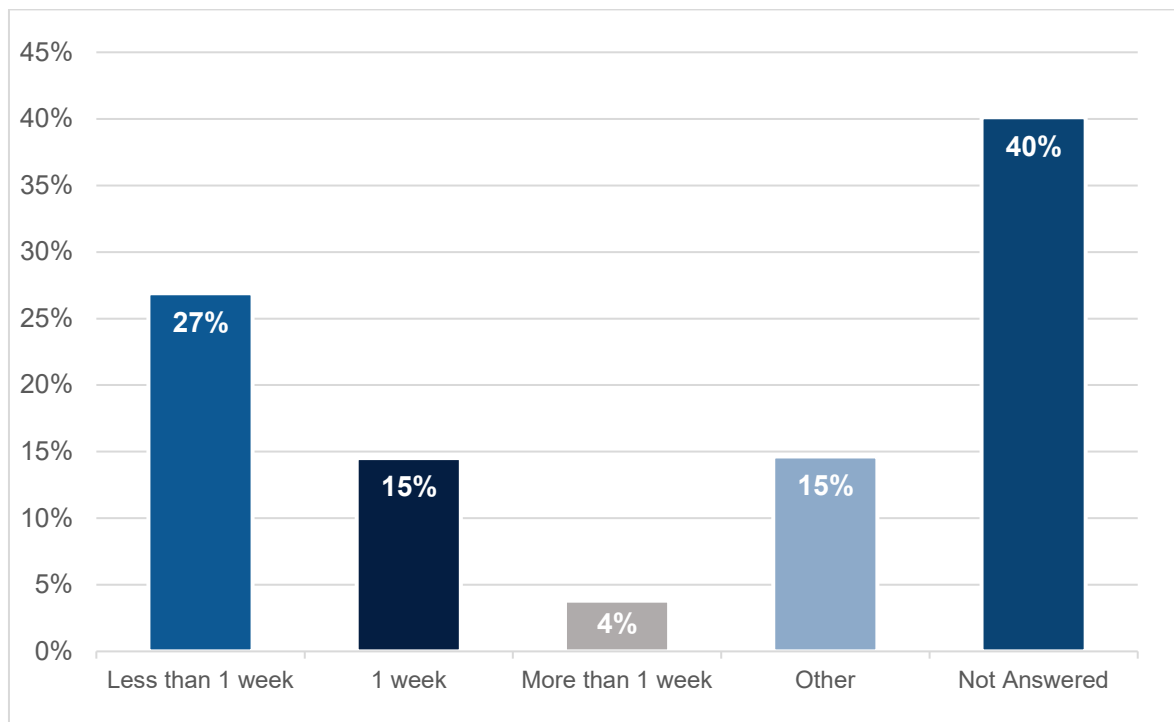


Many respondents who selected 'less than 1 week' suggested a notice period of 1-2 days. Some suggested that notice should be at the managers discretion or that no notice should be required in emergency situations, with calls for flexibility from employers. Several respondents echoed reasons provided in question 19, suggesting that the notice period for carer's leave should mirror that of annual leave.[34]

In the reasons providing for '1 week' or 'more than 1 week' we heard that this would be sufficient for planned caring activities. Several respondents noted that appointments are

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[32] Lewis Silkin LLP response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[33] Deloitte response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[34] Disability Law Service response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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usually scheduled in advance, which would allow carers to give a week's notice (or more) to accompany a dependant to an appointment. Again, calls were made in the comments on this question for no notice period, particularly in emergency situations.

As in question 19, calls were made from those who selected 'other' for no notice period to be included. Others argued that there should be flexibility, with as much notice given as possible but acknowledgement that this may not be possible in emergency situations.

**Question 21: Please comment on how employers would manage the process for requesting and recording the leave, and any associated issues, if it was:**

**- A week of unpaid leave, available to take as a single block?**

**- A week of unpaid leave, available to take as individual days?**

There were **424 responses** to the first part of this question (single block) and **420 responses** to the second (individual days).

In response to both parts of this question a significant number of respondents, across the range of respondent types, suggested that carer's leave would be requested, approved and recorded in the same way to other leave entitlements (e.g. annual leave).[35] Others suggested a request could be made directly to a line manager. One individual suggested that the process for requesting carer's leave could prompt a regular and constructive dialogue between employer and employee. A number of large employers commented that they already had a system in place for managing and record leave requests, which could include carer's leave.[36] Similarly, a number of respondents from medium, small or micro businesses also commented that they would use a similar process as is in place for annual leave.[37]

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[35] Chartered Institute for Payroll Professionals (CIPP) response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[36] Including Royal Mail and Deloitte response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[37] KR HR & Training Consultancy Ltd response to Carer's Leave consultation and other anonymous business respondents.

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# The impact on employers

*The consultation sought views on what impact a new statutory leave entitlement would have on employers, both in terms of the benefits this could bring and the costs that Government acknowledges carer's leave would create.*

Government expected that for employers, carer's leave would support productivity by preventing burnout among working carers and by supporting retention of valued expertise and reducing recruitment and induction costs. Government acknowledged that there would also be cost to employers largely driven by familiarisation and administrative costs. There may also be additional cost for those employers who wish to go beyond the statutory entitlement and offer paid carer's leave. However, this would be at the employers' discretion.

**Question 22: What benefits for employers would arise from introducing a right to unpaid Carer's Leave?**

There were **657 responses** to this question.

The benefits for employers that were suggested in response to this question can be broadly split into three themes:

1. *Better supported and valued workforce, leading to a more inclusive workplace and greater productivity*

   We heard that carer's leave will provide official recognition of unpaid carers and their caring responsibilities in the workforce. This will create a more inclusive working environment and help carers to feel more supported and valued at work, improving motivation and productivity which would benefit the employer.[38]

2. *Increased staff retention, leading to reduced recruitment and induction costs*

   A significant number of respondents to this question referenced better staff retention as a key benefit for employers from a new entitlement to carer's leave. It was noted that this would lead to a reduction in recruitment costs. [39] We heard that employers invest in the development and training of their employees, as such retaining experienced staff is in the employer's interest to this investment is not lost.[40]

3. *Improved workforce health and wellbeing outcomes*

   The leave could help improve the wellbeing of carers and reduce stress as they do not have to worry about how they will take time out of work to care. This will enable employees to better balance their work and caring responsibilities, as well as improving their own health outcomes. This will improve concentration and productivity

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[38] Deloitte response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[39] Anonymous large business responses to Carer's Leave consultation.
[40] USDAW response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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while at work, as well as reducing the likelihood of carers taking sick leave themselves due to burnout or stress.

