



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Julia Nicholls - Democratic Services (01443 424098)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a virtual meeting of **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 2022** at **5.00 PM.**

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

TIME	ITEM	PAGE(S)
5 Minutes	ITEM 1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive disclosures of personal interests from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct 1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject 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 prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.	
5 Minutes	ITEM 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS	
5 Minutes	ITEM 3. MINUTES To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 24 th November (5pm meeting) and the 15 th December 2021.	7 - 30
5 Minutes	ITEM 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS	31 - 34

	To receive public questions in accordance with the Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rules.	
	OPEN GOVERNMENT:	
10 Minutes	ITEM 5. STATEMENTS In accordance with Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rule 2, to receive any statements from the Leader of the Council and/or statements from Cabinet Portfolio Holders:	
20 Minutes	ITEM 6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS To receive Members questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2. (N.B a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for questions on notice.)	35 - 44
	COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME - FOR MEMBERS INFORMATION Council Work Programme 2021/22	
	OFFICERS' REPORTS	
10 Minutes	ITEM 7. AUDIT WALES - ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2021 (RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL) To receive the Audit Wales report.	45 - 60
20 Minutes	ITEM 8. COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 - PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT To receive a report from the Director of Financial & Digital Services	61 - 74
10 Minutes	ITEM 9. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME To consider the report of the Director of Financial & Digital Services.	75 - 84
10 Minutes	ITEM 10. WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021 To receive the report of the Director of Finance & Digital Services	85 - 130
5 Minutes	ITEM 11. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS To note the report of the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications.	131 - 134
10 Minutes	ITEM 12. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP REPORT - THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF	135 - 148

	To receive the report from the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication.	
45 Minutes	<p>ITEM 13. NOTICES OF MOTION</p> <p>13A To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors, A Roberts, W. Lewis, L. M. Adams, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, H. Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, A. Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L. De- Vet, J. Edwards, J. Elliott, S. Evans, M Griffiths, G. Jones, M. Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, J. Harries, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, R. Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S. Pickering, S. Powell, S. Rees, J. Rosser, G. Stacey, M. Tegg, G. Thomas, W. Treeby, R. K. Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo:</p> <p>This Council recognises the efforts of the Welsh Government in helping to address the issue of fuel poverty in Wales, both in terms of providing financial support to low income households, and also through a range of home energy efficiency improvements through the Warm Homes initiative.</p> <p>Since 2009/10, over 67,000 lower income households have benefitted from energy efficiency improvements, at an estimated average saving on their energy bills of £300 with the added benefit of reduced carbon emissions.</p> <p>One element of the Welsh Government’s Warm Homes programme is the Nest Grant scheme, which offers a range of free, impartial advice and if eligible applicants can access a package of free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating or insulation, which can lower energy bills and benefit the applicant’s health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Excellent work has been carried out by the Council’s Heat and Save team, despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, with RCT being the 2nd highest referring area in 20-21 with 9% of Nest referrals being received from RCT residents and the 2nd highest area for successful installs at 12.5%. During 2021-2022 the Councils Heat & Save Department, have sent out 3,631 direct mailers to strategic areas in partnership with Nest offering a targeted intervention helping the correct households access Nest assistance.</p> <p>Despite this positive work undertaken in Wales and locally in RCT, the continually increasing costs of energy prices means more and more households are being pushed toward fuel poverty.</p> <p>This trend threatens the targets outlined in the Welsh Government’s Tackling Fuel Poverty 2021-2035 strategy and with the Welsh Government recently launching a consultation on shaping the next iteration of the Warm Homes programme, it is now an opportune time to examine the feasibility of broadening</p>	

the criteria for applications for the Nest scheme.

This Council therefore notes:

- The good work undertaken in Wales by the Welsh Government, and on a local level by the Council's Heat and Save team in tackling fuel poverty.

And resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to Julie James MS, the Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change, to make the necessary representations for the criteria of eligibility of the Nest (and other schemes) to be widened to allow further applications to be approved, to the benefit of our residents.

13B To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors, J. Barton, J. Edwards, L. M. Adams, D. R. Bevan, H. Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, A. Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L. De- Vet, J. Elliott, S. Evans, M Griffiths, G. Jones, M. Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, J. Harries, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S. Pickering, S. Powell, S. Rees, A Roberts, J. Rosser, G. Stacey, M. Tegg, G. Thomas, W. Treeby, R. K. Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo:

The rising cost of energy prices is being described as a "national crisis" affecting households, businesses and the energy companies themselves.

The significant rise in gas prices has seen the U.K. energy sector pay approximately £20bn more this year. With the energy price cap, which currently sits at £1,277 set to jump in April, households could see their energy bills alone rise by 50%, meaning that households could be as much as £1,200 a year worse off as National Insurance contributions also rise.

The rising price of energy has seen more than 20 energy suppliers go out of business since September, with many customers unfairly moved on to new providers on more expensive tariffs.

Whilst most consumers are protected by the energy price cap at £1,277 for normal domestic usage, the limit will rise on 1st April in line with an expected announcement in early February – meaning the U.K. Government is running out of time to tackle the crisis.

The charity National Energy Action (NEA) has warned that a record 6 million UK households will be in fuel poverty when the next increase in the energy price cap comes into force in April, and this view is compounded by the findings of the Resolution

Foundation think tank, which warned that millions of UK families face a "year of squeeze" in 2022 thanks to rising energy bills, stagnant wages and tax rises. The Bank of England has also said it expects inflation to reach 6% by the spring.

The Resolution Foundation have said that an increase in National Insurance contributions from April, along with an expected rise in energy bills in the same month could amount to a £1,200 hit to household finances, with low-income families forced to bear the brunt of these rises as they spend a greater proportion of their income on electricity and gas.

Earlier this month, a group of twenty Conservative MPs and Peers – including five former Ministers – called on the Prime Minister to take action to tackle the spiralling cost of living and alleviate the pressures on the lowest income families.

Energy suppliers including Good Energy, EDF and trade body Energy UK have called for government intervention, after the cost of gas in wholesale markets rose by more than 500% in less than a year. The increase has bankrupted over twenty providers, forced to buy wholesale gas at higher prices than they are allowed to sell it.

The Westminster Government's inaction is leading to "an enormous crisis for 2022" with energy bills potentially increasing by another 50% unless the government intervenes. Many other governments across Europe have reduced taxes and other levies, and similar action taken in the U.K. could save close to £200 a year on an average bill.

One solution voiced by the industry is to move green levies from energy bills to general taxation as it would mean higher earners pay more than lower income households, who spend a larger proportion of their income on essentials like heating.

They also argue it would lower the measure of inflation, saving the government money on inflation linked borrowing costs. The Treasury, however, appear not to favour this approach in reluctance to increase the general tax burden, and the indications are that the U.K. Government will instead seek to expand the £140 Warm Homes Discount Scheme as part of a targeted relief package to up to 6 million households.

Despite the Westminster Government's apparent inability to act decisively, residents in Wales and across RCT have benefitted from initiatives designed to cut fuel poverty and increase household energy efficiency.

The Welsh Government's Arbed am Byth scheme has delivered 206 energy measures to 113 homes in Penrhiwceiber, whilst RCT was also the 2nd highest referring area and 2nd highest successful install area in Wales in 2020-21. The Council's own RCT Heating Grant - which provides funding of up to £5,000 to assist up to 20 households who are at risk of fuel poverty but not eligible for other assistance schemes – has received 24 applications with 7 grants approved at a cost of £1,500 per property.

	<p>Council Officers are also working closely with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and other organisations to signpost individuals and families in need of support to the most appropriate stream of financial assistance.</p> <p>This Council therefore resolves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To call on the U.K. Government to honour the Brexit campaign promise of cutting the 5% VAT rate on energy bills, or to bring forward an alternative support package that provides additional funding – both to subsidise energy companies and to provide relief to households - so that families across the U.K., including here in Rhondda Cynon Taf, are not the ones to bear the brunt of price increases. - To request that the Council Leader writes to the Business Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister to request that urgent action is taken to address the energy price crisis. 	
	<p>ITEM 14. URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>To consider any items which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.</p>	

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

To: All Members of the Council



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 5.00pm.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor S Trask	Councillor R Williams
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor A Calvert
Councillor T Williams	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor D Williams	Councillor G Davies
Councillor S Pickering	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor S Rees	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S Evans	Councillor S Evans
Councillor S. Rees-Owen	Councillor M Forey
Councillor A Fox	Councillor M Norris
Councillor E Webster	Councillor M Webber
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor M Weaver	Councillor G Holmes
Councillor L Walker	Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor P Howe	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor R Yeo	Councillor P Jarman
Councillor G Thomas	Councillor A Morgan
Councillor M Adams	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor W Owen	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor S Belzak	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor G Jones
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor K Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor L Jones
Councillor L Hooper	Councillor J Harries
Councillor D Grehan	Councillor H Fychan
Councillor M Fidler Jones	Councillor J Williams
Councillor A Davies-Jones	Councillor J Davies
Councillor J Cullwick	Councillor A Cox
Councillor A Chapman	Councillor G Caple
Councillor J Barton	

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr P Nicholls, Service Director Legal Services

81 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors, H Boggis, J Edwards, E George, E Griffiths, G Hughes, J James (MS), R Lewis, M Powell, S M Powell, M Tegg and R Turner.

82 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations were made pertaining to the agenda:

Agenda Item 6- Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2020/21 Statement of Accounts and External Audit Report

Agenda Item 7 - Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) - Inter Authority Agreement

- Councillor A Crimmings- "I pay into the Local Authority Pension Scheme via my Council allowance and via Coleg y Cymoedd pension scheme"
- Councillor A Roberts – "I am a member of the local authority pension scheme and so is my son who works for the Authority"
- Councillor D Owen-Jones – "I am a member of the local authority pension scheme"
- Councillor S Bradwick – "I am the chairman of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Pension Board and RCT Council has a service level agreement with SWFRS to provide this service for our firefighters pensions"
- Councillor S Bradwick- "I have a pension from RCT and I pay now into the pension scheme as an Elected Member "
- Councillor L Jones – "I am a member of the local authority pension scheme"
- Councillor G Caple – "I am in receipt of a pension from the LGPS and I am also a Member of the Pension Fund Committee"
- Councillor D R Bevan – "I have two family members, one in receipt of a council pension and one is a member of the Pension Scheme. I am a member of the local authority Pension Scheme"

Agenda item 11B – Notice of Motion

- Councillor L M Adams – "Four members of my family are serving in the Armed Forces"

83 Announcements

- Councillor A S Fox (on behalf of ward member Councillor R Williams) announced that two groups in Penrhiwceiber have been awarded the High Sheriff of Glamorgan award, Lee Gardens Paddling Pool and St.

Winifred's Church. Both have been recognised for their community and outreach work and projects they have undertaken (especially during covid) which have made lives a little better for many families. Some of the projects include, tackling holiday hunger, tackling period poverty, supporting new mothers' groups and holding weekly arts and crafts sessions for children. They have supported over 50 families each week with food essentials during covid which has been invaluable. Councillor Fox requested that a letter of congratulations is sent on behalf of the Mayor to the groups.

- Councillor W Jones wished to congratulate Blaencwm Chapel on achieving a Green Flag from Keep Wales Tidy for their community garden. They also run a Foodbank from the Church and the 'Pay as You Feel' café where residents can pay as little as they like if they are struggling to afford food. Councillor Jones also wished to congratulate Councillor G Davies and his wife who run the café.
- Councillor G R Davies announced that 'Welcome to Our Woods' weekly Woodland Therapy sessions have received the British, NHS Forest Award 2021 for Pioneering Use Of Green Spaces by Healthcare Professionals. Woodland Therapy was born 3yrs ago as part of the 'Be Active RCT' and the National Lottery Funded, 'Create Your Space' project. It's gone from strength to strength and become sustainable with many participants now volunteers and welcoming in new people. The main component of the sessions is relaxation through mindfulness in nature. Councillor G R Davies asked if a letter can be sent from the Mayor to congratulate the group on its achievements.

84 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 20th October 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

85 Statements

The Leader of the Council advised that following a decision taken by Cabinet the Real Living Wage has been extended to adult independent sector social care providers to provide older people residential and nursing care, supported living, extra care and home care and personal assistants providing care and support through direct payments. He added that the Council has already taken steps to introduce the Real Living Wage for home care provided by the independent sector through the Council's framework contract arrangements as well as to its own in-house staff.

With the Real Living Wage being implemented from the 1st December 2021 no employee working within social care for RCT Council will earn less than £9.50 per hour which will increase to £9.90 per hour from the 1st April 2022. The Leader confirmed that the Council is looking to bring that increased hourly rate forward and a further update will be reported to Cabinet and Council in the New Year to confirm the implementation date.

The Leader advised that discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government regarding the Real Living Wage, to ensure a sustainable workforce for care and support at home and in residential and nursing care. The introduction of the Real

Living Wage across this workforce will assist with the recruitment and retention challenges currently being faced within the local authority as with many others across Wales.

86 Members' Questions

Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, County Borough Councillor C Leyshon:

"Will the Cabinet Member please make a statement on this year's Santa Appeal and outline what role Members can play in supporting the initiative?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

Councillor C Leyshon advised that the Santa Appeal, organised by the Council, is a long-standing appeal that supports families who are known to Children's services who are not looked after. Where the Council works specifically with one child in a family and there are other siblings in the household, they will also be supported. Councillor Leyshon added that the success of the Appeal is reliant on the generosity of the public, local businesses, as well as the Elected Members and Council staff.

Councillor Leyshon acknowledged that this year has been particularly challenging for families with the Universal Credit uplift ending along with increasing costs of energy and fuel. She thanked Members for their help to ensure that hundreds of children are able to have a gift on Christmas Day. Councillor Leyshon advised that Members can assist by promoting the appeal within their wards via their own social media accounts and to encourage local residents and businesses to become involved in the appeal by pledging to purchase a gift for a child or young person.

There was no supplementary question

Question from County Borough Councillor M Forey to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing, County Borough Councillor D R Bevan:

"How is the Council supporting our town centres to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, both in the immediate future and over the longer term?"

Response from County Borough Councillor D R Bevan:

Councillor D R Bevan announced that a range of initiatives and measures already introduced will continue and develop in the future such as the £460,000 of direct grant support to help businesses adapt to new trading conditions, such as outdoor spaces, with support from WG. More than 80 businesses have received this support, including smaller town centres such as Abercynon and Treherbert.

Councillor D R Bevan advised that the Council's own Enterprise Investment Fund has been repurposed to make it more flexible and for businesses to be able to take advantage of the fund during the Covid recovery period. A new

£35m business grant support scheme for post Covid recovery launched across Wales yesterday and will be delivered by the Council. He added that work with the RCT BIDs and Chambers of Trade, including a 'Shop Local' marketing campaign, has allowed each of the key towns, Pontypridd, Treorchy and Aberdare to help market themselves.

Councillor Bevan explained that a healthy pipeline of projects for town centre properties is coming forward for development including initiatives to increase footfall and local spend in towns, taking advantage of new sources of funding such as the UK Levelling Up Fund. Councillor Bevan referred to the Porth Transport Hub which will allow greater access into the town using bus and the new Metro services.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing advised that the total support amounts to more than £75 million with a significant amount directed at town centre businesses.

There was no supplementary question

Question from County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services, County Borough Councillor J. Rosser:

"Are you able to provide more information on the recent announcement that the Cabinet has approved further funding for 21st Century Schools improvements, specifically relating to the proposal for Glyncoch?"

Response from County Borough Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser advised that subject to Cabinet approval a statutory school organisation consultation process will commence in the New Year to create a brand-new primary school for Glyncoch. She added that not all of the other projects within the 21st Century investment programme require a statutory consultation.

Councillor Rosser advised that further updates will be provided as projects are developed and timescales are confirmed, and she anticipated that local residents within the community will be eagerly watching this progress.

Supplementary question from Councillor D Williams:

Councillor Williams welcomed the progress and he added that the community will certainly be looking forward to this. He asked what engagement the Council will be undertaken with staff and pupils in terms of the colour schemes and internal decorations?

Response from County Borough Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser advised that the development of the proposals involves a number of engagement stages such as:

- Development meetings with the headteacher to discuss room locations, overall site layout and the wider staff will also have the opportunity to

contribute to room layouts and furniture;

- Pupils on the school council will have the opportunity to put forward their views on colour proposals, whilst the contractor for the scheme will also engage with pupils during the design and construction phases;

In conclusion, Councillor Rosser added that all these events are subject to Cabinet approval for a statutory consultation. Business case approval will also be sought to finalise funding arrangements.

Question from County Borough Councillor S. Pickering to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Can the Cabinet Member of Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services provide an update on the investment in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park outline any future schemes that are planned?”

Councillor Crimmings confirmed that works have progressed throughout 2021 to deliver a £1.2m package of improvements funded from the Council and Welsh Government via the Valleys Regional Park initiative. Improvements have included a full refurbishment of all the main footways, the installation of upgraded LED streetlighting and a new changing facility at the National Lido of Wales, Lido Ponty.

Councillor Crimmings advised of a further £1.9m which has been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government for the design and restoration of the sunken garden, bandstand area, rock outcrop area and the provision of a new training/activity centre. Completion of this element of the project is scheduled for early 2023.

There was no supplementary question

Question from County Borough Councillor P Howe to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A Crimmings:

“Could you please give an update on the changing rooms at Ferndale Darren Park?”

Response from Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings confirmed that the replacement of the changing rooms that serve the Astro-turf in Darren Park were approved as part of the 20/21 Parks Capital programme. She added that due to the pandemic, the project has seen a number of setbacks, primarily due to restricted access to the site.

Councillor Crimmings advised that this has culminated in the recent cancellation of the order for a de-mountable which was due for imminent delivery to site and the decision to proceed with a brick building as a replacement. Officers are in the process of finalising designs in readiness for submitting an application for planning permission as soon as possible, hopefully as early as next month.

Supplementary question from Councillor P Howe:

Councillor Howe advised that his supplementary question had already been responded to by the Cabinet Member.

Question from County Borough Councillor P Jarman to County Borough Councillor L Hooper, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee:

“Please will you make a statement on diversity in Public Life?”

Response from Councillor L Hooper:

Councillor Hooper advised that diversity in public life is vital to ensuring the democratic process is representative of those that Members seek to represent and is in everyone’s interest. Greater diversity results in better decision making and greater engagement with those residents. He added that since becoming Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, much work has gone into making the role of a Councillor more attractive through a variety of ways such as through hybrid meetings to ensure meetings are as accessible as possible for Members and making the care support for Members more accessible regardless of their individual care needs.

Councillor Hooper referred to the IRP report which set out proposals for the remuneration of Council, to which he had responded as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. He advised of the greater improvements to the Council website to make information more available and engaging and a greater presence on social media. In conclusion, Councillor Hooper stressed that there is always more to achieve in this area, through the Democratic Services Committee, for Elected Members and for all Political Groups.

