



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held **HYBRID** at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX
Wednesday, 22nd June, 2022 at 1.00 pm

Contact: Sarah Daniel – Council Business Unit – 07385 086 169

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Monday, 20 June 2022 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Note:

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

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 21st March 2022 as an accurate record.

(Pages 7 - 16)

3. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

To receive the report of the Service Director Democratic Services and

(Pages 17 - 38)

4. THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

To receive a report from the Chief Executive to enable Cabinet to consider, review and approve the Council's response to Climate Change in its final Tackling Climate Change Strategy – 'Think Climate RCT' following wider engagement with residents, partners and other stakeholders, including staff.

(Pages 39 - 70)

5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

To receive a report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to amalgamate the currently federated Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools.

(Pages 71 - 80)

6. REVIEW OF LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RCT

To receive the report of the Director Education and Inclusion Services to advise Members of the outcome of the publication of the Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to enhance Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

(Pages 81 - 88)

7. CAR MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

To receive a Joint Report of the Director of Human Resources and the Director Finance and Digital Services to determine the rate of reimbursement payable to Council employees who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes.

(Pages 89 - 92)

8. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE: OVERVIEW OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING 2020-2022

To receive the report of the Group Director Community and Children's Services to provide Cabinet Members with an overview of the additional support the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has offered young people as a result of the Council's additional investment since 2020.

(Pages 93 - 102)

9. PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

To receive a report of the Group Director Community and Children's Services to update Members on the Play Sufficiency Assessment following Pre-scrutiny by the Children & Young People Scrutiny

Committee at its meeting on the 16th February 2022 and to seek endorsement from members for the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and action plan to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 30th June 2022, as per statutory obligation placed upon the Council in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012.

(Pages 103 - 228)

10. FOOD RESILIENCE

To receive the report of the Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services to provide Members with an opportunity to review the support offered to residents who are experiencing food poverty, the work undertaken with partners to develop a strategic approach to food security and the progress made towards achieving a Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award plus plans for further development.

(Pages 229 - 240)

11. COMMUNITY WARDENS

To receive the report of the Director Frontline Services to seek approval from Cabinet to introduce a new Community Warden service, effective across RCT, to support the Police in providing a visible, reassuring presence in our town centres, parks and communities.

(Pages 241 - 246)

12. ARMED FORCES AND WAR MEMORIALS COMMITMENT

To receive the report of the Service Director Democratic Services and Communication to provide an update on the Council's ongoing support for our Armed Forces and Veteran community and outlines how the Council can increase the commitment to those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, through additional investment in the Armed Forces, including War Memorials

(Pages 247 - 252)

13. PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE PLACEMAKING PLAN - PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND PROJECT UPDATES

To receive the report of the Director of Prosperity and Development to set out the headline results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the early ideas for redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtens buildings;

(Pages 253 - 302)

14. DRAFT RCT TREE, WOODLANDS, AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

To receive the report of the Director Prosperity and Development for Cabinet to consider the contents of a new, draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy and agree that the draft is used as the basis on which to engage the public and other relevant stakeholders in an eight week consultation to ascertain a wider range of views.

(Pages 303 - 360)

15. PROPOSED LEVELLING UP FUND SUBMISSION FOR THE CYNON VALLEY

To receive the report of the Director Prosperity and Development to provide Cabinet with a summary of the UK Government Leveling Up Fund (Round 2) and the proposed project application for the Former Chicken Factory, Trecynon for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency

(Pages 361 - 370)

16. LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION

To receive the Leader's new Scheme of Delegation for information from the Service Director Democratic Services and Communication

(Pages 371 - 396)

17. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

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

18. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES LEARNING PROGRAMME (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) - FINANCIAL CLOSE FOR MIM PATHFINDER PROJECT

To receive the joint report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services and the Director Finance and Digital Services on Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools Band B) Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Revenue Funding Programme.

(Pages 397 - 1220)

19. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.



Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)
Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

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

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the Hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 21 March 2022 at 10.00 am.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Others in attendance

Councillor P Jarman

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

122 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Cllr R Bevan declared a personal interest in item 3 as his daughter works in Social Services

Cllr A Morgan declared a personal interest in item 10 having agreed a collaborative approach with the WLGA on the matter

123 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 28 February 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

124 DRAFT PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2021/24

The Head of Procurement presented a report to Cabinet on the updated

Procurement Strategy 2021/24 for review, comment and endorsement. Members were informed that the Strategy has been completed and takes into account the new and emerging areas that the procurement process has been tasked with helping to deliver.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that the Strategy builds on all the good work in incorporating the social aspects into the strategy. The Strategy also adds in the aspiration of achieving the Net Zero aim.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to endorse the Strategy

125 HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Service Director Highways and Engineering presented the report to members following the approval of the Council's Three-Year Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25 on 9th March 2022 at Council, the report set out the detailed capital programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects. The report detailed a number of proposals which will continue the enhanced levels of investment under the RCTInvest initiative, delivering sustained improvements to the resilience and durability of our highways and transportation infrastructure, promoting sustainable transport opportunities and network efficiency

The Leader commented on the funding that had been secured through Welsh Government and other bids were also pending for Highways and Transportation and was pleased that significant improvements would be made over the next 12 months.

The Deputy Leader thanked officers for the significant amount of work going into the projects. Flood alleviation schemes throughout the Borough, significant investment

At this juncture in the meeting County Borough Councillor P Jarman spoke on the item to which her comments were answered by the officers.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. To note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within the report.
2. To note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme and delegate authority to the Director of Frontline Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Digital Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year, where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

126 ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2020/2021

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager presented the report to Members to provide information on the Council's Annual Equality Report, for the year 2020/21 that had been developed to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report

on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties. Members were advised that the report contained progress made in year 2020/21 in meeting the equality objectives contained in Council's Strategic Equality Plan. Members were also advised that Members of the Overview & Scrutiny were provided with the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny on the Annual Equality Report in advance of Cabinet's consideration.

The Deputy Leader thanked the officer for the report and also thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their valuable input and comments which would be taken forward.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. To note the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2. To endorse the recommendations outlined within the Annual Equality Report 2020/21 as attached to the report, subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members.

127 BITC RACE AT WORK CHARTER

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager presented the report for the Council to sign the Business in the Community, Race at Work Charter and follow the recommended guidelines for compliance to reduce racial disparities in employment for Black and Minority Ethnic staff. Signing amplifies the organisation's commitment to equality of opportunity in the workplace and demonstrates our commitment to race equality and wider organisational inclusivity

The Deputy Leader thanked officers for the report and stated the importance for the Authority to be community leaders and sign the race at work charter

At this juncture of the meeting County Borough Councillor P Jarman spoke in support of the item

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager confirmed that the Authority would shortly be subscribing to the Membership of the BITC

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Race at Work Charter and follows the recommended guidelines for compliance to reduce racial disparities in employment for Black and Minority Ethnic staff.

128 EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Director Education and Inclusion presented the report to Members to provide them with details of the capital works for approval for 2022/23 as part of the Council's three-year Capital Programme

Cabinet were informed that an ongoing programme of work is required in school premises to deal with essential conditions and health and safety issues across the school estate, to ensure school buildings are 'safe, watertight and warm'. The Officer continued that these works will support schools with effective

maintenance that will continue to reduce the risks associated with buildings and building services and help to prevent the need for significant capital expenditure and disruption to children's education which can follow with building failure.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion Services thanked officers for the contents of the report and was pleased to read that all schools listed will benefit and bring them into the 21st Century.

The Leader commented that the proposed improvement works also demonstrated a good geographical spread across the whole of the County Borough. He thanked the Corporate Estates Team for their input into the works

At this juncture of the meeting and with the permission of the Leader Cllr P Jarman spoke on the item to which the Leader responded with her queries.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Education Capital Programme priority schemes for 2022/23 as outlined in Appendices 1-10 and approve scheme commencement.

129 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO ENHANCE WELSH MEDIUM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

The Head of Inclusion presented the report to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to enhance Welsh medium Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

The Consultation Report, prepared in respect of this proposal, is attached at Appendix 1 for your attention. It contains information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposal, with copies of the notes taken at these meetings; it contains Estyn's full response to the proposal and the appropriate clarification to the response; it also contains a summary of the online survey responses received during the consultation period and where required the appropriate clarification to any issues raised.

It must be noted that there has been a positive response to this particular consultation process with 31 written responses being received via the online survey which was available on the RCT website for the duration of the consultation period and 1 formal letter. Due to COVID restrictions, meetings with the community could not be held. However, a virtual meeting was held with the staff and governors and a face-to-face consultation was undertaken with the School Council.

Out of the 32 responses received, 28 were in agreement with the proposal, 2 respondents were not in agreement and 2 were unsure. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and in favour of the proposal to establish a Welsh medium Learning Support Class at Ysgol Garth Olwg to support pupils with significant additional learning needs.

The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, which was introduced on 1st November 2018, replacing the previous Code introduced in October 2013. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any Statutory

Notices which will progress the proposal. It further states that Statutory Notices must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 22nd August 2022 in this instance

The Statutory Notice for this proposal will refer to:

- The opening of a Learning Support Class for pupils with significant additional learning needs at Ysgol Garth Olwg with effect from 1st September 2022

If agreed, and subject to the matter not being called in for consideration by Scrutiny, the Statutory Notice will be published on 4th April 2022 and will allow for a minimum 28 day period for objections, ending on 11th May 2022.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion commented that it is good to see a positive result from the consultation and that the proposal will increase learning opportunities for our Children and Young People

The Deputy Leader added that the Authority engages with many stakeholders on the proposals and the majority were very supportive and in favour and it is right that we have a Welsh Medium Additional Learning Needs facility available for learners.

1. To note the information contained within the Consultation Report, which includes a summary of correspondence received during the consultation exercise, including the full response from Estyn, feedback received from the online survey, and notes of the meetings held.
2. To progress the proposal to enhance Welsh medium Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) by issuing the appropriate statutory notice to open a Key Stage 3/4 LSC for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN) at Ysgol Garth Olwg accommodating 14 pupils.

130 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GLYNCOCH

The Director Education and Inclusion presented the report which detailed proposals to Amalgamate Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion commented that she is pleased to see a positive response to enhance the learning experience for pupils in RCTCBC area

The Deputy Leader added that it is wonderful new school for young learners but was disappointed at the low consultation responses but understands that Covid restrictions had been detrimental to the consultation process.

1. To note the information contained within the Consultation Report, which includes a summary of correspondence received during the consultation exercise, including the full response from Estyn, feedback received from

the online survey, and notes of the meetings held.

2. To progress the proposals to the next stage of the consultation process by issuing an appropriate Statutory Notice which will trigger the start of the Objection Period.

131 NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICES

The Group Director Community and Children's Services presented the report to members to update on the proposals for developing the governance and enabling for the National Adoption Service for Wales as it assumes responsibility for Foster Wales

Formally endorses the revised governance, formally assumes responsibility for foster wales, positive move sets collaborate arrangements on a formal basis.

1.2 To achieve agreement to signing the Joint Committee Agreement for the proposed Joint Committee

1. That the Authority signs the Joint Committee Agreement for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales; and
2. Subject to 1, to authorise the Group Director, Community and Children's Services (in consultation with the Director of Legal Services) to agree any minor amendments to the Joint Committee Agreement which may arise as a result of the approval process being conducted across the 22 local authorities.

132 RCT LIBRARY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2022/25

The Service Director Community Services presented the report to Members provide Members with an opportunity to review the Draft Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf's Library Service and its associated Action Plan.

The Draft Strategy outlines the services currently available and identifies the key priorities proposed for the next 3 years and the outcomes and impact achieving these will have. The Draft Action Plan outlines the actions that will be implemented to ensure that the desired outcomes and impacts are achieved.

Members heard the key priorities proposed for the next three years are:

- Keeping the service relevant in a rapidly changing environment.
- Improving the library experience for all customers.
- Take the opportunities and lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic to inform and shape future provision.

The Cabinet Member Community Services thanked the officer for the report, and acknowledged that it has been difficult time for the service over past two years but despite this, the service has performed extremely well and ranked extremely high through difficult to digitise, fantastic new hubs developed in communities.

The Deputy Leader also paid compliment to staff during the pandemic for going over and above in reaching out to residents to ensure they still had a connection and communication throughout pandemic with the service area providing an enhanced provision for E-learning and ICT Skills.

The Leader also gave thanks to Library staff and spoke positively of the strategy.

At this juncture in the meeting and with agreement from the Leader Councillor P Jarman spoke on the item

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Library Service's proposed Strategy and Action Plan 2022/25.

133 **DIGITAL STRATEGY**

The Service Director Digital and ICT presented the report to Members which set out the Council's updated Digital Strategy for the period 2022 to 2026.

Members heard that the proposed Digital Strategy 2022-2026 seeks to build upon the progress made since 2017 and sets out the Council's vision of being a truly "Digitally Driven Council," that provides excellent services, which are efficient, effective and designed with the person and modern customer expectations at their heart and delivered by a digitally empowered workforce.

The Strategy reflects the ever-increasing role and reliance on digital in people's everyday lives and seeks to harness the transformative impact it has. It also recognises that whilst demand continues to rise for online services, there are some who will continue to need our help to access digital services and those who need to be supported through more traditional channels.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that the past 3 years has demonstrated how important the Digital Strategy is. The report builds on the strengths of the previous strategy and supports a better work/life balance for staff and was pleased Finance and Performance Committee are also supportive of the proposals.

The Leader also spoke positively on the Strategy and praised that it was for an all wales level as Welsh Government had our templates and shared these with other authorities. He stated that the investment into the service area helped to support staff to work from home and Highways to work with handheld devices.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's updated Digital Strategy (set out at Appendix A to the report).

134 **QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Service Director Finance and Improvement Services presented the report provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first nine months of this financial year

Members were informed that the Quarter 3 revenue budget position is projecting a £0.353M overspend, this being an improved picture compared to quarters 1 and 2 and reflects the continuation of key pressures primarily within Adult and Children's Services.

The Service Director continued that the Capital investment as at 31st December 2021 is £55.338M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the quarter to reflect changes in costs and new external grant funding approvals received, with the programme of capital investment supporting visible improvements in assets across the County Borough. With regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, positive progress overall has been made during Quarter 3 alongside services continuing their recovery from the pandemic and building on the work undertaken during the first half of the year.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that the £350k overspend has been further reduced. The £33m of hardship funding has been provided of to cover funding during pandemic, this will be extra pressure on the council to cover from existing budgets; he added that the report is important to show how despite the pandemic we have continued to invest heavily in corporate plan priorities.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to

1. Note the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery and, in parallel, the re-introduction of services as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted
2. Revenue

Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st December 2021 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and note the incorporation of Welsh Government Covid-19 funding into this position to support on-going service delivery.

3. Capital

Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st December 2021 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).

4. Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st December 2021 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary)

5. Corporate Plan Priorities

Note the Quarter 3 progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).

6. Note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).

135 EDINBURGH DECLARATION

The Director Public Health, Protection And Community Services presented the report to advise Cabinet of the Edinburgh Declaration and the role of Local

Authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, ensuring transformative change for nature over the coming decade and to seek Cabinet agreement for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to be a signatory of the Edinburgh Declaration.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services endorsed the report and recommendations, and commented that this aligns with the Authority's carbon reduction plan. He added it demonstrated that it is clear we are ambitious but there is more to do, however we are on track and the report aligns with our targets

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council becomes a signatory to the Edinburgh Declaration.

136 UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROPOSED SOLAR FARM AND RELATED ISSUES

The Director Corporate Estates presented the report to Members to provide a further update to Members with regards to the work underway in the development of a 'Land Based Solar Farm', to be located on Council owned land that allows a South facing aspect. He advised members that the facility will, when constructed, be an asset owned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Members were advised that whilst the name and location of the site has been anonymised at this stage for commercial reasons. Negotiations are in the crucial stages of the process to agree a Power Purchase Agreement / Offtake Contract with a potential partner. The Council has also signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding this sensitive matter.

The Cabinet Member Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services was happy to endorse the report as it is essential the Council engages in innovative new technology and looking for opportunities to de-carbonise. He thanked officers for all their hard work being undertaken behind the scenes.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that the project is ambitious project with significant investment required and supports the public sector and local businesses. He was therefore happy to support the project.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the contents of the report as part of the ongoing work in response to RCTCBC's climate change ambitions and agree to the further progress of the project proposals, in line with the contents of the report.
2. To receive further report(s) to provide updates on progress as/when deemed appropriate.

137 URGENT ITEMS

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd June 2022

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2022-23 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present, for Cabinet Members' comment and approval, the Cabinet Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2022-23 Municipal Year. The Work Programme will guide and direct the activities of other arms of the Council, as well as the Cabinet itself.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 At the Council AGM on the 26th May 2021, it was agreed that going forward a detailed Cabinet Work Programme be published for a 6 month period, allowing sufficient notice and opportunity for consultation and / or pre scrutiny. Amendments to paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution were amended to reflect this position, although still allowing updated versions of the programme to be provided on a 3 monthly cycle to the Cabinet.
- 3.2 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, provides that information about forthcoming executive decisions must be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure these Committees are best informed to undertake and better plan their work. Although the Council are already well placed in respect of this duty, it is important to ensure the development of an accurate and robust Cabinet work programme, outlining consideration of Key Decisions which will

strengthen the robust Governance arrangements intended to be taken forward.

- 3.3 The Work Programme is attached to this report for Members' consideration and covers the 2022-23 Municipal Year.
- 3.4 For ease of reference the work programme will also be available on the main Cabinet [webpage](#) for Members and members of the public information.

4. CABINET REPORTS

- 4.1 The proposed work programme is a rolling work programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, which is reported to Cabinet on a 3 month cycle to allow for regular updates and amendments.
- 4.2 The work programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.3 During the period outlined, the Work Programme may be subject to further change to take into account any additional/deletion reports, including any new consultative documents or legislative initiatives from the Welsh Government, which require urgent attention.
- 4.4 In accordance with paragraph 2.5 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution, any Member of the Council may also request the Leader to put an item on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting. There is also the ability for a resolution to be made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the full Council that an item be considered by the Cabinet, which could alter the forward Work Programme.
- 4.5 In addition to publishing the Cabinet work programme on the main Cabinet web page, the Work Programme is will also be published on a standalone 'Work Programme page' on the website to again assist Members of the public, by improving transparency.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 The work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder(s) and has been consulted upon with the relevant scrutiny committees in respect of pre-scrutiny.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

An Equality Impact Assessment including the socio-economic duty is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable. Any implications to the Welsh language will be presented within each of the reports outlined within the work programme.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution and the future requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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

The Cabinet work programme encompasses all of the Council priorities as it indicates reports coming forward across the Directorates which may impact upon the Council's corporate priorities and others. It also embraces the Future Generations Acts as all future decisions taken by the Cabinet seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

The Cabinet work programme for the 2022 - 23 Municipal Year is attached.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd June 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATIONS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.**

Item: CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2022-23 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

Background Papers

- Paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution.



Cabinet Work Programme

Forward plan of proposed Cabinet Business for the 2022/23 Municipal Year

Specific Period: June 2022 – May 2023

(Summary of proposed Key Decisions coming forward for Cabinet Members consideration)

N.B – The work programme is subject to change to take account of any additional / deletion of reports, including any new consultative documents or legislative initiatives from the Welsh Government, which require urgent attention.

Contact: Sarah Daniel (Tel No. 07385 086169)

Date	Report	Officer	Cabinet Member	Open/ Exempt	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
June 2022	Climate Change Strategy and its Commitments	Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive.	Cabinet Member Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Consultation Outcomes on Proposal to Create a New Community Primary School in Glyncoch	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion
	Consultation outcomes on the proposal to enhance Welsh Medium Learning Support Class provision for pupils with significant additional learning needs	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion
	Financial Update on school reorganisation in the Greater Pontypridd area (Band B)	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion
	MIM Update	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	EXEMPT	Education and Inclusion
	Play Sufficiency Assessment	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	YEPS: Overview of Additional Funding	Paul Mee, Group Director	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth	Open	Community Services

		Community and Children's Services	Participation and Welsh Language		
	Community Wardens	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	Armed Forces and War Memorials Commitment	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	
	Leader's Scheme of Delegation and associated matters arising from the AGM	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	The Pontypridd masterplan	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Tree and Hedgerow Strategy	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Proposed LUF Submission for the Cynon Valley	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	

July 2022	Council's Performance & Resources Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	EV Charging	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates		Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Housing Support Grant Needs Assessment and Strategy	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services
	Music Service Update To provide members with an update on a proposed National Music Service, and the implications for our services more locally	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion
	Residential Care and Day Services Development - Bronllwyn This report will provide on development proposals for the former Care Home site as agreed by Cabinet back in December 2020 – <i>Paul</i>	Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services
	Residential Care Services To provide an update position on the current in-house provision, including some proposed short term changes to current provision in	Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services

	order to meet current demand and staffing pressures.				
	Child Sufficiency Assessment	Group Director – Community & Children’s Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services
	The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Market Stability Report	Group Director – Community & Children’s Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Shared Prosperity Fund	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Family Engagement Officers	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion
	RCT SACRE Annual Report To receive the annual report of RCT SACRE	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion
	Community Schools Developments Family Engagement To provide Members with feedback on family engagement officer provision and potential areas of development in relation to community schools.	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion

	Participation Strategy	Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny
	Review of Adapted Housing	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Local Housing Market Assessment (including Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment)	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services
	Draft Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare To receive the draft Town Centre Strategy and initial delivery plan outlining funding sources such as the Levelling Up Fund	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
September 2022	Council's Performance & Resources Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Medium Term Financial Plan Update	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Leisure Strategy	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection	Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity &

	To provide Cabinet with the proposed Leisure Strategy	and Community Services			Frontline Services
	Office Accommodation	Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Update on the Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act in RCT To update Members on the Access & Inclusion Service's self-evaluation and future areas for further development.	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Director Social Services Annual Report (Draft) To provide Cabinet with the annual report on the delivery, performance, risks, and planned improvements to the Social Services function of the Council	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Cwm Taf Carer's Annual Report To approve for submission to WG the annual report.	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Plan To receive the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Plan	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		

	To consider the Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board.	Services and Communication Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	Council Corporate Plan - Investment Priorities To consider the investment priorities	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny
	Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Annual General Meeting To provide Cabinet with details of the AGM in respect of the Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Ltd and Amgen Rhondda Ltd.	Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Exempt	
	Community infrastructure levy annual monitoring report To update Cabinet on the performance of CIL during the last year and make any amendments deemed necessary.	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
	Update on North West Cardiff – RCT Transport Corridor Study	Director Frontline Services	Leader Cabinet Member for Infrastructure		Overview and Scrutiny Committee

			and Investment		
	Update on Aberdare – Hirwaun Passenger Rail Services Study	Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
October 2022	Council’s Corporate Performance Report To consider the Corporate Performance Report and recommend its endorsement by Council	Barrie Davies, Director Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Extra Care Developments The new Extra Care developments, and a proposal to build new large care homes across the 3 former districts, which offer a mix of care from residential through to high end nursing care, so that residents as they age, do not have to move between care homes	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children’s Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Day Services	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children’s Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Budget Consultation Report To inform Members of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2023/24 budget.	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Proposal to improve education provision for a new WM school for Ysgol Cwm Rhondda	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	<p>Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report</p> <p>In accordance with the SSWB Act, the need to report the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Report to the Cabinet, setting out their priorities for the coming year</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny
	<p>Social Services Annual Complaints Report</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an overview of the operation & effectiveness of the Council's Social Services complaints procedure</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny
	<p>LDP Annual Monitoring Report</p> <p>To approve the LDP annual monitoring report, prior to submission to Welsh Government</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Overview and Scrutiny
November 2022	<p>Proposal to improve the Education provision for a new special school in RCT</p> <p>To seek Cabinet approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for a new special school provision for RCT</p>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny
	<p>Ombudsman Annual Report and Letter</p> <p>To consider the Annual Report and letter of the Ombudsman</p>	Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	<p>Budget Consultation Report</p>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny

		Services and Communication			
	Council Tax Base 2022/23 To receive the report in respect of setting the Council Tax Base 2022/23	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment		
	Council's Performance & Resources Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny
December 2022	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	Eisteddfod Update To receive an update in respect of the Eisteddfod.	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Community Services
January 2023	National Adoption Annual Report To receive the National Adoption Annual Report	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services
	Budget Report To agree a draft Revenue Budget Strategy for 2023/24 as a basis to consult with stakeholders	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny

	<p>Digital Strategy</p> <p>To receive an update in respect of the Council’s digital strategy</p>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny
	<p>Irrecoverable Debts</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of irrecoverable debts</p>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	
	<p>Corporate Asset Management Plan Interim Update</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with a progress update in respect of the plan.</p>	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny
February 2023	<p>Community Infrastructure Levy “CIL” Consultation Responses</p> <p>To update Cabinet on the responses resulting from the Community Infrastructure Levy “CIL” consultation in respect of the Council’s Regulation 123 List</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		
	<p>Budget Report</p> <p>The need to adopt a budget strategy to recommend to Council as the basis of the budget strategy for the financial year ending March 2023, following consideration of the consultation feedback</p>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny
	<p>Council Fees and Charges</p>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance	Leader and Cabinet		Overview and Scrutiny

	The need to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Fees and Charges for the financial year 2023/24	and Digital Services	Member for Infrastructure and Investment		
	Capital Programme To propose to Council the three year capital programme	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny
March 2023	Regional Adoption Annual Report To consider the Regional Adoption Annual Report	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Community Services
	Annual Equalities Report To receive the report of the Director, Human Resources in respect of the Annual Equalities Report.	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny
	Council's Performance & Resources Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny
	Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny
	Coal Tips	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure		Overview and Scrutiny

			and Investment		
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		

Ongoing Updates

Date	Report	Officer	Cabinet Member	Open/ Exempt	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Ongoing Updates	Processing Of Mixed Kerbside Recycling To provide Members with an update in respect of the opportunities of investment into processing of Mixed Kerbside Recycling	Roger	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services

	<p>Highways Investment Scheme</p> <p>To receive regular updates in respect of the Highways Investment Scheme</p>	Roger	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
	<p>Review of Mainstream School Transport Provision</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with the outcomes of the periodic review of the Council's mainstream School Transport Provision</p>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
	<p>Porth Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>To receive updates as and when applicable</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
	<p>Taff Vale Update and Business Plan</p> <p>To receive the Taff Vale Update Report</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services
	<p>Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People – Consultation feedback</p> <p>To receive the consultation feedback</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>SS&WB Board Development</p> <p>To consider any updates as appropriate in respect of the SS&WB Board</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services

	<p>Regional Transformation Agenda</p> <p>To receive an update on the regional transformation agenda</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Development of Community Hubs</p> <p>To consider the development of Community Hubs across the County Borough</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Extra Care Strategy</p> <p>To receive update reports on the Councils progress in respect of delivery of the Extra Care Strategy</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of advocacy</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report</p> <p>To receive the Annual report of the Cwm Taf MASH</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Social Services & Wellbeing Act</p> <p>To provide updates as and when necessary on the Council's duties in respect of the Act</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services
	<p>Local Air Quality Management Reports</p> <p>To provide details of the Local Air Quality Management Reports</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities		Community Services

	Update on proposals to strengthen the continuum of school provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion
	21st Century School Transformation Programme	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion
	Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal The need to advise of the progress being made in respect of the City Deal	Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny
	Staff Panel Report To receive details of the proposals put forward by the Council's Staff Panel in respect of efficiency savings and smarter ways of working				
	Scrutiny Recommendations To receive recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.	Service Director Democratic Services and Communications			Overview and Scrutiny

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

22 JUNE 2022

CABINET

THINK CLIMATE RCT

THE COUNCIL'S TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2022-2025

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH CLLR CHRISTINA LEYSHON, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

AUTHOR: [Lesley Lawson](#), Performance Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to enable Cabinet to consider, review and approve the Council's response to Climate Change in its final Tackling Climate Change Strategy – 'Think Climate RCT' following wider engagement with residents, partners and other stakeholders, including staff.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report and the Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Consider the draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy as providing the framework for the Council's work to:
- a) Meet its stated carbon reduction targets for the Council and the County Borough.
 - b) Contribute to the response to the nationally declared climate and nature emergencies.
- 2.3 Agree that monitoring of the strategy is included in the Council's quarterly performance reports to Cabinet and thereafter the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 Agree to continue the Climate Conversation with staff, residents of all ages and backgrounds, partners, communities and businesses, using relevant and

different models of engagement so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and for the County Borough to be as close as possible to Carbon Neutral by the same date.
- 3.2 To contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition for a Carbon Neutral public service by 2030.
- 3.3 To contribute to the Welsh Government's target of a Net Zero Wales by 2050, at the latest

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The speed and urgency of the need to take local action to contribute to the national and global response to tackle Climate Change has never been greater. Data from the World Meteorological Organisation in its [State of the Global Climate Report 2021](#) provides a summary of global climate indicators and stark information. This includes: *'the last 7 years were the hottest on record'* and *'despite setbacks from Covid-19, real time data indicates that global greenhouse gas emissions continued to increase in 2021'*.
- 4.2 Closer to home, at the Welsh Government's [second Net Zero Carbon budget in October 2021](#), the First Minister indicated
 - *"The advice from the Climate Change Committee is clear, this must be a decade of action for Wales....."*
 - *We need to make more progress in the next ten years than we have in the last 30 years, this will be difficult, but we will do it by working together"*.
- 4.3 The Council has made progress in many aspects of its work to adapt to and mitigate the effects of Climate Change through the [Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group](#), established in 2019. Among other things between 2019/20 and 2020/21 the Council's Carbon Footprint reduced by 27% from as baseline of just under 100,000tCO₂e, although much of which was related to the impact of the pandemic.
- 4.4 The most recent Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on [2 March 2022](#) received a number of reports of progress across areas such as:
 - Energy Generation, including progress on a Land Based Solar Farm to be located on Council owned land, with a second scheme being driven by AMGEN at Bryn Pica.
 - Rolling out the implementation of Electric Vehicle Charging points and putting in place expansion plans.
 - Developing and improving our Network of Active Travel Routes.

- Using Geothermal heat from Wales' only Thermal Spring at Taff's Well to heat a new school building.
 - The availability of a range of schemes and grants to provide energy efficiency measures to reduce fuel poverty for RCT residents, as well as reduce carbon.
 - Finalising the business case for the development of the Bryn Pica Eco Park.
 - Progressing the calculation of the Council's Carbon Footprint.
- 4.5 Whilst recognising the progress made, Steering Group members also recognised the huge challenges ahead, were keen to increase the speed and scope of the Council's work and recognised the need for all stakeholders to work together to make a positive difference.

5. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

- 5.1 On [21 March 2021](#), Cabinet received endorsed recommendations arising from the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group [17 March 2021](#), and approved a draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy, subject to further public consultation as set out in the accompanying Engagement Plan and pre Scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Climate Change Strategy responses at its meeting on [15 June 2021](#). Members provided feedback on the Strategy, acknowledging that this was the starting point of the Climate Change discussions with residents and businesses across RCT with additional public engagement to follow and opportunity for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to further engage with the issues raised.
- 5.3 [In June 2021](#) the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group received a report setting out feedback arising from social media activity and public and stakeholder consultation using mostly on line methods to accommodate the Covid restrictions in place at the time. The majority of respondents were in support of the draft Climate Change Strategy and the priorities within. However, 81.9% of respondents felt that they didn't have enough information about the impact of climate change and 100% of respondents said they were very concerned or concerned about the impact of Climate Change in their local area.
- 5.4 Members were keen to continue the Climate Change Conversation particularly as Covid restrictions lifted. Continuing uncertainty and intermittent restrictions put in place because of the response to the Covid pandemic, affected the continuity of the programme of wider engagement. However, a wide-ranging programme took place which included:
- Ongoing on-line survey through 'Let's Talk Climate' platform.
 - Face to Face conversations with residents across Council locations.
 - a series of Climate Conversations with the third sector and community groups etc.