In addition, we also heard that employers would benefit from the clarity of a new entitlement specifically allowing carers to take time out of work to care.[41]

**Question 23: What are the most significant costs for employers which would arise from a right to unpaid Carer's Leave? Please rank 1 – 4.**

**Figure 18: Costs to employers (with 1 as the most significant cost)**
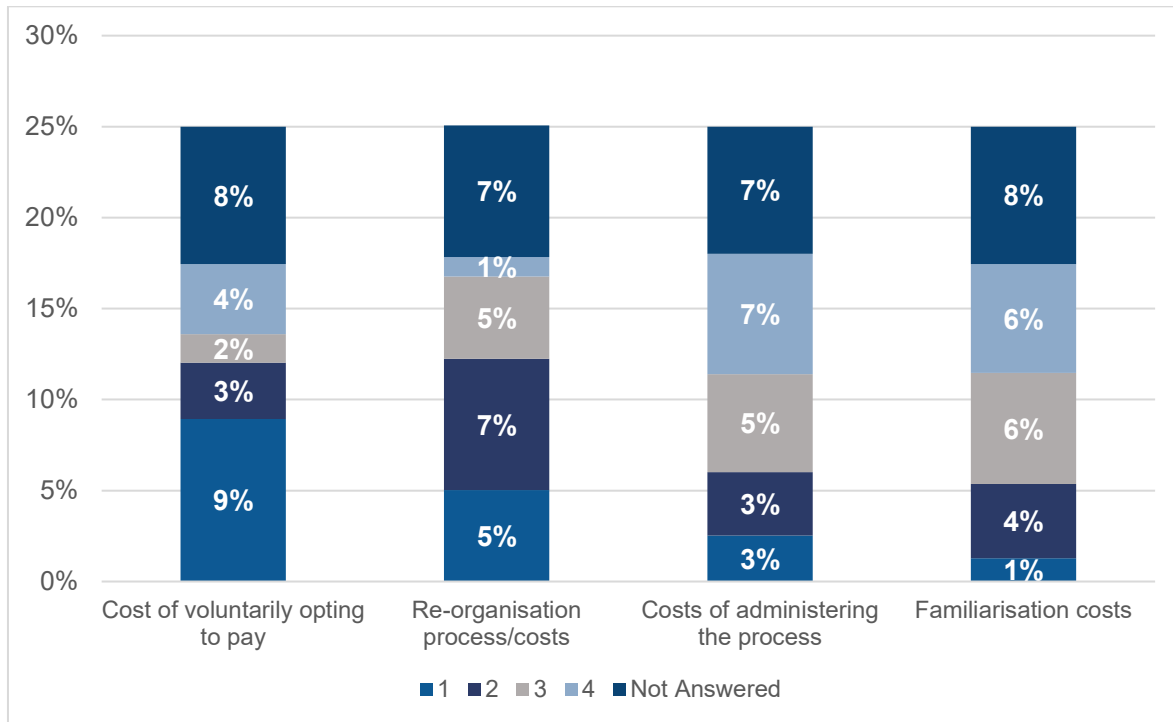


The cost of employers voluntarily opting to pay for carer's leave was ranked as the highest cost to employers by those who responded to this question. This would be at the employer's discretion and not a requirement under the new entitlement to carer's leave.

Re-organisation process and costs were ranked as the second highest cost to employers. These would be likely to include arranging cover while employees are off work on carer's leave, which would incur cost for the employer.[42]

Familiarisation costs ranked as the third highest cost to employers. It was noted by respondents that businesses will need to ensure employees are aware of and familiar with the new leave entitlement, but that this cost would reduce over time as carer's leave becomes 'business as usual'.[43]

The cost of administering the process was ranked fourth, as the smallest cost to employers. We heard from a number of respondents that these admin costs should be minimal, especially

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[41] Acas response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[42] Anonymous micro business response to Carer's Leave consultation
[43] Anonymous large business responses to Carer's Leave consultation.

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if the employer can align administering the leave to their existing process for taking other forms of leave.[44]

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[44] Anonymous large business responses to Carer's Leave consultation.

# Section 3: Further points raised during the consultation

## Paid Carer's Leave

There were strong calls from charities and individuals for this leave entitlement to be paid. The Government understands these calls and is sympathetic to the financial challenges faced by informal carers. However, the Government has been clear that the aim of carer's leave is to give individuals greater flexibility to provide care during regular working hours. The priority is to ensure that the leave is widely available to those who need it, while making sure that the impact on employers is proportionate. The legislation for carer's leave would form the minimum entitlement, and it would be at employers' discretion to enhance the entitlement in length or to offer pay.

Alongside employment measures such as flexible working and this new entitlement to Carer's Leave, the Government gives carers access to financial support when they need it, by ensuring that benefits (including Carer's Allowance and Universal Credit) meet the needs of eligible carers and support employment for those carers who are able to work.

## Flexible Working

The responses Government received to the consultation on carer's leave made clear that flexibility is hugely important in helping unpaid carers to balance their caring responsibilities with employment.

The Government is clear about the benefits of flexible working for employees and employers alike. It can give all employees much welcomed choice when looking to balance work and life at home – and from an employer's perspective, offering flexible working arrangements can help to recruit and retain valued staff members, as well as enabling them to reach their full potential at work.

There is currently a legal framework in place that grants all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service the statutory right to request flexible working. This includes requesting a change to their hours, working patterns, or working location. Employers must consider this request but reserve the right to refuse requests on specific business grounds.

Our objective is to encourage a discussion between employee and employer about what flexible working options are possible, rather than one side imposing certain ways of working on the other. The Government wants to make it easier for people to work flexibly and in our manifesto, we committed to further encouraging flexible working and consulting on making it the default unless employers have good reasons not to. This consultation will be launched in due course.