Supplementary question from Councillor P Jarman:

Councillor Jarman referred to the Council website, which she stated should be a reliable source of public information and lists on the basis of equality and diversity the names and details of all 75 Members who represent this council regardless of their gender or political affiliations. Councillor Jarman advised that however, on the council pages listing the Elected MP’s and MS’s, although it only shows the 3 Labour constituency Members in each case. Councillor Jarman pointed out that it discriminates against those that have been democratically elected as none of the 4 Plaid Cymru or 4 Conservative Senedd Regional Members for South Wales Central or South Wales West are represented, despite two being members of this Council. Other omissions include constituency members are Huw Irranca-Davies, Labour MS for Ogmore and Chris Elmore, Labour MP for Ogmore and who also represents part of RCT. Councillor Jarman asked Councillor Hooper what he will do to rectify the situation.

Response from Councillor L Hooper:

Councillor Hooper reminded Council of his pledge as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, that Members were welcome to contact him regarding any democratic related query. He added that he would look to update the relevant webpages and request a report to the next Democratic Services Committee.

Question from County Borough Councillor J. Brencher to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Can the Council Leader update on the completion and subsequent marketing of Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd?”

The Leader advised that the project was completed in 2020, in accordance with the agreed programme and since completion numerous tenants have already taken occupation and the development has contributed to an increased footfall within the Town. He explained that a marketing strategy had proved very successful to date and has already resulted in 3 separate organisations taking occupation of 3 Llys Cadwyn, those being Transport for Wales, Bradleys Coffee and Lounges who are all located in the largest of the three buildings. The Council used 1 Llys Cadwyn as a hub during the pandemic and more recently the gym, library and ‘one for all’ service have been operating successfully. Heads of Terms have been agreed for a prospective tenant for the occupation of the ground floor and first floor of 2 Llys Cadwyn and both parties have appointed their legal advisers. In conclusion, the Leader reported that early discussions are underway with prospective tenants for the small retail unit that fronts onto Taff Street.

87 Council Work Programme 2020/21

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that the next Council meeting to be held on the 15th December would be undertaken through a hybrid approach. He added that training will be available to all Members through an ‘open door session’ should they wish to drop in and attend the sessions in the Council Chamber. Two items will be considered at the next Full Council meeting:

- The RCT draft Diversity Pledge
- Two Annual Reports 2020/21 (Democratic Services Committee and Audit Committee)

88 Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2020/21 Statement of Accounts and External Audit Report

Mr M Jones, Audit Wales presented Members with the report on the Statement of Accounts for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2020-21 commenting that the full report and associated appendices are attached for Members’ information. Further, Mr Jones wished to acknowledge that there is little to report and no amendments to bring to Members’ attention, adding that is testimony to the efficiency of the Finance Service within RCT Council.

The Director of Finance & Digital Services advised that the accounts were duly prepared by early July 2021 and passed through the audit process, all financial statements are unaffected and the fund value of just under £4.5 billion. The Director assured Council in its role as the administering authority to the fund that robust governance arrangements are in place, including the Pension Fund Committee and RCT Pension Board.

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

- (a) Approve and note the Statement of Accounts for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund (Appendix 1), and associated Letter of

Representation (Appendix 2); and

- (b) Note the outcome of the 12th July 2021 Governance and Audit Committee meeting as required by the Local Government Measure (paragraph 8.2).

89 Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) - Inter Authority Agreement

In presenting his report, the Director of Finance & Digital Services set out the details of proposed amendments to the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) Inter Authority Agreement (IAA).

The Director advised that in 2017 Council agreed to the establishment of the Wales Pension Partnership Investment Pooling Arrangements which was governed by an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) and decision making within a Joint Governance Committee (JGC). He added that all eight Pension Funds in Wales are part of this collaboration which was in response to UK Government mandated pooling requirements for pension fund investments. Since establishing the pension partnership, 68% of the Wales Pension Fund aggregate investments have transferred into the WPP sub funds to the value of £14.6 billion.

The Director explained that it is proposed that the inter authority agreement is now Updated to allow further tranches of investment asset classes and to enable a non-voting co-opted scheme member representative be appointed to the JGC, in addition to other minor updates to reflect operational working arrangements.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to note and agree the proposed amendments as set out at paragraph 5 within the report and at Appendix 1.

90 2021-22 Mid-Year Treasury Management Stewardship Report

In accordance with the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management the Director of Finance and Digital Services provided Members with information on the Council's Treasury Management activity during the first six months of 2021/22 and Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the same period.

The Director advised that there has been an increase in the borrowing requirement this year albeit no long- term borrowing has been taken in the first half of the year. Capital charges are estimated to be on budget at the mid-year point. The Council remains under borrowed as compared to its underlying need to borrow or capital financing requirements by £150M and are well within the operational boundary and authorised limit. He reported that average cash balances for the first half of the year were just over £20M with a very low return on short term investments emphasising the current strategy of minimising cash balances and maintaining an under-borrowing position.

In conclusion, the Director of Finance and Digital Services advised that the Council has been compliant with all indicators and limits.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the content of the report.

91 Nominations for Freedom of the County Borough

The Service Director presented his report to advise and seek Members' approval in respect of the recommendations of the Freedom of the Borough Working Group, chaired by the Mayor which met on the 10th May 2021 and 11th October 2021.

The Service Director advised that the recommendations of the Freedom of the Borough Working Group include awarding the accolade of Freedom of the County Borough to Mr Neil Jenkins in recognition of his outstanding contribution to rugby and the National team and to key workers in recognition of their efforts during the pandemic. With regards to the second recommendation, the Service Director advised that the Working Group (comprising of the Mayor, Deputy Leader and Leaders of the Political Groups) propose that the honour is awarded by way of a free public event, subject to agreement by Full Council, the arrangements to progress in the Summer of 2022 and for the event to be as accessible as possible.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to support the recommendations of the Freedom of the Borough Working Group in awarding the accolade of Freedom of the County Borough to:

1. Neil Jenkins (before the end of the Municipal Year 2021/22)
2. Key Workers (the free and accessible event to be organised in the next Municipal Year 2022/23)

92 Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Principles (Local Policy) 2022 - 2025

The Director of Public Health, Protection & Community Services presented her report which outlined the revised Statement of Principles, under the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005 (i.e. the local policy statement for the management of gambling activity within the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council), for the period 2022 – 2025 in accordance with statutory requirements.

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

1. Approve the revisions to the policy, which had been considered and endorsed by both the Licensing Committee on [14th September 2021](#) and subsequently by Cabinet on [18th October 2021](#); and
2. Adopt the revised Statement of Principles in line with statutory requirements.

93 Notices of Motion

The following Notice of Motion was received standing in the names of Councillors L Hooper, S Trask and J James:

“The aspiration of home ownership is a natural instinct for many individuals and families across Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, and it is an aspiration this Council endeavours to support.

For many individuals and families, the aspiration of owning their own home looks increasingly difficult to achieve due to rising house prices and a shortage of properties. One major contributor to this is the increasing tendency of housing developers to engage in a practice which is commonly referred to as ‘land-banking’, whereby the developer succeeds in securing planning

permission but does not deliver upon the proposed development.

This is an issue that affects the whole United Kingdom and in this County Borough alone could explain as many as 4,517 properties that were granted between 2012/13 and 2019/20 but have yet to be built.

Though there are a multitude of factors that can explain why a successful housing application isn't delivered upon, it is clear that a great many of these are as a result of the practice of 'land-banking'.

As well as preventing many of our residents in making the first step on to the housing ladder, it can also erode the trust of residents in the planning system when 'brownfield' sites are being 'land-banked' by developers - putting pressure on the Local Development Plan to propose new sites for housing allocations that may be less suitable for such development.

Therefore, this Council resolves:

-That the Leader of the Council writes to the Welsh Minister for Climate Change (whose portfolio includes housing) asking that Local Authorities in Wales are given the power to levy council tax charges on incomplete applications that have failed to materialise after an agreed timeframe set by the local authorities.

-To ask council officers to bring forward a report to Full Council in the New Year, setting out what actions can be taken in the short-term to reduce the impact of this harmful practice”.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the Notice of Motion.

(**Note:** The following Members of the Conservative Group County Borough Councillors L Hooper and S Trask as well as the Independent Member County Borough Councillor S Belzak wished to have it recorded as voting in favour of the Notice of Motion).

The following Notice of Motion was received standing in the names of Councillors G. Davies, P Jarman, E, Webster, D. Grehan, E. Stephens, L. Jones, J. Williams, A. Cox, S. Evans, A. Chapman, S. Rees-Owen, M. Weaver, J. Davies, J. Cullwick, K. Morgan, H. Fychan and E. Griffiths.

“This Council expresses concern at the policy of the UK government to recruit 16-year-olds into the army. The UK government is the only country in NATO or Europe to do this.

This policy has adverse consequences for recruits of 16 and 17 years of age. Evidence shows that: -

- 1) They are twice as likely to be killed in active service than older recruits.
- 2) They are more likely to suffer mental health problem such as PTSD, and depression.
- 3) They are more likely to have alcohol and drug related addictions
- 4) They are more likely to commit suicide.
- 5) 28% fail to complete the basic training.

The policy has been opposed by the Children's Commissioner for Wales on

the ground that it conflicts with the United Nation's Convention on the Rights for the Child.

Council resolves to write to the UK Prime Minister requesting that the policy be changed as a matter of urgency. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the Welsh First Minister”.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the Notice of Motion.

(Note: The following members of the Plaid Cymru Group present, County Borough Councillors A Chapman, A Cox, J Cullwick, G Davies, J Davies, S Evans, H Fychan, D Grehan, P Jarman, L Jones, K Morgan, S Rees-Owen, E Stephens, M Weaver, E Webster and J Williams and the Independent Member County Borough Councillor S Belzak wished to have it recorded as voting in favour of the Notice of Motion

The following members of the RCT Independent Group present, County Borough Councillors P Howe, K Jones, W Jones, W Owen and L Walker and the Conservative Group present County Borough Councillors L Hooper and S Trask wished to have it recorded as voting against the Notice of Motion).

This meeting closed at 6.40 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor S Trask	Councillor R Williams
Councillor G Hughes	Councillor M Powell
Councillor H Boggis	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor S Bradwick	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Calvert	Councillor T Williams
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor D Williams
Councillor G Davies	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor S Rees	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S Evans	Councillor S Evans
Councillor M Forey	Councillor A Fox
Councillor M Norris	Councillor E Webster
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor L Walker
Councillor G Hopkins	Councillor P Howe
Councillor R Yeo	Councillor P Jarman
Councillor R Turner	Councillor G Thomas
Councillor A Morgan	Councillor M Adams
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor W Owen	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor E Stephens	Councillor W Lewis
Councillor G Jones	Councillor W Treeby
Councillor W Jones	Councillor L Jones
Councillor L Hooper	Councillor J Harries
Councillor D Grehan	Councillor E George
Councillor H Fychan	Councillor J Williams
Councillor A Davies-Jones	Councillor J Davies
Councillor J Cullwick	Councillor A Cox
Councillor E Griffiths	Councillor G Caple
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor J Barton

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr P Nicholls, Service Director Legal Services

94 Welcome & Apologies

The Presiding Officer welcomed everyone to the first hybrid Council meeting and announced those Councillors present in the Council Chamber as County Borough Councillors A Morgan, A Crimmings, G Caple, S Bradwick, R Williams, L M Adams, L Walker, J Davies, S Trask and L Hooper.

The following Officers were also present, Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive, Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services, Mr P Nicholls, Service Director Legal Services and Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services & Communications.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Belzak, A Chapman, J James MS, K Jones, M Fidler Jones, K Morgan, D Owen-Jones, S Pickering, S M Powell, S Rees-Owen, G Stacey, M Tegg, M Weaver and M Webber.

95 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, a number of declarations of personal interests were made later during the meeting pertaining to the agenda (Minute Number 103 refers – Notice of Motion).

96 Announcements

- Cllr S Powderhill and Cllr C Leyshon paid tribute to Melissa Foster and Christina Prewitt on their pledge to litter pick for 365 days, starting on New Year's Eve 2020 and culminating on New Year's Eve 2021. It was announced that to date they have litter picked in many local areas such as Trallwn, Treforest, Hawthorn, Beddau, Glyntaff, Cilfynydd, Radyr, Castell Coch and Ogmere as well as locations further afield such as Windermere and Kendall. A request was made that a letter from the Mayor is sent to both Melissa and Christina to acknowledge their huge efforts.

- Cllr Sera Evans announced that Parc Primary School in Cwmparc has been awarded with the Foundation of Community Engagement's 'Heart of the Community award' and is the first school in Wales to achieve the accolade. The school has been supporting its students, families and community with activities such as baby massage classes, family and toddler sessions, community eco projects, visiting the local dementia group twice monthly, offering training opportunities as well as running community workshops and providing much needed food parcels. The School's Family Engagement Officer, Leanne Gough was awarded the 'Exceptional Community Champion' award which acknowledge her passion for the wellbeing of her pupils and families in Cwmparc. A request was made that a letter from the Mayor is sent to acknowledge the School's achievement.

- Councillor A Cox announced that the 'House of Hansen' based in Hannah Street, Porth has won 'Beauty Salon of the Year 2021' in the Welsh Hair and Beauty awards. It is a stalwart of Porth having traded for over 10 years and the business is also a training academy for

beauticians. Councillor Cox requested a letter be sent from the Mayor to the salon and to Stacey Hansen to acknowledge the award.

97 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 24th November (3.30pm) as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

98 Statements

The Leader provided an update on the latest developments regarding Covid at a national and local level. He advised that a record number of cases, a total of 78,600 cases, had been recorded across the UK. A more stable situation had been recorded in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the last 7 days, although this would likely change over the coming weeks with a rapid increase in case numbers, particularly with the emergence of the new variant Omicron. To date there have been 3 confirmed cases of Omicron in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

The Leader formally thanked those officers from the local authority team for their involvement with the vaccine roll out programme, he added that the target of administering 50,000 vaccines per week has been supported by 105 council staff, a figure which would increase to between 140 and 150 staff in due course to support the NHS in view of new targets set by Welsh Governments.

The Leader reiterated the message to all those who have not yet received their first or second vaccine, that they can attend a Vaccine Centre without an appointment. With regards to the Booster vaccine, he stressed the importance of attending the allocated appointments as a large number of council staff have had to be redeployed to deal with the increased volume of calls from residents wishing to change/query their appointments. The Leader urged everyone to use the online facility where possible and in the case of all housebound residents, local GPs are organising house visits and so it is not an issue for the Council's call centre.

In conclusion, the Leader stressed that the new variant will lead to a large number of infections and could impact on staff shortages, particularly in the social care sector, which is always challenging. He added that further updates would be provided in due course.

99 Members' Questions

Members were advised that apologies of absence had been received from Councillors G Stacey and M Webber, Deputy Leader of the Council. The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications confirmed that question 6 would not be put to the Cabinet Member and written responses would be provided in relation to questions 5, 14 and 23.

Question from County Borough Councillor A. Cox to the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services, County Borough Councillor J. Rosser:

"What preparations are CBS RCT making for the proposed introduction of Free School Meals for all primary pupils in Wales?"

Response from County Borough Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser advised that RCT catering services are currently reviewing the existing meal provision in each of the Council's primary and special schools by assessing the kitchen equipment and storage facilities in order to estimate the increase in meal numbers and the additional requirements for staff, equipment, storage and dining hall space. Councillor Rosser added that the Council has met with other Local Authorities, suppliers and Welsh Government representatives to discuss the challenges faced across Wales and is currently waiting for the detailed proposals, funding arrangements and timescales to be confirmed by Welsh Government in order for implementation work to begin.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor A Cox:

"Is the Council looking at the funding formulas internally and assessing whether it is the right funding for the service and assessing the benefits for the schools? Will the Cabinet Member join me in congratulating the work of campaigners who have fought long and hard for this to be adopted and to Plaid Cymru who have insisted on this as part of the agreement with Labour despite it being voted down in the Senedd?"

Response from County Borough Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser responded that the Council is waiting to receive further information regarding funding arrangements but gave assurance that everything would be assessed appropriately and in good time. She added that everyone is pleased with the result but added that without any guarantee of funding from UK Government it was the right decision to wait for the comprehensive spending review before making a commitment.

Councillor Rosser reminded Council that the Motion from Plaid Cymru called for *all* children, including those in private schools, to be given Free School Meals and it also called for all families in receipt of Universal Credit to be eligible but, it was completely un-costed and gave no recommendation of where the funding would come from. In conclusion, Councillor Rosser advised that this is an instance where, instead of looking to score political points, it represents a celebration of co-operation in Welsh politics and the positive changes it is making.

Question from County Borough Councillor G. Holmes to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

"The Welsh Government has announced that families on low income and qualifying benefits will receive £100 to help them with their utility bills this winter. Can the Council Leader provide further information on this and how many householders do we think will benefit from this in RCT?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader advised that the Winter Fuel Scheme went live on the Council's website on Monday this week and the scheme is for relevant benefit claimants to apply for £100 to help them with the cost of their utility bills this winter. He explained that the Council has written to around 15,400 households who currently claim support through the RCT Council Tax Reduction Scheme

(CTRS). There are also a number of other eligible households that claim a qualifying benefit but do not claim or qualify for CTRS and they too have the option to make a claim via the Council's website. Potentially it is currently estimated that there could be up to a further 15,800 households that will benefit from this support which means there are potentially 31,200 households in RCT who will be eligible for this payment, meaning £3.12m going directly to the poorest families in the County this winter.

The Leader reported that Officers are currently undertaking an exercise to try and better understand and identify who these households are so that the messaging from the Council can focus on them. In conclusion, the Leader urged Members encourage households to sign up for this support.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor G Holmes:

"There are many pensioners who live alone, finding life a struggle due to rising prices, could we lobby Welsh Government to get them further assistance?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

Councillor Morgan confirmed that this outside the scope of the fund but advised that currently Older Persons households are entitled to a Winter Fuel Allowance and those over 80 years old are entitled to a further uplift from Welsh Government. The Leader confirmed that he would raise this with Welsh Government Ministers as soon as possible.

Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

"Can the Cabinet Member update on recycling figures so far this year and confirm whether we are still on course to meet the Welsh Government targets?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings confirmed that the Council has statutory targets for recycling set by Welsh Government and this year's target is again 64% and failure to meet this can result in a fine of £200 for every tonne that the target is missed by. Councillor Crimmings added that the increased challenge over last 18 months has been delivering services during the pandemic and she wished to thank the staff for their dedication and commitment. Councillor Crimmings confirmed that the recycling performance for the year to date (April-October) was just over 69% (69.11%) which has exceeded the Welsh Government target, a considerable achievement by both the Council and RCT residents during the Pandemic.

Councillor Crimmings advised that last year's figures were the highest ever achieved by this Council and to have come so close to them during restrictions is testament to the resilience of staff and the collection processes. She advised that the next target for this Council is the 2024/2025 target of 70%, which, if it can be maintained and improved upon slightly, it will put the Council on course to continue to work towards meeting its aspiration of 80%. The impact of restrictions and severity of lockdown measures has mainly been managed by changing operational practices to meet the rules and guidelines to ensure services have been delivered safely both for staff and residents.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor R Williams:

“What more can be done to achieve the Council’s target of 80% in terms of communication with residents?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings responded that despite excellent progress and efforts of residents, the Council is ambitious to achieve more. Recently, the festive recycling posts have been sent out on the Council’s social media accounts. Successful campaigns have also been run over recent years, both locally and as part of the regional “Be Mighty” campaign with other South East Wales Local Authorities. Councillor Crimmings advised that the Council plans to launch an awareness raising interactive campaign in 2022 to reinforce the need for residents to recycle as much as possible. In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services confirmed that the Authority continues to look at ways to reduce its carbon footprint, two recent examples include the new green waste sacks and recent trial of electric collection vehicle.