- Staff and Management Surveys and wider opportunities for staff to contribute to Net Zero Events and the creation of a virtual 'Green Space' on Teams.
- 5.5 The overall feedback indicates that people recognise the Council's efforts in tackling Climate Change and the challenges ahead if we are to meet our goals and Welsh Government ambitions and targets. They also recognise and reinforce the need to making tackling Climate Change a priority with people agreeing that it is more important than ever that we limit our negative impacts on Climate Change. Many respondents were keen to engage and provided ideas as well as told us what they have done to at home. The detailed feedback is also being considered by services to inform their work.
- 5.6 This feedback has helped to inform and shape our final 'Tackling Climate Change' Strategy. However, it is also clear from the feedback that we need to do more, and at pace, to make sure that all our services and all our staff are contributing to reducing carbon emissions across all aspects of the Council's business so that our work contributes to the reductions in the Council's Carbon Footprint and the County Borough more widely.
- 5.7 Our programme for the next stages of Climate Conversation with residents, partners, staff and stakeholders will be implemented from early summer.
- 5.8 As well as reflecting what residents, community groups and staff are telling us, the revisions to the Strategy have also been informed by
- [COP26](#) and the resulting [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) to accelerate climate action in this decade, [COP Cymru](#) and [Wales Climate Week](#) in November 2021 and
 - the publication of the Welsh Government's first all Wales Plan: [Working together to reach Net Zero](#) & the second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan [Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 \(2021-25\)](#) in October 2021.
 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, including most recently [Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#) and [Mitigation of Climate Change](#)
 - various Welsh Government, WLGA working groups and policies and good practice research.
 - progress from our work on the Council's Carbon Footprint(s), our ongoing climate and nature related projects across the Council and with partners.
- 5.9 The Council's Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT', set out in Appendix 1 sets the overall direction for the coming three years, describing the Vision, Purpose and Ambition as a Local Authority in respect of the Council's Carbon Footprint and the Carbon Footprint for the County Borough
- 5.10 For the Council's Climate Change Strategy to fully, and accurately, reflect the speed, complexity, interconnections and differing geographic and sectoral boundaries surrounding this work across the many different services we provide, purchase or commission, is a challenge (impossible!). In acknowledging this challenge, the aim is for the Strategy to provide a Framework for our work. Further, by integrating the Climate Change Strategy

with the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan, we will ensure that it reaches all services of the Council so that reducing carbon and contributing to tackling Climate Change becomes business as usual and ensures that it is cascaded more widely throughout the organisation as everyone plays their part.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment has been completed. This Assessment reflects the wide range of subjects contained within the Strategy which is described as a 'framework' for the more detailed work which will be developed in lower level plans that will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Carbon reduction ambitions. The main findings are set out below.
- 6.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, local authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
1. eliminate unlawful discrimination;
 2. advance equality of opportunity and
 3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.3 The Council is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and in doing so contributing to the national Well-being goal of a more equal Wales, required by the [Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- 6.4 The Climate Change Strategy contains high level and wide ranging commitments that recognise the impact of Climate Change. The commitments contained therein seek to introduce action to **Mitigate** Climate Change by for example reducing our emissions through new and emerging technologies and to take steps to **Adapt** to life in a changing climate through a better understanding local risks that we are currently facing, and which will continue. The Climate Change Strategy embeds the sustainable principle of taking decisions that meet our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs across the four aspects of Well-being of Wales described in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, i.e. economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. The Climate Change Strategy will direct the work across the Council and will include enabling people to access training and jobs in the new and emerging 'green' technologies and so support the alleviation of poverty and reduce deprivation; create the infrastructures and equal opportunities for people in communities to access and enjoy the environment and rich biodiversity that Rhondda Cynon Taf has to offer; by delivering low carbon and accessible public transport we will be improving air quality across the County Borough and in turn supporting the conditions that will enable improvements in the chronic physical health conditions, that are currently projected. By creating and supporting projects that will support and enable people irrespective of their background to enhance and contribute to their communities we will be supporting cultural well-being. The Assessment also contains examples of where plans are outlined to address the negative impacts of our commitments, including making sure that that

disabled people can access EV charging points and also have the opportunity to contribute to community food growing in accessible plots.

- 6.5 This Equality Impact Assessment will, over time, be supported by the additional and more detailed Impact Assessments of the projects/action plans that will deliver the Climate Change Strategy and also be further informed by the continuing 'Climate Conversation' with residents, particularly those who are communities of interest, partners and other stakeholders.

7 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed. Assessing the detail of the likely, or actual, effects of the strategy for residents and staff on the Welsh language, will be further addressed in the lower level plans that will deliver the actions required to meet the Council's carbon reduction ambitions. The detailed plans are currently being developed. However, in the meantime the work set out in the strategy will implement and integrate with the Council existing policies that currently actively support and promote the Welsh language in the services we deliver, procure or commission e.g. [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy](#), [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) and the Council's agreed approach to RCT street and place names. Examples include opportunities to promote the Welsh Language across communities through signage in infrastructure and community projects, promotion of 'green' leisure and outdoor activities, our Comms and Engagement campaigns about our carbon reduction plans and in developing green skills in jobs and training. There is scope within the projects set out in the Strategy to support the work to increase the number of Welsh speakers across RCT and in doing so contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition set out in its strategy [Cymraeg 2050](#), to see a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and also to contribute to the national Well-being Goal of a '*Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language*' as required by the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

8 CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 Since March 2021, the draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy has been the subject of wide ranging engagement with residents, community groups and staff as well as the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, the impact of intermittent Covid restrictions over the last year has limited the opportunity for face to face engagement.
- 8.2 It is proposed that we refresh and continue the programme of engagement and widen this activity to continue to involve as wide a range of stakeholders and align with relevant associated strategies. The Council will also continue to work with national and local environmental groups to engage residents and businesses and to also encourage them to engage in making different lifestyle choices.
- 8.3 To further raise awareness, the Council's social media and marketing tools will be used to develop and deliver targeted campaigns for specific audiences, as well as raise more general awareness of the impact of climate change. We are

keen to strengthen our engagement with the Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum, schools and other youth groups, in addition to the various groups with which the Council has traditionally engaged.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.
- 9.2 Moving forward, the agreed programme of work to deliver the Council's Climate Change Strategy will be incorporated into Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements to ensure resource requirements are reviewed, challenged and planned for.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

- 11.1 The Council has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and to work with residents and businesses to ensure the whole County Borough is Carbon Neutral as close as possible to the 2030 target. This supports the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' – 2020-24.
- 11.2 This report reflects the Sustainable Development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and its work contributes to all seven national goals. This can be seen in Appendix A within the Climate Change Strategy.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Council has set the ambitious target to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030, and for the County Borough to be as near to Carbon Neutral as possible by the same date. The draft 'Tackling Climate Change' Strategy sets out a framework of the action the Council will take over the next three years to make significant progress and lay the strong foundations to enable the Council to make progress towards achieving the 2030 targets as well as contributing to the Welsh Government carbon reduction ambition for a Carbon Neutral Public Service by 2030 and its target for a Net Zero Wales by 2050 or sooner.
- 12.2 Achieving the 2030 target requires all stakeholders and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to work together. The Council, therefore welcomes the opportunity to continue its ongoing 'Climate Conversation' and engage with residents, staff, partners, other public and private organisations, community and environmental groups in seeking their views as to how we can all help to achieve these ambitious targets.

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Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022- 2025)

Think Climate RCT

**Making Rhondda Cynon Taf
Carbon Neutral by 2030**

Our County Borough has many stunning and unique features which can and will continue to benefit the residents, businesses and visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. These features include a huge area of semi-natural landscape, with a high level of tree cover and a wide variety of wildlife, both common and rare, close to where we live. Even our mining heritage offers the potential to produce energy for us. We also face unique challenges. The devastating impact of the 2020 floods, Ciara, Dennis and Jorge on Rhondda Cynon Taf and the surrounding areas, is an early indication of the impact of projected warmer, wetter winters in the northern hemisphere arising from the impact of Climate Change that is also affecting plants and animals and the natural processes on which we all depend.

Welsh Government data, in its [Future Trends Report 2021](#), set out that by 2050, in Wales it is predicted that

- the average summer temperature will increase by 1.34°
- rainfall precipitation will decrease by 16% in summer and to rise by 5% in winter.
- These changes in weather will, among other things, impact on the environment and ecosystems.

Across Wales, rising temperatures are already changing habitats [affecting plants and wildlife as well as soil conditions and landscapes](#). Rising sea levels in coastal regions are threatening sea defences, frequent and more intense storms bring increased risk of flooding. More winter rain, too much rainfall in a short period and changes across the seasons will contribute to both flood and drought conditions. We are already seeing increasing numbers of heavy rainfall events, and expect this increase to continue, with greater risk of river and flash flooding. Rising temperatures will also impact on species and ecosystems, soils, agriculture and forestry with more invasive species, pests and diseases.

More extreme weather events also include more frequent heat waves which will affect our health, livelihoods and for many older and vulnerable people, life expectancy. For the ageing population in Rhondda Cynon Taf, this is one of the significant risks that need to be managed. Other risks include the supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks.

People, communities and countries are already being affected by climate change. These affects are not equal: gender, age and economic status affect our ability to respond. Poorer people suffer most as they are least able to relocate their home, afford to protect themselves or to pay more for food, transport and housing. We know that planetary health affects public health and each tonne of carbon emitted increases these affects. Closer to home, the Welsh Government's [Future Trends Report](#) also indicates that lower-skilled or routine jobs are at greater risk of future automation than high skilled occupations and younger people and women are more likely to be employed within jobs that have a high probability of being automated in the future.

However, there are also opportunities to create economic, social, environmental and cultural opportunities in how we deliver, commission and procure services.

Wales has declared both [Climate](#) and [Nature](#) emergencies and the Welsh Government's Programme for Government [updated in December 2021](#), aims to tackle these climate and nature emergencies. As a Council, we are committed to playing our part. This means reducing our emissions, i.e. climate mitigation and better understanding local risks so that we can adapt to the changes that will, and are already happening i.e. climate adaptation.

Over the last few years, within the Council we have put in place energy efficiency measures in our buildings, schools and street lighting and increased the amount of residents' waste recycled. As a result of this work, between 2014/15 and 2018/19 we reduced the amount of carbon emitted across the Council by 15,884 tonnes, a reduction of 45.24%. Our positive progress in waste recycling has led us to increase our recycling target for 2024/25 to 80%, which exceeds the national target set by Welsh Government.

In 2021, the Welsh Government published the [Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide](#). Which provides a consistent national calculation to "*estimate baseline emissions, identify priority sources and to monitor progress towards meeting the target collective ambition of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030*". Using this guide for our calculations we can show that our 'net' emissions across services and operations in 2020/21 were 67,610 tCO₂e, 32% less than 2019/20. However, we also know that this reduction reflected the exceptional and essential service and operational changes put in place during the pandemic and the consistent national calculation is currently being refined.

We have also increased the amount of renewable energy we generate by investing in solar and wind power plants, using the energy produced to deliver Council services. In 2020/21 we generated 2MW of energy from solar panels on our schools and Council buildings.

More widely, we know from data reported by UK Government in 2021, that in 2019, **1042.6** kilotonnes of CO₂e was emitted across the County Borough, 33.7% or 529 kilotonnes, less than in 2005.

We are making progress to tackle Climate Change, but we all need to do more, and faster, if we are to reduce our carbon emissions, help to reverse the damage to our planet and adapt to the changes already happening, both within the Council and within the County Borough. As a Council we will continue to lead by example, particularly in those areas where we have the greatest impact and work with our partners to make sure that we make the best use of our collective resources.

This is our plan to meet our commitments to reduce the carbon emissions across the Council and the County Borough and in doing so play our part to tackle Climate Change.

By 2030

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will be carbon neutral and
- the whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral
- our work with partners will have ensured that all public and private organisations that operate in the County Borough will be carbon neutral by 2040.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf will have contributed to the Welsh Government's ambition of a Net Zero public sector by 2030.

In order to deliver our Vision, the Council will continue to provide strong community leadership and create a cleaner, greener environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous and for natural eco systems to thrive. We will play our part in tackling climate change and protecting the planet and also adapting our services and operations so that we are able to meet the climate challenges ahead.

In our Corporate Plan 2020-24, [Making A Difference](#), the Council acknowledged that delivering our Climate Change commitment is our greatest challenge. In our plan we committed to delivering three main priorities, all of which will contribute to and benefit from tackling climate change:

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

The Climate Commitments set out below underpin each of our priorities. These commitments have been developed using the best information available at a time of significant and competing local, regional, national and global priorities with new and fast-moving opportunities being presented by governments and businesses alike. The pace of change is also being accelerated by the growing pressure of people both locally and across the world to take climate action. The Climate Commitments also show that we also want to unlock economic, social, cultural and environmental value by delivering a low a carbon infrastructure.

No single plan can set out the many and varied ways in which we are working to reduce carbon emissions to achieve our commitments. This plan is a framework to guide us and shape what we do to and how we allocate our resources to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and that of the County Borough, learning from best practice, eliminating barriers and strengthening our data arrangements so that we are better able to challenge and demonstrate our progress. Much of the work in this plan is reflected and aligned to other Council plans, strategies and policies, those that are most relevant are included in Appendix B for information.

We will be working within the Welsh Government's Delivery Plan for a [Low Carbon Wales](#), the [Net Zero Wales Carbon Wales budget](#) (2) and its 'Route Map' to decarbonise the public sector in Wales.

Our commitments to reduce carbon within the Council include:

1. Reducing the [Council's Carbon Footprint](#) across all the Council's activities, with particular emphasis on procured goods and services and built assets, which comprises the largest proportion of our Carbon Footprint.
2. Reducing the demand for energy, improving energy efficiency of assets and services and embedding carbon reduction into everything we do.
3. Using public sector land for green energy generation/carbon storage, managing flood risk, increasing biodiversity and community growing.
4. Continuing to invest in solar energy installations on Council buildings and making sure that all new schools, offices, homes and commercial buildings within the County Borough are built to a Net Zero standard.
5. Supplying all our buildings and offices with low carbon heat and/or generating our own electricity.

6. Further developing the use of hydrogen for fuel cells in Council vehicles and buildings.
7. Ensuring we recycle or reuse 80% of all municipal waste by 2025.
8. Ensuring we understand the sequestration potential of land in our ownership by March 2023 and commit to taking action to realise this potential by March 2030.
9. Ensuring all the Council's building estate, including schools, being built or refurbished achieve a net zero standard by 2030.
10. Aiming to meet the Wales' target for public sector organisations to have all our new cars and light goods vehicles ultra-low emission vehicles by 2025 and where practicably possible, our Heavy Goods Vehicles are ultra-low emission by 2030.
11. We will seek to only procure supplies and services from businesses that are striving to reduce their carbon emissions and in doing so we will actively support low carbon and local suppliers as part of our wider transition to Net Zero.
12. Developing staff awareness, knowledge, skills and expertise to enable the Council to meet our targets and respond to the Welsh Government's declared [Climate](#) and [Nature](#) emergencies.
13. Continuing to locate services closer to the people that use, work and visit them.
14. Reducing staff travel by car by continuing to maximise the use of technology, encouraging active travel and greater use of public transport significantly reducing car commutes and business travel.
15. Putting in place climate change and carbon reduction awareness raising for all staff.
16. Strengthening data quality, accessibility, collection, and reporting arrangements to track our progress towards meeting the Council's carbon reduction targets and our contribution to Welsh Government ambitions and targets.
17. Working with
 - local, regional and national partners to maximise resources.
 - Welsh Government to put in place a detailed local energy plan by the end of the 2023–24 financial year.

The Council is one of the largest employers in the Cardiff Capital Region, and around 80% of staff live in the County Borough. As of May 2022, the Council's property portfolio included 388 Operational Buildings and 2,400 sites of varying sizes located throughout the County Borough and our work within the Council can make a big difference. Through councillors representing their communities, the Council playing its part in providing strong community leadership, support and scrutiny and with Council staff trained, aware and encouraged to support climate initiatives, there is much that we can do locally to be part of the global climate solution.

Our approach

Across the wider County Borough, our success will be dependent on the Council playing its part to protect the planet for future generations and working with other public bodies and organisations to maximise the impact of this work. This includes encouraging and facilitating changes in lifestyle and choices in all staff and their representatives, elected Members, residents, local business as well as our visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. The involvement of younger people will be key to creating, developing and delivering this plan

over the long term and we will be continuing to progress this involvement through school eco councils, our Youth Fora and through other community organisations. Plans to progress our work, particularly in engaging with people face to face have been affected by restrictions arising from the pandemic but we are keen to accelerate our plans safely, now that restrictions are lifted.

As well as listening to what people, communities and businesses are telling us, we also need to support and challenge the Welsh Government to do better and to break down any national barriers that mitigate against local action.

Our Climate Change Strategy and commitments align directly with our Corporate Plan and its ambitions are being embedded across all our plans and processes so that in Rhondda Cynon Taf, 'green' becomes mainstream.

Think Climate – PLACES

Using RCT's resources to generate green energy for use in local buildings, homes and to power electric vehicles

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us generate energy from renewable sources and our plans include:

1. Exploring and delivering opportunities to develop micro hydro-electric schemes on rivers and streams, e.g. Taffs Well Thermal Spring.
2. Progressing wind, hydro and solar energy schemes to reduce the cost of meeting our energy needs and generate income, whilst reducing our carbon footprint.
3. Working with partners including Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, Natural Resources Wales, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils to maximise the collective resources to generate green energy across the region.
4. Exploring community cooperative energy projects to provide inexpensive, green energy for residents and businesses to purchase, including energy for electric vehicle recharging on publicly owned land.
5. Exploring potential options to utilise existing energy sources including:
 - a. waste heat generated at Bryn Pica.
 - b. geothermal energy from abandoned coal mines.
6. Contributing to actions within the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to explore options for a hydrogen economy and to generate green energy to fuel our industrial and commercial businesses.

Measures/targets

- *Increase local renewable energy generated from Council land or buildings from 2021/22 baseline(2MW) to 20MW by 2025.*
- *Baseline data on completion of Taffs Well Spring in mid 2022 and put in place arrangements for subsequent energy data collection and monitoring.*

Making Waste Work for RCT

Among other things, residents told us that they wanted to see better information and a wider range of opportunities to reduce, reuse, and recycle different items e.g. school uniforms and 'Tetrapak'. Also, making it easier to reduce, reuse and recycle locally through reuse and repair facilities. Our plans include

1. Increasing the amount of waste we reuse and recycle locally by investing in technology and supporting businesses and residents to recycle more.
2. Continuing to deliver innovative recycling solutions for new and difficult to recycle waste, such as absorbent hygiene products (AHP), mattresses and other household products.
3. Providing more opportunities for residents to reuse, reduce and recycle items by:

- increasing the range and number of reuse, recycle and repair facilities throughout the County Borough.
 - making it easier for residents to recycle waste at the kerb side and in our Community Recycling Centres.
4. Making sure that the methods of disposal for materials recovered from our waste are environmentally and ethically sustainable.
 5. Working with partners to:
 - develop a local solution for the recycling of rigid plastics
 - find more ways to recover energy from our waste
 - optimise the recycling of unwanted reusable items at our Community Recycling Centres (CRC) and Reuse Outlets.
 6. Working with Welsh Government to maximise funding opportunities that will grow the circular economy within RCT, including an investment in new industrial units and high tech recycling facilities at our planned Eco Park at Bryn Pica.
 7. Decarbonising our waste transportation services where cost effective, technical solutions are available and investigating opportunities to generate green energy that will support a sustainable and cost-effective energy source for vehicles and waste processing activities.

Measures/targets

- *80% of all RCT municipal waste will be reused or recycled by 2025,*
- *80% of the energy used at our Bryn Pica Materials Recycling Facility will come from renewable sources by 2025.*
- *increase the tonnage of unwanted items kept out of landfill through our [Reuse Outlets](#) to at least 1,000 tonnes by 2025 (2021 Baseline 800 tonnes)*

Putting in place low carbon infrastructure and promoting Active Travel

By 2030, we need to ensure that over half of all journeys are taken by public transport, bike or walking, with journeys using electric vehicles where this is not possible.

Among other things, residents told us that they wanted to see more sustainable, regular and accessible public transport options, including supporting people to switch to electric vehicles by making more public charging points available. They also want to see more and better integration of safe active travel making it easier to cycle, with the provision of secure cycle racks and bike hire at key locations e.g. town centres and transport hubs. Our plans include:

- Investing in alternative transport options including:
 - Improved public transport through the development of the South Wales Metro.

- Investing at least £1.5M per annum for the 3 years to 2025 in Active Travel initiatives that encourage walking and cycling.
- Investing in Safe Routes to schools across the County Borough.
- Investing in Park and Ride and active travel routes and facilities across the County Borough, at/to key metro sites and transport hub sites.
- Exploring opportunities to further develop the Active Travel network to major destinations, and public transport hubs in the County Borough, including cycle storage and hire and considering Active Travel in all major transport projects.
- Implementing our [Electric Vehicle Charging](#) (EVC) Strategy and supporting Implementation Plan, that will accommodate the transport needs of existing and future electric vehicle users.
- Working with the private sector to put in place and invest in an accessible County Borough Wide network of electric vehicle (EV) charging opportunities, to stimulate the market and widen EV charging opportunities.
- Supporting public transport providers to become more sustainable and to make the switch from diesel to electric taxis and buses.
- Working with Cardiff Capital Region and CCRTA, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to develop public transport infrastructure and services to enable sustainable travel across the region that will meet future demand
- Ensuring that the transport services we commission, inc. Home to School, are zero or low carbon where possible.
- Contributing to safer roads and improvements in air quality by introducing default 20 mph speed as required by Welsh Government's commitment to support Active Travel as well as provisions that emerge from the proposed Clean Air legislation in Wales, including measures to tackle idling vehicles.
- Working with the Cardiff Capital Region to develop a Regional Transport Plan by 2024.

Measures/targets

- *No of EV charging points installed at Council premises over next 5 years.*
- *Increase in number of charging devices per 100,000 population by 2025.*
- *By 2030, 90% of RCT residents without access to EV charging at home, will be within one mile of a publicly accessible EV charging point.*
- *% shift to zero emission passenger vehicles by 2030, WG target imminent.*
- *25% of journeys on foot, bike or public transport by 2025.*
- *20% more passengers using public transport by 2025 compared to baseline year 2009.*
- *5% of bays in council owned car parks will be charging bays by 2028, subject to funding.*
- *Increased kms of active travel routes within County Borough.*
- *Establish a baseline of number of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport of to travel to school and increase by 10% by 2025.*

Protecting and enhancing our wild spaces and working with nature to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies and benefit our communities

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see the Council create woodland to prevent flooding, soil erosion and improve carbon capture. They also want to see improved biodiversity across wildlife sites as well as in their local communities. Our plans include:

1. Protecting and enhancing our most valuable carbon stores, in undisturbed soils and semi-natural vegetation in woods, heathland and grasslands across the County Borough.
2. Rewet and appropriately manage peatbogs in Council ownership to reduce carbon emissions and where possible restore biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
3. Managing our land and green spaces so they are better able to cope with a changing climate and enhance the benefits they provide to communities.
4. Continuing to investigate and promote opportunities to use natural processes, green infrastructure and management techniques in RCT's countryside to reduce environmental risks such as flooding and wildfire, for example, [The Healthy Hillides Project](#).
5. Sharing knowledge and skills to protect, value, enhance and manage our trees, hedgerows and woodlands, helping to address the [Climate](#) and [Nature](#) emergencies declared by the Welsh Government for Wales and launching the final [Local Nature Partnership Website](#).
6. Working with partners to map and review the land we own to best manage our land, including identifying natural woodland regeneration, sites suitable for food production and where tree planting is appropriate; the potential for carbon sequestration and restoration of peatbogs.
7. Working with partners to expand green infrastructure and agroforestry to limit deforestation which in turn will significantly increase flood defences.
8. Minimising flood risk by promoting nature-based solutions in appropriate locations as well as traditional engineering works, for example Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
9. Continuing to develop a 'Living Landscape' bringing together existing wildlife sites, local communities, wildlife organisations and ancient woodland.
10. Contributing to the Queens Green Canopy initiative and the [National Forest for Wales](#) through sustainable tree planting by investing £200,000 per annum until 2030 in planting and encouraging new trees and hedgerows.
11. Attracting private sector investment to increase areas of woodland regeneration and creation, ensuring that we protect and store carbon and reduce the risk of flooding.

Measures/targets

- *Increase the number of Council and partner sites actively managed for nature to 100 by 2030*
- *Increase the RCT wildflower management area by a minimum of 3% per year from 2021/22 baseline*

- *Increase the area of tree cover in the five urban areas with the lowest cover (as at baseline year 2013)*
- *Rewet and appropriately manage all peatbogs in Council ownership by 2030*
- *Reduce the consequences of flood risk on properties at risk of flooding.*
- *Increase the number of flood risk alleviation projects that include a nature-based approach to managing the risk.*
- *Identify an accurate baseline of RCT woodland cover to inform future management by*
 - *Producing a whole RCT woodland cover map by 2024, including identification of all Council owned woodland*
 - *Identifying the rate of natural woodland regeneration on Council owned woodland sites over 10 hectares in size which have been identified in the carbon footprint reduction project*
- *By 2025, set a target for sustainable increase of woodland cover through natural regeneration*

Think Climate – PROSPERITY

Setting out Zero carbon ambitions for new homes and future developments in our Local Development Plan

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us reduce the need for travel by supporting the development of ‘15 minute neighbourhoods’ with amenities close to where people live, providing wildlife corridors at new developments and protecting and creating green spaces close to communities and our plans include:

1. Putting climate change at the centre of our Local Development Plan, which is currently being renewed.
2. Addressing carbon reduction in development and planning including the proximity of all development to public spaces and facilities.
3. Supporting development on existing brownfield sites, in particular Town Centres, rather than building on ‘greenfield’ sites where possible.
4. Increasing the opportunity and land supply for new Zero carbon homes through our local development plan and ensuring they are located in places that reduce the need for car use.
5. Ensure all new housing and commercial developments are easily accessible by active travel and/or public transport.
6. Introducing standards for new house building.
7. Protecting RCT uplands and important habitats, including peatbogs
8. Where appropriate, using planning conditions to deliver habitat restoration as part of new developments
9. Minimising flood risk by promoting nature-based solutions in appropriate locations as well as traditional engineering works, for example Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
10. Ensuring that new housing and commercial developments include solar, where feasible, and have the capability to generate, store and use renewable energy onsite and offer EV charging points.

Measures/targets

- *By 2025 all new socially rented housing developments will not be connected to the gas grid and will use other renewable sources of heating.*
- **By 2030 all new housing developments will be carbon neutral, and our ambition is that from 2026 all new housing developments in RCT will be carbon neutral.*
- *no. of sustainable/zero carbon homes in RCT*
- *Close and suitable proximity of new developments to public transport routes/hubs and/or active travel*

**By 2025 all new affordable homes in Wales will be built to net zero carbon, and our ambition is that our net zero standards are adopted by developers of all new homes regardless of tenure by this date [WG Net Zero Wales Carbon budget 2.](#)*

Making existing homes more energy efficient

Making RCT's traditional valley homes more energy efficient will be a significant challenge. 73% of homes are D rated on Energy Performance. Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us providing support including grants and information to help people make their homes more energy efficient and fit new technologies like solar panels and heat pumps in their homes. They would also like us to investigate new solutions like community heating. Our plans include

- Working with landlords and homeowners to reduce the amount of energy used in existing homes, reaching Zero carbon where this is feasible to do so, by 2050, in line with [Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World](#).
- Investigating innovative ways of decarbonising all the housing stock, exploring the Heat Pump systems and hydrogen opportunities.
- Increasing the energy efficiency of privately owned and rented homes through our [Warmer Homes Fuel Poverty Strategy 2019-2023](#) through supporting improvements to insulation and using more efficient low carbon appliances.
- Working with Registered Social Landlords to make their existing housing more energy efficient.

Measures/targets

- *No. of energy saving measures installed in RCT homes*

Supporting local businesses to become more sustainable and capitalise on the new opportunities offered by the green and emerging economies

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us encourage more Reuse and Repair shops on our high streets and encourage businesses to be more sustainable, for example through reducing single use plastic items and running deposit return schemes for bottles and containers and our plans include:

1. Considering how our business grants can support local businesses to become more sustainable.
2. Working with Welsh Government to help businesses eliminate waste and implement circular economy principles such as reducing pollution and extending the life of products and materials.
3. Working with local businesses to help them source more sustainable products locally, and sell to local markets
4. Supporting the development of 'Green Tourism', promoting the sustainable growth of the visitor economy in Rhondda Cynon Taf, growing the local economy whilst protecting our green spaces and natural assets.
5. Supporting local businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, by helping them to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be better prepared to tender for suitable opportunities for Council contracts as they arise

6. Bringing together public and third sector, business and academia to maximise our work so that we can all meet our carbon reduction targets.
7. Using natural planting in public areas of our town centres to improve air quality and well-being, reduce flood risk, provide cooling during heatwaves and other climate benefits for residents.

Measures/targets to be developed and to include

- *A suite of measures on support for businesses to become more sustainable*

Supporting opportunities for people of all ages to gain the skills they need to work in the developing green economy and to live more sustainably

Getting to 'Net Zero' will involve people having new skills to carry out new and different jobs in emerging technologies. It will also involve resurrecting 'traditional' skills that have been lost. Among other things, residents told us that they wanted to see gardening in schools and more opportunities to swap skills. To identify and meet the need for as wide a range of skills as possible our plans include

1. Working with Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, universities, colleges, and education providers to provide opportunities for people to acquire the skills they need for jobs in the green economy and emerging technologies.
2. Working with local businesses, partners and our schools to promote career paths and opportunities in emerging sectors, helping young people make decisions about their future study and careers.
3. Identifying job opportunities in new and emerging sectors, working with employers to understand their requirements and supporting people to take advantage of the options available through training, reskilling and in work support.
4. Promoting the development of horticulture and other technical skills within the community to support the growth of a sustainable food industry.
5. Expanding our range of Adult Education courses to widen opportunities for people to develop skills they can use to contribute towards a carbon neutral County Borough e.g. zero waste workshops, organic/wildlife friendly gardening, heritage crafts and local conservation.
6. Promoting Carbon and Eco-Literacy in our schools and across the Council.
7. Continuing to work in partnership with schools to deliver and encourage the use of ecology areas on 21st Century School sites for learning.
8. Create innovative projects aimed at connecting the new school curriculum developments with the work of this strategy

Measures/Targets

- *Develop a suite of measures to include*
 - *training opportunities/jobs in green and emerging technologies*
 - *the no. of people benefitting and*
 - *school engagement with green initiatives.*

Think Climate – PEOPLE

Supporting and encouraging different lifestyle choices

We will work with residents to develop the Council's plans to tackle Climate Change and also encourage and support them to make changes to their lifestyles and make the choices that will help RCT to get as close as possible to Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us lead by example e.g. eliminating our use of single use plastics and encouraging our staff to travel sustainably to and for work; encouraging people to think about reducing their consumption e.g. promoting 'use less, use better, recycle more' and purchasing more local products and our plans include:

1. Leading by example, e.g., eliminating our use of single use plastics, installing solar panels on our Council buildings etc. and encouraging our staff to make sustainable travel choices.
2. Encouraging residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, which will also help us to achieve our ambitious recycling target of 80% by 2025.
3. Encouraging residents to reduce food waste at home by providing education resources, recipes and practical tips.
4. Working with communities and residents to encourage people to eat climate friendly meals including eating less meat
5. Encouraging people to move away from carbon fuelled transport so that half of journeys are walking, cycling or made by public transport by 2030.
6. Encourage children and families to walk to school, including through supporting the [School Streets](#) initiative to reduce traffic around school gates and tackle air pollution.
7. Encouraging people to support improvements in air quality by promoting good driving behaviours including implementing no idling zones and reduced speed limits.
8. Encouraging and supporting homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes aiming for Zero Carbon homes by 2050.
9. Developing a facility at [Ynysangharad War Memorial Park](#) that will engage people in their local environment and contribute to activities with positive climate impact, increasing expertise and a love of nature.
10. Involving and working with residents and community groups to develop biodiversity initiatives including 'Grab a Rake', verge management; ['Action for Nature' Partnership](#), protecting peatbogs, recording our wildlife and developing a 'Living Landscape' project, bringing together wild places and local groups to benefit nature.
11. Encouraging women and girls to consider using reusable and sustainable sanitary products by providing education and access to sustainable products in the community and schools and also lobby Welsh Government to raise the profile of these initiatives across Wales.

Measures/Targets

- *Increasing the number of campaigns to inform and encourage residents to make positive climate choices*
- *% of sanitary products provided in communities and schools that are reusable or plastic free and the number of information sessions held to promote their use.*

Working with Third Sector organisations, Neighbourhood Networks and other partners to maximise our collective resources to achieve a Carbon Neutral County Borough

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us work with existing community groups and networks to promote and expand initiatives that already operate in the County Borough e.g. repair cafes and our plans include:

1. Working with third sector organisations to ensure the sustainability of community facilities/venues in RCT, reduce the impact of rising energy prices and improve energy efficiency. This includes Council buildings leased to third sector groups.
2. Promoting existing repair cafes in the County Borough and encouraging new enterprises and locations to safely extend the life of products and materials and encourage a reduction in consumption of new products.
3. Ensuring that climate impacts are considered when assessing and approving Community Asset Transfers.
4. Working with our Community Voluntary Council, Interlink RCT and third sector organisations, including Welsh language groups, to provide and promote opportunities for volunteering which will engage people in supporting the local environment and help them develop relevant skills to support the ambition of a Carbon Neutral County Borough.
5. Working with community partners to maximise available resources to ensure RCT land is appropriately managed and utilised for the benefit of our communities.
6. Identifying and understanding resources and services that are already available in the community in third sector organisations, community groups and volunteer experts.

Measures/Targets

- *Develop a suite of measures to evidence how we are maximising our resources.*
- *Establish baseline data for the number of repair cafes or similar across the County Borough.*

Promoting sustainable, local food in services and communities

Among other things, residents told us they would like to see us help people to grow food closer to home, encourage and inform people about the benefits of eating more plant based meals and support community growing and sharing fruit and vegetables and our plans include

1. Working with partners to develop a Food Prosperity Network for creating an RCT sustainable food facility with the ambition of achieving the [Sustainable Food places Gold Award](#) with Bronze Award achieved by June 2023.
2. Developing 'park to plate' activities in Ynysangharad Park, to grow fresh vegetables for local use and pilot how this model can be applied to Council parks and land for community food production.
3. Reducing the environmental impact of food provided by the Council through more climate friendly meals choices and procurement.
4. Continuing to work with community groups to transfer Council assets, when available, for sustainable food activities.
5. Providing more opportunities for residents to grow their own fresh food e.g., by increasing the number of allotments throughout the County Borough, exploring use of micro plots, co-working and volunteering and also developing a package of support to new plot holders.
6. Working with partners to map the land we own to better understand the food growing potential of our land.
7. Contributing to the discussion with Welsh Government on developing a Wales Community Food Strategy.

Measures/Targets

- *Establish a baseline of food growing activities across RCT.*
- *Increase the number of climate friendly meal options offered by the Council in our schools, offices and offered by our community meals service from a baseline that will be established in 2022/23.*

Raising Climate Awareness

Among other things, residents and staff told us they would like to see us increase awareness of climate change and provide opportunities for residents and communities to become involved in developing solutions that will contribute to the County Borough becoming Carbon Neutral and our plans include:

1. Providing clear, simple and practical ways to encourage everyone to play their part to reduce carbon at home, in work and getting about.
2. Listening to and understanding what our residents of all ages are telling us.
3. Inviting and encouraging residents, businesses, staff and their representatives to discuss what the Council can do to help them to reduce their carbon footprint and what they can do for themselves.
4. Working with young people, including through schools and their eco councils, youth groups and Arts projects in ways they can help shape our plans for their future.
5. Working with Community Groups, including Older Persons Advisory Group and those that are seldom heard so that they can contribute to and shape our plans for the future.

