



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

A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on Monday, 28th February, 2022  
at 12.00 pm

Contact: Sarah Daniel - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385086169)

Councillors wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. Any Member wishing to speak must do so in accordance with the arrangements proposed by the Chair, for facilitating participation of non-committee members, in a virtual meeting. To make such a request please email:- [ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk)

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**Note:**

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

**2. MINUTES**

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as an accurate record.

**3. COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES POLICY 2022/23**

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services, which provides the Cabinet with the proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the financial year 2022/23 (all to be effective from 1st April 2022 or as soon as is practicable thereafter) and the details of fees and charges decisions previously approved and included in the 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy.

**(Pages 19 - 26)**

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

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services, which provides Cabinet with the proposals and results that have now been consulted upon as part of a second phase of budget consultation, for Cabinet to consider and amend as necessary the draft budget strategy which they would wish to recommend to Council.

**(Pages 27 - 94)**

**5. THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 – 2024/25**

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services, which provides Cabinet with a proposed three year capital programme for 2022//23 to 2024/25 that if acceptable, will be presented to Council for approval.

**(Pages 95 - 124)**

**6. LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME 2022/23**

To receive a report from the Director Finance and Digital Services, which provides Cabinet with details of a proposed Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for Rhondda Cynon Taf and an update on the continuation of the Welsh Government Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief (RLH) Scheme for 2022/23.

**(Pages 125 - 132)**

**7. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) CAPITAL PROGRAMME - NEW WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RHYDYFELIN**

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services regarding financing of the proposals to build a new Welsh Medium Primary School in Rhydyfelin.

**(Pages 133 - 140)**

**8. PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN**

To receive a report from the Director of Prosperity and Development, in respect of the draft Placemaking Plan for Pontypridd Town Centre which provides a bold vision for the regeneration of the town.

**(Pages 141 - 200)**

**9. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) USE OF RIPA IN 2020-21 BY RCTCBC**

To receive a report from the Director of Legal Services in respect of the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (as

amended) (RIPA) and The Council's use of the Acquisition of Communications Data under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA).

**(Pages 201 - 206)**

**10. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION**

"That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

**11. ACQUISITION OF 103-110 TAFF STREET, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 4SL AND 13-17 SARDIS ROAD, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 1DX**

To receive a report from the Director of Corporate Estates that seeks Cabinet approval to purchase the Freehold interest of 103-110 Taff Street, Pontypridd and 13-17 Sardis Road, Pontypridd.

**(Pages 207 - 220)**

**12. URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.

**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

To receive the updated [Leaders Scheme of Delegation](#) following change to Members of the Cabinet.



**Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication**

**Circulation: -**

**Councillors:** Councillor A Morgan (Chair)  
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor R Bevan  
Councillor J Bonetto  
Councillor G Caple  
Councillor A Crimmings  
Councillor R Lewis  
Councillor C Leyshon  
Councillor M Norris

**Officers:** Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive  
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services  
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Louise Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources  
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development  
Neil Griffiths, Head Of Financial Services - Community & Children's Services  
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services  
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development  
Paul Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates  
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF

### RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 27 January 2022 at 11.00 am

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

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor M Norris

#### Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive  
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services  
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources  
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development  
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates  
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services  
Ms Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community, Wellbeing and Resilience

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

Councillor P Jarman

#### 96 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct Cllr R Bevan declared a personal interest in item 3 as he has a family member that works for the Authority. He confirmed he has been granted dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak on matters

#### 97 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 13 December 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

#### 98 THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET

The Director of Finance and Digital Services presented the report to Cabinet. He advised that 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. 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.

He continued that given the continuing financial pressures the Council is working under, it remained his view, that the Council should hold a minimum of £10M as General Fund Balances. As part of the Councils ongoing strategy, he advised that 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

The Director advised that 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.

Members were informed that the overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2022/23 at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 9.4% (+£437M). The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 8.4%.

The Director stated, 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

The Director continued that 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 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.

Members were reminded that the costs of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) impacts on the net income generated through any increase in Council Tax. He added that 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 net 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. He advised therefore that 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.

In respect of the Schools Budget (ISB) he advised it 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. 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.

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. 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.

The Director continued that 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. For 2022/23, the proposals are set out in 9.3 of the report for Cabinet's consideration.

The Leader was pleased of the positive settlement from Welsh Government but stated he was concerned that there would be no hardship fund. He continued that this was a big risk to the Authority as costs were still being incurred due to the pandemic as staff were still having to take time off work to isolate due to COVID.

He spoke positively of the £11.2m uplift for education and stated this was the largest uplift since his time being Leader of the Authority and this was a recognition of the pressures our schools face.

He was also pleased that the Business Support Grants, Climate Change and Public Health areas had been given an uplift as over recent years these are the areas that the Authority have had to cut back on so was pleased to be in a position to reinvest in these areas.

He continued that the Council Tax rate of a 1% uplift will be used to offset pressures such as the £2m reduction in Capital Funding, he added that they have tried to keep this as low as possible to support residents through the pandemic but recognise that there are other pressures.

The Leader then referenced a £75k uplift in Detached Youth which will contribute to a third hub vehicle meaning there would be one in each area of RCT, he continued that this will contribute to expanding the YEPS programme to continue to work with youngsters which had so far been very positive.

Acknowledging the proposed increase of 2.5% in fees and charges the Leader stated that whilst inflation was currently over 5% and continuing to rise, he thought it was only fair on residents and families in the Borough that the Authority absorb some of the costs and not pass on to families who were still struggling with rising costs of living.

In concluding his comments, he was pleased to be in a positive position following the settlement, but he advised that we should not underestimate that there is still huge pressure on services and whilst Social Services will receive an uplift, they still face pressures on a huge scale and is why he proposes to go further than the real living wage for Social Care Workers to ensure their positions are more sustainable.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services echoed the Leaders comments in relation to the positive settlement and is pleased to be in a position to continue investing in services. He was also concerned that the removal of the hardship grant is going to hit the Councils finances in addition to the rising cost of living.

He reassured members that they will freeze as many Fees and Charges as possible recognising the difficult time ahead for many.

The Deputy Leader stated it was reassuring to see the positive level of engagement with residents having been restricted due to COVID and there was strong support for our priorities. She continued that no one is under the illusion that we do not have strong challenges facing us and was very concerned at the rising cost of living with no direction from UK Government on how we can address this.

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

1. To note that the procedures relating to revenue budget construction, the consultation process, and reporting to Council, are set out in the "Budget and Policy Framework" within the Council's Constitution.
2. To note and consider the outcomes of the budget consultation phase 1 process.
3. To review and consider the draft 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy, detailed in the attached Discussion Paper 'Appendix A'.
4. The level of Council Tax increase at 1% 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.
5. To the draft timetable for setting the 2022/23 revenue budget as set out at Appendix A2.
6. To receive feedback from the second phase of budget consultation in order to consider and determine the final budget strategy for submission to Council.
7. 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.

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#### **PROPOSED CESSATION OF THE CURRENT REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) AND PREPARATION OF A NEW RLDP**

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report to members which updated Members on the progress of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP). He advised that the report indicates that although considerable work has been undertaken, we have been unable to meet the formal Delivery Agreement. He continued that the report then sets out the most appropriate way to comply with our statutory duty to prepare a Development Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Director continued that 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 timescale

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.

The Director advised that 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. 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.

The Cabinet Member Enterprise Development and Housing, endorsed the report. He advised that an RLDP Steering Group had been set up and had met earlier in the morning. He stated that it was clear that delivery targets and times had been impacted due to COVID particularly the public consultation process and engaging consultants. He continued that we now need to review the position to move forward to produce a new LDP to take us to 2037.

At this juncture of the meeting and with permission of the Leader, Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee in respect of this item – she referred to the RLDP Steering Group of which she was also a member of and was pleased of the work so far and stated that they were experienced in planning policy. She noted that the Draft Delivery agreement will be reported to full council in March and will reserve comment until then and contribute to the debate

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

1. Approve the cessation of the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2020 – 2030.
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.
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 attached as Appendix 1 of the report.
4. Any appropriate and necessary amendments resulting from the consultation will be incorporated into a final DA. It is proposed that the recommendations in 1 and 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).

## 100 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Service Director Children's Services presented the report to Cabinet which provided information regarding the looked after children prevention strategy. The report includes an outline of the services aimed to develop to enhance our offer to families, and the resources that are required to make that possible.

The Cabinet Member Children's Services agreed that supporting families is a priority to RCTCBC and delivering this priority will require additional service. She was pleased that the children looked after is gradually declining and the Authority were developing an improved service. She commented that this was especially important to parents who have experienced the care system themselves.

The Leader added that there was pressure on the service to keep families together and it was pleasing to see this coming forward. Having attended a number of meetings with the Service Director for Children's Services he learned that studies revealed that the best outcome for a child is providing Early Intervention support and supporting them to stay within their family.

At this juncture of the meeting and with permission of the Leader, Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee in respect of this item - She informed members that the Strategy will be a focus for the cross party Corporate Parenting Board and reassured that party politics was a no go area when it comes to safeguarding vulnerable children. She was impressed with the information in the report which she believed is intended to make a difference and support in keeping families together.

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

1. Note the information contained within this report and give formal approval to implement the proposed investment and service developments

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

## 101 THE TRANSFORMATION OF EARLY YEARS SERVICES IN RCT

The Head of Community, Wellbeing and Resilience presented the report to members outlining 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.

Members were advised that 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

The Cabinet Member Children's Services commented that thanks to a new

contract with Health services we are now the only Authority in Wales to offer a schedule of growing Skills screening assessment for all children aged 20 months. This will support in identifying where early support and intervention is required and will be beneficial to RCTCBC going forward. She continued that the external evaluation has been able to evidence that families benefiting from early intervention that previously would not have been eligible.

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

1. Note the regional progress made since July 2017 in delivering the Welsh Government's Early Years Transformation Programme.
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.

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.

## **102 NEW GUIDANCE FOR UNPAID CARERS IN THE WORKPLACE**

The Head of Adult Care and Support presented the report to members to seek Cabinet endorsement for the staff guidance 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. The report also presents the business case to Cabinet for introducing a new leave of absence for employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities

The Head of Adult Care and Support continued that the report was developed in conjunction with an RCT working group 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

She advised members 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

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

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".

The Deputy Leader commented that she was pleased to see the proposals before them and to hear that more and more Local Authorities were taking the same approach. Unpaid carers in the Councils Workforce play a significant role in their Communities and in society and it is important that we signpost staff to the support that is available to them.

The Cabinet Member Adult Social Services was pleased to see the recognition for the unpaid carers in the workforce who have provided essential care for the most vulnerable during the pandemic and continuing beyond.

The Leader stated that WG has put a lot of resource into this as they are aware of the pressures in this area and if they cannot provide this support it will add further pressure to other vulnerable services. He added the more we can do to support carers the better.

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

1. Endorse the Working Carers Guidance (Appendix 1) and support its implementation.
2. Endorse additional specific paid leave arrangements for unpaid carers within the workforce of up to 5 days per annum.

Endorse the pursuit of a recognised accreditation scheme for working carers ‘

### **103 CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented the report to members which provided an update to Members on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

He continued that Officers of the CCRC 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.

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.

The Leader stated that this is a step in the right direction for joint working and formulating arrangement, as long as the shift is seamless to residents with services continuing to be delivered then this will be positive. He continued that it is important that the Local Authorities decide on what services will be delivered through the CJCs and there is local determination on services that require different needs in different Local Authority areas. He relayed his concerns that

some out of town developments could have a detrimental impact on town centres so this would need closer working with Local Authorities

The Deputy Leader commented that Scrutiny arrangements will be key to CJs to include the wider engagement of Members and Communities to measure the impact of the CJs. She commented that RCTCBC had already supported a step change in the current scrutiny arrangements of the CCRCD

At this juncture of the meeting, and with permission of the Leader Cllr P Jarman addressed members on the item. She commented whilst she is not a supporter of CJC's, having scrutinised the legislation, she accepted that they are a model of Regional Governance. She did query why matters and updates have not come before full council for every member to have an update on matters and there is a need to be open and accountable.

She also commented that she was disappointed that Welsh Government has not negotiated with the UK Government before the implementation of CJs on the taxation issues.

The Leader agreed with the comments around the taxation issues. He added that independent legal advice was sought and the CRCD Cabinet has done everything they possibly can to progress. He added it is disappointing that no resolution or clarification has been given from UK and Welsh Government on the matter as it needs to be resolved before key strategic decisions can be made on matters where there are financial implications. He reassured that Local Authorities in the CCRCD are now focussed on taking this forward and making this work

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

1. Note that the information provided to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> 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. Note the requirement for the CJC to set and approve a budget on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022;
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 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, to align to the other three CJs in Wales;
4. Note the Minister for Finance and Local Governments' letter of 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 consulting the Council on amending the commencement date of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee to 30<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022; and
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.

## 104 TIP SAFETY MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

The Director of Frontline Services presented the report to members 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.

Since Storm Dennis, capital investment in tip safety together with a major programme of tip maintenance, funded by Welsh Government, 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. This has allowed the Flood Risk and Tip Management Team to focus more exclusively on the increasing demands of Flood Risk Management.

He continued that 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.

The Director informed members that 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.

On establishment, the current Flood Risk and Tip Safety team will become the Flood Risk Management Team with job titles adjusted accordingly. He concluded that the proposed team will consist of 6 posts which were detailed in the report with a possible market supplement required to attract candidates to the posts

The Leader commented that the dedicated coal tip safety teams are a much needed resource within the Authority. It is envisaged they will work on some of the Capital works that are coming forward and also remediation work on Tylorstown and Wattstown. The costs will be covered from Welsh Government funding and the Capital Programme. The new proposed way of working he added will also alleviate pressure on the Flood Risk Management Teams

The Cabinet Member Enterprise Housing and Development thanked the officer and his team for bring the report forward he commented that this team was desperately needed as we are facing a number of pressures also arising from Climate Change so it was imperative to increase our expertise in this area to ensure the safety of the public.

The Deputy Leader agreed the proposals were the right way forward to provide reassurance of safety to our residents.

At this juncture of the meeting and with permission of the Leader, Cllr P Jarman addressed the Committee on this item. She stated that she fully accepts the need to maximise the funding from Welsh Government to deliver a multimillion pound programme of works together with a schedule of tip safety works and also to look to establish a centre of excellence in the future. Cllr Jarman however was concerned that it has left the public querying whether the centre of excellence can only be achieved nationally due to skills shortages. She asked therefore if it was anticipated if the posts to create the tip safety team would be advertised

internally or externally. She expressed concerns that if funding were to not continue that the posts would cease to be viable. She urged that if this were to be the case that the Council should continue to fund the posts in order to retain the expertise. She also commented that the public remained dissatisfied that the Authority has not made public new tip categorisation, unlike other neighbouring Local Authorities and asked when we can expect this to happen

The Leader reassured on the point of funding that he was not immediately concerned that the funding would not continue from Welsh Government and stated however that the Authority would continue to fund the posts should this be required.

The Director Frontline Services confirmed that posts will be advertised externally in a bid to attract new skills and experience to the Authority and a market supplement may need to be applied to attract candidates. He commented that potential internal candidates are already undertaking critical roles. He concluded that the need was right now for RCT and this is the priority going forward, if the service does transform to be regional in the future then this will be reviewed.

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

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.

**105 To consider Passing the Following Resolution:**

It was **RESOLVED**: "That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

**106 CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN INTERIM UPDATE**

Following the consideration of the report of the Director, Corporate Estates containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), it was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report

**107 REAL LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION**

Following the consideration of the report of the Group Director Community and Children's Services containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Formally commit to implementing the increase to the Real Living Wage

for all externally employed care workers with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

2. Agree that the annual increase in the Real Living Wage for any Council staff impacted by the increase, be implemented for this year with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022; and
3. Delegate responsibility to the Group Director of Community and Children's Services (in consultation with the Director of Legal Services) to engage with providers and make the necessary contractual amendments; and

Delegate responsibility to the Director of Human Resources to apply the increase in the Real Living Wage to all staff working for the Council that are affected by the increase.

**108 WRITE OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS**

Following the consideration of the report of the Head of Revenue and Benefits containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), it was **RESOLVED** to

Agree to write-off the accounts set out in the schedule to the appropriate Bad Debt Provision contained within the Council's accounts (if further information on any debt becomes available, payment will be pursued).

**109 Urgent Items**

None

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**





## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

2022/23

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

Author: Barrie Davies (01443) 424026

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out:

- Proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the financial year 2022/23 (all to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 or as soon as is practicable thereafter); and
- Details of fees and charges decisions previously approved and included in the 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Consider and, if appropriate, approve the proposed revised levels for all areas of the Council's fees and charges as set out at section 5 and detailed at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Subject to fees and charges proposals being agreed, build the net budgetary impact (£45k for 2022/23) into the budget strategy proposals for consideration by Cabinet and Council as appropriate (paragraph 5.3).
- 2.3 Note the fees and charges decisions previously approved and included in the 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy (paragraph 5.4 / Table 2).

#### 3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Council's fees and charges for 2022/23, required as part of the annual budget setting process.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council provides a wide range of services across the County Borough and the ability to apply a charge is an important funding source to support the cost of maintaining service provision.
- 4.2 As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements, fees and charges are reviewed regularly and, as part of this process, account is taken of funding levels received through the Local Government Settlement; the implications of decisions already approved; Corporate Plan priority areas; feedback received as part of the consultation process; and the level of inflation (i.e. the 12 month Consumer Prices Index (CPI) to December 2021 is 5.4%).
- 4.3 Where appropriate, agreement of the proposed revisions is now required in order to put in place the necessary steps for their implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 (or as soon as is practicable thereafter).

#### **5. REVIEW**

- 5.1 Cabinet have reviewed fees and charges levels having regard to the information set out in Section 4 with the objective to continue to provide a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices.
- 5.2 The outcome of Cabinet's review is a proposed 2.50% standard increase to fees and charges (allowing for rounding adjustments as appropriate), with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying a standard uplift in line with the CPI rate of inflation. In addition, a number of areas are proposed to be subject to specific treatment, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Summary of proposed fees and charges not subject to the proposed standard increase

<b>Area of Charge</b>	<b>Proposed Exception</b>
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
Pest Control Service Charges (Domestic / Public Health)	Freeze

- 5.3 The impact of the proposals set out in Table 1 would reduce income by £45k in a full year (compared to the Council's budget modelling for 2022/23).
- 5.4 In addition, a number of fees and charges decisions have previously been approved and accordingly have already been incorporated into the Council's 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy. These are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of decisions already approved

Area of charge	Decision approved
Adult Social Care Charges (non-residential care services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£100 per week in line with the current limit determined by Welsh Government (<a href="#">Cabinet 18th July 2017</a>)</li> </ul>
Fixed Penalty Notice (for environmental crimes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set at £100 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 (<a href="#">Cabinet 25th January 2018</a>)</li> </ul>
Houses in Multiple Occupation - Licenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>License fees set for the period 2019/20 to 2023/24 (<a href="#">Cabinet 14th February 2019</a>)</li> </ul>
Bereavement fees and charges for war veterans and service men and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25% reduction to all Council bereavement fees incurred by families of deceased war veterans and service men and women resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf (<a href="#">Delegated Decision 8th May 2019</a>)</li> </ul>

- 5.5 As Members will be aware, a pilot was approved at the [21st November 2019](#) Cabinet meeting to apply a reduced cremation fee for funeral directors offering a Direct / Simplicity cremation service in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Following consideration of the results of the pilot at the [29th April 2021](#) Cabinet meeting, it was agreed that the provision of a Direct / Simplicity cremation service would continue in 2021/22 at the rate applied for the pilot scheme and, for 2022/23 onwards, the fee level would be determined as part of the annual fees and charges process.
- 5.6 For completeness, a full list of all fees and charges across all Council services can be accessed [here](#), now including the proposed level of charges for 2022/23.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.

6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concluded that the recommendations set out in the report are in line with the above legislation.

## **7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 A comprehensive budget consultation exercise has been undertaken in relation to the 2022/23 budget requirements.

8.2 The proposals included in this report do not require any specific additional consultation exercises to be undertaken.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 As outlined in section 5 of the report, the proposed revisions to fees and charges levels for 2022/23 would reduce income by £45K in a full year if Cabinet decide to take forward the proposed recommendations (as compared to the Council's budget modelling for 2022/23).

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

10.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

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

11.1 Fees and charges income is a critical component of the funding arrangements for many services. At a local level, the proposals intend to ensure the continued provision of a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices for users to support the Council's work in delivering its Corporate Plan priorities; improving the provision of essential services; and at the same time 'living within its means'.

11.2 The proposals also complement the requirements of the Well Being of Future Generations Act in helping to provide Services with adequate resources to continue their work in shaping provision fit for the future and, in doing so, enable positive contributions to be made toward meeting the seven national wellbeing goals.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 This report sets out proposals for the level of Council fees and charges for the forthcoming year, and, if approved, will be incorporated within the recommended 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **Other Information**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee** – Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee

**PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/23**

Group	Service Area	Type Of Income	2022/23 Proposed Increase
Chief Executive	Land Charges	Land Charges (excluding those set nationally)	2.50%
Community and Children's Services	Environmental Health (Pollution) and Licensing (where applicable)	Licences (General)	2.50%
		Licenses (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire)	0%
		Houses in Multiple Occupation – Licenses	Price set in line with previous decision
	Food Standards	Course Fees General	2.50%
	Bereavement Services*	Cremation Fees (including Direct / Simplicity cremations)	2.50%
		Burial Fees	2.50%
		All supplementary fees & charges	2.50%
	Registrar	Booking Fees	2.50%
		Attendances	2.50%
	Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools	Pay & Play Fees	2.50%
		3G Pitch Hire	0%
		Membership Fees	0% (frozen until January 2023)
	Rhondda Heritage Park	<u>Admission Fees - Schools</u>	
		Welsh Mining Experience (underground tour)	0%
		Santa's Grotto	0%
		<u>Admission Fees - External</u>	
		Welsh Mining Experience (underground tour)	0%
		Santa's Grotto	0%
		Miscellaneous Sales / Souvenirs	2.50%
	Lido – Pontypridd	Leisure Sales Income	0%
	Park & Dare & Coliseum Theatres	Bars & Catering	2.50%
		Room/Venue Hire	2.50%
		Ticket Sales	Internally set based on act / performance
Cinema (entrance fee)		2.50%	
Community Centres	Rental Income / Hire Charges	2.50%	
	Leisure Sales Income	2.50%	

Group	Service Area	Type Of Income	2022/23 Proposed Increase
Community and Children's Services	Parks & Recreation Grounds	Summer Fees (Sports Clubs)	0%
		Winter Fees (Sports Clubs)	0%
	Dare Valley Country Park	Hire Charges	2.50%
		Rental Income	2.50%
	Day Services	Catering Income	2.50%
		Meals Sales	0% (frozen until 2023)
		Hire Of Premises	2.50%
		Produce Sales	2.50%
	In-House Residential Services	Board And Lodge Income	2.50%
		Meals Sales	2.50%
	Domiciliary Care (Adults)	Non Residential Care Charges	In line with previous decision: maximum weekly charge payable set by Welsh Government (and based on individual financial circumstances)
	Nurseries	Day Nursery Fee Income	2.50%
	Telecare	Lifeline Income	2.50%
	Pest Control	Pest Control Service Charges (Domestic / Public Health)	0%
		Other Pest Control Service Charges	2.50%
	Libraries	Library Fines	2.50%
		Hire Charges	2.50%
		Photocopy & Printing Charges	2.50%
		All Other Sales	2.50%
	Adult Education	General Course Fees	2.50%
Hire Charges		2.50%	
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	Street Cleansing Operations	Fixed Penalty Notice (environmental crimes)	Price set in line with previous decision
	Allotments	Rental Income	2.50%
	Parks Services	Rental Income	2.50%
		Income From Outside Bodies	2.50%
	Commercial Waste	Trade Refuse Charges (Residual)	2.50%
		Trade Refuse Charges (Recycling)	2.50%
	Waste Collection	Bulky Waste Collection Income	2.50%
		Replacement Bin Charges	2.50%
	Parking Services	Season Ticket Parking Fees	0%
		Parking Fees	0%
		Residential Parking Permits	0%
	New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA)	Licences	2.50%
Home To School	Sale of Surplus Seats	2.50%	
Traffic Management	Fees	2.50%	

Group	Service Area	Type Of Income	2022/23 Proposed Increase	
Education and Inclusion Services	School Meals Income	School Meals Sales	0% (frozen until 2023)	
	Catering Training	Miscellaneous Contributions	2.50%	
	Meals on Wheels	Clients Meals Sales	0% (frozen until 2023)	
	Peripatetic Music Service	Course Fees General		2.50%
		Performances - Ticket Income		2.50%
Equipment Hire			2.50%	

\* Bereavement Services – in line with previous decision: 25% reduction to all Council bereavement fees incurred by families of deceased war veterans and service men and women resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

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

**COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES POLICY 2022/23**

**Background Papers**

None

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies





## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

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

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN**

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

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the Cabinet agreed draft budget proposals for the 2022/23 revenue budget strategy.
- 1.2 These proposals have now been consulted upon as part of a second phase of budget consultation and the results are now available for Cabinet to consider and amend as necessary the draft budget strategy which they would wish to recommend to Council.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review and, if appropriate, amend their Budget Strategy which they wish to recommend to Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022; and
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of contribution from the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as a consequence of any change to the Council's resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, Cabinet agreed draft proposals for the revenue budget strategy for financial year 2022/23.

- 3.2 These proposals have been subject to a second phase of consultation which ran from the 28<sup>th</sup> January to the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The results of this consultation exercise are now available for Cabinet.
- 3.3 The proposals have been incorporated into a draft budget strategy report to Council and this is attached at Appendix A. The results of the Phase 2 consultation process is also attached to that report.
- 3.4 It is now for Cabinet to consider the feedback received from Phase 2 and determine whether they would wish to amend the draft budget strategy.

#### **4.0 THE FINAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2022/23**

- 4.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement for 2022/23 has followed the UK Government Autumn Budget and Spending Review (SR21), with the provisional settlement being announced on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 4.2 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2022/23 is expected to be received on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 4.3 There are no indications of any significant changes between the provisional and final settlement but such a risk clearly remains.
- 4.4 In order to ensure that Cabinet are able to recommend a balanced budget to Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, and given the timing of the Final Settlement (1<sup>st</sup> March 2022), it will be necessary to authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the budget to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. It is proposed that any change is dealt with by means of amending the contribution from our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve. This reserve has a remaining balance of £3.636M and is set against the context that a 0.5% change in the level of our settlement would amount to £2.207M.

#### **5.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.
- 5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concluded that the recommendations set out in the report are in line with the above legislation.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The allocation of resources, as set out in the proposed 2022/23 Budget Strategy, is based on supporting the Council's service delivery requirements and associated statutory responsibilities for the forthcoming year. In doing so, the proposed strategy is in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The proposed approach to budget consultation for 2022/23 was set out in the Cabinet report dated 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021. It comprised 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 agreed the draft budget strategy, and in light of the provisional local government settlement, then this draft strategy was consulted upon as part of Phase 2.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The financial modelling assumptions and implications are set out in Appendix A of this report.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS or LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget and also a legal duty under the Local Government Act 2000 for it to be reported to and approved by Full Council. The construction of the draft 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy in line with the "Budget and Policy Framework", as set out in the Council's Constitution, will support compliance with the above legal requirements.

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

- 10.1 The draft budget strategy will be a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and in doing so will support wider partnership objectives and the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The feedback from the second phase of budget consultation is now available for Cabinet to review and, if appropriate, amend their draft budget strategy proposals which they wish to recommend to Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN  
DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN**

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**None**

**OFFICER TO CONTACT - Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital  
Services**

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**APPENDIX A**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-2022**

**COMMITTEE:  
COUNCIL**

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**REPORT OF:**

**THE CABINET**

**AUTHOR: Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services Tel. No. 01443 424026**

<b>AGENDA ITEM NO.</b>	
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<b>THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY</b>	
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**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides information on the provisional local government settlement for 2022/23 and sets out the recommendations of the Cabinet with regard to the Council's Revenue Budget and the level of Council Tax for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the written statement from the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) and the table on the 2022/23 Provisional local government settlement, reproduced at Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Note the implications for the Council and the remaining budget gap as set out at section 5;
- 2.3 Agree a Council Tax increase for 2022/23 of 1.00%;
- 2.4 Agree the uplift to the aggregate Schools Budget as detailed at section 8;
- 2.5 Agree the budget strategy proposals as set out at paragraphs 10.3(a) to 10.3(i);
- 2.6 Agree the use of the 'Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve' as transition funding, totalling £0.971M for 2022/23;

- 2.7 Approve Tables 3 and 4 in Section 13 of the report as the basis of allocating resources to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), to other Council Services, and to meet its corporate financing requirements; and
- 2.8 Agree the Council's overall budget for 2022/23 at £566.792M, in order to pass the necessary statutory resolutions to set the Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year by the statutory deadline of the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Council's audited accounts were presented which reported General Fund Balances amounting to £8.505M.
- 3.2 Given the continuing financial pressures the Council is working under, it remains the view of the Director of Finance and Digital Services (Section 151 Officer) 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.
- 3.3 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 is considered to be the minimum level, it was wholly appropriate that they were used in this way and for this purpose. The Director of Finance and Digital Services is 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.
- 3.4 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. 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was £3.691M. 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).



- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.
- 3.7 In the context of this overall financial position, the Cabinet, assisted by the Senior Leadership Team was able to commence initial work on its budget strategy for 2022/23. The broad objectives of next year's proposed strategy are to:
- (i) Support the delivery of our key strategic priorities -
    - People – Are independent, healthy and successful
    - Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play
    - Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper
  - (ii) Retain the support of Audit Wales for the approach the Council has adopted to securing strong financial management;
  - (iii) Continue with the delivery of our key services and protect as many local jobs as possible; and
  - (iv) Take a responsible approach to the level of Council Tax.

#### **4.0 THE 2022/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT**

- 4.1 On the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 1.
- 4.2 The "headlines" of the 2022/23 Provisional 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 Capital Funding allocation has reduced by £2.165M to £11.599M.

## **5.0 COUNCIL BASE BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2022/23**

- 5.1 In anticipation of the 2022/23 local government settlement, the Council's service managers have constructed the base budget requirements for next financial year. Those initial calculations provided for:-
  - Estimated national wage awards, 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.
- 5.2 The Council's updated budget requirement was reported to Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 alongside the implications of the Provisional Local Government Settlement which was announced on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 5.3 After taking into account the updated budget requirement and the provisional settlement increase of 8.4%, in addition to the Council's updated Tax Base, the Council was faced with a **remaining budget gap of £0.229M**.