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# Support for working parents

Government noted calls for better support for working parents in the consultation responses on carer's leave. We heard that there are situations which may fall outside of existing leave entitlements, where the right to time off for dependants is available only in emergency situations and unpaid parental leave is available to take in blocks of one week, rather than individual days. For example if a child requires short term care at short notice, outside of an emergency, a parent may only require an individual day of leave rather than a full week.[45] This falls outside of the right to time off for dependents and unpaid parental leave.

It was raised that the Covid-19 pandemic has put increased pressure on working parents, many of whom have struggled to balance work and childcare. There were calls for carer's leave to be introduced alongside other measures to support parents, such as those relating to flexible working[46] or improvements to unpaid parental leave (for example changes to the qualifying period of one year's continuous service).[47]

In 2019 the Government consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay. We are also conducting a formal evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme. Together, these will give us a fuller picture of how well the current system of parental leave and pay is working for parents and employers. We intend to publish the Government Response to the consultation and the findings of the evaluation later this year. We will also take into account the responses provided as part of this carer's leave consultation on childcare.

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[45] UNISON response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[46] EHRC response to Carer's Leave consultation.
[47] Muslim Women's Network UK response to Carer's Leave consultation.

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# Section 4: Next Steps

The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing worker's rights. The Government will introduce a new leave right to one week of leave per year for unpaid carers as an important measure in supporting the UK labour market and businesses to build back better.

The insights and feedback received as part of the consultation have been important in developing a policy that meets the needs of the millions of people balancing employment alongside unpaid caring responsibilities, without putting undue burden on businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the challenges already faced by carers and has increased the numbers of those who provide this invaluable service. We consider the introduction of carer's leave to be an important step in recognising this group of people within the labour market, their contribution and the particular set of challenges that they face day to day.

The Government is committed to building back better for unpaid carers, the majority of who are women, and intends that carer's leave, alongside other policies to further encourage flexible working, will help carers to provide care as they would wish to and in such a way that supports their own health and wellbeing. We also hope that businesses will realise the benefits of supporting their employees with caring responsibilities as they also build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing increased engagement, productivity, and retention from this important group within their workforce.

We are very grateful to the wide range of charities, businesses, trade unions, individuals and other groups who engaged with us as part of the consultation process and have greatly valued their detailed input.

The Government looks forward to introducing an entitlement to Carer's Leave, as set out in this response to the consultation, when parliamentary time allows.

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**APPENDIX 4**

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUPPORTING WORKING CARERS

This document contains a selection of research, information and experiences from other businesses on why it is important to support unpaid carers in the workplace. There are also some examples of what other organisation, both local and global, currently offer their working carers in terms of paid leave and other support.



**Carers at work
What you need to know**

**6.5m** people in the UK are carers

**One in seven people** juggle working and unpaid caring

Nearly **half a million** people have given up work over the past two years as a result of caring – that's **600** people every day

Source: Centrica Working Carers Guide, courtesy of Carers UK.

## Results for Wales

6% have given up work to care, 3% have reduced working hours. This equates to 149,812 people in Wales who have given up work to provide unpaid care and 74,906 people who have reduced their working hours to part-time because of unpaid caring. 7% said unpaid caring had a negative impact on their work.

16% of people said they were providing unpaid care. This is one in six adults and equates to 399,500 unpaid carers aged 18+ in Wales, compared to around 358,675 carers aged 18+ in the Census 2011.[20] This is a potential rise of nearly 40,825 carers in Wales.

The top three support mechanisms the public in Wales deemed most valuable if they were theoretically providing unpaid care which were considered very and fairly important:

- 84% understanding employer / line manager (62% ranked this as very important)

- 82% flexible working

- 76% a right to paid care leave of between five and ten days

If 15% of all those in employment have unpaid responsibilities across the UK, in Wales this would mean that roughly 223,000 workers were juggling work and care. This is nearly one in seven of all workers in Wales.[21]

Source: "Juggling work and unpaid care: A growing issue", report by Carers UK.

# The business case for a carer-friendly workplace

The societal case for a carer-friendly workplace is obvious – but we believe the business case is equally clear.

A Carers UK study of over 200 British businesses highlighted some of the benefits experienced by employers who supported carers in the workplace:

- 92% saw better staff retention
- 88% experienced lower absence
- 69% observed higher productivity
- 61% witnessed improved recruitment[11]

**On average, Centrica carers take just 3.4 days of matched care leave each year.**

At Centrica, we've had an equally positive experience. We offer paid carers' leave of up to six weeks for our colleagues who care. Despite the substantial paid leave available via this policy, we've found that the average amount of carers' leave taken is just 3.4 matched days per year. Instead of taking intermittent bouts of carers' leave, we've found that our employees prefer to work with their line managers to agree flexible working arrangements that help them balance their longer term work and care commitments – and we've created a culture in which they're able to do this.

To help prove the business case for carer-friendly workplaces, we've recently calculated the financial saving made by supporting our people with a flexible carer policy and peer support:

- Estimated saving of **£1.8 million a year** by avoiding unplanned absences and presenteeism (working while unwell or not fully performing) due to caring responsibilities.[12]
- Further cumulative savings of **£1.3 million** through increased retention by supporting colleagues to stay in work while they care for loved ones.[13]

These figures are significant for us – but imagine if similar flexible working policies were adopted by businesses across the UK.

**£3.1 million** is the estimated financial saving Centrica has made by avoiding unplanned absences and improving employee retention, by supporting our people with a flexible carer policy and peer support.

Source: Centrica Working Carers Guide, courtesy of Carers UK.

What makes the biggest difference to carers in the workplace?

New research from Carers UK[10] identifies the support workers would find most useful, imagining they were providing unpaid care:

1 A supportive employer and understanding line manager

2 Flexible working

3 Paid carers' leave of between 5–10 days per year

4 Long-term unpaid carers' leave

5 Signposting information and advice

6 Peer support network

Source: "Juggling work and unpaid care: A growing issue", report by Carers UK.