6. Developing intergenerational projects that enhance the skills and lives of people in our communities.
7. Providing opportunities for communities to become involved in developing local solutions through Neighbourhood Networks.

Measures/Targets

- *Increase the number of opportunities for residents and communities to be involved in the ongoing Climate Change conversation.*

In preparing this Climate Change Strategy the Council has taken account of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, making decisions and taking action today that are not at the expense of the generations that follow us.

The Act focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It makes public bodies, such as the Council, think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven national Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The Council's approach to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) is to embed its requirements into the Council's business including our Climate Commitments.

This plan sets out a vision and Climate Commitments that will continue to maximise the Council's contribution to the seven national Well-being Goals. The national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, will continue to be incorporated into the detailed action plans that will deliver the Council's Climate Commitments.

Examples of how our plans to tackle Climate Change contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals

National Well-being Goal	RCT Climate Action
Prosperous Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting new green jobs in a low carbon economy with locally procured goods and services and community benefit clauses. • Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now, and in the future including improved low carbon public transport and active travel. • Considering how our business grants can support local businesses to become more sustainable. • Working with local businesses to help them source more sustainable products locally, and sell to local markets. • Working with local businesses, partners and our schools to promote career paths and opportunities in emerging sectors, helping young people make decisions about their future study and careers.
Resilient Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and enhancing our most valuable carbon stores, in undisturbed soils and semi-natural vegetation in woods, heathland and grasslands. • Minimising flood risk by promoting nature-based solutions. • Protecting RCT uplands and important habitats through our Local Development Plan. • Leading by example, e.g., eliminating the Council’s use of single use plastics, installing solar panels on our Council buildings etc. and encouraging our staff to make sustainable travel choices. • Using public sector land for green energy generation/carbon storage, managing flood risk, increasing biodiversity and community growing. • Continuing to develop a ‘Living Landscape’ bringing together existing wildlife sites, local communities, wildlife organisations and ancient woodland.
Healthier Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing traffic speed limitations to improve air quality in our communities. • Using natural planting in public areas of our town centres to improve air quality and well-being, reduce flood risk, provide cooling during heatwaves and other climate benefits for residents. • Ensure all new housing and commercial developments are easily accessible by active travel and/or public transport. • Encouraging people to move away from carbon fuelled transport so that half of journeys are walking, cycling or made by public transport by 2030. • Encourage children and families to walk to school, including through supporting the School Streets initiative to reduce traffic around school gates and tackle air pollution.

National Well-being Goal	RCT Climate Action
<p style="text-align: center; color: white;">More Equal Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the inequalities faced by those who are most vulnerable to the effect of Climate Change including women and people on low incomes, allowing people to fulfil their full potential. • Increasing the energy efficiency of privately owned and rented homes through our Warmer Homes Fuel Poverty strategy 2019-2023. • Identifying job opportunities in new and emerging sectors, working with employers to understand their requirements and supporting people to take advantage of the options available through training, reskilling and in work support. • Encouraging women and girls to consider using reusable and sustainable sanitary products by providing education and access to sustainable products in the community and schools.
<p style="text-align: center; color: white;">Wales of Cohesive Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling residents being more active in their communities in community projects and community use of green space. • Exploring opportunities to further develop the Active Travel network to major destinations, and public transport hubs in the County Borough, including cycle storage and hire and considering Active Travel in all major transport projects. • Working with partners to develop a Food Prosperity network for creating an RCT sustainable food facility. • Developing ‘park to plate’ activities in Ynysangharad Park, to grow fresh vegetables for local use and pilot how this model can be applied to Council parks and land for community food production. • Involving and working with residents and community groups to develop biodiversity initiatives including ‘Grab a Rake’, verge management; ‘Action for Nature’ Partnership protecting peatbogs, recording our wildlife and developing a ‘Living Landscape’ project, bringing together wild places and local groups to benefit nature.
<p style="text-align: center; color: white;">A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding our range of Adult Education courses to widen opportunities for people to develop skills they can use to contribute towards a carbon neutral County Borough e.g. zero waste workshops, organic/wildlife friendly gardening, heritage crafts and local conservation. • Working with our Community Voluntary Council, Interlink RCT and third sector organisations, including Welsh language groups, to provide and promote opportunities for volunteering which will engage people in supporting the local environment and help them develop relevant skills to support the ambition of a Carbon Neutral County Borough. • Working with young people, including through schools and their eco councils, youth groups and Arts projects in ways they can help shape our plans for their future.

National Well-being Goal	RCT Climate Action
Globally Responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating sustainable behaviour and using nature’s resources responsibly at home to contribute to protecting the countries and people that are most at risk and vulnerable to the effects of Climate Change around the world. • Working with communities and residents to encourage people to eat climate friendly meals. • help businesses eliminate waste and implement circular economy principles such as reducing pollution and extending the life of products and materials. • Encouraging residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. • Eliminating single use plastics across the council and schools. • Decarbonising our waste transportation services where cost effective, technical solutions are available, and investigating opportunities to generate green energy that will support a sustainable and cost-effective energy source for vehicles and waste processing activities. • Progressing the Eco Park in Bryn Pica. • Opportunities to create and use our own green sustainable energy such as micro hydro-electric schemes which utilise natural river and water course feature. • Increasing the opportunity and land supply for new Zero carbon homes.

Appendix B

Making A Difference Corporate Plan 2020-24	The Council's Corporate Plan Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (rctcbc.gov.uk)
Corporate Performance Report 2021-22	CorporatePerformanceReport202122.pdf (rctcbc.gov.uk)
Local Development Plan	Revised Local Development Plan (LDP) 2020 - 2030
Active Travel	Active Travel Annual Report 2018
Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	RCT Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030
Local Transport Plan	South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan 2015
Biodiversity Duty	Biodiversity Report 2019
Local Nature Partnership	RCT Local Nature Partnership
Flood Risk	Flood Risk Management Plan Volume 1 2015
Tourism Strategy	Tourism Strategy 2021
Air Quality Management Plan	Progress Report October 2021
Sustainable Communities for Learning formerly 21st Century Schools	School Investment Projects
Cwm Taf Well-being Plan.	Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-23
Asset Management Plan.	Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) 2018- 23
Procurement Strategy.	Procurement Strategy 2022
Tree and Woodland Strategy <i>currently in development</i>	

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) – PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

**Author(s): Lisa Howell, 21st Century School Organisation and Business Manager
Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to:
- Amalgamate the currently federated Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the one objection received in response to the publication of the statutory notice to progress this proposal.
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposal with no amendments.
- 2.3 Note the financial implications as set out at section 8 which will be subject to further reports in due course.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To implement the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code).

- 3.2 To increase capacity and improve the quality of the English medium primary education provision available to learners in Glyncoch.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th of December 2021, approval was given to begin a process to formally consult on a proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools by way of closing the existing schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.
- 4.2 Following the conclusion of the consultation period, and at a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet held on the 21st of March 2022, a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish the required Statutory Notice.
- 4.3 The Statutory Notice was published on the 4th of April 2022 which triggered the commencement of the Objection Period. This ran until the 11th of May 2022. One objection was received during this period, details of this can be found in the Objection Report at Appendix A.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
- 5.2 Equality and Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code").

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code"). This document is still available to view on the Council's website.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined within the Code and in accordance with Welsh Government coronavirus guidance for schools in place at the time.
- 7.2 The consultation took place between the 10th of January 2022 and the 21st of February 2022 and full details of this process were published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on the 21st of March 2022 and subsequently published on the Council website.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Based on current estimates it is proposed that circa £15M is required to build the new school to ensure the pupils currently attending Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. It is proposed that that this be funded in partnership by the Council and Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, through their Mutual Investment Revenue funding stream which includes an 81% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 19% share of the costs will be factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 8.2 As part of the funding arrangements, the Council will have to part fund (at 35%) capital costs in respect of fit out (e.g. furniture, ICT) and resources have already begun to be set aside within the Capital Programme in this regard.
- 8.3 Any costs that arise in preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council's powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 9.2 Section 13A(3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.
- 9.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act then provides that the Council shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary education and secondary education are available in the Council's area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity for appropriate education.
- 9.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 9.5 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with

any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the Code is found here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES / WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*'. The proposal will also support delivery against the five strategic priorities, most notably:

- Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
- Strategic Priority 5 – Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

10.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

10.3 Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving zero-carbon buildings and constructing to BREEAM excellent.
- Providing additional school places.
- Opening new community facilities that would create opportunities for local people to utilise.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating new school environments that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.

- Providing first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contributing towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to build the new schools.
- Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the communities to engage throughout the process.

10.4 The Equality Impact Assessment includes further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

10.5 An Equality Impact Assessment, including further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future generations Act, formed an integral part of the consultation document. This was and is still available for all stakeholders to view.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11. The Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning funding is a strategic investment programme that delivers physical improvements to our schools to benefit learners throughout the County Borough. However, the new school proposed is located within the Glyn-coch electoral ward.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools by way of closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school will significantly improve English medium primary education in Glyncoch. A new 21st Century school with first class facilities will create a learning environment which nurtures and supports pupils and staff, it will deliver exciting opportunities for the community focussed schools' agenda, and will also support us in realising our Net Zero Carbon targets.

12.2 It is recommended therefore that Members formally approve the proposal as consulted upon, with no amendments, allowing the project to progress.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and Organisation (Tel: 01443 744062)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

PROPOSAL: AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of the Objection Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the statutory notice published for this proposal, which was published on the 4th of April 2022 for a period of a minimum of 28 days; and
- Include a summary of the statutory objections received and the local authority's response to them.

2. The Statutory Notices

The Statutory Notice to progress this proposal, which was published on the 4th of April 2022, is reproduced below:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education and Inclusion Services, Tŷ Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, proposes to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Cefn Primary School, Greenfield Avenue, Glyncoch, Pontypridd CF37 3BD
 - Craig yr Hesg Primary School, Cefn Lane, Glyncoch, Pontypridd CF37 3BP
2. Establish a new English Medium Community Primary School, to be maintained by RCTCBC in a new school building to be constructed for this purpose. The new school building will be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Tŷ Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit) for boys and girls aged 3-11 years.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/CurrentConsultations/ProposaltoamalgamateCefnPrimaryandCraigyrHesgPrimarySchools.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals by no later than the 1st of September 2026.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending Cefn Primary School and Craig yr Hesg Primary School should transfer to the new English Medium Community Primary School by the 1st of September 2026, subject to parental preference.

The proposed new school will be an English Medium Community Primary School.

RCTCBC will be the admissions authority and there will be no arrangements for pupil banding.

The proposed capacity of the new English Medium Community Primary school shall be 360 pupil places, plus nursery. The admission number for pupils aged 4 to the Reception Class at the new school in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented is proposed to be 51.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with RCTCBC's Transport Policy. RCTCBC provides free transport for pupils who attend their nearest suitable Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1.5 miles walking distance to that school, or if there is no safe walking route. The term 'nearest suitable' school applies to the catchment area or nearest Welsh, English, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which these proposals were published, that is to say by the 11th of May 2022, any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Tŷ Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ, or e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

Where objections have been received, RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within 7 days of the determination of the proposal.

Signed:



Gaynor Davies
Director of Education and Inclusion Services
For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Date: 4th of April 2022

3. Details of Objections Received

During the Statutory Notice period, a total of 1 objection was received by the closing date of the 11th of May 2022. This objection is included below along with the Council's response to the objection.

4. Objection and Responses

The objection detailed in the report reflects the language used in the submission. The following table reflects this.

<u>HYSBYSIAD STATUDOL – YMGYNGHORI AR GYNNIG I UNO YSGOL GYNRADD CEFN AC YSGOL GYNRADD CRAIG-YR-HESG ER MWYN SEFYDLU YSGOL GYNRADD GYMUNEDOL NEWYDD AR SAFLE NEWYDD</u>
<u>STATUTORY NOTICE – TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL</u>
<p>Fel y bydd yr awdurdod lleol yn gwybod, mae teimlad cryf yn yr ardal hon nad oes Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg i ddiwallu anghenion yr ardal. Pan benderfynodd yr awdurdod gau Ysgol Gynradd Pont Sion Norton, bu ymgyrchwyr yn glir am yr angen am ysgol Gymraeg ar gyfer ardal ynysybwl, glyncoch, coedycwm, trallwn a cilfynydd. Gofynwyd i'r Cyngor ystyried y safle hwn ar gyfer ysgol o'r fath, gan nodi ei leoliad perffaith o ran trafndiaeth gyhoeddus hefyd.</p> <p>Os yw'r Cyngor yn ymrwymo i'r targed miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg, pa ffordd well hynny na diwallu'r angen drwy newid yr ysgol newydd i fod yn ysgol Gymraeg neu o leiaf i ddechrau yn un gyda ffrwd Gymraeg y gellir ei thyfu. Oes ystyriaeth wedi ei roi i hyn, gan weithio gyda ymgyrchwyr lleol ac i sicrhau mynediad cydradd i Addysg Gymraeg yn y rhan yma o'r Sir?</p> <p>As the local authority will know, there is a strong feeling in this area that there is no Welsh Medium Primary School to meet the needs of the area. When the authority decided to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton, campaigners were clear about the need for a Welsh-medium school for the area of Ynysybwl, Glyncoch, Coed-y-cwm, Trallwng and Cilfynydd. The Council was asked to consider this site for such a school, also noting its perfect location for public transport.</p> <p>If the Council commits itself to the target of one million Welsh speakers, what better way than to meet the need by changing the new school into a Welsh medium school or at least initially one with a growing Welsh stream. Has consideration been given to this, working with local campaigners and ensuring equal access to Welsh Medium Education in this part of the County?</p>
<p><u>Response:</u></p> <p>The Council is fully committed in supporting the Welsh Government in achieving its Cymraeg 2050 target of creating one million Welsh speakers, and further information on this has been captured within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment which was included within the consultation documentation and can still be found on the Council's website.</p>

The new Welsh medium primary school, which will open in September 2024 in Rhydyfelin, has been designed to accommodate all pupils that wish to pursue a Welsh medium education from the areas listed. We have also ensured that there has been additional capacity designed into the new school to accommodate growth in the number of pupils attending to further support the Welsh Government's overarching Cymraeg 2050 outcome. We will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in the development of this school and ensure that all staff, parents and carers, are kept up to date with progress.

The rationale for delivering a new English medium school in Glyncoch is contained within the consultation document. The existing school buildings at Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools require significant repairs and are no longer fit-for-purpose, with collective outstanding maintenance costs of more than £783,000. The age and construction of the buildings prevent either school from receiving any significant upgrades which would allow them to be deemed a 21st Century Schools' provision.

The site of Cefn Primary and the school building itself is not accessible and does not comply with the Equality Act 2010, and Craig yr Hesg Primary also requires significant improvement to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The new school would be fully accessible for all staff, pupils as well as the community ensuring that the facilities at the school can be fully utilised ensuring we drive forward and support the Welsh Government's community focussed agenda. The new school's extensive external facilities, including a Multi-Use Games Area, will allow staff, pupils, and the community to benefit from a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.

The school will be designed to be energy efficient and will include renewable energy systems including photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting. The school will be built to BREEAM Excellent standards, and will be Net Zero Carbon in operation, contributing to the delivery of the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy for 2021-2025 and the ambitious goal of being a carbon neutral Council by 2030.

The site that will be used to accommodate the new school will incorporate the existing Craig yr Hesg School site as well as the land adjacent to it (formerly the Ty Gwyn site). The land adjacent to the school is not large enough to accommodate a school without utilising the existing school site. In accordance with Building Bulletin 99, to accommodate a school of this size with the appropriate external areas, a site of approximately 1.5ha is needed, both sites cumulatively provide an area of circa 1.6ha.

The Council believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard educational standards for the future and provides a platform for improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit-for-purpose facilities. It delivers the facilities required to meet the new curriculum allowing teachers to focus on maximising educational outcomes. It will be fully accessible, it will provide quality outdoor spaces not just for the school but the wider Community delivering the Community Focused school agenda, and it will achieve Net Zero Carbon supporting the Council's ambitious target of being a carbon neutral Council by 2030.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET
22ND JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION & WELSH LANGUAGE COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Item: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) – PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND CRAIG YR HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Background Papers

13th December 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme – Proposals to Improve English Medium Primary Education Provision for Glyncoch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn](#)

21st March 2022

[21st Century Schools programme – Consultation on Proposal to Create a New Community Primary School in Glyncoch](#)

Officer to contact:

Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and Organisation
01443 744062



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

REVIEW OF LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author: Ceri Jones – Head of Inclusion Services (Tel: 01443 744008)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the outcome of the publication of the Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to enhance Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposal as published in the Statutory Notice which will open a Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs in Ysgol Garth Olwg with effect from 1st September 2022.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.1 and 2.2 above, agree to the publication of the relevant Decision Notices in respect of any proposals taken forward as required by the School Organisation Code.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in the Welsh Government legislative guidance (The School Organisation Code) so that an improved continuum of Welsh ALN provision can be achieved in RCT.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 21st March 2022, approval was given to issue a Statutory Notice in relation to the enhancement of Welsh medium mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within RCT.
- 4.2 Considerable changes are underway in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) (ALNET) Act was introduced in January 2018. The Act requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. This includes a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for pupils with ALN. The Act is supported by a new statutory Additional Learning Needs Code 2021. The Code is based on the following principles:
- meeting the needs of pupils with ALN should be part of a whole school approach to school improvement;
 - pupils must be supported to participate in mainstream education and in the National Curriculum as fully as possible wherever this is feasible.
- 4.3 For pupils with more significant needs who experience difficulties in coping with mainstream education, more specialist placements are required. Rhondda Cynon Taf has a range of specialist provisions which includes: 44 LSCs, 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and 4 Special Schools. These placements are agreed by Access and Inclusion Service panels. However, the LA does not currently have a discreet Welsh medium LSC provision for pupils with additional learning needs. In light of the requirements of the ALNET Act, it is vital that this shortfall is addressed, and approval is sought to create a specialist LSC provision for Welsh medium Key Stage 3/4 pupils with significant ALN.

5. STATUTORY NOTICES

- 5.1 A Statutory Notice was issued on the 4th April until 11th May 2022 relating to the proposal to open a Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs in Ysgol Garth Olwg with effect from 1st September 2022.
- 5.2 Following completion of the Statutory Notice period an objection report has been produced. No objections were received in relation to the notice. The report is attached as Appendix A.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1. As detailed in previous reports, Equality Impact and Community Impact Assessments have been undertaken and have been published on the Council's website together with the consultation document at the appropriate time.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Welsh Impact Assessment has also been prepared in respect of this proposal and has been published on the Council's website as a part of the Consultation Documentation in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code").

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, which was introduced on 1st November 2018, replacing the previous Code introduced in October 2013. These arrangements stipulate that Statutory Notices must be issued and a report provided to Cabinet outlining any objections that have been received. This report is attached as Appendix A.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Secondary schools hosting LSC provisions are funded via the Council for one specialist teacher and two Learning Support Assistants at an approximate cost of £112k per class. Funding that is currently provided to Ysgol Garth Olwg to establish a Step 4 provision following the amended proposal in June 2020 will be re-directed to support the establishment of the proposed new LSC for learners with significant ALN.
- 9.2 The creation of the LSC will incur a transportation cost in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy, however this increase in cost is seen as a necessity in order to enhance provision for RCT's most vulnerable pupils. Costs cannot be quantified at this time as placements are pupil led.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Section 316A of the Education Act 1996 specifies that children with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational/additional learning provision that their learning difficulty calls for; the efficient education of other children, and the efficient use of resources.
- 10.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires Local Authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. The ALN Code for Wales (2021) places a statutory duty upon the LA to keep under review the overall Additional Learning Provision (ALP) available in its area and supporting arrangements, to ensure provision is sufficient to meet the overall needs of its population of learners with ALN and that provision is available in Welsh.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES / WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The proposal will ensure that two of the Council's three key priorities will be met. These include:
- Economy: Building a strong economy
 - People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- 11.2 The proposal will ensure that some of the Council's most vulnerable pupils will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes, whilst also ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families in line with strategic priority 3 of the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate's Strategic Plan. The proposal will also ensure more efficient and effective use of Council resources to promote the development of social inclusion and positive outcomes for learners.
- 11.3 The proposal will ensure there is renewed capacity to focus on prevention which is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and a key element of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 11.4 The proposal will also assist the directorate in achieving strategic priority 3 of the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 The proposal relates to the strategic development of Welsh-medium Additional Learning Provision that is available within the county borough that will enable learners with significant additional learning needs in Key Stage 3/4 to continue with their education through the medium of Welsh by accessing a Welsh medium specialist learning support class placement.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Members are now asked to consider the contents of the Objection Report, at Appendix A to the report, and agree to its immediate publication and consider whether or not to implement the proposed enhancement to LSC provision within RCT.
- 13.2 If the proposal is agreed as outlined in the report, the Council must publish a Decision Notice that formally outlines the reasons for the implementation of this proposal.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

None

Contact officer:

Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

01443 744008

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

**PROPOSAL: THE ENHANCMENT OF WELSH MEDIUM MAINSTREAM
LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS (LSC) PROVISION
WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

1. Purpose of the Objection Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 011/2018. Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the statutory notice published for the proposal, which was published on 4th April until 11th May 2022;
- Include a summary of the statutory objections received and the local authority's response to them.

2. The Statutory Notice

The Statutory Notice to progress this proposal, which were published on 4th April 2022 are reproduced below:

Statutory Notice

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf, having consulted such persons as required, proposes to establish SEN provision at Ysgol Garth Olwg, Main Road, Church Village, Pontypridd, CF38 1DX, by providing 14 places for Key Stage 3/4 (aged 11 – 16) pupils with Significant Additional Learning Needs through the Medium of Welsh at the school. The school is currently maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Rhondda Cynon Taf undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposers' responses and the views of Estyn is available on www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultations.

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1st September 2022.

The current number of pupils at the school is 1208, the pupil capacity of the school is 1110 Secondary and 324 Primary and the proposed capacity once the proposal is implemented will be 1110 Secondary and 324 Primary.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by 11th May 2022 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Director of Education and Inclusion Service, Access and Inclusion Service, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ.

Rhondda Cynon Taf will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Signed



Director of Education and Inclusion Service, Rhondda Cynon Taf

Date – 4th April 2022

Explanatory Note

1. Improving the quality of education and raising standards is one of the Council's main priorities. It is considered that improving standards and educational outcomes for some of our most vulnerable learners will improve their life chances, access to the world of work and other education pathways. Ensuring that our support classes are well matched to the needs of learners is important in helping them to make progress.
2. Whilst the quality of LSC classes in Rhondda Cynon Taf is good, there is a need to modernise and develop the type of LSC classes to increase opportunities for mainstream inclusion and to further improve results for vulnerable groups of learners.
3. There is a need to expand KS 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs in the Local Authority.

3. Details of Objections Received

No objections were received by the published closing date, namely 5pm on 11th May 2022.

4. Conclusion

As there have been no objections received from stakeholders Access & Inclusion will seek permission from Cabinet to continue with the proposed enhancement of Welsh medium LSC provision within RCT.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH
PARTICIPATION, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

**Item: REVIEW OF LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

Background papers

None

Officer to contact:

Ceri Jones – Head of Inclusion Services (01443 744008)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd JUNE 2022

CAR MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Authors: RICHARD EVANS AND BARRIE DAVIES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to determine the rate of reimbursement payable to Council employees who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended to:

- a) Continue with the increase in the rate of reimbursement payable to Council employees who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes to the HMRC rate of 45p per mile as set out in the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To continue with the increase in the rate of reimbursement payable to staff who use their own vehicles having regard to increasing fuel prices.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since 2015 (effective from 1st May 2015) the Council had applied a Car Mileage reimbursement rate, payable to staff who utilise their vehicles for work related purposes, of 35p per mile.
- 4.2 The Council's budget strategy for 2022/23, as agreed by full Council on the 9th March, increased this rate to 40p with effect from the 1st April 2022.
- 4.3 During the ensuing period, fuel prices increased substantially and on the 1st April 2022 the Chief Executive determined to temporarily increase the rate to the HMRC rate of 45p per mile which was subject to review before the end of June 2022.
- 4.4 Fuel prices remain at a higher level, as shown in the below illustration :

Weekly road fuel prices over the 12 months to June 2022



Source:

Energy Prices Road Fuels and Other Petroleum Products
Weekly Road Fuel Prices

Publication date: 07-Jun-2022
 Data period: New data for week commencing 06 June 2022



- 4.5 The Council relies upon a dedicated workforce who deliver valued services across our communities, many of whom do so using their own vehicles. It is important that such staff do not suffer unduly financially as a consequence of the increased fuel prices and that service continuity is assured.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the rate at which staff are reimbursed for using their own vehicles is now reset to 45p per mile on an ongoing basis. This is the rate set by HMRC and is widely used across local government. It is proposed that the Council's rate follows that of the HMRC going forward, for example, in the event that HMRC determines to amend the rate.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

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

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The proposal will be advised to the Trade Unions.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The cost of the proposal, for the remainder of the financial year is estimated at £88k, which can be funded from existing available and one off resources and will be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan from 2023/24.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Director of Finance and Digital Services will put into effect the necessary arrangements in accordance with the Council's 'officer scheme of delegation'.

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

- 10.1 This proposal supports the Council's corporate priority of Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer. Due regard has also been given to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The decision to increase the mileage rate will ensure that staff are appropriately reimbursed and seek to assure service continuity.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE: OVERVIEW OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING 2020 - 2022

22nd JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR RHYS LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Author: Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet Members with an overview of the additional support the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has offered young people as a result of the Council's additional investment since 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review and comment on the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Commit to double the number of community youth hub vehicles from two to four vehicles.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 At the request of the Cabinet Member, this report highlights the service developments for the Youth Engagement and Participation Service over the past two years that have been supported by the additional investment the service has received during the previous Council.
- 3.2 To build on the Council's youth investment over recent years and double the number of community youth hub vehicles.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the end of 2019/20, the Council announced its commitment to providing additional funding in support of youth services to the value of £200,000. The purpose of this funding was to provide additional capacity for community-based support, including extending youth work provision on Friday evenings and weekends, and alternative means of engagement in areas where there was no permanent youth centre, for example via a mobile youth base (vehicle).
- 4.2 On 23rd March 2020, a national lockdown was imposed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. At that time, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service suspended all face-to-face work with young people and colleagues. This lockdown had a significant impact on the plans to review of the key priorities of the service, mainly the priority of increasing the community offer available to young people.
- 4.3 The Coronavirus restrictions required staff to demonstrate personal resilience in the practical implementation of emergency contingency plans to manage crisis, whilst at the same time predict and plan for the longer-term impact on young people. Focusing on service users, the team was tasked to assess needs and identify requirements, which were then used to reallocate resources and develop contingency plans. Their previous engagement in service innovation and their confidence to use their expertise and knowledge of the needs of young people resulted in a comprehensive youth offer of both targeted and universal services to assist young people process and manage the change.
- 4.4 Maintaining these close working relationships with young people throughout the past 26 months has allowed the service to gather the views of young people and plan its recovery out of the pandemic in a way that meets the emerging needs of the various cohorts. This feedback has informed the service's plans and subsequent developments to ensure it offers a balanced programme that fulfils as many of the presenting needs as possible, whilst maximising capacity in both targeted and universal interventions.
- 4.5 More recently, a further £75,000 has been made available to the service to support its community engagement efforts, including investment in expanding its fleet of mobile youth club vehicles. These vehicles have been well-received by young people and are making positive impact in terms of engagement and reach of the service.
- 4.6 The additional core funding (£275,000 in total) has been instrumental in transforming the service's provision into a comprehensive hybrid offer over the past two years. It has added much-needed capacity to the team's front-line delivery, especially in the community where young people have been most adversely affected by restrictions.

5. OVERVIEW OF SERVICE DELIVERY AREAS DIRECTLY FUNDED BY THE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

- 5.1 The implementation of plans to extend the youth work community offer was suspended as a result of the introduction of the national lockdown and the service focused on establishing a virtual offer to support young people. This section provides an update on what the service has done already, or is in the process of implementing, to add capacity and introduce innovative solutions in response to the needs of young people post-pandemic as a result of the additional investment.
- 5.2 **Street-based youth work:** From October 2020, the service entirely re-focused its community youth offer to deliver street-based youth work across the County Borough. This was in response to the escalation of young people's needs who are seeking a trusted adult/support during the pandemic and made possible as a result of the additional youth service funding. The service is currently deploying up to four teams every evening to the key localities across RCT where young people are known to frequent. This work has been well-received by young people and community members.
- 5.3 **Developing community provision:** During the street-based sessions, staff have started to establish new relationships with local businesses to consider what they are able to offer young people in their own area. For example, in Treorchy, a supermarket has offered YEPS the use of a parcel of land for free to develop as a safe outdoor space for young people to congregate and for the service to host outdoor activities, such as street dance.
- 5.4 **Mobile youth club vehicles:** The Council has already invested in two vehicles utilising core and grant funding to act as mobile youth clubs and provide the opportunity for a hub in a locality where access to a suitable permanent venue is not available. The vehicles are used as mobile youth clubs; as the base for community activities like fun days and street-based youth work; as well as a hub for use at times when an immediate response is required within a community, such as following a serious incident that requires enhanced youth work support. The mobile vehicles proved invaluable during the pandemic, offering a safe space for young people and support for the street based work.
- 5.5 Based on the success of the mobile youth hubs, the Cabinet Member has requested proposals to be developed, which would see a commitment made by the Council, to double the number of YEPS vehicles to four. A third vehicle will be secured with external grant funding through the Safer Streets Fund. A fourth vehicle will be brought into operation as soon as a vehicle of this bespoke nature can be secured, which meets the needs and requirements of the service. The

costs of this second additional vehicle will be met from Council funding. In line with the priorities of the new Cabinet, the ongoing expansion of the community street based youth work supported by the YEPS vehicles will remain a priority in line with available funding opportunities.

5.6 **“RCT Safe Spaces”**: The service is establishing a network of organisations that support our “Safe Space” initiative. A Safe Space is a youth-focused location that provides an open access space for young people within their local community. Every Safe Space will be different depending on the community it is based in. A Safe Space may be a youth club, community centre, park, sports club, or business like a café or activity centre. The Safe Spaces Network will provide support to individual organisations by offering advice, guidance and training opportunities to provide an inclusive and safe location that young people can benefit from. YEPS will provide their own Safe Spaces and support partner Safe Spaces coordinated by wider local authority service areas, third sector organisations and private businesses.

5.7 **Workforce development**: Reviewing the levels of engagement and reporting rising levels of needs, the service has invested in the development of future qualified and competent youth workers, ensuring a sustainable workforce into the future. Facing a national shortage of youth workers, the Council has dedicated resources to developing its own talent at a local level. The service has made a firm commitment to the upskilling of the youth workforce across RCT, not only for Council employed youth workers but for those working in our partner organisations, such as third sector and housing partners and community members. Delivering youth work qualifications at Level 2 and Level 3, this commitment is not only benefiting community members and organisations but most importantly the young people they will be supporting.

5.8 **Apprentices**: In January 2021, the service appointed two youth work apprentices. Throughout their two-year contract, they will work in all areas of the service and gain Level 2 and 3 qualifications in Youth and Community Work. It is hoped that they will further their career within RCT either by securing a post within YEPS or a partner agency within a youth support role.

6. **SUMMARY OF THE ADDITIONAL PROVISION OFFERED BY THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE**

6.1 The wider work of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has indirectly benefited from the additional investment. This section provides an update the wider youth work offer of the service delivers across the County Borough. For further detail on service delivery during

the pandemic, please see [Cabinet Report MTSP One4aLL LG \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk).

- 6.2 **Referral work:** The service's core work continues to be its referral work, supporting identified young people on a 1:1 basis. This includes meetings in school, college, home or community setting (including the mobile youth vehicle), as well as via text messages, WhatsApp, telephone and Zoom calls. Referrals rates are currently at an all time high.
- 6.3 **Mental health and wellbeing support:** Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers work directly with young people who are referred to the service for support to improve their mental health where they don't reach the threshold for other services, like CAMHS. The staff employed within this team are qualified youth workers who have received enhanced training to be able to assist young people with their specific wellbeing needs.
- 6.4 **School-based support:** Youth workers are based at each secondary school across RCT on a daily basis during term time. Their usual duties to support learners include offering support on a 1:1 basis (referral work); group work where a common need or issue is identified, such as managing anxiety about returning to school and behaviour concerns; targeted work for young people impacted by suicide; etc.
- 6.5 **After-school sessions:** Youth workers deliver sessions after the school day, on school sites, to provide opportunities for young people to participate in fun activities within their own time and free of charge.
- 6.6 **Holiday provision:** In addition to the term time provision, YEPS offers a comprehensive holiday programme, except for the Christmas break. These programmes include sporting, leisure and cultural activities, chill out rooms, workshops and arranged trips. Many of the activities are delivered within the community, in parks, skateparks, and town centres, utilising the community assets across RCT. The mobile youth clubs feature heavily in the delivery of these sessions, offering a base for the activities with a power supply, lighting and shelter in the event of adverse weather. These vehicles have broadened the offer that the service is able to offer at a local level.
- 6.7 **Youth clubs:** Youth clubs are currently in the process of re-opening following the pandemic. The delivery of youth club provision from both fixed centres and mobile vehicles is providing greater opportunity to engage with a wider range of young people.
- 6.8 **Enhanced education, employment and training programme:** Year 11 leavers were significantly affected by Coronavirus, with many leaving school without a destination or clear progression plan for their

future. YEPS, with input from schools, Careers Wales and the Gatsby Project, have developed an enhanced support programme for those at risk of becoming NEET. Interventions include in-person and virtual support sessions; coffee mornings; volunteering experience days; in-employment days, including CV writing skills, interview techniques; and developing the basic skills of those young people in work to ensure they continue to be employable in the post-Covid world.