Question from County Borough Councillor G. Caple to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Will the Leader please make a statement on how this Council is working with Trivallis and other social housing providers to deliver environmental improvements?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader confirmed that the Council has worked closely with Trivallis over a number of years to identify adopted footways on their estates and other infrastructure improvements. In recent years the Council has received financial support from Trivallis which has been matched by Council funding to carry out improvements to estates in Penywaun, Cwmbach, Maerdy, Dinas, Cymmer, Trebanog and Tonyrefail. In addition, there has been close working on play area investment on Trivallis sites. The Council currently has an Enforcement/Awareness Warden (funded by Trivallis under an SLA) who deals with Environmental problems/crimes on their estates.

The Leader advised that the Council has additional Cleansing staff (2 FTE) undertaking additional cleaning on a number of Trivallis’ problematic estates. In addition, the Council regularly works with Trivallis to identify issues (particularly waste/fly tipping/etc) and coordinate resources to undertake clean-ups and respond to problems.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor G Caple:

“Can you expand on the financial benefits to both the Council and Trivallis with the resulting visible improvements for tenants and residents of former Council Estates, e.g. highways improvements on Rhiw Garn Estate, Trebanog?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader advised that it is important to maximise the benefits where the Council can work closely with Trivallis and he gave an example of when this has happened with improvements to the access of flats. In some cases, the Council has undertaken work which has fallen within the remit of Trivallis for environmental improvements but by adding them to the Council contracts when

it is already on site maximises the efficiencies for both the Council and Trivallis.

The Leader confirmed that he has undertaken site visits with Trivallis and Officers from the Local Authority to consider next year's programme of work. With regards to flooding improvements, the Leader advised that Trivallis has made financial contributions to improve flood assets to provide additional resilience to their properties. In addition to Trivallis, the Leader confirmed that close working continues with other Housing Providers.

Question from County Borough Councillor G. P. Thomas to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

"Can the Council Leader outline what bids have been and are planned to be made to the Welsh Government for upgrading culverts and flood alleviation schemes?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader advised that the Council's Flood Risk Management team is currently developing bids for numerous projects, and phases of major projects which will feed into the Welsh Government's timetable for grant applications for the 2022/23 financial year. Members were informed that the bids for these were submitted by the 10th December 2021. The team is looking at national pipeline schemes and have submitted schemes for the next three years. Years two and three will have further schemes added to them over time.

The Leader reported that significant funding has been received through the small-scale projects which includes projects up to £150K with many schemes already approved. A number of bids have been submitted for next year with further information being reported by Feb/March 2022 for the approvals, although all the bids submitted to date have been approved by WG.

With regards to the Resilient Roads Fund, which includes mainly highways drainage schemes, the Leader advised that many culverts have caused flooding on highways and also affect residential properties have been subject to individual grant bids totalling £8M of investment next year.

Following further flooding the Council continues to accelerate already challenging programme of FRM projects with a further 9 Small Scale Works bids submitted to Welsh Government. These were approved in November 2021 for 2021/22, generating another £480k of investment. This brings the current portfolio of FRM projects to 70 being delivered or developed in 2021/22. In conclusion, the Leader explained that these projects are likely to continue over the next 5-10 years.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor G Thomas:

"In relation to the recent Natural Resources Wales press release, urging people to check their flood risk, can you advise further should we receive requests from resident?"

The Leader explained that the recent NRW press release on the Council's website promoted the dedicated postcode checker on Natural Resources Wales's website where residents can check to see if they are at risk of particular types of flooding. From the Council's point of view, Cabinet

recently agreed to a Flood Enforcement Team and Flood Awareness and Support Officer who will engage with residents to advise them on mitigation issues in respect of flooding.

100 Council Work Programme 2021/22

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications confirmed that there were no changes regarding the adopted and published Council Work Programme 2021/22.

101 Diversity in Democracy

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report which sought Council's approval of the 'Diversity Declaration' as the formal pledge of the Council to becoming a Diverse Council. He reminded Members that at the Extra Ordinary Council meeting on the 26th May, 2021, Members took a decision to become a Diverse Council following consideration of a series of recommendations from the WLGA, supported by all Political Groups. RCT became the first Council in Wales to make the pledge.

The Service Director advised that Welsh Government has placed great focus on the diversity agenda and a number of recommendations have since arisen from the Welsh Government's Diversity in Democracy work which are being addressed through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Details were provided by the Service Director in respect of the Working Group established by the Democratic Services Committee to progress the matter and in the context of promoting participation and engagement in advance of the 2022 local government elections. In recognition of the work undertaken, it is proposed that the diversity declaration is adopted in recognition of the work and of the ongoing priorities as set out in the attached report.

Following consideration of the report and associated appendices it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Adopt the attached 'Diversity Declaration' subject to inclusion of the additional following point "to encourage participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme by all Members to assist in protecting them in their retirement" and take forward the declaration as the formal pledge of the Council to becoming a Diverse Council.

102 Annual Reports 2020/21

Through his report, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented the Annual Reports of the Democratic Services Committee and Audit Committee for the 202/21 Municipal Year. He added that both annual reports had been formerly approved by their respective Committees for presentation to Full Council.

Following comments by both the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee County Borough Councillor L Hooper and the Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr C Jones, it was **RESOLVED** to note the Annual Reports for the Democratic Services Committee and Audit Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year (subject to a typographical error being corrected on page 3 of the Democratic Services Annual report).

103 Notice of Motion

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

Banks should be an essential service in our communities, giving residents convenient access to their finances and allowing them to take care of their affairs. They are often situated in the heart of our town centres, in close proximity to other vital facilities and shops.

The notice that Barclays are intending to close their branch at Victoria Square in Aberdare in March 2022 is the latest (potential) withdrawal of financial services from communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and, should the plans go ahead, will have a detrimental impact, not just to our residents in accessing facilities, but also to the vibrancy of our town centres. The Council has worked hard to make our town centres attractive and welcoming hubs of the communities they serve, especially after the exceptional difficulties faced by local traders over the past 18 months.

Aberdare has already seen NatWest and HSBC withdraw their services from the town, whilst Treforest, Treorchy, Porth and Mountain Ash are among the other areas to have also seen banks close over recent years.

The assurances provided by Barclays that Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd are the closest services will be scant consolation to many, with both journeys taking between 40 and 50 minutes each way.

This Council wishes to record its opposition to the closure of Barclays Bank in Aberdare and resolves to:

- Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Head of Corporate Relations Wales and West and the Chief Executive of Barclays Bank to call for the plans to be reconsidered.
- Requests that the Council seeks to ensure that the social benefits of maintaining a local banking presence in our communities forms part of our future relationships with the banking sector.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from County Borough Councillors P. Jarman, A. Cox, J. Williams, D. Grehan, G. Davies, J. Davies, J. Cullwick, K. Morgan, L. Jones, E. Stephens, S. Rees-Owen, M. Weaver, E. Webster, A. Chapman, S. Evans, H. Fychan and E. Griffiths.

The amended motion read:

Banks should be an essential service in our communities, giving residents convenient access to their finances and allowing them to take care of their

affairs. They are often situated in the heart of our town centres, in close proximity to other vital facilities and shops.

The notice that Barclays are intending to close their branch at Victoria Square in Aberdare in March 2022 is the latest (potential) withdrawal of financial services from communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and, should the plans go ahead, will have a detrimental impact, not just to our residents in accessing facilities, but also to the vibrancy of our town centres. The Council has worked hard to make our town centres attractive and welcoming hubs of the communities they serve, especially after the exceptional difficulties faced by local traders over the past 18 months.

Aberdare has already seen NatWest, The Co-operative Bank and HSBC withdraw their services from the town, whilst Treforest, Treorchy, Porth and Mountain Ash are among the other areas to have also seen banks close over recent years.

The assurances provided by Barclays that Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd are the closest services will be scant consolation to many, with both journeys taking between 40 and 50 minutes each way.

This Council wishes to record its opposition to the closure of Barclays Bank in Aberdare and resolves to:

- Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Head of Corporate Relations Wales and West and the Chief Executive of Barclays Bank to call for the plans to be reconsidered.
- Requests that a joint report from the Chief Executive, the 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer be brought forward to Council addressing all matters relating to consideration of an option of changing our Bankers from Barclays.
- Requests that the Council seeks to ensure that the social benefits of maintaining a local banking presence in our communities forms part of our future relationships with the banking sector.
- To note the Welsh Government's announcement to develop and launch a new Community Bank of Wales headquartered in Wales, This Council further calls on Welsh Government to accelerate the establishment and roll out of Banc Cambria which aims to open High Street Branches in towns throughout Wales.

(Note: At this point during the proceedings and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following personal declarations were made pertaining to the Notice of Motion:

- County Borough Councillor A Morgan: " I bank with Barclays Bank"
- County Borough Councillor G P Thomas: " I bank at the Aberdare branch of Barclays Bank"
- County Borough Councillor G Hughes: " I bank with Barclays Bank"
- County Borough Councillor Sheryl Evans: "I bank with Barclays Bank"
- County Borough Councillor E George: "I bank with Barclays Bank"
- County Borough Councillor D Grehan: "I bank with Barclays Bank"

- County Borough Councillor G R Davies: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor G Jones: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor J Bonetto: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor D R Bevan: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor G Caple: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor P Howe: “I bank with Barclays Bank”
- County Borough Councillor A Crimmings: “I bank with Barclays Bank”)

During discussions, and in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion, the Leader of the Council read the following statement in response to a query regarding the Council’s procurement processes in relation to Barclays Bank:

“We have a contractual relationship with Barclays to provide corporate banking services to the Council. The Contract does not include any provisions associated with mandating local branches.

- It would not be lawful to terminate a contract taking matters into account that are not directly linked with the contract. Only in the event of specific issues, for example the performance of the contractor, can termination clauses be instigated.
- There are currently no issues in respect of delivering this Contract that could instigate these events.
- The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules mandate that Contracting Authorities conduct their procurement processes with openness, fairness and transparency. In the event that the Council tenders this contract in the future, it would not be lawful to blacklist or be seen to influence a contractual relationship on grounds and matters which are outside of the contractual provisions / services.
- Any future review of the Council’s banker will need to be undertaken with openness, fairness and transparency, and in compliance with the principles provided within the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules”.

There followed further discussion and in accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the amendment.

(Note: The Plaid Cymru Group present wished to have it recorded as voting in favour of the amendment to the Notice of Motion: County Borough Councillors P Jarman, A Cox, J Cullwick, G R Davies, S Evans, H Fychan, D Grehan, E Griffiths, L Jones, E Webster and J Williams).

Following discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the substantive motion.

This meeting closed at 6.50 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL - 19 JANUARY 2022

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the public question for Member's response, as detailed within 4.1 of the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the Question and any supplementary question proposed, as in accordance with the Council's Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rules.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To receive the question and any supplementary question posed by Members of the Public, as indicated within the report.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

- 4.1 One public question was received to the Council Business Unit and is outlined below:

1	<p>Question from Mr Marshman to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A Crimmings:</p> <p>“Would the council provide a skate park at Ynysangharad Park Pontypridd, near to the Marks and Spencer's bridge adjacent to the tennis courts? This is for the children and teenagers from Pontypridd and the surrounding areas. This would be in line with the Future Generations Act (Wales) and would promote and facilitate a great outdoor facility for young people of all ages”.</p>
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- 4.2 In accordance with Council procedure rule 3.1 a period of up to 5 minutes each shall be allowed for the question to be put and answered at the meeting and for supplementary questions and answers thereto under these rules.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 The Presiding Member was advised upon in relation to the question received.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rule 3 allows Members of the Public the opportunity to ask a question at meetings of Council, promoting openness and transparency.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with the Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rules.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 9.1 The opportunity for Members of the public to propose questions at Council meetings allows Members to receive information which potentially detail the Council priorities. It also embraces the Future Generations Act as all work and decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailing the procedure for questions of the public assists in transparency for both Members and for public engagement.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19 JANUARY 2022

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

Item: PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Background Papers

Council Constitution – [Open Government Council meeting procedure rules.](#)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19 JANUARY 2022

MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the order of questions in respect of the Members Questions on Notice, following the amendment to the process agreed at the [Council AGM 2019](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the Questions and any supplementary questions proposed, as in accordance with the running order advised upon in 4.3 of the report, which should not exceed a 20-minute time period.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 15th May, 2019, Members agreed to amend Council Procedure Rule 9.2 in respect of Members Questions on Notice. A further amendment was made to Council Procedure Rule 9.2 at the Council AGM on the 26th May 2021 in respect of supplementary questions following expiry of the 20 minute time duration. [Council AGM 2021](#)

4. MEMBERS QUESTION ON NOTICE

- 4.1 The closing date for receipt of Members Questions on Notice to the Council Business Unit for the Council meeting on the 19th January 2022 was 5pm on the 6th January 2022.
- 4.2 Thirty-six questions were received and put forward to the Council Ballot held on the 10th January 2022, to determine the running order of the questions at the Council Meeting.
- 4.3 The results of the ballot are outlined below:-

Number	Corresponding Question
1	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader please give an update on the improvement works to the culverts in Ynyshir, particularly above Heath Terrace?”</p>
2	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Walker to the Cabinet member for Education & Inclusion Services, County Borough Councillor J. Rosser:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services outline the progress made in the proposed site for the new Special school provision in RCT and what steps have been taken, if any, as regards funding and eventually building it given the chronic overcapacity in special schools”</p>
3	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Turner to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways please give an update on the latest position with regards to the Llanharan Footbridge?”</p>
4	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor T. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an overview of the works completed to date to help protect residents of Bronallt Terrace in AbercwmbOI from flooding, and can the Leader also outline whether further measures can be taken?”</p>
5	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor H. Boggis to the Deputy Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>“Will the Deputy Leader provide an update on the progress to implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces Veterans, following the decision of Cabinet?”</p>
6	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Jones to the Chair of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee, County Borough Councillor M. Powell:</p> <p>“Can the Chair of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee please make a statement on the priorities of the Committee?”</p>

7	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Jones to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Blaenrhondda Park Pavilion”</p>
8	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Treeby to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, County Borough Councillor C. Leyshon:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Santa Appeal and the huge generosity shown by residents and businesses?”</p>
9	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Barton to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“What action can the Council take to improve road safety and reduce speeding traffic in local communities?”</p>
10	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on the implementation of the Real Living Wage to the social care sector in RCT?”</p>
11	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Elliott to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader please provide an update on the various flood schemes planned and ongoing across RCT, including for the Cwmbach ward?”</p>
12	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Morgans to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Council’s investment in outdoor leisure facilities?”</p>
13	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor E. Griffiths to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Pryd bydd adroddiad Adran 19 ynglyn a’r llifogydd a fu yn Nhrehafod yn cael ei gyhoeddi?”</p> <p>“When will the Section 19 report into the flooding that occurred in Trehafod be published?”</p>

<p>14</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Stacey to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services please provide an update on the further works due to start in Ynysangharad Park?”</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Brencher to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader update on PPE supplies and if we have stock available should the country see an increase in cases due to the new variant?”</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“What implications does the recent Welsh Government announcement to pause major roadbuilding schemes in Wales have for Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. M. Adams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Will the Leader provide an update on how many families have received support through the £100 Winter Fuel Support Scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on what progress is being made on the backlog of repairs to bridges and other critical infrastructure?”</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“How is the Council supporting low-income households to meet the pressures of increasing household fuel costs during the winter?”</p>

20	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Bonetto to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor M. A. Norris:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member please outline the latest position on the Taff’s Well Thermal Spring project, in light of the good progress made to deliver the improvements to Ffynnon Taf Primary School?”</p>
21	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Holmes to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and the Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor G. Hopkins:</p> <p>“Could the Cabinet Member please make a statement on delayed discharges from hospital and outline what work the Council is undertaking to assist with this?”</p>
22	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. Roberts to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor R. R. Lewis:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the Council’s work with Voluntary and Third Sector organisations in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
23	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Hooper to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Could the Cabinet Member please make a statement on skate park facilities in Pontypridd and the surrounding area?”</p>
24	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. M. Powell to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p> <p>“How is this Council progressing plans for the introduction of Electric Charge Points throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
25	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor P. Jarman to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Please will you make a statement on the new Green Waste Service introduced in November 2021?”</p>
26	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor K. Morgan to the Deputy Leader, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>“How many Freedom of Information requests did RCT council refuse in 2021?”</p>

27	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader of the Council provide an update on the progress of flood alleviation scheme bids for the forthcoming year please?”</p>
28	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor Sheryl. Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader outline the priority areas when considering the draft budget for 2022/2023?”</p>
29	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Griffiths to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the leader update on budget discussions with the Welsh Government in his role as WLGA Leader?”</p>
30	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Powell to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Whilst Aberdare has been fortunate to get funding from RCT for a BMX track and Gravity Family Bike Park would the Cabinet Member say what RCTCBC has done to date to provide similar facilities in Pontypridd please?”</p>
31	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Yeo to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on Storm Dennis damage repairs and what further works are expected to be carried out this year?”</p>
32	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. P. Thomas to the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen:</p> <p>“Can the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee please make a statement on the priorities of the Committee?”</p>
33	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Cagle to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on what progress is being made to replace and improve the Highway wall adjacent to the river at Britannia?”</p>

34	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Forey to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader please provide an update on how the Council is supporting colleagues in Health in the fight against the Omicron variant?”</p>
35	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“With the change in working practices due to the pandemic what is the Council doing to support co-working spaces?”</p>
36	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Rees to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Will the Leader please make a statement on the Council’s budget planning ahead of the next financial year?”</p>

- 4.4 At the Council meeting a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for Questions on Notice. Any questions that are not dealt with in this time limit shall fall. Any questions on notice not answered will need to be resubmitted to the Proper Officer for the next full Council meeting in accordance with these rules.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 The amendments to the Council Procedure Rule in respect of Members Questions was considered and agreed at the Council’s AGM 2019 and AGM 2021, following consultation with the Constitution Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The amendment to the Council procedure rule taken forward at the Council AGM, allows the opportunity for more Members to ask a question at Council

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 9.1 The opportunity for Members to propose questions at Council meetings allows Members to receive information which potentially detail the Council priorities. It also embraces the Future Generations Act as all work and decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailing the procedure for Members Questions on Notice assists in transparency for both Members and for public engagement.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19 JANUARY 2022

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

Item: MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Background Papers

[Council AGM 2019.](#)

[Council AGM 2021](#)

Officer to contact: Emma Wilkins, Council Business Unit

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Annual Audit Summary 2021

This is our audit summary for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. It shows the work completed since the last Annual Audit Summary, which was issued in July 2021. Our audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.



More information about these duties can be found on our [website](#).

About the Council

Some of the services the Council provides



Key facts

The Council is made up of 75 councillors who represent the following political parties:

- Welsh Labour 48
- Plaid Cymru 17
- RCT Independent Group 6
- Conservative Party 3
- Independent 1

The Council spent £532.2 million on providing services¹ during 2020-21, the third-highest spending of the 22 unitary councils in Wales.