5.4 It was against this position which the Cabinet have considered their further budget strategy options for 2022/23.

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

6.1 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.

6.2 The Council's overall financial position was set out at Section 3 of the report. 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.

6.3 Every year, there are certain corporate financial provisions that must be "top sliced" locally, before 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; and
- d) Resources to fund the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

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

6.5 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.

## **7.0 COUNCIL TAX LEVELS**

- 7.1 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). The proposal is to increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 1.00%, that is, less than the 2.65% originally modelled. This proposed increase equates to 20p per week for a person living in a Band A property and 30p per week for a person living in a Band D property (42% of properties in Rhondda Cynon Taf are Band A). Increasing Council Tax by 1.00% will increase the remaining budget gap by £1.554M.
- 7.2 Members will be aware that the cost of the CTRS is impacted by changes in caseload and by changes to the level of Council Tax. This 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 net additional income of £0.942M, or stated another way, 21% of any Council Tax increase is lost to support the increased costs associated with Welsh Government's CTRS.

## **8.0 SCHOOLS BUDGET (ISB)**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 In overall terms, the proposal sees the Schools Budget (ISB) increase from £163.8M to £175.0M, an increase of £11.2M (6.8%). Schools are therefore fully funded for 2022/23.

## **9.0 EFFICIENCY**

- 9.1 Council services have for many years now delivered against ambitious efficiency targets, making considerable budget reductions without adversely impacting on front line service provision.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021, we were able to release £988k of in year base budget reductions.
- 9.5 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.

## **10.0 BUDGET STRATEGY PROPOSALS**

- 10.1 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. It is recommended that this approach is continued.
- 10.2 As a Cabinet we have always been focussed on protecting our front line services and have taken any opportunities to prioritise or reallocate resources to areas of priority.
- 10.3 For 2022/23, the following proposals are recommended to Council.

### **a. NDR Local Relief Scheme**

Cabinet have previously determined (13<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021). The Real Living Wage was announced as increasing to £9.90 in November 2021 and this Council has determined to bring forward the implementation of this rate to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 (ordinarily the Council implements increases from 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

<b>Area of Charge</b>	<b>Proposed Exception</b>
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
Pest Control Service Charges (Domestic / Public Health)	Freeze

The cost of this proposal (net of that assumed at latest MTFP) is **£45k**.

10.4 The implications of the above strategy proposals, including the proposed reduction in the level of Council Tax increase and the delivery of efficiencies, on the remaining budget gap position is shown in table 1.

Table 1 : Budget Strategy Proposals 2022/23

	<b>£'000</b>	
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	45	
Council Tax at 1.0%	1,554	
		742
<b>Remaining Budget Gap</b>		<b>971</b>

10.5 *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.

10.6 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 £0.971M is made from this reserve for 2022/23. This would facilitate a balanced budget for 2022/23 and would leave £3.636M in the reserve (subject to the year-end assessment of reserves). Processes are now sufficiently well embedded to ensure that savings are achieved in-year and that this reserve can continue to be replenished.

Table 2 : Budget Strategy Proposals 2022/23 – Balancing the Budget

	<b>£'000</b>
Remaining Budget Gap	971
Use of Transition Funding	- 971
<b>Remaining Budget Gap</b>	<b>-</b>

10.7 The above provides a robust and balanced budget strategy for financial year 2022/23 which is now recommended to Council.

## **11.0 SERVICE PRIORITIES**

11.1 Even after a period of significantly reducing 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.

- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 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 the early identification of opportunities to deliver in-year savings. 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 alongside this revenue budget strategy.

## **12.0 THE 2022/23 BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 The approach to budget consultation for 2022/23 was set out in the Cabinet report dated 18<sup>th</sup> 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 agreed a draft budget strategy, and in light of the provisional local government settlement, then this draft strategy was consulted upon as part of Phase 2.
- 12.3 The Phase 1 Consultation report was considered by Cabinet on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 alongside the initial budget proposals which were then consulted upon as part of Phase 2.
- 12.4 The Phase 2 Consultation report is now attached at Appendix 2. The phase 2 consultation process ran from the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and included:

- On-line questionnaire via the Let's Talk website;

- Young persons engagement, through face-to-face and on-line zoom meetings, with a Comprehensive School, the Environmental Youth Forum, Young Editors and Members of the Youth Parliament;
- Promotion through social media and through the Disability Forum, Community Hubs and Veterans Groups;
- A telephone consultation option through the Council's Contact Centre and a freepost address for postal responses;
- On-line Zoom meetings with:
  - Older Persons Advisory Group (31<sup>st</sup> January 2022);
  - School Budget Forum (1<sup>st</sup> February 2022);
  - The Council's Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022); and
  - Joint Consultative Committee (10<sup>th</sup> February 2022).

12.5 With regard to the consultation activity undertaken with the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee, School Budget Forum and Joint Consultative Committee, the extracts of the minutes from these meetings are attached at Appendices 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

### **13.0 THE 2022/23 MACRO REVENUE BUDGET**

13.1 In arriving at a strategy for 2022/23, the Cabinet has taken into consideration its key commitments, its views on service delivery and relevant charges for services and the need to minimise the tax burden on local residents. Consequently, and after careful deliberation, the Cabinet has concluded that it can now propose a balanced revenue budget which will meet all of the fundamental requirements of its preferred strategy **and** minimise the Council Tax increase for next year.

13.2 Table 3 below illustrates how the revenue resources available to the Council could be utilised, with a Council Tax increase of 1.00%:

**Table 3: Proposed Resources in 2022/23**

	<b>£'000</b>
2022/23 Net Revenue Spending	566,792
<b>LESS:</b> Revenue Support Grant & NDR Contribution	441,433
<b>LESS:</b> Social Care Workforce Grant	3,668
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>121,691</b>
<b>LESS:</b> Release of Earmarked Reserves	971
<b>To be met from Council Taxpayers</b>	<b>120,720</b>

- 13.3 Table 4 below, shows the overall effect on services of applying the principles of the Cabinet's recommended outline 2022/23 budget strategy.

**Table 4: Application of the 2022/23 Outline Budget Strategy**

<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease)</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Corporate Requirements</b>			
Capital Financing	19,950	21,308	1,358
Levies	12,874	13,174	300
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	25,334	25,587	253
Miscellaneous	14,205	15,647	1,442
	<b>72,363</b>	<b>75,716</b>	<b>3,353</b>
<b>Individual School Budgets (ISB)</b>			
Individual School Budgets	163,784	174,966	11,182
<b>Other Council Services</b>			
Community & Children's Services	168,586	183,619	15,033
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	60,372	65,993	5,621
Chief Executive's	30,857	32,673	1,816
Education & Inclusion Services	31,941	33,825	1,884
<b>Net Revenue Spending</b>	<b>527,903</b>	<b>566,792</b>	<b>38,889</b>

#### **14.0 SPECIFIC GRANTS**

- 14.1 For next year, the Welsh Government is to provide over £1.1Bn in Specific Revenue Grants to Welsh Local Authorities.
- 14.2 Whilst specific grants dilute local accountability, such funding does enable us to undertake projects and deliver services that otherwise may not have been possible. Whilst we will continue to make representation for such funding to be transferred into the Revenue Support Grant, until they do so then specific grants will continue to supplement our base revenue budget.
- 14.3 By their nature, specific grants are often directed toward specific spend areas or policy objectives and are not certain in terms of their ongoing continuation nor value, presenting uncertainty in terms of forward planning.
- 14.4 The allocation of specific grants, however, remains a key feature of the annual local government settlement, albeit there is a commitment to reduce

such hypothecation. There are also a number of specific grants which have been introduced to deal with recurring cost pressures (eg Social Care Workforce Grant) and it is important that we seek to ensure their continuation beyond 2022/23.

## **15.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.
- 15.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concluded that the recommendations set out in the report are in line with the above legislation.

## **16. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 16.1 The allocation of resources, as set out in the proposed 2022/23 Budget Strategy, is based on supporting the Council's service delivery requirements and associated statutory responsibilities for the forthcoming year. In doing so, the proposed strategy is in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

## **17.0 CONSULTATION**

- 17.1 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken as part of formulating the recommended 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy, the detail of which is set out in Section 12 of the report.

## **18.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 18.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the main body of the Report.

## **19.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 19.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget and also a legal duty under the Local Government Act 2000 for it to be reported to and approved by Full Council. The recommended 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy and its reporting to full Council ensures compliance with these legal duties.

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

20.1 The recommended 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy has been formulated to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, as set out within the Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024. The plan is aligned to the goals and principles included within the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

**21.0 CONCLUSIONS**

21.1 The Council's overall financial position remains sound, with a clear plan in place to replenish the level of General Reserves to the recommended minimum level of £10M.

21.2 On the 21<sup>st</sup> 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%.

21.3 The Cabinet's proposals properly address the corporate financial requirements of the Council and allocate an adequate financial uplift to the Individual Schools Budget. The remaining resources available are allocated to fund all other services and to support our key priorities in 2022/23.

21.4 The Cabinet has recommended setting the 2022/23 revenue spending and budget at £566.792M which will require a Council Tax increase of 1.00% for the financial year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

21.5 The Council continues to deliver year on year balanced budgets alongside an investment programme supporting key priorities. The challenge does remain for positive and proactive management from the Senior Leadership Team and clear direction from Members to produce a robust and financially sustainable budget into the medium term in what continues to be a challenging financial climate.

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**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 through 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.

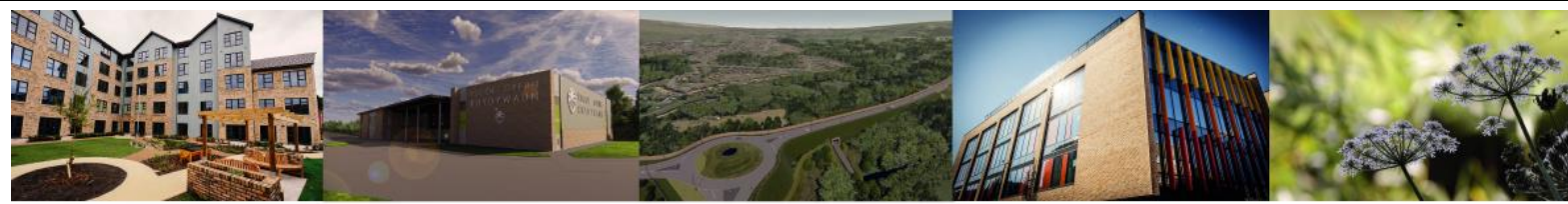
## Summary Table

### 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 <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>All Unitary Authorities</b>	<b>4,670,080</b>	<b>5,107,507</b>	<b>9.4%</b>		<b>244,000</b>

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.



**APPENDIX 2**

**Dewch i  
siarad RhCT  
Let's talk  
RCT**



# **BUDGET**CONSULTATION**2022/23** ( P H A S E 2 )

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC**  
**FEBRUARY 2022**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Phase 2 Budget Consultation 2022/23.
- The consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 28<sup>th</sup> January and ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- A digital approach that included the following methods to consult with a range of stakeholders:
  - Publication of key information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf “Let’s Talk” website, which included;
    - A survey
    - Two “Quick Polls”
    - The option to leave longer responses as “Ideas”
    - A simplified “Easy Read” survey that could be downloaded and printed for use by any audiences that felt unable to engage with the full survey format
  - Promotion through social media
  - An online Older Persons Advisory Group Meeting (OPAG)
  - A meeting with the Pontyclun 50+ Forum
  - Correspondence with the Disability Forum
  - Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee virtual meeting
  - School Budget Forum virtual meeting
  - Joint Consultative Committee virtual meeting
  - Face-to-face and on-line sessions with young people in schools and youth groups
  - An email sent to key stakeholders and the Citizens’ Panel
- The Council provided a number of alternatives to online engagement, as it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- The majority of survey respondents felt that the proposed 1% increase in Council Tax was reasonable (80.2%).
- 91.2% of respondents agreed with the ongoing prioritisation of Schools and Social Services.
- 78.2% of respondents agreed with the approach for the delivery of efficiency savings for next year.
- 79.8% of respondents agreed with the proposals for fees and charges.
- 78.4% of respondents agreed with the proposed additional investment of £100K in the Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme.

- 81.1% of respondents agreed with the proposed £500K investment to support the Council' ongoing work on climate change and carbon reduction.
- 88.2% of respondents agreed with the proposed £550K investment to increase the minimum rate of pay for Council staff and contracted staff.
- 78.8% of respondents agreed with the proposed £200K investment to provide additional resources to Public Health and Protection Services.
- 87.4% of respondents agreed with the proposed £1.5M investment in Sustainable Social Services.
- 82.9% of respondents agreed with the additional £1M Funding for Investment proposal.
- 79.4% of respondents agreed with the additional £75k investment within the Detached Youth Service.
- 81.8% of respondents agreed with the use of £970K in transitional funding to address the remaining budget gap.
- Over 700 people were engaged in the phase 2 budget consultation.
- Overall (including Phase 1) over 1,700 people were engaged in the Council's budget setting process.



# **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Phase 2 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 of the Let's Talk engagement tools and the feedback received from the Older Persons Advisory Group.
- 1.5 Section 5 provides feedback on the young persons' engagement.

## 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.
- 2.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf's 2022/23 Budget Consultation is a phased approach, so that we can ensure residents and stakeholders have as much opportunity as possible to provide views on the budget and to make sure that views are informed by the most up to date and relevant information.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The Phase 1 consultation report was available to support the preparation of the budget strategy proposals and was presented to Cabinet on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022, where a draft budget strategy was agreed.
- 2.6 This report presents the findings of **phase 2** of the budget consultation, which asked for views on the draft budget strategy for 2022/23.
- 2.7 Phase 2 of the consultation started on the 28<sup>th</sup> January and ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the methodology used for the Phase 2 Budget Consultation 2022/23. The consultation was conducted in-house.
- 3.2 The consultation period ran from the 28<sup>th</sup> January and ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- 3.3 The 'digital by default' approach included the following methods to consult with a range of stakeholders:
- Publication of information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf "Let's Talk" website, which included
    - A survey
    - Two "Quick Polls"
    - The option to leave longer responses as "Ideas"
    - A simplified "Easy Read" survey that could be downloaded and printed for use by any audiences that felt unable to engage with the full survey format
  - Promotion through social media
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  - A meeting with the Pontyclun 50+ Forum
  - Correspondence with the Disability Forum
  - Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee virtual meeting
  - School Budget Forum virtual meeting
  - Joint Consultative Committee virtual meeting
  - Face-to-face and on-line sessions with young people in schools and youth groups
  - An email sent to key stakeholders and the Citizens' Panel

The Council provided a number of alternatives to online engagement, as it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods. This included:

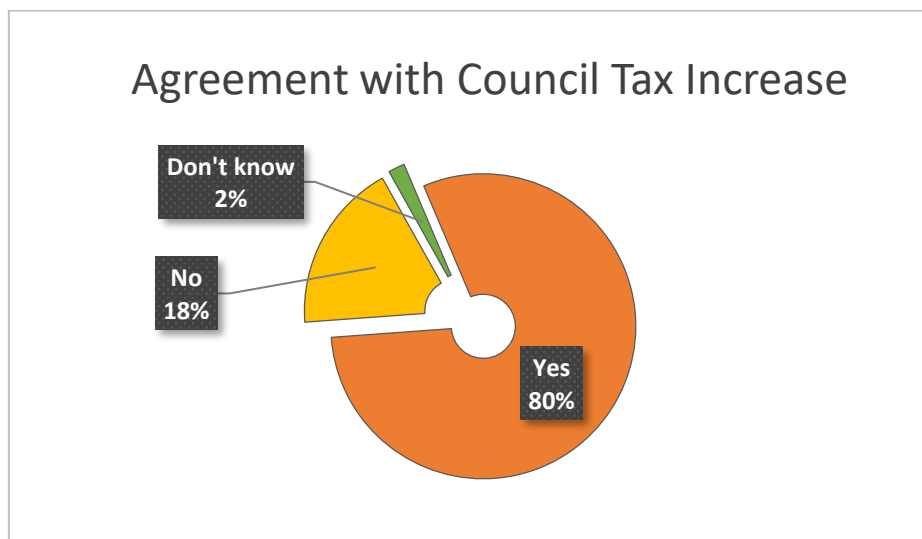
- Paper surveys and information available on request.
  - Consultation freepost address for postal responses.
- 3.4 The Team designed an Easy Read/Plan English Document in paper format and online, to simplify some of the consultation materials.
- 3.5 Over 700 people were engaged in the phase 2 budget consultation. Overall (including Phase 1) over 1,700 people were engaged in the Council's budget setting process.

## 4. Consultation Findings

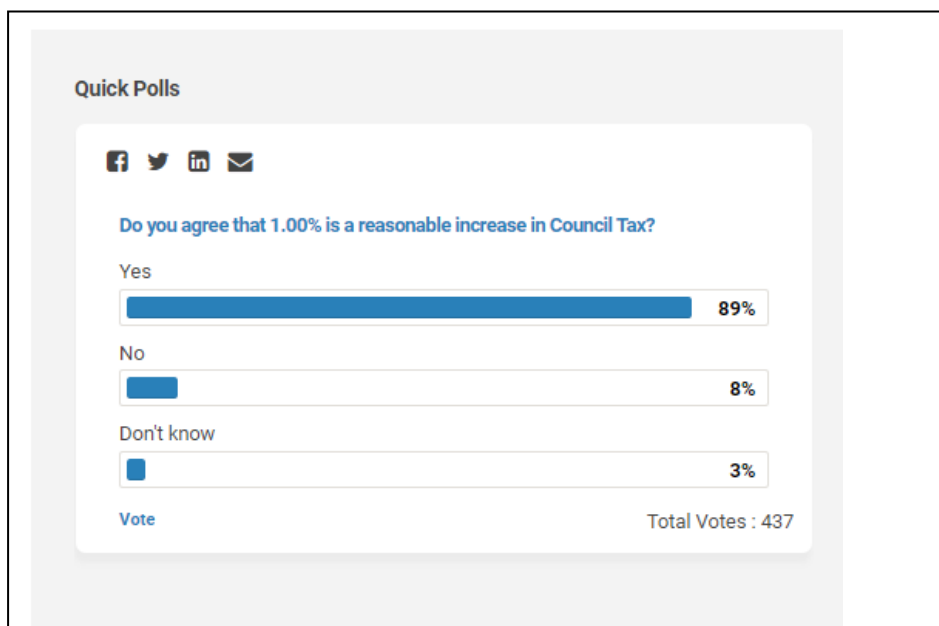
- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the phase 2 budget consultation questionnaire, which received 172 responses, and also includes the feedback received from the Older Persons Advisory Group. A selection of comments are provided, and the full list of comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.

### Council Tax

- 4.2 The Council is proposing that Council Tax be increased by 1% for next year. **The majority of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the increase was reasonable (80.2%).**



The Poll question on the Let's Talk Budget Engagement site was completed by 437 people, with 89% in agreement.



- 4.3 Many comments were in favour of the proposed increase being lower than that previously consulted upon.

*“I would have been content with 2.65% but understand the need to reduce the cost on residents at this time”*

*“1% is very reasonable”*

*“Thought (the increase) would have been higher so really pleased”*

*“That’s very reasonable”*

- 4.4 A number of comments noted that any additional increase to the cost of living would be unwelcome.

*“With all the increases in other things energy Nat ins etc it is not the time for increase at all”*

- 4.5 Some comments raised concern with property bandings (noting that this is outside of the Council’s control) and relative Council Tax rates compared to other Local Authority areas.

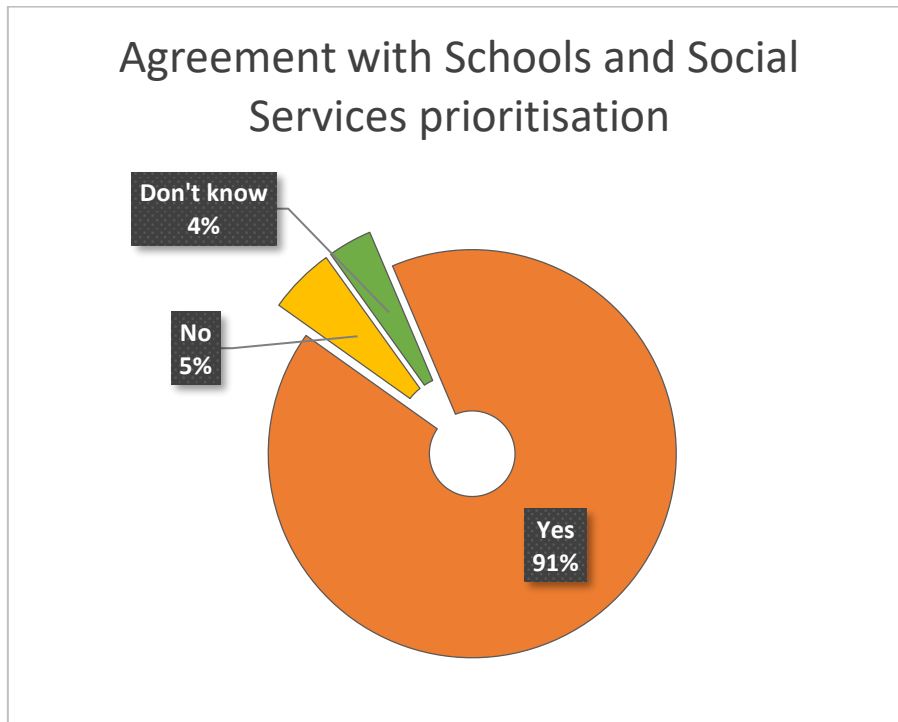
*“Increases in Council Tax should be kept at a minimum & there should be a fairer system for calculating council tax”*

- 4.6 OPAG members overall agreed with the proposed Council Tax level of 1%.

*“Obviously we’d prefer no increase at all, but in the real world this is better than the 2.65% mentioned before”*

**Schools and Social Services Funding**

4.7 The Council is proposing to increase the Schools Budget by £11.2M (6.8%) to fully fund increased costs, and to increase the Social Services (Community and Children’s Services) Budget by over £15M (8.91%). **91.2% of respondents agreed with the prioritisation of these services.**



4.8 The majority of comments welcomed this proposal.

*“Schools need it for the future of the area”*

*“These services are vital”*

4.9 Some comments noted in respect of efficiency within these service areas:

*“Whilst priority should be given to funding in these areas, cost cutting and economic exercises should also be carried out to minimise wasteful expenditure”*

*“Schools and social services are important services within RCT, but efficiencies can still be made within these services”*

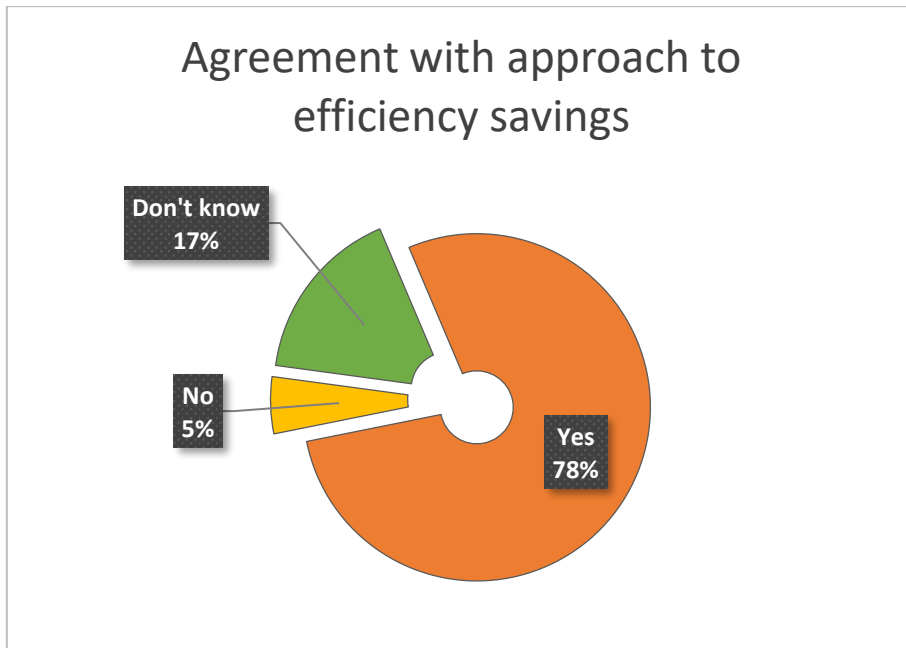
4.10 Further comments asked what other service areas would be deprioritised as a result of this proposal.

*“As opposed to prioritising what other areas?”*

*“Agree they are important, but other areas should not suffer”*

### **Efficiencies**

- 4.11 The Council’s budget strategy has identified efficiency savings of £4.9M for 2022/23 that will not impact on frontline services. **78.2% of respondents agreed with the proposal for the delivery of efficiency savings for next year.**



- 4.12 Most of the comments on this proposal noted the importance that efficiencies should not be found at the expense of staffing levels or support.

*“Any efficiency savings which do not impact services and jobs should always be at the forefront of savings strategy”*

*“Increasing efficiency is good as long as it doesn’t strain the system and the people who run it”*

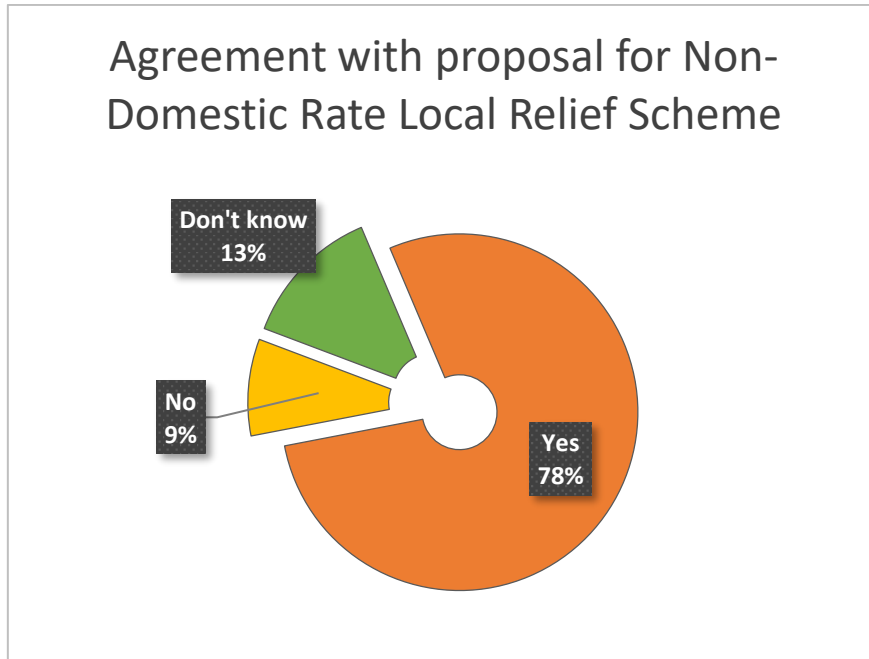
- 4.13 Some comments asked whether further savings are possible due to increased flexible working across the Council.

*“I think you are saving quite a bit of cash with employees WFH”*

*“Working from home should continue, it frees up council buildings”*

### **Non-Domestic Rate Local Relief Scheme**

- 4.14 The Council is proposing an additional £100K be added to the existing Non-Domestic Rate Local Relief Scheme implemented in 2021/22. **78.4% of respondents agree with this proposal.**



- 4.15 The majority of comments are supportive of this proposal, welcoming support for small businesses that have been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

*“Businesses have struggled greatly in the pandemic, its lovely to see further support offered to them”*

*“People need to work and we need to support this as best we can”*

*“We need to help & encourage small businesses in our towns”*

*“This is an excellent initiative”*

- 4.16 A number of comments provided examples over how funds should be allocated.

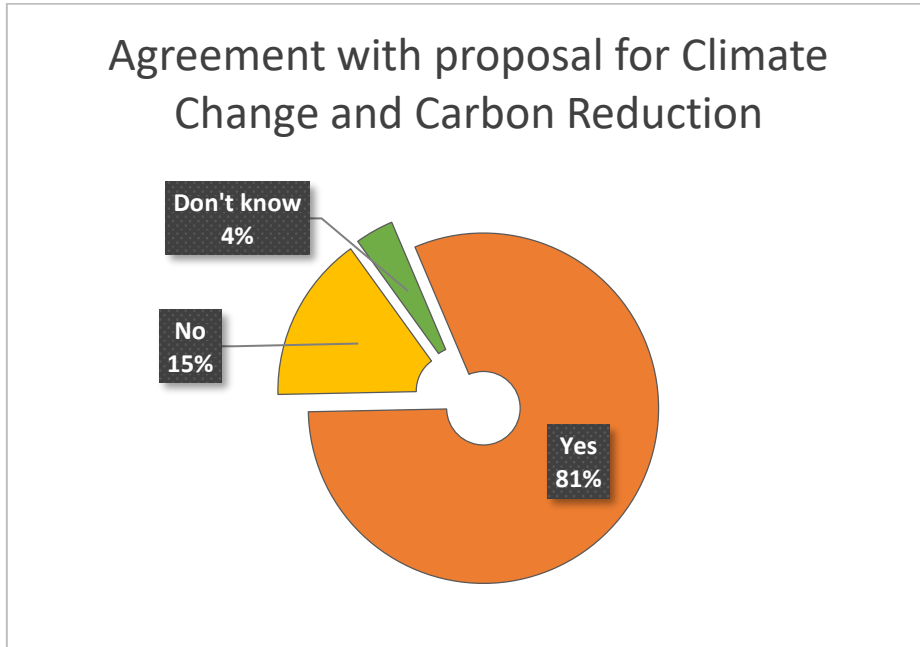
*“The relief scheme should be allocated depending on the profit the business is making”*

*“Would like assurances that any financial support is given only to employers who agree to an ethical charter”*



### **Climate Change and Carbon Reduction**

- 4.17 The Council is proposing £500K be put in place alongside existing resources to maintain and enhance delivery of work responding to climate change and carbon reduction. **81.1% of respondents agree with this proposal.**



- 4.18 There was a wide range of comments on this area, with some welcoming the investment and also calling for higher funding rates and more focus on this area.