6.9 **Tackling youth homelessness:** Preventing youth homelessness continues to be a priority and the service continues to develop its universal interventions to reduce the risk of homelessness as well as delivering targeted specialist support; training to prepare for independent living; and family interventions to improve relationships that allow the young person to remain within the family home.

6.10 **Virtual youth offer:** The service has maintained an element of virtual delivery post lockdown offering information, advice and guidance, as well as universal activities for young people via the website (www.wicid.tv) and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube) with contributions from delivery partners including sexual health teams, substance misuse organisations, and commissioned providers. The website is in the process of being rebranded to www.yeps.wales and will be supported by the introduction of a downloadable YEPS app.

6.11 **Youth Fora:** one of the fundamental priorities of YEPS is to proactively consult with young people, and this continued throughout the pandemic. The locality youth fora have been revised from geographically based groups to ones that focus on key thematic areas, as chosen by the young people themselves. These community fora include:

- Environment
- Community Safety
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Equality and Inclusion

Representatives on these groups include those working with YEPS, third sector organisations and schools. They will also form part of RCT's County Youth Forum, as the main group for ensuring that the voice of as many young people in RCT can be collated and shared with relevant partners and decision makers.

7. **PERFORMANCE DATA FOR 2021/22**

7.1 Over the course of the year, 2021/22, the service has provided targeted support to:

- 1,666 individual young people on a 1:1 basis through its referral work, which includes 1,346 new referrals accepted during the year. The number of referred open cases peaked at 512 cases in May 2021, of which 175 were new referrals.

7.2 In addition to this, the service has provided open access opportunities to young people to the level of:

- 450 activity programmes for young people to take part in during term time, totalling 2,994 individual sessions;
- 250 activities during the holiday periods, totalling 343 individual sessions;
- 6,112 individual young people attended these sessions over the year, who attended 39,514 times in total.

7.3 Furthermore, the service undertook 355 street-based sessions during 2021/22 and during those sessions, staff made 12,930 contacts with young people on the streets of RCT.

8. SERVICE PRIORITIES FOR 2022-23

8.1 The work of the service over the coming 12 months will be centred around seven key priorities:

- Provide a visible, accessible, and inclusive youth provision in RCT;
- Ensure high-quality youth work provision in RCT;
- Support youth workers to provide the best and most suitable support for young people in RCT;
- Increase and improve the available support for young people aged 16-25 in RCT;
- Continue to enhance the mental health and wellbeing support for young people in RCT;
- Develop sustainable partnerships with all key agencies in RCT to offer a co-ordinated approach to issues facing young people;
- Build on the Council's youth investment over recent years and double the number of community youth hub vehicles.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

9.1 An Equality and Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

10. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only

11. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 11.1 All work of the service is based upon consultation responses from young people, contributions from our internal youth workers and feedback from key delivery partners, such as Children's Services, Health, Education and the third sector, as a result of their own work with young people across RCT.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 12.1 The Youth Engagement and Participation Service utilises both core funding and grant funding to deliver a comprehensive and responsive youth work offer across RCT. The additional financial investment provided since 2020 has allowed specific service improvements to be implemented, which may not have been possible otherwise, including the purchase and operation of the first two mobile youth club vehicles alongside the use of grant funding.
- 12.2 At a purchase cost of approximately £67k per vehicle, the Manifesto commitment to double the number of vehicles to fourth will be delivered utilising a mix of core budget and grant funding.
- 12.3 The cost of the additional fourth mobile youth club vehicle and its operating costs will be met from existing Council resources.

13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 13.1 There are no legal implications that need to be considered concerning the report.

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

- 14.1 The appropriate provision for young people aged 11 – 25 years across Rhondda Cynon Taf will make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan vision of *'a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all'*, as it will deliver against the specific priorities of *'People - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and 'Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'*.
- 14.2 Young people are a key cohort of our community as they are the next generation of Rhondda Cynon Taf. As such, they are a priority group under The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is felt that this report, the survey findings and the subsequent developments that are occurring as a result, will contribute to all of the seven elements that the Act is aiming to achieve:

1. A prosperous Wales;
2. A resilient Wales;
3. A more equal Wales;
4. A healthier Wales;
5. A Wales of cohesive communities;
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language;
7. A globally responsible Wales.

15. CONCLUSION

- 15.1 The Service has, and continues to demonstrate, its ability to anticipate and mitigate the immediate, mid-term and longer term impact of Covid-19 on young people across the County Borough and to adapt service provision accordingly.
- 15.2 Despite the challenges of the past two years, the Youth Engagement and Participation has continued to develop youth work provision in a timely manner to respond to the existing and emerging needs of young people, facilitated by the additional Council investment it has received.
- 15.3 The additional investment provided for the service, will provide the opportunity to double the size of the mobile youth-fleet from two to four, and thereby increase the reach of this well-received youth provision to more young people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion

Contact Officer

Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR RHYS LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE:
OVERVIEW OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING 2020 - 2022**

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact:

Zoe Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

22ND JUNE 2022

CABINET

A REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER, CLLR CAPLE, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022 – 2025

Author: Jessica Allen, Children and Young People's Service Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the Play Sufficiency Assessment following Pre-scrutiny by the [Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 16TH February 2022](#)
- 1.2 To seek endorsement from members for the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and action plan to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 30th June 2022, as per statutory obligation placed upon the Council in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the PSA for 2022 - 25 and the supporting action plan.
- 2.2 Consider comments from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as detailed in section 7.6 of the report
- 2.3 Endorse the PSA and action plan and agree for it to be submitted to Welsh Government.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The preparation of the Play Sufficiency Audit is a statutory duty of the Council. As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Play Sufficiency Assessment enables the following:

- Identification of gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation;
- Support the establishment of evidence to give an indication of distance travelled in relation to play sufficiency;
- Highlight potential ways of addressing issues relating to partnership working;
- The input and involvement of all partners increasing levels of knowledge and understanding;
- A monitoring system which will involve and improve communication between professionals;
- The identification of good practice examples;
- Increased levels of partnerships in assessing sufficient play opportunities;
- The identification of actions for the Securing Play Sufficiency Action Plan which accompanies the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most universally recognised human rights treaty, recognises that every child has the right to play. This right has been recognised and promoted for many years in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.2 Our vision is that all children and young people should be able to: have fun; enjoy their childhood and youth; pursue learning; and develop life skills through participating in a range of high quality play, leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities, thus ensuring we meet the interest and needs of each individual child or young person. The Council continues to work collaboratively with partners from across all departments of the Council, as well as third sector and national organisations. Wherever possible we endeavour to ensure that Welsh medium play opportunities are given the same priority as English medium provision.
- 4.3 There are more than 200 children's play areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf, which are incorporated into a rolling programme of investment to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The programme is informed by annual independent play area condition surveys, which ensures that investment is targeted at the most deserving facilities. As well as modernising play equipment, improvements have also been made to increase accessibility in and around play areas, with considerable focus on enhancing the play experience that these valuable community assets offer.
- 4.4 Under the statutory obligation placed upon the Council in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012, a full Play Sufficiency Assessment must be completed every three years.

- 4.5 This 2022 PSA has been compiled over the last 6 months and has involved a range of partner services that make up the PSA Working Group, led by the Play Development Team and involving the Resilient Families Service, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, Sport, Leisure, Parks, Transport, Planning, Education, Disabled Children’s Team, Family Information Service, the third sector and officers working on Community Resilience Hub and Neighbourhood Network developments in RCT.

5. KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2022 PLAY SUFFICIENCY AUDIT

- 5.1 Completion of the Play Sufficiency Audit involves an evidence based self-assessment of the local authority’s position in relation to a set of criteria within each of the nine sections or ‘matters’, as identified by Welsh Government. Full details of each of the “matters” and subsequent criteria can be found in Appendix A of this report, together with subsequent action plan for improvement. For each criterion of the nine ‘matters’, the PSA requires the Council to RAG its progress using the following definition:

- Green – criteria fully met
- Amber – criteria partially met
- Red – criteria not met

- 5.2 The areas considered as part of the 2022 PSA include:

- Matter A - Population
- Matter B – Providing for diverse needs
- Matter C – Space available for children to play: Open space and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces
- Matter D – Supervised provision
- Matter E – Changes for play
- Matter F – Access to space/provision
- Matter G – Securing and developing the play workforce
- Matter H – Community Engagement and Participation
- Matter I - Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

- 5.3 The findings of the PSA have informed the action plan for 2022-25 to ensure that work undertaken next year addresses the shortfalls in provision identified by the 2022 PSA. Our key priority areas for 2022-25 are to improve the gathering and use of data to target play opportunities; Increase the amount of Welsh medium play provision; to roll out WG’s quality assurance framework; and to promote play opportunities across the county borough via online platforms. The full action plan can be found as part of report, following the assessment.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality and Diversity Assessment has not been carried out in connection with the recommendation set out in this report as the contents and actions do not require a policy or service change, resulting in no reasonably foreseeable differential impacts.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 As part of the 2022 PSA, the Council were required to carry out a consultation exercise with a range of children and young people. Using the questions in the PSA toolkit, provided by the Welsh Government, an on-line questionnaire was developed and utilised to gather the views of children and young people. A total of 588 children and young people completed the questionnaire from 18 schools and 7 play schemes, running over October half-term. The sample of schools were chosen as representative of primary and secondary schools across RCT and included Welsh medium schools and special schools. Private sector businesses, such as after school clubs, childminders and education providers also contributed to the workforce development elements of the PSA. The full report can be found in the main body of the PSA, and at Appendix B of this report.
- 7.2 Most children and young people (83% of respondents) said they preferred to play and hang out in their own home or at a friend house, which is significant change to when the consultation was conducted in 2019; a sign of changing habits since the pandemic. The next most popular responses were in a designated play area (69%), in the school playground (64%), and in the streets around their house (50%).
- 7.3 88% of the children and young people said that always or usually feel safe playing in their chosen location, a reduction from 95% in 2019. When asked how adults react to them in the play locations, 87% said they felt the 'grown ups' were great with them or at least ok with them playing in that location, but almost 14% stated that the 'grown ups' seemed to be angry or grumpy about them playing there.
- 7.4 42% of children and young people said that the opportunities for playing or hanging out were excellent and could not be improved, but 7% stated that the facilities were 'not good' or 'rubbish' and needed to be made much better.
- 7.5 In addition to the consultation with children and young people, a full consultation has been undertaken with the play providers to determine if they feel equipped to provide play opportunities and meet children's emerging support needs as a result of the pandemic. These results have been analysed and the results can be found in Appendix C together with a proposed timetable of training and professional development courses to further improve their play skills to deliver meaningful play experience for children and young people in RCT, Appendix D.

7.6 At the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Members discussed the Assessment and provided comments in respect of:

- Providing Play opportunities in the Medium of Welsh
- Funding opportunities to maintain play provisions

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 The PSA is not a business case, however, the majority of actions noted in the Assessment where standards fall below green (i.e. amber and red) require funding to implement improvements. This funding will be sought from both the Children and Communities Grant, the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant, the Playworks Grant and the Council's core funding for Play as well as any other monies that may become available during the financial year.

8.2 The Children and Communities Grant will continue to provide flexibility than to sustain current provision and resource future initiatives to meet identified gaps. Should Welsh Government allocate discreet play grants to the Council during the year, the PSA action plan will be key to its allocation and spend.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 In 2012, the Welsh Government placed a duty on all local authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in their areas. The first Play Sufficiency Assessments and Play Action Plans were submitted to Welsh Government in March 2013.

9.2 In 2014, the Welsh Government commenced the second part of the duty on local authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities, having regard to their assessments. This put into effect the complete Section 11, Play Opportunities of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN AND/OR OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES

10.1 The PSA will contribute to the Council's corporate priorities:

- Economy – building a strong economy through resilient children able to manage risk and develop innovative solutions to challenges;
- People – promoting independence through social interactions with other children and self-management in play situations, such as team games;
- Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and
- work and where children are encouraged to play safely and respectfully.

10.2 The PSA has been developed in full consideration of the sustainable development principles. The proposal will also support the Council to contribute to all of the seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales: children who learn to manage risks and socialise with others are more prepared for the demands of functioning in the adult world;
- A resilient Wales: children who play learn to manage risks and recover from accidents in safe, supported environments that challenge them and allow them to grow, giving them the tools to build resilience throughout life;
- A healthier Wales: children who play outside benefit from exercise and the wellbeing effects of being closer to nature;
- A more equal Wales: children who play together learn to socialise and accept other children with different skills and abilities, making them tolerant, helpful and inclusive children, young people and adults;
- A Wales of cohesive Communities: children who play with others benefit from understanding about turn taking and cooperation, preparing them for adult interactions, team working and leadership roles;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: children who are given the freedom to play in the language of their choice learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world;
- A globally responsible Wales: children who have access to play equipment and furnished with the skills and techniques to use it properly, preparing them for an adult world of finite resources.

11. **CONCLUSION**

11.1 This report has provided Members with details of the Play Sufficiency assessment (PSA) for 2022-25 and the supporting action plan for their consideration and approval to be submitted to Welsh Government.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

**A DISCUSSION REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
CABINET MEMBER, CLLR CAPLE, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022 – 2025

Background Papers

Nothing to report

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

Jessica Allen, Children and Young People's Service Manager

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Appendix A

Play Sufficiency Assessment Form



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Name of Local Authority: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Name of responsible officer: Gail Beynon

Job title: Play Development Manager

Date of completion: 1st February 2022

Please note that the Play Sufficiency Assessment must be received by the Welsh Government by 30 June 2022



Conducting the Assessment – Play Sufficiency Assessment

As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Play Sufficiency Assessment will enable the following:

- Identification of gaps in information, provision, service delivery and policy implementation
- Support the establishment of evidence to give an indication of distance travelled in relation to play sufficiency
- Highlight potential ways of addressing issues relating to partnership working
- The input and involvement of all partners increasing levels of knowledge and understanding
- A monitoring system which will involve and improve communication between professionals
- The identification of good practice examples
- Increased levels of partnerships in assessing sufficient play opportunities
- The identification of actions for the Securing Play Sufficiency Action Plan which accompanies the Play Sufficiency Assessment

A template has been produced to support a corporate appraisal of the matters that need to be taken into account as set out in the Statutory Guidance. The indicators listed within each matter are provided as sample indicators which should be amended to meet local issues as appropriate.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment must demonstrate that the Local Authority has taken into account and assessed the matters set out in The Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and Statutory Guidance.

As well as providing baseline information, the Assessment can include examples of current practice that the Local Authority wishes to highlight.

Local Authorities might consider structuring the Play Sufficiency Assessment in the following way and as a minimum address all the identified sections.

Principle Statement

This section should be used to articulate the Local Authority's acknowledgement of the value and importance of play in the lives of children.

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most universally recognised human rights treaty and recognises that every child has the right to play. This right has been recognised and promoted for many years in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Our vision is that all children and young people should be able to: have fun; enjoy their childhood and youth; pursue learning; and develop life skills through participating in a range of high quality play, leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities, thus ensuring we meet the interest and needs of each individual child or young person. The Council continues to work collaboratively with partners from across all service areas of the Council,

as well as third sector and national organisations. We endeavour to ensure that Welsh medium play opportunities are given the same priority as English medium provision.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the demand for play for disabled and vulnerable children and young people at the end of the school day and throughout the school holidays. To ensure we are meeting the needs of these cohorts of children and young people, RCT has established the Council's Care2Play (C2P) programme. The aim of the C2P programme is to provide a bespoke package of support for children and young people to enable them to access open access play provision within their local community alongside their peers and siblings. This support may be provided in the form of strategies for the play team to use whilst at the play setting or additional adult support, depending on the needs of the child. The C2P and Open Access Play programmes are continuously monitored, reviewed and improved.

The Council will continue to strive to develop and deliver efficient, effective and high quality play, cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities for all children and young people and ensure that the Council and its partner organisations continue to build on the strong foundations that already exist. We will continue to work collaboratively to develop, plan and co-ordinate the delivery of effective and efficient services to meet the identified needs of local communities across the county borough.

Context

This section should describe the methodology used to undertake and approve the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan and any consultation with partners on the Assessment/Action Plan. It should also list the key partners that engaged with the process and identify any challenges in undertaking the Assessment. It should describe the mechanism that the Local Authority proposes to use to take forward the identified actions for the action plan.

The starting point to undertake the 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) has been via the PSA working group. The group membership consists of representatives from a range of services, including the internal services: Community Wellbeing and Resilient Service, the Children & Young People Service, Sport RCT, Leisure, Parks, Transport, Planning and Regeneration, Education and Inclusion, Disabled Children's Team, Family Information Service and the Community Development Team. External PSA partners include Interlink and Menter Iaith. In order to ensure that the action plan of the 2022 – 2025 PSA continues to be monitored and reviewed the PSA group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis.

The PSA itself has been compiled by involving all partners listed above in the self-assessment process. Each has contributed to the rating of the Council's current ability to meet the key elements of the assessment documentation, outlining the reason for that rating, the evidence that supports the rating and any mitigating factors as to why the rating was not different. These ratings were subsequently scrutinised by fellow PSA working group partners to ensure the rating is objective. Each partner was then required to consider the development actions it would need to undertake over the life of this PSA to increase the rating and provide a full play offer.

In addition, feedback has been taken from play delivery partners throughout the three year period of the previous PSA, and this has been used to influence the self-assessment process to inform future developments across the sector in RCT.

A consultation was undertaken with children and young people from across RCT, both those involved with existing play services and those who do not participate in the open access play or C2P provision. This highlighted the play opportunities they are interested in, the opportunities currently available to them and those that they would like to have more chance to participate in. There were also a number of pandemic related questions that looked at how it had affected them and their right to play. The results of these consultations have been reflected in this document and used to inform the future action plan.

As part of the 2022-2025 PSA, the Council conducted a Play workforce audit with play staff from 3rd sector, private and local authority play teams across the county borough. Using the questions provided in the PSA toolkit, the team worked with the corporate consultation team to compile an on-line questionnaire. There was a total of 44 respondents from 11 play settings. The main aim of the Play workforce audit is to identify the training needs of the sector to ensure that they have access to training throughout the year to enable them to deliver good quality, stimulating play opportunities for CYP. The full workforce audit report can be found at Appendix 1A .

This PSA document and the subsequent action plan has been presented to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Cabinet, for discussion and approval.

Partnership working

This section should demonstrate to what extent the following (and others) were involved in the undertaking of the Assessment and the development of the action plan:

- Town and Community Councils
- Third sector organisations, particularly play associations and play providers
- The private sector if appropriate
- Community groups

There are a number of third sector organisations commissioned to deliver play, leisure, cultural and sport provision across the county borough. Interlink is the body supporting voluntary sector organisations and representatives from this organisation and the play sector are active members of the PSA working group.

Private sector businesses, such as after school clubs, childminders, and education providers have contributed to consultation and workforce development elements of the PSA. The lead officer with responsibility for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is a key member of the PSA Group which serves to link the two assessments.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the play sector across RCT has continued to develop and deliver a range of virtual and face to face play opportunities for some of the local authority's most vulnerable children. The play sector supported the delivery of the emergency childcare hubs, for key workers and vulnerable families during the summer holidays in 2020, delivered over 2000 craft packs to the homes of isolating children and

young people across RCT and delivered virtual play sessions for children and young people open to the Children's Services.

The feedback from all of the above partners has been reflected in this PSA document, including helping the Council to identify good practice and areas for development for the future.

Consultation and participation

This section should describe how the Local Authority has:

- Obtained the views of children with regards to the play opportunities they currently access, how they would like the community to better support them to play and what barriers stop them from playing
- Obtained the views on play provision from parents, families and other stakeholders
- Analysed the information and how it has been used to inform future plans

As part of the 2022-2025 PSA, the Council conducted a consultation exercise with a range of children and young people. Using the questions provided in the PSA toolkit, the team worked with the corporate consultation team to compile an on-line questionnaire. A total of 588 children and young people took part in the consultation, from 18 schools and 7 playschemes over the October half-term holiday 2021. The full consultation report can be found at Appendix 1B.

During the summer holiday period 2021, parents were asked for their feedback on the provision offered by the Play Development Team. The results were overwhelmingly positive with requests being made for even more sessions to be made available in future holiday periods. This feedback has been used to inform the PSA action plan with additional providers being sought to offer additional play sessions.

All commissioned play providers are required to regularly consult with the children and young people accessing their provision to enable them to improve the play space and opportunities they are delivering. The play teams are also required to reflect on their own practice and capture statistical information on the effectiveness of their offer. The Council uses this statistical information to ensure that the play provision being commissioned and delivered is in communities where there is an identified need.

Maximising resources

This section should provide an overview as to how partners currently use their existing budgets to support children's access to play opportunities. It should identify how budgets have been reprioritised as part of the 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessments and subsequent plans.

Please use this section to highlight what has changed since the 2019 Play Sufficiency Action Plan in terms of how resources are allocated.

Please also highlight how Welsh Government programmes have been used locally for the provision of play and how they have addressed priorities from your 2019 play sufficiency assessment:

During 2021/22, the Council has welcomed an increase in funding from Welsh Government. The Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing funding was used to commission a range of third sector, community organisation and local authority partners, many of whom the Council's Play Development Team had not previously worked with, to deliver additional play, leisure, cultural and sporting opportunities for children and young people 0 – 25 years. This increased capacity in the county borough's play offer has been vital to respond to the emerging needs of children, young people and their families that have arisen or been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The revenue element of the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant (AWPOG) has been used to improve a range of play and youth facilities that children and young people access locally and across the wider community.

The capital element of the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant has been used to develop the outdoor play spaces in parks and skate parks; cultural venues for use by children and young people such as theatre spaces; and, nature trails and allotments.

The Children and Communities Grant (CCG), specifically the Childcare and Play element, has been used to upskill the play workforce to respond to the emerging needs of children and young people as we exit the pandemic. Furthermore, it has been used to enhance the delivery of free open access play provision across the county borough in the areas identified as having the least amount of opportunities available. Additional CCG funding was made available during 2021/22 and was used to pilot the Children's Wellbeing Support Programme (CWSP) for 7-11 year olds.

The new Playworks funding has been used to improve the quality of the play equipment and resources that children and young people have access to within the commissioned play sessions. We have also used the funding to raise the profile of play across RCT, ensuring that families are aware of the opportunities in their local area so that they have the option to engage in them. In addition, this funding had supported the delivery of 12 National Play Day celebratory events in various communities, nine Family Fun Days and project based workshops within play sessions. This was a conservative number of events due to the pandemic restrictions, and so this future PSA plan will include an increased number of these as the restrictions ease.

The service has secured Integrated Care Fund (ICF) monies to support the delivery of the Care2Play programme. This grant funded the additional adult support costs incurred when a child was in need of a dedicated adult to help them attend and engage in open access play provision alongside their siblings and peers.

A Council commitment in the form of a Play Development Team base budget funds the three staff that coordinate all of the work of the team and much of this PSA.

The continuation of the the AWPOG, CCG, Playworks and base budget will allow the Council to meet some of the identified play needs of children and young people across the

county borough. However, additional long term funding will need to be secured to meet all the desired outcomes of the 2022 - 2025 PSA action plan, if previous short term funding is no longer available, i.e. ICF, AWPOG capital, additional CCG, Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment and local Well-being Plans

This section should identify how the Play Sufficiency Assessments form part of the local needs assessment and to what extent the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan are integrated into the Well-being Plan and Public Service Board.

The vision of the PSA is evident through the organisation's plans all the way through to the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan. The PSA is used to inform the local needs assessment and as a priority for the Public Service Board, one of the three objectives of the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan states, ***“To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.”*** This demonstrates that play sits at the highest strategic position of the organisation's direction. The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan can be found at www.ourcwmtaf.wales

Monitoring Play Sufficiency

This section should identify the lead director and lead member for children and young people's services. It should also describe the Play Monitoring Group or equivalent. Along with a list of members, please describe how the group has been facilitated and the benefits and challenges of the group.

The lead Director for the PSA is the Group Director for Community and Children's Services, supported by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. Since April 2019 responsibility for the management of the PSA and the subsequent monitoring of play sufficiency sits with the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service.

Membership of the PSA Group includes representatives from a range of internal service and external partners who are committed to ensuring appropriate play opportunities across RCT. The working group meetings are held to monitor and review the priorities of the PSA action plan. Whilst members of the group are fully committed to the development and delivery of play opportunities against actions within the plan, recently there has been limited opportunities and capacity to facilitate the work of the group as a collective due to Covid restrictions. This partnership working will resume as restrictions ease.

Collective monitoring of the PSA and Youth Support Service Strategy has been undertaken and the information taken from this has identified that work needs to be done to develop an enhanced commissioning model for third sector organisations to deliver a comprehensive joint play and youth offer across the county borough for ages 5 – 25 years. It is envisaged that through the continuation of the monitoring role of the PSA working group it will enable the Council to gather routine data to identify priority areas for the development of play, youth and other recreational opportunities.

Insights from the Coronavirus

This section should discuss the impact the Coronavirus has had on the local authority's ability to progress Play Sufficiency Actions.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 and in light of the imposed restrictions across the UK and Wales, the Council been limited in how it has been able to complete the 'in-person' actions within our PSA action plan. However, with that said, services have continued to deliver covid compliant play opportunities, albeit using a targeted approach for vulnerable children and young people and on a virtual basis. It has also provide time to identify and deliver training opportunities to upskill the play workforce to meet the emerging needs of children and young people.

Criteria

This section contains the "matters that need to be taken into account" as set out under section 10 of the Statutory Guidance.

The Criteria column: sets out the data that needs to be available and the extent to which Local Authorities meet the stated criteria.

The RAG status column: provides a drop down box, whereby the Local Authority can show its assessment of whether that criterion is fully met; partially met; or not met. These have been given Red, Amber Green markers, which appear as words in the drop down boxes. *(In the "RAG status column", Double click on the word STATUS – this will bring up drop-down form fields options, use the arrow down key until the status required RED, AMBER or GREEN- is at the top then press ok)*

Red, Amber Green (RAG) status is a tool to communicate status quickly and effectively.

Criteria fully met.	Fully met
Criteria partially met.	Partially met
Criteria not met.	Not met

The 2022 column enables the local authority to indicate the direction of travel with the insertion of arrows.

The Evidence to support strengths column: should be used to provide the reason for the chosen criteria status and how the evidence is held.

The Shortfall column: should be used to explain the areas in which the Local Authority does not fully meet the criteria.

The Identified Action for Action Plan column: should be used to show the Local Authority action planning priorities for that Matter.

The Comments section: asks some specific questions for each matter that should enable you to give a clear overview of how the Local Authority complies with the intention

and implementation of this matter as set out fully in the Statutory Guidance. It also provides the opportunity to identify challenges and how they might be overcome.

Matter A: Population

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should provide an overview of population and demographic data used locally to plan for play provision.

Information should also be included regarding:

- Ages of children
- First language Welsh speaking children
- Cultural factors (such as other language)
- Gypsy Traveller children
- Disabled children

What has changed in terms of population and demographic trends since Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019?

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, we are waiting for the dissemination of the 2021 Census data. Once the data has been released we will be use a number of factors such as deprivation, ages of children and young people etc, to determine where we will be focusing the development of play, youth and recreational opportunities for the next 3 years. We are continuing to develop profiling models for children and young people, for families and for communities. These models will utilise both local and national data sets and analyse them to ensure we are targeting our services where they are needed most. This modification of our systems and processes takes account of national developments such as our involvement in the Early Years Transformation work in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, the NEST/NYTH regional implementation plan and the roll out of Community Resilience Hubs and Neighbourhood Networks.

How has/will the Local Authority use its population data to plan for sufficient play opportunities locally?

We have worked in conjunction with colleagues from across the play sector to commission and deliver play provision in areas of identified need through using a range of data sources including vulnerability profiling information, community profiles, Children's Services data, Youth Services data and community safety / anti-social behaviour data. Priority areas for the delivery of provision will also include evidence of need within the Neighbourhood Network areas.

Have there been challenges?

A small number of historical organisations which would have been commissioned to deliver play provision are no longer operating, due to a lack of sustainable funding. This lack of organisations from which to commission play provision has been the greatest challenge for the play service in

previous years. However, during the pandemic, the Play Development Team have worked with new local groups to support them to become play providers and as such, three new providers have been commissioned to deliver play provision in 2021/22 alone despite the pandemic, offering a total of five additional playschemes across the county borough.




How can these be overcome?

Part of the challenge has already been overcome, and using the same model, it is hoped that further external partners will wish to be supported to become long term play providers within their local area. Service Level Agreements with current and new third sector providers will provide them with the security to invest in resources, staff development and marketing activities to support their long term sustainability and improve the integration of joint service delivery. Furthermore, it is envisaged that through working with colleagues across other council departments, it will be possible to plan and deliver a range of Council-maintained play.

Comments

The Council’s Service Planning and Transformation Team will produce robust and live profiling data from a range of sources with which the PSA group will be able to ensure that moving forward all play opportunities will be targeted to meet the emerging needs of our communities, whilst ensuring that there is an equitable spread of provision across the local authority as far as reasonably practicable.




RAG Status for Matter A

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs

The Play Sufficiency Assessment should present data about how the Local Authority and partners aim to offer play opportunities that are inclusive and encourage all children to play and meet together.

RAG Status:

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MB01	The play requirements of children living in isolated rural areas are understood and provided for	GREEN	AMBER	<p>Whilst we know understand generic themes about what children and young people would like in terms of play opportunities, the data behind this is not yet available whilst we await the most up to date census information.</p> <p>As part of the 2022 PSA, specific cohorts of children and young people from rural areas have been consulted with and the findings will be referenced throughout this report.</p>	We are waiting for the data from the 2021 Census to be released. Once we have this information we will use it to prioritise the future development of play opportunities.	The data is to be analysed and used to develop and deliver appropriate levels of play opportunities.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p>The 'Your Voice Survey' consults approximately 5,000 children and young people about their needs, feelings about their community and the activities they participate in, or the barriers they face to participate.</p> <p>The RCT assessment of Needs offers further guidance on local needs of communities.</p> <p>Finding suitable and accessible venues to offer play provision can be difficult in rural areas – the RCT mobile provision has enabled play provision to be accessible and inclusive across the rural areas of RCT.</p>		
MB02	The play requirements of Welsh language speaking children are understood and provided for	RED	RED	As part of the 2022 PSA, specific cohorts of children and young people from rural areas have been consulted with and the findings will be	It has been difficult to identify external providers that can deliver through the medium of Welsh	Work to be carried out to identify partners to support the development and delivery of play and youth

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p>referenced throughout this report.</p> <p>The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) includes specific actions to increase and improve the opportunities for children to engage in activities through the Welsh Language, this is done through a partnership between different organisations.</p> <p>A high percentage of Welsh speaking staff allows children aged 11-14 to engage through the language of their choice.</p>		<p>provision through the medium of Welsh.</p>
MB03	The play requirements of children from different cultural background are understood and provided for	AMBER	GREEN	As part of the 2022 PSA, specific cohorts of children and young people from rural areas have been consulted with and the findings will be referenced throughout this report.		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p>All provision is inclusive and diversity is encouraged and celebrated.</p> <p>Further opportunities for children are developed through the equality and diversity youth forum.</p>		
MB04	The play requirements and support needs of disabled children are understood and provided for.	GREEN	GREEN	<p>The Care2Play programme provides children and young people with access to a range of play opportunities during term-time and holiday periods. It also meets the support needs of individuals to access play provision locally within their community.</p> <p>We continue to work with our Education colleagues to provide additional supported places as part of the SHEP programme.</p> <p>Specific provision is offered to children attending Special Schools in RCT. A strong working partnership has been developed with the schools to</p>		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				ensure the needs and requirements of each pupils is understood and met during the provision. Some school staff are offered temporary play worker posts to ensure a level of consistency to the required care.		
MB05	Play projects and providers have access to a range of resources which support inclusion	GREEN	GREEN	<p>As part of the Care2Play offer, a Passport 2 Play (P2P) is completed specifically for each child or young person. The aim of the P2P is to support the child, to develop their play skills in specific areas of their holistic development. Where it has then been identified that the child may need some additional resources or specialist equipment this is sourced and provided by the play development team.</p> <p>Additional staff can be allocated to provision to ensure that all young people are able to attend.</p>	Prior to covid the sensory rooms at the children and family centres were available for use for practitioners and the general public free of charge. Whilst there is still no cost robust measures now need to be developed and implemented to ensure they are covid compliant before they can be used publicly.	Covid risk assessment to be developed to reinstate public usage of the sensory rooms across the Children and Family Centres.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MB06	There is a well known and agreed mechanism which is used to identify the need for separate provision for disabled children	GREEN	GREEN	The Care2Play service receives applications from the Disabled Children's Team and Resilient Family Service for children and young people they are working with and where they have identified that they may need additional support or strategies to access local play provision.		
MB07	Access audits for all play provision as described in the guidance are undertaken	AMBER	RED	Access audits are undertaken on all playscheme premises. The information captured in the audit aims to inform service users of the accessibility of the building for service users.	All collated data needs to be embedded into the virtual playscheme timetable via a range of symbol and publicised on the council website.	Work to be completed on including access data onto the playscheme timetable.
MB08	Designated play space is provided and well maintained on gypsy traveller sites	RED	RED	There are currently no council-maintained play spaces on gypsy traveller sites		Work with colleagues within the parks department to undertake a consultation with the gypsy traveller community to gain their views and opinions on

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MB09	The requirements of young carers are understood and provided for	GREEN	GREEN	Support for young carers is offered through a service level agreement with an internal children service.		developing a designated play space on their site.
MB10	The requirements of lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) children are understood and provided for	GREEN	GREEN	<p>Training is provided to our commissioned play providers to enable them to understand and support the needs of LGBTQ+ children and young people within the play setting. Service wide training has been delivered to staff to improve the knowledge and understanding of the requirements of LGBTQ+ children and young people.</p> <p>The equality and diversity youth forum develops further opportunities for young people to engage in inclusive provision.</p>		

Providing for Diverse Needs

How has data been used (or how will the data be used) to address the barriers that children with diverse needs face in accessing inclusive and accessible opportunities for playing?