¹ We define spending on services as the cost of services charged to the general fund from the Expenditure Funding Analysis, less any Housing Revenue Account cost of services, plus precepts, levies and debt interest.

Key facts

As at 31 March 2021, the Council had £171.3 million of useable financial reserves². This is equivalent to 32.2% of the Council's annual spending on services, the seventh-highest percentage of the 22 unitary councils in Wales³.

The County Borough has 27 (18%) out of its 154 areas deemed the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales, this is the joint-third highest of the 22 unitary councils in Wales⁴.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's population is projected to increase by 4.5% between 2020 and 2040 from 241,492 to 252,418, including a 4.3% decrease in the number of children, a 1.2% increase in the number of the working-age population and a 23.7% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over⁵.

The Auditor General's duties

We completed work during 2020-21 to meet the following duties

- **Continuous improvement**

The Council also had to put in place arrangements to make continuous improvements, including related plans and reports, and the Auditor General had to assess whether the Council met these requirements during 2020-21.
- **Audit of Accounts**

Each year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- **Value for money**

The Auditor General examines whether the Council has put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and he has to be satisfied that it has done this.
- **Sustainable development principle**

Public bodies need to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

² We define useable financial reserves as reserves usable for revenue costs, where the purpose is not protected by law. This is the total of the general fund, earmarked reserves and schools' balances. It excludes Housing Revenue Account reserves, capital receipts and capital grants unapplied.

³ Source: 2020-21 Statement of Accounts

⁴ An area in this context is defined as a 'Lower Super Output Area'. Source: Stats Wales

⁵ Source: Stats Wales



We continue to recognise the huge strain on public services and to work in a way that seeks to reduce the impact on public bodies' response to COVID-19, while still meeting our statutory duties.



To meet the Auditor General's duties we complete specific projects, but we also rely on other audit work, and the work of regulators such as Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn (the education inspectorate). We take the findings of our audit work into account when assessing whether the Council has put in place arrangements to secure value for money. Our findings and conclusions are summarised below.

What we found

Audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's 2020-21 Accounts

Each year we audit the Council's financial statements.

For 2020-21:

- the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Council's financial statements on 6 October 2021.
- the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance. They were also consistent with the financial statements prepared by the Council and with our knowledge of the Council.
- the quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 2 July 2021 was generally good.
- a number of changes were made to the Council's financial statements arising from our audit work, which were reported to the Council in our Audit of Financial Statements Report in September 2021.
- in addition to the Auditor General's responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, he also has responsibility for the certification of a number of grant claims and returns. Our work to date has not identified any significant issues.
- the Auditor General issued the certificate confirming that the audit of accounts for 2020-21 has been completed.

Our work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we changed the approach and focus of our performance audit work in local government and other bodies. Below is a summary of some of the work we have undertaken in response to the pandemic across a number of sectors, much of which is of relevance to local government.

We undertook a project to support public sector efforts by sharing learning through the pandemic. The project aims to help prompt some thinking, and practise exchange. [Further information is available on our website.](#)

In March 2021, we published a [national report](#) setting out an overview of progress to date on Test, Trace, Protect in Wales. In December 2020, we also published some [observations](#) of the Auditor General on procurement and supply of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a [report](#) in April 2021. In June 2021, we also published our [report](#) on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wales.

Continuous improvement

The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2020-21, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

As part our examination of councils' performance assessments covering the 2020-21 financial year, we noted a reduced reference to comparative performance information although we recognise that the pandemic led to the suspension of some national data collection. The ability to compare data and performance with other organisations will continue to be an important element of arrangements to secure value for money and will be a challenge for councils to consider, particularly as they continue to implement the requirements relating to self-assessment set out in the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021.

Financial sustainability

During 2020-21, we examined the financial sustainability of each council in Wales. In August 2021 we concluded that the Council continues to be well placed to manage its financial sustainability. The [full report](#) is on our website.

We also published two national summary reports: the [first report](#) in October 2020 and the [second report](#) in September 2021.

Recovery planning

During 2020-21, we reviewed the arrangements that each council in Wales was putting in place to support recovery planning. We undertook this work on an ongoing basis, providing real-time and ongoing feedback where appropriate.

Other inspectorates

We also took into account the reports of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn as well as any subsequent actions taken by the Council in response.

CIW undertook an assurance check in May 2021, focusing on both children's and adults' safety and wellbeing.

The [letter](#) has now been published on CIW's website.

CIW and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales published their [joint National review](#) of the use of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) in Wales. They identified a number of key findings and recommendations.

In November 2021, CIW also published its [national overview report of assurance checks in Wales](#) and [Let me flourish](#), a national review of early help, care and support and transition for disabled children in Wales.

Estyn carried out monitoring visits to schools and pupil referral units that were in a statutory category of follow-up. It also reviewed the progress of schools requiring Estyn review. The reports for schools judged to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from their Section 28 inspection are on [Estyn's website](#).

Estyn did not undertake an inspection of Local Government Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf during 2020-21.

Local government studies

As well as local work at each council, each year we also carry out studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money. Since the last annual improvement report, we have published the following reports:

Discretionary services (April 2021)

Financial pressures have led to councils reducing spending and cutting services, but the pandemic has shown local government services are essential to keeping people safe and healthy. We focussed on how councils define services, the systems and processes they have used to review services and how robust these are. Demand for some essential services is continuing to increase and councils are not confident that they can continue to deliver these services in the face of this rising and complex demand. Councils need to take the opportunity to refresh, reevaluate and reset what they do and to learn from the pandemic to build a better future. Our [report](#) was published in April 2021.

Regenerating town centres in Wales (September 2021)

Between 1950 and 1980, local authorities prioritised regeneration of town centres creating new and greater retail space. However, past policy choices, changing consumer expectations and technological advances are now adversely affecting many Welsh town centres. And the pandemic has created challenges for local government and central government, with one in seven shops on Welsh high streets now empty, despite the Welsh Government investing and leveraging in £892.6 million in the last seven years. Local authorities do not have the capacity to respond to this situation and are not always using the powers they have to help regenerate towns. To deliver the best local outcomes, policies and joint working need to be aligned and integrated, and resources prioritised on town centres. Our [report](#) was published in September 2021.

Planned work for 2021-22

We also looked at the key challenges and opportunities facing the Council. These could have an effect on the Council's ability to meet its legal obligations in relation to the sustainable development principle and the use of its resources.

The most significant risk and issue facing councils and the wider public sector during 2021-22 continues to be the COVID-19 pandemic. We have shaped our work to provide assurance and challenge in a way which helps to support the Council through this period. Our planned work for 2021-22 includes:

- Assurance and risk assessment including a focus on:
 - The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021
 - Recovery planning
 - Carbon reduction plans
 - Self-assessment arrangements
 - Financial position
- Springing Forward – as the world moves forward, learning from the pandemic, this review looks at how effectively councils are strengthening their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, including those delivered in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
- Improvement reporting audit
- Review relating to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg health partnership
- Digital review

The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the Senedd.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities, national parks, and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies, assesses compliance with the remaining requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and may undertake special inspections under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Senedd Commission, and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities with their own legal functions, as described above. Audit Wales is not a legal entity.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf Crynodeb Archwilio Blynyddol 2021

Dyma ein crynodeb archwilio ar gyfer Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf. Mae'n dangos y gwaith a gwblhawyd ers y Crynodeb Archwilio Blynyddol diwethaf a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Gorffennaf 2021. Mae ein crynodeb archwilio'n rhan o ddyletswyddau Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru.



Ceir rhagor o wybodaeth am y dyletswyddau hyn ar ein [gwefan](#).

Ynglŷn â'r Cyngor

Rhai o'r gwasanaethau y mae'r Cyngor yn eu darparu



Ffeithiau allweddol

Mae gan y Cyngor 75 o gynghorwyr sy'n cynrychioli'r pleidiau gwleidyddol canlynol:

- Llafur Cymru 48
- Plaid Cymru 17
- Grŵp Annibynnol RhCT 6
- Y Blaid Geidwadol 3
- Annibynnol 1

Gwariodd y Cyngor £532.2 miliwn ar ddarparu gwasanaethau¹ yn ystod 2020-21, y trydydd gwariant uchaf o'r 22 o gynghorau unedol yng Nghymru.

¹ Rydym yn diffinio gwariant ar wasanaethau fel cost gwasanaethau a godir ar y gronfa gyffredinol o'r Dadansoddiad Ariannu Gwariant, namyn costau unrhyw wasanaethau a ariennir o'r Cyfrif Refeniw Tai, gan ychwanegu praeseptau, ardollau a llog ar ddyledion.

Ffeithiau allweddol

O ran y sefyllfa ar 31 Mawrth 2021, roedd gan y Cyngor £171.3 miliwn o gronfeydd ariannol wrth gefn defnyddiadwy². Mae hyn yn cyfateb i 32.2% o wariant blynyddol y Cyngor ar wasanaethau, y 7fed ganran uchaf o'r 22 o gynghorau unedol yng Nghymru³.

Mae 27 (18%) o'r 154 o ardaloedd yn y Fwrdeistref Sirol yn rhai yr ystyrir eu bod ymhlith y 10% o ardaloedd mwyaf amddifadus yng Nghymru, sy'n gwneud y Cyngor yn gydradd drydydd uchaf o'r 22 o gynghorau unedol yng Nghymru⁴.

Rhagamcanir y bydd poblogaeth Rhondda Cynon Taf yn cynyddu 4.5% rhwng 2020 a 2040 o 241,492 i 252,418, gan gynnwys gostyngiad o 4.3% yn nifer y plant, cynnydd o 1.2% yn nifer y boblogaeth o oedran gweithio a chynnydd o 23.7% yn nifer y bobl 65 oed a throsodd⁵.

Dyletswyddau'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol

Fe wnaethom gwblhau gwaith yn ystod 2020-21 i gyflawni'r dyletswyddau canlynol

- **Gwella'n barhaus**

Roedd rhaid i'r Cyngor sefydlu trefniadau i wneud gwelliannau parhaus, gan gynnwys cynlluniau ac adroddiadau cysylltiedig, ac roedd yn rhaid i'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol asesu a wnaeth y Cyngor ateb y gofynion hyn yn ystod 2020-21.

- **Archwilio'r Cyfrifon**

Bob blwyddyn mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn archwilio datganiadau ariannol y Cyngor i wneud yn siŵr y rhoddir cyfrif priodol am arian cyhoeddus.

- **Gwerth am arian**

Mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn archwilio pa un a yw'r Cyngor wedi sefydlu trefniadau i gael gwerth am arian am yr adnoddau y mae'n eu defnyddio, a rhaid iddo fod wedi'i argyhoeddi ei fod wedi gwneud hyn.

- **Yr egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy**

Mae angen i gyrff cyhoeddus gydymffurfio â'r ddyletswydd datblygu cynaliadwy wrth bennu eu hamcanion llesiant a chymryd camau i'w cyflawni. Rhaid i'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol asesu i ba raddau y maent yn gwneud hyn.

² Rydym yn diffinio cronfeydd ariannol wrth gefn defnyddiadwy fel cronfeydd wrth gefn y gellir eu defnyddio ar gyfer costau refereniw, lle nad yw'r diben wedi'i ddiogelu gan y gyfraith. Mae hyn yn golygu cyfanswm y gronfa gyffredinol, cronfeydd wrth gefn wedi'u clustnodi a balansau ysgolion. Nid yw'n cynnwys cronfeydd wrth gefn y Cyfrif Refeniw Tai, derbyniadau cyfalaf na grantiau cyfalaf anghymwysedig.

³ Ffynhonnell: Datganiad Cyfrifon 2020-21

⁴ Diffinnir ardal yn y cyd-destun hwn fel 'Ardal Gynnyrch Ehangach Haen Is'. Ffynhonnell: Stats Cymru

⁵ Ffynhonnell: Stats Cymru



Rydym yn parhau i gydnabod y straen enfawr ar wasanaethau cyhoeddus ac i weithio mewn ffordd sy'n ceisio lleihau'r effaith ar ymateb cyrff cyhoeddus i COVID-19, gan ddal i gyflawni ein dyletswyddau statudol.



I gyflawni dyletswyddau'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol rydym yn cwblhau prosiectau penodol, ond rydym hefyd yn dibynnu ar waith archwilio arall, a gwaith cyrff rheoleiddio megis Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru ac Estyn (yr arolygiaeth addysg). Rydym yn cymryd canfyddiadau ein gwaith archwilio i ystyriaeth wrth asesu pa un a yw'r Cyngor wedi sefydlu trefniadau i sicrhau gwerth am arian. Caiff ein canfyddiadau a'n casgliadau eu crynhoi isod.

Yr hyn a ganfuom

Archwiliad o Gyfrifon Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf ar gyfer 2020-21

Bob blwyddyn rydym yn archwilio datganiadau ariannol y Cyngor.

Ar gyfer 2020-21:

- rhoddodd yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol farn ddiamod bod datganiadau ariannol y Cyngor yn gywir a theg ar 6 Hydref 2021.
- cafodd Datganiad Llywodraethu Blynyddol ac Adroddiad Naratif y Cyngor eu paratoi yn unol â Chod CIPFA a chanllawiau perthnasol. Roeddent hefyd yn gyson â'r datganiadau ariannol a baratowyd gan y Cyngor ac â'n gwybodaeth ni am y Cyngor.
- roedd ansawdd y datganiadau drafft a gyflwynwyd i'w harchwilio ar 2 Gorffennaf 2021 yn dda ar y cyfan.
- fe wnaed nifer o newidiadau i ddatganiadau ariannol y Cyngor a gododd o'n gwaith archwilio, gyda'r rheiny'n cael eu dwyn i sylw'r Cyngor yn ein Hadroddiad ar yr Archwiliad o'r Datganiadau Ariannol ym mis Medi 2021.
- yn ogystal â chyfrifoldebau'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol am archwilio datganiadau ariannol y Cyngor, mae ganddo gyfrifoldeb hefyd am ardystio nifer o hawliadau am grantiau a ffurflenni grantiau. Nid yw ein gwaith hyd yma wedi canfod unrhyw faterion arwyddocaol.
- cyhoeddodd yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol y dystysgrif a oedd yn cadarnhau bod yr archwiliad o'r cyfrifon ar gyfer 2020-21 wedi cael ei gwblhau.

Ein gwaith mewn ymateb i bandemig COVID-19

Mewn ymateb i bandemig COVID-19, fe newidiom ni ddull a ffocws ein gwaith archwilio perfformiad mewn llywodraeth leol a chyrrff eraill. Isod ceir crynodeb o rywfaint o'r gwaith yr ydym wedi'i wneud mewn ymateb i'r pandemig ar draws nifer o sectorau, y mae cryn dipyn ohono'n berthnasol i lywodraeth leol.

Fe gynhaliom ni brosiect i ategu ymdrechion y sector cyhoeddus trwy rannu gwersi a ddysgwyd trwy'r pandemig. Nod y prosiect yw ysgogi rhywfaint o feddwl, a chyfnewid ymarfer. [Ceir rhagor o wybodaeth ar ein gwefan.](#)

Ym mis Mawrth 2021, fe gyhoeddod ni [adroddiad cenedlaethol](#) a oedd yn nodi trosolwg o'r cynnydd hyd yma o ran Profi, Orlhain, Diogelu yng Nghymru. Ym mis Rhagfyr 2020, fe wnaethom hefyd gyhoeddi rhai o [arsylwadau'r](#) Archwilydd Cyffredinol ar gaffael a chyflenwi Cyfarpar Diogelu Personol yn ystod pandemig COVID-19, ac yna [adroddiad](#) ar hynny ym mis Ebrill 2021. Ym mis Mehefin 2021, fe wnaethom hefyd gyhoeddi ein [hadroddiad](#) ar gyflwyno rhaglen frechu COVID-19 yng Nghymru.

Gwella'n barhaus

Fe wnaeth yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol ardystio bod y Cyngor wedi cyflawni ei ddyletswyddau sy'n weddill dan Fesur Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) 2009 ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2020-21, fel y'u harbedwyd gan orchymyn a wnaed dan Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021.

Fel rhan o'n harchwiliad o asesiadau cynghorau o'u perfformiad ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2020-21, fe wnaethom nodi bod llai o gyfeirio at wybodaeth gymharol am berfformiad er ein bod yn cydnabod bod y pandemig wedi arwain at atal gwaith i gasglu peth data ar lefel genedlaethol am y tro. Bydd y gallu i gymharu data a pherfformiad â sefydliadau eraill yn dal i fod yn elfen bwysig o drefniadau i sicrhau gwerth am arian a bydd yn her i gynghorau ei ystyried yn enwedig wrth iddynt barhau i weithredu'r gofynion sy'n ymwneud â hunanasesu a nodir yn Neddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021.

Cynaliadwyedd ariannol

Yn ystod 2020-21, fe wnaethom archwilio cynaliadwyedd ariannol pob cyngor yng Nghymru. Ym mis Awst 2021 daethom i'r casgliad bod y Cyngor yn dal i fod mewn sefyllfa dda i reoli ei gynaliadwyedd ariannol. Mae'r [adroddiad llawn](#) ar ein gwefan.

Fe wnaethom hefyd gyhoeddi dau adroddiad cryno cenedlaethol: yr [adroddiad cyntaf](#) ym mis Hydref 2020 a'r [ail adroddiad](#) ym mis Medi 2021.

Cynllunio adferiad

Yn ystod 2020-21, fe wnaethom adolygu'r trefniadau yr oedd pob cyngor yng Nghymru'n eu rhoi ar waith i gefnogi gwaith cynllunio adferiad. Fe wnaethom y gwaith yma ar sail barhaus, gan ddarparu adborth mewn amser real ac yn barhaus lle'r oedd yn briodol.

Arolygiaethau eraill

Fe wnaethom hefyd ystyried canfyddiadau Archwiliadau Sicrwydd a gwblhawyd gan Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (AGC) ac adroddiadau Estyn yn ogystal ag unrhyw gamau dilynol a gymerwyd gan y Cyngor mewn ymateb.

Cynhaliodd AGC archwiliad sicrwydd ym mis Mai 2021, a oedd yn canolbwyntio ar ddiogelwch a lles plant ac oedolion.

Mae'r [llythyr](#) bellach wedi cael ei gyhoeddi ar wefan AGC.

Fe gyhoeddodd AGC ac Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru eu [hadolygiad Cenedlaethol ar y cyd](#) o ddefnyddio'r Trefniadau Diogelu wrth Amddifadu o Ryddid yng Nghymru. Fe wnaethant nodi nifer o ganfyddiadau ac argymhellion allweddol.

Ym mis Tachwedd 2021, fe wnaeth AGC hefyd gyhoeddi ei [hadroddiad trosolwg cenedlaethol o archwiliadau sicrwydd yng Nghymru a Gadewch imi ffynnu](#), adolygiad cenedlaethol o gymorth cynnar, gofal a chefnogaeth a threfniadau pontio ar gyfer plant anabl yng Nghymru.