## Examples of carer friendly employers

**Cwm Taf UHB:** Up to 5 days paid carers leave per year, matched with employee annual leave whenever possible. Line managers create an employment support plan with carers to identify what will support them to remain in work and maintain their own wellbeing.

**Hertfordshire County Council**
Council employees can take up to five days paid leave to deal with emergencies involving dependants and an extra 20 days unpaid leave each year.

**Lancashire Council**
It has a 'Working Carer Policy', through which working carers can access support, advice and information and sign up to the Working Carers database. Workers who have signed up receive regular information, both from within the Council and also national and local carer information. To further recognise their commitment to the valuable contribution that working carers make to the organisation, two half–day carer workshops are organised per year, which can be attended in the working day.

**Monmouthshire County Council**
Additional 5 days paid leave for carers based on line manager's discretion. Internal training programme around carer issues for line managers and part of induction training.

**Centrica**
Industry: Utilities
Size: Large

For over 15 years, Centrica has introduced a range of carer-friendly policies. Most recently they've updated their policy giving employees up to six weeks of paid carers leave. This includes 10 days (two weeks) paid carers' leave and if additional care leave is required, a further 10 days (two weeks) can be taken when matched with annual leave entitlement. Centrica also offer flexible working, a Carers' employee network, an employee assistance line, and Carers regional representatives to encourage employees to seek any support they might need.

**Aviva**
Industry: Financial Services & Insurance
Size: Large
Aviva's carers policy enables full-time employees with caring responsibilities to take up to 35 hours of paid leave per year for planned events, such as to attend hospital appointments and up to 35 hours of paid leave for emergencies. The amount of paid leave for part-time employees is pro-rated. Carers can also request up to three months of unpaid leave and adjustments to their working patterns, for example part-time hours. Aviva also doubled bereavement leave entitlement from 35 to 70 hours per year.

**Intuit**
Industry: Information Technology/Software
Size: Medium
Intuit UK offer all employees with at least one year's service up to four weeks fully paid time off per year to support family members who need additional support. Time can be taken in days or weeks and covers scenarios such as supporting a spouse after an operation or finding long-term nursing care for an elderly parent/in-law.

**BT**
Created and implemented a BT Carers Passport that can be completed by any BT employee with caring responsibilities that they consider would impact on their ability to work, short or long term. A document which describes their caring responsibilities and caring needs/adjustments as well as actions to take if the carers needs to leave work suddenly or is unable to attend to work. This Passport allows employees to take their requirements from one manager to another as they move around departments.

**British Gas**
Their Carers Policy includes practical arrangements for carers, flexible working and up to one months' matched leave per year, so if an employee takes five days annual leave for caring responsibilities British Gas will match this with an additional 5 days at no service requirement.

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# EfC Business Benefits

An ageing workforce, with fewer young people entering the job market and later retirement ages (including later state pension ages). Tighter public sector budgets for care and support services which are increasing the pressure on families and friends to care. More people are therefore needing to work and care longer. Forward looking employers now recognise caring as an issue which will have an increasing impact on their employees and on themselves as businesses.

In Wales juggling work and care remains a challenge, with 16% of carers having reduced hours to manage their caring responsibilities, and 6% had given up work to care since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Corporate Leadership Council estimates that the cumulative costs to an organisation of an employee leaving work are equal to the employee's last salary, while Hay Group suggests it could cost anywhere from 50-150% of their salary.

In a recent survey, among carers continuing to work the same hours, 1 in 6 (17%) said their job had been negatively affected by caring, i.e. lateness, tiredness and stress. Here again the consequences of not addressing support for carers in the workplace are not only negative for employees but also for employers. There is evidence that the impact of staff turnover, absence and stress as a result of juggling work and caring unsupported could be costing UK businesses over £3.5 billion every year, so there are significant savings to be made by better supporting employees to combine work and caring.

In a survey on the business benefits of supporting working carers conducted for Supporting Working Carers, 223 responses were received from micro, small, medium and large employers: 46% were from the private sector, 38% from the public sector and 17% from the third sector. Most respondents said supporting carers in their workforce had either a 'major' or 'some' benefit through:

- Increasing staff morale and loyalty (93%)
- Staff retention (92%)
- Reducing sick leave and absenteeism (88%)
- Improving staff engagement (85%)
- Improving people management (80%)
- Making team working more effective (75%)

- Improving service delivery (72%)
- Increasing productivity (69%)
- Reducing recruitment and training costs (65%)
- Improving the ability to attract (61%)
- Producing cost savings (55%)

*Please see footnote for business examples

# Umbrella Membership Benefits

Supporting people to combine work and care also has benefits for society as a whole and, as with the economy, there are associated risks if this is not addressed. In recent years the contribution of unpaid carers in Wales has been calculated at £8.1 billion per year. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, however, this contribution has increased still further. Research published in November 2020 calculated the care provided by families over the course of the pandemic in Wales, equivalent to £33 million each day. Carers (80% of whom are of working age) play a crucial role both in providing (unpaid) care and in helping their relatives or friends to stay out of hospital or, in some cases, residential care. They provide a very valuable contribution, therefore, not only for individuals and families but also for our wider economy and society.

**Mark Greening, Carers Commissioning Manager explains why West Sussex County Council is reaching out to SMEs through Umbrella Membership:**

*"I wish I'd known sooner" is a phrase we hear all the time from carers in West Sussex, and we know this is echoed throughout the country.*

*We believe the key to improving support for carers is through partnership working and joined-up thinking. This means identifying more and more stakeholders with a role to play in helping to raise awareness of caring and to connect carers with information and support that could help them avoid crisis.*

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*Workplaces have a huge role to play here. That's why at West Sussex County Council we've focused on making our own workplace carer friendly and then reaching out to other employers in the area and helping them to become more carer aware.*

*So far we've recruited nearly 40 local SMEs to join EfC through our membership.*