*“This additional investment is a welcome one but will need to be increased in years to come”*

*“It’s important we support reducing the carbon footprint”*

*“Despite difficult times I agree Climate Change and care for the environment must be a priority”*

*“More needed to safeguard our future!”*

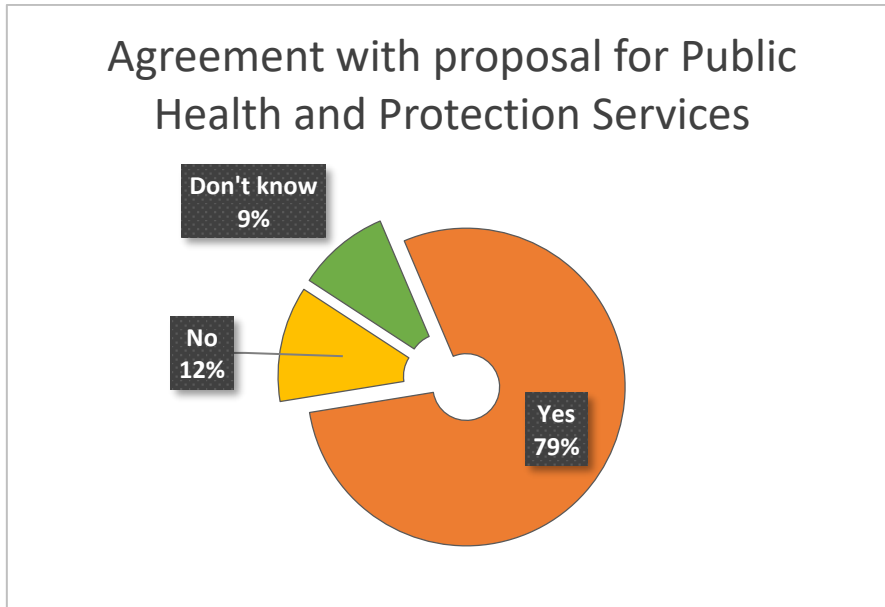
- 4.19 A number of comments noted that the level of investment detracted from other service areas.

*“Investment in viable schemes is justified but not to the amount of £500k when there are so many other services that would benefit from additional funding”*

*“This figure is far too high, when you have residents who have to choose to heat or eat”*

### **Public Health and Protection Services**

- 4.20 Additional investment of £200K is being proposed, further to the £200K invested in 2021/22, to support the Public Health and Protection Service. **78.8% of respondents agree with this proposal.**



- 4.21 There was praise for the Council's role during the pandemic and some comments that the funding may not be needed for this purpose in the future.

*"PH&P have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and it is great to see further investment in the department."*

*"My experience of Rhondda Leisure Centre for vaccines and tests has been excellent. I commend the council and the staff & volunteers there for their efficiency and cheerfulness."*

*"sounds like money well spent"*

*"If this 200k investment is targeted towards Covid etc, then I feel going forward this money should be used elsewhere"*

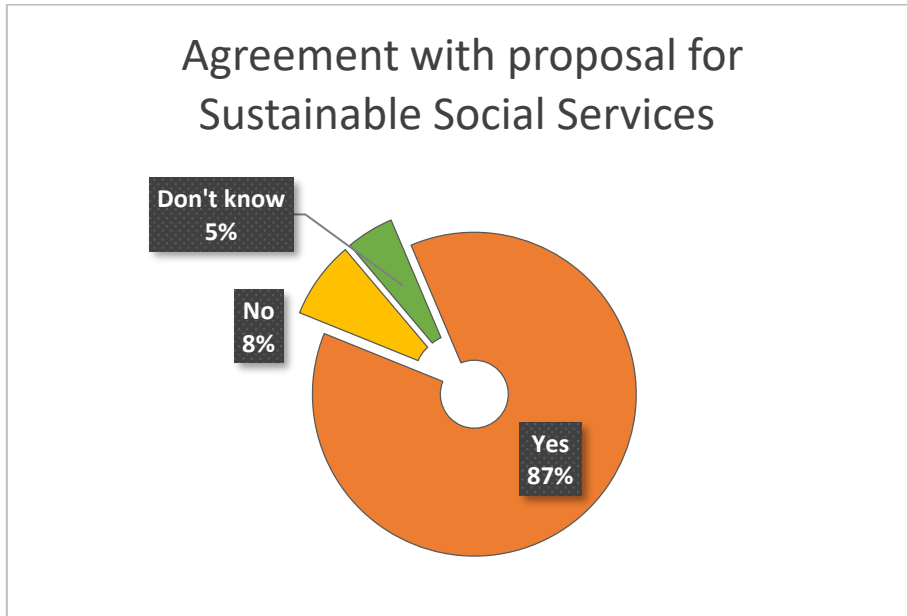
- 4.22 Some comments noted that other service areas should receive attention.

*"More needs to be done on dog fouling. Dog Patrols should not just finish at 3pm."*

*"Please concentrate on street cleaning"*

**Sustainable Social Services**

4.23 The Council has proposed that additional investment of £1.5M is made to support our Social Services provision, developing different models of service provision and the remodelling and integration of community services with partners. **87.4% of respondents agree with this proposed investment.**



4.24 A number of comments raised the issue of partnership working and restructuring Social Service provision to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

*“(I) wonder if the monies would be better spent engaging with local communities and the voluntary sector”*

*“Third sector and community organisations play an important part in sustainability”*

4.25 Other comments expressed a desire to see social services and related work brought more fully into the Council’s remit.

*“Would support this proposal as long as services are brought back into council control”*

*“Bring social care back under the council. No outsourcing.”*

4.26 Multiple comments related to staffing levels and support for front line staff and services.

*“More front-line workers that are appreciated and valued are needed”*

*“Services have been overstretched and unable to meet the needs of individuals due to the number of people referred and the stagnant level of staff”*

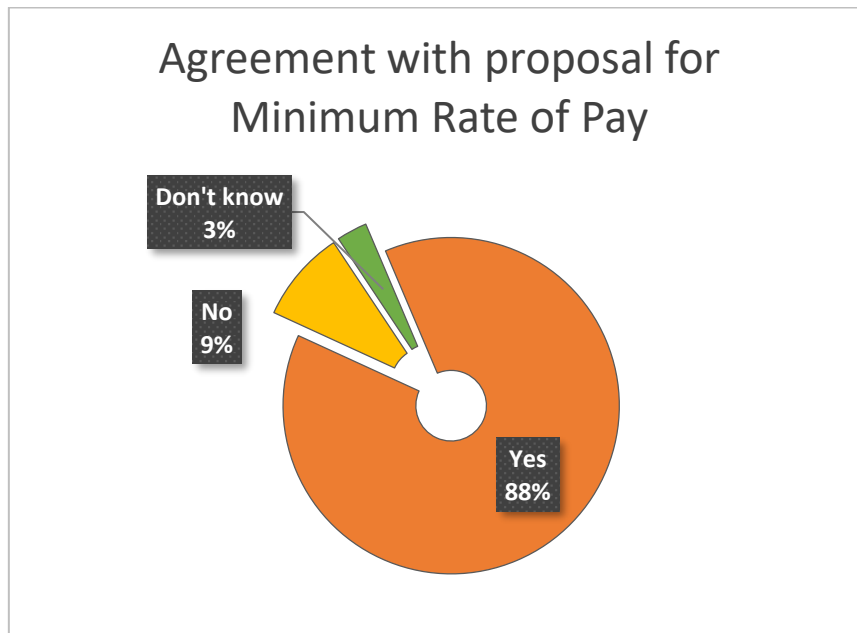
- 4.27 A number of comments praised existing staff and services and reflected the importance of Social Services across RCT.

*“This service is vital to the community”*

*“Social services are relied heavily upon through all aspects of life”*

### **Minimum Rate of Pay**

- 4.28 The Council has been a Real Living Wage employer for many years and has proposed to increase the minimum pay for all Council staff and commissioned social care staff to £10 per hour from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. **88.2% of respondents agree with this proposal.**



- 4.29 In general comments were in agreement with the proposal, with a number of comments stating that the rate of pay is still too low.

*“This is an excellent move by RCT”*

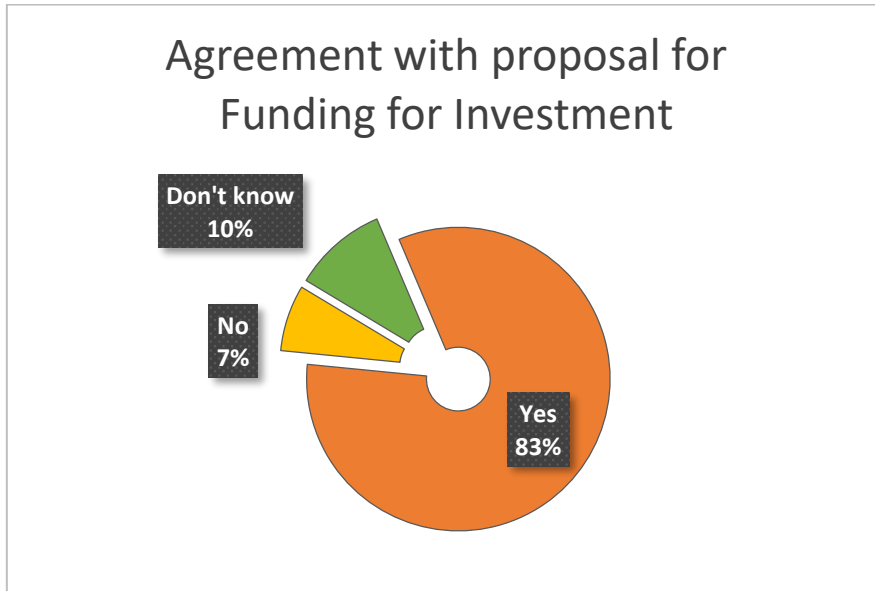
*“This is a good way to retain staff”*

*“Probably needs to be more but a (good) start”*

*“The lowest paid jobs have been critical throughout the pandemic and should be paid accordingly”*

**Funding for Investment**

4.30 The Council has already invested over £129M since October 2015 in key corporate plan priorities and infrastructure developments. The proposal is for an additional £1M investment to further support ongoing and key projects. **82.9% of respondents agree with this proposal.**



4.31 Many comments offered suggestions on specific areas that respondents felt needed further investment and/or development.

*“Invest in the infrastructure of Tonypanyd which was once a vibrant town, now a ghost town”*

*“Llanharan bypass is much needed”*

*“A good investment (...) would be to provide lighting on the A4059 between Abercynon and Cwmbach”*

*“We definitely need more money invested in supported living accommodation”*

4.32 Some comments noted that new developments are diverting funds that could support key services.

*“We need to recover from the effects of Covid-19 before investing in further schemes”*

*“Coming out of the pandemic we need to divert funds to Social Services and schools”*

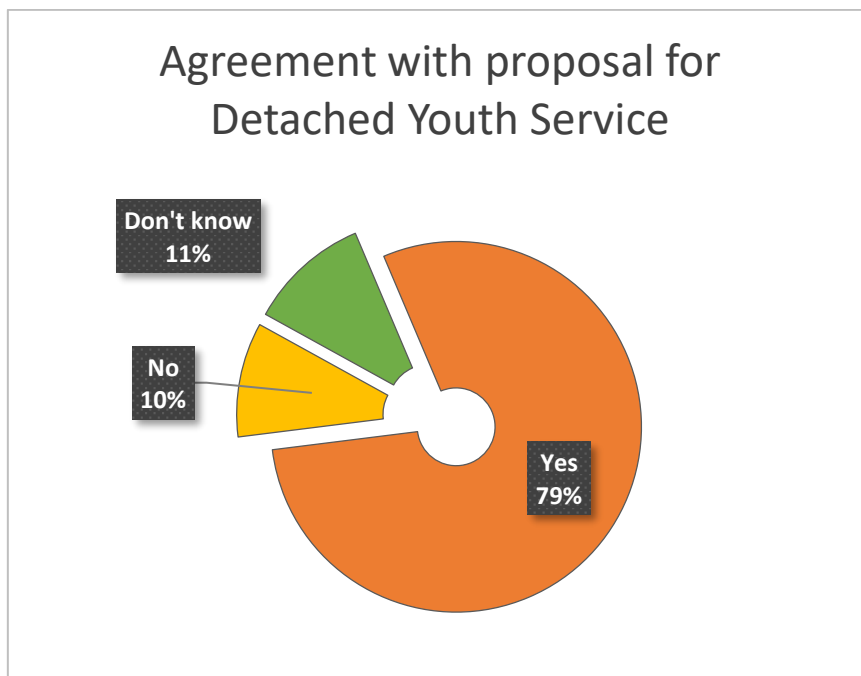
4.33 OPAG members were generally supportive of the proposal but raised some points.

*“Please consider extra funding to tackle dog fouling problems that are always brought up in community forums and groups as major problems”*

*“It is so difficult to find large venues to use for community events and groups – could the Council invest, for example, in a large marquee and hire this out/ put it up for community groups to use for events. Example: the Platinum Jubilee – no venues available for community groups to organise any celebrations”*

### **Detached Youth Service**

- 4.34 The Council has proposed an additional £75K investment to support the on-going work to support young people across RCT. **79.4% of respondents agreed with this proposal.**



- 4.35 A number of comments mentioned perceived increases in antisocial behaviour and many welcomed any investment to continue to address this issue.

*“The investment needs to deliver results. The amount of anti-social behaviour taking place at the moment is out of control”*

*“We should invest much more in keeping our youth out of drugs and antisocial behaviour”*

*“We need more youth club type activities to get the young people off the streets and away from anti-social behaviours”*

- 4.36 A large number of comments called for a greater level of investment in youth services and facilities.

*“Needs to be much more investment than 75k”*

*“This should be increased further. Children and young people need more support and services”*

*“Not enough money. More needs to be invested in youth facilities.”*

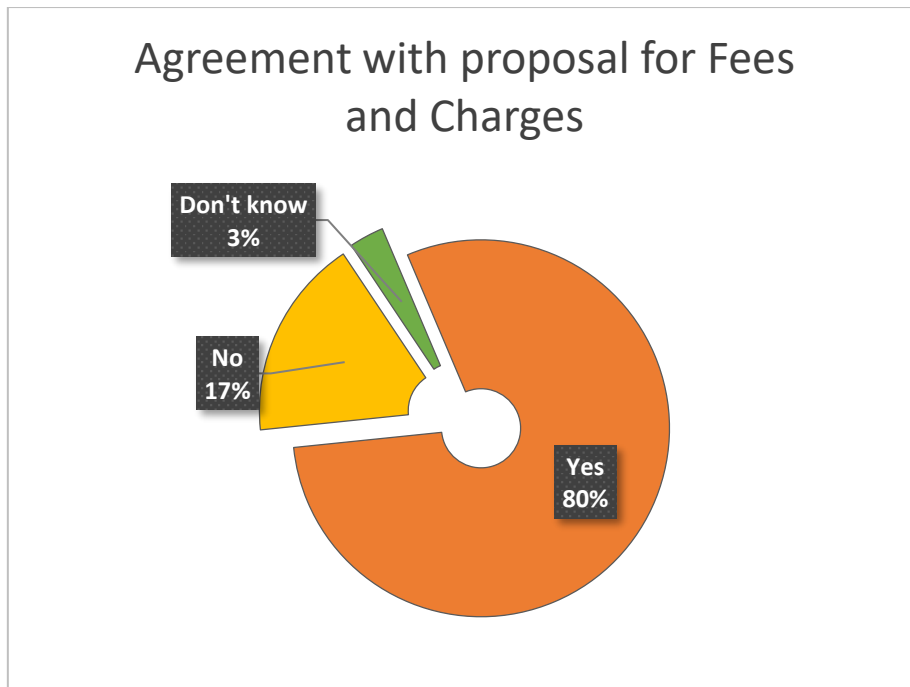
### **Fees and Charges**

- 4.37 A standard increase of 2.5% is proposed on all fees and charges with a number of specific exceptions.

<b>Area of Charge</b>	<b>Proposed Exception</b>
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

This proposal would lead to a reduction in income of £44K.

**79.8% of respondents agreed with the proposals for fees and charges.**



4.38 Comments on this point varied - some questioned the charges that are proposed to be frozen.

*“You could put some of these up, even slightly”*

*“Make sure charges keep pace with increased costs”*

*“I don’t see why a small increase cannot be considered as long as users of the facilities are warned in advance”*

4.39 Other comments welcomed the freezes or called for further areas to be frozen.

*“I think this will encourage people to access these facilities and in turn the town centres injecting life back into them”*

*“Pest Control fees and Bulk Collection charges should be frozen or reduced”*

*“Welcome lots of these fees being frozen due to the cost of living crisis everyone says is coming”*

4.40 OPAG members agreed with the proposals, with the following comments.

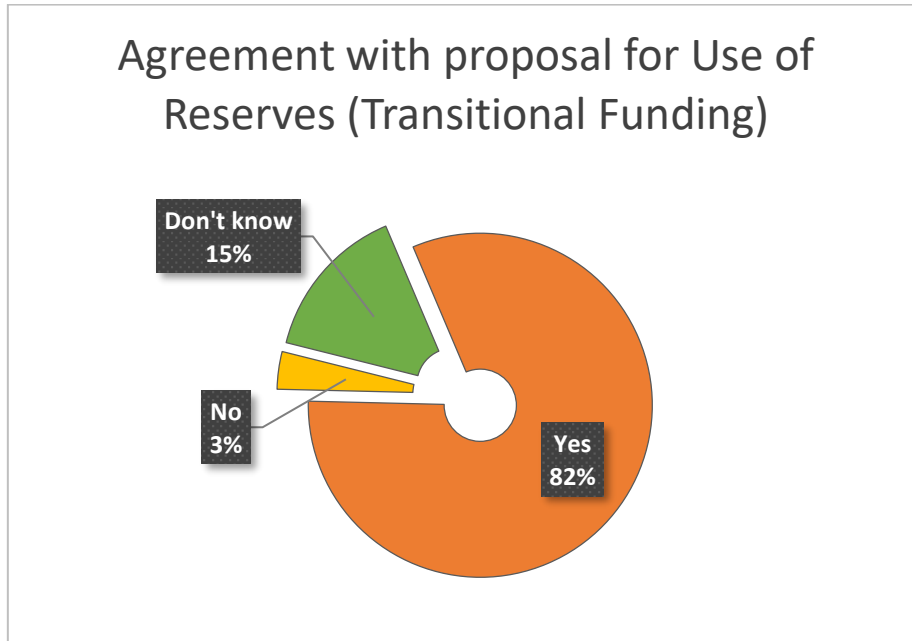
*“Increases will still be out of reach for some, but realistically it is needed”*

*“We need to keep people active, so it is particularly important to freeze sports and leisure fees”*



### **Use of Reserves (Transitional Funding)**

4.41 After taking account of the above proposals, proposed level of Council Tax, the delivery of efficiencies and other budget requirements the remaining budget gap is £970k, which the Council proposes to be funded through Transitional Funding Reserves. **81.8% of respondents agreed with this proposal.**



4.42 A lower number of comments were received on this area, with some expressing confusion over how reserve funding is secured and maintained.

*“You shouldn’t keep spending more than the budget, eventually savings run out.”*

*“Eventually the reserves will runout... what then?”*

### **Other Comments**

- 4.43 A wide range of general comments were received regarding the budget. A number of them praised the proposals and the consultation exercise.

*“I have looked at what other councils do and Rct has one of the most inclusive and engaging processes for residents to make their views known”*

*“Setting a budget during the most scary time in our history and RCT has succeeded more than other councils but there will always be areas that require more attention than others”*

*“It appears to me that priorities are correct in the main”*

*“Seems the council is very socially minded which is how it should be”*

*“On the whole I am pleased with the value for money that the council provide”*

- 4.44 Some respondents commented that they felt specific areas were not directly addressed in the proposals.

*“Not sure if the higher allocation in 21/22 will be drastically reduced next year”*

*“I(n)vest in safety, research the structural integrity of the underground tunnels and the tips. Remove the tips”*

*“(I) would like the authority to have a strategy for taking over vacant properties which are empty and in disrepair as a way of supporting the homeless in the short term”*

*“The proposed budget strategy is on the whole very good but it could be improved by being more radical by bringing services back in house”*

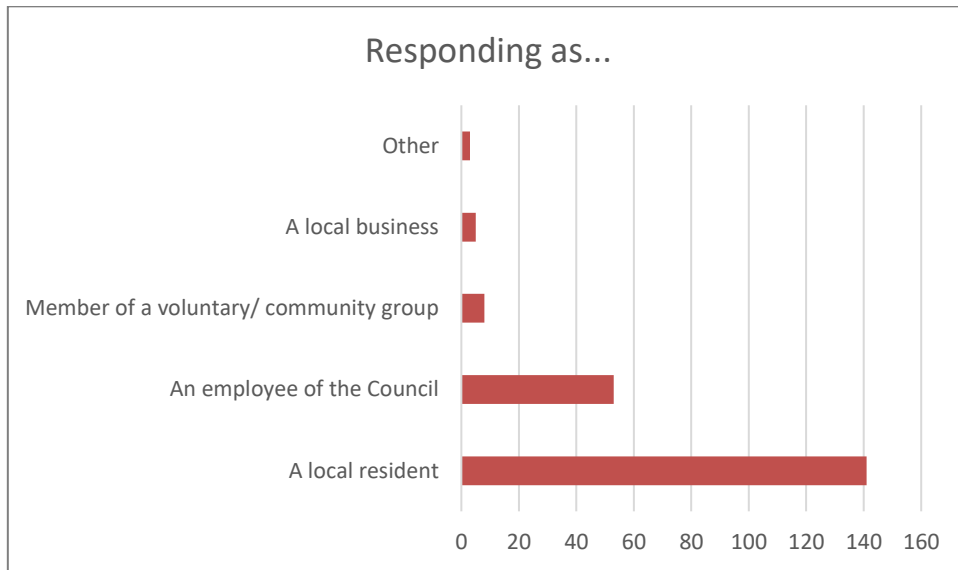
- 4.45 OPAG members raised the following comments outside specific focus sections.

*“The schools funding is vital – as a Chair of Governors, I understand the extreme budget pressures in some schools.”*

*“Congratulations to the Council on committing to the Real Living Wage – this is very important particularly in recruitment of staff in social care, which is in crisis”*

**About You**

4.46 The majority of respondents to the survey were residents (67.1%).



A local resident	67.1%
An employee of the Council	25.2%
Member of a voluntary/ community group	3.8%
A local business	2.4%
Other	1.4%

Note: This was a multiple response question.

4.47 A number of points were raised in the comments regarding impacts due to protected characteristics.

*“I’m disabled and the lack of investment in (my area) leaves people like myself isolated.”*

*“The budget could offer more support in regards to working class people and childcare... there should be much more support for working families”*

*“I am a pensioner and homeowner so increases in council tax really do affect me”*

*“As I’m getting older my reliance on public services increases so budget proposals are beneficial”*

4.48 There were also a number of comments regarding impacts on the use of the Welsh Language.

*“I think there should be provision for Welsh learners to be able to meet up with Welsh speakers to help them increase their confidence and hear the language being spoken in a natural setting”*

*“English is now treated as second class in wales, welsh speakers seem to get priority for good jobs”*

*“In my opinion too much money wasted on bilingual bills, signs etc”*

*“We should be doing more to encourage local cultural events which reflect the priorities of local communities”*

*“Positive effects could be increased with continued free Welsh courses”*

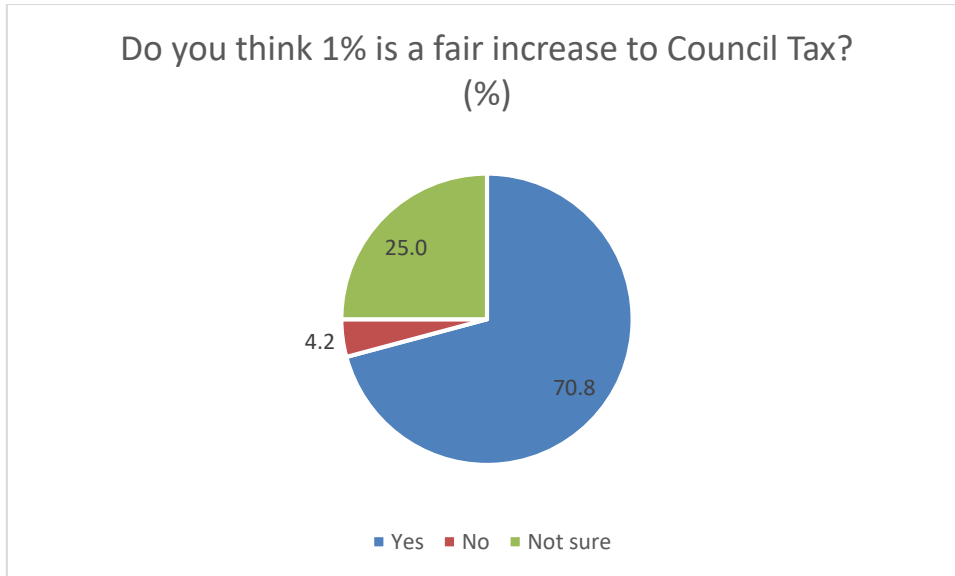
*“Supporting schools with additional funding will only strengthen the promotion of the Welsh language”*

## 5. 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 because of the pandemic, we were unable to consult face to face in Phase 1 of the consultation. Phase 2 was slightly different, and we managed to arrange to meet with 4 groups of young people.
- 5.2 The Youth Engagement Participation Service (YEPS) arranged 2 school groups at Pontypridd High School (year 9 and sixth form) and 2 virtual sessions via Zoom, with the Environmental Youth Group and the Young Editors and Members of Youth Parliament. They also posted details of the phase 2 consultation on Instagram and other social media sites.
- 5.3 The sessions at Pontypridd High School were attended by a member of the Consultation Team along with the YEPS Communication and Rights Officer. During the sessions, the young people were shown the Easy Read consultation document which explained the Council's plans and proposals. The groups were asked questions which helped aid discussions.
- 5.4 The questions were centred around Council Tax levels, Efficiencies, Fees and Charges, Schools and Social Services budget, helping local businesses, Climate Change, Public Health & Protection, the Detached Youth Service and investments.
- 5.5 In total we engaged with 25 young people and a summary of their responses will follow in this section. The sessions were well supported, and all young people engaged well with the format.

### **Council Tax**

- 5.6 We asked the groups ***“Do you think 1% is a fair increase to Council Tax to keep services at current levels?”***



5.7 Of the 25 young people we spoke to, there was general agreement with increasing Council Tax by 1%, although they were only in favour of this after seeking confirmation that core services would not be affected. Some young people fed back that a 1% Council Tax increase was affordable and a reasonable increase. One person commented that the increase will hit less well-off families more and could cause them to struggle.

**Efficiencies**

5.8 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.

5.9 **Feedback included:**

*" Better quality items should be bought so they last longer."*

*"Investing in better quality equipment/resources that lasts longer, rather than getting cheaper things than need constant replacing."*

*"Savings should be used on community improvements such as bins or recycling points."*

*"The money that is saved should be used for other services like youth services etc."*

### **Fees and Charges**

- 5.10 We asked the young people **“Do you think it is a good idea to spend £44,000 to keep some fees the same?”**. 80% of young people responding agreed that £44,000 should be used to keep some fees the same. 20% were unsure.

#### **Comments included:**

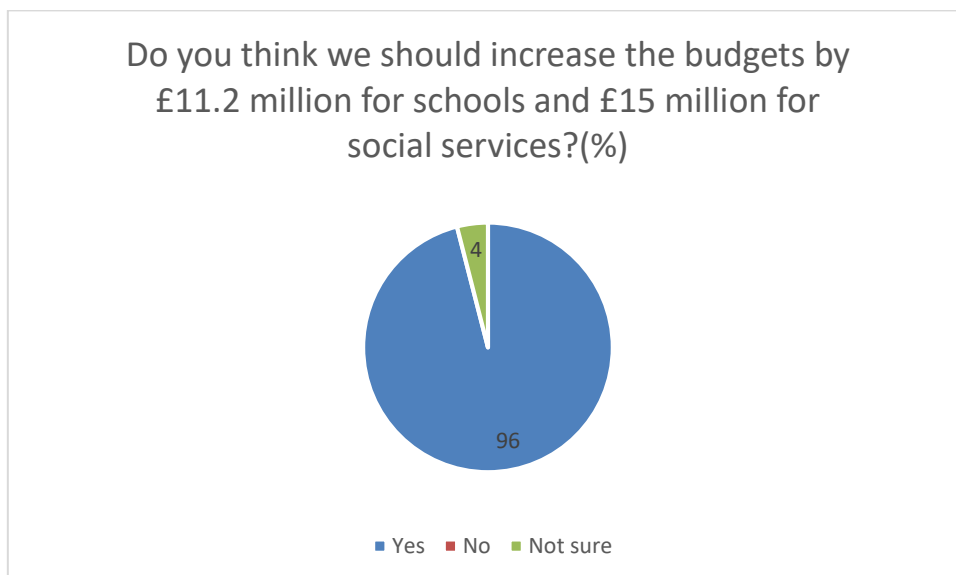
*“Keeping prices, the same will help those on low incomes to afford things like school dinners or leisure activities.”*

*“Some services should stay the same such as meals on wheels and day centre meals.”*

*“However, things like Rhondda Heritage Museum and Lido entry could be charged more for.”*

### **Schools and Social Services Budget**

- 5.11 When asked whether the groups agreed with the Council’s approach to protect and prioritise the Schools and Social Services budget, **“Do you think we should increase the budgets by £11.2 million for schools and £15 million for social services?”**, 96% of 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, to give learners the best experience possible.