The Council uses the relevant data available to us to ensure that the children and young people referred to our flagship Care2Play programme are placed in community based play settings alongside siblings and peers. The Play Development Team also use the data to put in place the necessary support for their individual needs. During the pandemic, the Council used local data and information from a range of sources to assess the play needs of other cohorts of vulnerable and play deprived children, to ensure resources were targeted in these areas to help them access the available play offer.

Have there been challenges?

Due to Covid restrictions, the level of play opportunities were significantly impacted, reducing the availability of provision for children and young people.

How can these be overcome?

The easing of Covid restrictions will resolve the majority of the challenges and allow the key actions to be addressed.

The Play Development Team is working with various internal departments to stream line the processes and delivery of a number of services for children and young people. This will include the development and implementation of integrated service delivery opportunities facilitated by the flexible use of the new Children and Communities Grant alongside Council core budget. These developments will take into consideration new Welsh Government programmes of work and local government initiatives, which will include, The Cwm Taf Early Years Transformation Programme the Resilient Families Service and the Neighbourhood Networks.




Comments:

It is envisaged that through partnership working across all council departments and with both, the voluntary and private sector, the quality of play opportunities for all children throughout the County Borough will flourish. We will also be working extensively with partners to support children and young people to improve their wellbeing and feel safe to go out and play again.

Matter C: Space available for children to play: Open Spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

The Local Authority should recognise that all open spaces within their area are potentially important areas where children can play or pass through to reach other play areas or places where they go.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Open Spaces

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MC01	The Local Authority has undertaken an Open Space Assessment (OSA) that maps areas that are used, or might be used for playing as listed in the Statutory Guidance	GREEN	GREEN	An updated Open Space Assessment (OSA) will be prepared during the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan. However, the study whilst including some areas used for play such as play areas, does not assess whether areas are used for or could be used for play and is broader in its remit.	OSA to be completed as part of the next planned LDP. Any issues are to be reported back to the PSA working group for consideration.	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MC02	The Local Authority has undertaken an Accessible Greenspace Study that maps areas that are used for playing	GREEN	GREEN	A Green Infrastructure Assessment and an updated Open Space Assessment will be prepared during the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan. However the studies do not specifically assess areas for play and will not specifically map areas used for play.		
MC03	The Local Authority undertakes access audits at all open spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety	GREEN	GREEN	Access audits on all LA owned/maintained play spaces are undertaken on an annual basis. Also, where an open space is part of a Community Asset Transfer, the relevant department provides support and guidance on access and safety.		
MC04	The Local Authority has developed its own Open Space Standards in accordance with the advice and requirements of Planning Policy Wales	GREEN	GREEN	An updated Open Space Assessment will be prepared during the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan.		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				During the preparation process consideration will be given for the need for localised policies on open space where there is evidence to support this.		
MC05	The Local Authority undertakes and actions play value assessments in public open space	RED	AMBER	Play value assessments are undertaken on fixed equipped playgrounds only.	Undertaking play value assessments on all public open space is not feasible within the current service provision structure.	
MC06	Brownfield sites owned by the Local Authority are assessed for the potential for the site to be reclaimed to provide for children's play	GREEN	GREEN	With Corporate Estates officers being based within Leisure, Parks and Countryside they are requested to comment on any planned disposals or development of land.		

Outdoor Unstaffed Designated Play Spaces

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MC07	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all designated play space as described in the Statutory Guidance	AMBER	GREEN	The Playgrounds team has a record of all fixed equipped play spaces and designated play spaces within the Councils ownership.		A schedule of works has been developed and will be implemented as and when resources and funding becomes available. A monitoring cycle will be developed and any issues fed back to the PSA
MC08	The Local Authority assesses play spaces for play value and potential to increase in play use as set out in the Statutory Guidance	AMBER	GREEN	Play value assessments are undertaken on fixed equipped play spaces. Capital programme in place supporting play space improvements.		
MC09	The Local Authority undertakes access audits at all designated play spaces and implements proposals to improve access and safety	AMBER	AMBER	Access audits undertake in 2021.	Funding to implement all the work required.	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MC10	The Local Authority has developed and agreed a new fixed play provision standard	GREEN	GREEN	The Local Authority applies minimum standards and undertakes inspections in line with the standard	On-going monitoring and review	
MC11	The Local Authority undertakes and actions play space assessments in designated play spaces	GREEN	GREEN	Assessments are undertaken on fixed equipped play spaces. Capital programme in place supporting play space improvements	On-going monitoring and review	
MC12	The Local Authority has introduced smoke-free playgrounds The local authority complies with The Smoke-free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020 that requires playgrounds in Wales to be smoke-free.	AMBER	GREEN	Legislation introduced in 2021. All playgrounds now have appropriate signage.		
MC13	The Local Authority has removed 'no ball games' signs to encourage more children playing in the community	GREEN	AMBER	Action can only be taken by the service area on land within their portfolio. Where playgrounds are not safe for ball play, signs will remain.	On-going monitoring and review	Signage to be monitored and removed during routine checks

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
					for the proposal. Recent examples include Splash Pads, Multi Use Games Areas, Skateboard Park and Outdoor Gym etc.	
MC17	The Local Authority refers to guidance around creating accessible play space when refurbishing or developing new playgrounds	GREEN	GREEN	Local Authority applies minimum standards and undertakes access/accessibility audits	On-going monitoring and review	

Open Spaces

How has the Local Authority ensured collaboration between Open Space Assessments / Green Infrastructure Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments to improve spaces for play?

The collaboration between the OSA and PSA has resulted in additional spaces being identified for use either for informal play or formal structure play provision, such as family fun days. In addition, the capital funding made available via the PSA has allowed development work to be undertaken at specific sites.

Have there been challenges?

There have been no major challenges at this time.

How can these be overcome?

N/A

Comments:

The Local Authority officers from various departments will continue to work together in this area.

Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces

Due to the restrictions imposed as part of the pandemic limited work has been undertaken in this area and will be a priority for development in during the 2022-2025 PSA action plan.

The local authority's Play Development Team undertook all accessibility audits in 2021 and will continue to do so in 2022 and beyond.

How has the local authority considered all issues of accessibility in play space development?

In 2021 an accessibility audit of all children's play areas within the Council's remit was undertaken. This report will be reviewed and broken down into key actions as soon as staffing resources become available.

Have there been challenges?

There are many challenges and the key issues faced include resources – physical and financial. Accessibility usually requires physical work to be undertaken from lowering kerbs to creating pathways to play spaces, these often require expertise from different service areas. In terms of

providing accessible equipment e.g. a roundabout or swing that can be used by wheelchair users, these are substantially more expensive than a standard item not deemed as inclusive or accessible. However where resources allow all play area refurbishments include an accessible roundabout and an inclusive basket swing as minimum, as well wheelchair accessible picnic tables, hard surfaces and linking pathways around the play area and hydraulic self closing gates in yellow.

How can these be overcome?

The majority of challenges can be overcome with additional funding and ensuring that wider partners have a better understanding of play considerations and its importance.

Comments

The Council has over 200 designated play spaces and to ensure that these play facilities better meet the play needs of ALL children and young people living in RCT. Over £5 million has been invested over the past six years, with a further commitment of additional funding to come in the next financial year. Accessibility has been a fundamental part of this work. Whilst increasing accessible opportunities within the play space itself has been relatively easy to achieve, the greater challenge has been facilitating improvements to the old infrastructure like access paths and routes.

With the emphasis on changing needs has come a greater use of the phrases 'accessibility' or 'inclusive play'. Whilst the concept has long been engrained in certain aspects of the play industry it relatively new in others and with this has come confusion and an expectation that all play equipment should be adapted for wheelchair users. As a provider of play opportunities it has sometimes been difficult to relay a message that shifts the emphasis from adapted equipment to providing spaces that enable children no matter what their ability to play together.

Matter D: Supervised provision

The Local Authority should aim to offer a range of supervised play provision.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Playwork provision

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MD01	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of all supervised playwork provision as described in the Statutory Guidance	GREEN	GREEN	All information of commissioned open access play provision is collated into quarterly timetables which is then disseminated to the public, through the FIS, Wicid website, RCT council website, Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service website and all play providers websites and Facebook accounts.		
MD02	The Local Authority offers playwork provision which offers a rich play environment as	AMBER	RED		The Play Soft Outcomes tool was previously used by	This is a priority for the play and childcare team to support all play providers

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	described in the Statutory Guidance				commissioned play providers to reflect on the play environment created for the children and young people to use. However, this process has now been disestablished and we are waiting for the All Wales QA to become available from Play Wales.	to undertake the All Wales QA toolkit as and when it becomes available.
MD03	The Local Authority ensures that partners offering playwork provision are supported to offer rich play environments as described in the Statutory Guidance	GREEN	AMBER	The play development officer (PDO) carries out annual monitoring visits at all commissioned play provisions. Where necessary the PDA will issue requirements for improvement.	As and when funding becomes available the play team issues grants to replenish equipment and resources. There is no long term funding available to embed this as an annual play improvement grant.	Identify a long term funding stream to deliver an annual play improvement grant offer.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MD04	Staffed playwork provision that the Local Authority provides meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards	GREEN	GREEN	All play provision delivered directly by the RCT play team is done so in line with the National Minimum Standards for OAP.		
MD05	Staffed playwork provision that the Local Authority funds meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards	AMBER	GREEN	<p>All existing and newly commissioned community based play provision is delivered in line with the NMS for OAP.</p> <p>During the last 2 years and within the Covid pandemic we have recruited 3 new play providers and opened 5 new play provisions.</p>		
MD06	Staffed playwork provision that the Local Authority's partners provide meets the regulatory requirements and National Minimum Standards	AMBER	GREEN	All commissioned open access play provision is either registered with CIW or working within the under 2-hour rule, meet the required national minimum standards.		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MD07	Staffed playwork provision across the Local Authority works to a recognised quality assurance programme	RED	RED		At present there is no formal QA scheme for play, however, Play Wales are developing an All Wales version. RCT will use as soon as it becomes available.	Engage with Play Wales to ascertain when the QA scheme will be available for rollout. Play Development Team will work with the play sector to produce a timeline for roll out of the QA scheme across all commissioned play provision.
MD08	The Local Authority prioritises quality issues when engaging with/ commissioning the private sector to deliver recreational activities for children.	AMBER	GREEN	As part of the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing grant funding streams, the LA has commissioned a number of community based organisation to deliver recreational activities. All partners are required to submit copies of their public liability insurance, Safeguarding policy and activity risk assessments to ensure they meet the requirements of grant funding.		
MD09	The Local Authority provides council premises and space free of charge to organisations	GREEN	GREEN	We work closely with our leisure colleagues and extensively use their		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	which provide free (at the point of access) playwork provision for children			facilities free of charge to deliver play and family play opportunities.		

Structured recreational activities for children

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MD10	Local authority sport, physical activity, and active recreation plans are contributing to increasing free play and recreational activities	GREEN	RED	Sports RCT have linked with stakeholders to support the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing objectives and offering free sessions through play.	Lack of casual workforce in Sport RCT. At present there is limited access to free provision for families.	Undertake a recruitment drive to enhance the casueal workforce in Sport RCT. Leisure services to look at free access to paid provision for families that need it most, which will include dry and wet side provision for all the family.
MD11	The sports agenda contributes to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children	AMBER	AMBER	Through collaboration with stakeholders that include Welh Cycling, FAW, Welsh Netball, Welsh Athletics, we	Lack of casual workforce.	Undertake recruitment drive to enhance the casual workforce in Sport RCT.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				are currently offering more than ever. This includes fun weekly sessions happening across the authority. Leisure for Life has been integral to its success and has been key in enabling us to subsidise these sessions as much as possible.		
MD12	The cultural and arts agenda, is contributing to the provision of sufficient recreational activities for children	GREEN	GREEN	The local authority Arts Service works with partners to provide creative opportunities through play. RCT Theatres work with artists to provide activities and are creating an outdoor community space at the Park & Dare Theatre for the provision of creative play and performances.	Lack of casual workforce in Sport RCT. At present there is limited access to free provision for families.	
MD13	The Local Authority Youth Service provides for children's opportunities for leisure and association	GREEN	GREEN	The Council's youth service, Youth Engagement and Participation Service, offers a range of sporting and leisure opportunities as part of the after-school,		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				evening and holiday provision. Some of these are provided by the youth workers, others are with local organistaions including Cardiff City Football Club.		

Supervised play provision

Where the Local Authority has assessed settings as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSAs), how have these settings been assessed in respect of the quality of play opportunities they provide and offer?

Development Officers support childcare settings in all aspects of their practice and businesses. Specific advice concerning improving play opportunities is provided by Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs via settings membership and courses commissioned by the LA, and signposting to other training and funding opportunities that will improve their practice.

How has provision that is not part of the CSA been assessed in respect of the quality of play opportunities they provide and offer?

The same level of support, as detailed above, is provided to all play and out of school childcare settings.

Have there been challenges?

There is a limited capacity to offer an intensive level of support to all settings in RCT.

How can these be overcome?

Without additional funding to provide additional Development Officers, this will continue to be a challenge.




Comments:

We will continue to work collaboratively with colleagues across the childcare and play sector to ensure that any emerging themes or areas of identified support needs are being met.

Matter E: Charges for play provision

The Local Authority should consider which play opportunities involve a charge and the extent to which the Local Authority takes these charges into account in assessing for sufficient play opportunities for children living in low income families as set out in the Statutory Guidance.

RAG status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
ME01	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in low income families	GREEN	RED	Continue to use vulnerability profiling methodology to support the planning and delivery of recreation activities for all children and young people across RCT.	No up to date information has been shared with the PSA partners.	New information to be collated against the 2021 census and shared with PSA partners.
ME02	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in areas of deprivation	GREEN	RED	As Above		
ME03	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of children living in rural areas	GREEN	RED	As Above		
ME04	The Local Authority keeps records of the number of disabled children and those with particular needs.	GREEN	GREEN	The Capita One Management Information System also stores all records of children with additional learning needs therefore service data is able to		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				reflect how many young people have engaged with the service who have Additional Learning Needs		
ME05	The Local Authority records the availability of no cost provision	GREEN	GREEN	The Play Development Team collates this information and is available via the FIS website and social media platforms, where they are made aware of them through commissioning routes etc.		
ME06	The Local Authority records the provision of no cost / low cost premises used for play provision	RED	RED		There is no information currently recorded for no cost / low cost premises across the area	Establish mechanisms for recording ALL no cost / low cost provision across RCT.
ME07	The Local Authority records the provisions where grants or subsidies are available for play providers	AMBER	AMBER	<p>The Play Development Team records this information, which is then used to inform grant funders of the desired outcomes of the funding.</p> <p>More recently additional funds have been distributed to community organisations to deliver play and recreational activities as part of the the</p>	The lack of sustainability for community organisations due to lack of continuity of funding from WG post the 31 st of March 2022.	Set up an approved supplier list on Bravo for small community organisations to become an approved supplier to deliver recreational activities. All community organisations will receive the same

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing grant offers.		information and notifications of opportunities to apply for grant funding.
ME08	The Local Authority provides subsidised transport for children travelling to play opportunities	AMBER	AMBER	Funding has been allocated to community organisations to provide free transport for participants to access play and recreational activities.		Seek clarification from WG to find out if any additional funding will be available from the 1 st of April 2022 to allow better co-ordination of the delivery of play and recreational activities.

Charge for play provision

All commissioned play and additional recreational activities delivered by the local authority or third sector organisations are free for children and young people and their families.

How is the Local Authority ensuring that children have access to no or low-cost provision?

The LA continues to invest in developing play opportunities and community events in areas of identified need. The Council favour smaller, more local activities over larger events to reduce access and transport barriers. The Council will also continue to review and re-profile our services to meet the changing needs of communities and in line with the most up to date research and Welsh and National Government initiatives.

Have there been challenges?

The Covid-related additional funding, namely Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing, have supported the Council to offer more free activities to children, young people and their families. However, the challenge will be maintaining the offer from April 2022 onwards when they funding is no longer available. Without this funding, the Council will have to evaluate the current offer and decide what can be sustained over the next three years of the PSA and what will have to be de-commissioned/end with the financial year.

How can these be overcome?

We will use emerging data to ensure that all play opportunities are being developed, commissioned and delivered in areas of identified need.

Comments:

The Play Development Team will work more closely with colleagues within the YEPS service to streamline processes to commission play provision alongside youth provision and deliver joined up provision to offer provision 5 – 25 years.

Charge for play provision

All commissioned play provision is free on entry for all children and young people across the county borough.

How is the Local Authority ensuring that children have access to no or low-cost provision?

PSA working group members will work to identify opportunities to make fee-paying activities available free/lower cost to families most in need. This will include sporting activities, cultural activities and those offered by third party providers, such as football groups etc.

Matter F: Access to space/provision

The Local Authority should consider all the factors that contribute to children’s access to play or moving around their community.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MF01	The Local Authority keeps an up to date record of the number of 20 mph zones/school safety zones in residential areas	GREEN	GREEN	Traffic Management hold information on all 20mph zone locations which is regularly updated		Continue to bid for schmes and seek other funding opportunities.
MF02	The Local Authority has an identified mechanism for assessing the impact of speed reduction and other road safety measures on the opportunity for children to play outside in their communities	AMBER	GREEN	Before and after speed surveys are made at sites where traffic calming / 20 mph zones are introduced. This provides evidence of the effectiveness of the measures in reducing speeds.		
MF03	The Local Authority has a plan(s) to reduce the negative effect of busy roads and junctions through the	AMBER	AMBER	Measures are implemented on an evidential need basis through a numbe of internal	Schemes are subject to funding availability.	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	introduction of speed reduction measures and provision of safe crossing points/routes for pedestrians and cyclists			and external funding sources.		
MF04	The Local Authority has a plan(s) to improve walking and cycle access to parks, outdoor play facilities and local leisure centres from residential areas	AMBER	AMBER		Bids for Active Travel and Safe Routes in Communities schemes are submitted to Welsh Government via the Local Transport Fund (LTF) and Safe Routes in Communities funding (SRIC).	Active Travel and SRIC schemes aim to improve connectivity and health and wellbeing, access to leisure facilities is an associated benefit and not a key outcome.
MF05	There is potential for the Local Authority to take further action to reduce traffic speed and improve road safety to promote play opportunities	AMBER	AMBER		The Council continues to introduce traffic calming measures at locations where there is identified need. The necessary legislation is in place. Welsh Government are pursuing a	Traffic calming is subject to funding, which is allocated towards road safety measures across the region to reduce the incidence of personal injuries

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
					change in legislation to introduce a national default speed limit in Wales from 30mph to 20mph on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets	
MF06	The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to support delivery of cycling training for children to national standards	GREEN	RED	.	Welsh Government are pursuing a change in legislation to introduce a national default speed limit in Wales from 30mph to 20mph on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets	Agree traffic calming policies and procedures to introduce traffic calming measures. (Transport)
MF07	The Local Authority uses road safety grants and/or other funding to provide pedestrian safety training for children	GREEN	AMBER	National Standards cycle training delivered is delivered to approximately 1000 pupils (age 10-11) each year. Kerbcraft / Child Pedestrian Training delivered to	Only a minority of children can be accommodated by the training	Continue to bid for WG Road Safety grant funding to enable continuation of National Standards cycle training.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				approximately 1,600 pupils (age 5-7) each year.		
MF08	The Local Authority has an accessible and well-known way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play outside their homes	GREEN	RED		The LA will be trialling the introduction of a number of Play Street Schemes in 22/23, in co-ordination with Play Wales.	RCT Playstreets working group to develop a devleiry plan for the delivery of the pilot proposed for the Spring term.
MF09	The Local Authority refers to <i>Manual for Streets</i> when considering new developments and changes to the highway network/urban realm	GREEN	GREEN	RCT Residential Design Guide is based on Manual for Streets <i>TAN 18</i> and <i>RCTCBC's Design Guide for Residential Streets</i>		
MF10	The Local Authority works to nationally recognised good practice guidelines when developing walking and cycling facilities	GREEN	GREEN	The Welsh Government's Design Guidance: Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 must be considered when designing and maintain active travel routes and related facilities.		
MF11	The Local Authority uses child pedestrian road accident casualty data to inform the	RED	RED	There is no evidence currently available to support this.	Nationally, Wales to reduce the accident of personal injuries.	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
	location and design of interventions which help children get around independently in their communities					
MF12	The Local Authority considers children's needs to access play opportunities when making decisions about public transport planning and expenditure	AMBER	AMBER	This is not a significant consideration. Welsh Government has not increased public transport funding since 2013. Funding currently available will be used to focus on social inclusion; which will support children and young people to access leisure opportunities.	Limited access to play opportunities	
MF13	The requirements of disabled children are understood and provided for within traffic and transport initiatives	GREEN	GREEN	All traffic and transport initiatives are designed to be inclusive for all service users.		

Information, publicity and events:

For children and families to take part in play opportunities, recreational activities and events it is necessary for them to know what is available in their area.

MF14	The Local Authority has a clearly identified section on its	GREEN	GREEN	Information of all commissioned play		
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Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

	website which gives information about play opportunities as described in the Statutory Guidance (play areas, play provision, clubs and their accessibility)			opportunities is recorded on a timetable and disseminated on a quarterly basis through the council's website, FIS, Wicid website and play providers.		
MF15	The Local Authority provides information on access to play opportunities and contact for support if required	GREEN	AMBER	<p>YEPS provide information on all activity timetables on www.wicid.tv, which all young people can access. Information is also shared on individual secondary school websites and the local authorities Family Information Service website. Information is also displayed in the secondary schools via display boards and plasma screens.</p> <p>YEPS provide information and updates through Social media, via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.</p>	At present the Play Development Team has limited means to promote play online. The service currently uses FIS and the online platforms of out third sector providers. However, it is anticipated that this will significantly change with the launch of the new RCT Families website.	The Play Development Team will develop a range of information leaflets for professionals and parents on play opportunities and play support services available to them. All information to then be kept up to date and made available on the designated play page on the new RCT Families website.
MF16	The Local Authority supports and publicises events which encourage play opportunities and events for children and families	GREEN	GREEN	The play team deliver family play opportunities during school holiday periods, which is publicized via the council's website, FIS,		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

				Wicid website and play providers.		
MF17	The Local Authority publicises information which contributes to positive community attitudes to play	GREEN	AMBER	<p>YEPS produces press releases to showcase and celebrate young people's achievement gained from attending YEPS provision. This information is also put on Wicid</p> <p>YEPS hold an annual Celebration Event to celebrate the achievements of young people and the wider community.</p>	At present the Play Development Team has limited means to promote play online. The service currently uses FIS and the online platforms of out third sector providers. However, it is anticipated that this will significantly change with the launch of the new RCT Families website.	
MF18	The Local Authority publicises information and support for parents to help them encourage their children to play	RED	AMBER	During lockdown, the Council's Play and Parenting teams developed a range of short 'follow along' films for children and their families to use to play together. They raged for nursery rhyme dances to arts and crafts project to nature trails. This were made available on the FIS	These will continue to be developed and circulated on the new RCT Families website once it has launched.	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

				social media pages on YouTube.		
MF19	The Local Authority widely uses on-site signposting to safeguard and promote play	AMBER	AMBER			
MF20	The Local Authority engages with the media to encourage the positive portrayal of children playing in the local area	GREEN	GREEN	<p>YEPS produces press releases to showcase and celebrate young people's achievement gained from attending YEPS provision. This information is also put on Wicid</p> <p>YEPS holds an annual celebration Event to recognise the achievements of young people and the wider community.</p> <p>Cultural events run by the Arts Service and by the 3rd sector arts organisations in RCT - such as the Hot Jam Bootcamp and SONIG Young Promoters Network music nights, promote the creativity of young people.</p>		

Access to space/provision

How has the Local Authority ensured collaboration to ensure children can move around their communities to increase access to opportunities for playing?

The local authority continues to deliver a package of road safety initiatives to thousands of school children every year, which includes school road safety sessions. The aim of the road safety sessions is to equip children and young people with the necessary skills they will need to travel safely to and from school and their local play space. Other safety initiatives include 20 mile calming measures, dropped kerbs etc.

'Safe routes in communities' schemes are also being developed locally in consultation with children and young people and their parents, through school surveys and workshop sessions to ensure that the proposed measures meet the needs of the community.

Have there been challenges?

There have been no challenges at this point.

How can these be overcome?

N/A

Comments

We continue to work closely with the 21st Century Schools team as and when new schools are being built to ensure we take account of the new routes children and young people will need to take in order to get to school safely.

Information, publicity, events

How has the Local Authority positively used information to support access to play provision?

The LA continues to use information to positively promote access to all provision for children and young people.

Have there been challenges?

In recent years there has been limited opportunities to disseminate play information to children and young people and their families.

How can these be overcome?

The Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service is in the process of developing a bespoke website where the play service will have a designated section on it to be able to promote all aspects of the play service.

Comments:

The corporate Public Relations and Tourism department continues to support all other council departments to advertise and disseminate a range of information, publications and up and coming events in line with council policy.

Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce

The Local Authority should provide information on the organisational structure of the policy area which manages the play agenda and the play workforce.

RAG status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

Note – These criteria are specifically about Playwork: Playwork is a highly skilled profession that enriches and enhances play. It takes place where adults support children’s play but it is not driven by prescribed education or care outcomes. This includes both open access and out of school childcare settings.

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MG01	The Local Authority keeps up to date information regarding the playwork workforce across the Local Authority (this should include the number of playworkers, playwork management structure, qualification levels, training opportunities and volunteers)	GREEN	GREEN	We have recently undertaken our annual Play Workforce audit, which identifies the training needs of the play workforce. The outcome of the audit will be used to develop the play training programme for 2022/23. Additional annual audits will be carried out for		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

				23/24 and 24/25 to inform the future training for the play sector.		
MG02	The Local Authority supports all of the workforce to achieve the qualification level required by the Welsh Government's National Minimum Standards	AMBER	GREEN	<p>We provide free statutory training for the play workforce. Where applicable we also provide training grants to enable volunteers and play workers to undertake level 1 & 2 play training course.</p> <p>All play training qualifications promoted in RCT are on the Pathway Framework for Playwork.</p>		
MG03	The Local Authority has a staff development budget ring fenced for play, including playwork	GREEN	GREEN	An element of the Childcare & Play grant is designated on an annual basis to deliver quality play training opportunities.		
MG04	There is a comprehensive range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities available for playworkers in the area	GREEN	GREEN	The Play Development Team and their commissioned providers have access to the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service's training prospectus, offering mandatory and	The training prospectus continues to be developed to ensure emerging training needs of the play workforce	Regularly review the play workforce training needs and liaise with the Training and Development Officer to offer these as part of the termly training prospectus.

				good practice training courses for funded staff	are offered on a termly basis.	
MG05	Training is available for volunteers and parents to develop their knowledge on skills in playwork	AMBER	RED		Due to recent covid restrictions there has been extremely limited engagement with volunteers and parents	The Play Development Team will reengage with local communities to improve the knowledge and understanding of Playwork locally.
MG06	The Local Authority includes playwork within its Workforce Development strategies	GREEN	GREEN	The Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service has a Training Working Group that identifies and delivers a range of mandatory and service specific training for the Play workforce.		
MG07	The Local Authority supports partners to deliver appropriate training to community groups, parents and volunteers	GREEN	RED		Due to covid restrictions limited work has been carried out in this area.	The play team will develop a bespoke package of play training to raise awareness of the importance of play to community groups parents & volunteers.

Note – these criteria are about the Play workforce: This encompasses anyone employed whose role has an impact on children playing – those who may either directly facilitate their play, design for playing, or those with the power to give permission for children to play, or not.

MG08	The Local Authority has undertaken a comprehensive training	GREEN	GREEN	This has been achieved through the play workforce audit, which		
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Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

	needs analysis for the play workforce as defined in the toolkit glossary and above			identified the mandatory training and specialist training needs the play workforce need for 2022/23		
MG09	The Local Authority takes action to expand the variety of learning and development opportunities that are offered to staff	GREEN	GREEN	This is done through offering blended training opportunities and evening and weekend training sessions.		
MG10	There is a comprehensive range of CPD opportunities for a range of professionals who work with children	GREEN	GREEN	Our training officer identifies and sources new inavitive training opportunities for the play sector.		
MG11	Training awareness sessions are available for professionals and decision makers whose work impacts on children's opportunities to play	GREEN	RED		Due to recent changes in service areas and the commissioning of services there is limited evidence available to support this.	Work to be undertake by the PSA working group to identify record and publicise play awareness training for professionals and decision makes. The information gathered will focus on the importance of providing children with stimulating play opportunities.

Securing and developing the play workforce

How has the Local Authority met the requirement to undertake or secure the managerial and delivery functions necessary to achieve sufficient play opportunities?

We have a designated core Play Development Team that commissions providers to deliver open access and targeted play, as well as assisting new providers to deliver play opportunities. The service also has a bank of casual play staff that support the direct delivery of the after-school play provision in RCT's special schools, family fun days and community play sessions. The team commissions third sector organisations to deliver the new Children and Wellbeing Project and Family Play Programme.

How has the Local Authority ensured it understands and provides for the workforce development needs of the play workforce (as defined in *Wales: A Play Friendly Country and above*)?

During 2020, the service undertook a play workforce audit to identify the training needs of the play workforce. Therefore, as the covid pandemic hit and lockdown restrictions were imposed, the service was able to use the time to upskill the play workforce by providing them with innovative and a bespoke package of training.

How has the Local Authority ensured it understands and provides the playwork workforce (as defined in *Wales: A Play Friendly Country and above*)?

The Local Authority has a designated Play Officer who is responsible for ensuring the training needs of the play workforce are identified and met on an annual basis. The local authority provides free / subsidised training for childcare, play and youth providers to ensure that they are meeting their legal requirements and are kept up to date with the outcomes of research or new practices. All training delivered is done so in partnership with Adult Learning Wales and other reputable training providers.

Over the past two years, there have been many changes in the way training is offered to the play sector. Due to staff having the opportunity to access blended learning there has been a noticeable increase in the uptake of and attendance at training sessions.

Have there been challenges?

Due to the restrictions imposed throughout the covid pandemic there has been limited opportunities for face to face training.

How can these be overcome?

We will endeavour to reinstate elements of face to face training as and when it is safe to do so.

Comments

We will continue to carry out annual training audits on the needs of the play sector. This will enable the Council to prioritise and compile and annual comprehensive package of training whilst maximising budgets across the sector.

Matter H: Community engagement and participation.

The Local Authority should consult widely with children, their families and other stakeholders on their views on play provision. It should also promote wide community engagement in providing play friendly communities.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MH01	The Local Authority promotes initiatives to engage relevant groups in enhancing play opportunities for children in its area.	GREEN	GREEN	<p>The aim of the annual Teddy Bear Picnic is to engage with parents and children to promote the importance of play within the Early years. We see over 3000 visitors attend the event on an annual basis. This is also used as an opportunity to consult with children and their families.</p> <p>We also deliver a number of free family fun days over the holiday periods from our children centres. An example of some of the</p>		

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p>activities we offer can range from a climbing wall to storytelling, silent discos, clog dancing, junk modelling and much more.</p> <p>Street Play workshops have been delivered to community development partners to identify and engage with new community groups to develop locally based play opportunities.</p>		
MH02	<p>The Local Authority promotes community engagement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making space available and suitable for play - organising play events - positive attitudes towards children and play - training on the importance of play. 	GREEN	AMBER	<p>Through close working relationships with a number of council and voluntary organisations, we promote free usage of the children centres to organisations who want to deliver play opportunities for children and young people.</p> <p>The venues are also used to deliver various play training and with prior notice we can arrange for the centres to be open in</p>	<p>Due to the Covid restrictions over the past 2 years, there has been limited promotion of access to these venues and resources.</p>	<p>As the Covid restrictions ease, the PSA working group will establish a list of community based venues and facilities that can be promoted to community groups that are suitable for a range of play opportunities and support groups.</p>

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				the evenings and weekends.		

Community engagement and participation

How has the Local Authority effectively used existing mechanisms for children’s participation and family consultation processes with regards to play?

Throughout this section there is a clear indication that a range of community engagement activities are taking place; from formal consultations to customer satisfaction. There have been a number of events held to capture the views of specific cohorts of children and young people service users and community members in the development and delivery of specific projects and programmes. We have recently undertaken our annual consultation with 560 children and young people from across 18 schools and 7 playschemes. We have also consulted with children and young people and the families who access the Care2Play programme.

Have there been challenges?

There have been no challenges at this time.

How can these be overcome?

N/A

Comments

The Local Authority will continue to consult and engage with children and young people and communities to ensure that the provision being commissioned and delivered meets the individual needs of the service user, their families and communities. All feedback information from the consultations we have undertaken will be imbedded into the annual play service delivery plan and 2022/23 PSA action plan.

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

The Local Authority should examine all its policy agendas for their potential impact on children's opportunities to play and embed targets and action to enhance children's play opportunities within all such policies and strategies.

RAG Status

Criteria fully met.	
Criteria partially met.	
Criteria not met.	