*We're working on reaching many more!"*

*There are 44 councils signed up as Umbrella members*

## Your Membership Plan Includes

- **Access to our online members' platform, EfC Digital,** containing guides, e-Learning, best practice examples, templates, sample policies and case studies; designed to help build your strategy around supporting working carers. The platform is co-branded to reflect your corporate identity. The platform has also been translated into the Welsh language.
- **An initial consultation/diagnostic session** - used to identify where we can best work with you to build upon your existing employee support or to look at a particular issue of relevance to you.
- **Regular lunch & learn or training sessions** tailored to meet your individual requirements.
- **A dedicated Account Manager** to help you make full use of your EfC membership.
- **Direct support from the EfC Wales Hub for Wales based organisations** or organisations with a Welsh presence/regional office.
- **Tailored promotional materials** to help promote EfC membership within your organisation.
- **Invitations to Members Networking Events** each focusing on a specific area of interest (approximately four per year).
- **Further opportunities to share your experiences** by hosting and speaking at our events. (Previous hosts include Cardiff Council, North Wales Police, NHS England and Companies House among others).
- **A discounted assessment fee for Carer Confident,** our employer benchmarking scheme, which you can read more about here.
- **Opportunity to connect with peers from the same sector,** as well as across sector and regions, to share best practice, including via 1-2-1 connections and our social media channels (LinkedIn).
- **Regular communications** such as our monthly e-bulletin newsletter, featuring latest legislation and policy updates.
- **Use of our logo** on job adverts, company websites, intranets, email footers, etc.
- **Branding and sponsorship opportunities** across our websites, communication channels, publications and social media.
- **The chance to be at the forefront of new research** – as and when it's released – and to engage in topical policy debates.
- **Opportunities to participate in major research,** both national and international projects.
- **Invitations to key Carers UK events,** such as the annual Carers Rights Day Parliamentary reception.
- **Support from EfC for your workplace events,** such as Employee Wellbeing Fairs, Diversity and Inclusion showcases and Health and Wellbeing Weeks.
- **Opportunities to take part in national campaigns** such as Carers Week and Carers Right's Day, and receive a face-to-face presence from Carers Wales staff.
- **Opportunities to showcase your support for carers** in our literature and at events.
- **Free online membership of Carers Wales,** which is available for staff in your workforce with caring responsibilities.

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# Umbrella Membership Plan Includes

Umbrella membership is an extended EfC membership arrangement which gives small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), Staying Well at Work Project, GPs and health partners the opportunity to engage with EfC. This enables SME businesses that are part of an umbrella membership scheme to gain **FREE ACCESS** to Employers for Carers resources.

Our definition of an SME is an organisation with fewer than 250 employees. SMEs, health partners, Staying Well at Work Project and GPs benefit from umbrella membership in the following ways:

- Accessing member resources on the members' platform, EfC Digital, which includes relevant legal information, practical case studies, guides and template leaflets/workplace surveys.
- Being part of an employer network within the locality which could also host local employer networking sessions
- discounts on Carers Wales and EfC products such as training, e-learning, Carer Confident and Lunch and Learns

# Membership Investment

Membership cost is based on the number of employees within your organisation. The investment for membership is:-

Employers for Carers membership*          £2,000 per annum

*As a member you will also receive a discounted Carer Confident Assessment at £500 (normally £2,000)

Employers for Carers Umbrella membership*          £3,000 per annum

*All signed up SMEs will also receive a discounted Carer Confident Assessment at £500 (normally £2,000)

This offer is valid to 30th November 2021. If at that time there is no confirmation about this proposal, we recommend we set up an additional meeting to discuss how to move forward.

If multiple years are paid for in advance then we can adjust your invoice to include a 5% discount.

*

*Reduced costs* - **Centrica** estimates potential costs savings of £2.5m through increased staff retention and £4.5m through reduced unplanned absenteeism
*Reduced staff turnover* - **Listawood** (SME) While only 56% of employees felt their pay was competitive 97% felt they offered better work life balance
*Reduced stress and absenteeism* - **BT** achieved a productivity increase of 21% a year, at least £5 million on the bottom line

**A win-win for employers:**
'Stress related absence has been reduced by 26% through flexible working alone'
'Retaining carers through support or special leave arrangements represents a saving to the company of about £1 million a year'
'The cost of recruiting is incomparable to the cost of 2-3 days emergency leave'

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

**UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**1.      PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1     The purpose of the report is to update Members on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

**2.      RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

2.1     Note that the information provided to Cabinet on 18th October 2021 in respect of the creation and development of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee has been updated. In particular the decision of the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet to introduce an interim governance and delivery model for implementation of the SE Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) until such time as a number of taxation status issues and risks associated with the Regulations are resolved;

2.2     Note the requirement for the CJC to set and approve a budget on or before 31st January 2022;

2.3     Note the request made by CCR of WG to amend the CJC regulations to change the date on which immediate duties commence under the Regulations from 28th February 2022 to 30th June 2022, to align to the other three CJCs in Wales;

2.4     Note the Minister for Finance and Local Governments' letter of 20th December 2021 consulting the Council on amending the commencement date of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee to 30th June 2022 and the response of the Council's Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, confirming the Council's support to the amendment. The consultation ended on 21st  January 2022; and

2.5     Note the work ongoing by CCR and its constituent Councils to work with WG, UKG, Audit Wales and advisors as appropriate, to help inform resolution of the remaining issues wherever possible.

## 3.     REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1     The formation of CJC's as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act will, over time, alter the landscape and governance of some strategic economic well-being, strategic planning and transportation functions currently undertaken by the constituent councils making up the CJC across the South East Wales Region or Welsh Government or another Welsh Government sponsored public body. WG hope that they will 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 the regulations to establish the South East Wales CJC and set out, at a macro level, how the CJC would operate. However, there are primarily taxation status issues that need to be resolved before the CJC can fully operate as intended. Until such time as these issues can be resolved, an "interim" arrangement will be created with the CJC doing the "bare minimum" until such time as the taxation issues are resolved.

## 4.     BACKGROUND

4.1     The Local Government and Elections Act 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. 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 and as ways are found to help Wales recover.

4.2     Welsh Government (WG) maintain that the model of CJCs builds on the best that has already been achieved in the development of regional arrangements in different parts of Wales. In South East Wales, the Cardiff Capital City Joint Committee Cabinet which has led on the City Deal is an excellent example where the councils achieve significantly more than they would individually by collaborating and undertaking economic and well-being and transport functions that no individual council had the capacity or the capability to undertake.