Cynhaliodd Estyn ymweliadau monitro ag ysgolion ac unedau cyfeirio disgyblion a oedd mewn categori statudol ar gyfer camau dilynol. Fe wnaeth hefyd adolygu cynnydd ysgolion yr oedd yn ofynnol iddynt gael adolygiad gan Estyn. Mae'r adroddiadau ar gyfer ysgolion y bernir eu bod wedi gwneud cynnydd digonol o ran mynd i'r afael â'r argymhellion o'u harolygiad Adran 28 ar [wefan Estyn](#).

Ni chynhaliodd Estyn arolygiad o Wasanaethau Addysg Llywodraeth Leol yn Rhondda Cynon Taf yn ystod 2020-21.

Astudiaethau llywodraeth leol

Yn ogystal â gwaith lleol ym mhob cyngor, bob blwyddyn rydym hefyd yn cynnal astudiaethau ar draws y sector llywodraeth leol i wneud argymhellion ar gyfer gwella gwerth am arian. Ers yr adroddiad gwella blynyddol diwethaf, rydym wedi cyhoeddi'r adroddiadau canlynol:

Gwasanaethau dewisol (Ebrill 2021)

Mae pwysau ariannol wedi peri i gynghorau ostwng gwariant a thorri gwasanaethau, ond mae'r pandemig wedi dangos bod gwasanaethau llywodraeth leol yn hanfodol i gadw pobl yn ddiogel ac yn iach. Fe wnaethom ganolbwyntio ar sut y mae cynghorau'n diffinio gwasanaethau, y systemau a'r prosesau y maent wedi'u defnyddio i adolygu gwasanaethau a pha mor gadarn yw'r rhain. Mae'r galw am rai gwasanaethau hanfodol yn dal i gynyddu ac nid yw cynghorau'n hyderus y gallant barhau i ddarparu'r gwasanaethau hyn yn wyneb y galw cynyddol a chymhleth hwn. Mae angen i gynghorau achub ar y cyfle i adnewyddu, ailgloriannu ac ailosod yr hyn y maent yn ei wneud a dysgu o'r pandemig i greu dyfodol gwell.

Cyhoeddwyd ein [hadroddiad](#) ym mis Ebrill 2021.

Adfywio canol trefi yng Nghymru (Medi 2021)

Rhwng 1950 a 1980, fe wnaeth awdurdodau lleol roi blaenoriaeth i adfywio canol trefi gan greu mannau adwerthu newydd a mwy. Fodd bynnag, mae dewisiadau polisi blaenorol, disgwyliadau newidiol defnyddwyr a datblygiadau technolegol bellach yn effeithio'n andwyol ar ganol sawl tref yng Nghymru. Ac mae'r pandemig wedi creu heriau i lywodraeth leol a'r Llywodraeth ganolog, gydag un siop ymhob saith ar strydoedd mawr Cymru bellach yn wag, er

bod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi buddsoddi ac ysgogi buddsoddiadau gwerth £892.6 miliwn yn y saith mlynedd ddiwethaf. Nid oes gan awdurdodau lleol y capasiti i ymateb i'r sefyllfa hon ac nid ydynt wastad yn defnyddio'r pwerau sydd ganddynt i helpu i adfywio trefi. I gyflawni'r deilliannau lleol gorau, mae angen i bolisiau a threfniadau cydweithio gael eu halinio a'u hintegreiddio, ac mae angen i adnoddau gael eu blaenoriaethu ar ganol trefi. Cyhoeddwyd ein hadroddiad ym mis Medi 2021.

Gwaith sydd yn yr arfaeth ar gyfer 2021-22

Fe wnaethom hefyd fwrw golwg ar yr heriau a chyfleoedd allweddol sy'n wynebu'r Cyngor. Gallai'r rhain gael effaith ar allu'r Cyngor i gyflawni ei rwymedigaethau cyfreithiol mewn perthynas â'r egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy a'r modd y mae'n defnyddio'i adnoddau.

Y risg a'r mater mwyaf arwyddocaol sy'n wynebu cynghorau a'r sector cyhoeddus ehangach o hyd yn ystod 2021-22 yw pandemig COVID-19. Rydym wedi trefnu ein gwaith i ddarparu sicrwydd a her mewn ffordd sy'n helpu i gefnogi'r Cyngor trwy'r cyfnod hwn. Mae ein gwaith arfaethedig ar gyfer 2021-22 yn cynnwys:

- Sicrwydd ac asesu risg gan gynnwys ffocws ar y canlynol:
 - Deddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021
 - Cynllunio adferiad
 - Cynlluniau lleihau carbon
 - Trefniadau hunanasesu
 - Sefyllfa ariannol
- Llamu Ymlaen – wrth i'r byd symud yn ei flaen, gan ddysgu o'r pandemig, mae'r adolygiad hwn yn ystyried pa mor effeithiol y mae cynghorau'n cryfhau eu gallu i drawsnewid, addasu a pharhau i ddarparu gwasanaethau, gan gynnwys y rhai a ddarperir mewn partneriaeth gyda rhanddeiliaid allweddol a chymunedau.
- Archwiliad o adrodd ar wella
- Adolygiad sy'n ymwneud â phartneriaeth iechyd Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- Adolygiad o wasanaethau digidol

Mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn annibynnol ar y llywodraeth, ac fe'i penodir gan Ei Mawrhydi'r Frenhines. Mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn gwneud ei waith gan ddefnyddio staff ac adnoddau eraill a ddarperir gan Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru, sy'n fwrdd statudol a sefydlwyd at y diben hwnnw ac i fonitro a chynghori'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol. Caiff Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru ei dwyn i gyfrif gan y Senedd.

Mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn archwilio cyrff llywodraeth leol yng Nghymru, gan gynnwys awdurdodau unedol, yr heddlu, awdurdodau tân ac achub, parciau cenedlaethol a chynghorau cymuned. Mae hefyd yn cynnal astudiaethau o werth am arian mewn llywodraeth leol, yn asesu cydymffurfiaeth â'r gofynion sy'n weddill o Fesur Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) 2009 a gall gynnal arolygiadau arbennig dan Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021.

Y tu hwnt i lywodraeth leol, yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol yw archwilydd allanol Llywodraeth Cymru a'r cyrff cyhoeddus a noddir ganddi ac sy'n gysylltiedig â hi, Comisiwn y Senedd a chyrff y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol yng Nghymru.

Archwilio Cymru yw'r enw cyfunol anstatudol ar gyfer Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru a Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru, sy'n endidau cyfreithiol ar wahân sydd â'u swyddogaethau cyfreithiol eu hunain, fel a ddisgrifir uchod. Nid yw Archwilio Cymru yn endid cyfreithiol.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Saesneg.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-2022

**COMMITTEE:
COUNCIL**

19th January 2022

Item No:8

THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET – THE PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT
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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

AUTHOR: Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services (01443 424026)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information in respect of the 2022/23 Provisional Local Government Settlement, and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Minister for Finance and Local Government on the 21st December 2021;
- 2.2 Note that the Final 2022/23 Local Government Settlement is expected during early March 2022; and
- 2.3 Note the approach to budget consultation for 2022/23 as already determined.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To update Members on the implications of the Provisional Settlement for 2022/23 following receipt of information on the 21st December 2021.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement in Wales for 2022/23 has followed the UK Government Autumn Budget and Spending Review (SR21) as announced on the 27th October 2021.
- 4.2 On the 21st December 2021, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement. The Minister's statement and key data table is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The "headlines" of the Provisional 2022/23 Settlement are as follows:-
- a. The overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2022/23 (of unhypothecated funding) at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 9.4% (+£437M).
 - b. The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 8.4% which is below the average all Wales increase. Settlement figures across Wales range from 8.4% to 11.2%.
 - c. No 'floor' protection has been included for 2022/23.
 - d. The Settlement figures for 2022/23 include transfers into the settlement in respect of Food and Residual Waste Management Gate Fee Support (£13.3M), Social Care Workforce Grant (£5.0M) and the Coastal Risk Management Programme (not applicable to this Council). The values for this Council are £2.430M and £0.408M respectively.
 - e. The Settlement also provides indicative all Wales settlement levels for the next 2 financial years, at 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25. The figures are indicative and dependent on NDR income over the period and on the funding provided to WG by UK Government.
 - f. Provisional figures and indicative estimates for a 3 year period are also included for specific grants, at an all Wales level. The Social Care Workforce Grant has been partially transferred into RSG as detailed above. This continues to fund our core base budget.

- g. The Council's General Capital Funding allocation has reduced by £2.165M to £11.599M.

5.0 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2022/23 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT

- 5.1 The provisional settlement indicates that our 2022/23 RSG and NDR funding will total £441.433M.
- 5.2 In anticipation of the 2022/23 local government settlement, the Council's service managers have constructed base budget requirements for next financial year. Those initial calculations provided for:-
- Estimated employee costs, pension costs and National Insurance Contribution levels;
 - Non-pay (i.e. goods and services) inflation, including energy and fuel;
 - Corporate financing requirements and levies; and
 - Full year effects of any additional burdens imposed on the Council and the implications of demand led pressures.
- 5.3 The Provisional Settlement is at a higher level than the range modelled in the most recent Medium Term Financial Plan and recognises some of the intense funding pressures which are being experienced across local government in general but also within Rhondda Cynon Taf. **It also importantly recognises the critical role which local government continues to play in responding to the pandemic and protecting our communities and residents.**
- 5.4 Members have continued to receive updates on the projections of the Council's revenue budget position for the period to 2024/25, as part of our Medium Term Service Planning arrangements. The latest of these assessments was considered by Council on the 29th September 2021 which, based on a range of modelled settlement levels, projected a funding gap of £9.3M (at +4% settlement).
- 5.5 As referenced at section 4, the provisional settlement provides this Council with an uplift of 8.4%.
- 5.6 Cabinet on the 15th November 2021 determined the Council Tax Base for 2022/23 at £77,707.00. The impact on the modelled budget gap of our updated tax base can also now be reflected.
- 5.7 The combined effects of the above, including the transfers into the settlement, have resulted in additional resources available to the Council as shown in table 1.

Table 1 : Additional Resources at Provisional Settlement

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

- 5.8 Our base budget requirements for 2022/23 have continued to be reviewed since the preparation of the MTFP and a number of updates can now be made.
- 5.9 This has included notably the financial implications of increases to National Insurance Contributions payable by employers linked to the UK Government's Health and Social Care Levy (including the implications upon commissioned service providers) and the costs of funding the payment of the Real Living Wage to social care providers within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.10 Further funding has also been identified and included in the Schools budget (ISB) to recognise the implications of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, in addition to funding (in full) for pay and non-pay inflation and pupil number changes.
- 5.11 It is evident that demand led cost pressures are being felt across many of our service areas, plus future pay and non-pay inflationary and supply chain pressures. There are also additional cross cutting cost pressures such as energy, fuel and food in addition to the ongoing cost implications as a consequence of the pandemic.
- 5.12 In the MTFP, a number of risk items were identified and estimated in financial terms. In light of the above review and updates, it is now appropriate that these risks are removed from our base budget requirement for next year, albeit they will continue to be monitored as we go forward and continue to refresh our MTFP.
- 5.13 The impact of the above updates are summarised in table 2. This is in addition to the required £28.5M of budget increases already factored into our MTFP and includes the budget requirements associated with the transfers into the settlement.

Table 2 : Base Budget Updates

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

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

Table 3 : Revised Budget Gap 2022/23

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

- 5.15 It will now be for Cabinet to consider the implications of the above scenario in the preparation of its draft budget strategy. As part of this, consideration will be given to the outcome of the first phase of the budget consultation process.
- 5.16 It is customary for our services to deliver on an efficiency requirement year on year which for the current year (2021/22) amounted to £4.6M. Senior Finance Officers continue to work with service managers to identify any such opportunities which can be factored into the 2022/23 budget strategy, noting that the focus of our service managers has largely and appropriately remained on responding to the pandemic.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 Cabinet may wish to consider the wider and ongoing implications of the pandemic on our services and staff, residents, businesses and communities. This will include council tax levels, the treatment of schools, our levels of fees and charges for next year and any opportunities to allocate additional resources to priority service areas.

6.0 DEVELOPING AN EQUITABLE BUDGET STRATEGY FOR 2022/23

6.1 Against the backdrop of a sustained period of financial challenges and more recently significant storm damage and the pandemic, the Council must maintain a focus on robust financial management and stability. A key ingredient of this is the responsible approach taken to how we address the development of our annual budgets. Therefore, we still, as in previous years, need to ensure that the parameters for producing the 2022/23 budget are adhered to, these being :-

- a) Maintain the Council's financial stability, whilst targeting any available funding, in an efficient and effective manner, towards our key services and priorities;
- b) Look to protect those key services and jobs wherever possible;
- c) Review all areas of service provision, including eligibility to those services and charging policies in place;
- d) Take maximum advantage of all new funding opportunities made available by the Welsh Government and others where it is in the best interests of the Council;
- e) "Top slice" appropriate necessary sums to fund corporate budgets;
- f) Fully allocate any sums "earmarked" for specific services which are demonstrably the direct result of legislative changes included in the 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government;
- g) Allocate across our Services, initially, an adequate allowance for movements in employee costs;
- h) Allocate an appropriate level of funding to support our schools;
- i) Continue to deploy our procurement strategy to offset the impact of certain supplies and services inflation in the coming financial year;
- j) Actively pursue efficiency in all areas of the Council, for example, through continuing our work on digitalisation, reducing office accommodation, on-going transformational change as a result of the pandemic and a focus on invest to save and preventative activities.

6.2 These parameters will provide an effective and pragmatic framework for the delivery of a fair and equitable Council budget.

6.3 Council Tax Levels

- 6.4 As is the case every year in respect of Council Tax levels, the Council will have due regard to the level of increase and the ability of residents to pay, but it also has to balance this against the need to fund important services. The 'modelled' increase at this time, in line with the current years increase and our MTFP is +2.65% for 2022/23 and it is now for Cabinet to consider and recommend the level of Council Tax.
- 6.5 The local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), will continue to operate in line with the national framework, and at the same level of funding as that originally provided for through Revenue Support Grant in 2014/15. Costs therefore associated with Council Tax uplifts and changing caseloads remain a risk that the Council must fund. To illustrate the cost implications further, a 1% increase in Council Tax will generate an additional income for the Council of £1,195k (at the 2022/23 tax base level), but will also cost £253k in additional CTRS requirements. It therefore follows that a 1% increase generates a net additional income of £942k, or stated another way, 21 per cent of any Council Tax increase is lost to support the increased costs associated with the Welsh Government's CTRS.
- 6.6 The cost and caseload of the CTRS during this year (2021/22) has returned (currently) to more pre-pandemic levels, following the additional support provided by WG for increases which were felt during 2020/21. WG continue to monitor spend with an expectation that additional funding would be provided if necessary.

7.0 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst the primary focus is necessarily on setting out an annual budget strategy and required Council Tax levels for the forthcoming financial year, the medium term financial and service planning emphasis has been a cornerstone of robust financial management at this Council.
- 7.2 The provision by Welsh Government of an all Wales multi-year settlement with indications of prospects for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is helpful for our medium term financial planning arrangements, notwithstanding the lower levels of indicative future year settlements will present us with a challenge. In this regard it is essential that we retain our focus across the medium term planning horizon and seek to ensure that we continue to manage our cost base effectively alongside future prospects for settlement levels.
- 7.3 Work is now underway to revisit all of the assumptions through to 2024/25 within the Medium Term Financial Plan and this will be reported to Members when available. The Council must continue to identify opportunities for efficiency and savings and whilst Members will clearly focus on their legal obligation to set a balanced budget for 2022/23 by March of this year, we must also be mindful of the medium and longer term requirements.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

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

9.0 CONSULTATION

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

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

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

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The financial modelling assumptions and implications are set out in the detail of this report. Members are not being asked to make any new financial decisions at this stage.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS or LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

- 12.1 The budget strategy is a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "Making a Difference".
- 12.2 With regard to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, at the 4th March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 13.1 The Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement on the 21st December 2021.
- 13.2 The reported Provisional Settlement represents an increase in revenue funding for the Council of +8.4% and decrease in capital support.
- 13.3 The Council's primary objective continues to be setting a budget in 2022/23 that maintains key services and jobs as well as ensuring the ongoing financial stability of the Council.

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WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act) provides for the creation and ongoing development of corporate joint committees to allow authorities to work together on specific functions such as transport, economic development and planning. Following one-off specific grant funding this financial year to support preparatory work, I am delivering ongoing additional funding to support the core operation of these committees 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 ¹	2022-23 provisional AEF	% change on adjusted 2021-22 AEF	Rank	Council Tax Reduction Schemes (within AEF)
Isle of Anglesey	104,872	114,549	9.2%	12	5,240
Gwynedd	195,905	213,210	8.8%	17	8,263
Conwy	167,356	183,308	9.5%	5	9,189
Denbighshire	159,060	173,637	9.2%	15	8,536
Flintshire	212,608	232,174	9.2%	14	9,680
Wrexham	189,233	207,060	9.4%	7	9,275
Powys	192,088	210,257	9.5%	6	8,978
Ceredigion	110,006	119,419	8.6%	19	5,126
Pembrokeshire	179,422	196,253	9.4%	8	8,180
Carmarthenshire	285,262	311,597	9.2%	11	14,006
Swansea	353,571	386,585	9.3%	9	19,339
Neath Port Talbot	237,289	258,068	8.8%	18	15,955
Bridgend	212,755	232,364	9.2%	13	12,866
The Vale Of Glamorgan	168,128	186,011	10.6%	3	9,088
Rhondda Cynon Taf	407,050	441,433	8.4%	21	21,005
Merthyr Tydfil	101,493	110,616	9.0%	16	5,627
Caerphilly	292,712	317,453	8.5%	20	12,651
Blaenau Gwent	120,657	130,795	8.4%	22	8,166
Torfaen	146,560	160,117	9.3%	10	8,500
Monmouthshire	101,003	112,275	11.2%	1	5,918
Newport	240,957	265,612	10.2%	4	10,337
Cardiff	492,095	544,715	10.7%	2	28,076
All Unitary Authorities	4,670,080	5,107,507	9.4%		244,000

Note: Total may not sum correctly due to rounding

1. 2021-22 AEF adjusted transfers of £18.585m (at 2021-22 prices) into and out of the Settlement and for the latest, 2022-23 tax base.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

COUNCIL

19th JANUARY 2022

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

REPORT OF: THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Author: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report fulfils the requirement to annually consider whether to revise or replace the Council's existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme ("CTRS") and the requirement to adopt a scheme by 31st January 2022.
- 1.2. As part of the review, the report sets out the changes to the CTRS that were introduced in April 2013. It explains the amendments proposed, the funding implications likely and documents the consultation outcomes allowing Members to consider the adoption of the Council's local CTRS for the 2022/23 financial year, which must be adopted by 31st January 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations as the Council's local CTRS for 2022/23, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise;
- b) Note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the CTRS for 2022/23; and
- c) Confirm the discretions applicable to the Council's local CTRS for 2022/23 as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2) of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. The CTRS in Wales is set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012). On 26th November 2013, the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) approved two sets of regulations:

- (a) the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Schemes) (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Default Scheme Regulations”); and
- (b) the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) (together the “Regulations”).

The Regulations at (b) above prescribe the main features of the CTRS to be adopted by all councils in Wales.