5.12 **Feedback included:**

*“Schools should have more spent on them.”*

*“We need more laptops to get on with work. There aren’t enough laptops for us.”*

*“Toilet facilities in this school need to be maintained better.”*

*“More equipment such as pens etc are needed.”*

*“We feel teachers should be paid more because without them we don’t get a good quality education.”*

*“We feel that funding for schools should be increased by more than £11.2 million.”*

**Helping Local Businesses**

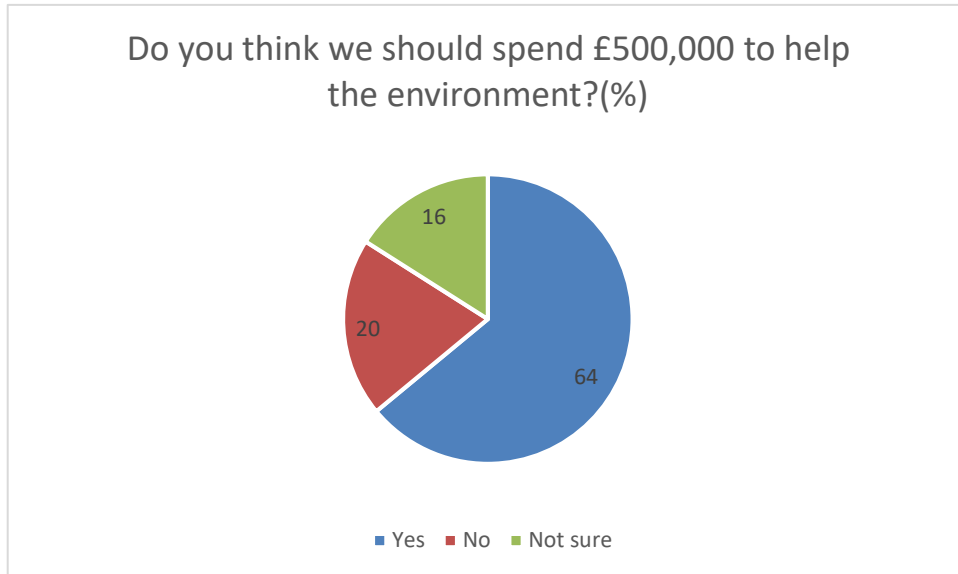
5.13 The conversation moved on to helping local businesses. We explained to the young people that the Council started a local Business Rate Reduction Scheme two years ago which helps local businesses with some of the costs they have to pay. We asked, ***“Do you think we should spend £100,000 more on helping businesses?”***

5.14 96% of young people agreed that the Council should help local businesses, however comments received suggested that £100,000 doesn’t seem so much to help all businesses in RCT and whether more money could be spent - a young person asked *“How is the money spent to support local businesses?”*

**Helping the environment / Climate Change**

5.15 We asked the groups ***“Do you think we should spend £500,000 to help the environment?”***





5.16 64% of young people agreed with the £500,000 investment to help the environment, however 20% disagreed and 16% said they were unsure.

5.17 **Feedback included:**

*“Use money to help businesses reduce their CO2 footprint. Individuals can make changes themselves to help. More effective recycling for people, fines for those who don’t comply, like people who leave dog mess.”*

*“More money should be spent on helping tackle climate change now to help with the future.”*

*“We think that more than £500,000 should be spent to help save the environment and reduce everyone’s’ carbon footprint.”*

**Public Health & Protection Services**

5.18 The Public Health and Protection service has played an important role this year in making sure the public health and wellbeing of our communities is protected. They have provided advice and help and are leading on things such as the Test Trace Protect programme. We explained to the group that more money will help us employ more people, making sure we are able to help as many people as possible and making sure we are ready for any challenges this year.

We asked the groups ***“Do you think we should spend £200,000 on this service?”***

5.19 The majority of young people agreed with the Council’s approach to spend £200,000 on Public Health and protection; however they felt that more money could be spent on these services.

### **Detached Youth Services**

- 5.20 The Council wants to make sure young people across RCT have services and activities to support them and would like to spend £75,000 to let the Detached Youth Service organise this.

We asked the groups ***“Do you think we should spend £75,000 to help the Detached Youth Service?”***

- 5.21 96% of young people agreed that £75,000 should be spent to help the Detached Youth Service but they agreed that more should be spent.

### **Investments**

- 5.22 We explained that the Council has invested in buildings, projects, and schemes for a long time. This has let us create new buildings and improve others, to help people and businesses across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We asked, ***“Do you think we should spend £1 million to invest across RCT?”***

- 5.23 Again, most young people agreed that money should be spent to invest across RCT, but they agreed it should be more than £1 Million.

- 5.24 **Feedback included:**

*“Potholes and pavements to be fixed.”*

*“More than 1 million pounds should be spent to regenerate older buildings so they can be enjoyed by people again.”*

### **Instagram and Facebook**

- 5.25 Budget content was created and shared on the YEPS’ Instagram account. 2 posts went out on February 7 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.

- 5.26 The Council’s Budget Content was also shared by YEPS’ Facebook account.



## APPENDIX 3

### **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on  
Wednesday, 2 February 2022 at 5.00 pm.

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

Councillor M Powell (Chair)

Councillor G Thomas	Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor S Evans	Councillor A Fox
Councillor E George	Councillor J Williams
Councillor T Williams	Councillor R Yeo

#### **Officers in attendance:-**

Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services  
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services  
Ms S Davies - Head of Education & Financial Reporting  
Ms N Lewis - Programmes Co-ordinator  
Mr A Wilkins – Director of Legal Services  
Mrs T Watson – Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer  
Mrs S Handy – Members’ Researcher & Scrutiny Officer

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

#### **Co-Opted Members in attendance:**

Mr J Fish – Parent/Governor Representative

#### **44 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](mailto:Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk).

#### **45 Declaration of Interest**

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

#### **Extract from the minutes**

#### **Budget Consultation 2022/23 (Phase 2)**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services provided Members with an overview of the Budget Consultation 2022/23 (Phase 2) and updated the Committee on the following 6 areas:

- Introduction – 2022/23 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy
- Council's Current Financial Position (2021/22)
- Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines
- Provisional Local Government Settlement 2022/23 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2022/23
- Next steps and key dates

Further to the Service Director's overview of the Cabinet's proposed Budget Strategy, Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and feedback their views on each of the following six areas:

- Council Tax
- Schools Budget
- Social Services Funding
- Efficiencies
- Fees and Charges
- Targeted Investment
- Use of Reserves

The Chair asked if it was acceptable for written feedback to also be submitted following the meeting. The Service Director confirmed that the phase 2 consultation runs until 11<sup>th</sup> February and all points of clarity and feedback would be welcomed within this timeframe.

Councillor Fox referred to the additional investment and commented that the areas highlighted for additional funding were completely justified and was in full support of them. Councillor Fox also fed back that it was particularly pleasing to see the proposal for the minimum rate of pay increase to £10 for the Council's own staff and commissioned social care staff, above the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90, and emphasised this was the real living wage level calculated on the true cost of living, as opposed to the national living wage. Councillor Fox added that Rhondda Cynon Taf needed to lead by example and this proposal would improve the lives of some of the lowest paid in employment.

Councillor Evans referred to the Council Tax slide and stated that it was good to see such consistent year-on-year low council tax rises and highlighted that the proposal for 2022/23 would equate to an increase of 20p per week for a Band A property and an increase of 30p a week for a Band D property. Councillor Evans fed back that the 1% proposed increase was the right decision for people at this time and struck the right balance between affordability of Rhondda Cynon Taf residents to pay and the range of services provided, and also considering the other budget strategy proposals that will see additional investment in schools, social care and a number of frontline services.

Councillor Bradwick referred to car parking charges and supported the freeze in prices and also supported the approach to the delivery of efficiency savings that do not impact on frontline services, noting the positive position where £16.5M of efficiencies had been delivered in the past 3 financial years. Members of the

Committee were also in agreement with the position in respect of efficiencies. Councillor Bradwick also requested clarification on whether pest control fees would be frozen and the Service Director fed back that the proposal is for pest control fees to be increased by 2.5%. Councillor Bradwick and Councillor T Williams fed back a preference for pest control fees to be frozen and Councillors Yeo and Fox noted that although they would prefer the prices to be frozen, they recognised the high standard of service delivered by the Council's Pest Control Service and this being competitively priced. Councillor Bradwick went on to thank Council Officers for their work in supporting the budget setting process and was pleased that the proposed budget will see schools fully funded for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Yeo referred to page 18 of the presentation that set out the proposal for Community and Children's Services funding to be increased by over £15M next year and noted that this was extremely welcomed and asked what this increase would equate to in percentage terms. Councillor Yeo also supported the increases to the other budget areas and the proposed fees and charges areas to be frozen, noting the significant squeeze on the cost of living for households that included the National Insurance rise, increases in fuel and a freeze in Universal Credit. Councillor Yeo went on to say that against this difficult backdrop for households, the 1% increase in Council Tax was also welcomed alongside the proposed areas for additional investment and increase to the minimum rate of pay for Council staff and commissioned social care staff. Councillor Yeo added that the proposed budget strategy will do the right thing for residents across the County Borough and thanked officers for their work in supporting the budget setting process.

The Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services provided feedback on the question raised by Councillor Yeo in respect of what the proposed increase in the Community and Children's Services budget would equate to in percentage terms, this being an 8.9% increase.

Councillor T Williams was supportive of the proposed freezes to specific fees and charges, noting that these areas demonstrate that the Cabinet is looking to prioritise the right things. Councillor T Williams added that the proposals will prioritise the needs of the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf and was supportive of the 2022/23 budget strategy.

Mr Fish, the Parent/Governor Representative commended the schools' budget and fed back it was pleasing to see this area once again being protected, along with other Council services, and the positive position of school pay and non-pay inflationary pressures proposed to be fully funded. Mr Fish referred to the likelihood of volatile inflationary pressures during 2022/23 and requested clarity around what further support the Council could provide and also requested the period over which school meal prices will be frozen. The Service Director fed back that the proposed budget strategy has allocated all available funding to school and non-school service areas, and the Council will continue to work closely with schools to ensure the continuation of robust financial management arrangements; opportunities to deliver cost savings through areas such as the on-going effective deployment of procurement processes and energy efficiency measures; and ensuring school reserve levels are optimised to provide some flexibility to meet in-year cost pressures during the next financial year. The Service Director went on to confirm that school meal prices will be frozen for the 2022/23 financial year. Mr Fish added that he also had questions in relation to the medium-term outlook and the impact on education provision; however, as

these did not directly impact on the proposed 2022/23 budget strategy, Mr Fish indicated that he would email these to Council officers separately.

Councillor Bradwick requested an update on electric charging points, particularly in Aberdare and Pontypridd car parks and also the position with regard to trialling electric taxis. The Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services fed back that resources have been allocated to support the electric charging vehicle infrastructure within the County Borough and work is on-going to apply for external funding to also support this work. The Service Director indicated that he would obtain an update on the current position with regard to works at Aberdare and Pontypridd car parks and trialling electric taxis.

The Chair continued the discussion and noted the proposal to increase the mileage rate from 35p to 40p per mile for staff who use their vehicles for Council business at a cost of £0.118M. The Chair indicated that this equates to 2,316,000 miles being travelled per year and requested clarity on how this aligns with the Council's carbon zero ambitions by 2030 and the impact of more staff working from home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services fed back that the 2021/22 budget strategy included a significant reduction in the budget for car mileage expenses, this reduction being achievable due to staff working from home / remotely, on-going digitisation of processes that did not require attendance at office locations and undertaking specific functions and meetings virtually via Teams / Zoom. The Service Director added that the 2022/23 proposed budget strategy includes a further, albeit lower, reduction in the car mileage budget, and reflected an overall reducing trend around the level of business mileage being required. The Service Director went on to indicate that many Council Services, due to their nature, require Council officers to incur business mileage, for example, to have face to face contact with clients from an Adult Services and Children's Services perspective, and also Public Health and Protection Services in working directly / inspecting businesses across the County Borough. The Chair wished to clarify his point that was focussed on the need for the Council to give on-going consideration to actions that would help reduce the Council's carbon footprint rather than the proposed increased to the mileage rate.

The Service Director asked if Members had any other comments in respect of budget strategy proposals and Committee Members fed back they had no further questions.

The Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services concluded the presentation by informing Members of the range of stakeholders being engaged as part of phase 2 of the consultation process and also set out the 2022/23 budget setting timetable. There were no further questions from Members and the Chair thanked the Service Director for the presentation.

## SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM MEETING – 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY – PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

#### Extract from the minutes

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 and covered the following areas: Introduction – 2022/23 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy; Council's Current Financial Position (2021/22); Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines; Provisional Local Government Settlement 2022/23 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf; Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2022/23; and Next steps and key dates.

Following the overview by the Service Director, Forum Members were informed that their feedback would be considered by Cabinet, alongside feedback received from all other stakeholders, as part of Cabinet meeting later in February 2022 to finalise its recommended Budget Strategy.

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

#### **Council Tax**

Forum Members fed back that they agreed with the proposed 1% Council Tax increase in order to help maintain as many services as possible at the current level.

#### **Schools Budget**

Forum Members agreed that the Council should fully fund schools for next year and requested that further information be provided on the estimated pay award for next year to aid budget planning. The Service Director indicated that further information would be provided to schools as part of budget setting preparations for the forthcoming year.

#### **Efficiencies**

Forum Members agreed with the approach to efficiency savings for next year and that the Council should continue to become more efficient going forward in future years.

#### **Fees and Charges**

Forum Members agreed with the standard increase of 2.5%, in the context of the current rate of inflation being 5.4%, and agreed with the proposals for a number of specific fees and charges areas to be frozen for next year.

#### **Use of Reserves**

Forum Members noted the use of reserves and agreed with the approach taken by the Council.

### **Proposed Targeted Additional Investments**

Forum Members agreed with the proposed targeted additional investments and the approach being taken by the Council.

Following discussion, Forum Members **RESOLVED** to note the 2022/23 Budget Consultation and for their comments to be incorporated into the Phase 2 Consultation Report to be presented to Cabinet later in February 2022.



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on Thursday, 10 February 2022 at 12.00 pm

**Joint Consultative Committee Members in attendance:-**

Councillor A Crimmings – Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage  
Councillor R Lewis - Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Communities  
Councillor R Bevan - Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing  
Mr C Jones, Representing GMB  
Mr P Crews, Representing Unison  
Ms L Davies, Representing Unite Teaching Unions:  
Mr M Cleverly - The Teacher's Union (NASUWT)  
Ms Mererid Lewis Davies - Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

**Officers in attendance**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources  
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**Extract from the minutes**

**2. BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23 (PHASE 2)**

The Service Director - Finance and Improvement Services provided Members with a Powerpoint presentation on the Council's Phase 2 Budget Consultation for 2022/23 and covered the following areas:

- Introduction – 2022/23 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy
- Council's Current Financial Position (2021/22)
- Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines
- Provisional Local Government Settlement 2022/23 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2022/23
- Next steps and key dates

The Service Director concluded his presentation by informing the Committee that the feedback provided by consultees as part of the Phase 2 process will be reported to Cabinet on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 as part of the Cabinet finalising its recommended budget strategy for the forthcoming year.

Members of the Committee thanked the Service Director for the overview and provided the following comments for consideration by the Council's Cabinet.

### **Council Tax increase**

Members fed back their support for the proposed 1% increase in Council Tax if this would ensure that services and jobs would be protected, and noted that an increase was part of the proposed strategy to enable a balanced budget to be set. Members also noted the rising cost of living for households across the County Borough many of which were Trade Union members.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Communities commented that the budget setting process is a balancing act, recognising the need to continue to deliver good quality services alongside residents' ability to pay. The Cabinet Member went on to indicate that the settlement from Welsh Government is more favorable than the Council had modelled, noting that this does follow 10 years of austerity, and emphasized that the indicative funding levels for years 2 and 3 included in the Settlement represent a challenge for the Council as services continue their recovery out of the pandemic and rising cost pressures for both residents and the local authority. The Cabinet Member added that in order to protect vital frontline services, a proposed 1% increase in Council Tax is the right approach to adopt.

### **Schools Budget**

Members agreed that the Council should fully fund schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and recognized the financial pressure they are facing, for example, the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act. Members also fed back that the proposed position is positive and noted that some schools may still be faced with financial pressures to manage.

Members expressed concern that the Welsh Government Hardship Fund will cease at the end of the current financial year, even though it is likely that schools will face additional on-going costs as recovery from the pandemic continues, for example, staff absences that need to be covered with supply staff. Members asked for clarity how the hardship fund is awarded to schools and what further support could be provided to schools.

The Service Director fed back that the full year forecasted additional costs and income losses that will be incurred by the Council (including schools) as a direct result of the pandemic for 2021/22 is £30M and is reimbursed to the local authority by Welsh Government on a claims basis, noting that the claims submitted are based on actual expenditure and income losses incurred. The Service Director added that the proposed 2022/23 budget strategy has allocated all available funding to school and non-school service areas, and the Council will continue to work closely with schools to identify cost saving opportunities; ensuring school reserve levels are optimised to provide some flexibility to meet in-year cost pressures during the next financial year; and continue its dialogue with Welsh Government to explore all potential additional funding opportunities.

### **Social Services Funding**

Members were supportive of the £15M allocation of additional funding for Community and Children's Services and the proposal for the minimum rate of pay to increase to £10

per hour, above the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90 per hour. Members went on to indicate that the pressures across social care are unprecedented and requested clarity on where the funding is proposed to be allocated, linked to its adequacy to meet all requirements, and noted that the challenges being faced are the same across Wales. One Member added that they would like consideration to be given to bring services fully in-house, for example, domiciliary care, and assurance was requested around commissioned social care providers passing on the £10 per hour minimum rate of pay to its employees.

The Service Director fed back that the proposed allocation of the £15M additional funding relates to £10M to Adult Social Care, nearly £4M to Children's Services and over £1M for Community Services that includes services such as Public Health and Protection, Libraries and Leisure Services, and added that subject to approval of the budget, Services will be allocating the funding to the required areas. With regard to commissioned service providers paying their staff the £10 minimum rate of pay, the Service Director fed back that the Council will be continuing to work closely with providers, as part of their funding arrangements, to ensure that the payment at the increased rate is in place.

### **Efficiency savings**

A Member requested assurance that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the proposed efficiency savings and another Member requested that where efficiency savings are planned, that this information is provided to Trade Union representatives to enable potential impacts to be understood and discussed.

The Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services fed back that the £4.9M efficiency savings proposed to be incorporated into the 2022/23 budget strategy have been reviewed and challenged internally and assurance is in place that they are deliverable and do not impact on frontline services. The Service Director went on to indicate that the proposed efficiency savings for 2022/23 include approved staffing restructures, ensuring full cost recovery of services, on-going effective deployment of the Council's procurement strategy, additional rental income and reductions in consumable budgets.

The Director of Human Resources also provided specific feedback in respect of no compulsory redundancies, indicating that this is the commitment rather than a guarantee, and the Council and Trade Unions have a good track record of working together to achieve this. The Director added that the Council is fully committed to continuing this approach into the future.

Members asked if buildings that are surplus to requirements have been considered for efficiencies due to the number of staff now working from home.

The Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services fed back that the 2021/22 budget strategy included building operating cost savings as a result of services revising their operating arrangements due to the pandemic. The Service Director added that a Built Asset Review is currently underway taking into account current and future service needs and on-going revisions to working arrangements, and indicated that the outcome of this work will help inform the Council's medium to long term asset / building requirements in line with service need and ensure continued efficient use of resources.

### **Fees and Charges**

Members were generally supportive of the standard increase to fees and charges and specific charges being frozen on the basis of the proposals protecting jobs, for example, in Leisure Services, and that pricings remain competitive.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Communities fed back that the strategy in respect of Leisure Services is to keep pricing competitive alongside a high quality offer, and although there had been a drop in Leisure membership during the pandemic as a result of facilities being closed / restricted use of facilities, he reassured Members that the Service is working hard to attract back previous members and also new members.

### **Targeted Investment**

Members were supportive of the targeted investment proposals and fed back they are critical areas and help the Council to secure jobs. Members noted that the £25 charge for pest control services and suggested that this could be a means tested charge to support families on low incomes, with reference made to challenges a specific community were facing, but still recognising there needs to be a charge for the service.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing stated that work is on-going to ensure people are encouraged to take litter home and are made aware of the impact of fly tipping, and also the continuation of close working with public sector partners to help combat this issue. The Cabinet Member indicated that the approach to charging could be considered and noted that the principle of continuing to apply a competitive charge for the service is a responsible way forward.

A Member also requested clarity around whether the additional funding to increase the minimum rate of pay to £10 per hour also included any implications of maintaining pay differentials. The Service Director fed back that the £550k proposed additional investment related specifically to the £10 per hour minimum rate of pay and any pay differential implications would be considered with the relevant service areas, as required.

### **Use of Reserves**

Members were supportive of the proposal to use £970k from transitional funding to bridge the funding gap in the proposed budget strategy and requested feed back on the impact on the level of Council Tax if transition funding was not used. Another Member requested clarity on if the provisional Local Government Settlement was likely to change as part of the final settlement announcement.

The Service Director fed back that Council Tax would need to increase by approximately an additional 1% based on the option of not using transition funding and funding the gap from Council Tax. With regard to the provisional settlement, the Service Director indicated that whilst there is the possibility of the settlement changing at the final settlement stage, the indications from Welsh Government are that this is unlikely to be the case.

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 – 2024/25

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

Author: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a proposed three year capital programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 that if acceptable, will be presented to Council for approval.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review, and if acceptable propose the attached three year capital programme at Appendix A to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 which includes:
- 2.1.1 A proposed reallocation of existing resources, and allocation of new resources as detailed in paragraph 5 of the attached report;
  - 2.1.2 Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the attached report;
  - 2.1.3 The Council's core capital programme;
  - 2.1.4 The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding.
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of Council Resources required to fund the Core Three Year Capital Programme as shown at Appendix 2 as a consequence of any change to the Council's capital resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

#### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To agree that the report at Appendix A is acceptable and is proposed by Cabinet to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report presented on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018 titled “[Delivering the Corporate Plan – “The Way Ahead” – Investing for the future](#)”. These were to agree in principle to a strategic outline capital investment programme of in excess of £300M over the next 5 years over and above its recurring annual capital programme, and that regular reports are presented to Cabinet and full Council. The draft report at Appendix A expands on this and proposes the Council’s three year capital programme commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan “Making a Difference” 2020-2024 reinforces the need to continue to live within our means, deliver an efficient and effective Council, maximise opportunities and have a shared responsibility.

#### **5.0 THE PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2022/23**

- 5.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement for 2022/23 has followed the UK Government Autumn Budget and Spending Review (SR21), with the provisional settlement being announced on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 5.2 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2022/23 is expected to be received on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 5.3 There are no indications of any significant changes between the provisional and final settlement but such a risk clearly remains.
- 5.4 In order to ensure that Cabinet are able to recommend a balanced capital programme to Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, and given the timing of the Final Settlement (1<sup>st</sup> March 2022), it will be necessary to authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the programme to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. It is proposed that any change is dealt with by means of amending the contribution from Council Resources across the 3 year programme, providing the opportunity to rebalance as necessary into future years.

#### **6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of this report relate solely to the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

#### **7.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

**8.0 CONSULTATION**

8.1 Details regarding consultation relating to the Council's budget strategy are subject to a separate report.

**9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1 All financial implications are included in the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

**10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

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

11.1 The Council's capital programme is focussed on investing capital resources in line with all the Corporate Plan priorities. The capital investment also contributes to all of the seven national well being goals.

**12.0 CONCLUSION**

12.1 The draft report at Appendix A sets out the proposed capital programme from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-2022**

**COUNCIL**

**9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

**THE COUNCIL'S THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 – 2024/25**

**REPORT OF THE CABINET**

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

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25, following receipt of the provisional local government settlement for 2022/23.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the detail of the provisional 2022/23 local government settlement for capital expenditure, reproduced at Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Agree to the proposed reallocation of existing resources, and allocation of new resources as detailed in paragraph 5;
- 2.3 Agree to allocate the funding identified in the report to the investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2;
- 2.4 Agree the proposed 'core' three year programme detailed at Appendix 2;
- 2.5 Agree the proposed total three-year Capital Programme, detailed at Appendices 3 (a) to (e), which includes the following non core capital funding:
  - Prudential borrowing to support Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) and Highways Improvements schemes;
  - Capital grants for specific schemes;
  - Third party contributions;
  - Additional Council resources previously allocated to support existing schemes



- and Corporate Plan investment priorities; and
- The investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that each year the Council is allocated a sum of unhypothecated “Supported” borrowing and General Capital Grant from the Welsh Government (WG). Details of the provisional allocation for 2022/23 are shown at Appendix 1. The funding for 2022/23 totals £11.599M.
- 3.2 Members will recall that last year’s Capital Settlement included the continuation of an additional £35M at an all Wales level, which was not included as funding for our core programme due to a lack of clarity over its continuation. Our Core Programme was therefore retained at a level which did not rely on this additional funding.
- 3.3 It is now proposed that we maintain our core programme at its existing level (£14.100M).
- 3.4 In so doing and in light of latest capital receipt forecasts and use of capital reserves, we would require to use £10.985M of the WG General Capital Funding, with a remaining balance of £0.614M which can be used to fund Investment Priorities over and above the core programme as set out at paragraph 6.2.
- 3.5 WG’s draft budget includes indicative General Capital Funding of £200M (all Wales) for 2023/24 and 2024/25 which includes £20M each year in respect of decarbonisation. It is proposed that any additional resources are considered as part of future Investment Priority reviews outside of our Core Programme.
- 3.6 The wider overall capital programme however includes approved prudential borrowing, specific grants and agreed additional investment in our key priorities.

### **4.0 THE NEW THREE YEAR PROGRAMME (2022/23 TO 2024/25)**

- 4.1 The proposed new 3 year capital programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 represents a total investment of **£148.770M**. This comprises:
- A Core programme of £42.300M over the next 3 years;
  - Prudential borrowing of £12.791M to support the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and Highways Improvements schemes;
  - Specific grants of £24.314M;
  - Third party contributions of £0.272M;
  - Earmarked reserves and revenue contributions previously allocated to schemes and investment priorities of £39.645M;
  - Capital resources, in addition to the 3 year core allocation, of £15.227M; and
  - Allocated earmarked reserves of £0.214M, reallocated existing funding of £3.155M, flexibility provided by additional external funding of £9.852M and £1.000M proposed in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy to fund the proposed investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2.

- 4.2 Having due regard to the level of available capital resources, both from WG and from our own capital receipts, the new core programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 is set at £14.1M per year. This represents a fully funded £42.3M core programme across the 3 years.
- 4.3 There remains a risk that the projected capital receipts are less than anticipated and projections will continue to be closely monitored.
- 4.4 Whilst allocating core resources for three years, there remains the requirement for us to continue to review and challenge any commitments made into years two and three, to robustly monitor capital receipt projections and to position ourselves to respond as appropriate and necessary as we move forward.
- 4.5 Given the timing of external funding approval processes, it will be necessary to maintain flexibility of funding across individual schemes in order to ensure the most efficient delivery of the overall programme.
- 4.6 Details of the overall capital programme for the 3 year period are set out in Section 7 of this report.

## **5.0 FURTHER AVAILABLE FUNDING**

- 5.1 The Council has maintained an Investment/Infrastructure reserve for a number of years to fund the cost of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough. The balance of this reserve at 31st March 2021 was £9.497M, and following release of £6.500M agreed by Council on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, £2.997M is available to fund further investment priorities.
- 5.2 Our capital expenditure and commitments are closely monitored across the 3 year period of the programme and it is not unusual for spend to slip into future years and present opportunities for the reallocation of resources. In this regard an amount of £2.158M has been identified which can be reprioritised without adversely impacting on wider programme delivery and whilst maintaining the new core programme.
- 5.3 The Council's Revenue Budget Strategy for 2022/23 proposes an amount of £1.000M as a base budget for funding investment to support Corporate Plan priorities. Subject to Council agreeing the Revenue Budget Strategy, this £1.000M budget is proposed to be included in the resources available for investment priorities in the capital programme.
- 5.4 The Council has also received and been successful in securing additional external funding in the form of specific grants during 2021/22. Additional grants have related to WG Capital and Revenue Maintenance for schools, WG Regeneration grants and UK Government's Levelling Up Funding. This additional funding provides flexibility to reallocate our own existing resources within the capital programme which amount to £5.084M.
- 5.5 Finally, WG have recently announced additional General Capital Grant for 2021/22 which, in line with accounting rules and the conditions of funding, can be used to support spend during 2022/23. At an all Wales level the additional funding amounts to £70M which provides this Council with additional resource of £5.418M.

5.6 A summary of this additional available funding is provided in the table below:

<b>Additional Funding</b>	<b>£M</b>
Infrastructure Reserve	2.997
Reprioritised Existing Funding	2.158
Revenue Budget 2022/23	1.000
Additional External Funding	5.084
General Capital Grant 2022/23	0.614
Additional General Capital Grant 2021/22 – 2022/23	5.418
<b>Total Additional Funding</b>	<b>17.271</b>

## **6.0 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES**

6.1 The Cabinet believe that the most appropriate use of these one off resources is to continue to invest in our infrastructure and to support the aspirations and priorities of the Corporate Plan.

6.2 In being able to support the above objectives, Cabinet have identified the following specific areas which it is proposed that Council agree to be invested in:

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>£M</b>
Highways Maintenance	3.000
Unadopted Roads	0.500
Highways Structures	1.500
Llanharan Link Road	2.000
Making Better Use/Traffic Developments	0.150
Parks Structures	0.500
Parks & Green Spaces	2.400
Play Areas	0.250
Schools	2.571
Empty Properties Grants	1.000
Electric Vehicles Charging	0.350
Investment Programme – Pipeline Development/Capacity (revenue allocation)	0.250
<b>Total Council Investment</b>	<b>14.471</b>

6.3 The above investment priorities can be funded from the resources identified at paragraph 5.6, with the remaining resource amounting to £2.800M being retained in our Investment / Infrastructure reserve to fund future priorities.

6.4 Further details on these investments are included in section 7.

## **7.0 THE THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 – 2024/25**

7.1 The details of the 3 year proposed programme for each Service Group are provided below.

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S GROUP**

- 7.2 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £4.419M for the Chief Executive's Group in 2021/22.
- 7.3 The total resources for 2022/23, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £2.909M.
- 7.4 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Chief Executives Services in the following areas:
- Electric Vehicle Charging - £0.350M.

This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3a.

- 7.5 As part of the Council's on-going programme to ensure high standards of health and safety and operational efficiency within its premises, appropriate resources continue to be allocated to our operational accommodation, the management and remediation of Asbestos and Legionella and resources for energy efficiency/carbon reduction measures across our property estate. The additional investment of £0.350M will support the delivery of the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy & Implementation Plan.

## **PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES**

- 7.6 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £83.109M for Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in 2021/22.
- 7.7 The total resources for 2022/23, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £52.567M.
- 7.8 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in the following areas:
- Highways Maintenance - £3.500M
  - Highways Structures - £1.500M
  - Parks Structures Improvements - £0.500M
  - Transport Infrastructure - £2.150M (Llanharan Link Road, Making Better Use/Traffic Developments)
  - Empty Properties Grants - £1.000M

This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3b.

## **PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.9 The Council's Capital Programme continues to provide a long-term funding commitment to the economic regeneration of the County Borough and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and

fulfil their potential and prosper’.