4.3     Over the autumn and early winter of 2020, Welsh Government consulted local government and others on the specific functions of a CJC, how it will be governed, its legal status as a corporate body, whether it can employ

staff and financial powers. This information was used to develop the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee regulations, approved on 17th March 2021.

4.4 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. <u>PROGRESS TO DATE TO CREATE THE SE WALES CJC & MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AND ADDRESSED</u>

5.1 As reported to Cabinet on 18th October 2021, the CCR Cabinet on 20th September 2021 agreed to transition CCR's existing operational and delivery model into a single corporate body, the CJC. This would mean carrying across CCR's existing governance arrangements under the Joint Working Arrangement to the CJC such that the CJC adopts the existing decision-making and oversight role of the Joint Committee. They also agreed to undertake an exercise analysing existing projects/pipeline projects and, where appropriate (in the case of existing projects), transferring such projects to the CJC to act as the vehicle for project delivery going forwards.

5.2 The Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet considered that this was the best way forward as it:

- Ensures that the partner councils retain absolute control over CCR decision making;
- Allows for a bespoke governance model which can follow the terms of CCR's Joint Working Agreement;
- Does not require a partner council to assume the role of accountable body and the additional burden and risks associated with that role;
- Ring fences delivery risk from the partner councils;
- Takes advantage of Welsh Government policy and the Regulations by transposing CCR's existing decision-making and project delivery into the CJC.
- Provides a framework by which the CJC, as a separate corporate body, can naturally evolve over time on a project by project basis.

5.3 Officers of the CCR and the Accountable Body have been putting in place all the legal, accounting and practical steps to ensure the new CJC can be created on 28th February 2022. However, it has become clear that the specific risks and issues originally highlighted by CCR with WG will not be resolved sufficiently to support the transfer of the CCR City Deal into the CJC by the date of CJC budget setting on 31 January 2022. This is mainly because the issues that require resolution, namely S.33 (VAT) status, has

not been considered by WG in setting the Regulations. As a result we require the approval of Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) to approve the correct taxation status. This approval clearly sist outside the sphere of direct influence and control of WG.

5.4     In addition, further issues have arisen in respect of Corporation Tax. This is a complex matter not addressed so far in the Regulations; and could have significant implications to the CCR operating model unless similarly addressed through an application to HMT for relevant dispensations. Work is underway to address this, with CCR supporting WG's business case application to HMRC for the relevant dispensations.

5.5     Therefore, there remain a number of substantially unresolved matters, that need to be resolved prior to the transfer of the CCR functions to the CJC. It is worth noting that even basic activities under a 'bare minimum' CJC may still incur a level of irrecoverable VAT and as such an initial scaled back approach which reduces such a potential risk is proposed.

5.6     The impacts of all these issues will require the support of UK Government regarding the timing and transfer of the existing CCR City Deal Funding Agreement to the CJC. In addition, it must be understood that these are complex and inter-connected issues and there are no 100% guarantees of success. Wider financial status issues are bound up within making the case for s33 status and in essence, the need to demonstrate the intent and effect of the CJC legislation, which is for them to be 'creatures of LAs' and 'part of the LG family'.

5.7     CCR has made representations to WG on these issues, including seeking a re-setting of the statutory budget timeframe. WG has advised that this is not possible due to timescales and the need to carry out statutory consultation on any proposed changes.  However, the issues raised are recognised and understood and the implementation of a pragmatic and proportionate provisional approach is supported. Legal advice has been taken on the risks and challenges posed to CCR of 'doing nothing' and the advice is clear in that CCR's constituent Councils must be minimally compliant at this stage.

5.8     Therefore, the CCR Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 13th December 2021 to undertake a 'bare minimum' implementation of the CJC legislation, and will continue to maintain the current Joint Committee/Accountable Body-led model for delivering the CCR City Deal for the time being. This dual approach is unavoidable and will provide business continuity for City Deal delivery.

5.9     WG has also notified the CCR Cabinet that the date of commencement of immediate South East Wales CJC duties in respect of the preparation of the Regional Transport Plan, Strategic Development Plan and economic wellbeing powers, can be changed from the original date set for SE Wales of 28 February 2022 to 30 June 2022 – thus, falling in line with other CJC regions. The CCR Cabinet at the meeting on 13th December 2021

accepted this offer in order to better align with the proposed bare minimum approach and be consistent with the other three CJCs across Wales.

5.10    On 20th December 2021 the Council received notification that the Minister for Finance and Local Government was commencing a consultation on amending the commencement date of the functions of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee, from 28th February 2022 to 30th June 2022. The revised regulations were received on 13th January 2022 and the consultation closed on 21st January 2022. Due to the short timescales provided for consultation responses, and the fact the proposed amendment to the regulations deals with a single issue relating purely to their commencement, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, responded to the consultation confirming the Council supported the proposed change to the commencement date for the reasons outlined in this report.

**What will be the "bare minimum" approach?**

5.11    The 'bare minimum' model proposed in this report provides a pragmatic way of enabling the ten member Councils of CCR, to begin implementing the CJC requirements and adopting statutory duties – whilst at the same time – supporting WG to progress the resolution of issues. We will be required to put in place a series of steps that will define the critical path between now and 31 January 2022 (the date by which the CJC must approve its budget), in order to ensure compliance with the legislation, but in ways which protects CCR's ten constituent Councils' short and long-term position and wherever possible, safeguards against any detriment.

5.12    On the basis of external advice and technical support, the proposed 'bare minimum' model will enable CCR to demonstrate it has commenced transition to the CJC and ensure it is complying with the legislation and regulations. It is essentially creating the outline of the CJC as an absolute statutory minimum and as an interim holding position only. It will include:

- Setting minimal nominal budgets and the amounts payable by each constituent local authority for the operation of the CJC no later than 31 January 2022;

- Agreeing with the Auditor General for Wales the CJC audit scope and fee, which is proportionate and reflects the CJC's bare minimum operations;

- Adopting model Standing Orders and any basic supplements – i.e. scheme of delegations;

- Arrangements to place any staff at disposal of CJC – again this will be on the basis of proportionality;

- Establish statutory sub-committees e.g. Audit and Governance Committee etc.;

- Appoint Chair/ Vice Chair/s – which can mirror existing CCR arrangements; and,

- Establish practical arrangements in respect of the CJC's basic infrastructure as a separate legal entity – accounting & reporting requirements, bank account, VAT registration, minimum insurances, proportionate records scheme etc.