3.2. The Prescribed Requirements Regulations contain an obligation, where each year a council must consider whether to revise its scheme, or to replace it with another scheme. Any revision or replacement must be made no later than 31st January in the year preceding the financial year for which the revision or replacement scheme will take effect. However, the Regulations were amended in January 2015 to remove the requirement for Local Authorities to consult in relation to changes made by Welsh Ministers where authorities have no discretion. This means that Local Authorities do not need to consult when the Prescribed Requirements Regulations are amended by WG annually, to reflect consequential amendments to other state benefit changes.

3.3. Although there is a national scheme for Wales, the Prescribed Requirements Regulations provide limited discretion for the Council to apply minor additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme and which provide for additional administrative flexibility. If the Council does decide to offer more generous local discretions this would further increase the cost of the CTRS. These are:-

- (a) The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons who have ceased to receive qualifying benefits after they return to work (or increase hours or increase earnings), where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end as a result of the change in their circumstances;
- (b) The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax reduction for periods longer than the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made; and
- (c) Discretion to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow’s Pensions (disregarded when calculating the income of the applicant).

3.4. The Prescribed Requirements Regulations require the Council to adopt a CTRS by 31st January each year, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements set out in the preceding paragraph. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme shall apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. The Council can only apply discretion if it adopts a scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

- 3.5. Each year, WG updates the Regulations to amend the financial values used to assess an applicant's entitlement. On 7th December 2021 the amending Regulations - (The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021) (the "Amendment Regulations") - were laid before WG. Due to the WG's procedures which govern the making of the Regulations, the Amendment Regulations are to be formally considered by Plenary session of WG on 18th January 2022 and subject to approval, will come into force the following day.
- 3.6. As detailed above, each year WG has to amend the Regulations to ensure that certain financial values used to calculate entitlement to a reduction for non-passported CTRS applicants are up-rated. For 2022/23, these changes relate to: -
- Personal allowances in relation to working age, carer and disabled applicants;
 - Personal allowances in relation to pensioner applicants; and
 - Non-dependant deductions.
- 3.7. In addition to any changes to the up-rating provisions referred to above, the Amendment Regulations incorporate further amendments to reflect consequential changes relating to social security benefits and other technical changes. A summary of all the main changes is set out in Appendix 1 to this report for information.

4. CONSULTATION AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. The Regulations specify that in preparing its CTRS, a council must consult with any person it considers are likely to have an interest. Consequently, this requirement is met by incorporating a number of questions on the discretionary areas in the local CTRS, within the Council's general budget consultation process (which includes council tax levels and service priorities to inform the annual budget setting process).
- 4.2. Phase 1 of the annual budget consultation process for the 2022/23 financial year ran from 26th October to 7th December 2021 and used the Council's new Let's Talk Engagement website, reintroduced some face-to-face events in the community and provided alternate means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the internet and for those who preferred to engage through traditional methods. As part of these arrangements, the Older Persons Advisory Group and Disability Forum were provided with the consultation information as part of providing opportunity for as many stakeholders as possible to feedback their views.
- 4.3. The overall response from the consultation process on the three discretionary areas available to the Council and which it could apply to its CTRS was as follows: -

Table 1

Discretion Area	No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you think that 4 weeks is a reasonable period to continue paying Council Tax Reduction when someone returns to work?	247	190	35	22
Do you think that it is reasonable for the Council to continue to totally disregard War Disablement and War Widow's Pensions income when assessing entitlement to CTR Scheme?	247	151	63	33

Do you think that 6 months is reasonable period to backdate claims for working age and pensioners?	247	173	41	33
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4.4. In addition, a presentation was made to the Council's Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 30th November 2021, the feedback from which is set out below.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme – a 4-week extended payment period for people who return to work?

- Committee Members supported the continuation of a 4-week extended payment period for people who return to work.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Exclude war disablement and war widow pension when assessing CTR scheme?

- Committee Members supported the exclusion of the whole amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions when calculating Council Tax Reduction Scheme entitlement.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Backdating claims by 6 months?

- Committee Members supported the continuation of the backdated claims period of 6 months.

4.5. In terms of an Equality Impact Assessment, the Council undertook a comprehensive equality impact assessment in January 2013 based on the original scheme. This has been reviewed in light of the minor changes to each subsequent year's scheme and it is evident that there are no amendments required.

4.6. The NafW undertook a comprehensive Regulatory Impact Assessment in respect of the national Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which accompanied the Regulations when they were considered by the NafW in November 2013.

5. ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

5.1 The Council is required to adopt its CTRS by 31st January 2022. This requirement is a statutory duty and applies even if the Council chooses not to apply any of the discretions available to it. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply under the Default Scheme Regulations (as amended).

5.2 As set out in paragraph 3.3, the Council does have limited discretion to be more generous than the national scheme and provide for additional administrative flexibility (specified under Part 5, paragraphs (32) to (34) of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations).

5.3 Taking account of:-

- (a) the responses to the Council's consultation exercise relating to the discretionary elements of the scheme;
- (b) the existing Housing Benefit Scheme in relation to the treatment of War Pensions (widows, widowers and disablement), which disregards these payments in full;

and

(c) the fixed funding made available by WG (as detailed at paragraph 6),

it is recommended that the approach to the available discretions should continue in line with the arrangements for 2021/22 as set out in Table 2.

Table 2

Discretionary Parts of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations <i>(Part 5 – Other Matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme)</i>	Prescribed Requirements Regulations (Minimum Requirement)	Recommended Discretion to be adopted
<p>Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings.</p> <p><i>Regulation 32 (3) paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6.</i></p>	<p>4 Weeks</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non- Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6 will apply</p>
<p>Ability to backdate an application for CTR with regard to late claims prior to the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made.</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (4) and paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</i></p>	<p>3 Months</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months will apply.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months will apply.</p>
<p>Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant);</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (5), paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</i></p>	<p>£10</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 20 (a) and (b), Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

5.4 It should be noted that there is no additional funding available from WG to fund the discretionary elements of the CTRS. The estimated cost of funding the discretionary elements of the Prescribed Scheme in **2021/22** is set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Discretionary Element	Est. Annual Cost	No. of Applicants
Extended Payments	£2,600	30
Backdated Payments	£13,000	85
War Disablement & War Widow's Pensions	£26,500	65
Total estimated cost	£42,100	180

5.5 Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council adopts the Prescribed Requirements Regulations (as amended by the Amendment Regulations) which set out all the components that must be included in a CTR Scheme, as the Council's CTR Scheme for 2022/23 along with the discretions as set out in Table 2.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

6.1. The current estimated annual value of CTRS to be paid in **2021/22** is £25.153M, to 24,409 applicants (£25.375M to 25,495 applicants for 2020/21, as at December 2020).

6.2. Local Authorities receive fixed funding for the CTRS from WG, which means that as a local authority's caseload, and hence costs, changes from that assumed when the WG funding was set, the local authority bears the financial risk of any variance.

6.3 The amount allocated to councils by WG through the local government settlement takes no account of:

- Any increase in Council Tax levels that may be applied for 2022/23;
- The increase or decrease in the costs of awards under the CTRS if the number of claimants increase/decrease, or if claimants become eligible for more/less help; and
- The provision for Council Tax bad debt.

6.4 The total amount of cash-limited funding for 2022/23 distributed to the local authorities in Wales contained in the provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 21st December 2021 is £244M (this has remained unchanged since 2013/14) and the Council's allocation for 2022/23 is £21.005M (representing 8.6% of the all Wales funding). This Council's allocation for 2021/22 was £21.936M.

6.5 Any change to actual Council Tax levels in 2022/23 made by the Council, will affect the cost of providing the local CTRS, which equates to approximately £253k for each 1% increase in Council Tax.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The equality and diversity implications are set out in the main body of the report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation arrangements have been set out in the main body of the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The relevant legislation has been referenced throughout the main body of the report.

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

10.1 The recommendation for the adoption of this CTRS and the local discretions will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "Making a Difference" through focussing on supporting the economy, prosperity and promoting people's independence. In doing so, it will also contribute to the well-being goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Each year local authorities in Wales are under a statutory obligation to consider whether to revise their CTRS or to replace it with another scheme and any revision or replacement must be made by no later than 31st January in the year preceding the financial year for which the revision or replacement scheme will take effect.

11.2 This report provides Council with details of the proposed scheme to be applicable for financial year 2022/23.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Amendments to the 2013 Regulations made by 2022

Regulations

1. The new statutory instrument¹ amends the 2013 CTRS Regulations to up-rate certain figures used within those Regulations to calculate entitlement to a Council Tax Reduction, and the amount of any reduction awarded to applicants in 2022/23. It also makes a number of consequential and technical amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to take account of interrelated benefits and ensure they remain fit for purpose.
2. The up-rating increases the various figures used to calculate an applicant's entitlement to a reduction and the amount of the reduction, in line with variations for living costs and earnings. The uprated figures relate to:

Change	Impact
<p>Personal allowances in relation to working age, carer and disabled applicants</p> <p>The financial figures in respect of these allowances have been amended and have increased in line with the cost of living rises. The convention is to uprate in line with the Consumer Price Index September figure from the previous year (2021), which is 3.1%.</p>	<p>Costs</p> <p>Uprating the financial figures in respect of pensioners and working age allowances would slightly increase total reductions under Council Tax Reduction Schemes. However, if the financial figures in relation to Non-Dependant Deductions were also uprated, this would mitigate some of the increase in total reductions. Consequently, total council tax reductions are not expected to rise significantly because of the uprating.</p> <p>Benefits</p> <p>Uprating the financial figures in the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the personal allowance for working age applicants continues to increase in line with the CPI (which is set at 3.1%). For example in 2022-23, the single person allowance would increase from £79.60 to £82.10 (an increase of £2.50). ▪ the personal allowance for pensioners continues to increase in line with the standard minimum guarantee and savings credit. For example in 2022-23, the single person allowance would increase from £191.15 to £197.10 (an increase of £5.95). ▪ Non-dependant deduction rates are uprated, this will ensure the calculation used to assess the eligibility of non-dependant households remains up-to-date. The calculation would continue to make a fair assessment of the income of non-dependants and the cost of council tax. This will ensure the system remains fair and equitable.
<p>Pensioners reaching state pension age: personal allowance</p> <p>The Regulations currently provide for higher or lower personal allowance rates for pensioners depending on whether they are over or under 65 respectively. There are no longer pensioners (within the meaning of the Regulations) who are under the age of 65. An amendment is therefore made to remove those redundant references. The effect of the amendment is that all pensioners in Wales are entitled to the higher rate of personal allowance. This means the Welsh scheme is more generous than in England</p>	
<p>Non-dependant deductions</p> <p>The financial figures in relation to both the income bands and deductions made in relation to 'non-dependants' will be uprated. If amendments are not made, appropriate deductions would not be made from CTRS awards as the income thresholds would no longer reflect average earnings and the deduction would no longer reflect the overall cost of council tax.</p>	

¹ The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022

3. Additional Consequential Amendments

In addition to the uprating of financial figures, this statutory instrument makes a number of consequential amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations. These will ensure the 2013 Regulations remain up-to-date and fit for purpose.

Area/Issue	Effect of 2022 “Amendment” Regulations
<p><u>Afghan Nationals and UK nationals from Afghanistan</u> This is designed to support Afghan nationals and UK nationals from Afghanistan as a consequence of the recent changes to the Afghan Government. The amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations make provision to exempt this group from those counted as persons not being in Great Britain.</p>	<p>The effect of these amendments is that this group will be eligible to be included in a local authority’s CTRS and will be eligible for a discount if they meet the other requirements of the CTRS.</p>
<p><u>Redress Scheme for survivors of historical child abuse in Scotland</u> The Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 23 April 2021. The Act sets up a scheme to make financial payments (‘redress payments’) to survivors of historical child abuse in care in Scotland.</p>	<p>To ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively affected because they have received a redress payment, a consequential amendment is made to disregard any redress payment received from the calculation of an applicant’s capital under the scheme. A similar amendment is also made to disregard any ex gratia payment made by the Scottish Ministers from the Advance Payment Scheme set up by the Scottish Ministers in respect of cases of historical child abuse in care.</p>
<p><u>Changes to income and capital disregards</u> A number of payments are disregarded for the purposes of calculating ‘income’ and/or ‘capital’.</p>	<p>Will ensure these references in the 2013 Regulations remain up-to-date for 2022/2023.</p>



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19th January 2022

WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

AUTHOR : Barrie Davies (01443) 424026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is to ensure the Council complies with the requirements relating to the production and approval of an Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March 2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (a) Approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2020/2021 (Appendix 1);
- (b) Approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 2); and
- (c) Consider the External Auditor report (Appendix 3).

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has administrative responsibility for the production of the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements.
- 3.2 The draft financial statements were provided to Audit Wales on 17th November 2021.
- 3.3 The intervening period has seen the completion of the audit of the Financial Statements by Audit Wales and they are now in a position to provide their opinion on them as presenting a true and fair view. During the audit process a small number of amendments were necessary and these are incorporated into the Financial Statements at Appendix 1. The Audit Wales report is attached for Members consideration at Appendix 3.
- 3.4 It is normal practice for Audit Wales to request that the Responsible Finance Officer provides a “Letter of Representation”, which highlights material issues relating to the completeness and/or accuracy of the information included in the Financial Statements and could, therefore, influence the audit opinion. This is to ensure that the Financial Statements properly reflect the Fund’s financial standing and is consistent with the approach taken by Audit Wales in prior years.
- 3.5 The Letter of Representation for the Welsh Church Act Fund is provided at Appendix 2.

4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 4.1 The report satisfies the legal requirement for the approval of the Welsh Church Act Fund’s Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. As a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

7.1 The report ensures the Council complies with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102).

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

8.1 The report supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act in particular 'a Wales of cohesive communities' through the financial support it offers to community based groups within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend Councils.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The completion of the audit of the Welsh Church Act Fund Financial Statements provides Members, in their role as trustees, with the necessary assurances upon the financial affairs of the Fund.

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**The Welsh Church Act Fund within
the areas of
Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend
and Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Councils**

**ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
2020/21**

Registered Charity no. 506658

Annual Report 2020/21

Contents

	Page
Report of the Trustee	3
Statement of the Trustee's Responsibilities	8
Report of the Auditor	9
Statement of Financial Activities	13
Balance Sheet	14
Statement of Cash Flows	15
Accounting Policies	16
Notes to the Statement of Financial Activities	18
Notes to the Balance Sheet	21
Notes to the Cash Flow	23

Report of the Trustee for the Year Ended 31st March 2021

Duty to Prepare Annual Reports and Accounts

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as trustee, is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund.

The trustee presents its report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Information

Name of Charity

The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

Charity Number

506658

Governing Document

Trust Deed

Trustee

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, as a corporate body, is the trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund.

Method of Appointment

Upon becoming a Member of the Council, Councillors become a trustee of the Fund.

Chief Executive

Chris Bradshaw

Principal Office

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

Auditors

Audit Wales, 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC, Leicester, Leicestershire, United Kingdom, LE87 2BB.

COIFs (Charities Official Investment Fund)

Managed by CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Investment Management Ltd., Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4ET.

Solicitors

Legal and Democratic Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Rhondda Cynon Taf, CF40 2XX.

Investment Managers

There is no contract with any advisor and no annual fees are charged. However, advice is sought on an ad-hoc basis.

Narrative Information

Constitution and Objectives

Lloyd George, under the provisions of the 1914 and 1919 Welsh Churches Acts, established the Welsh Church Act Fund. These two acts transferred certain categories of secularised property to a Welsh Church Act Fund to be administered by the County Councils, however, these funds were not activated until 1942-47, when property to the value of almost £2.5m was handed over to the County Councils.

The Welsh Churches Acts state that income of the funds should be devoted to charitable or alms giving purposes and that each Council is required to prepare a scheme for the use of the fund.

The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils still operates under the constitution of the Mid Glamorgan Welsh Church Act Fund. The original trust deed is dated 9th January 1976 and the registered charity number is 506658.

The charitable purposes to which the fund may be applied are:

- Educational
- Relief in sickness
- Relief in need
- Libraries, Museums, Art Galleries, etc.
- Social and recreational
- Protection of historical buildings, etc.
- Medical and social research, treatment, etc.
- Probation, etc.
- Blind persons
- Aged persons
- Places of worship and burial grounds
- Emergencies or disasters
- Other charitable purposes

These purposes are consistent with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Organisation

All the Councillors of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC act as trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund. As the Fund covers the areas of Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil as well as Rhondda Cynon Taf, the trustee consults with representatives from these County Borough Councils on successful applications within their localities.

The charity trustee has complied with the duty in the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Related Parties

A related party transaction is one where the charity has a relationship with another party, which might inhibit it from pursuing its own separate interests. It is considered that Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Bridgend CBC and Merthyr Tydfil CBC and all Trustees of the Fund have related party relationships with the charity. Transactions with related parties are disclosed in Note 4 to the Statement of Financial Activities.

Grant Making Policy

Organisations are invited to submit applications together with estimates, accounts and constitutions. One or more of the purposes mentioned previously will cover successful applicants. There are specific restrictions applied around these general categories which are as follows:

1. Students are not eligible as it is considered that the County Borough Council's education policy already covers the most worthwhile cases.
2. Individual cases of relief in sickness will be referred to by the County Borough Council's Community & Children's Services Group.
3. Individual cases of relief in need will be refused, as any provision in this area should be the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions. However, applications from organisations working towards relief in need will be considered on their merits.
4. No grant will be made towards organisations with an alcohol licence.
5. No grants will be made toward projects operating outside the areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.
6. Applications will be considered from organisations based outside the areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf provided that the work of the organisation has local significance.
7. To be eligible, organisations should ensure their facilities are open to the public at large. Any assistance given will be towards project expenditure of a capital nature only. Revenue costs such as running expenses will not be supported. Welsh Church Act Fund grants will not be paid up front. Grant will normally be paid on completion

of the project, on submission of invoices and bank statements to evidence the expenditure.

8. Welsh Church Act Fund grant limits during 2020/21 were:

Grants under £2,000 did not require match funding, grants exceeding £2,000 required a minimum of 10% match funding and grants exceeding £10,000 required a minimum of 20% match funding from non-Welsh Church Fund sources. Maximum grant available was £50,000.

Details of the Grant Making Process

When projects are fully developed and ready for a decision, recommendations are made by officers via a Grant Assessment Report. Decisions to accept or reject these recommendations are made by the Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member and following consultation with Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

Review of Financial Activities

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year is set out on page 13. A summary of the financial results are set out below:

Investment income during the year totalled £408k (£427k in 2019/20). Expenditure on charitable activities totalled £342k (£797k in 2019/20), and governance costs of £6k were incurred (£6k in 2019/20). Net incoming resources less resources expended amounted to a surplus of £60k (Net incoming resources less resources expended amounted to a deficit of £376k in 2019/20).

During 2020/21 the number of grant awards processed reduced from 57 in 2019/20 to 23. This was as a result of a lower number of applications due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Net gains on the revaluation of Investments totalled £1,326k for the year (net losses of £207k in 2019/20).