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI01	There is a named person on the Local Public Service Board who champions children's play and ensures that the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute to and are incorporated within the Well-being Plan	GREEN	GREEN	The Group Director for Community and Children's Services as named person for Play sits on the Cwm Taf Strategic Partnership Board that acts as an advisory working group for the PSB. Any considerations for the PSB in relation to children's play are fed up via the SPB Play is referred to in one of the key objectives of the Well-being Plan		
MI02	The Well-Being Plan recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities	GREEN	AMBER	The Wellbeing Plan places an emphasis on the need of play opportunities for all children and young people, including those who require	From April 2022, much of the funding previously used to support wellbeing programmes will not	Identify funding to continue to deliver the play projects that improve children and young people's wellbeing.

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LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
				<p>support to access provision. The Regional Commissioning Board have realised this and approved ICF funding for the Care2Play programme in RCT.</p> <p>Children and Community Grant (CCG) funds the Children's Wellbeing Support Programme in RCT to offer 1:1 support for children aged 7 – 11yrs known to the Resilient Families Service. The programme builds resilience via the use of play techniques that families can continue with once the initiative has ended.</p>	<p>be available. Therefore, the PSA partners will need to continue to champion the need for play opportunities as a means to improve children and young people's wellbeing.</p>	

Education and schools						
LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI03	Schools ensure that children are provided with a rich play environment for breaks during the school day	GREEN	AMBER		<p>Opportunities have been limited over the past 2 years due to Covid restrictions but YEPS is re-opening its after-school provision, we have after-school special school sessions delivered by PDT.</p> <p>Play wales are working with schools to make their outdoor spaces available after the school day.</p>	<p>Re-establish YEPS after-school provision once it is safe to do so</p> <p>Progress the Play Wales initiative of utilising school playgrounds after the school day.</p>
MI04	Schools provide play opportunities during out of teaching hours	AMBER	AMBER	Some schools have been commissioned from the Winter of Wellbeing grant to run afterschool activity sessions.		Clarity needed from WG if additional funding for 2022/23 will be made available to continue to support these sessions to run.

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MI05	Schools provide access to school grounds for playing out of school times	AMBER	AMBER		Work is currently on-going to engage with local schools to promote this.	Work with relevant partners to take the Play Wales initiative forward.
MI06	Schools encourage children to walk and cycle to school	GREEN	GREEN	<p>Schools are required to develop a sustainable travel plan. Within this, they identify areas of development to encourage children to use more sustainable modes of transport to school, such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>As part of our 21st Century Schools' investment we ensure that scooter and bicycle shelters are a part of the new school build, and we work closely with officers in our 'Safe Route's Team' to ensure that the works onsite and off complement each other.</p> <p>It is a condition of Planning Consent that schools review their Travel Plan to ensure they utilise any additional sustainable transport initiatives that have been included in the new school builds, and schools are supported by officers to</p>	these assessments recommend improvements to the walking and cycling routes, these works are implemented.	

				<p>deliver any new initiatives that are developed. Alongside this, Traffic Impact Assessments are undertaken as are assessments of the safe walking routes.</p>		
MI07	<p>The Local Authority offers guidance to ensure schools understand and ensure that regular outdoor play is not curtailed</p>	GREEN	GREEN	<p>Welsh Government Foundation Phase guidance supports schools to design and develop engaging and appropriate outdoor play spaces for Foundation Phase pupils, this is also a priority within the New Curriculum for Wales. This is supported through the 21st Century Schools investment programme as the ability for 'free-play' is designed into all of our Foundation Phase classrooms and associated external areas, and where practical in our KS2 classes too. Our 21st Century School standard design includes external canopies that are installed outside all Foundation Phase classrooms to ensure that</p>		

				<p>there is the opportunity for outdoor play whatever the conditions.</p> <p>There is guidance contained within the Welsh Government Building Bulletins, specifically 98 and 99, which advises on what type of external spaces are required for schools, and the associated areas of each. We use this guidance to inform the design of all of our 21st Century Schools.</p> <p>The Cwm Taf Well Being Plan 2018-23, and the New Curriculum for Wales encourages all schools to make the most of opportunities to engage pupils with the outdoors to support their mental health and well-being.</p>		
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Town and Country Planning						
LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI08	The Local Development Plan recognises and addresses the	AMBER	GREEN	The Local Development Plan contains policy AW4		

	<p>outdoor play needs of children of various age groups and abilities</p>			<p>which seeks planning obligations including for open space, sport and play space where it is deemed appropriate. The plan also contains policy AW6 which supports development proposals which provides open space in line with the Fields in Trust Standards. Policy AW7 also seeks to protect areas of public open space.</p> <p>In preparing the revised LDP consultation with other Council departments will be undertaken.</p>		
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Traffic and Transport						
LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI09	<p>The local Transport Plan recognises the importance of local streets, roads and walking and cycling route in offering play opportunities for children of different ages and</p>	GREEN	GREEN	<p>One of the LTP's core interventions is to develop programme for innovative walking, cycling and Smarter Choices, to deliver</p>		

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

	abilities			Active Travel schemes that improve walking and cycling links to key services and facilities and, to improve accessibility within and between communities.		
MI10	The local Transport Plan identifies ways of assessing and addressing the needs of all groups including those which are often marginalised.	GREEN	GREEN	Social inclusion and equality is promoted in the LTP, through the provision of a transport system that is safe, accessible and affordable to all sections of the community. The needs of vulnerable groups are understood and taken into Account in the overall direction of the LTP and in the design of individual transport schemes that are delivered through the Plan		

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Early Years Plans						
LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI11	Early Years and Flying Start plans and services recognise the importance of play and contribute to the provision of rich play opportunities for	GREEN	GREEN	Flying Start continues to support commissioned childcare settings to improve the quality of play provision. Recent		

younger children

improvements over the past 12 months include providing settings with outdoor play equipment, canopies, wet weather clothing so the children can access outdoor play in all weather conditions.

Settings have been provided with movement matters packs and resources to encourage outdoor physical literacy activities.

Childcare staff have received training around developing the outdoors and physical play which included natural resources and Jabadao.

Outdoor play has been the main focus throughout the COVID 19 Pandemic where settings have adapted their practice to fully utilise outside play.

Family policy and initiatives						
LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI12	Family support initiatives provide up to date information and support for parents to enable them to support their children to play	GREEN	AMBER	The play team has recently developed and piloted the new Family Play Programme initiative. Once the evaluation of the pilot has been completed, aspects of the programme will be amended. A programme of delivery for the year will be timetabled and delivered.	To date, this initiative has only been piloted. Going forward, this needs to be mainstreamed to offer maximum capacity for targeted families to access the support.	Roll out the Family Play Programme across additional areas of RCT
MI13	The local implementation of the Families First programme recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities	AMBER	GREEN	In 2021/22 a new Children's Well Being project was piloted via the increase in CCG in order to meet an identified need and gap in provision. The aim of the pilot was to develop a wellbeing intervention for children aged 7-11 where the child displayed low self-esteem, confidence and resilience levels which focused on play opportunities.		

MI14	Plans to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences recognises the importance of play and contributes to the provision of rich play opportunities	AMBER	GREEN	<p>A comprehensive ACE's awareness training schedule has been implemented across schools, youth service and children's services teams. The protective factors of engaging in play opportunities is highlighted as an important aspect of reducing the impact on ACE's</p> <p>Trauma-informed practice is fundamental to the way in which Play Development Team operate. Training has also been provided to wider Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service teams and Education and Inclusion Services.</p>		
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Inter-generational policy and initiatives

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI15	There are a range of play based approaches to inter-generational activity	AMBER	GREEN	The play team delivers a number of family fun days throughout the year, offering children, young people, and		

				<p>families to come together to take part in groups activities.</p> <p>YEPS deliver intergeneration projects to support the perception of young people in the community. An example of this is where young people share a building with a local bowls club. The young people designed and created a mural of a bowls player and created planters with some of the older players that were placed outside the bowls pavillion</p>		<p>Play Development Team and the Youth Engagement and Participation Service to jointly commissioned community-based play and youth sessions across RCT.</p>
MI16	<p>There is a creative approach to inter-generational activity which encourages better interaction between children of different ages</p>	GREEN	RED	<p>The Play Development Team and the Youth Engagement and Participation Service are planning to jointly commission external partenrs to deliver provision to children and young peole aged 5 – 25 years. The widened age range will improve the interaction between age groups and</p>	<p>Youth Play sessions have been suspended as a result of the pandemic. It is being considered if these are the best way forward as normal service resumes.</p>	

				ease children’s anxiety as they transition from primary to secondary school, and the associated support services.	The services have not yet implemented this commissioning model	
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Health and Safety

LA Ref No	Criteria	RAG Status 2019	RAG Status 2022	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified actions for Action Plan
MI17	The Health and Safety policies explicitly recognise the value of children being able to experience risk and challenge	GREEN	GREEN	<p>YEPS offer young people the opportunity to participate in numerous activities such as climbing river boarding and canoeing. All off site activities have to comply with EVC and AALS licences protocol and all staff taking young people on 'adventurous' activities are experienced, have up to date DBS checks and have completed First Aid and safeguarding training.</p> <p>All building and activity risk assessments are reviewed as part of the Play Monitoring visit.</p>		

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MI18	The Health and Safety policies and procedures incorporate the risk-benefit approach to health and safety assessments as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	RED	GREEN	A number of Risk v. Benefit training sessions have been and will continue to be delivered to the play sector throughout the year.		
MI19	The Local Authority offers the provision of insurance through the Local Authority scheme to all third sector play providers and community councils	RED	GREEN	<p>Individual organisations must have their own public liability insurance in order to be commissioned by the Council.</p> <p>However when commissioned play providers deliver provision jointly with the play team the RCT council insurance is used for cover.</p>		

Play within relevant policy and implementation agendas

Please use this section to highlight successes of collaboration across policy areas to improve play opportunities.

Play features in the top layer of objectives of the regional Cwm Taf Well-Being Plan adopted by the Council. This has encouraged a more innovative approach to meeting cross cutting objectives including play.

Have there been challenges?

The main challenge over the past 2 years has been the covid pandemic and restrictions that were imposed.

How can these be overcome?

With the easing of restrictions and our way of life continuing to become more normal again, we need to ensure that at every step of the way we develop and promote a range of play and wellbeing opportunities for children and young people and families in local communities.

Comments:

We will continue to work with partners from across council departments and our community based third sector organisations to develop and deliver play and recreational opportunities for children and young people aged 0-25 years, from childcare to play and to youth work underpinned by a quality assurance framework that can be used across all providers within the sectors. Changes to commissioning arrangements via the Children and Communities Grant will also encourage and support more collaboration between services and more sustainability for third sector providers able to deliver integrated provision.

Conclusion

This section should identify the key priorities for the Local Authorities in accordance with the regulations and described in the Statutory Guidance.

Throughout the whole of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) report it is evident that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that all budgets and funding available are being utilised to deliver provision to meet the emerging needs of individual service users, families and communities. A main priority will be the gathering, analysis and use of data to inform and co-ordinate the planning, delivery and monitoring of play, leisure, culture and sporting provision. The use of this data will enable us to identify areas of need and target our resources to address them. It will also enable us to identify those children and young people who face barriers to accessing play as a result of their socio-economic or family situation and enable us to proactively remove these barriers.

All members of the PSA group will be responsible for undertaking and monitoring of the actions of the 2022-25 PSA Action Plan. This will mean that colleagues from across the sector will need to share their knowledge and understanding of how various approaches and processes can be applied to achieve these actions, for example, engaging with communities and carrying out consultations. It is envisaged that through the joined up working across the sector we will be able to provide children and young people, families and residents across the communities of RCT access to a range of play, leisure, culture and sports activities as and when they want it.

Way forward

This section should briefly introduce the Action Plan which sets out what steps need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children to play within the Local Authority area, including what mechanism and criteria were used to agree and prioritise actions. It should also describe the actions the Local Authority will take with regards to change in infrastructure, partnership working or mechanisms to ensure that it is well placed to deliver on the duty to secure sufficient play opportunities.

As the county recovers from the pandemic, the Council will need to realign our priorities to develop services that focus on supporting the needs of all of our children and young people aged 0 – 25 years and their families to enable them to engage in accessing community based play, childcare, youth and other recreational activities.

The action plan focuses on addressing those PSA criteria that have been assessed as red and amber within this document and therefore in need of development and improvement. This does not mean that the activities rated as green will not be continued, but that they will be mainstreamed as part of the ongoing work of internal services and partners. Existing funding and resources will be utilised to create the infrastructure needed to quality assure a range of provision and develop the tools necessary to monitor quality of delivery.

Signed:

Date:

Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Proposed actions for the period of 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Matter	Priorities	Targets	Links to other Matters	Resources, including costs	Funding source (new or existing funding streams)
Matter B: Providing for diverse needs	To analyse the 2021 Census data and use it to prioritise the future development of play opportunities.	To develop play opportunities in the 3 most vulnerable areas across RCT.	Matter E	New play providers. Approximately £15,000	New 2022 / 23 Playworks funding.
	Work with the PSA working group to undertake a mapping exercise to identify where current play, youth and other recreational activities are being delivered through the medium of Welsh across the county borough.	Review and amend current SLA's to meet the identified needs for the development of provision for Welsh language speaking CYP.	Matter C	Staff time	Reprofile existing funding streams.
		Identify partners to support the development and delivery of provision through the medium of Welsh.	Matter G	Welsh medium play providers	
To reopen the sensory rooms to the general public free of charge	Develop and implement robust Covid compliant risk assessment to reinstate public usage of the sensory rooms across the C&FC.	Matter E	Staff time to take responsibility for the implementation the Covid Risk assessments.	Core funding	

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

	Design a playscheme timetable that incorporates a range of symbols to publicise the accessibility of buildings for service users.	To enable services users to make an informed choice of what playscheme suits their needs best.		Staff time	Core funding
	Undertake a consultation with the gypsy traveller community to gain their view on developing a designated play space on their site.	Work with colleagues within the parks department to design and undertake a consultation with the gypsy traveller community.	Matter C	Staff time and potentially capital costs to fund the purchase of land/construction of play equipment.	Core funding to undertake the consultation. Use AWPOG Capital funding as and when becomes available.
Matter C: Space available for children to play	Undertaking play value assessments on all public open space	Identify staff within the departments current service structure to undertake the work.		Additional hours for staff to undertake this work.	New funding to be identified.
	Access audits undertake in 2021.	Implement the schedule of works that has been developed from the outcome of the access audits. Remove No Ball signs from areas where it is safe to do			New funding to be identified.

		so on land within the department's portfolio.			
	<p>All residents are given the opportunity to be able to comment on the proposal to dispose of General Land,</p> <p>All residents are given the opportunity to comment on the proposal to transfer the leasehold of land for a Community Asset Transfer, including Splash Pads, Multi Use Games Areas, Skateboard Park and Outdoor Gym etc.</p>	<p>Corporate Estates to develop a process that enables residents to comment on the disposal of General Land</p> <p>Corporate Estates to develop a process that a community organisation applying for a lease or transfer of community assets can evidence they have consulted with the children and families within the area.</p>	Matter I	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>Existing funding</p> <p>Existing funding.</p>
Matter D: Supervised provision	To identify a fit for purpose designated play quality assurance scheme (QAS) to be rolled out across RCT.	Roll out of the new All Wales Play QAS to as and when it becomes available from Play Wales.		<p>Staff time</p> <p>Cost of registration to the QAS.</p>	<p>New 2022 / 23 Playworks funding.</p> <p>Children and Communities Grant allocation.</p>
	Identify funding to introduce an annual Play Improvement Grant.	Provide commissioned play providers with an opportunity to apply for funding to improve and		<p>Staff time</p> <p>£20,000</p>	<p>New 2022 / 23 Playworks funding.</p>

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

		replenish play equipment and resources.			Children and Communities Grant allocation.
Matter E: Charges for play provision	Provide service user with information on free or subsidised provision.	Establish mechanisms for recording no cost / low cost premises	Matter D	Staff time	Existing funding
	Develop an approved supplier list for private and 3 rd sector organisations to deliver recreational activities.	To create a central distribution list to notify providers of funding as and when funding becomes available.		Staff time	Existing funding
	Identify funding to continue to commission community organisation to deliver recreational activities locally.	Develop a process and guidance to commission additional recreational activities.	Matter I	Staff time £10,000	Children and Communities Grant allocation.
Matter F: Access to space/provision	Develop a timetable of delivery for specific schemes that meet the needs of service users.	Continue to bid for funding for schemes and seek other funding opportunities to deliver various road safety training opportunities to CYP.		Staff time	Existing funding streams
	To implement changes in legislation on the national speed	Develop and agree traffic calming policies and procedures to introduce traffic calming measures in		Staff Time	Existing funding

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

	limit as and when directed by WG.	residential roads and busy pedestrian streets			
	To deliver a comprehensive programme of Active Travel and SRIC schemes.	Continue to bid for funding to schemes and seek other funding opportunities			
	To develop a process of sharing child road traffic accident data	Use the data to inform changes that may be needed to enable children to safely move around their local communities		Staff time	Existing funding streams.
	Work with Play wales and other key partners to pilot the Play Street Scheme.	Develop a scheme of works to pilot the delivery of Street play across RCT. RCT Playstreets working group to implement the devilery of the pilot in the Spring term.	Matter G	Staff time	Play Wales funding.
	To establish a publicity campaign to promote the importance of play for ALL CYP. which will be highly visible across the CWRS Website.	Develop a range of publicity material to be disseminated to professionals and decision makers RCT wide. Develop a range of promotional information for parents / CYP and volunteers.	Matter G Matter H	Staff time	New 2022 / 23 Playworks funding

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

		Develop a range of promotional material for schools and lunchtime supervisors.			
Matter G: Securing and developing the workforce	To create CPD opportunities for staff across the social care sector.	Develop a CPD pathway across play, youth, and childcare to upskill the social care workforce. Develop a training package to upskill the social care workforce.			New 2022 / 23 Playworks funding
	To create opportunities for volunteers to become engaged in the delivery of play provision.	Develop a pathway for volunteers and/or parents to get involved in the delivery of play opportunities within their community.	Matter H	Staff time	Existing funding
Matter H: Community engagement and participation	Undertake a mapping exercise and to identify and record the availability of community buildings that are suitable to deliver a range of play, recreational and training opportunities.	Develop promotional material for community groups on how to apply for usage of council buildings.	Matter B Matter E Matter G	Staff time	Existing funding

Play Sufficiency Assessment Template

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas	Streamline the delivery of the Childrens Wellbeing Support Programme.	Identify relevant funding to continue to deliver the CWSP. Develop a 3-year plan for the continued development and roll out of the CWSP.	Matter B	Staff Time £80,000+	To be sourced.
	To raise the profile of play during the school day with all teaching staff and lunchtime supervisors.	Work with colleagues in Education to support schools to develop a play policy. Promote and support the Play Wales initiative to enable communities to have access to the school grounds at the end of the school day.	Matter G	Staff time	Existing funding
			Matter H	Staff time	Existing funding
	To develop a programme of delivery for the Family Play Programme.	Work with partners to identify staff to deliver the programme		Staff Time	To be sourced.
Streamline the commissioning of Play & Youth provision.	To develop a timeline for the commissioning of a Play & Youth offer.		Staff Time	Existing Funding	

		Develop a framework for the commissioning of a Play & Youth offer.			
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Child Play Questionnaire_copy

This report was generated on 07/02/22. Overall 588 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

(How old are you?)

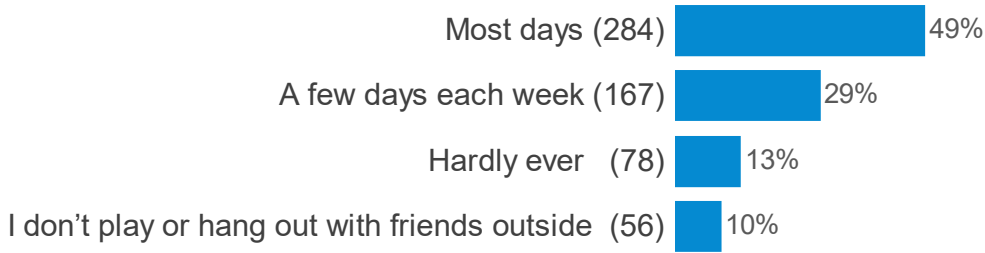
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5	10	6	6	9	6	6	10	6	6	8	9	8	10	5	11	6	8	7	9
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6	10	8	9	6	7	11	9	5	7	8	9	8	11	10	9	8	7	10	9
9	10	5	9	6	6	9	7	7	10	9	8	6	6	10	6	8	7	9	9

(Which school do you go to?)

Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	YGG Aberdar
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar
Parc Lewis Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	YGG Aberdar
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdare	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG aberdar	Heol Y Cely	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn	Heol Y Celyn
Pengeulan Primary	YGG Aberdar	YGG Aberdar	Heol Y Celyn

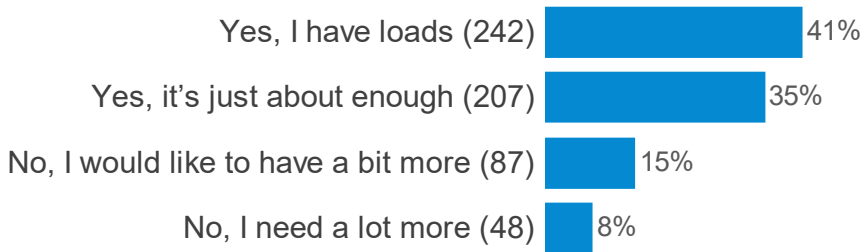
How often do you go out to play or hang out with friends?

Tick just one answer



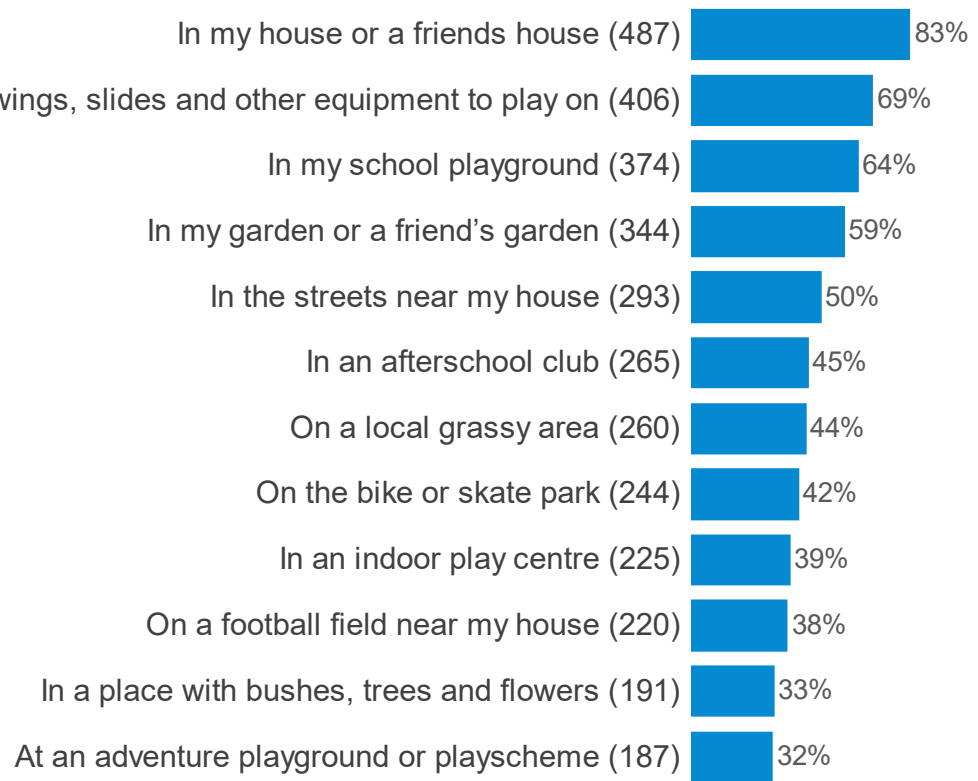
Do you have enough time for playing or hanging out with friends?

Tick just one answer



When you're not in school, what types of places would you like to play or hang out in?

Tick all the answers that are true for you:



Somewhere else (tell us where)

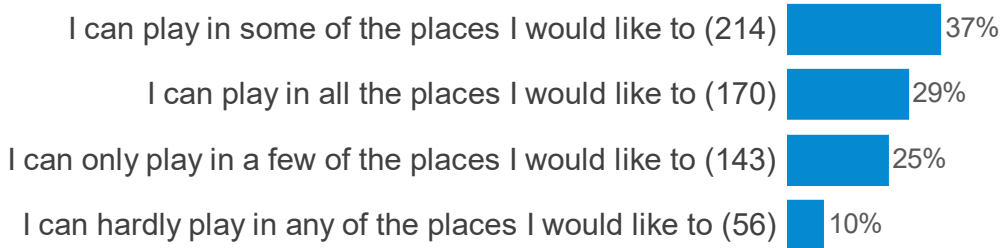
in my friends street	Mountain + Rugby Pitch
Up the top shop streets	The fair.
Gymnastics	on my trampoline
Beach	The park.
Soft play	shop or my nans
Park	nans
On a beach	Trampoline park.
Farm	shop, dance class, costa
Trampoline park	on my balcony.
Woods	swimming pool and horse riding
Gwenifor Park	football
Brynifor park	around the area
Brynifor Park	Inside my house
Car park	Outside of school
McDonalds	Football club
going somewhere like ninja world	Football club
Park	In the car park
I play in mud.	Carpark

Somewhere else (tell us where)

My cousins new house.	The park
Rugby Field	In my bedroom and take dogs for a walk.
On the yard on my farm	Mountain
Rugby Pitch	Up the mountain
in the river area	Rugby Pitch
cubs, archery	in a football cage
Rugby Pitch	netball and gym
Swimming pool	on my switch and in my house
School	darran park
Back of shop (outside theres a swing)	Tylorstown Tigers RFC
Beach	soft play
Up the mountain	rugby tylorstown
Ibiza on holiday	netball barn
in a forest	holiday blue stone
Swimming	I play tag in a nice garden
Holiday	football field
Holiday	party's
Holiday	nans house
Holiday	nans house
basketball	swimming
Arcade , playground	on holidays i go to theatre club
Dance	park
park and horse riding	phone
Dance	in the park with my family
Nanny's house	caravan
Tonypandy	Up at my friends
in the park	caravan
The beach	rugby field
my nans house	football
On holidays	rugby field
Nans house	at a club
on xbox	Anywhere

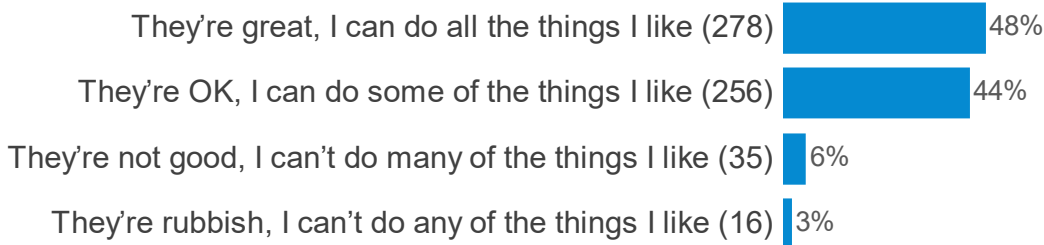
Can you play in all of the places you would like to?

Tick just one answer



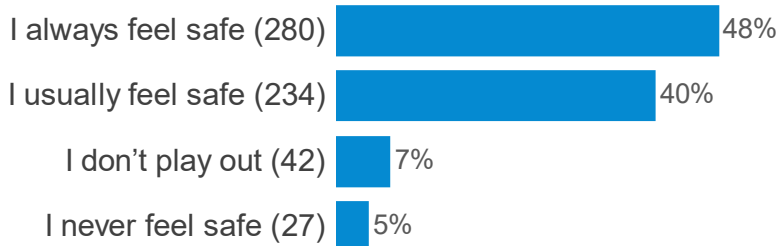
How good are the places you play in?

Tick just one answer



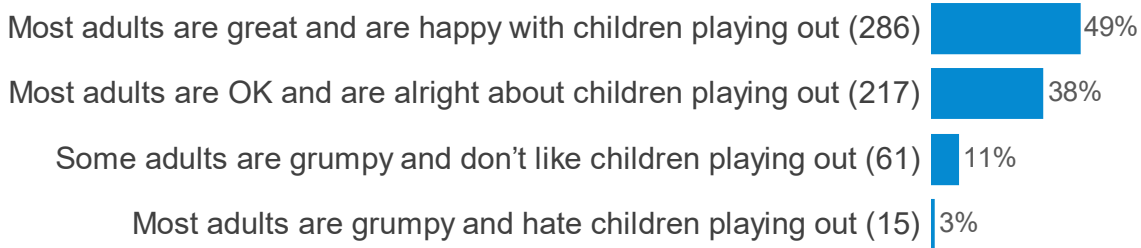
How safe do you feel when playing or hanging out?

Tick just one answer

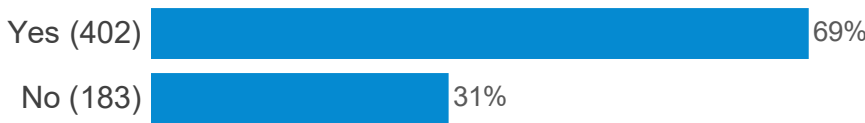


What are grown-ups like when you're playing or hanging out?

Tick just one answer

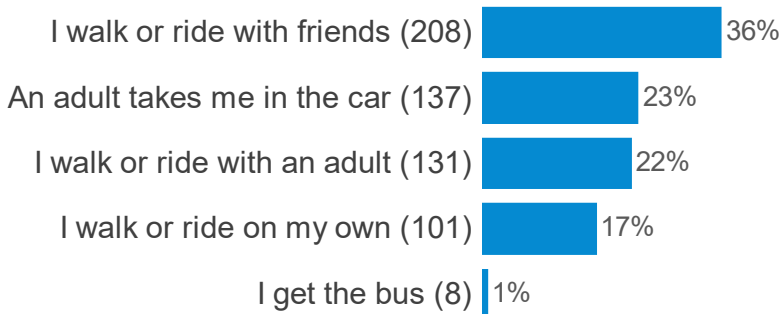


Are you allowed to play out on your own or with friends?



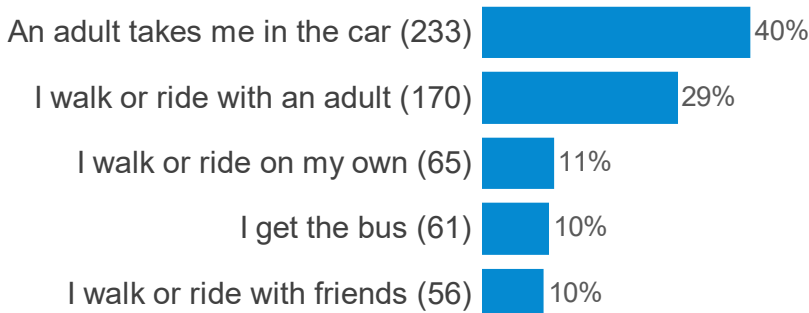
How do you usually get to places where you play?

Tick just one answer:



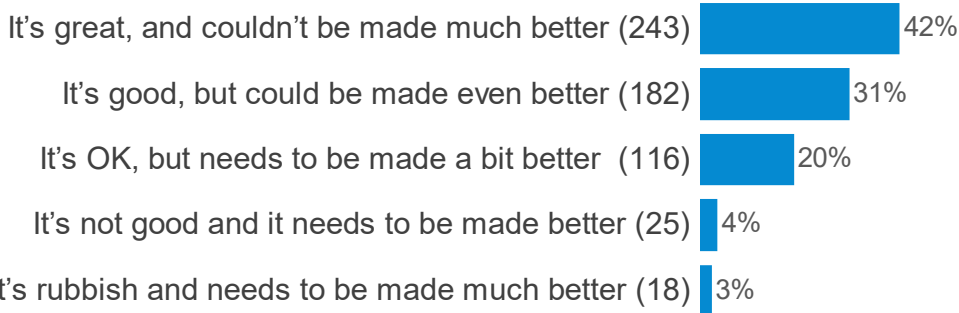
How do you usually get to school?

Tick just one answer:



Overall how good are your opportunities for playing and hanging out?

Tick just one answer



What's good about your area for playing and hanging out?

- go to the ride park
- different buildings or certain parks are mostly ok unless usually teenagers break stuff or are rude with certain jokes or offences
- basketball, football, tennis
- I like it when I'm on my trampoline
- there are grown ups to supervise the children playing and because of that there are less accidents
- on the scooter in mountain ash park
- everything is good
- it's fun and it's nice and has a nice garden and it's good to play
- playing with my friends
- tree house in the park
- park
- park
- park
- trampoline
- it is the best
- there's adults to watch over us
- it's good
- park
- we have water fights in the summer
- playing on the streets with friends
- swimming
- it has a skate park
- skate park
- park
- skate park
- that all of my friends live in the street
- not having a roundabout
- a lot of my friends live around the area we play in

What's good about your area for playing and hanging out?

ride my bike

it's near my house

playing football

ride my bike

I can play whatever I want to

adults keep me safe

park near house

football field

friends

I can do wheelies on my bike

only cars come in the night

most people are kind and helpful

where I live there is a mountain for me to play

we can play rugby or football

It's good because I live near my friends so I communicate with them

the back street

kind

I live near a forest and a park and I enjoy it

I like playing football and going for walks

good parks

got good play area in my house

dragons den

dragons den

parks

park

park

it's secluded, only my friends and family can find me

make the park bigger

it's safe

There's grassy areas, rocky area to find crystals and it's nice to be out in the fresh air

I have lots of activities in my garden

it's safe and fun

there's quite a lot of parks to walk to

The swings slide and tyre swing

it's very quiet

Loads of space

There's a park

football fields, parks, rugby field

The park is in my street

a football field

The park is good I like the swings

What's good about your area for playing and hanging out?

a park a football field

we have places to go and we can make our own adventures

it's quiet

I like the park

that I get to play everywhere just not dangerous places

I like the swings

garden

They are ok

the park and football better

no cars or anything are on the roads

I feel safe and it's a great place to have fun

it's fun, have some parks

I like the slides and swings

I have a park which has 2 slides, see-saw, roundabouts, monkey bars

we have a good park where we have fun

park

Not really much

It has a slide

It has a park, zip line, shops, swings and I have a pool in my house

There is a park close to my house and a play centre

I love going to the park and on the monkey bars

I love swinging on the bars

New equipment

It's safe for me

There's a lot of hiding places when playing hide and seek

It's a good place to play at my house or church because it's quiet

I don't go out

The woods

It's safe

It is a big space

No

What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better?

the roads

Karen's mean people

it does not have a swimming pool

it's too far

a skate park

better places to play

animal run across the road

What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better?