5.13   The bare minimum model will operate on the expectation that the absolute minimal operational activity required will be undertaken. Therefore, any extraneous activity such as production of a business plan; meetings of the CJC beyond initial budget setting/ 'establishment'; meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee; and staffing arrangements beyond those linked to the above – is unlikely to take place.

5.14   In order to provide a level of certainty to all CJC stakeholders and constituent councils, the bare minimum model, will be predicated on being in place until the 31 March 2023. However, should the issues be resolved sooner, there is provision for the budget requirement to be re-visited in-year and potentially transfer the CCR City Deal functions. This means that for the initial operating period a nominal budget is set with the clear expectation of minimal expenditure against it. This is an important principle. If even low-level expenditure can be justified, the advice is there is a strong case to avoid incurring such expenditure if it can be demonstrated that it would "prejudice the CJC's position or suffer any detriment".

5.15   Therefore, whilst a provisional budget can be set, and actions taken to set-up the CJC, it does not follow that enactment beyond this is necessary, at least until such time the CJC is ready to be operable and the transfer of functions can occur.  The timeframe outlined above will be kept under constant review throughout the year as the outstanding matters are progressed and future reports will be brought back to Cabinet/ Council as required.

5.16   The CJC will be required to comply with all necessary regulations and legal requirements.  The principle of 'proportionality' will be adopted in assessing bare minimum compliance, along with the requirement to minimise any adverse budgetary impacts.

5.17   It should be noted that the two duties to begin preparation of both a Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan will commence in 2022/23. As per paragraph 5.9 above, it is now proposed this date is re-set as 30 June 2022 and this has been communicated with Welsh Government. Whilst there are no immediate actions required in relation to the commencement duties, some progress will need to be demonstrated from July 2022 and plans for such will be presented to the CJC during the year.

5.18   This pragmatic, proportionate and reasonable approach will require key stakeholders to adopt a shared endeavour approach. As a result,

consultation and engagement is ongoing with Audit Wales and Welsh Government.

5.19 It should also be noted that in setting this process in plan, the clear milestone is the budget setting for the CJC on or before 31 January 2022. Approval of the budget requires unanimous support of CJC constituent councils. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority will feature as part of this in relation to the estimated budget for preparing an SDP and as such, ongoing communication and engagement is taking place.

5.20 Whilst work led by WG on behalf of all regions/ constituent CJCs in Wales, is underway with HMRC and HM Treasury on the outstanding issues named in this report, there are further updates to note. The SE Wales CJC is not a 'levying body' with an expectation that 'Connected Body' status can be secured to enable access to the LG Pension Scheme. In relation to access to Public Works Loan Board borrowing, at the relevant future point, WG has had initial positive discussions with HMT that suggest borrowing capability through this medium, can be considered and potentially, developed.

5.21 Work continues to be put in place regarding arrangements for interim accounting systems, processes and relevant systems infrastructure for the CJC. This is being carried out in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, where we will be providing basic 'transactional services' for the initial period of 'bare minimum' CJC operation. CCR City Deal will continue to be supported by the 'Lead Council/ Accountable Body' mechanism. This reflects the arrangements underpinning the twin-tracking approach which will be needed, at least initially and until the remaining issues are resolved.

## 6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality or diversity implications aligned directly to this report. CJCs will be subject to the Equality Act 2010 and Welsh Language Standards.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned specifically to this report at present.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS & LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The relevant legislation linked to the introduction of CJCs and how they would operate is set out in the body of the report.

## 9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9.1 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.

9.2 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 CJCs 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 CJCs to achieving the goals is limited, but the indirect contribution will be much more significant.

## 10. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

10.1 The Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet has considered the best approach to transferring its City Deal responsibilities into the new CJC to:

- Ensure that the partner councils retain absolute control over CCR decision making;
- Allows for a bespoke governance model which can follow the terms of CCR's Joint Working Agreement;
- Does not require a partner council to assume the role of accountable body and the additional burden and risks associated with that role;
- Rings fences delivery risk from the partner councils;
- Takes advantage of Welsh Government policy and the Regulations by transposing CCR's existing decision-making and project delivery into the CJC.
- Provides a framework by which the CJC, as a separate corporate body, can naturally evolve over time on a project by project basis.

10.2 To deliver on the South East Wales CJC Regulations and the required delivery dates, there are issues that have arisen that require the 10 councils to delay the full implementation of the CJC and initially introduce a "bare minimum" approach until such time as these issues are resolved by UK and Welsh Government. This is a pragmatic and sensible approach.

**Other Information:-**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee** – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27th JANUARY 2022**

**ITEM: UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Background Papers**

Freestanding Report.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**27TH JANUARY 2022**

**TIP SAFETY MANAGEMENT RESOURCES**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR – FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR ANDREW MORGAN**

**Author:** Roger Waters, Director – Frontline Services

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   The purpose of the report is to seek approval to establish a Tip Safety Management Team within Frontline Services which would focus all current elements of spoil tip safety, including regulatory, management and maintenance into a single dedicated Tip Safety Management Team.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   Cabinet is recommended to;

2.2   Agree to the establishment of a dedicated Tip Safety Management Team within Frontline Services to;

- Manage the Council's responsibilities under the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969,
- Manage the Council's safety responsibilities as a land-owner of significant numbers of coal spoil tips across RCT.

## 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   There are a significant number of Coal Spoil Tips within the geographical area of RCT. The total number exceeds 340, of which over 70 are owned or part-owned by RCT.

3.2   In recent years there have been a number of slips to coal tips, namely at;

- Tylorstown  - February 2020 (Storm Dennis)
- Wattstown Standard - December 2020

3.3   It is widely acknowledged that the risk associated with coal spoil tips has increased as a result of climate change and its impact on the intensity and frequency of storm events.