Investment Policy and Performance against Policy

The Trust Deed governs the trustee's investment powers. This permits the Charity's funds to be invested in any authorised security listed on the London Stock Exchange. The trustee has complied with this policy during 2020/21.

The investment strategy of the Fund is to balance risk. Capital value is exposed to minimum risk whilst ensuring investment income is sufficient to pay for approved grants.

Achievements and Performance

In line with the charity's objectives, grants of £342k were awarded in 2020/21. Further details are given in Note 2 to the Statement of Financial Activities.

Risk Management

The trustee is made aware of any issues with possible detrimental effects upon the Fund as they arise. There were no such issues during 2020/21.

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Host Authority's Corporate Governance policies such as Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules, Codes of Conduct and Scheme of Delegation. The trustee is aware that investment values can decrease as well as increase.

Statement of the Trustee's Responsibilities

The trustee is responsible for preparing the Trustee's Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustee is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on its website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

By order of the Trustee

Signed:

On behalf of the Trustee.....

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils (the Fund) for the year ended 31st March 2021 under the Charities Act 2011. These comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at 31st March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practise Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The trustee is responsible for the

other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, and in doing so consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information I am required to report the fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require me to report to you if, in my opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustees' report;
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by the team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the trustee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the statement of trustee's responsibilities set out on page 8, the trustee is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustee is responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

I have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could

reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Fund's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.
- Obtaining an understanding of the Fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Fund.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Council and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the trustee;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Fund's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Richard Harries
On behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	
		2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<u>Income and Endowments from:</u>			
Investments	1	408	427
Total Income and Endowments		408	427
<u>Expenditure on:</u>			
Charitable Activities	2	(342)	(797)
Other	3	(6)	(6)
Total Expenditure		(348)	(803)
Net gains/(Losses) on Investments		1,326	(207)
Net Income/(Expenditure)		1,386	(583)
<u>Net Movement in funds</u>		1,386	(583)
<u>Reconciliation of Funds</u>			
Total Funds Brought Forward at 1 st April		12,137	12,720
Total Funds Carried Forward at 31st March		13,523	12,137

The notes contained on pages 18 - 20 form part of these Accounts.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

	Note	31/03/21	31/03/20	31/03/20
		£'000	£'000	£'000
			Restated	
<u>Fixed Assets</u>				
Investments	2	13,396	12,070	12,070
		13,396	12,070	12,070
<u>Current Assets</u>				
Debtors	3	103	105	105
Cash at Bank		398	664	664
		501	769	769
<u>Current Liabilities</u>				
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	4	(374)	(702)	(702)
Net Current Assets		127	67	67
Total Net Assets		13,523	12,137	12,137
Represented By:				
<u>The Funds of the charity:</u>				
Revaluation Reserve				5,182
Unrestricted Funds	1*	13,523	12,137	6,955
Total Unrestricted Funds		13,523	12,137	12,137

The notes contained on pages 21 - 22 form part of these Accounts.

* See Note 1 Prior Year Adjustment.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31st March 2021

	Note	2020/21	2019/20
		£'000	£'000
<u>Cash Flows from Operating Activities:</u>			
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities	1	(672)	(456)
<u>Cash Flows from Investing Activities:</u>			
Dividends, Interest and Rents from Investments		406	405
Cost of Purchase of Units		0	0
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Investing Activities		406	405
<u>Cash Flows from Financing Activities</u>			
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Financing Activities		0	0
Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents in the Reporting Period		(266)	(51)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		664	715
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period		398	664

The notes contained on page 23 form part of these Accounts.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Barrie Davies
Director of Finance and Digital Services
 Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
 The Pavilions
 Cambrian Park
 Clydach Valle
 Tonypandy. CF40 2XX

Accounting Policies

Accounting Policies are the principles, bases, conventions and rules by which transactions are recognised, measured and presented in the accounts.

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102) except where stated otherwise.

Incoming Resources Policy

Income is credited to the fund in the year to which it relates regardless of when the income is actually received.

Resources Expended Policy

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis i.e. charged to the year to which it relates regardless of when the expenditure is made.

Grants Payable Policy

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is conveyed to the recipient. Unused grants are written back when written confirmation is provided stating that funding is no longer required.

Management and Administration Policy

The allocation of Central Support Services costs to the Fund is based upon an estimate of the time spent by employees of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC in undertaking work associated with the Fund.

Investment Properties

Investment properties are recorded in the accounts at the most recent valuation of market value. Any difference in value arising out of the periodic revaluations will be charged/credited to Unrestricted Funds. The most recent valuation was at 1st December

2020 and was carried out by Chris Clarke Surveyors Ltd. In accordance with FRS 102, investment properties are not depreciated.

Fixed Asset Investments (Other Than Property)

Long Term Investments are recorded in the accounts at current market value. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, as Host Authority, administers investments on behalf of the Fund. The Treasury Management Policy statement of the Host Authority governs all such transactions.

Any unrealised and realised gains and losses on revaluation and disposal are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Fund Structure

All funds are unrestricted.

Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

The trustee has not received any remuneration or expenses in the year 2020/21.

Policy on Reserves

Reserves are unrestricted and held for the future use of the Fund for the purposes specified in the Trust Deed.

Policy on Investments of Cash

Cash is deemed to be sums of money available for immediate use by the Welsh Church Fund. Such items are cash balances held in the Fund's bank account (less unrepresented cheques). The Welsh Church Fund does not hold Cash in Hand.

Policy on Debtors and Creditors

Debtors are amounts recoverable, based on the amount the Charity anticipates it will receive. There is no bad debt provision included within the Statements. Creditors are amounts due from the Welsh Church Act Fund.

Policy on Going Concern

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records and produce financial statements that comply with the provisions of the trust deed. The Fund is therefore prepared on the basis of a going concern.

Notes to the Statement of Financial Activities**1. Investment Income**

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Bank Interest	1	5
Interest on Investments	407	422
Total	408	427

2. Charitable Activities

During 2020/21 the Fund awarded total grants amounting to £358,268.68. Those organisations awarded grants equal to or greater than £2,000 are detailed below:

Organisation	Amount £
Ramoth Christian Centre, Hirwaun	(3,219.00)
Noddfa Ruhaman Capel Y Bedyddwyr, Porthcawl	(3,752.00)
Horeb Congregational Chapel, Merthyr Tydfil	(4,491.00)
St David's Church, Laleston	(4,740.00)
St Crallo's Church, Coychurch	(6,930.00)
St Fagans Church, Trecynon	(7,275.00)
St David's Church, Llangynwyd	(7,876.80)
Pete's Shop Ltd, 24 Taff St, Pontypridd	(8,074.53)
Eglwys Y Bedyddwyr, Blaencwm	(8,507.70)
Cwmparc Community Association, Treorchy	(9,030.60)
Lewis Merthyr Band, Porth	(10,000.00)
Trecynon Free library & Institute, Trecynon	(10,000.00)
Cwmparc Community Association, Treorchy	(10,000.00)
Highland Place Unitarian Church, Aberdare	(10,000.00)
St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Merthyr Tydfil	(10,000.00)
St John's Church, Cymmer	(10,000.00)
Cory Band, Treorchy	(35,506.16)
Age Concern Morgannwg Ltd - Cynon Linc, Aberdare	(45,075.89)
Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership, Ynysybwl	(50,000.00)
Pontypridd YMCA	(50,000.00)
Cynon Valley Museum Trust, Aberdare	(50,000.00)
Subtotal of grants equal to or greater than £2,000 (21 in number)	(354,478.68)
Grants less than £2,000 (2 in number)	(3,790.00)
Total grants payable for 2020/21 (23 in number)	(358,268.68)
Grants written back to the Fund	55,961.82
Accounting and Technical Support	(39,178.75)
Total Charitable Activities as per Statement of Financial Activities	(341,485.61)

The Welsh Church Fund only awards grants to institutions.

The following table gives a summary analysis of grants awarded by the nature of the project during 2020/21:

Analysis	Total Amount of Grant Awarded	Total Number of Grants
	£	
Social and recreational	(126,436.76)	7
Other charitable purposes	(103,150.42)	3
Places of worship	(78,681.50)	12
Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries	(50,000.00)	1
Total	(358,268.68)	23

3. Other Costs

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Audit Fees	(6)	(6)
Total	(6)	(6)

4. Related Party Transactions

4.1 Related Transactions with Administrating Authority

Organisation	Nature of Interest	Welsh Church Act Fund Transactions with Organisation			
		Net Value (£'000)		Balance Outstanding as at 31st March 2021 (£'000)	
		Payments	Receipts	Payments	Receipts
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Accounting & technical support	(39)	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Interest Receivable	0	1	0	1
Total		(39)	1	0	1

4.2 Related Transactions with Members of the Council

During 2020/21, eleven Members identified an interest in nine organisations that have been awarded a grant from the Fund.

Organisation	Member's Relationship	Amount Awarded		Outstanding Amount	
		2020/21	2019/20	31/03/21	31/03/20
Eglwys y Bedyddwyr, Blaenycwm,	Secretary	8,508	10,000	0	0
Cambrian Village Trust	Director	0	50,000	0*	37,050
Llanharan Community Development Project Ltd	Trustee	0	10,000	0**	2,500
St Elvan's Church, Aberdare.	Member	0	50,000	25,000	50,000
Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club, Treorchy.	Member	0	8,272	0	8,272
Friends of Aberdare Park	Member (x3)	0	50,000	10,000	50,000
Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership, Ynysybwl	Director	50,000	0	10,000	0
Trecynon Free Library & Institute, Trecynon.	Chair	10,000	0	10,000	0
Pontypridd YMCA	Director	50,000	0	50,000	0

* In 2020/21 Cambrian Village Trust was paid £34,685 with £2,365 written back in year.

** In 2020/21 Llanharan Community Development Project Ltd was paid £2,380 with £120 written back in the year.

Notes to the Balance Sheet

1 Prior Year Adjustment

The 2019/20 Balance Sheet has been restated to aggregate the Revaluation Reserve and the Unrestricted Funds as required by the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

2 Fixed Asset Investments

2.1 Analysis of Movement in Investments

An analysis of the fixed assets held as investments for the charity is provided below:

	Land £'000	Securities £'000	Totals £'000
1 st April 2020	33	12,037	12,070
Net Surplus on Revaluation	11	1,315	1,326
Market Value at 31st March 2021	44	13,352	13,396

2.2 Investment Securities Analysis

	31/03/21 £'000	31/03/20 £'000
Government Stock	457	462
Charities Official Investment Fund	8,094	6,705
Charities Official Fixed Interest Fund	4,801	4,870
Total Market Value	13,352	12,037
Historical Cost as at 31 st March 2021	7,289	7,289

3 Debtors

An analysis of debtors as at 31st March 2021 is provided below:

	31/03/21 £'000	31/03/20 £'000
Amounts due from RCT CBC	1	5
Accrued Interest on Investments	102	100
Total	103	105

3.1 Accrued Interest relates to investment income relating to 2020/21 paid in 2021/22. It is made up as follows:

	£'000
COIF Fixed Interest Fund	59
COIF Investment Fund	39
2 ½ % Index Linked 2024	4
Total	102

4 Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

An analysis of creditors as at 31st March 2021 is as follows:

	31/03/21	31/03/20
	£'000	£'000
Miscellaneous Charitable Organisations	(336)	(643)
Audit Wales – fee accrual	(6)	(19)
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	(32)	(40)
Total	(374)	(702)

Notes to Cash Flow**1. Reconciliation of Net Income/(Expenditure) to Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities**

	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
Net Income/(Expenditure) as per the Statement of Financial Activities	1,386	(583)
Adjustments for:		
(Gains)/Losses on Investments	(1,326)	207
Dividends, Interest and Rents from Investments	(408)	(427)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	4	19
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	(328)	328
Net Cash Provided by (used in) Operating Activities	(672)	(456)

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Appendix 2

Date/Dyddiad:
19th January 2022

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:
Barrie Davies
(01443) 424026

Auditor General for Wales
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Dear Richard,

Representations regarding the 2020/21 financial statements for the Welsh Church Act Fund within the Areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of the Welsh Church Act Fund for the Areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils for the year ended 31st March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management Representations

Responsibilities:

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Charities SoRP; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith; and
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error

Information Provided:

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- The results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- Our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (as Trustee of the Fund) and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- Our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
- Our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.
- The identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial Statement representations:

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. All misstatements have been corrected both material and those below materiality thresholds.

Representations by the Trustee of the Welsh Church Acts Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements of the Welsh Church Act Fund for the Areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils were approved by full Council of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council on 19th January 2022.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by

Director of Finance and Digital Services
(Section 151 Officer)

Leading Member

Date

Date

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Appendix 3

Audit of Accounts Report – The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Audit year: 2020-21

Date issued: January 22

Purpose of this document

This document is a draft supplied in confidence solely for the purpose of verifying the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in it and to obtain views on the conclusions reached.

Handling prior to publication

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In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts There are some issues to report to you prior to their approval.

Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction	4
Proposed audit opinion	4
Significant issues arising from the audit	4
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Final Letter of Representation	6
Appendix 2 – Proposed Audit Report	9
Appendix 3 – Summary of Corrections Made	13

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2020-21 accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with Director of Finance and Digital Services.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £268k for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, such as related parties.
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit.
- 7 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and, our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Proposed audit opinion

- 8 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 9 We issue a 'qualified' audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 10 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards.
- 11 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Significant issues arising from the audit

Uncorrected misstatements

- 12 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

- 13 There were initially misstatements in the accounts that have now been corrected by management. However, we believe that these should be drawn to your attention and they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Other significant issues arising from the audit

- 14 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There were no issues arising in these areas this year.

Final Letter of Representation

[Audited body's letterhead]

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

[Date]

Representations regarding the 2020-21 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils (the Fund) for the year ended 31 March 21 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Charities SoRP; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith; and
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;

- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- The results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- Our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Fund and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- Our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
- Our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.
- The identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.

Representations by the Trustee of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as trustees on [insert date].

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

[Officer who signs on behalf of management]

Date:

Signed by:

[Officer or Member who signs on behalf of those charged with governance (director only for companies)]

Date:

Proposed Audit Report

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the trustee of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils (the Fund) for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Charities Act 2011. These comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cashflows and related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustee[s] with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The trustee is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require me to report to you if, in my opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustee's report;
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the trustee[s] for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the statement of trustee's responsibilities set out on page 8, the trustee is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustee is responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

I have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from

fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Fund's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.
- Obtaining an understanding of the Fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Fund.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Council and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the trustee
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Fund's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Richard Harries
On behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Summary of Corrections Made

During our audit we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process.

Exhibit 3: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£6,508k	Reclassify £6,508k from revaluation reserve to Fund balance.	To account for financial instruments in line with the SoRP
£32k	Increase in Cash and increase in Creditors	To correctly treat money owed to RCTCBC due to timing differences of payments
Various narrative and presentational changes	Minor corrections throughout the accounts.	To provide enhanced disclosures and understanding of the information contained within the financial statements



Audit Wales
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500
Fax: 029 2032 0600
Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

19 JANUARY 2022

URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN FORWARD

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present, for Members' information an overview of the Urgent Decisions taken forward by the Cabinet Committee and the Urgent Key Officer Delegated Decisions taken forward outside of the Cabinet Committee during the period October– December 2021.
- 1.2 This is excluding those reports which were presented to another Committee of the Council for final decision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules 17.2(a) Urgent Executive Decisions taken forward should be reported to Council for information purposes.
- 3.2 To assist in the openness and transparency of the Decision-making process within the Council.

4. URGENT DECISIONS OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE

- 4.1 There were no urgent Decisions of the Cabinet Committee taken forward during this time period.

5. DELEGATIONS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

- 5.1 As outlined in Section 3 of the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation, Cabinet Members are permitted to make decisions falling under their portfolio if deemed urgent to protect the interest of the Council, subject to prior consultation with the relevant Senior Leadership Team Officer(s).
- 5.2 The Leader can take urgent decisions in the absence of the appropriate portfolio holder.
- 5.3 The confirmation and signature of the Presiding Officer or Deputy Presiding Officer to the proposed decision must be sought in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 17.2(a)
- 5.4 There were no urgent Cabinet Member Decisions taken forward during this time period.

6. DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS TO OFFICERS.

- 6.1 As outlined within section 6 of the Leaders Scheme of Delegation, and in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2000, executive functions can be delegated to Officers (as set out within the terms of Section 5 of Part 3 of this part of the Council Constitution)
- 6.2 Following the Council AGM in 2016 and to increase transparency and accountability, Key Officer Delegated Decisions taken forward would be subject to the Overview and Scrutiny Call in procedure Rules.
- 6.3 The following urgent Key officer Delegated Decision was taken forward during the period October – December 2021:

Date	Decision Taken	Reason for Exemption
15.10.21	Emergency Works to Wattstown Standard Tip	In order for the works to be progressed before the onset of winter weather conditions
29.10.21	Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Reports 2020 and 2021	<i>The need to submit the Annual Monitoring reports to Welsh Government by the 31st October 2021.</i>

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 None Applicable, this report is for information purposes only.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED.

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

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 12.1 All of the decisions taken forward link to the Councils Corporate plan / priorities and Members should look to each of the decisions to see how they link accordingly.

- 12.2 All decisions taken by the Executive are taken through the lens of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, ensuring that the decision takes account of the impact it could have on people living their lives in Wales now and in the future.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Members are advised of the current position in respect of urgent decisions taken forward within Cabinet Committee and through Individual Cabinet Members and Officer Decisions.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

January 2022

URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN FORWARD

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATION**

Item: URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN FORWARD

Background Papers

- Annual General Meeting – May 2016



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021-22

COUNCIL - 19 JANUARY 2022

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP REPORT

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the findings and recommendations agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Working Group at its final meeting held on the 16th November 2021;
- 1.2 The Working Group was established to deal with 'The development of future transportation infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf' following the Notice of Motion considered by Council at its meeting held on the [18th September 2019](#).
- 1.3 The recommendations were ratified at the hybrid meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the [9th December 2021](#).

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group as set out at paragraph 6 as ratified by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 18th September 2019 Council considered the Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors G.Davies, K.Morgan, P.Jarman, D.Grehan, H.Fychan, J.Williams, A.Cox, D.Macey, J.Cullwick, J.Davies, M.Weaver, S.Rees Owen, L.Jones E.Stephens E,Griffiths, E,Webster, S.M. Evans, and A. Chapman.

"With the advent of the approved Metro in 2022; coupled with the aspirations as set out in the Council's proposed Tourism strategy the time is now right to push for future rail development in the County.

This Council therefore calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to commit to extending the Aberdare passenger line to Hirwaun

subject to full consultation with the public and other stakeholders on the location of the station so that it is accessible and fully utilised.

This Council further calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to also extend the Treherbert line to Tynnewydd. subject to its inclusion in the reviewed RCT Local Development Plan.

- 3.2. At the Council meeting and in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7 the mover of the motion moved an alteration to the Motion to include:

“And that the matter be referred to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration, with a widening of the Motion to include the wider County Borough footprint”.