- 7.10 In addition to the above, sustained investment has been maintained across a range of funding streams, supported by external funding and the Corporate Plan Investment Priorities. This has enabled a wide range of regeneration activity to be delivered to benefit the local economy.
- 7.11 The Council will continue to work with partners to develop and progress exciting and innovative schemes such as:
- Development of modern business accommodation with new units at Robertstown, Aberdare;
  - Townscape Enhancements across our key town centres – a targeted approach to acquiring, redeveloping and upgrading town centre buildings for increased business and commercial use and continuing to improve the quality of the townscape providing business investment and employment growth. This will be supported by the development and delivery of strategies and placemaking plans for our key town centres;
  - Development of a new integrated Transport Hub at Porth as part of the Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy;
  - New sources of funding are being accessed to bring forward investment such as the UK Government Levelling Up Fund where successful bids have been made for the Muni Arts Centre Redevelopment, Porth Transport Hub and A4119 Dualling projects;
  - Strategic Opportunity Areas – a number of Strategic Opportunity Areas have been developed to deliver economic growth and job creation in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These areas are:
    - Cynon Gateway – Energising the Region;
    - The Wider Pontypridd, Treforest – Edge of the City, heart of the Region;
    - Pontypridd Town – Pivotal in the Region;
    - A4119 Corridor – Regional Rhondda Gateway; and
    - Llanilid on the M4 – Driving the Regional Economy.
- 7.12 The programme of regeneration projects will add value to the significant regeneration investment that has already taken place and will act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity.

### **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

- 7.13 A budget for 2022/23 of £8.990M has been allocated and the programme comprises the following schemes to contribute to one of the Council’s Corporate Plan Priorities: ‘People – Are independent, healthy and successful’:
- Disabled Facilities Grants
  - Maintenance Repair Assistance Grants
  - Renovation Grants in Exceptional Circumstances
  - Empty Properties Grants scheme;
  - Community Regeneration budget which provides grants to support a number of initiatives underpinning the affordable warmth and energy efficiency agenda;
  - Affordable Housing;
  - Tackling Poverty Fund.

## **FRONTLINE SERVICES**

### **Highways Technical Services**

- 7.14 A budget for 2022/23 of £11.203M has been allocated to the next phase of the Council's Highways Improvement programme and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'. Schemes comprise:
- Road surface treatments and resurfacing – £4.600M;
  - Car park improvements – £0.045M;
  - Major repairs to structures such as bridges and walls – £5.650M;
  - Parks Structures Improvements - £0.548M;
  - Street lighting replacement and upgrades – £0.200M; and
  - Traffic Management - £0.160M.

### **Strategic Projects**

- 7.15 A budget for 2022/23 of £15.162M has been allocated to Strategic Projects for major transportation infrastructure schemes and to extend and enhance the programme of pinch-point and highways network improvement projects as well as road safety, traffic management and drainage improvements. Schemes comprise:
- Transportation Infrastructure which includes Park & Ride schemes, Llanharan Link Road, A4119 Coed Ely Dualling, Cynon Gateway North, Gelli – Treorchy Link Road, and the Making Better Use programme – £15.007M; and
  - Drainage Improvements – £0.155M.
- 7.16 The Welsh Government grant position is evolving as a result of the 3-year funding settlement. It is anticipated that overall grant funding will reduce for 2022/23 before recovering in subsequent years. Consequently the general advice is that most funding streams will be restricted to bids that are a continuation of work undertaken in previous years. In addition, the Roads Review will have a bearing on funding, with some road schemes potentially being included in the Review and consequently excluded from funding. Clarity on this aspect is anticipated ahead of the final deadline for bid submission. A number of individual grants, such as Resilient Roads fund, have now been incorporated into the Local Transport Fund grant. Bids for various funds returned during January and February are expected to be confirmed during March. Bids have also been submitted for "Small Scale" flood alleviation schemes with the upper limit of funding for individual schemes seeing an uplift from £150k to £200k.
- 7.17 A supplementary report on the detail of proposed schemes for Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

### **Storm Dennis Flood Recovery**

- 7.18 Following the unprecedented weather events of Storm Dennis in February 2020, the Council will have already spent £19M on the immediate response and subsequent recovery works (this also includes some costs relating to Storm Christoph in January 2021) by the end of March 2022.
- 7.19 Funding of £6.441M has already been secured in respect of further works during

2022/23 with remaining works estimated to be in excess of £27M. There are a significant number of schemes ongoing to repair and replace bridges, river walls and retaining walls, as well as a work programme to deal with coal spoil tip safety, including the remediation process following Tylorstown landslip. Funding for the recovery work is provided by WG on an annual basis and the Council continues to work closely with WG to ensure funding is increased and secured during the financial year to maintain the momentum of the recovery programme.

## **WASTE STRATEGY**

7.20 The budget for 2022/23 is £1.000M. This relates to the Eco Park at Bryn Pica.

## **FLEET**

7.21 The 3 year rolling programme for replacement vehicles continues. The 3 year allocation is £7.719M. This service area is subject to ongoing assessment and continuous review of requirements.

## **EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES**

7.22 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £31.806M for Education & Inclusion in 2021/22.

7.23 The total resources available to Education & Inclusion for 2022/23, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £26.128M and will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.

7.24 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Education & Inclusion Services, in the following areas:

- Schools - £2.571M

This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3c.

## **SCHOOLS**

7.25 The Council will continue to deliver and support its long-term strategic investment programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for young people and the wider community. The programme of capital investment is supported with Council funding, WG Sustainable Communities for Learning (previously the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme) and Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

7.26 In this regard, investment totalling £212M has already been made in our schools with this anticipated to increase to £445M by 2025/26.

7.27 The following key school projects are either in progress or planned, and are included in the overall strategic programme and include a combination of

refurbishments, remodelling, demolitions and new buildings:

- Ffynnon Taf Primary – to create a community room/childcare facility and construct a four-classroom extension and hall to increase capacity at the school;
- Cwmlai Primary – to deliver dedicated childcare facilities on the school site, to expand identified need in the community and refurbish areas of the existing school. School capacity to be increased;
- YGG Llyn Y Forwyn – to create a brand new school on a new site in the Rhondda Fach, increasing Welsh medium capacity and providing community facilities;
- Y Pant Extension – phase 1 will deliver a four-classroom extension to increase the capacity at the school to accommodate growth as a result of housing developments in the area;
- YG Rhydywaun – to construct a new teaching block to increase the capacity at the school and provide brand new learning environments including sports facilities that will be available for the wider community;
- YGG Aberdar – to construct a four-classroom extension to increase capacity; car parking provision; and to create a dedicated meithrin, to expand identified need in the community delivering additional fee-paying child-care services for the area.

#### **PLANNED MINOR CAPITAL WORKS**

- 7.28 The planned minor capital works programme allocation for 2022/23 is £8.230M. The allocation includes an on-going rolling programme for kitchen refurbishments/remodelling, window & door replacements, essential works, electrical rewiring, fire alarm upgrades, toilet refurbishments, Equalities Act/compliance works, access condition surveys, boiler replacements, roof renewals, asbestos remediation works, 21st Century classroom upgrades, external improvements, capitalisation of IT hardware/software & licences and improvements to schools.
- 7.29 A supplementary report detailing proposals of works for consideration within the above-mentioned programme will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

#### **COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 7.30 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £8.326M for Community and Children's Services in 2021/22.
- 7.31 The total resources available to Community and Children's Services for 2022/23, as outlined in the proposed three year Capital Programme, is £12.396M.
- 7.32 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Community and Children's Services in the following areas:
- Parks & Green Spaces - £2.400M
  - Play Areas - £0.250M



This additional investment is included in the figures presented in Appendix 3d.

## **ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 7.33 The programme for Adult and Children's Services includes a budget of £4.931M in 2022/23. This will continue to fund the essential refurbishment and improvement works to the Council's Adult & Children's Services establishments, including the extra-care programme, in line with care standards and health & safety legislation. Also included are additional costs associated with Telecare Services.
- 7.34 These investments will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'People – Are independent, healthy and successful'.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION**

- 7.35 The Public Health and Protection programme has a budget of £7.465M in 2022/23. This budget is allocated across the ongoing rolling programmes for Parks Improvements, Cemeteries and Community Safety measures. Also included in this budget are allocations for investment and improvement works at Leisure Centres and Play Areas. The redevelopment of the Muni Arts Centre is also included in this programme. These areas of investment support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'.

## **8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 8.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.
- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concluded that the recommendations set out in the report are in line with the above legislation.

## **9.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **10.0 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken as part of formulating the revised programme and this was also built into the wider consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the recommended 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy, particularly in respect of investment priorities and community benefits.

## **11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 11.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the main body of the report.

**12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

12.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 complies fully with all legal requirements.

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

13.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25 has been formulated to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, as set out within the Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024, with these documents being aligned to the goals and principles included within the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

**14.0 CONCLUSIONS**

14.1 The three year Capital Programme is a key component of the overall Medium Term Financial Planning and Resources Strategy for this Council. Targeted capital investment can make a significant impact on service delivery and used effectively, is able to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, where relevant.

14.2 This report sets out the capital investment priorities for the Council through to March 2025. It represents an ambitious and significant level of investment (£148.770M) over the next 3 years.

14.3 The programme includes some element of slippage identified throughout 2021/22, which is subject to change when final spend for the capital programme is known and the 2021/22 accounts are finalised. Any changes to slippage will be reported to Members in the quarterly performance reports.

14.4 This report has also identified the opportunity to invest £14.471M of additional resources in our local area including our own assets in order to improve the services which are available to our residents.

14.5 As the year progresses, changes will be made to the programme, for example where new schemes can be supported by specific grants. Approval from Members will be sought as these opportunities arise throughout 2022/23.

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**Table 2a: Breakdown of General Capital Funding (GCF), by Unitary Authority, 2022-23 (£'000s)**

**Provisional Settlement**

<b>Unitary Authority</b>	<b>General Capital Funding 2022-23</b>	<b>of which: General Capital Grant</b>	<b>of which: Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing</b>
Isle of Anglesey	3,643	1,486	2,157
Gwynedd	6,880	2,807	4,073
Conwy	5,786	2,361	3,425
Denbighshire	5,103	2,082	3,021
Flintshire	6,794	2,772	4,022
Wrexham	5,880	2,399	3,481
Powys	7,762	3,167	4,595
Ceredigion	4,891	1,995	2,896
Pembrokeshire	6,342	2,587	3,755
Carmarthenshire	10,037	4,095	5,942
Swansea	10,722	4,375	6,347
Neath Port Talbot	7,488	3,055	4,433
Bridgend	6,678	2,725	3,953
The Vale of Glamorgan	5,829	2,378	3,451
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	<b>11,599</b>	<b>4,732</b>	<b>6,867</b>
Merthyr Tydfil	2,632	1,074	1,558
Caerphilly	8,157	3,328	4,829
Blaenau Gwent	3,207	1,308	1,899
Torfaen	4,499	1,836	2,663
Monmouthshire	4,107	1,676	2,431
Newport	6,928	2,827	4,101
Cardiff	15,036	6,135	8,901
<b>Total unitary authorities</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>61,200</b>	<b>88,800</b>

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## PROPOSED "CORE" THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME

### 2022 / 2025

SERVICE GROUPS	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£M	£M	£M
Chief Executive's Group	1.325	1.325	1.325
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	7.870	7.870	7.870
Education & Inclusion Services	3.915	3.915	3.915
Community & Children's Services	0.990	0.990	0.990
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>14.100</b>	<b>14.100</b>	<b>14.100</b>

### Estimated Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme

#### Welsh Government General Capital Funding

Supported borrowing	6.867	6.867	6.867
General Capital Grant	4.732	4.732	4.732
<b>Total WG Funding</b>	<b>11.599</b>	<b>11.599</b>	<b>11.599</b>

Additional one off WG capital funding reallocated to fund Investment Priorities

- 0.614 - 0.614 - 0.614

#### **Total Available to fund the Core Programme**

**10.985 10.985 10.985**

#### Council Resources

Council Resources	3.115	3.115	3.115
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#### **Total Resources Required to Fund the "Core" Capital Programme**

**14.100 14.100 14.100**

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Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

**Finance & Digital Services**

CIVICA Financials	200	200	200	600
Capitalisation of Computer HW/SW & Licences	500	500	500	1,500
<b>Total Finance &amp; Digital Services</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>2,100</b>

**Corporate Estates**

Major repair/refurbishment and/or rationalisation of Service Group Accommodation	150	150	150	450
Strategic Maintenance	50	50	50	150
Asset Management Planning	50	50	50	150
Asbestos Management	175	175	175	525
Asbestos Remediation Works	50	50	50	150
Legionella Remediation Works	275	275	275	825
Legionella Management	175	175	175	525
Carbon Reduction Programme	934	350	350	1,634
Electric Vehicles Charging	350	0	0	350
<b>Total Corporate Estates</b>	<b>2,209</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>4,759</b>

<b>Group Total</b>	<b>2,909</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>6,859</b>
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Chief Executive  
Service Director - Finance Services

Chris Bradshaw  
Martyn Hughes

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Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Prosperity &amp; Development</b>				
<b>Planning &amp; Regeneration</b>				
Enterprise Investment Fund	200	200	200	600
Regeneration Investment	1,185	835	400	2,420
Robertstown Development	163	0	0	163
Porth Interchange Metro+ LTF	5,435	504	0	5,939
<b>Total Planning &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>6,983</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>9,122</b>
<b>Private Sector Housing</b>				
Disabled Facilities Grants/Adaptations (DFG)	4,000	4,000	4,000	12,000
Maintenance Repair Assistance (MRA)	450	450	450	1,350
Renovation Grants Exceptional Circumstances & Home Improvement Zones	530	450	450	1,430
Empty Properties Grants Investment	2,500	0	0	2,500
Affordable Housing	800	1,536	0	2,336
Tackling Poverty Fund	200	0	0	200
Community Regeneration	510	250	250	1,010
<b>Total Private Sector Housing</b>	<b>8,990</b>	<b>6,686</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>20,826</b>
<b>Total Prosperity &amp; Development</b>	<b>15,973</b>	<b>8,225</b>	<b>5,750</b>	<b>29,948</b>
<b>Frontline Services</b>				
<b>Highways Technical Services</b>				
Highways Improvements	4,600	1,100	1,100	6,800
Car Parks	45	45	45	135
Structures	5,650	300	300	6,250
Parks Structures	548	0	0	548
Street Lighting	200	200	200	600
Traffic Management	160	160	160	480
<b>Total Highways Technical Services</b>	<b>11,203</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>14,813</b>
<b>Strategic Projects</b>				
Transportation and Travel Schemes	18	0	0	18
Transportation Infrastructure	14,989	7,032	5,744	27,765
Drainage Improvements	155	140	140	435
<b>Total Strategic Projects</b>	<b>15,162</b>	<b>7,172</b>	<b>5,884</b>	<b>28,218</b>
<b>Storm Dennis Flood Recovery</b>				
Storm Dennis Flood Recovery	6,441	0	0	6,441
<b>Total Storm Dennis Flood Recovery</b>	<b>6,441</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,441</b>
<b>Waste Strategy</b>				
Waste Strategy	1,000	0	0	1,000
<b>Total Waste Strategy</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Fleet</b>				
Vehicles	2,573	2,573	2,573	7,719
<b>Total Fleet</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>7,719</b>

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Buildings</b>				
Buildings	215	100	100	415
<b>Total Buildings</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>415</b>
<b>Total Frontline Services</b>	<b>36,594</b>	<b>11,650</b>	<b>10,362</b>	<b>58,606</b>
<b>Group Total</b>	<b>52,567</b>	<b>19,875</b>	<b>16,112</b>	<b>88,554</b>

Director of Prosperity & Development  
 Director of Frontline Services  
 Service Director - Finance Services

Simon Gale  
 Roger Waters  
 Martyn Hughes

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Schools</b>				
School Modernisation Rhondda and Tonyrefail	2,531	0	0	2,531
School Modernisation	7,297	140	140	7,577
Ffynnon Taf Primary Refurbishment and Extension	885	0	0	885
Y Pant Extension	856	0	0	856
SRIC - School Modernisation Programme	140	0	0	140
WG Childcare Grant	244	13	0	257
<b>Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B</b>				
YG Rhydywaun School Modernisation	4,972	263	0	5,235
YGG Aberdar School Modernisation	723	26	0	749
Mutual Investment Model Projects	250	250	250	750
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,898</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>18,980</b>
<b>Supplementary Capital Programme</b>				
Planned Kitchen Refurbishments	250	200	200	650
Window & Door Replacements	163	150	150	463
Essential Works	496	400	400	1,296
Capitalisation of Computer HW / SW & Licences	296	250	250	796
Roof Renewal	2,555	700	700	3,955
Boiler Replacement	950	250	250	1,450
Equalities Act/Compliance Works	225	225	225	675
Education & Inclusion Services Condition Surveys	97	50	50	197
Electrical Rewiring	312	200	200	712
Asbestos Remediation Work	900	900	900	2,700
Fire Alarm Upgrades	150	100	100	350
Toilet Refurbishments	1,170	350	350	1,870
21st Century Classroom Upgrade	566	0	0	566
Improvements to Schools	100	100	100	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,230</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>15,980</b>
<b>Group Total</b>	<b>26,128</b>	<b>4,567</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>34,960</b>

**Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Service Director - Finance Services**

**Gaynor Davies  
Stephanie Davies**

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Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

**Adult & Children's Services**

Modernisation Programme (Adults)	4,364	1,700	200	6,264
Modernisation Programme (Childrens)	129	50	50	229
Asbestos Remediation	90	45	45	180
Telecare Equipment (Inc of Carelink Equipment)	348	200	200	748
<b>Total Adult &amp; Children's Services</b>	<b>4,931</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>7,421</b>

**Public Health, Protection & Community Services**

Leisure Centre Refurbishment Programme	155	90	90	335
Parks & Countryside	3,805	100	100	4,005
Play Areas	359	50	50	459
Cemeteries Planned Programme	135	135	135	405
Community Safety Initiatives	89	99	50	238
Culture	20	20	20	60
Muni Arts Centre Redevelopment	2,852	2,472	0	5,324
Buildings	50	50	50	150
<b>Total Public Health, Protection &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>7,465</b>	<b>3,016</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>10,976</b>

<b>Group Total</b>	<b>12,396</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>18,397</b>
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**Group Director**  
**Service Director - Finance Services**

**Paul Mee**  
**Neil Griffiths**

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**Capital Programme from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025**

Group	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Chief Executive	2.909	1.975	1.975	6.859
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	52.567	19.875	16.112	88.554
Education and Inclusion Services	26.128	4.567	4.265	34.960
Community and Children's Services	12.396	5.011	0.990	18.397
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.000</b>	<b>31.428</b>	<b>23.342</b>	<b>148.770</b>

**Estimated Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme**

Supported Borrowing	6.867	6.867	6.867	20.601
Unsupported Borrowing	11.502	0.289	1.000	12.791
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.369</b>	<b>7.156</b>	<b>7.867</b>	<b>33.392</b>

**Capital Grants**

General Capital Grant annual base allocation	4.732	4.732	4.732	14.196
General Capital Grant additional allocation 2021/22	5.418			5.418
WEFO ERDF Modern Industrial Units Developments	0.082			0.082
WG Sustainable Communities for Learning	2.202			2.202
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	2.543			2.543
UK Government Levelling Up Fund	11.085	7.341		18.426
Heritage Lottery Grant	1.000			1.000
WG PRS Lease Scheme	0.012	0.049		0.061
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.074</b>	<b>12.122</b>	<b>4.732</b>	<b>43.928</b>

<b>Third Party Contributions</b>	<b>0.259</b>	<b>0.013</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.272</b>
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**Council Resources**

Revenue Contributions	27.588	7.850	7.992	43.430
General Fund Capital Resources	20.710	4.287	2.751	27.748
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.298</b>	<b>12.137</b>	<b>10.743</b>	<b>71.178</b>

<b>Total Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme</b>	<b>94.000</b>	<b>31.428</b>	<b>23.342</b>	<b>148.770</b>
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<b>Difference Total Spend to Total Resources</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
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## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

### **SUPPORTING RETAIL LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF – LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME**

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

**Author(s): MR MATTHEW PHILLIPS, HEAD OF SERVICE (REVENUES & BENEFITS)**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with details of a proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for Rhondda Cynon Taf and an update on the continuation of the Welsh Government Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief (RLH) Scheme for 2022/23.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the changes to the Welsh Government RLH Scheme for the year 2022/23;
- b) Agree to adopt the Welsh Government RLH Scheme for the year for 2022/23; and
- c) Agree the proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 which will be incorporated into the Council's Revenue Budget Strategy.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide ongoing support to RLH businesses within Rhondda Cynon Taf following two years of restricted trading through the period of the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In February 2020 Cabinet agreed to introduce support to businesses through the provision of a Local Business Rate Relief scheme which provided £150K to be distributed across qualifying businesses in order to support them in meeting their Non-Domestic Rates liability. The relief was to be paid in line with the qualifying

criteria applicable to the High Street and Retail Rate Relief (HSRR) Scheme and it was estimated that up to 485 businesses would benefit by up to £300 per business. The level of support was increased to £350 per business for 2021/22 financial year.

- 4.2 However, as the pandemic emerged in March 2020 and restrictions were applied to businesses, the Welsh Government replaced the HSRR Scheme with an extended RLH scheme which provided 100% rates relief for the financial year 2020/21, meaning that qualifying businesses had no rates liability. This scheme extended the eligible businesses to include leisure businesses and continued unchanged through 2021/22.
- 4.3 In January 2022, WG indicated that the RLH scheme for 2022/23 would provide 50% rate relief (as opposed to 100%) and consequently businesses in these sectors would have a rates liability for the first time in two years.
- 4.4 The Cabinet's proposed budget strategy for 2022/23 includes an additional £100k to increase the available resources to support such businesses to £300k.

## **5. PROPOSED LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME**

- 5.1 On 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022, WG issued the RLH scheme details and guidance, which confirms that the 2022/23 scheme would provide 50% rate relief to all qualifying businesses. The amount of RLH relief allowed to a single business across Wales has been capped at £110,000.
- 5.2 In order to support our Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses in 2022/23 it is proposed that a local discretionary relief be provided in **addition** to the WG RLH scheme of up to a maximum of £300 per qualifying business.
- 5.3 The qualifying criteria of the RLH scheme shall be applied. It is estimated that 1,200 businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf would benefit from this further support.
- 5.4 In cases where the "net" rates bill (following the award of RLH and any other applicable reliefs) is less than £300, the rates bill will be reduced to zero.
- 5.5 In line with WG requirements, businesses will need to make an application to the Council for the RLH relief to be assessed and applied to their NDR bill.
- 5.6 Subject to this application and eligibility, the Council will then also award up to £300 local discretionary relief. Business will then receive an adjusted Non Domestic Rates bill, net of RLH relief and the Local Business Rate relief.
- 5.7 The list of the types of businesses able to qualify for RLH Rates Relief (and therefore the Local Discretionary Business Rates Relief) is set out at Appendix 1 with those non-qualifying businesses set out at Appendix 2.
- 5.8 It is noted that there are no planned changes to the WG's Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 6.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.

## **7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 8.1 A consultation exercise on the original proposal took place between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 8.2 A consultation on the Cabinet's proposed budget strategy took place between the 28<sup>th</sup> January and the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 The Council has included the resource requirement in its proposed 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy to fund the local Business Rates Discretionary scheme.
- 9.2 The Welsh Government will reimburse local authorities for the RLH relief that is provided in line with its guidance via a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

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

- 10.1 The WG Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Relief Scheme and the proposed local Business Rates Relief Scheme is in accordance with the Council's statutory powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- 10.2 For both schemes to be applied in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council needs to formally resolve to adopt the schemes locally in exercise of its discretionary powers under section 47(1) (a) of the 1988 Act and the Director of Finance and Digital Services will administer the scheme and make the necessary determinations in accordance with the Council's 'officer scheme of delegation'.

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

- 11.1 The proposals are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020-2024, in particular the priority 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper' and also the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 well-being goal of "A more prosperous Wales".

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 The adoption of the WG RLH Rate Relief Scheme and the Local Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme will provide further much needed financial support for local businesses to meet their 2022/23 rate liability and forms part of a wider package of support intended to create and maintain vibrant town centres across Rhondda Cynon Taf, which is something that this Council has committed to in its Corporate Plan.

## Appendix 1

Examples of the types of premises that **may** qualify for assistance under the Wales Retail Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief Scheme:

- Properties that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:-
  - Shops (such as florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off-licences, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)
  - Charity shops
  - Opticians
  - Pharmacies
  - Post offices
  - Furnishing shops or display rooms (such as carpet shops, double-glazing, garage doors)
  - Car or caravan showrooms
  - Second hand car lots
  - Markets
  - Petrol stations
  - Garden centres
  - Art galleries (where art is for sale or hire)
  
- Properties that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:-
  - Hair and beauty services
  - Shoe repairs or key cutting
  - Travel agents
  - Ticket offices (e.g. for theatre)
  - Dry cleaners
  - Laundrettes
  - PC, TV or domestic appliance repair
  - Funeral directors
  - Photo processing
  - DVD or video rentals
  - Tool hire
  - Car hire
  - Estate and letting agents
  
- Properties that are being used for the sale of food and / or drink to visiting members of the public:-
  - Restaurants
  - Drive-through or drive-in restaurants
  - Takeaways
  - Sandwich shops
  - Cafés
  - Coffee shops
  - Pubs
  - Bars or Wine Bars

- Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including for the viewing of such activities) and for the assembly of visiting members of the public:
  - Sports grounds and clubs
  - Sport and leisure facilities
  - Gyms
  - Tourist attractions
  - Museums and art galleries
  - Stately homes and historic houses
  - Theatres
  - Live Music Venues
  - Cinemas
  - Nightclubs
  
- Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public:
  - Public halls
  - Clubhouses, clubs and institutions
  
- Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business:
  - Hotels, Guest and Boarding Houses,
  - Holiday homes,
  - Caravan parks and sites



## **Appendix 2**

Examples of the types of retail premises that **will not** qualify for assistance under the Wales Retail Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief Scheme:

- Properties being used wholly or mainly for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:
  - Financial services (eg banks, building societies, cash points, ATMs, bureaux de change, payday lenders, betting shops, pawnbrokers)
  - Medical services (eg vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
  - Professional services (eg solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisers, tutors)
  - Post Office sorting offices
  - Day nurseries
  - Kennels and catteries
  - Casinos and gambling clubs
  - Show homes and marketing suites
  - Employment agencies

In addition, the following properties will not be eligible to relief under the scheme:

- a) Properties that are not reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public
- b) Properties that are not occupied
- c) Properties that are owned, rented or managed by a local authority

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

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

Item: **SUPPORTING RETAIL LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES  
IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF –  
LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME**

**Background Papers  
NONE**

Officer to contact:

**MR MATTHEW PHILLIPS, HEAD OF SERVICE (REVENUES & BENEFITS)**



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS) CAPITAL PROGRAMME – NEW WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RHYDYFELIN

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

Author: Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services, (01443) 424026

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update regarding financing of the proposals to build a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the position, as set out in the report on the submission of a full business case to Welsh Government in respect of a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin;
- 2.2 Review and agree the updated total costs and funding package for the school; and
- 2.3 Review, and if acceptable propose that the Prudential Borrowing report attached at Appendix A to the report is presented to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

#### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To complete the funding package for the new school to enable works to commence in line with the programme.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 an update was given on the proposals to reorganise schools in the greater Pontypridd area.

- 4.2 These proposals include a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin.
- 4.3 The indicative cost presented to Cabinet in June 2021 was £13M. Following this a revised Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) was submitted to Welsh Government (WG) to incorporate updates to the programme including a commitment to achieve net zero carbon schools. The revised estimated cost, incorporating price increases and additional costs to achieve a net zero carbon school is £14.183M.
- 4.4 The updated SOP was approved by WG in September 2021 and our funding envelope was increased to include, among other things, an increase to achieve net zero carbon schools. An update in respect of this was presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- 4.5 The final stage in obtaining a formal grant award for individual projects within our SOP is the submission, and subsequent approval, of a Full Business Case (FBC) to WG. The Outline Business Case (OBC) was approved by WG in August 2021 and approval to proceed to FBC was also granted.
- 4.6 The FBC was submitted to WG in January 2022. WG are fully aware of the increase in costs and have approved these via the SOP approval, however a formal grant award is subject to WG panel review. The panel met on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and recommended approval to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language. The formal grant award is anticipated during March 2022, following Ministerial approval.
- 4.7 The funding arrangements for Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) Band B capital schemes are 65% WG grant and 35% from the Council's own resources. Based on estimated costs of £14.183M, the WG grant award will be £9.219M and the Council's contribution is £4.964M. It is proposed to fund the Council's contribution by the use of Prudential Borrowing. In order to complete the funding package to enable the scheme to progress, it is now necessary to seek Council approval for the borrowing.

## **5.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 The equality and diversity implications have been considered and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium primary school and there are no further implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **6.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Welsh language implications have been considered and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium primary school and there are no further implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The necessary consultation process has been undertaken and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin and there are no further consultation requirements as a result of the

recommendations in this report.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The annual revenue cost to repay this borrowing (£4.964M) is £0.195M per year for 40 years. It is anticipated that the revenue repayments will commence in financial year 2024/25, therefore the costs will be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

9.2 The Council has the necessary powers to borrow money to fund expenditure under the Prudential Code.

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

10.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Investing in new and replacement 21st Century Schools, whilst also meeting the demand for Welsh language provision throughout the County Borough."

10.2 The financing of this commitment will enable the delivery of proposals that will contribute to all 7 well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 and due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This is well documented in the Business Case submitted to the Welsh Government

## **11.0 CONCLUSIONS**

11.1 The investment in a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin can be financed by Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B grant and by borrowing for the Council's contribution by the use of powers available under the Prudential Code.

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## **Appendix A**

### **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021 – 2022**

**COUNCIL**

**9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

### **FINANCING OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS) CAPITAL PROGRAMME USING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & DIGITAL SERVICES**

**Author: Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services, (01443) 424026**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval:

- For a capital investment of £14.183M for a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin;
- To finance the project through the Welsh Government's (WG) Sustainable Communities for learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) Band B capital grant and to fund the Council's contribution from borrowing using its powers under the Prudential Code.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Agree to the inclusion in the capital programme of a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin at a total cost of £14.183M; and
- 2.2 Agree that the net capital cost to the Council of £4.964M is funded through borrowing, using the Council's powers under the Prudential Code, with the annual revenue cost of £0.195M being included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 An update on proposals to reorganise schools in the greater Pontypridd area was considered by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, which included a new Welsh medium

primary school in Rhydyfelin.