3.4 The slip events referred to above have been widely publicised, raising significant concerns with the public and generating substantial media coverage. In parallel, Welsh and UK Governments have collectively established a series of Tip Summits, with the Welsh Government driving forward a review of Coal Tip Safety in Wales in conjunction with the local authorities and The Coal Authority and providing funding and resources to support enhanced levels of inspections, maintenance, monitoring equipment and capital works.

3.5 RCT has been heavily involved with the Coal Tips Safety Group established by Welsh Government and has also benefitted significantly from the funding and resources that have been made available to manage the liabilities associated with these legacy assets.

3.6 The recent WG budget announcement sees further commitments from WG towards dealing with the liabilities from these legacy assets. Arguably RCT has the largest proportion of ongoing risk associated with these tips. It is therefore appropriate to review the level of resourcing involved in discharging our duties as regulators and owners, and in anticipation of a significant forward programme of capital investment targeted at reducing the risks posed to our communities and our infrastructure.


## 4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The historic position in RCT is that the responsibility for undertaking the regulatory role contained within the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969 resides within the Flood Risk and Tips Management Team within Frontline Services. Responsibilities for Council owned tips, as land-owner, has rested with Corporate Estates.

4.2 Since Storm Dennis, capital investment in tip safety together with a major programme of tip maintenance, all funded by WG grant, has been delivered by the Council's new Head of Infrastructure Asset Management, utilising a combination of existing staff, consultants, seconded specialists and The Coal Authority.

4.3 This has allowed the Flood Risk and Tip Management Team to focus more exclusively on the increasing demands of Flood Risk Management – the enormous scale of which has been well documented in other Cabinet and Scrutiny reports.

4.4 Integrating the tip safety aspects of the Council's responsibilities as land-owner with its responsibilities under the "Tips Act" provides a focal point for all tip safety issues and enables a dedicated team to be established to discharge these duties effectively.


## 5. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

5.1   It is proposed to establish a dedicated Tip Safety Management Team which will report to the Council's Head of Infrastructure Asset Management within Frontline Services.

5.2   On establishment, the current Flood Risk and Tip Safety team will become the Flood Risk Management Team with job titles adjusted accordingly.

5.3   The Team will comprise of;

- GR15 Tip Safety Manager
- GR13 Principal Tip Safety Engineer
- GR11 – Assistant Engineer
- GR8 – 2 nr inspectors
- GR6 – Technician

5.4   Market supplements may be required to attract the right candidates into the senior roles.

5.5   The team will be required to deliver a multi-million pound capital programme of tip safety works, together with scheduled and exceptional tip maintenance works. These works will be identified by a comprehensive programme of inspections and increasingly supported by the continued roll-out of the latest technological advancements in tip management and monitoring equipment and techniques. The team will also contribute to engagement and collaboration with the Welsh Government Tip Safety team and The Coal Authority.

5.6   The Team will also engage with private tip owners and, subject to grant availability or recharge, manage major capital or maintenance works on third party land.

5.7   They will also work towards delivering warning and informing systems and processes with the Council's Emergency Planning Team to mitigate risks of future incidents.

5.8   As the team becomes established, opportunities to develop graduates and apprentices in establishing a centre of excellence will be encouraged.

5.9   It is not proposed that the new team will take over the role currently fulfilled by Corporate Estates i.e. leasing of land, protection of boundary fence works, etc, with that function remaining with Corporate Estates together with the requisite budget. It is anticipated that there will be close working between the two areas.


6.   **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. There are no adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.


7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 The gross cost of the staff structure set out in 5.2 is £263k, plus market supplements (where appropriate) per annum.

7.2 There will be a need to have a revenue budget for the team to ensure that the maintenance of the tips can be undertaken regardless of availability of capital monies / grant. It is envisaged that a yearly revenue budget of £200k will be required to undertake the maintenance of the tips including devegetation, cleaning and repairing drainage channels, repair of drainage structures, minor repairs of localised slips, scour, etc.

7.3 Due to the inaccessibility of the sites in question and the need to drive vehicles onto the sites, 2 number 4x4 vehicles will be required to be purchased for use by the inspectors undertaking the tip inspections. Purchase cost of the vehicles is estimated at £60k for the two.

7.4 A further annual revenue budget of £26k per annum would be required for ongoing costs including vehicle running costs, ICT costs, monitoring equipment and ppe.

7.5 The total costs are estimated at £489k per year plus any market supplements.

7.6 The opportunity to fund these ongoing costs (including vehicles) from grant funding sources will continue to be maximised, as part of the substantial capital programme which is being delivered. The revenue maintenance costs are currently being funded by WG and we will continue to seek to ensure continuation of these arrangements going forward, notwithstanding there is no guarantee of this arrangement being permanised. As a transitionary arrangement the Council will need to underwrite and accept the risk of permanent funding not being secured. Any costs which cannot be funded by WG / external funding sources will be funded from, initially, one off resources.


8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 Local Authorities have regulatory and land-owner responsibilities under the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969.

8.2 This legislation is no longer fit for purpose and WG has commissioned a review which has been carried out by the Law Commission. The report of the Law Commission is awaited. It will then be a matter for the

Welsh Government to consider whether they wish to take forward new legislation on Coal Spoil Tips for Wales.

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

9.1    The proposal supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for; Place – Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and Economy – Building a strong economy. The presence of these legacy assets represents a threat to community safety and wellbeing.

9.2    The establishment of a dedicated team to deal with Tip Safety and to deliver a comprehensive programme of tip safety works will improve the resilience of our physical infrastructure and reassure our communities that any risk is being effectively managed and reduced.

9.3    The capital programmes will generate jobs in the locality and enhance the landscape/remove potential barriers to private investment.

9.4    This is in turn supports the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals and is consistent with the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

**10.    CONCLUSION**

10.1    RCT is host to one of the highest incidences of coal spoil tips in Wales, together with one of the highest risks of tip instability associated with increasing climate change threats.

10.2    The proposal to establish a dedicated Tip Safety Management Team to manage these risks is both necessary and proportionate if the Council is to discharge its duties and responsibilities effectively in order to protect our communities.

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