- internet
- people always scream
- broken equipment
- I sometimes don't go out
- it down the bottom of the street
- dog mess
- a bigger park and football field
- the park up graig
- it's a big hill so when I ride my bike I could fall
- there's lots of dangerous places that people like going to
- Mam don't like me playing in the street
- the big kids
- skating area
- damaged stuff
- if there were cameras able to see what people do it will make us feel much better and safer to do with particularly my street
- there is a lot of pubs
- some kid fighting down flats, people getting drunk, glass
- to have a park and see kids hanging around. I would like to have a friendly centre
- there are not much games but still play time is enjoyable
- going on an adventure trail
- nothing
- they haves stones and they hurt me
- trampoline
- better equipment in parks
- more slides
- not much
- that people come and hurt feelings
- I don't like going out
- nothing
- playing on my own
- more ramps in the skate park
- playing with my brother
- swings
- too many cars
- cars
- some people are mean and nasty
- park could be closer
- it's not close to where my friends live
- playing rugby
- nothing

What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better?

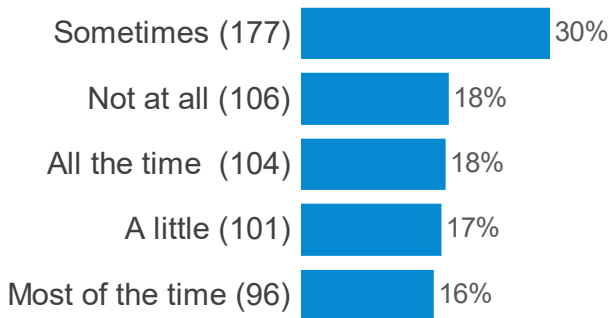
- fighting
- nothing
- ball goes down the banking
- we need more activities
- nothing
- the main road
- fight
- because I live on a main road
- more parks
- no parks
- make the park bigger
- There's a lot of people walking around and I don't feel safe
- it's small
- maybe it could be better if there were more things in the park
- The CP line and the bounce things
- The zip line you stand up
- Swimming pool
- Not many places to build dens
- more pools
- A skate park
- we lose the ball loads in the bushes
- Lots of glass and rubbish
- sometimes there is rubbish on the floor
- there's no park or anything
- Everything is broken
- nothing really
- There's always fighting
- that I can't really go anywhere without my mam
- Trampoline
- The park
- big slide
- there's not a lot of space
- sometimes there's scary music on
- Make it bigger
- dog poop
- dog poop
- Need more football pitches in my area
- It's not good because the swings are not good
- Nothing
- Nothing needs to be better

What's not good about your area for playing and hanging out and needs to be made better?

- _____ The equipment
- _____ The equipment in the park
- _____ New equipment because the things are broken
- _____ New equipment in the park
- _____ New equipment in the park
- _____ Things happen not good things The park is rubbish all it's got is baby swings Bad slide
- _____ A lot of sketchy adults and teens in places
- _____ Nothing in my opinion
- _____ I don't go out
- _____ The parks are closed
- _____ Kidnappers
- _____ The grass is long
- _____ More football pitches

How has COVID-19, lockdowns and restrictions affected how you usually play?

Tick just one answer



If you can, please tell us more about how COVID-19 has affected your play?

- _____ Good - I stayed with Mam
- _____ fun and nice because I was with my mum, dad and sister
- _____ I couldn't see my nanny
- _____ couldn't go out
- _____ couldn't see family
- _____ can't go out with my friends
- _____ I could only go out to play sometimes
- _____ we did WhatsApp with my friends
- _____ someone had covid
- _____ I play in my garden
- _____ I was bored and couldn't go to the park
- _____ the scape park
- _____ it has closed down certain buildings and pods that I like to hang out in

If you can, please tell us more about how COVID-19 has affected your play?

couldn't play outside

many people can't play together

a bit sad

couldn't go to western canal county park

it has not affected my play

I play around and use roblox on my laptop

I was sad

sad

sad

not allowed to go to places

couldn't play

sad

I wasn't allowed to go to certain places

I can't go out much

play roblox

sad

couldn't go play

not allowed out

couldn't see my nans dog

sad

we couldn't go to the beach

some places got shut down that I liked

having to stay in the house

because I couldn't play

not being able to go out and play

because I couldn't play

hate it

couldn't go outside

when will it stop?

I had to stay inside, doing home schooling and I felt sad because I couldn't play with my friends

couldn't see friends

we can't communicate with friends

sad

I couldn't see my friends for 11 months

angry

it only affects me when I or my friends catch it

missed my friends

sad, bored

sad, bored

sad

sad

If you can, please tell us more about how COVID-19 has affected your play?

sad

sad

sad

sad

couldn't see my friends

Sometimes when I try and go out there are people coughing and sneezing all the time

I was bored

I didn't get to see my friends

I can't go in my friends house and can't see all of my friends

Angry

Had to play I. The house

Couldn't go out

bored

Sad I didn't see my friends

bored

I couldn't play with my friends

bored

we can't go into people's houses. we have to stay 2 meters apart

Bad, I missed playing with my friends

only because I was a little bored

I was ok but I couldn't play

Sad because I couldn't go out to play

bored

No

missed my friends

I caught COVID and couldn't play with my friends

in the first lockdown I wasn't allowed to play and I wasn't allowed to have sleepovers as much as I used to

sad

Because I like going out with my friends

sad

sad

bored

I can't play with my friends

Playing with my friends

It has affected my play a little

Some parks were shut

Missed my friends

Sad

Couldn't go out and play

Not a lot it's fine

If you can, please tell us more about how COVID-19 has affected your play?

A bit but I kind of don't know

When I was on holiday I had COVID so I could barely make new friends and play with them and then when we got home we had to stay in our house for a while so I couldn't see my friends

Nothing

Lock down

I couldn't go to the park

I have t been out much

Are you ...



Other (please describe)

i don't feel like any gender so I'd say I'd prefer they/them

Tom boy

A tom boy

Prefer not to say

non-binary

Do you think of yourself as being disabled?



Which language do you prefer to speak?



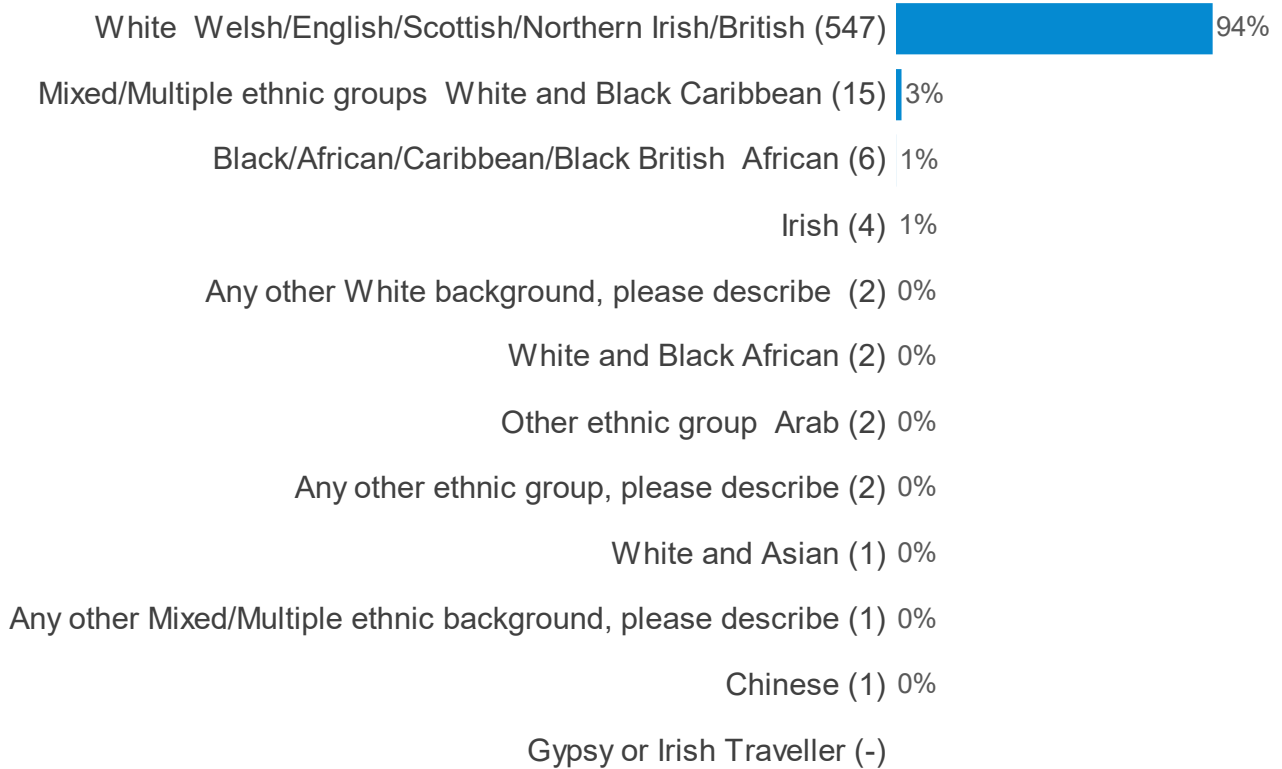
Child Play Questionnaire_copy

Other (tell us which)

Polish	I speak English and mostly polish
Greek	English but speak polish to grandparents
British	Turkish
French	French and Chinese
French	spanish
Dutch	British
French	house
I like speaking polish.	Arabic
Polish	Arabic
French	sinhala
English and Spanish	Portuguese

Tell us which one of the following best describes your ethnic group or background?

Please ask for help if you're not sure.



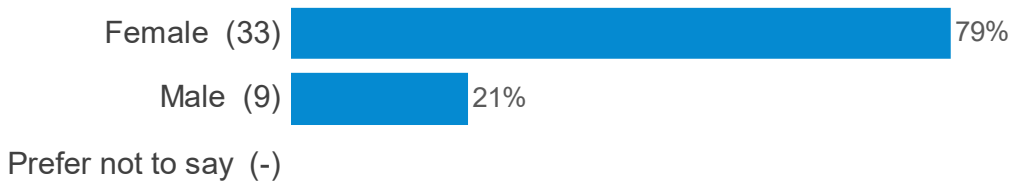
Play Workforce

This report was generated on 18/01/22. Overall 44 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

Sex

Are you:



Gender Identity

Do you identify as:



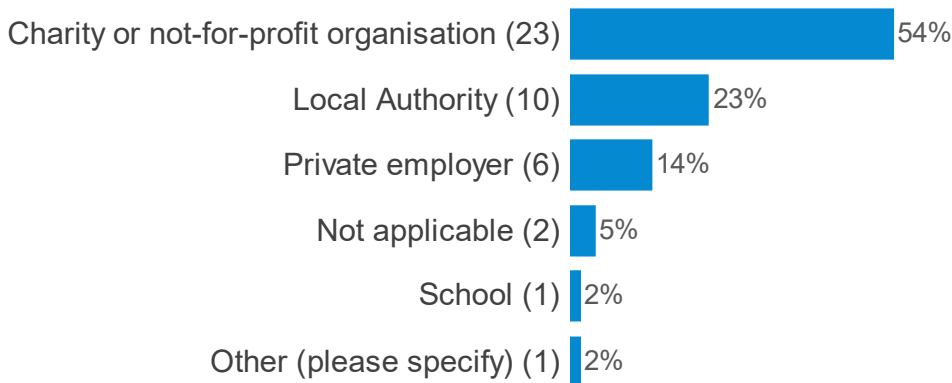
If you prefer your own term, please provide this here:

(Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.)

Male

Play Workforce

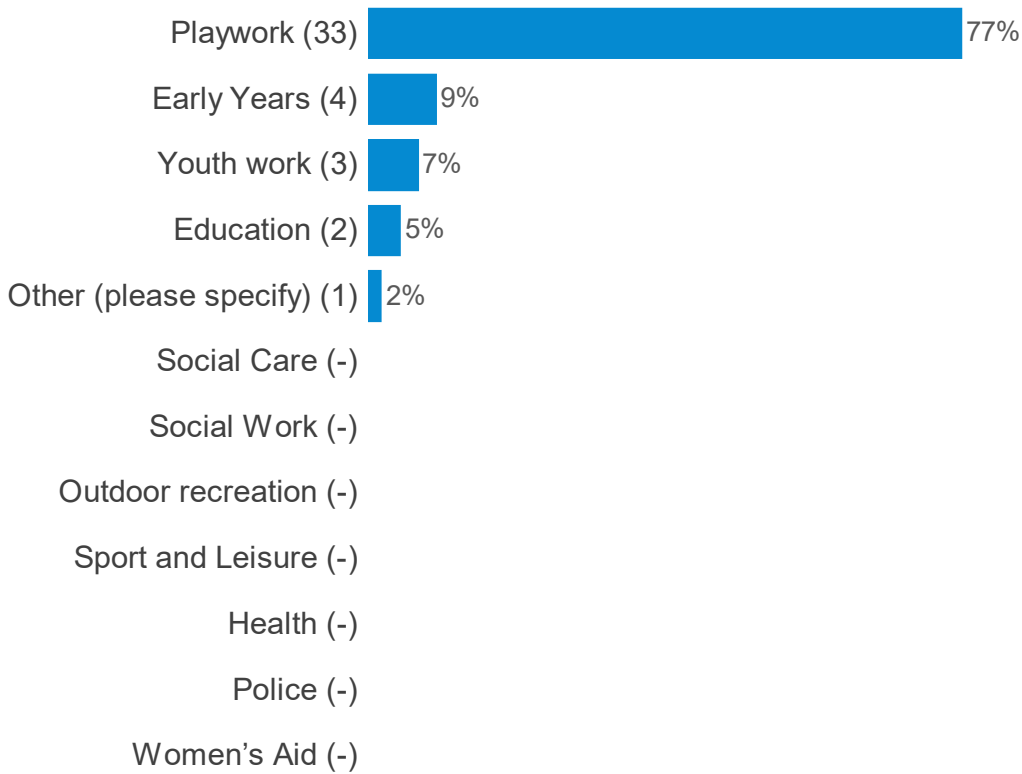
Do you work for a...?



Other (please specify)

Community Centre

What sector do you work in?



Other (please specify)

Playwork, youth work, early years

Play Workforce

What is your job title?

Play Development Officer	Nursery nurse key worker
Care 2 Play Officer	Casual playworker
Play Leader	Deputy Childcare & Community Manager
Youth Project Coordinator	Cook
Play worker	Support assistant
Development Manager.	children and youth development officer
Play worker	Play and Youth development mana
Playworker	Playworker
Playworker	Play Assistant
Childcare practitioner	Playworker
Playworker	Playworker
Team Manager	Deputy leader
Playworker	Owner
Playworker	Play Support Worker
Play assistant	Play worker and youth coordinator
Playworker	Playworker
Casual playworker	Play worker
Casual playworker	Play worker
Playworker	Family Hub Manager
Playscheme worker	Play leader
Play worker	Playworker

Briefly tell us your job role:

- To develop play opportunities in the local community for children and young people aged between 5-14.
- ensure children that have additional needs are placed in play settings and their play needs are being met
- Supervise and provide after school play activities
- Manage activities and projects for children and young people. Gain funding for this to happen and manage staff and oversee the day to day operating of the project including responsibility for finance and report writing.
- Organise, plan and deliver play activities for children age 5 to 11, supervise children making sure they are safe and happy. Liaise with parents, keep records and control petty cash.
- I am the Development Manager of our Soft Play Centre and over see our Play Schemes and Wellbeing and support worker.
- Provide a space where children have opportunity to experience play opportunities
- Look after and support children and young people, ensure they stay safe during play.
- Setting up a stimulating play environment for children aged 5-11 and taking part in child led activities when invited by the children.
- Play work looking after children
- I Work in a daycare. Keeping accurate records, assessments of children, key worker, plan and set up activities etc.
- Set up activities, work alongside children as they play, help pack away at the end of the session

Briefly tell us your job role:

Manager of the 16+ support team within the Youth Engagement and Participation service. My team provides youth work support for young people aged between 16 and 25 and this can take the form of advice and guidance around issue based concerns, EET and those at risk of homelessness.

Holiday club pslworker

Playworker for children aged 5-11

I provide safe and enjoyable play opportunities for children and young people aged 5-14

To supervise and give children play opportunities

Assist and support open access play schemes and after school clubs in special schools, some 1 to 1 and 2 to 1 support

Offer play provision to children. Travel to special schools and offer disabled children the chance to play like other children Run and lead open access play provision

Activities with children

Activities with childer

I go around RCT providing okay provision for children

Cook for a primary school

One to one support worker

Responsible for the children and youth activities and programme

Plan and manage the running of all provisions at the centre.

Support children splay in a supervised session

I care and understand the needs of young children and give them the support that they need. I make sure they have the best start in life and get the best outcome.

Working in nursery and after school clubs

To allow children to have free play within our development

I own an out of school setting

To support the play development team to deliver high quality play service. To work with children and young people to participate in a range of play activities, support them to achieve and identify their play needs.

I work for a charity doing several job roles. Working in a nursery, running playschemes and an after school club and helping to run a youth club

Supervise children

To encourage and support play of children and young people

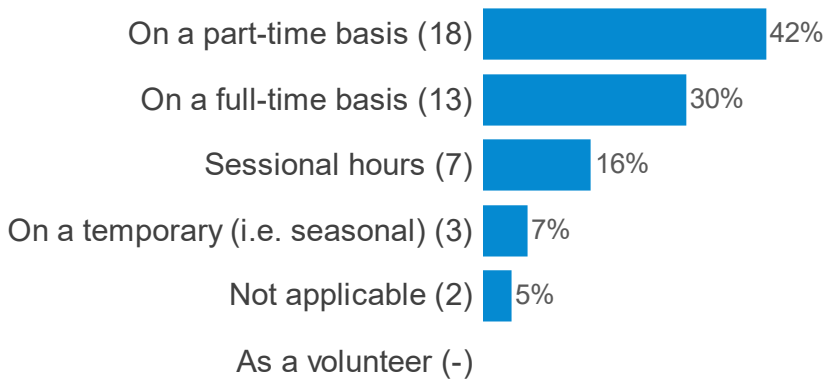
To manage a team of Play and Youth Workers ensuring delivery and facilities are safe and legal

Daily running of after school club, ensuring children are safely supervised, communicating with parents and other staff at the school, planning appropriate activities for the children. Completing daily safety checks and ensuring records are up to date

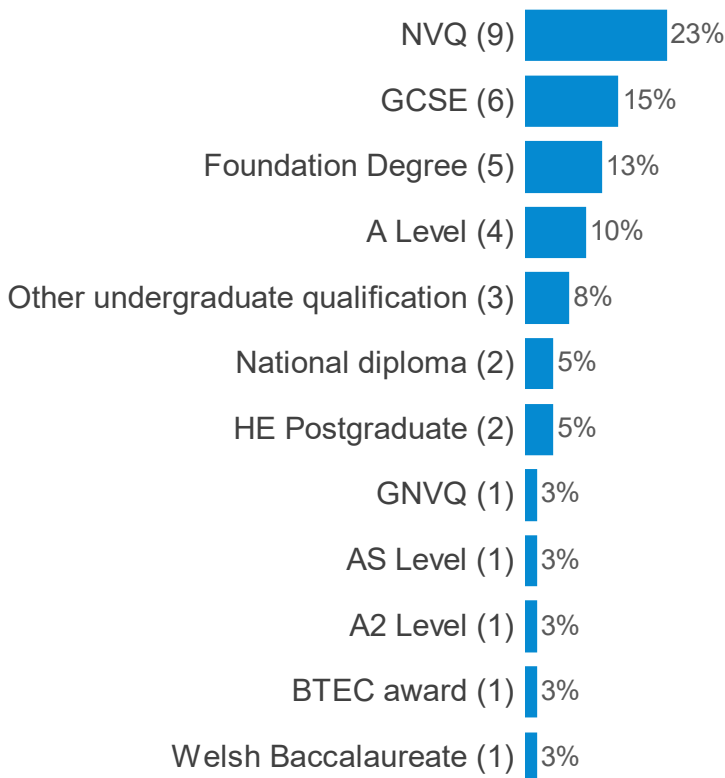
As a Playworker we organise, plan and take part in play and leisure activities for children. We also care for and supervise the children, making sure that they are safe and happy.

Play Workforce

Do you work:



What is the highest qualification you have achieved?

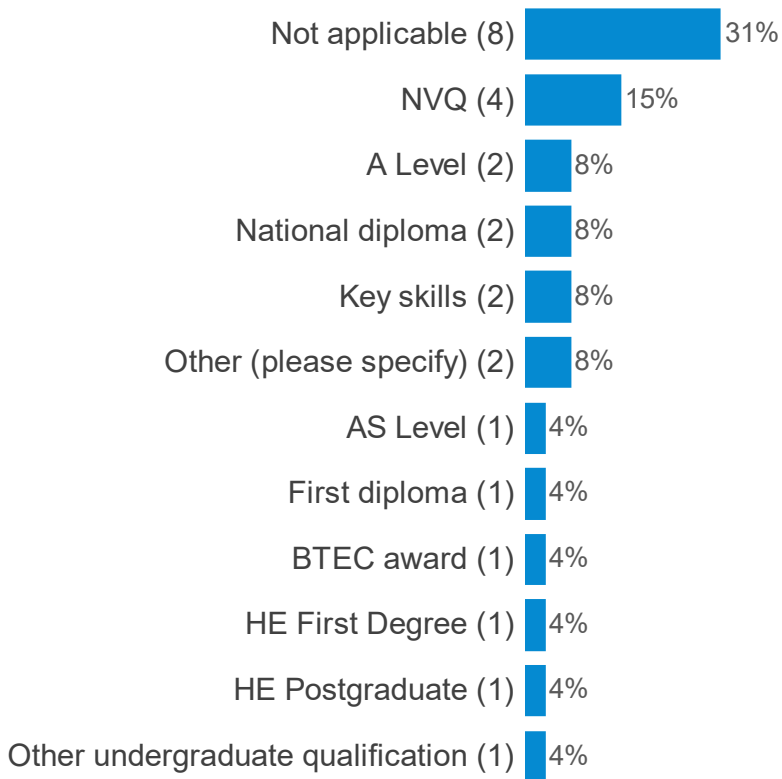


Other (please specify)

- _____
MSc
- _____
City & Guilds Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Childcare, Learning and Development.
- _____
Level 2
- _____
Hlta status
- _____
Bachelor of science degree 2:1
- _____
BA honours

Play Workforce

If you are you working towards a further qualification, please indicate:



Other (please specify)

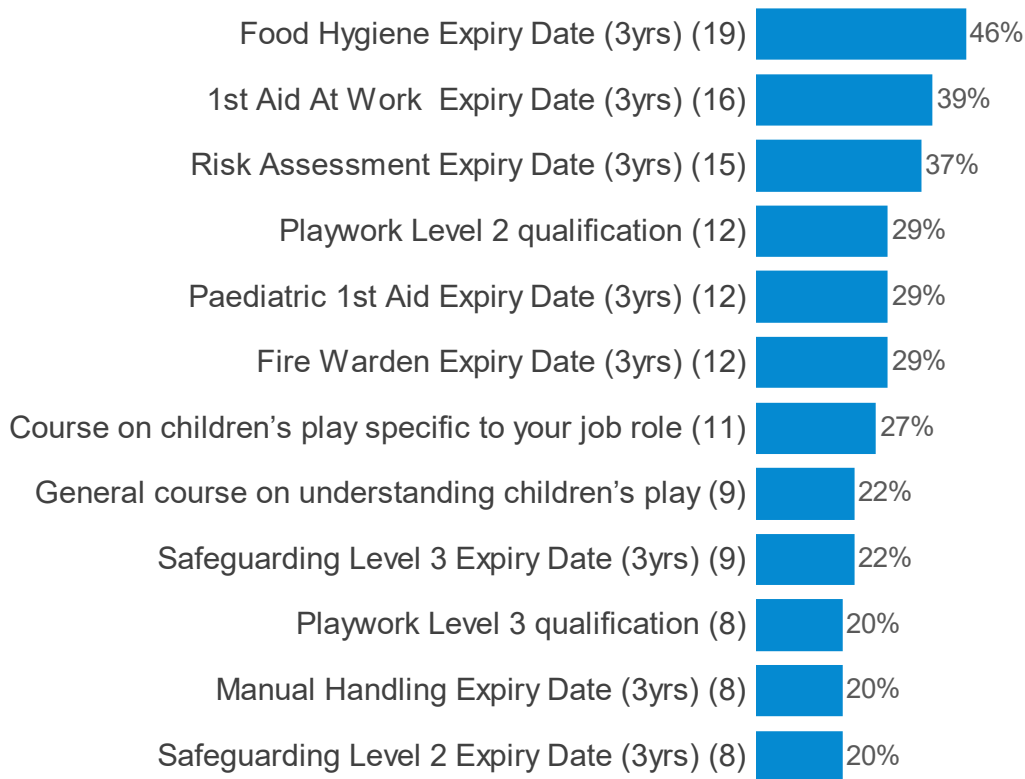
Level 3 in Playwork

Looking at level 3 play work currently have Transition to play work level 3

Level 3 transition into play work

Transition into play work level 3

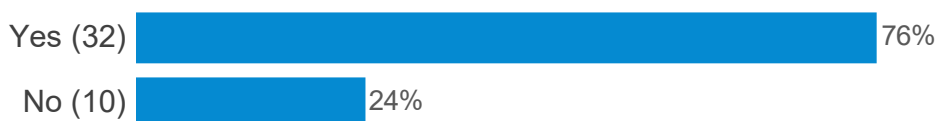
What training needs do you think you have?



Please list any other Training you would like to attend:

- Play therapy Welsh active offer Basic Welsh in a play environment Makaton
- **Understand special needs **Issuse based - Mental health, drugs and alcohol, sex and sexuality, health and well-being
- Any other training that would benefit me within my role.
- Play therapy, makaton, welsh language
- How play and youth work teams can work together for mutual benefit.
- Any
- ADDAPT
- Basic welsh language
- Risk assessment Food hygiene Fire warden
- Additional learning needs training, managing challenging behaviour
- Playwork level 2 Playwork level 3 First aid at work
- Additional needs and makaton

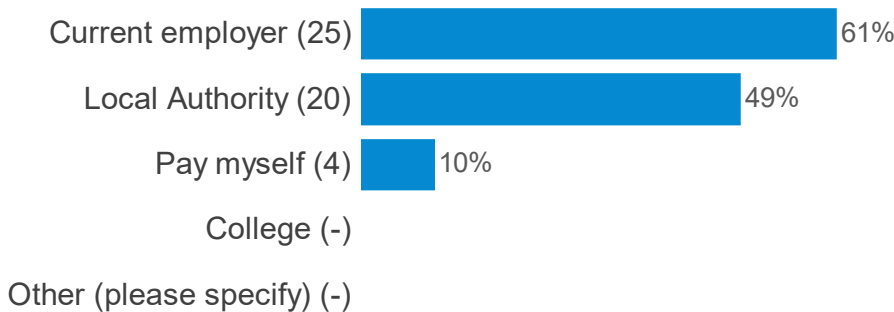
Are you able to access this training locally?



If you answered yes to the above question, please tell us who provides this training?

- Our in house training department will organise it
- Not sure
- local community. RCT.
- the fern partnership
- Adult wales
- LCDP
- LCDP
- Council
- range of providers
- R.C.T
- RCT
- Adult learning wales
- Local Authority
- Within the setting I work in.
- RCT council
- Adult learning wales
- Feel good factory
- Organisations that reach out to the centre and local council
- Various delivery partners such as High Speed Training with most available via the Local Authority

Please tell us how you are currently able to fund training?



When would you be able to attend training sessions?



How would you like the training to be delivered?



Briefly tell us why you feel you need to better understand children’s play

- I am always looking to broaden my knowledge and experience ongoing professional development
- To understand better.
- Any training that would benefit my job role I am willing to under go. I am always looking for more courses to attend to develop myself to support the children and families I work with.
- To extend personal development
- Because all children play and learn in different ways therefore it is good practice to have an understanding of play.
- I am undertaking a University placement in a play scheme and I am finding it difficult to merge my remit (youth work for 11 - 14 years olds who attend) with the play ethos.
- I feel the need to better understand children’s play so that I can improve the level of quality of a service we provide in order to give children and young people the best play opportunity we can provide them
- To provide a happy play experience
- To improve my knowledge and provide a better play provision for children daily
- Always room to learn more
- Always something else to learn
- It allows me to present the best possible play opportunities for children
- To gain a greater understand and knowledge, to enhance my professional development
- I would find it easier to understand children and there needs better, and will give me a greater understanding which would further the help I could give.
- It’s important to keep updated in childrens play to ensure that I am a efficient playworker
- I feel that being more trained in challenging behaviour and additional learning needs will help better facilitate my ability to provide more inclusive playschemes
- I would just like more training for the future
- There’s always way to better your understanding and being able to access courses is always a good thing to have.
- In order to be fully up to date with current legislation and to ensure my staff are trained and qualified.
- Because all children are different.

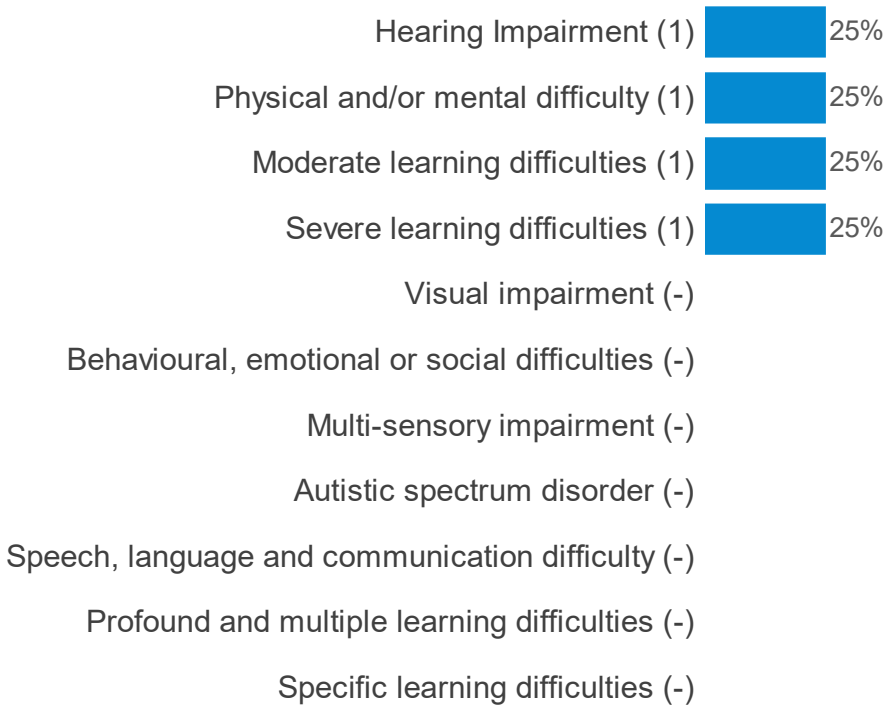
Disability

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

‘The definition of disability as defined under the Equality Act (2010) is ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities’.



If yes, what is your primary type of disability?

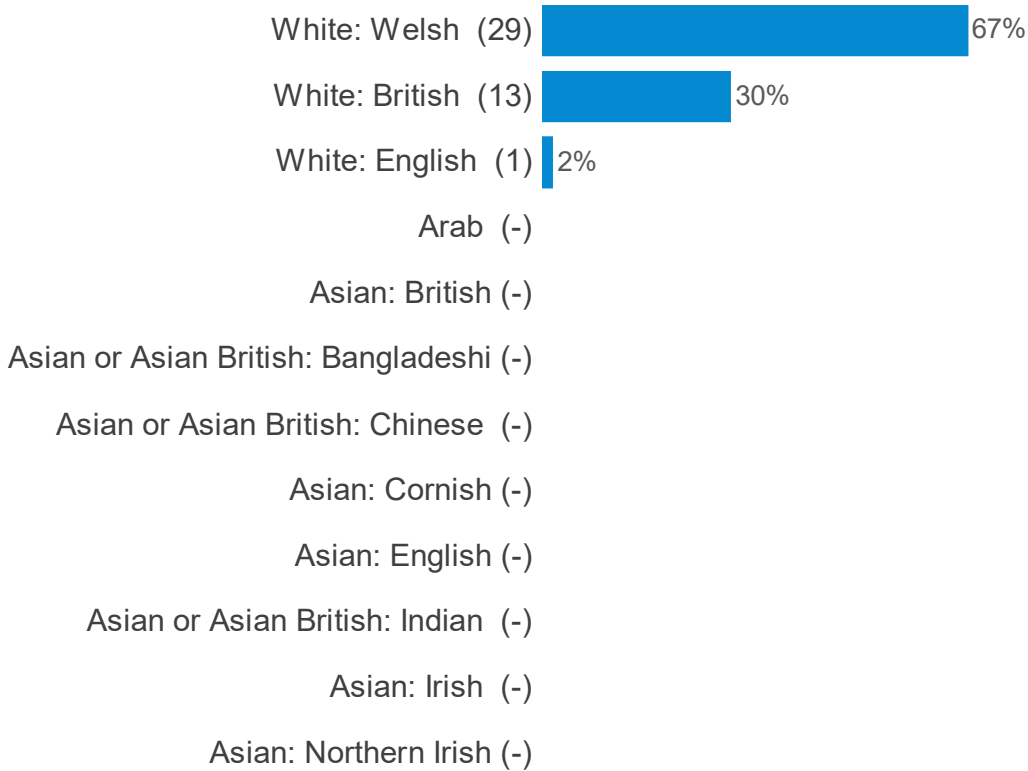


Do you live and/or work in Wales?