- 3.2 As reported to Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the proposal is now at the Full Business Case (FBC) stage with Welsh Government (WG), which has been recommended for Ministerial approval by the WG review panel, and a formal grant award is expected during March 2022.
- 3.3 Cabinet reviewed the updated costs and funding package and agreed that this report is presented to Council to approve the borrowing for the Council's contribution.
- 3.4 Whilst the formal award of funding in respect of this proposal is awaited following submission of the FBC, the proposal and updated costs have been approved by WG as part of an updated Strategic Outline Programme.
- 3.5 Contractual commitments and formal appointments of contractors will only be progressed once the formal WG grant award is received and accepted. However, in order to progress the scheme and complete the funding package it is necessary to seek Council approval for the Prudential Borrowing.

#### **4.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 4.1 The equality and diversity implications have been considered and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium school and there are no further implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

#### **5.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Welsh language implications have been considered and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium primary school and there are no further implications as a result of the recommendation in this report.

#### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The necessary consultation process has been undertaken and reported as part of the decision making process for a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin and there are no further consultation requirements as a result of the recommendations in this report.

#### **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposal to build a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin will cost an estimated £14.183M in capital investment.
- 7.2 The funding arrangements for Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B capital schemes are 65% WG grant and 35% from the Council's own resources. Based on estimated costs of £14.183M, the WG grant award will be £9.219M and the Council's contribution is £4.964M funded through borrowing, using the Council's powers under the Prudential Code.

7.3 The annual revenue cost to repay this borrowing is £0.195M per year for 40 years. It is anticipated that the revenue repayments will commence in financial year 2024/25, therefore the costs will be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising as a result of the recommendations in the report.

8.2 The Council has the necessary powers to borrow money to fund expenditure under the Prudential Code.

## **9.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Investing in new and replacement 21st Century Schools, whilst also meeting the demand for Welsh language provision throughout the County Borough."

9.2 The financing of this commitment will enable the delivery of proposals that will contribute to all 7 well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 and due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This is well documented in the Business Case submitted to the Welsh Government

## **10.0 CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The investment in a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin can be financed by Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B capital grant and by borrowing for the Council's contribution by the use of powers available under the Prudential Code.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

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

**Item: FINANCING OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS) CAPITAL PROGRAMME USING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING**

**Background Papers**

Cabinet 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

[21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Improve Education Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area](#)

Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019

[21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area](#)

Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019

[21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area](#)

Cabinet 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area](#)

Cabinet 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme - Band B Update](#)

Cabinet 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Sustainable Communities for Learning (Formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) Capital Programme – New Welsh Medium Primary School in Rhydyfelin (Link pending publication of report)

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28 FEBRUARY 2022

#### PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE – DRAFT PLACEMAKING PLAN

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (COUNCILLOR ROBERT BEVAN)

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Set out the draft Placemaking Plan for Pontypridd Town Centre which provides a bold vision for the regeneration of the town;
- To seek approval for a public consultation exercise to be undertaken in respect of the draft Placemaking Plan and to receive a further report detailing the results from the consultation;
- Provide a progress update on the redevelopment plans for the former Bingo Hall site, Marks & Spencer and Burtons/Dorothy Perkins buildings and the Muni Arts Centre.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Consider the draft Pontypridd Placemaking Plan and agree to consultation and public engagement on the overarching Pontypridd Placemaking Plan including engagement on early ideas for the former Marks & Spencer /Dorothy Perkins/Burtons area;
- 2.2 Agree to receive a further report detailing the results from the consultation exercise;
- 2.3 In addition to consulting on the Placemaking plan, agree to a funding application being submitted to Welsh Government to demolish the vacant Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings due to their dilapidated

and structural state and general poor quality and to commence the demolition process if and when funding is in place and on the securing of any necessary statutory consents;

- 2.4 In addition to consulting on the Placemaking plan, agree to move to the formal procurement stage to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel on the site of the former Bingo Hall/High Street/Sardis Road.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Pontypridd town centre has faced significant challenges in recent years but has proven to be incredibly resilient during these times. Significant investment is already underway but with continued investment and a co-ordinated approach, the town centre has a positive and bright future. A draft Placemaking Plan has been prepared to respond to this exciting and changing context and to enable Pontypridd to fully become a key economic, social and cultural centre.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As with many town centres throughout the UK, Pontypridd town centre has faced significant challenges to its economic viability in recent years. This has been intensified further by the destructive flood events in the winter of 2020 that damaged large areas of the town and endangered businesses and more recently the socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.2 While the challenges associated with the pandemic are not yet over, there are reasons for optimism as throughout this period, the town centre has demonstrated incredible sustained resilience. Evidence that Pontypridd is becoming a more resilient town is demonstrated by the latest footfall figures. The recorded figures for the months of October to December 2021 of 864,762 is an increase of 190,948 on the same 3 month period in 2019, prior to the Storm Dennis floods and COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.3 As demonstrated in the previous report in October 2021 '*Progress update on the delivery of Regeneration in Pontypridd Town Centre*', substantial investment has been successfully delivered over recent years under the Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd 2017 – 2022 '*Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth*'.
- 4.4 To maintain this momentum, the draft Placemaking Plan is underpinned by a baseline review that identifies the issues and opportunities in the town centre and proposes a series of phased interventions to ensure the plan delivers early positive change but also enables growth and investment consistently over a realistic delivery period.

## 5. DRAFT PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN

- 5.1 'Placemaking' is an overarching approach to improving how a place looks, functions and is experienced. The draft Placemaking Plan for Pontypridd Town Centre, shown at **Appendix 1**, seeks to replace the existing Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd (2017-2022) building upon the foundations of what has already been delivered and to provide a framework for delivering further new development and investment that can help improve the prosperity of Pontypridd, enhance the townscape and make it more resilient to future change.
- 5.2 The placemaking plan illustrates the scale of opportunity that exists in the town. To realise the opportunity, it will be important to create the conditions for a successful residential, office, leisure, and retail market that is supplemented by strong placemaking and active town centre management. It will also be crucial to explore opportunities to make the town resilient to future flood incidents.
- 5.3 Pontypridd has a unique townscape and landscape setting that includes two iconic rivers and a historic park. These strong attributes will be utilised to establish a destination that is a great place to work, live and visit.
- 5.4 Transport is a key consideration for the town centre and there are a series of the projects identified in the placemaking plan either relate to transport enhancements or require adaptations to transport infrastructure.
- 5.5 To guide future investment, the plan identifies the following core ambitions for the town centre:
- **A BUSINESS DESTINATION** with established development areas that provide striking gateways to the town and a series of flexible workspaces that combine to make Pontypridd an attractive to place to invest and work.
  - **A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE** with a choice of high quality new homes, accessible jobs and a bespoke leisure offer delivered in a unique riverside setting.
  - **CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE** with excellent pedestrian connections between the town centre and the railway and bus stations and high-quality cycle infrastructure that establishes the town as base to explore the wider valleys landscape.
  - **A GREEN WATERSIDE TOWN** with a unique outlook over the River Taff and the historic Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that provide

an unrivalled leisure and recreational setting and distinctive landscape.

- **A UNIQUE TOWNSCAPE** with iconic heritage buildings that are celebrated and have been reused to accommodate a mix of vibrant modern uses.
- **A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DESTINATION** with an annual programme of events for Pontypridd that attract visitors and establish the centre as a unique cultural and social destination.
- **AN INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT TOWN** with a network of unique streets and spaces that are safe and accessible, resilient and adaptable to future challenges, optimised views of the unique townscape and riverside setting and provide space for outdoor activity.

5.6 The plan identifies a framework to deliver new investment that responds to the unique character of the town and the issues and opportunities that are present. The plan takes an overarching view of the key areas that make up the town centre and proposes a series of approaches that would strengthen the sense of place in each area that combine to revitalise the town as a whole.

5.7 Five spatial areas have been identified that will act as areas of specific focus for investment:

- **SOUTHERN GATEWAY** - A redeveloped gateway to the town that has a significant redevelopment of the key development blocks including the former Bingo Hall site and Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins stores, enhanced links between the station and the high street and an improved public realm that opens the entrance to the town and establishes a riverside plaza and proposes a range of commercial uses in the railway station. It is proposed that redevelopment of this 'Southern Gateway' area could form Phase 1 of the implementation of the Placemaking Plan and further detail can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- **TOWN CENTRE CORE** - A reinforced core of refurbished buildings that will provide workspace, homes, retail and leisure uses, a riverside walkway and better pedestrian connections and spaces.
- **MARKET QUARTER** - A bespoke Market Quarter within the Town Centre Core that includes a rejuvenated market building and a unique retail and leisure offer in an historic setting, creating a destination in its own right within the heart to the town centre.

- **NORTHERN GATEWAY** - Continued regeneration of the northern gateway to the town that includes a rejuvenated bus station, explores the potential for a new train halt, further workspace and mixed-use development at Berw Road, enhanced art and culture and better pedestrian routes.
- **YNYSANGHARAD WAR MEMORIAL PARK** - A heritage park that has a natural riverside setting, diverse sport and recreational offer, is a hub for cultural and social events and base from which to explore the Valleys Regional Park.

## 6. **PROJECTS**

6.1 A series of projects and interventions have been identified collectively aimed at transforming the town by creating high quality development and public spaces that promote prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being. Full details can be found within the draft Placemaking Plan but in summary these projects will:

- Establish enhanced gateways into the town.
- Unlock large-scale commercial development opportunities.
- Deliver improved integration between public transport modes.
- Restore traditional buildings with new uses.
- Revive the town's traditional townscape.
- Create a new riverside and parkland setting.
- Make the town centre more resilient to future flood events that might occur.
- Provide better pedestrian routes and create spaces that that people can enjoy, and which businesses can use.
- Create spaces for social and cultural events.
- Develop a stronger digital presence and brand.

## 7. **PROGRESS UPDATE – KEY SITES AND PREMISES**

7.1 The sites detailed in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.7 have been identified in the draft Placemaking Plan as key areas that will contribute to the economic growth

of the town centre. Supported by government investment, progress is already being made towards securing a sustainable future for these prominent sites.

- 7.2 **Former Bingo Hall / Angharads Nightclub** – Funded by £2.2m investment from the Council and Welsh Government, these vacant and dilapidated buildings were acquired in March 2020 and subsequently demolished in August 2021 leaving the site development ready.
- 7.3 Expert advice has been commissioned to explore a range of commercial uses to strengthen the viability of the town together with opportunities for new distinctive architecture that builds on the town's unique assets and strengthens its sense of place.
- 7.4 Advice received clearly supports a hotel-led development with retail uses at the lower ground floor in this prominent location and a market testing exercise has evidenced that there are developers and operators interested in taking this forward.
- 7.5 Subject to approval, a formal procurement exercise will be undertaken over the next 6 months to secure a Development Partner to take forward a hotel-led development on site. The Council will work closely with potential Development Partners to ensure the best outcome for the town centre.
- 7.6 **96-99a and 100-102 Taff Street** – In March 2021, these vacant buildings formerly occupied by Marks & Spencer, Dorothy Perkins and Burtons, were acquired with investment from the Council and Welsh Government.
- 7.7 Situated opposite the former Bingo Hall site and adjacent to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, these vacant properties provide an exciting development opportunity.
- 7.8 Early design work commissioned to explore opportunities for the site demonstrate that the properties provide a great opportunity to open the town centre towards the river and the park and to provide a range of leisure, commercial and retail uses in this location. The proposed public consultation presents a timely opportunity to seek views on the early proposals shown at **Appendix 2**.
- 7.9 The property formerly occupied by Marks & Spencer, being vacant since 2015 and suffering from a lack of maintenance is in poor condition, requiring extensive refurbishment and upgrading works both internally and externally. The property will continue to deteriorate without significant expenditure. Structural Surveys have been undertaken and the building is deemed to be beyond economic repair and consideration is now needed regarding demolition to maximise the redevelopment opportunity in this prime location. Whilst the Burtons/Dorothy Perkins building appears to have been maintained in relatively good condition by its previous owners, the



building itself is of poor architectural quality and detrimental to the character of the High Street and to the integrity of the Conservation Area within which it is located. As such it is recommended that the Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings are demolished to allow future redevelopment of the whole site, shaped by the public engagement sought by this report and through the process of securing all necessary planning and other consents.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 8.1 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 at this time. This will however be revisited following the public consultation exercise.

## **9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Placemaking Plan will be subject to a Welsh Language Impact Assessment and an update will be provided following the public consultation.

## **10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 10.1 No consultation has taken place at this stage; however the report proposes that a public consultation exercise on the draft Placemaking Plan, with a particular focus on the redevelopment of the former Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons stores, is undertaken over a 4 week period.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 11.1 There are no financial implications in respect of the development of the draft placemaking plan but as projects are developed, the financial implications will be fully assessed and reported as appropriate.
- 11.2 Subject to approval of this report, funding will be sought from Welsh Government to demolish the former Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings. This will take the form of a grant application to the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme for the maximum 70% contribution towards the associated costs. The balance will be funded from existing Prosperity and Development budgets.
- 11.3 Costs associated with the procurement process for securing a development partner for the hotel-led development will be funded from existing

resources. The financial implications of the actual development will be subject to a further report.

## **12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 12.1 There are no current legal implications, but as the opportunities are developed, the legal implications will be fully assessed.

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

- 13.1 The draft Placemaking Plan has been developed in accord with the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 'Making a Difference' which highlights that its town centres will be vibrant, thriving places where people wish to live, work and socialise and with Welsh Governments 'Town Centres First' approach, aimed at putting the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the public sector, businesses and communities.
- 13.2 All proposed developments within the draft plan will contribute to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. In particular, the economic and environmental well-being of Wales, supporting the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

## **14. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

- 14.1 The draft placemaking plan identifies a framework to continue to deliver significant new investment to Pontypridd town centre that responds to the unique character of the town and the issues and opportunities that are present. The Placemaking plan will succeed the current Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd 2017 – 2022 'Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth'.
- 14.2 The successful delivery of the plan will result in transformational change for Pontypridd town centre. A coordinated effort between the public, private and third sectors will be required to realise the scale of opportunity in the town centre to ensure we can successfully deliver a dynamic, diverse and sustainable town centre where people are proud to live, work and visit.
- 14.3 Critical next steps for consideration are:

- Consultation and public engagement on the overarching Pontypridd Placemaking Plan including engagement on early ideas for the former Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins/Burtons area.
- Agreement to seek funding to demolish the vacant Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings due to their dilapidated and structural state.
- Agreement to move to the formal procurement stage for a development partner to deliver a hotel on the site of the former Bingo Hall/High Street/Sardis Road.

**Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee  
Finance & Performance***

***Contact Officer:  
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development (01443 281114)***

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (COUNCILLOR  
ROBERT BEVAN)**

**Item:**

**Background Papers**

***Contact Officer:***

***Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development (01443 281114)***



# PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE PLACEMAKING PLAN

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Draft February 2022

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Llywodraeth Cymru  
 Welsh Government



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View over Pontypridd town centre



# 0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government, the Valleys Task Force and Transport for Wales. It provides a placemaking plan for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.

Town centres throughout the UK have faced a series of significant challenges to their economic viability over the past decade that have recently intensified further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pontypridd town centre is no different, but further pressure has been placed on the town and its businesses by the destructive flood incidents that occurred in the winter of 2020.

In spite of the challenges faced, there are grounds for optimism. Pontypridd town centre has proven to be incredibly resilient throughout this difficult period and is now well placed to respond and move beyond the challenges. The town centre will shortly have unheralded connectivity to the wider Capital City Region, and is already the focus of new commercial investment through the successful delivery of the Lllys Cadwyn development. The placemaking plan seeks to build upon these foundations and provide a framework for delivering further new development and investment that can help improve the prosperity of the town, enhance the townscape and landscape setting and make it more resilient to future change.

The placemaking plan is a strategy document that has been informed by the existing local planning and regeneration policy context and develops many of the initiatives identified in the key documents.

The placemaking plan identifies a series of core ambitions to guide future investment to the town and design drivers to ensure new development meets the ambitions.

#### Core Ambitions:

1. A business destination.
2. A great place to live.
3. Connected and accessible.
4. A green waterside town.
5. A unique townscape.
6. A cultural and social destination.
7. An inclusive and resilient town.

#### Design Drivers:

1. Development.
2. Connectivity.
3. Townscape.
4. Green Infrastructure.
5. Cultural and social.
6. Public realm.

The plan also identifies a series of interventions in key spatial areas of the town that would deliver upon the ambitions and address the design drivers.

Five key spatial areas have been identified for the town centre that will act as areas of specific focus for investment. These areas have been identified as:

1. Southern Gateway.
2. Town Centre Core.
3. Market Quarter.
4. Northern Gateway.
5. Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

A placemaking analysis has been prepared to identify the core ambitions, design drivers, spatial areas and interventions. A summary of the key issues and opportunities identified from this analysis is included in the placemaking plan.

The placemaking plan will be actively used and implemented over the short, medium and long term. Phasing them in this way will ensure that the plan delivers immediate positive change but also delivers growth and investment consistently over a realistic delivery period.

The placemaking plan illustrates the scale of opportunity that exists in the town. To realise the opportunity it will be necessary to curate a successful residential, office, leisure, and retail market that is supplemented by strong placemaking and active town centre management. It will also be necessary to make the town resilient to future flood incidents. A coordinated effort between the public and private sector is required to realise the scale of opportunity in the town centre.

Transport is a key consideration for the town centre and a series of the projects identified in the placemaking plan either relate to transport enhancements or require adaptations to transport infrastructure to be fully realised. These projects shall be progressed in accord with Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government, the Valleys Task Force and Transport for Wales. It provides a placemaking plan for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.

Pontypridd has an excellent strategic location at the core of the Capital City Region. It is located 12 miles north of Cardiff and is strategically perched on the A470 and three of the core valley rail lines. Pontypridd is also a town that is changing. Connectivity will be transformed through the South Wales Metro, which will result in 12 trains per hour in each direction between Pontypridd and Cardiff, while perceptions of the commercial property market will be overhauled by the completion of the Llys Cadwyn development.

With the planned investment the town centre has a bright future, and there are big ambitions for it. This plan provides the framework to deliver the ambition.

The placemaking plan provides a bold vision for the town centre, and identifies interventions that can be implemented consistently to unlock the town's potential and ensure that it is a key economic, social and cultural centre for the Capital City Region. A coordinated effort between public and private sector partners will be required to realise the opportunity.

The upgrade of transport infrastructure is essential to deliver vision. A series of strategic transport projects have been identified in the plan and shall be progressed in accord with the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance.

Pontypridd town centre was subject to significant flooding in February 2020, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the winter of 2020 presented unforeseen challenges to town centres across the UK. This placemaking plan has accounted for these events and will help ensure that Pontypridd becomes more resilient to future challenges.

Pontypridd has a unique townscape and unrivalled landscape setting that includes two iconic rivers and a historic park. These unique attributes will be utilised to establish **a destination that is a great place to work, live and visit.**

The placemaking plan has been prepared in accord with the national Town Centres First principle: *“Ensuring a thriving future for our town/city centre[s] must be a key driver. We can increase footfall and accessibility and make a vital contribution to the vibrancy and sustainability of our town centres by locating public bodies, partner organisations and associated services/facilities in them. This should be the default option for any new investment and decisions to locate elsewhere should only be made where there is compelling evidence that this is necessary/justified. Proportionate and best value decision making regarding location should include consideration of the impact on town centres, social cohesion, accessibility by public transport, the environment and climate change”.*



Aerial view of Pontypridd town centre with Llys Cadwyn in the foreground



- Legend:
- Main Roads
  - Railway
  - Train Station
  - City / Town
  - Water
  - Park

Regional location plan

Weston-Super-Mare

# 1.1 INTRODUCTION: EXISTING MOMENTUM

The Council has previously completed a range of significant regeneration activity in the town including:

The flagship scheme **Llys Cadwyn**, supported through Welsh Governments Transforming Towns programme, completed in 2020. Replacing the former 1960's Taff Vale shopping centre and revitalising a derelict site at the northern gateway to the town, the mixed-use development comprises Grade A office accommodation, restaurant/café facilities and a community hub incorporating a 21st Century library, access to Council services, state of the art gym and leisure studios.

The development also comprises a riverside promenade linking to a new footbridge **which** connects the site over the River Taff to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

**The National Lido of Wales, Lido Ponty** involved the restoration of a derelict and dilapidated Grade II listed 1920's lido into a regional visitor attraction. Completed in 2015 with support from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government, Heritage Lottery Fund and Cadw, the scheme expertly balanced sympathetic restoration and conservation alongside stylish and contemporary new build in an art deco style.

Original features such as the timber changing cubicles and entrance buildings including iron turnstiles and the original ticket office have been restored and complemented with a new build café and visitor centre. The original pool has been remodelled to form three new pools, further enhanced through the provision of a high quality adventure dry play facility.

Targeted regeneration investment through the Welsh Government's **Vibrant and Viable Places Programme** awarded between 2014 and 2017 assisted the Council

and its partners to deliver a focussed set of sustainable physical and social improvements aimed at improving economic viability, enhancing the town's role in the local and regional economy and reducing levels of deprivation in the communities it serves. Key projects included –

**The Townscape Enhancement Programme** which contributed to the regeneration of 10 town centre properties by working with owners and businesses to deliver high quality, viable and attractive business premises. The scheme focused on internal and external improvements and bringing 1900 sqm of vacant floor space back into use to accommodate new and existing businesses and jobs.

**The Vacant to Viable: Homes Above Retail Premises** initiative enabled Registered Social Landlords to lease and renovate vacant space above retail premises to provide 24 new affordable homes in the previously untapped housing market.

In 2013 the Council completed a **major public realm improvement scheme** throughout the town centre which included new highway surfaces, high quality paving, street furniture and architectural lighting throughout the main shopping thoroughfare.

Further regeneration projects underway include:

The ambitious **Pontypridd YMCA** redevelopment project which will bring the historic 1910 venue back into use by creating a state-of-the-art mixed-use facility. A major redesign of the building will make it fully accessible, rationalising the use of internal spaces, creating new and improved facilities including offices and workspace for social enterprises and businesses and a suite of dedicated arts facilities.

With the support of **Transforming Towns** funding via the Welsh Government, the Council acquired the former **Bingo Hall and Angharad's nightclub and the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings**, all of which were vacant and in a dilapidated state of repair and having a hugely negative impact on the townscape and character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Redevelopment of these sites is fundamental to the future growth and success of the town and how this is realised could involve various forms and uses. All viable options will be explored to ensure the best outcome for the town.

**The Muni Arts Centre** redevelopment project will secure the building's heritage, establishing it as a unique regional arts and cultural venue for the 21st century. The Grade II listed building of architectural and historical significance which has been closed since late 2018 will be transformed into a fully accessible mixed-use cultural venue offering music, cinema and theatre with new and flexible facilities to maximise the use of space, enabling a wide range of arts, culture, events and community activities.

With support from the Valleys Regional Park programme, works have progressed in the Grade II listed **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park** to deliver a full refurbishment of all the main footways and paths across the park together with the installation of upgraded LED street lighting via new lighting columns, providing a secure and comfortable environment for all park users.

Further improvements are planned with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government to improve and rejuvenate the heritage features of the historic park. Improvements include refurbishment of key areas including the bandstand, sunken garden and rock outcrop area, new signage and interpretation and the delivery of a new training and activity centre.



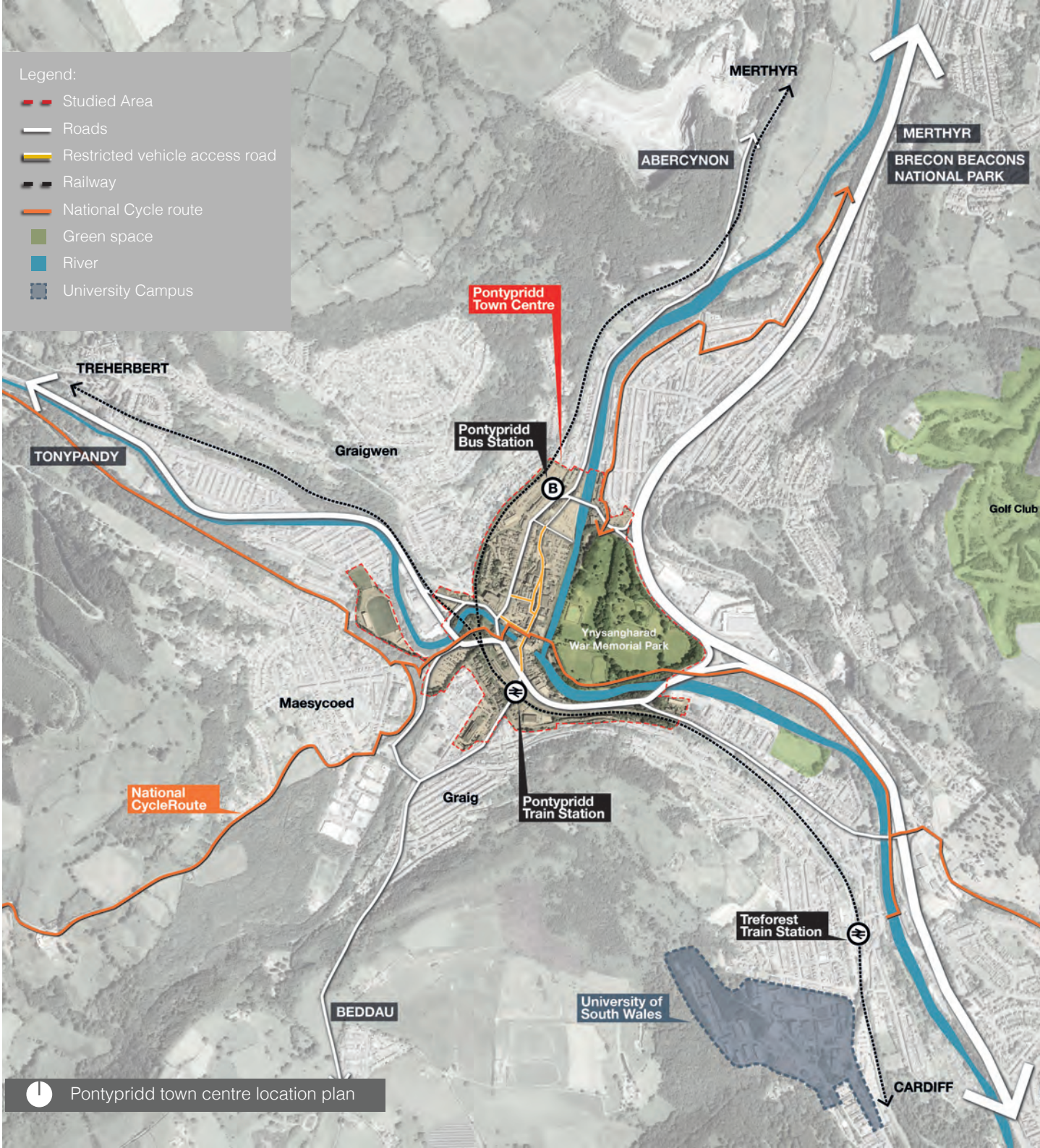
Restored Lido Ponty, National Lido of Wales



The Muni Arts Centre, a cultural and event venue



Restored Bandstand in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park



# 1.2 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

## WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking is an overarching approach to improving how a place looks, functions and is experienced. Placemaking requires a place to be viewed in its entirety, rather than focus being on isolated components. In this way placemaking opens up how a place is viewed and prevents a place being considered through a single lens.

In Wales placemaking is critical in planning for development and places, with Planning Policy Wales identifying it as the process for creating sustainable places and maximising wellbeing.

*“Placemaking” is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense”.*

*Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11*

Wales also has a Placemaking Charter which sets out six principles to promote through placemaking. These include: people and community; location; movement; mix of uses; public realm; and identity.

The placemaking plan embraces the policy approach of Planning Policy Wales and the Placemaking Charter.

## WHAT IS THE PLACEMAKING PLAN?

The placemaking plan is a tool that will be used to guide decision making. This will cover: development, building enhancement, infrastructure and place management.

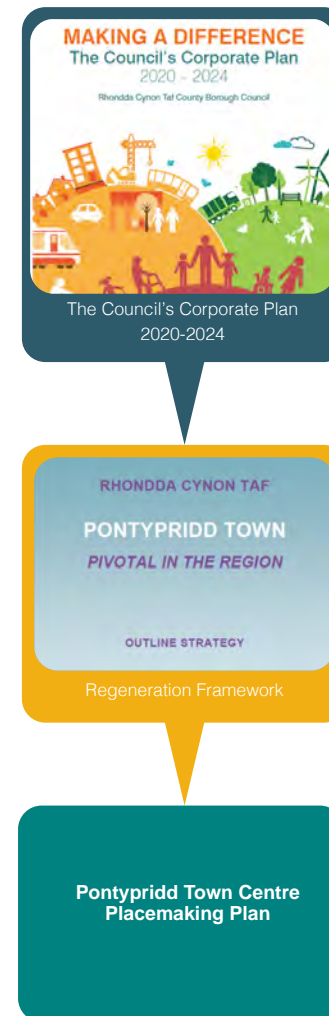
The placemaking plan identifies a means to deliver new investment to Pontypridd town centre that responds to the unique character of the town and the issues and opportunities that are present. The plan takes an overarching view of the key places that make up the town centre and proposes a series of bespoke projects that would strengthen the sense of place in each and combine to revitalise the town as a whole.

The placemaking plan has been prepared by The Urbanists, Mott MacDonald and Alder King. As client’s Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales have also shaped the plan through the collective expertise and knowledge of its officers.

The placemaking plan has therefore been prepared collaboratively and the proposals reflect a multi-dimensional approach to planning, designing and managing development and spaces.

A delivery plan will be prepared to help further shape the ideas and opportunities presented in the placemaking plan and attract the investment that is required to deliver them.

In addition to responding to national policy, the placemaking plan builds upon the local development and regeneration policy context. An overview of where the placemaking plan sits within the local policy framework is illustrated opposite.





The completed Llys Cadwyn scheme has transformed the northern entrance into the town centre, creating a new unique sense of place and providing the basis for a new riverside setting

# 1.3 INTRODUCTION: PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE TODAY

To help identify the ambitions and projects for the town centre, a baseline review was undertaken to identify the issues and opportunities that Pontypridd town centre currently faces. The analysis undertaken is included as an appendix to the placemaking plan through the themes of development and investment, movement, built environment and natural environment. A summary of the key matters identified is summarised below.