- 3.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed that a Working Group would be established to consider the Notice of Motion. The Working Group Members consisted of County Borough Councillors L M Adams (Chair), H Boggis, J Bonetto, G Caple, A Cox, M Griffiths, W Jones and L Walker. The Working Group was also privileged to have both County Borough Councillors G R Davies and K Morgan, initial mover and seconder to the Council's Notice of Motion as key stakeholders/observers to assist the Working Group's review.
- 3.4 At its inaugural meeting on the 25th November 2019, the Working Group agreed the scope of its work, its terms of reference and received a comprehensive Power Point presentation from Transport for Wales. (Members noted that since the terms of reference had been agreed, the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) Members Steering Group had been established which would provide an effective mechanism for discussion and consultation between Members and LDP officers on the content of the revised Plan).
- 3.5 The Working Group learned that as part of the Wales-wide rail franchise, Transport for Wales (TfW) (a wholly owned arms-length company of Welsh Government) had let the 15-year rail franchise to Keolis Amey, operating as Transport for Wales Rail Services. The initial investment secured full electrification of the Valley lines within Rhondda Cynon Taf (and to Merthyr) together with new rolling stock. Once complete, high frequency fast trains will run four times an hour each way on the lines north of Pontypridd and 12 times an hour each way between Cardiff and Pontypridd, with upgrades to stations and facilities also being delivered.
- 3.6 With information provided around the range of complimentary improvements to stations with potential for additional stations and park and ride opportunities as well as specific projects such as a new rail depot to be developed at Taffs Well which would also accommodate the control centre for these rail services, Members agreed that Metro must be more than rail and would need to integrate all forms of transport to create a comprehensive, joined-up and coordinated network of routes and services across; rail, tram, bus, cycling, walking, whilst promoting more sustainable ways of fuelling private cars, freight and service vehicles.
- 3.7 In order to progress its considerations as to how future rail and transport infrastructure and services could develop and build on the early stages of implementation of the South Wales Metro in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Working Group agreed to seek submissions from local Members and stakeholders. This would enable the Working Group to explore the concerns, points and questions raised further during the course of their work.

- 3.8 The Working Group sought views on a range of proposals such as:
- How the Council maximises opportunities to add value to current Metro investments across RCT
 - Resident and stakeholder views on improving the reach and efficiency of our transport network and services for all modes of travel, especially sustainable transport solutions, in order to improve the social and economic well-being of the County Borough and
 - How such proposals might compliment and contribute towards the impending LDP review by the Council and the development of a Strategic Development Plan for the region.
- 3.9 Eight submissions were received in total from Local Members and other stakeholders such as Community Councils and the Rhondda Tunnel Society, which were due to be considered and discussed at its second meeting in early 2020.
- 3.10 On the 23rd March 2020, and in response to measures implemented by the UK and Welsh Governments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's committee meetings were temporarily suspended. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook a more streamlined approach towards its work programme and in effect undertook its role to identify the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that all Scrutiny working groups were suspended to allow officers to concentrate their time on business-critical matters.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

- 4.1 On the 7th July 2021, the Working Group received a report from the Service Director Frontline Services which presented the summary of the submissions received in response to the call for evidence (as set out below) and the subsequent response of the Council to each individual submission (attached at Appendix 1):

Councillor G. Caple – Local Member for Cymmer
 Councillor G. Thomas – Local Member for Rhigos
 Councillors D. R. Bevan & L. M. Adams – Local Members for Tylorstown
 Councillors G. R. Davies & W. Jones – Local Members for Treherbert
 Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
 Rhondda Tunnel Society
 Welcome to Our Woods/Create Your Own Space
 Ynysybwl & Coed Y Cwm Community Council

- 4.2 Members considered the responses to individual, specific queries raised such as the extension of the rail line from Treherbert to Tynewydd to capitalise on the benefits of the improved services as well as the 'wider County Borough footprint' which had been moved as an alteration to the original Notice of Motion. They also considered the wider transport context such as legislative, environmental and economic factors and also reflected on the developments that have taken place since the original call for evidence in 2020.
- 4.3 The Working Group acknowledged that a number of WG funded studies have potentially significant impacts for RCT are also progressing via the CCR Transport Authority and TfW with regard to the North West Transport Corridor project from Cardiff into RCT, (details of which had been presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the [15th June 2021](#)), extending passenger rail services

beyond Aberdare to Hirwaun, Strategic rail-based park and ride proposals to serve the eastern end of the A473 corridor near Upper Boat and improving regional east-west transport connectivity across the mid-valleys (i.e. Usk – Pontypool – Newbridge – Ystrad Mynach – Abercynon – Pontypridd – Pontyclun – Bridgend – Porthcawl).

- 4.4 The North West Transport Corridor Cardiff Project, a £300 plus million scheme which was commissioned in July 2019 has now identified short and long-term public transport options from Pontyclun, Talbot Green, Llantrisant, Beddau, Creigiau and Plasdwr towards Cardiff City Centre. The short-term interventions will consider Bus Rapid Transit and bus priority measures, alongside active travel, to alleviate bottlenecks on the existing network between RCT and Cardiff. The longer-term measures will focus on rail-based options mainly utilising former mineral lines. It is possible that the wider economic benefits could extend northwards into the Rhondda Valley and Gilfach Goch areas as the creation of new employment in Talbot Green and planned reduction in journey times to/from Cardiff will offer residents in these communities with improved access to new jobs, training and learning opportunities.
- 4.5 RCT has successfully secured funding via the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund towards the following transport schemes; A4119 Coedely Dualling, Porth Transport Hub.
- 4.6 The Working Group considered that as a number of studies are being undertaken by TfW, via the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority it would be timely to consider the re-evaluation of plans, feasibility reports and costs for the Council's pipeline of road schemes to feed into the Welsh Government review of road schemes and which could be reported to Scrutiny in due course.
- 4.7 On a local level, RCT is also developing and delivering proposals to complement the Metro such as the investment in Porth Transport Hub and working closely with TfW to facilitate delivery of the new £100m rail depot at Taffs Well. Options are also being explored with Transport for Wales to develop a new railway station that serves Treforest Industrial Estate in the vicinity of the new DWP offices. It is also promoting its active travel and in partnership with a number of organisations and bodies such as Sustrans and Public Health Wales, is raising awareness of the health, economic and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. The Council recently undertook a public engagement exercise into its future Active Travel plans which has informed the required formal consultation (now underway) and this will establish the aspirations for investment in Active Travel over the next 15 years. The updated proposals will be submitted to Welsh Government during December 2021. The 695 responses to the initial consultation were reported to Cabinet on the [17th June 2021](#)
- 4.8 It was noted that Welsh Government has initiated a review of all road schemes under the Climate Change agenda including projects that are subject to the Welsh Government's Business Case Process. Aspirations for a phased road scheme in the Rhondda Fach in the form of a 3 section extension of the Rhondda Fach Relief Road to Ferndale, to the Salisbury Hotel to Maerdy and link from Maerdy to the Heads of the Valleys would be subject to the legislation and policies governing climate change and alternative measures that will improve public transport provision along the Rhondda Fach.
- 4.9 The Working Group acknowledged that opportunities to extend the rail line towards Tower Colliery, which would improve connectivity with Zip World, are being considered without prejudicing extensions further west beyond those areas in the future.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Members recognised that that the essence of the Notice of Motion needed to be considered in the wider context and against progress of the new Welsh Transport Strategy; Llwybr Newydd, South Wales Metro, WG funded studies and many local projects.
- 5.2 Whilst considering the eight submissions and key queries raised by local Members and stakeholders, Members noted the benefits of undertaking further feasibility studies and analysis of each submission to understand any potential financial costs which will only become known following more detailed study and analysis.
- 5.3 Members proposed that, in view of the wider remit of the working group a report is presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to demonstrate that the broader scope has been captured.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members proposed the following recommendations:
- The Working Group acknowledges that the integrated transport map of South Wales is swiftly changing and evolving;
 - As a result, the Working Group recommends that the Council/ And RTA (Regional Transport Authority) reviews all potential infrastructure, including rapid transport and active travel in the wider context of the revised LDP;
 - This Working Group recommends that all pipe-line projects are fully evaluated, and that priority is given to integrated public transport to support greener means of travel across the region;
 - The Working Group also recommended consideration continues to be provided to the extension of the Rhondda Fach Relief Road, while recognising that the recent 'moratorium' by Welsh Government upon the funding of future highway developments would prevent progress of this scheme into reality, the development of enhanced integrated transport networks, should be a key objective in improving the economic well-being of residents.
 - When considering the wider development of transport infrastructure in future years, in the context of tackling climate change, the Working Group was of the view that selected roads schemes remain important and justified, where they support economic growth and compliment wider transport behavioural change being undertaken.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this report, however, creating sustainable communities, transport and long- term employment opportunities are of benefit to all RCT residents regardless of background.

8. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

8.1 Consultation was undertaken with the stakeholders and local Members who responded to the call for evidence as set out in the submissions at Appendix A.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report, but detailed consideration of the capital and revenue implications will be required in order to inform a preferred strategy. It should be noted that many of the submissions set out in Appendix 1 will have a financial implication for the Council. However, at this stage, the potential financial cost will only become known following more detailed study and analysis of each submission.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

11.1 Supporting the development of a more sustainable transport solution will allow the Council to meet its stated objectives covering health and prosperity set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. For example, the planned, new public transport and active travel proposals will help address air quality and congestion issues and improve connectivity and access to new employment opportunities.

11.2 Many of the submissions in Appendix 1 will also meet a number of the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For example, a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS

NAME OF RESPONDENT	DETAILS OF SUBMISSION	RESPONSE OF THE COUNCIL
Councillor Gareth Caple	<p>Many railway stations are in a poor state of repair.</p> <p>Trehafoed station Park & Ride is unwelcome, badly signposted and underused. The northbound platform does not have disabled access and the station has poor drainage.</p> <p>Transport for Wales should work with the Council and transport providers in order to promote tourist attractions in the valleys.</p> <p>Concern about the lack of toilets on new Metro rolling stock.</p>	<p>Responsibility for stations located along the Core Valley Lines north of Cardiff has been transferred from Network Rail to Transport for Wales. Maintenance and upgrade is being undertaken as part of the investment in the South East Wales Metro. These works will cover improved access for cyclists and people with reduced mobility as well as addressing the condition and capacity of Park & Ride sites.</p> <p>The Council liaises closely with transport operators and local tourist attractions and in the publicity, the local bus and rail services serving these attractions are highlighted.</p> <p>Transport for Wales is procuring the new rolling stock and is aware of this issue. Rolling stock (PACERS) fitted with toilets which are not accessible to people with restricted mobility have very recently been phased out. It is understood that when the new Metro rolling stock is introduced, passengers may have to disembark at certain stations with toilet facilities and rejoin a later journey.</p>
Councillor Graham Thomas	<p>Additional frequency, as part of the Metro investment, along the Aberdare line will be welcome. The extension of passenger rail services to Hirwaun will be of benefit to the residents of Rhigos and could be extended further to Hirwaun Ind Estate. This could enable more goods to be carried by rail.</p> <p>Current rail fares are prohibitive for employees earning the minimum wage.</p> <p>There should be a close analysis of an integrated transport system that includes links to bus services.</p>	<p>Comments are noted. A Transport for Wales study, with input from the Council, is currently being undertaken into the feasibility of extending passenger rail services from Aberdare to Hirwaun. This proposed scheme will also involve the construction of new intermediate stations and facilities along the extended route. The Council has recently secured the "Chicken Factory" site at Trecynnon which could serve as access and P&R for a new station. The Council has also submitted a bid to the UK Government, under its "Levelling Up" Fund, to fund the construction of a 127 space Park and Share (potentially future P&R) facility at Llwydcoed as part of a first phase – this will include complementary elements such as a new Active Travel bridge over the A4059.</p>

		<p>TfW Rail has reduced season ticket prices from stations located in the Heads of the Valleys for commuters travelling southwards to Pontypridd and Cardiff.</p> <p>The development of the South East Wales Metro will include the integration of ticketing and co-ordination of bus and rail services, including better orbital services between valleys. The Welsh Government is currently examining changes to the existing legislation governing the operation of local bus services. It has launched an updated Wales Transport Strategy which reflects these proposals.</p>
NAME OF RESPONDENT	DETAILS OF SUBMISSION	RESPONSE OF THE COUNCIL
Councillors Robert Bevan & Mark Adams	Extend the Rhondda Fach Relief Road to Maerdy (Phase 2) and to the Rhigos Mountain Top (Phase 3).	<p>Both Phases can be classified as major road schemes, with Phase 2 included as a long term aspiration in the current South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan. If progressed further, both Phases will be subject to the Welsh Government's Business Case process, prior to any planning and design being undertaken and alignment identified.</p> <p>The Business Case process would provide evidence of the economic, social and environmental cases for developing these particular road schemes. However, any decision to proceed further must take account of the legislation and policies governing climate change, alternative measures that will improve public transport provision along the Rhondda Fach and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Welsh Government has recently placed a moratorium on proceeding with new road schemes, pending a full review.</p>
Councillors Geraint Davies & Will Jones	<p>Welcome the development of the South East Wales Metro including the increase in frequency and reduction in journey times.</p> <p>Extend the rail line from Treherbert to Tynewydd to capitalise on the benefits of the improved services.</p>	<p>Comments are noted.</p> <p>The potential extension of rail services from Treherbert to Tynewydd has been included for consideration as part of a wider study looking at improved transport links to/from the Mid Valleys areas. Subject to funding, this study is expected to be commissioned in the current financial year</p>

NAME OF RESPONDENT	DETAILS OF SUBMISSION	RESPONSE OF THE COUNCIL
<p>Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council</p>	<p>Sets out the potential benefits of improved rail frequency and capacity on its residents.</p> <p>Important that adequate funding is available for schemes; ticket costs are affordable; improved services do not undermine local town centre economies.</p> <p>Puts forward a number of measures and schemes to support the South East Wales Metro.</p> <p>There are a number of opportunities that exist to enhance transport accessibility and connectivity in the County Borough. For example, reinstating the rail line between Neath and Merthyr via Hirwaun and making new road developments suitable for a cross-section of users.</p> <p>Puts forward a number of measures to reduce travel demand in RCT whilst encouraging economic growth and tackling climate change.</p>	<p>Comments are noted.</p> <p>All infrastructure schemes will be subject to the Business Case process which identifies whether a scheme is affordable and represents value for money. TfW Rail has reduced season ticket prices from stations located in the Heads of the Valleys for commuters travelling southwards to Pontypridd and Cardiff. It is envisaged that development and 'place making' opportunities will be identified around stations located on the South East Wales Metro network.</p> <p>Comments are noted. Measures and schemes are being looked at by Transport for Wales, in collaboration with the Regional Transport Authority, local authorities and transport operators. For example, the co-ordination of bus and rail services at key interchanges; improvements to stations in terms of making them more accessible and providing better facilities for passengers; extending passenger rail services to Hirwaun. The planned increase in frequency on Valley lines north of Cardiff will increase capacity. Where constraints exist along the single track sections, the provision of double tracks is being examined by Transport for Wales. Significant Sections of dual tracking are proposed as part of the Metro transformation of Core Valley Lines.</p> <p>As the highway authority, the Council has been investing in improvements along the principal bus corridors in RCT. These improvements cover roadside waiting facilities for passengers and tackling delays to local bus services. The Council has also been exploring the widespread provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout RCT, both in residential areas and at key facilities.</p> <p>Requests for local bus services are brought to the attention of the local bus operators who determine the times and coverage of their commercial network. The role of the Council is to determine whether a social need exists for a local bus service, that is not being met by the commercial network. This is in terms of the availability of alternative</p>

		<p>services, the level of access to key facilities and destinations and financial costs to the Council.</p> <p>Under current legislation, all new highway schemes must ensure that active travel provision (walking and cycling) is incorporated in the design of the scheme.</p> <p>The proposal to re-open the rail line between Neath and Merthyr Tydfil would be subject to the Welsh Government's business case process. Most of the existing rail alignment has not been safeguarded from development and this would have a substantial and negative impact on the engineering feasibility and financial costs of re-opening.</p> <p>The Council has implemented a number of measures across RCT to promote social distancing and accommodate changes to travel patterns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Council continues to promote homeworking for the majority of staff that are able to do so, thereby reducing travel demand, congestion and carbon footprint.</p> <p>With the support of the Council, local bus and taxis operators are investing in new fleets of modern, fully accessible, low emission vehicles.</p>
NAME OF RESPONDENT	DETAILS OF SUBMISSION	RESPONSE OF THE COUNCIL
Rhondda Tunnel Society	<p>The rail service will be a key resource bringing a large number of visitors to the Tunnel. An increase in service frequency will be important. The provision of a shuttle bus service and bike hire facilities is envisaged at the terminus station.</p> <p>It is important that the seating arrangement of the new rolling stock is flexible to accommodate cycles as well as wheelchair users and pushchairs.</p>	<p>Comments are noted. See response above.</p> <p>Transport for Wales is procuring the new rolling stock for use on the Core Valley Lines network. The carriages will be fully compliant with existing design standards and the internal layout will ensure sufficient capacity is provided to meet different passenger needs.</p> <p>The Council has commissioned a study to investigate a possible alignment for an active travel route along the Rhondda Fawr. A number of sections have already been constructed to serve key facilities which will eventually form part of a continuous route between Blaencwm and Porth.</p>

	<p>A traffic free cycle path is essential to the Tunnel.</p> <p>There is inadequate Park and Ride facilities at some stations.</p> <p>There is a need to promote sustainable travel to the Tunnel which will have health benefits and relieve traffic congestion.</p>	<p>Responsibility for stations located along the Core Valley Lines north of Cardiff has been transferred from Network Rail to Transport for Wales. Maintenance and upgrade is being undertaken as part of the investment in the South East Wales Metro. These works will cover improved access for cyclists and people with reduced mobility as well as addressing the condition and capacity of Park & Ride sites.</p> <p>The Council, in partnership with a number of organisations and bodies such as Sustrans and Public Health Wales, is undertaking a number of measures to promote active travel and raise awareness of the health, economic and environmental benefits of cycling and walking. In addition to promoting the network of existing active travel routes. Full details are on the Council's website.</p> <p>A formal consultation exercise covering the development of active travel routes in Rhondda Cynon Taf will commence shortly, building on the recent online engagement which attracted 695 responses.</p>
<p>Welcome to our Woods Create Your Space</p>	<p>Are supportive of the idea to restore a rail service to Tynnewydd village.</p>	<p>The potential extension of rail services from Treherbert to Tynnewydd has been included as part of a wider study looking at improved transport links to/from the Mid Valleys areas. Subject to funding, this study is expected to be commissioned in the current Financial year.</p>
<p>Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm Community Council</p>	<p>Construct a new rail station near Glyncoch with a Park & Ride facility. This will benefit residents who commute from the Ynysybwl area.</p> <p>YCC are fully supportive of investment and enhancement to the current transport system.</p>	<p>Responsibility for existing stations and the development of new stations along the Core Valley Lines network north of Cardiff lies with Transport for Wales. This proposal will need to be subject to achieving a satisfactory business case under the rail industry's GRIP (Governance in Rail Infrastructure Protocol) process.</p> <p>Comments are noted.</p>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972
as amended by
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL
19th JANUARY 2022

List of Background Papers

Report of the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication

Item - Overview & Scrutiny Working Group- The Development of Future Transport
Infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Appendix 1 – Summary of Submissions

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