## Movement

- The bus station and railway station are located at opposite ends of the town. Better integration between modes is required and improved wayfinding between the two stations.
- Traffic movement currently dominates key entrances to the town centre and key routes within the centre.
- The connections from the town into Ynysangharad War Memorial park have been enhanced with the new bridge from Llys Cadwyn and reinstatement of the old bridge access. West-east pedestrian connections through the town could be improved to build on these improvements.
- There is limited active travel facilities in the town and active travel connections to the surrounding landscape are poor.
- Existing car park sites are not strategically located to serve the town centre.

## Built Environment

- There is limited sense of arrival and legibility at the southern gateway to the town centre that needs to be addressed through any future redevelopment.
- There are poor quality buildings at the entrances to the town and at key locations within the town that weaken the sense of arrival and place, and which need to be addressed through any future redevelopment.
- The town centre has a hierarchy of streets and spaces that could be revitalised to deliver a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

- The town centre has numerous heritage buildings, which if refurbished could become distinctive features within the townscape.
- Limited visual and physical access to the river front could be overcome through the delivery of new development.
- The river edge environment is poor due to roads, service yards and car parking occupying strategic positions, but this could be improved gradually through redevelopment of key premises on Taff Street and new development at key locations onto the rivers.

## Natural Environment

- The recent damaging flooding event caused by Storm Dennis confirms that the flood risk from the rivers Taff and Rhondda across large parts of Pontypridd, are tangible and significant. This requires the prompt development of a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy to prevent future damages.
- The green setting of the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and the rivers Taff and Rhondda need to be exploited.
- More tree planting and green infrastructure is required in the town centre and could be utilised to deliver Sustainable drainage systems that mitigate flood risk and improve climate resilience.
- The green infrastructure in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park could be better managed to improve its riverside setting.

## Development and Investment

- The southern gateway to the town centre is currently poor, but could be redeveloped to create new commercial opportunities and a distinctive and welcoming entrance into the town centre from the railway station.
- There is an opportunity to establish a northern gateway that integrates to the Llys Cadwyn development, and which provides for an integration of transport modes.
- Pontypridd Indoor Market is a key opportunity. Key investment has been delivered in the last 18 months that can be built on to create a diverse leisure and retail destination.
- There are key heritage buildings within the town that could be reused to become cultural and social destinations.
- There is an opportunity to diversify land uses through the centre by utilising the upper floors of buildings for new commercial and mixed use spaces.
- Significant development could be delivered through redevelopment of car parks in key locations.
- The town has a waterside setting that is under-utilised, but which could be activated to accommodate new leisure opportunities that can diversify the night time economy.
- The town centre would benefit from digital brand and smart town strategy.



# 1.4 INTRODUCTION: STRATEGIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Pontypridd's strategic location in the Capital City Region is a key advantage and planned investment will enhance its connectivity. A summary of the strategic transport and access opportunities for Pontypridd is identified below.

Pontypridd is part of the Cardiff Capital Region, which is currently benefiting from significant rail service improvements as a result of the South Wales Metro proposal and the City Deal. As a result of the programmed investment Pontypridd will be highly connected by train (there will be 12 in each direction every hour) and will benefit from improved rolling stock and shorter journey times to Cardiff and the wider region.

Improved rail connectivity to Pontypridd will provide a catalyst for the town centre to receive positive economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts by making areas of land more accessible to external investors. Increasing the integration of the town centre and railway station is therefore critical to the placemaking plan.

Pontypridd also benefits from direct access to strategic highway connections to the wider region via the A470, A4058, A4223 and A473. However, the presence of some of these routes within and adjacent to the town centre does present challenges to the functionality of the town centre.

The A4058 in particular requires consideration, since the route is the strategic connection into the Rhondda valleys and passes through the southern gateway to the town centre. At this location the route serves local highway connections and as such consists of a considerable area of highway infrastructure. It is also heavily trafficked during peak times. Combined these factors disconnect the railway station from the town centre, create a poor sense of arrival into the town and poor pedestrian environment.

A poor pedestrian environment and sense of arrival is also present on the A4223 (Gelliwastad Road, Morgan Street and Bridge Street), in the west and north of the town.

Addressing the impact that these strategic routes are having on the town is therefore a key requirement of the placemaking plan and a number of interventions have been identified to address this. Further transport modelling and assessment of the town highway network will be required to inform the detailed proposals to be taken forward.

Given the importance of transit and movement networks in realising the potential of Pontypridd town centre, the placemaking plan has identified key transport related problems and opportunities through a review of local and national policy documents and stakeholder engagement.

Issues identified include disconnected cycle routes, roads causing severance in the town centre and opportunities to enhance the river front and leisure offer in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

The stakeholder engagement process generated a set of agreed transport objectives for the town. These are:

- Objective 1 – Establish a positive 'sense of arrival' at Pontypridd Rail Station which links the station to the town centre;
- Objective 2 – Enhance the links between Pontypridd town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park to reinforce the Park's role as a 'green heart' to the town;
- Objective 3 – Support the development of the night-time economy and town centre residential development to make Pontypridd a vibrant place to live; and
- Objective 4 – Provide commercial space to support a diverse range of uses in order to create a town centre economy resilient to future changes.

A long-list of potential options were then assessed against each of the objectives to identify standalone and packaged transport projects, comprising low and medium impact schemes which can be implemented piecemeal or phased over time. Each project is identified as part of the placemaking plan (refer to section 3).

The interventions identified address the following key themes: pedestrian connectivity between the rail station and the town; improvements to station facilities and forecourt; rail and bus interchange improvements; wayfinding and signage; bus and Train service extension; refurbishment of key public spaces and pedestrian connections; refurbish and promote cultural / heritage assets; Active Travel infrastructure alongside the river; enhance existing river crossings; support residential and commercial development

# 2.0 PONTYPRIDD IN 2035: CORE AMBITIONS

To agree the core requirements and outcomes that the placemaking plan must address and deliver, a series of **core ambitions and design drivers** were identified for the town centre. These were identified to respond to the key issues and opportunities identified during the analysis, and were agreed iteratively through two workshops with key officers and personnel from Welsh Government, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Transport for Wales.

During the workshops the transport objectives for the town were also agreed. Improved transport infrastructure is key to delivering new development and placemaking initiatives in Pontypridd. The transport objectives were therefore identified alongside the core ambitions and key design drivers to ensure that the placemaking plan is underpinned by a robust transport approach that will help to deliver the key projects.

The core ambitions and design drivers are presented below.

## 1. A BUSINESS DESTINATION

.... with established development areas that provide **striking gateways to the town** and a series of **flexible workspace** that combine to make Pontypridd an attractive **place to invest and work**.

## 4. A GREEN WATERSIDE TOWN

.... with a **unique outlook** over the River Taff and the historic Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that provide an **unrivalled leisure and recreational setting and distinctive landscape**.

## 7. AN INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT TOWN

.... with a network of **unique streets and spaces** that are **safe and accessible, resilient and adaptable** to future challenges, optimise views of the **unique townscape** and riverside setting and provide **space for outdoor activity**.

## 2. A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

.... with a choice of **high quality new homes, accessible jobs** and a **bespoke leisure** offer delivered in an **unique riverside setting**.

## 5. A UNIQUE TOWNSCAPE

.... with **iconic heritage buildings** that are **celebrated** and have been reused to accommodate a mix of **vibrant modern uses**.

## 3. CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE

.... with **excellent pedestrian connections** between the town centre and the railway and bus stations and **high-quality cycle infrastructure** that establishes the town as **base to explore the wider valleys landscape**.

## 6. A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DESTINATION

.... with an annual programme of events for Pontypridd that **attract visitors**, and establish the centre as a **unique cultural and social destination**.



The William Edwards Bridge is a key heritage asset and a distinctive feature at the northern entrance to the town centre

# 2.1 PONTYPRIDD IN 2035: DESIGN DRIVERS



## DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateways into Pontypridd.
- Redevelop the upper storeys of existing units to deliver new homes and workspaces.



## CONNECTIVITY

- Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.
- Establish a better integration between transport modes at the railway station.
- Provide a new train halt adjacent to the bus station that will create a new interchange.
- Improve west/east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.
- Improve cycle connectivity across the town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.



## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Use planting to integrate Ynysangharad War Memorial Park into the town centre.
- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas to soften the landscape.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.

# 2.1 PONTYPRIDD IN 2035: DESIGN DRIVERS



## TOWNSCAPE

- Establish new gateways into the town.
- Create new frontages onto the river.
- Restore the town's historic architecture, including the grade II listed market building.
- Increase building heights around key nodal locations to create new iconic landmarks enclosure.



## CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

- Establish Ynysangharad War Memorial Park as a social and cultural beacon and destination.
- Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.
- Diversify the retail and leisure offer provided in Pontypridd Market.
- Establish an annual programme of events to be held throughout the town.



## PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve links to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.

# 3.0 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

The ambitions, design drivers and transport objectives have led to the identification of a series of projects for the town centre. Each of these would work towards achieving the core ambitions and addressing the design drivers; collectively they will transform Pontypridd town centre.

Delivery of the projects would:

- Establish new gateways into the town.
- Unlock large-scale commercial development opportunities.
- Deliver improved integration between public transport modes.
- Restore traditional buildings with new active land uses.
- Revitalise Pontypridd Market.
- Revive the town's traditional townscape.
- Create a new riverside and parkland setting.
- Make the town centre more resilient to future flood events that might occur.
- Create spaces for social and cultural events.
- Develop a stronger digital presence and brand.

The projects are grouped into two distinct areas:

1. Projects associated with key areas of the town centre.
2. Complementary projects that are digital, non physical and located just outside of the town centre, but would help revitalise the centre.

More detail on each of these project areas is provided over the following pages.

# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

The majority of the placemaking plan projects can be grouped into the key action areas in the town centre. These are outlined below.

## Southern Gateway

A new gateway to the town that has a range of commercial uses in the railway station, better integration of transport modes, significant redevelopment of the key development blocks, a direct pedestrian connection across the A4058 and an improved public realm that opens the entrance to the town and establishes a riverside plaza.

## Town Centre Core

A reinforced core of refurbished buildings that provide a selection of unique new homes and workspace with a riverside setting, new riverside development that will provide workspace, homes and leisure uses, a riverside walkway and better pedestrian connections and spaces.

## Market Quarter

A bespoke Market Quarter within the Town Centre Core that provides a rejuvenated market building and a unique retail and leisure offer in an historic setting, which is the heart to the town centre.

## Northern Gateway

A new northern gateway to the town that includes a redeveloped bus station, new train halt, town centre car park, further workspace development, art and culture park and better pedestrian routes.

## Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

A heritage park that has a natural riverside setting, diverse sport and recreational offer, is a hub for cultural and social events and base from which to explore the Valleys Regional Park.



The town action areas

# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

## SOUTHERN GATEWAY

- Utilise existing under-utilised spaces in Pontypridd Railway Station for supporting office space and retail.
- Reconfigure railway station forecourt to enhance the sense of arrival at the station and provide public space (with new hard landscape, planting, street furniture and lighting) that provides space for retail units and work space.
- Deliver bus bays, disabled parking and taxi waiting area outside the station as part of the reconfiguration of the station forecourt.
- Improve the pedestrian crossing route over the A4058 to provide a direct connection for pedestrian and cyclists between High Street and the railway station. Any future crossing to be designed as part of new station forecourt space.
- Redevelopment of key existing urban blocks opposite the railway station, including the former Bingo Hall, M&S and Dorothy Perkins / Burtons buildings, to provide a distinctive southern gateway into the town and improve the interface between the town centre and the rivers Rhondda and Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. New floorspace created to provide office, residential, retail, leisure and hotel uses that stimulate the night time economy.
- Redevelop Sardis House to provide new office space with a direct access to the railway station platform.
- Redevelop Sardis Road car park to provide new office / mixed use space with direct access to the railway station. Element of existing car parking capacity to be retained. Existing connection to the station to be refurbished to provide a suitable pedestrian access.



Southern Gateway



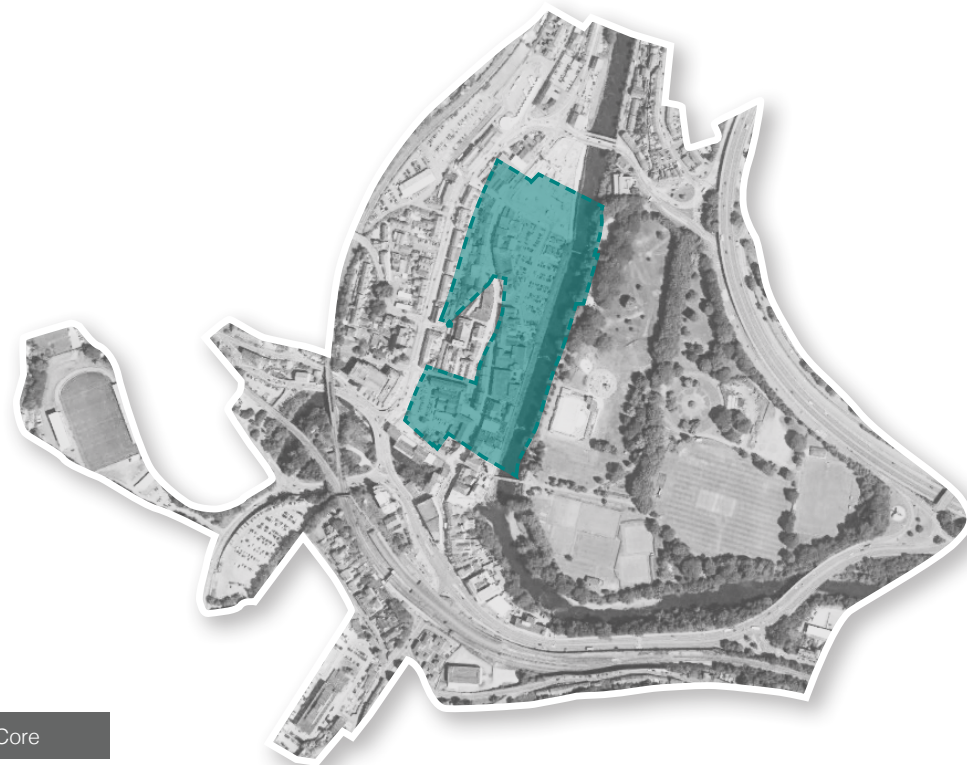
# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

## TOWN CENTRE CORE

- Improve the interaction between the town centre, the River Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park by providing active edges to the rear elevations of properties on Taff Street. New uses could include retail at ground level with residential and / or small scale office space on upper floors. Refurbish rear facades where no redevelopment proposed.
- Reintroduce waterfront paths and spaces along the rear of Taff Street to connect the Llys Cadwyn development and Gas Road car park site with the commercial uses that could be delivered on High Street.
- Redevelop upper floors of properties on Taff Street to deliver new apartments and small-scale work spaces. Such spaces will diversify the land uses in the town centre and increase activity in the town beyond traditional retail hours.
- Improve the townscape through redevelopment of poor quality buildings, and restoration of heritage buildings so that their architectural style is celebrated and prominent in the centre's townscape.
- Address inconsistencies in storey heights throughout the town centre by redeveloping of small-scale low quality buildings
- Integrate flexible event spaces into the town centre streets.
- Increase extent of green infrastructure along Taff Street, Crossbrook Street, Gelliwastad Road and Penuel Lane. This could include trees, plants, greenwalls and open spaces.
- Improve the aesthetic appearance of the alleyways connecting the town centre to the River Taff and bridge access to the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Improve the quality and connectivity of national cycle route 4 & 8 through the town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Reduce extent of road infrastructure on Gelliwastad Road (while retaining its role as a key service route) to reduce dominance of vehicle movement and reconnect the core of the town centre with the

architectural heritage and community services located there (the Muni Arts Centre and St Catherine's Church).

- Redesign the Gas Road Car Park to create a more attractive space that is pedestrian friendly and better integrated to the proposed riverside walkway and adjacent Llys Cadwyn development. Existing car parking function to be retained along with the servicing arrangements to the properties on Taff Street.



Town Centre Core

# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

## MARKET QUARTER

- Restore and sensitively redevelop the grade II listed Pontypridd Indoor Market to create a distinctive cultural and leisure destination that forms a heart to the town centre. The proposal would include sensitively refurbishing and enhancing the building and revitalising the existing retail offer to provide excellent quality local produce and more diverse leisure uses in a unique setting.
- Redevelop upper floors of properties on Market Street / Church Street to deliver new apartments and small scale work spaces. Such spaces will diversify the land uses in the Market Quarter and increase activity in the Market Quarter beyond traditional retail hours.
- Improve the townscape through redevelopment of poor quality buildings and restoration of heritage buildings so that their architectural style is celebrated and prominent in the Market Quarter townscape.
- Address inconsistencies in storey heights throughout the Market Quarter by redeveloping of small scale low quality buildings.
- Increase extent of green infrastructure along Market Street / Church Street. This could include trees, plants, greenwalls, and open spaces.
- Refurbish and reuse the Old Town Hall building as a key and distinctive event space.



Market Quarter

# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

## NORTHERN GATEWAY

- Redevelop and restore the Pontypridd YMCA to create a fully accessible multi-purpose facility including offices and workspace for social enterprises and businesses and a suite of dedicated arts facilities.
- Redevelop and refurbish properties adjacent to the YMCA on Taff Street to provide a more appropriate frontage to the Llys Cadwyn development.
- Enhance the existing bus station and exploit adjacent opportunities to deliver further office space development.
- Explore options and viability to deliver a South Wales Metro enhancement adjacent to the bus station that would establish a new interchange.
- Rationalise parking arrangements in the area to serve a new interchange, meet town centre demand and transition to include electric charging facilities and low carbon technologies.
- Provide new public realm around enhanced bus station and future office space that provides high quality pedestrian connections to the Llys Cadwyn development and provide an appropriate sense of arrival to the town centre.
- Create cultural park where temporary exhibitions can be held to the rear of Pontypridd Museum with views over the William Edwards Bridge.
- Redevelop the Muni Arts Centre for cultural uses.
- Explore redevelopment opportunities on Berw Road to provide office / mixed use space.



Northern Gateway

# 3.1 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: KEY ACTION AREAS

## YNYSSANGHARAD WAR MEMORIAL PARK

- Develop leisure use at the northern entrance to the Park that offers a riverside setting.
- Provide an improved northern access into the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that is integrated to a new public space that provides improved access to the River Taff and could act as an event space.
- Enhance and encourage interaction with the River Taff through the introduction of water sport and recreation offer.
- Enhance visual and physical connectivity along the eastern bank of the river through better management and maintenance of existing green infrastructure.
- Create a flexible indoor/outdoor space in the Park where leisure and cultural events can be held.
- Establish a cycle hub that would be a key base from which to explore the Taff Trail and wider Valleys Regional Park. Facilities could include rental facilities, trail and destination information, a workshop and light refreshment.
- Enhance the infrastructure at the cricket ground to provide opportunities for Glamorgan Cricket Club to play fixture at the ground.
- Development of new changing place facilities and enhancements to access throughout the Park so that it performs its role as a Valleys Regional Park destination gateway site.
- Development of a Training and Activity Centre.



Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

# 3.2 THE PLACEMAKING PLAN: SUPPORTING PROJECTS

In addition to focussed town centre area projects, a series of complementary projects have been identified that will help to revitalise the town centre. These include digital connectivity and infrastructure projects, non physical; projects like events and physical projects located just outside of the town centre. Such projects include:

- Establish a health campus at Dewi Sant Hospital.
- Establish a modern diverse sporting destination at Sardis Road that is both an elite regional facility and resource for local sporting clubs and community groups.
- Enhance legibility throughout the town by rationalising signage, maintaining visual connections through town and using hard landscape treatments, planting and lighting to direct movement at key junctions.
- Expand on the existing programme of events to develop a consistent calendar of activity that includes heritage, food, music and recreation. (1).
- Implement a series of temporary placemaking measures that can create interest and activity in the town centre. (2).
- Coordinate lighting throughout the town to enhance key buildings and public spaces. (3).
- Deliver later evening train and bus services with integrated ticketing.
- Incorporate bike hire facilities in key gateways to the town and at central locations.
- Improve mapping and signage to the formal and informal cycle routes that connect to the wider region.

- Improve marketing and communications with the University of South Wales to attract students to visit and live in the town.
- Introduce free wifi across the town.
- Improve digital infrastructure in the town to encourage new development.
- Create a digital high street through development of an app that promotes the town centre and its businesses.
- Create existing digital resources (online maps/council website/app) to aid wayfinding for the cycle and walking opportunities around Pontypridd and the wider Valleys Regional Park.
- Establish a brand and marketing strategy for the town, that consistently promotes the leisure, tourism and retail offer.

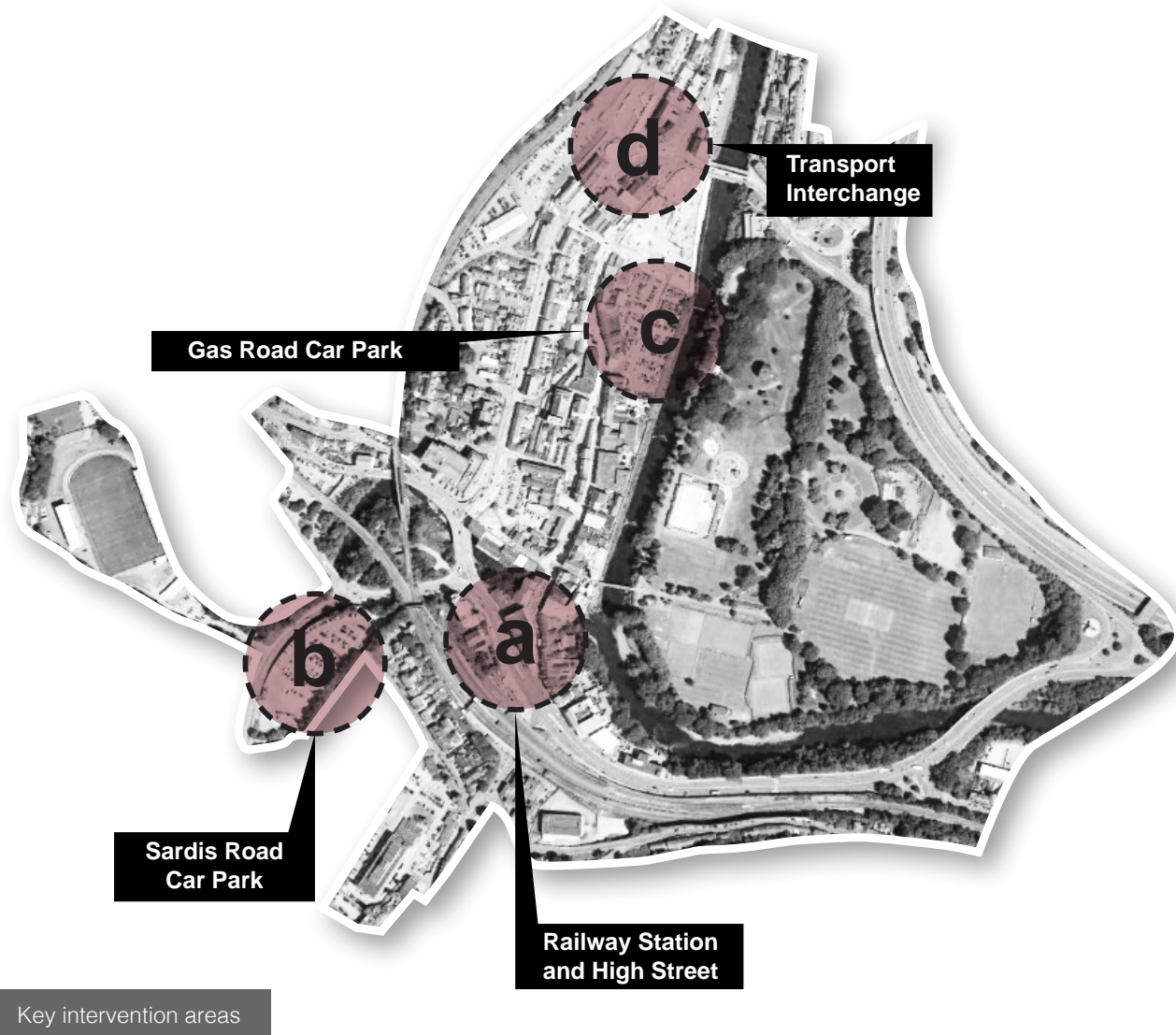


# 4.0 KEY INTERVENTIONS

Within each of the key spatial areas, there are sites of particular opportunity and importance to the placemaking plan. These sites can accommodate interventions that are of significant scale and would have substantial impact in transforming the town centre and the role that it performs in the Capital City Region. These sites include:

- Railway Station and High Street in the Southern Gateway (A).
- Sardis Road Car Park in the Southern Gateway (B).
- Gas Road Car Park in the Town Centre Core (C).
- Bus Station in the Northern Gateway (D).

Further detail on the interventions that can be delivered on these sites is provided below.





Pontypridd Train Station



(B) Sardis Road Car Park



(C) Gas Road Car Park



(D) Pontypridd Bus Station

# 4.1 KEY INTERVENTIONS RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET

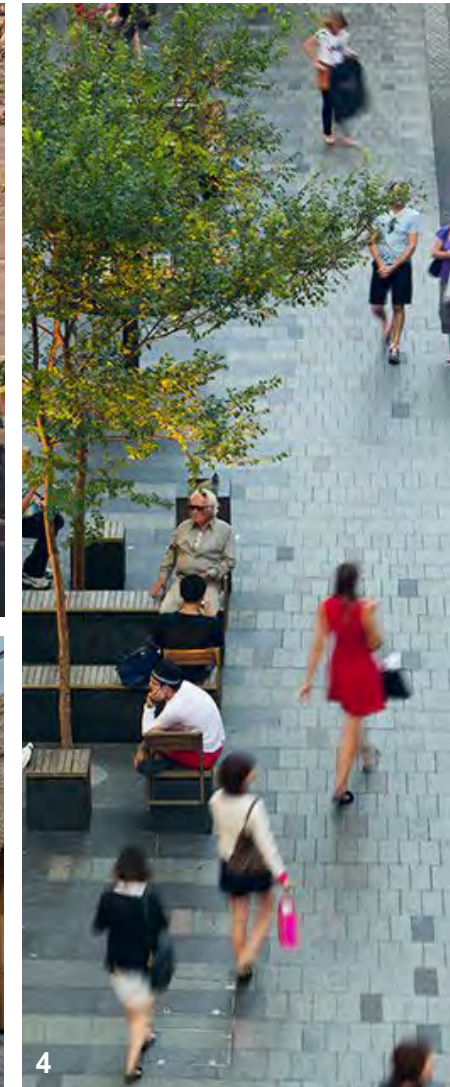
The Railway Station and High Street provide the Southern Gateway to the town. This is the first area that people experience when entering the town and is therefore the key place to establish an inspiring entrance and make visual connections to the town's river and parkland setting.

A series of redevelopment proposals could be delivered in this area to provide a distinctive sense of arrival and new floorspace that could provide new workspace, leisure uses and a hotel.

The redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall site presents a key opportunity as the property is prominently located and is vacant. Redevelopment could transform the site into a distinctive mixed use development that defines the southern entrance into the town centre and provide new homes, hotel, workspace or retail uses. Redevelopment of the site is therefore a key priority. (1).

New development delivered in this area would be of high architectural quality to provide the statement entrance required, exploit opportunities to create a distinctive interface with the River Taff and River Rhondda, establish views over Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and create excellent quality spaces for people by redeveloping the site of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings. The scale of development would be agreed through the detailed design process. (2, 3,4 and 7). More detailed proposals can be found in the accompanying Southern Gateway Masterplan Report.

New commercial uses could also be delivered within the railway station, where there is significant amounts of under utilised space that could be used for retail, leisure uses and flexible workspace (5, 6 and 8). New development delivered would need to be appropriate to the historical character of the station and contribute to its restoration.





# 4.1 KEY INTERVENTIONS: RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET



In this area, there is also an opportunity to improve the pedestrian connectivity between the railway station, the town centre and adjacent residential areas, introduce more active travel infrastructure and better integrate the railway station to local bus and taxi services.

To improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and High Street improved pedestrian options to cross the A4058 is required. This could be achieved by a new single span crossing directly from the station entrance to the top of High Street via new plazas outside the station and at the top of High Street. (9). A footbridge that provides direct access between the railway station platform and High Street could also be considered. (10). Any footbridge would need to be of the highest architectural quality.

In order to inform a crossing at grade further transport modelling would be required to inform the viability of the design and amendments required to the highway network and signal operation.

To improve connectivity between the station and the residential area to the south of the station enhancements are required to the High Street bridge.

More active travel infrastructure in the form of cycle storage and rental facilities could be accommodated in the new station plaza, which could be serviced by a variety of cycle routes that connect to the wider local area.

Better integration of transport modes could be achieved through incorporation of bus and taxi waiting areas into the exterior of the station plaza. Drop off areas for disabled passengers could also be accommodated in this location. (11 and 12).



# KEY INTERVENTIONS RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET

## FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- **A Business Destination** - Modern workspaces with excellent access to the railway station would be provided as part of the new floorspace to be created.
- **A Great Place to Live** - A section of new homes with river or park views and new leisure and retail uses with access to unique riverside plazas would be provided.
- **Connected and Accessible** - The proposed pedestrian crossing across the A4058 would improve connectivity between the town centre and the railway station while the new plaza would include space for better integration of transport modes.
- **A Green Waterside Town** - The majority of the developments proposed would have views of the River Rhondda or Taff while Taff Street would accommodate more soft landscape features.
- **A Unique Townscape** - The development would add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape.
- **A Cultural and Social Destination** - The leisure and retail offer included in the new development would enhance the town's reputation as a social destination.
- **An Inclusive and Resilient Town** - The new pedestrian routes across the A4058 would create a safe and accessible route into the town, while the plazas would provide unique outdoor settings and entrance spaces to sustain safe social activity and local businesses.

## FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



### DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



### CONNECTIVITY

- Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.
- Establish a better integration between transport modes at the railway station.



### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



### TOWNSCAPE

- Establish new gateways into the town.
- Create new frontages onto the river.



### CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

- Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.



### PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.

# 4.1 KEY INTERVENTIONS: RAILWAY STATION & HIGH STREET

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Sketch showing new development and pedestrian crossing

# 4.2 KEY INTERVENTIONS: SARDIS ROAD CAR PARK



Sardis Road Car Park has a direct access into Pontypridd railway station, which has excellent connectivity by rail, and is served by a strategic highway connection. It is also in public sector ownership. Each of these attributes make the site a key future opportunity, and subject to market demand, part of the site could be brought forward for mixed use development or new workspaces. (1).

The site currently performs an important role in providing car parking provision for the town. An element of parking would need to be safeguarded in any future redevelopment if demand for its use remains.

As part of any redevelopment, high quality public space and amenity space should be provided for future occupants. (2 and 3).

The redevelopment proposals should also enhance the existing footbridge access to the railway station to make the route safer and more pleasant. As part of the upgrade of the footbridge consideration should be given to establishing a strong landscape infrastructure along the route and connecting the route to Sardis House (3, 5 and 6).

Redevelopment of Sardis House presents an additional opportunity in this area. The premises is also in public sector ownership and could have a direct access to the railway station. The site therefore presents another opportunity to deliver an exemplar transport orientated development that provides office / mixed use space (4).

The redevelopment proposals should work in synergy with the interventions of the Railway Station and High Street.



# 4.2 KEY INTERVENTIONS: SARDIS ROAD CAR PARK

## FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- **A Business Destination** - Modern workspaces with direct access to the railway station would be provided.
- **Connected and Accessible** - An upgrade to the existing footbridge would improve access into the railway station and town centre, while other enhancements to adjacent pedestrian infrastructure would further strengthen the site's accessibility.
- **A Green Waterside Town** - Soft landscape features incorporated into the footbridge would provide a unique green feature for the town, while planting in new public areas would increase the volume of green infrastructure in the town.
- **A Unique Townscape** - The development would add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape
- **A Cultural and Social Destination** - The new enhanced space could be a setting for cultural and social activities.
- **An Inclusive and Resilient Town** - The public realm, outdoor recreational space and linear park access to the railway station would provide a unique outdoor setting.

## FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



### DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



### TOWNSCAPE

- Establish new gateways into the town.



### CONNECTIVITY

- Improve pedestrian connectivity between the railway station and the town.



### PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.



### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.

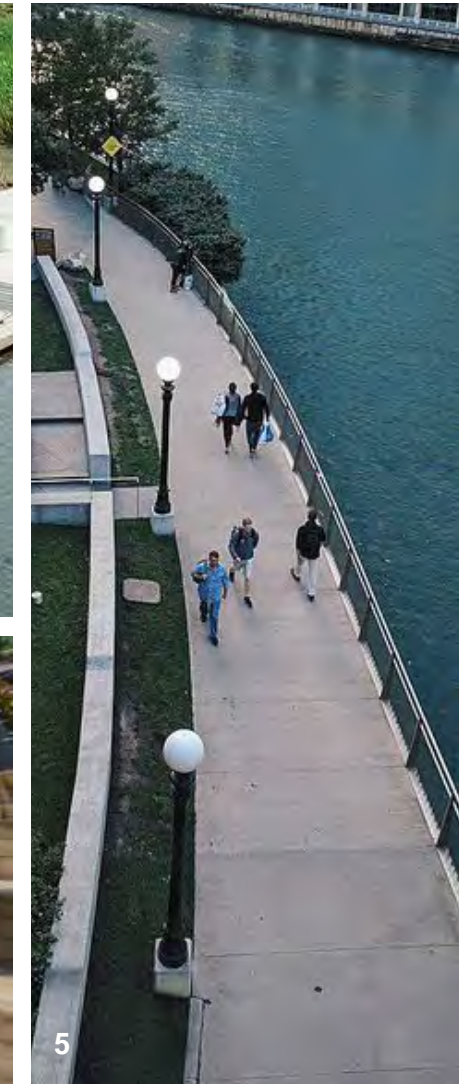
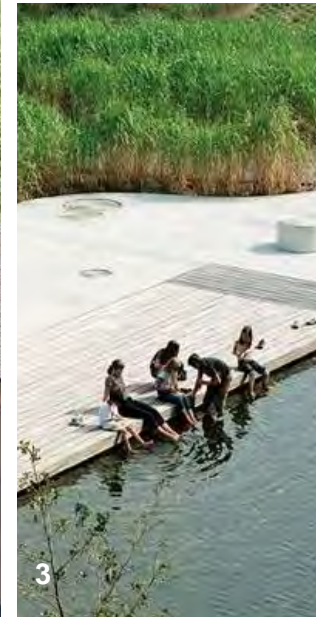
# 4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK

The Gas Road Car Park site is located centrally within the placemaking plan area and has a prime position adjacent to the River Taff and the Llys Cadwyn development. The site is also in public sector ownership.

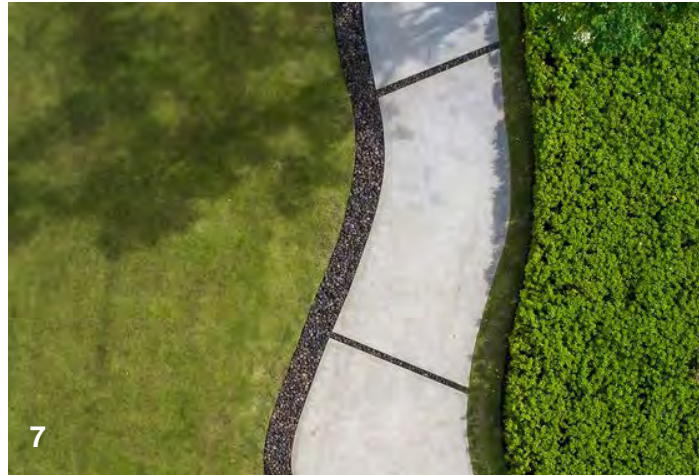
The space is currently used as a town centre car park, that is well-used, but detracts from the amenity of this part of the town centre and prevents opportunities to exploit the riverside setting. With thoughtful design, the site could be transformed into a new multifunctional space that retains town centre car parking provision, but also provides a new green outdoor space for residents and visitors to the town.

Initially it is anticipated that car parking provision will likely need to remain as currently provided, but over time as car usage reduces and more people use an enhanced public transport network there may be opportunities to reduce the parking provision to create more public green space.

The location of the Gas Road Car Park site means that it is perfectly located to better integrate the town centre to the river and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, provide a distinctive outdoor setting to Llys Cadwyn and connect the redevelopment site with the proposed river walkway (5) that would be located to the rear of Taff Street and connect Llys Cadwyn with new development proposed on High Street. The design of the new space would require close coordination with Natural Resources Wales, but the key focus shall be on greening a site with plenty of green infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage Systems that could contribute to improving the flood resilience of the town centre. (6, 7, 8, 9 & 10). The space should also be designed to provide distinctive features that would make the area a great place to socialise. (1, 2, 3, 4 & 9).



# 4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK



Any commercial development on the site would likely be moderate in nature, in recognition of the flood risk, with uses limited to a flexible cafe type use that could be designed so that it would not be greatly impacted by a flood incident. (12 & 13).

Any future proposals for redevelopment of buildings on Taff Street adjacent to Gas Road Car Park should consider opportunities to overlook the new space. (11).

As part of the redevelopment of the site, pedestrian access to Taff Street and access for businesses on Penuel Lane would need to be safeguarded. A portion of the town centre car park should also be retained for use by disabled visitors to the town centre.



# 4.3 KEY INTERVENTIONS: GAS ROAD CAR PARK

## FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- **A Business Destination** - An enhanced public space with (retention of some town centre parking) would benefit existing businesses and encourage new investment. The space could also help facilitate the proposed riverside walkway to the rear of Taff Street.
- **Connected and Accessible** - Enhancement of the car park would create a better arrival point into the town by car and improve the pedestrian connection to Taff Street. Car park spaces for disabled visitors would be kept to ensure accessibility is maintained.
- **A Green Waterside Town** - Enhancement of the car park would provide an improved setting and connection between the town centre and the River Taff and the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. It would also provide an opportunity to deliver new areas of planting.
- **A Unique Townscape** - The new space could add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape and transform a poor public realm into a new engaging space for people to use.
- **A Cultural and Social Destination** - The new enhanced space could be a setting for cultural and social activities.
- **An Inclusive and Resilient Town** - Enhancement of the car park would create a more engaging pedestrian environment, and create an opportunity to establish the unique riverside walkway. A new public space would provide outdoor areas designed to sustain safe social activity. Through careful design it could also help to mitigate flooding in this part of the town.

## FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



### DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



### TOWNSCAPE

- Create new frontages onto the river.



### CONNECTIVITY

- Improve west/east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.



### CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

- Create a varied leisure offer that has riverside presence.



### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Establish a unique waterside setting for the town.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.



### PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.





- Building**
  - Proposed
  - Refurbished
  - Existing
- Hardscape**
  - Proposed Plaza / Key Public Space
  - Existing Plaza / Key Public Space
  - Proposed Pedestrian Area / Street
  - Existing Pedestrian Area / Street
  - Proposed Reinforced Area
  - Existing Road
  - Existing Plot
  - Railway
  - Proposed Bike Path
  - Proposed Shared Pedestrian and cycle lane
  - Bus Lane
- Softscape**
  - Green Space
  - Buffering Green
  - River
  - Water Feature
  - Proposed Tree
  - Existing Tree
- Other**
  - Boundary
  - Demolition Line

- ① Retained Car Park
- ② Existing Sub-Station
- ③ Retained Service Lane
- ④ Kiosk with Outdoor Seats
- ⑤ Green Square
- ⑥ Steps / Amphitheatre
- ⑦ Riverfront Path
- ⑧ Riverside Plaza
- ⑨ Terraced Riverfront
- ⑩ Event Space in Ynysangharad Park
- ⑪ Regenerated Public Realm
- ⑫ Wider Footpath with Cycle path
- ⑬ Old Theatre refurbishment

Concept design for Gas Road car park enhancement where parking capacity could be reduced over the long-term

# 4.4 KEY INTERVENTIONS TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

Pontypridd bus station is located at the northern extent of the town centre adjacent to the Aberdare and Merthyr railway lines. It is also located in close proximity to a town centre car park and Llys Cadwyn. There is a long-term opportunity to better integrate transport modes in this location, increase the connectivity of the town and its key development sites by public transport and through high quality design create a new northern gateway to the town. (1 and 3).

As part of enhancements to the transport infrastructure, opportunities to deliver new commercial floorspace for some retail uses and workspace might be unlocked. Any new development delivered should establish a great sense of arrival and consist of landscape pedestrian routes and plazas that provide clear connections into the town and provide space for people and businesses to use (2 and 4).

As part of the proposals, strong visual connections to the William Edwards Bridge should be established, where there are opportunities to establish an external cultural and art park with views over the river. (5, 6 and 7).



# 4.4 KEY INTERVENTIONS: TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

## FULFILLED CORE AMBITIONS:

- **A Business Destination** - Provision of workspace would continue to provide for demand created by improved connectivity by public transport and development of key town centre sites.
- **A Great Place to Live** - Better integration of transport modes would improve connectivity to the north of the town and make it easier for residents of the town and surrounding settlements to travel.
- **Connected and Accessible** - An interchange would improve the accessibility into the north of the town and connect transport modes, while the new routes and plaza would improve pedestrian connectivity into the town.
- **A Green Waterside Town** - Soft landscape would be delivered in the new pedestrian routes and square to soften the public realm and assimilate the new development to Pontypridd Museum and the River Taff.
- **A Unique Townscape** - The development would create a new gateway into the town and add a contemporary design to the town's traditional townscape.
- **A Cultural and Social Destination** - Retail uses would be delivered as part of the bus station that would activate the new pedestrian routes and square.
- **An Inclusive and Resilient Town** - New pedestrian routes and spaces provide the opportunity to establish streets and places for people and a new gateway that offers a great sense of arrival. The presence of the Pontypridd Museum and Williams Edwards Bridge provides an opportunity to incorporate the heritage of the town into the new gateway.

## FULFILLED DESIGN DRIVERS:



### DEVELOPMENT

- Unlock new development sites that will build on the Llys Cadwyn scheme and provide more work space, homes and leisure opportunities.
- Focus new development around key transport modes to create new gateway's into Pontypridd.



### TOWNSCAPE

- Establish new gateways into the town.



### CONNECTIVITY

- Provide a new train halt adjacent to the bus station that will create a new interchange.
- Improve the west / east pedestrian connectivity through the town.
- Retain suitable parking capacity while facilitating new development.



### PUBLIC REALM

- Create new plazas on the riverside and gateways into the town.
- Improve interaction with the River Taff and River Rhondda.



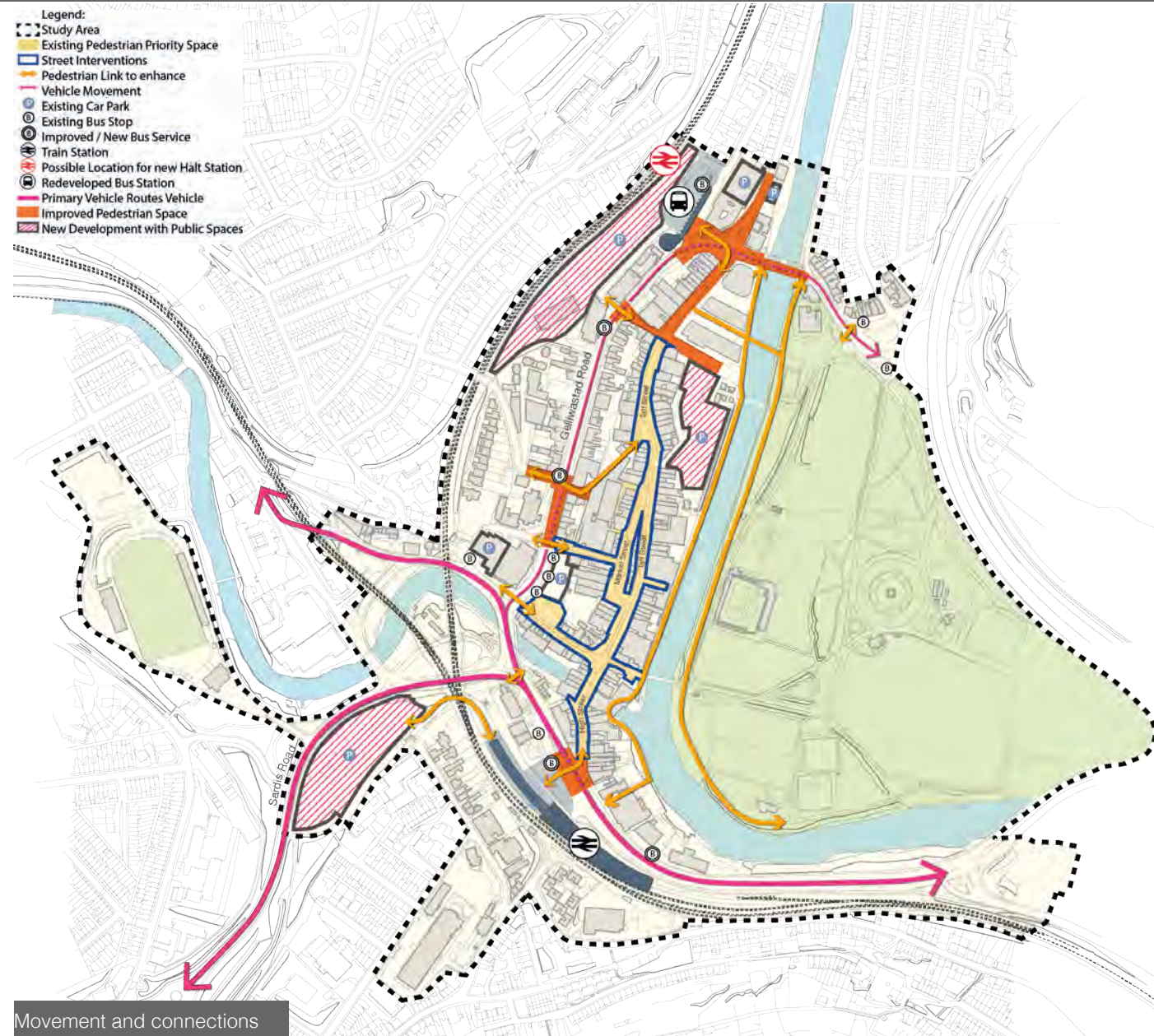
### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Incorporate more soft landscaping into road infrastructure and public realm areas.
- Introduce new green spaces and planting that can help to reduce surface water runoff and help mitigate future flood incidents.

# 5.0 MOVEMENT & CONNECTIONS

Each of the key areas of intervention provide opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment and create safe and attractive spaces that benefit visitors and businesses. The diagram opposite visualises how each of the key areas could work together to create a better connected town with streets and spaces that are great places for people to spend time in.

- Railway Station and High Street: New gateway to the town centre and better pedestrian and cycle connections and environment between the railway station, town centre and adjacent residential areas. New development opportunities on High Street provide an opportunity to establish new spaces that overlook the rivers Taff and Rhondda.
- Sardis Road Car Park and Sardis House: Improved connections could be delivered between the sites, the railway station and town centre via a new footbridge that is integrated into a distinctive soft and hard landscape. There are also other opportunities to enhance other key the pedestrian routes on Sardis Road.
- Gas Road Car Park: A distinctive riverside public space that creates a new entrance point into the town and softens the existing car park, which could be retained. It would also serve to create an enhanced setting for Llys Cadwyn and could integrate it to a new riverside pedestrian connection to the rear of Taff Street and High Street.
- Northern Interchange: New transport development would provide the opportunity for a new gateway to the north of the town that is integrated to new development, accentuates the historical fabric and prioritises the movement and experience of pedestrians.



Movement and connections

# 6.0 CONCLUSION

Pontypridd town centre has faced significant challenges in recent years; first navigating the challenges presented to the retail sector and then experiencing flooding that damaged large areas of the town and endangered the businesses and employees. Most recently the town like others across the UK has also had to navigate the socio-economic challenges posed by COVID-19. While the challenges associated with the pandemic are not yet over, there are reasons for optimism as throughout this period, the town centre and its community has demonstrated incredible sustained resilience.

This placemaking plan is founded on the town's unique setting and attributes and provides the basis for establishing Pontypridd as a unique place to work, live and visit. The vision set by this placemaking plan is ambitious in the current context, but it is also realistic and can be delivered by private and public stakeholders working collectively over a phased basis.

Investment into Pontypridd is already underway at the Llys Cadwyn development and the Metro will transform the connectivity of the town. The new development and placemaking opportunities identified in this plan respond directly to this exciting and changing context, and collectively they can enable Pontypridd to once again become a key economic, social and cultural centre that provides for the needs of its residents and also acts as a catalysts for spreading growth and prosperity through the wider Capital City Region.



View over Pontypridd town centre



# PONTYPRIDD SOUTHERN GATEWAY

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## DRAFT MASTERPLAN

February, 2022

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Issue date	03   02   2022
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Revision	02
Author	FV, LH
Checked by	LH

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Produced By:

On Behalf Of:





# INTRODUCTION

The Southern Gateway is identified in the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan as one of the key areas that can accommodate interventions and investment of significant scale, which would have a substantial impact in transforming the town centre and the role that it performs in growing the prosperity of the wider County Borough and Capital City Region.

As part of the development of the Placemaking Plan, the Council has been proactive in securing key properties in the area to ensure that it is able to manage the type of development delivered and ensure the highest design quality. In light of the acquisitions made there is an opportunity to further the design and placemaking approach for the southern gateway.

The Southern Gateway is the first area that people experience when entering the town from the south, including from Pontypridd Railway Station, which is a key station in the South Wales Metro. Transforming the area therefore provides the opportunity to create a distinct sense of arrival that is unique to Pontypridd; an opportunity to welcome people into the town; enhance its fine historic townscape; and open the town to its riverside and parkland setting.



View over Pontypridd town centre

# SOUTHERN GATEWAY MASTERPLAN

The proposed masterplan for the Southern Gateway visualises how the area can respond to the issues and opportunities identified and be transformed into a gateway place that:

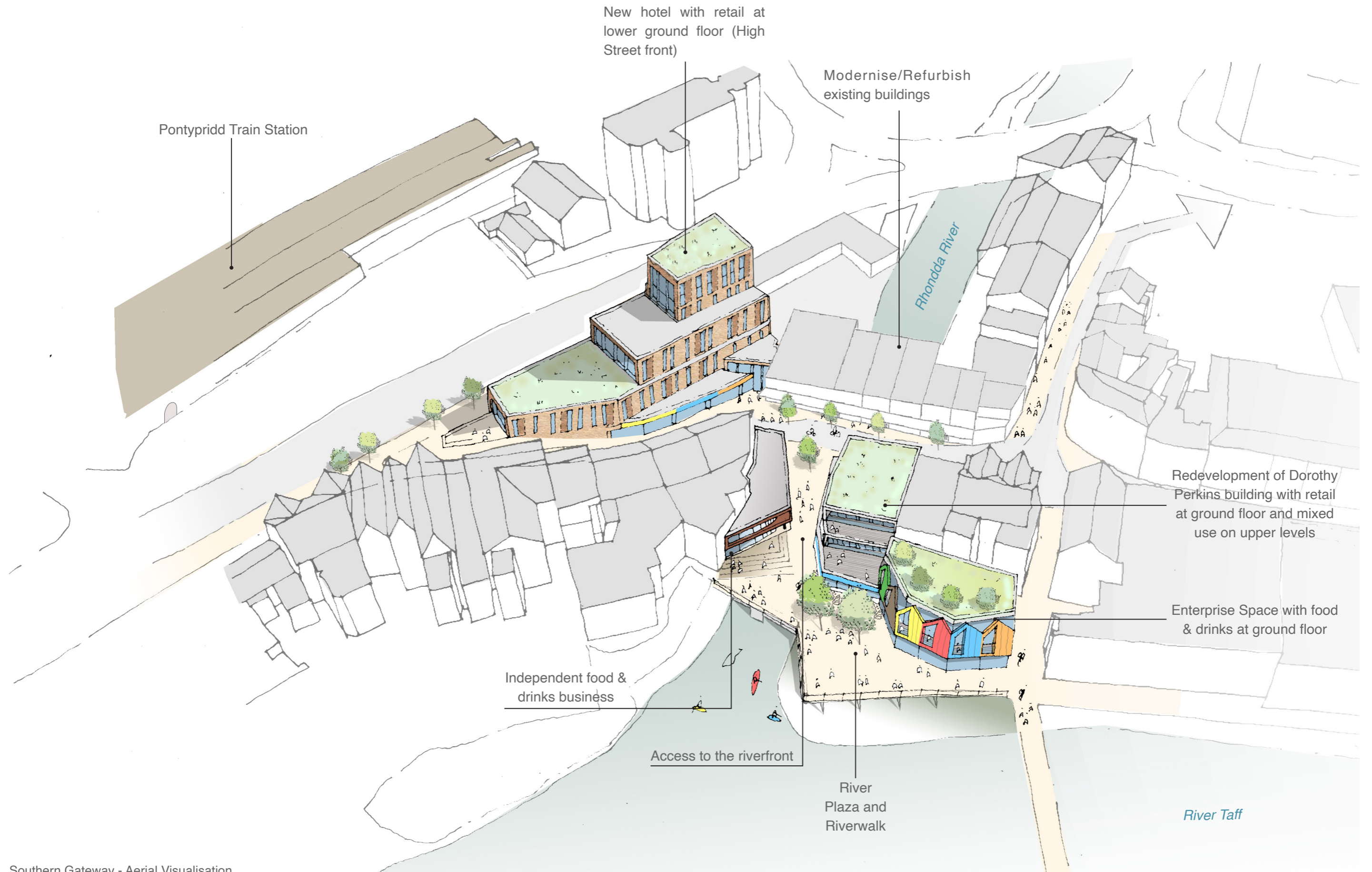
- delivers new commercial uses that would strengthen the vitality of the town centre;
- creates opportunities for new distinctive architecture and public spaces that build on the town's unique assets and strengthen its sense of place;
- and create a new riverside setting for the town.

The key intervention areas of the masterplan are as follows:

1. Former Bingo Hall and Angharads Nightclub.
2. The former Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins site.
3. The commercial block where Tesco is a tenant.
4. The streets and public spaces that surround these key development plots (including Sardis Road, High Street and Taff Street).



# SOUTHERN GATEWAY MASTERPLAN



Southern Gateway - Aerial Visualisation

# CONCLUSION

In recent years Pontypridd town centre has attracted significant investment that is transforming the town and re-establishing it as a place to visit, work and live. The Pontypridd Placemaking Plan presents an ambitious vision for Pontypridd that builds on the momentum and provides a framework for delivering investment that can deliver the ambition.

Currently the Southern Gateway area is not fulfilling its significant potential, and the masterplan presented in this document identifies how this can be rectified.

The redevelopment proposals will create a distinctive sense of arrival into the town; deliver new architecture; provide a diverse mix of floorspace that will diversify the town centre experience; improve physical and visual connectivity; and, create a unique riverside space and setting.

The Southern Gateway area presents a strategic opportunity to start delivering the Placemaking Plan on a major scale, creating significant momentum that can continue the town's significant growth.



Aerial view of Pontypridd town centre



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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) and INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2016 (IPA) - USE OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS DURING 2021 BY RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER, CLLR WEBBER

**Author: Judith Parry, Trading Standards & Registrar Service Manager**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

To enable Members to review for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021:

- 1.1 The Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (as amended) (RIPA); and
- 1.2 The Council's use of the Acquisition of Communications Data under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA).

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report; and
- 2.2 Acknowledge that investigatory powers in respect of covert surveillance and acquisition of communications data have been used in an appropriate manner that is consistent with the Council's RIPA and IPA policies during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure Members are kept apprised of how RIPA has been used during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and that it has been used in an appropriate manner consistent with the Council's RIPA policies.

- 3.2 The Cabinet is responsible for providing oversight for effective and appropriate use of specific investigatory powers under the Council's Corporate RIPA and IPA Policies; and to ensure that the policies remain fit for purpose.

#### **4. USE OF RIPA BY THE COUNCIL: 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY – 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

##### **Directed Surveillance and the use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources**

###### **New Authorisations**

- 4.1 During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 there were no authorisations in respect of directed surveillance. During the same period, there were no authorisations for the use of covert human intelligence sources.
- 4.2 Directed surveillance authorisations can be issued where it is necessary and proportionate in order to prevent or detect crime, or prevent disorder, where at least one of the offences is punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least six months or more or relates to the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco/nicotine.
- 4.3 The post pandemic recovery period has meant that some departments did not return to 'business as usual' during 2021. Over the previous years, the majority of covert surveillance authorisations related to fly-tipping in the county borough. Whilst this activity has, unfortunately, not diminished, the service area has been controlling through overt surveillance, for which RIPA authorisation is not required.
- 4.4 It is likely that 2022 will see a return to pre-pandemic activity in relation to authorisations. It is important that policies remain current to utilise this investigative tool when it is needed.

###### **Authorisations extant as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

- 4.5 There were no directed surveillance authorisations that were carried forward from the previous calendar year (2020). Similarly, no authorisations in respect of a Covert Human Intelligence Source extant remain extant.

###### **Authorisations extant as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022**

- 4.6 No authorisations have been carried forward into 2022.

###### **Human Rights Act Authorisations**

- 4.7 At the commencement of an investigation, officers may need to carry out non-overt work which does not fall within the statutory requirements for RIPA, predominantly because the work is carried out in a manner that there is little likelihood of obtaining private information (collateral intrusion). The use of non-overt enforcement techniques are assessed to ensure that they are carried out



in compliance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Such assessments are recorded on a Human Rights Act consideration form, whereby the necessity, proportionality and purpose of the activity are addressed, precautions are introduced to minimise collateral intrusion and the use of the technique is approved by a senior manager.

4.8 If this preparatory investigative work carried indicates that an investigation needs to be carried out using RIPA-based techniques, officers will apply for RIPA authorisation.

4.9 During the period of this report, the HRA authorisations were:

<i>Anti-social behaviour monitoring</i>	0
<i>Underage sales test purchasing</i>	0
<i>Proxy sales monitoring</i>	0
<i>Internet site monitoring</i>	18
<i>Vehicle test purchasing</i>	0

4.10 Of note this period is the return to pre-pandemic numbers in respect of internet site monitoring. Such sites are predominantly monitored for investigations into sale of illegal products via social media.

4.11 Members may recall that the last reporting period included monitoring in relation to diversification of trading practices and a move away from high street premises to online presence during the pandemic period, commonly termed 'from bricks to clicks'. As this mode of trading increases, it is important to ensure that all service areas who may be moving to online monitoring are up to date with HRA processes, and when such monitoring may move into the realms of covert surveillance.

4.12 Whilst monitoring through social media may initially be considered intrusive, in many instances it can lead to a level of remote interaction between service areas and businesses that results in timelier resolution to enquiries; this has proved of benefit during the pandemic period.

4.13 Activity in other areas, such as underage sales test purchasing is still curtailed by risk assessment, due to the need to use volunteers who would have to remove their face masks to demonstrate their age to prospective sellers of restricted goods. Any complaint of proxy sales can be investigated through use of premises CCTV, however no such complaints have been received during this period.

4.14 A review of HRA authorisations showed that on no occasion did they result in an improper infringement of a person's human rights.

### **Communications Data**

4.15 During the reporting period, three applications for communications data were submitted via the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) in relation to telephone numbers used as part of fraudulent activity.

- 4.16 All three applications related to traders resident outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf who had defrauded local residents.
- 4.17 Two of the traders proved untraceable: one having given false information to register the mobile phone, and one using a pre-paid mobile which limits the amount of intelligence available. The third application resulted in a joint investigation and court case alongside Shared Regulatory Services, and custodial sentences of 2 years and 4 years, with compensation for consumers involved.

**5. CONSULTATION/ INVOLVEMENT**

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Trading Standards & Registrar Service Manager who is responsible for operational oversight of RIPA matters.

**6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

There are no equality or diversity implications linked to this report.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications linked to the contents of this report.

**8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/ OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The report will ensure that effective governance arrangements with regards to RIPA remain in place by the Council.

**9. CONCLUSION**

The Senior Responsible Officer (Director of Legal & Democratic Services) considers that RIPA has been used appropriately in relation to all of the above uses of directed surveillance and acquiring of communications data and that RIPA has been used in a manner that is consistent with the Council's Corporate Policies.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**  
**AS AMENDED BY**  
**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**  
**28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

**ITEM: REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) and  
INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2016 (IPA) - USE OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS  
DURING 2021 BY RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC  
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE  
DEPUTY LEADER, CLLR WEBBER**

**Background Papers**

Freestanding Report.

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