Ethnicity

How would you describe your ethnic origin?



Please state Asian or Asian British Other / Black, Black British or Black African Other / Mixed/Multiple Other / White Other:

White

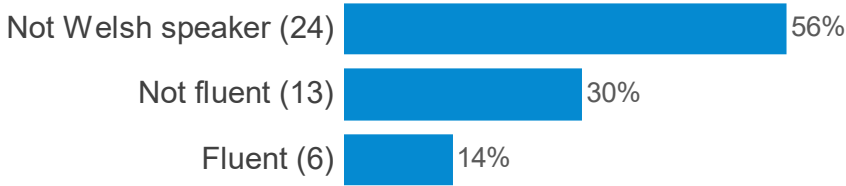
What is your first language?



Other (please specify)

Welsh

Are you a Welsh speaker?



What is your preferred language of learning?



Is there any other information you would like to add?

I personally do not think there is enough outdoor play provision and parents use after school and holiday clubs as a “babysitting “ service. There is limited understanding of play and it’s benefits to C/YP in the wider parental community and I feel training opportunities for this population is non existent. I feel having parents who have some understanding will give them the confidence to get their children away from screen time and outside.

No

No

None

PSA Workforce Training Timetable April – March 2022/2023

	Course	Date	Time
April	L2 Safeguarding (1) First Aid at work (1) Playwork Level 2 (1) Neurodevelopment (1) Makaton (1) Active Listening (1)	4 th April 2022 9 th April 2022 Start 4 th April 2022 12 th April 2022 14 th April 2022 23 rd April 2022	9am (weekday) 10am (weekend) 6pm (evenings) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday) 10am (weekend)
May	L3 Safeguarding (1) Paediatric First Aid (1) Playwork Level 3 (1) Course on Children’s play specific to your job role (1) Incidental Welsh (1) Managing Challenging Behaviour (1)	14 th May 2022 17 th and 24 th May 2022 Start 21 st May 2022 5 th May 2022 3 rd May 2022 28 th May 2022	10am (weekend) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 10am (weekends) 9am (weekday) 6pm (evening) 10am (weekend)
June	Food Hygiene (1) Fire Warden (1) Risk Assessment (1) Understanding Children’s Play (1) Additional Learning Needs (1) Resilience, Self Assessment and Action Plan Building (1)	6 th June 2022 7 th June 2022 8 th and 15 th June 2022 13 th June 2022 11 th June 2022 21 st June 2022	9am (weekday) 6pm (evening) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 9am (weekday) 10am (weekend) 6pm (evening)
July	Manual Handling (1) Substance misuse (1) Sex and sexuality (2) Play Therapy (2) Emotion Coaching (1) Mental Health First Aid (1)	2 nd July 2022 6 th July 2022 9 th July 2022 16 th July 2022 11 th July 2022 18 th July 2022	10am (weekend) 6pm (evening) 10am (weekend) 10am (weekend) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday)

August	Incidental Welsh (Clybiau) (2) Makaton (2) Bereavement Training (1) Resource Planning (1) Building Resilience (1)	6 th August 2022 13 th August 2022 16 th August 2022 20 th August 2022 8 th August 2022	10am (weekend) 10am (weekend) 6pm (evening) 10am (weekend) 6pm (evening)
September	L2 Safeguarding (2) First Aid at work (2) Playwork Level 2 (2) Neurodevelopment (2) Active Listening (2)	10 th September 2022 14 th September 2022 6 th and 13 th September 2022 17 th September 2022 19 th September 2022	10am (weekend) 9am (weekday) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 10am (weekend) 9am (weekday)
October	L3 Safeguarding (2) Paediatric First Aid (2) Playwork Level 3 (2) Course on Children's play specific to your job role (2) Managing Challenging Behaviour (2)	5 th and 12 th October 2022 15 th October 2022 Start 10 th October 2022 Start on 24 th September 2022 18 th and 25 th October 2022	6pm (2 twilight sessions) 10am (weekend) 6pm (evenings) 10am (weekends) 6pm (2 twilight sessions)
November	Food Hygiene (2) Fire Warden (2) Risk Assessment (2) Additional Learning Needs (2) Emotion Coaching (2) Mental Health First Aid (2)	12 th November 2022 14 th November 2022 8 th November 2022 10 th and 17 th November 2022 2 nd November 2022 19 th November 2022	10am (weekend) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 6pm (evening) 10am (weekend)
December	Substance misuse (2) Health and wellbeing / mental health (2) Sex and sexuality (2) Play Therapy (2) Makaton (3) ADD (2)	3 rd December 2022 10 th December 2022 5 th December 2022 7 th December 2022 12 th December 2022 14 th December 2022	10am (weekend) 10am (weekend) 9am (weekday) 6pm (evening) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday)

January	L2 Safeguarding (3) First Aid at work (3) Playwork Level 2 (3) Course on Children's play specific to your job role (3) Managing Challenging Behaviour (3) Resilience, Self Assessment and Action Plan Building (2)	11 th and 18 th January 2023 19 th and 26 th January 2023 Start on 23 rd January 2023 9 th January 2023 17 th January 2023 12 th January 2023	6pm (2 twilight sessions) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 6pm (evenings) 6pm (evening) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday)
February	L3 Safeguarding (3) Paediatric First Aid (3) Playwork Level 3 (3) Manual Handling (2) Neurodevelopment (3) Additional Learning Needs (3) Resource Planning (2)	7 th February 2023 9 th February 2023 Start 13 th February 2023 16 th February 2023 15 th and 22 nd September 2023 23 rd February 2023 2 nd February 2023	9am (weekday) 9am (weekday) 6pm (evenings) 9am (weekday) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday)
March	Food Hygiene (3) Fire Warden (3) Risk Assessment (3) Understanding Children's Play (2) Incidental Welsh (3) Bereavement Training (2) Building Resilience (2)	2 nd and 9 th March 2023 8 th and 15 th March 2023 7 th March 2023 11 th March 2023 13 th March 2023 20 th March 2023 4 th March 2023	6pm (2 twilight sessions) 6pm (2 twilight sessions) 6pm (evening) 10am (weekend) 9am (weekday) 9am (weekday) 10am (weekend)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

FOOD RESILIENCE REPORT

REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR. ROBERT HARRIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

Author: Wendy Edwards – Service Director - Community Services - 07557082875
Caroline O'Neill – Strategic Arts and Culture Manager - 07786523614

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an opportunity to review the support offered to residents who are experiencing food poverty, the work undertaken with partners to develop a strategic approach to food security and the progress made towards achieving a Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award plus plans for further development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Cabinet note the content of the report.
- 2.2 Continues its support for developing Rhondda Cynon Taf as a 'Sustainable Food Place'.
- 2.3 Approves the submission of an expression of interest for a Sustainable Food Place Bronze Award.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food remains a challenge for poorer households across the County as in other areas of Wales. The [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019](#) records that Rhondda Cynon Taf has the third highest lower super output areas (LSOAs) ranked in the 50% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. It is important therefore that we continue to work with partners to provide support to those who need it and work collaboratively to provide more resilience over the longer term.

- 3.2 It is widely accepted that the UK is currently experiencing the worst cost of living crisis for decades and research by academics at Cardiff University Business School led by Professor Huw Dixon and by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (UK Poverty Report 2021) indicates that poorer households will be more deeply affected as they spend a higher percentage of their income on food and energy costs than those in wealthier households. Evidence suggests that work is no longer a route out of poverty for many and over 50% of households in poverty in Wales have an adult that is working full-time. Just over 20% of employed people in RCT are not paid the Living Wage Foundation's 'Living Wage' (2018) making them more vulnerable to food poverty.
- 3.3 The Council and its partners are working to reduce pressures on households in the short-term while working towards a longer-term plan to improve resilience through the Sustainable Food Places (SFP) programme that aims to work across all aspects of the food system to solve social, environmental, and economic issues.
- 3.4 Achieving an SFP Bronze Award, for which an expression of interest has been submitted by January 2023, will evidence how the Council is:
- Establishing a broad, representative and dynamic local food partnership.
 - Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.
 - Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food.
 - Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy.
 - Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains.
 - Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Support to access food formed an important part of the resident response during the Covid pandemic with the Council working with Welsh Government to identify those on the Shielded Patients List (SPL) who had no friends, family or support network to rely on for food shopping and were unable to book online shopping. At the height of Lockdown 1,653 SPL residents received weekly Welsh Government food parcels.
- 4.2 Over 80,000 community meals were successfully delivered during the pandemic to some of our most vulnerable citizens in our community, together with delivery of over 637 meals a week to shielding individuals within the County.
- 4.3 To support people with dietary requirements and people that required emergency food parcels, the Council established a Food Distribution Centre

which provided and/or delivered a total of 5,785 food parcels between 13th April and 26th August 2020.

- 4.4 In addition to the above, 32 deliveries were made to local Food Banks amounting to £14,951 of food products during the same time-period. The use of the Council's procurement team to source specific food products was identified as a particular benefit when certain food products were difficult to buy and consequently donations of these by the public reduced, affecting the ability of some local foodbanks to provide the boxes of products that would enable recipients to make suitable meals.
- 4.5 The infrastructure established during the pandemic to support residents remains in place and requests for food-related support through the Community Resilience Hubs have continued since the end of Lockdown although at a greatly reduced rate. 243 resident requests for support were received and responded to in 2021/22, of which 180 were for emergency food parcels, 9 for Meals on Wheels support, and 123 for support with shopping. (Some residents required more than one support option, for example an emergency food parcel and support to do shopping).
- 4.6 The focus on food support and the challenges facing foodbanks during the pandemic resulted in a Community Growing Solutions Network event facilitated by Interlink in July 2020 which was attended by a broad range of organisations including Council staff. It was agreed that there was a need to develop a more strategic approach to food poverty including the establishment of a Food Prosperity Network and a Food Response Pathway that have been successful in some other areas and which provides a more sustainable way ahead.
- 4.7 The support provided for foodbanks and community food organisations outlined below has been developed alongside this longer-term approach and each element forms an essential part of the Council's plan to improve food resilience.

5. SUPPORT FOR FOOD BANKS AND COMMUNITY FOOD ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 In October 2020 the Council Leader announced £10,000 of funding to support RCT foodbanks. In consultation with the four main Foodbanks, it was felt that the funds could also go a long way to support community food groups. A simple online application process was quickly established, in line with other RCTCBC Community Support Grant Schemes and all known food providers within our communities were alerted to the grant availability. The fund was boosted by a further £10,000 from Trivallis who had successfully applied for funding from the Welsh Procurement Alliance. Applications of up to £500 could be made up to 3 times in a year.
- 5.2 20 community organisations accessed this fund in 2021/22, 14 of whom made multiple applications. Each group completed a monitoring form identifying

number of beneficiaries and volunteers involved in their programme. In total 806 people/families benefitted from their support and 85 volunteers were involved in the work.

- 5.3 The Food Support Fund has been an efficient way to support residents with food security. It has been greatly appreciated by community groups and residents alike. Community groups have particularly appreciated the ease and speed of accessing the grant and being able to claim funding up front. The approach taken fits in well with the Neighbourhood Network and Community Resilience Hub model where we are building capacity and supporting communities to help themselves. For a relatively modest investment we have been able to directly support a huge number of residents which has eased pressure on Foodbanks. Examples of some of the projects supported include:
- Bonding Through Real Action - Food bags provided much needed support for families and individuals through the half term holiday. 50 bags of fresh fruit, vegetables and unperishable items were provided to families/individuals on the Bryntirion Estate.
 - Cynon Valleys Organic Adventures - The money was used to purchase seeds and compost/soil to grow vegetables for the community. A wide range of vegetables were planted and the food was distributed to community members who came into the project for a warm drink, a chat and to pick their own vegetables.
 - Newydd HAPI Project - Newydd ran a Christmas Hamper project for tenants and the wider community. Over 40 hampers were delivered to individuals and families going through financial difficulties over the festive period. Each hamper included ingredients for meals to last 7 days (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) as well as recipe cards and bespoke video guides on how to make the meals.
- 5.4 In April 2022 an additional £22,000 was allocated to the Food Support Fund by the Council from the Welsh Government's Household Support Fund. This will continue to provide much-needed funds for community food organisations to support residents at a time when the cost-of-living crisis is impacting more families.
- 5.5 The Council has also allocated £28,000 from the Household Support fund to the 4 main local foodbanks to meet the increased demand for their services. The support provided by the Council's Procurement service remains in place and bulk orders continue to be made on behalf of foodbanks.
- 5.6 Foodbanks and other community organisations are also provided with period dignity products from the Council's allocation under the Welsh Government's Period Dignity Grant.

- 5.7 Other forms of support have also been provided, for example, the Council refurbished the former Riverside Day Centre and it was transferred over through the Council's Community Asset Transfer programme to Pontypridd Foodbank on favourable lease conditions to meet their need to find a permanent location to support residents in the local area.
- 5.8 At the peak of the lockdown period, the Council had 25 school-based hubs operating, including 4 special schools and 2 PRUS with over 200 vulnerable children accessing the hubs on a daily basis. All children accessing the hubs had a free lunch and breakfast provided along with transport where that was identified as a barrier to access provision.
- 5.9 Free breakfast provision was reinstated early to support pupils in our primary schools for those in need and assisted our communities and parents/carers to get back to work.
- 5.10 In addition the Council ran a School Holiday Enrichment Programme in a range of 15 mainstream and special school settings over the summer holiday period of 2021 securing a grant of over £150k to deliver the programme and the Council funded a further summer provision in an additional mainstream setting. The SHEP programme provided a safe, supervised place for pupils to socialise with one another, receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch and participate in sports, education and craft activities. This scheme has been particularly important for our vulnerable children and their families as we continue to support our Communities through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.11 Big Bocs Bwyd is another example of a successful community project. It is a project based in 9 of our schools (with a 10th coming on board this summer) aimed at ensuring that children and their families have access to food on a 'pay as you feel' basis. This ensures that some income can be generated by the project to reinvest in the Big Bocs Bwyd but also where parents may be unable to afford full price products, they can access these at a reduced or no cost basis. The Big Bocs Bwyd unit is a refurbished storage container fitted with shelving and fridges to create a 'shop front' with a separate smaller container used to store produce. The schools source food surplus from Fareshare Cymru and through local shops and supermarkets. They are also linking with organisations such as allotment societies and growing their own produce on school site. The children of the schools are actively involved in the Big Bocs Bwyd and growing elements with explicit links to the 4 purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.
- 5.12 Through pooling together a number of external grants, Council funds and the contribution from Trivallis, food banks and other community food organisations/initiatives were provided with direct funding of just over £80,000 worth of capital and revenue funding in 2021/22. Additional external funding has been made available for 2022/23 with the result that there will be £206,402 (£154,357 revenue, £52,045 capital) of direct funding to invest in

immediate solutions to resident needs and to further develop the longer-term approach to developing RCT as a Sustainable Food Place.

6. SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES

- 6.1 Alongside the developments highlighted above, the Council applied in December 2020, to Sustainable Food Places for a Development Grant to begin the conversations with key partners and communities and to establish the RCT Food Network. In January 2021, the Council was chosen as one of just four successful applicants across Wales. The Development Grant was deliverable within 6 months and its objectives have been achieved.
- 6.2 In May 2021 a virtual event on Zoom was arranged and facilitated by Interlink. 82 individuals signed up for the event. There was a clear commitment & agreement across Rhondda Cynon Taf that a strategic approach to food was required. The main action called for by partners at the event was to appoint a specialist Sustainable Food Places Co-ordinator to drive this forward.
- 6.3 In October 2021, a successful application was made to become a Sustainable Food Places Member and for a contribution to the Co-ordinator's cost. The award was £10,000 per annum for 2 years. The Sustainable Food Coordinator was appointed in November 2021.
- 6.4 The work undertaken on developing RCT as a sustainable food place has been significant. The partnership has identified local needs and agreed a workplan while the Council has been able to allocate funding from a range of sources to support the implementation of the plan. Recent developments include:
- Terms of Reference and Information Sharing agreement drafted.
 - Public Health Wales added as a member of the Steering Group alongside Fareshare, Interlink, Bryncynon Strategy and the Council.
 - Six key themes agreed and working groups established.
 - Financial support has been provided to source equipment and establish the infrastructure for community pantries. (Pantries and pre-paid purchase cards reduce the reliance on, and stigma attached to using Foodbanks.)
 - A successful pilot programme to encourage older people to try more climate friendly meals, reducing meat quantity by half but keeping a similar protein content through addition of non-meat proteins, has been implemented at Gilfach Goch centre.
 - 120 slow cookers have been purchased from the Welsh Government's grant to community hubs. Cookery classes are being planned to ensure that people who are most disadvantaged can access learning opportunities to enable them to produce nutritious meals on a budget – on completion of the learning programme they will be able to keep the slow cookers to use in their homes.
 - Cooking hobs have been provided to community groups who support residents to develop cooking skills.

- A programme of face-to-face events has been undertaken to facilitate communication and collaboration amongst community projects. Two events have been held, 22/02/2022 at The Feel-Good Factory and 24/05/2022 at Meadow Street Community Garden.
- A Food Pantry subgroup of the network has been established via an event held in conjunction with Purple Shoots on 4th April 2022.
- Community Support Steering group partners have worked together to design a resident support leaflet, ensuring residents are aware of how to access support and entitlements.

6.5 Work is ongoing to spread the awareness of the Healthy Start Voucher scheme. Healthy Start is a means-tested programme designed to improve the health of low-income pregnant women and families on benefits and tax credits. It enables pregnant women and children over 1 and under 4 years to have 1 voucher worth £4.25 each week to help buy some basic foods. Children under 1 can get 2 vouchers each week (£8.50). Women and children in receipt of the vouchers can also get vitamin coupons to swap for free Healthy Start vitamins. FareShare have now included information on how food support projects can accept Healthy Start vouchers. However, more work is required to increase take up in RCT for eligible families, as recent UK Government developments which moved the process to online, has caused a reduction in uptake from 52% to 32% in RCT. Ensuring that all eligible families receive these vouchers will go some way to mitigate the impact of rising costs on families.

6.6 It is also important to note that Council's Community Meals Service continues to support those in need, providing a hot meal during the week and chilled meals on the weekend to vulnerable and elderly residents. We currently provide over 500 meals a day. The 2022/23 price of a two course, nutritious meal is £4.05, which represents good value for money.

6.7 Working with Community, Voluntary and Third Sector organisations as well as internal services, developments are continuing to support public bodies to make land available for food growing, green prescribing & access to green space for health and wellbeing.

7. FREE PRIMARY SCHOOL MEAL PROVISION

7.1 The Council continues to make very good progress towards implementing the first phase of the Welsh Government's commitment on free school meals (FSM) for all primary aged children. We have 97 Primary Schools of which 87 currently have full production kitchens and 10 with dining centres, where food is transported to a servery at the school site. To improve the quality of the dining experience in those schools without a kitchen, we have an ambitious annual rolling programme to remove these dining centres and in 2022, we have programmed to convert three of the existing dining centres into production kitchens. This investment builds upon a continued investment programme over the past ten years in school kitchens.

7.2 We have 19,451 pupils on roll in the primary phase and we currently provide only 7,650 meals (8,946 pre-pandemic) in total to this age group. In the first phase of the Universal Primary FSM programme, there are 7,768 pupils in Reception – Year 2 of which only 3,106 pupils currently are provided with a school meal. Therefore, meeting the challenge of providing all children in primary school with a meal has required the Council to prepare a strategic plan to meet the logistical challenges.

7.3 A parental consultation (e-form) has been designed to estimate the demand for meals in the Autumn term and capture the reasons preventing parents taking up the FSM offer. We will also capture dietary requirements and include links to our special diet procedures. A new menu has been created and food suppliers have been notified of new products to enable forward planning with manufacturers. The new menu will commence and be trialled during June in order to identify and resolve production issues before the demand for meals increases in September 22. The majority of our food suppliers used in the production of School and Community Meals are based locally in South Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf are working in collaboration with neighbouring Local Authorities and is a member of the WLGA Food Group that is centrally looking at procurement routes to market that will benefit local Welsh supply chains and the foundational economy of Wales.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

8.1 There is no requirement for an equality and socio-economic impact assessment.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There is no requirement for a Welsh language impact assessment.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

10.1 There is no requirement for a consultation in relation to this report. It should be noted however that the work undertaken, and the resources allocated to support food resilience has been in response to needs identified by communities and partner organisations, and that a wide variety of organisations are involved in the work to establish RCT as a Sustainable Food Place.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

11.1 Food resilience is supported from a variety of external grants and Council funding. The role of the Sustainable Food Coordinator (GR10 post) is partly funded through the Sustainable Food Places grant (£20,000 over 2 years) with the remainder being allocated from the EU Transitional Support (Revenue) Fund.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal considerations aligned to this report.

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

13.1 The work undertaken as part of Sustainable Food Places aligns to each of the 3 Council Corporate Priorities:

- Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful.
- Creating places where people are proud to live, work and play.
- Enabling prosperity, creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

13.2. Facilitating and supporting the development of programmes to increase food resilience meets the following Well-being goals:

- Prosperous Wales – increasing the skills of the population to produce and prepare healthy food locally will reduce the carbon footprint and improve the environment.
- A resilient Wales – growing more food locally will have a positive impact on biodiversity and the resilience of local communities, helping them to develop the skills they need to help themselves and their communities.
- A healthier Wales – people's physical and mental wellbeing will be supported through adopting a healthy and nutritious diet. Activities supported by the Food Prosperity Network include teaching people how to cook and grow food thereby improving their health and wellbeing.
- A more equal Wales – ensuring that people have more secure access to food will reduce inequalities in our communities including inequality in relation to healthy life outcomes between poorer and more wealthy residents. Healthy diets and appropriate access to food can also improve school performance for pupils and reduce sickness absences from work as good food is essential for brain and organ health.
- A Wales of cohesive communities – engaging people in activities such as volunteering to support community groups who provide food support and participate in growing solutions will increase.
- A globally responsible Wales – adopting a more sustainable approach to food and reducing food poverty will contribute to creating a more globally responsible Wales.

13.3 The work related to Sustainable Food Places adopts a long-term approach to tackling food poverty, improving the environment and creating and improving diet and health, while recognising that it is important to continue to provide immediate relief to those experiencing food insecurity in order to prevent harm. It involves close collaboration and involvement from a wide range of organisations, from very small community groups to larger third sector and

public service organisations. The Network that has been developed is democratic and advice and feedback provided in relation to identifying resident needs and potential solutions is listened to and acted upon in line with resource availability.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The experience of Covid highlighted how vulnerable a wide range of residents were to food insecurity. During that period, foodbanks experienced a significant increase in demand for their services and dealt with individuals and families who had never previously relied on them. The current cost of living crisis is having a similar effect, impacting employed people as well as those who are unable to work. It is important therefore that the Council works closely with foodbanks, community organisations and the third sector to support those who are need – meeting their immediate needs through short-term solutions, while developing a plan that will provide a more resilient and sustainable food system over the longer-term.
- 14.2 This report has documented the support and resources provided by the Council to foodbanks and community support organisations, the positive impact on residents and the funding being made available for the coming year to address immediate needs. The report also outlines the notable progress being made towards ensuring free school meals to primary school age children.
- 14.3 Significant progress is being made to support the longer-term plan that will ensure RCT progresses along the journey to becoming a Sustainable Food Place. The first steps along this journey have already been taken with the establishment of the Food Prosperity Network, the Sustainable Food Places Steering Group and its work plan. The next significant step would be the achievement of the Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award which, if achieved, would recognise that the County was meeting each of the 6 criteria of the programme.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR ROBERT HARRIS, CABINET MEMBER
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

FOOD RESILIENCE REPORT

Background papers

None

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

Caroline O'Neill - Strategic Arts and Culture Manager

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd JUNE 2022

COMMUNITY WARDENS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – FRONTLINE SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

Author: Roger Waters, Director – Frontline Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet to introduce a new Community Warden service, effective across RCT, to support the Police in providing a visible, reassuring presence in our town centres, parks and communities. The report also outlines a Council funding proposal for additional Police Community Support Officers for RCT, to be employed by South Wales Police.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Director – Frontline Services, to proceed with the measures necessary to give effect to the proposals set out in this report, namely: -
1. To establish a new Community Warden Service to include a new team of Community Wardens with supervisory staff and provision of appropriate vehicles and equipment to support their deployment.
 2. To undertake a review of the existing roles and responsibilities of the Streetcare Enforcement team.
 3. To establish effective working procedures between the new team, the Council's Community Safety Team and the wider Community Safety Partnership to co-ordinate appropriate partner responses to areas of anti-social behaviour or community nuisances.
- 2.2 It is further recommended that Cabinet agree to provide funding to South Wales Police to employ an additional 10 Police Community Support Officers, (PCSOs), dedicated to RCT, but nevertheless deployed and directed by the Police.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe, is a key aim of the Council's corporate priority of creating places where people are proud to live work and play. The introduction of Community Wardens to provide a highly visible and reassuring presence in our communities will significantly contribute towards achieving this aim.
- 3.2 The Council's Streetcare Enforcement team is responsible for the enforcement, via the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, (FPNs), of certain day-to-day environmental crimes and offences including, but not exclusive to: litter dropping and dog fouling / control in support of the Council's Public Space Protection Orders, (PSPOs). It is envisaged that the new Community Wardens will also be warranted to carry out enforcement activities with respect to the PSPOs as part of their role and should thus form part of a revamped Environmental Enforcement & Awareness team.
- 3.3 The Council's Community Safety Team is responsible for working with partners to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) by individuals or in communities, using an evidence based, targeted approach to address problem areas. This work includes liaising with young people in communities, in conjunction with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, and working with schools and parents to prevent ASB. The enforcement of the PSPO in relation to ASB related to use of drugs and alcohol in our communities and town centres is a key priority to reduce the impact of alcohol and drug misuse on our communities and promote safe and confident communities and the Community Wardens will strengthen the Council's proactive approach to securing compliance with the PSPO. Effective procedures to harmonise the work of the Wardens and the Community Safety Partnership will enable the Council to monitor the impact on ASB referrals to inform future decisions about resources required to deliver the Partnership's priorities.
- 3.4 It has been widely reported and acknowledged that problems linked to, and caused by, ASB have increased over the past few years, especially during the period covered by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In order to help combat such problems, the Welsh Government has previously approved funding for an extra 100 PCSOs across Wales and the Council is seeking to enhance that provision with an additional offer of funding another 10 PCSOs solely dedicated to supporting the communities of RCT. Ongoing proactive dialogue will be held with the Chief Constable of South Wales Police to confirm arrangements around the Police's plans for the recruitment and future deployment of the PCSOs.

4. COMMUNITY WARDEN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The new Community Warden service will provide a visible, uniformed presence in our communities, 7 days a week, with a focus on town centres and parks, by helping to build partnerships to reduce the fear of crime and ASB.
- 4.2 The primary duty of a Community Warden will be to provide reassurance, assistance and help to create a safer, more pleasant living environment for all.
- 4.3 The Wardens will undergo rigorous training to ensure they can effectively and proportionately use the Council's enforcement powers to uphold the Council's PSPOs.
- 4.4 However, the Wardens will not replace the Police, or any other kind of wardens; instead, they will complement existing services, working closely with PCSOs and local neighbourhood policing teams to help ensure a coordinated and visible presence in the community.
- 4.5 Therefore, in essence, it is expected that the roles and responsibilities of the Community Wardens in supporting our communities will broadly encompass two main approaches:
- **Preventative**: Being a local point of contact, providing advice and support, as well as making referrals to other Council service areas, enhancing communication, and informing resource targeting. Supporting the Community Safety Partnership with developmental work in our communities to consult with and engage local residents in community safety initiatives and working with the YEPS Service to promote diversionary activities for young people.
 - **Reactive**: a focused response to areas that are experiencing ASB and or juvenile nuisance. Providing a visible uniformed patrolling of hotspot areas at key times and locations, reporting incidents and safeguarding concerns to partners as appropriate.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.
- 5.2 Moreover, the introduction of this new service can be seen as another step forward to ensuring strong and safe communities thrive across RCT for the benefit of all residents, providing an important link between the Council, our Partners and its communities to promote community cohesion and ensure an effective response to identified issues.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Community Wardens, and any supervisory staff, are employed at levels broadly consistent with other Frontline Services enforcement functions.
- 6.2 Additional patrol vehicles will be added to the Council's fleet replacement programme to enable the Community Wardens to be mobile to meet the needs of local communities. (Where possible, these vehicles will be Ultra-low Emission Vehicles). Uniforms, personal protective equipment, (e.g., body-worn video cameras) and mobile communications will also be provided.
- 6.3 Inclusive of the provision of the PCSOs, resources have been made available to meet the full cost of the proposal, and these have already been identified within the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Community Wardens will be warranted to enforce, where applicable and appropriate, offences associated with the following Statutory Legislation:
- The Environmental Protection Act, 1990 – Section 88, including the offences of dropping of litter, chewing gum, cigarette butts, etc.
 - The Anti-Social Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Section 68, including offences under Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2020 such as dog fouling, etc.
 - The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, (2005).

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

- 8.1 The proposals outlined in this report will help to improve community safety, particularly in our town centres and parks and assist in the creation of safer living environments across RCT.
- 8.2 The establishment of a Community Warden service can also be seen to be contributing towards the Council's plans to tackle Climate Change by encouraging and supporting residents to respect their local environments and dissuading people from committing harmful environmental crimes such as littering and dog fouling.
- 8.3 The work of Community Wardens, especially in relation to town centres and open spaces, can be seen to contribute to the delivery of the

Council's Corporate Priorities with respect to the theme of "place": creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work by making Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment clean and attractive.

- 8.4 Further, this report has considered the potential long-term impact of a Community Warden service to help ensure fair and consistent standards of environmental enforcement across a wide area, which in turn helps to support and promote the Council's well-being objective of creating an environment where people are proud to live, work and play.
- 8.5 Community Wardens will work closely with the Police, all partners of the Community Safety Partnership, Elected Members and local residents and so, in providing this service, the Council can be seen to be collaborating with others to consider the needs of all citizens.
- 8.6 Safer town centres, play areas and parks, which are effectively and fairly enforced for the benefit of all residents, will help support the delivery of a Wales of cohesive communities, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Community Wardens will provide a uniformed, professional patrolling presence in our communities, offering reassurance, assistance and effective reporting of issues to the police and statutory services in order to create a safer, more pleasant living environment within our communities.
- 9.2 The Wardens will ensure close links and integrated working across a breadth of Council services such as Environmental Enforcement, Community Safety Team, CCTV, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, Trading Standards, etc., as well as with locally Elected Members.
- 9.3 The Community Warden service will also involve communication and joint working with external agencies and organisations, including all member organisations of the Community Safety Partnership: e.g., the Police; Health Board; Probation Service; Fire Service, etc., as well as community-based and voluntary organisations.
- 9.4 The introduction of Community Wardens together with the addition of 10 RCT dedicated PCSOs represent an opportunity to promote safe and cohesive living environments across RCT that are clean and vibrant places to live.



Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity

Contact Officer
Roger Waters



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

CABINET

22ND JUNE 2022

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS – CHRISTIAN HANAGAN IN DISCUSSION WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR MAUREEN WEBBER

Report Author: CHRIS DAVIES – ARMED FORCES LEAD OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Council's ongoing support for our Armed Forces and Veteran community and outlines how the Council can increase the commitment to those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, through additional investment in the Armed Forces, including War Memorials.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the wide-ranging support that the Council is currently providing to support our Armed Forces and veterans.
- 2.2 Agree that the Council continues with its commitment to the Armed Forces, through a further £100k programme of investment over the next 5 years.
- 2.3 Agree that the recently appointed Heritage and Ancient Monuments Officer will develop a programme of investment and improvement to War Memorials, as well as providing a key point of contact for the community.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 We owe our Armed Forces community an enormous gratitude for the sacrifices that are and have been made. Under the Armed Forces Covenant Rhondda Cynon

Taf Council pledges to support those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces and their families, and that they should be treated with fairness and respect in the community, economy, and society they serve with their lives.

- 3.2 A continued commitment and investment will allow the Council to further support the Armed Forces community in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has invested significantly to increase the level of support provided to our veterans and was proud to be one of the first Local Authorities in Wales to establish an Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Armed Forces community based in the County Borough. The pledge recognises the dual respect between the Council, its partner agencies, its communities, our Armed Forces personnel (serving and retired) and their families.
- 4.2 In 2019 the Council launched the Veteran's Advice service, which provides free, impartial, dedicated information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces community within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The service covers a range of areas, including benefits, adult social care, finances, employment, and housing. The service has helped over 600 Veterans and family members in Rhondda Cynon Taf to date.
- 4.3 The Council are also proud to hold the Gold Employer recognition award and have employed a dedicated Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (AFLO) to ensure the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged in any way by their service. The AFLO provides Covenant awareness sessions to council staff, charities and external organisations and works closely with Armed Forces partners, neighbouring authorities, charities, and veteran groups.
- 4.4 The Council has also introduced a number of benefits to veterans including the waiving of burial and cremation fees, introduced to help the families of those who had served with the Armed Forces. We are the first council in Wales and England to introduce such a scheme. The Council also provides free access to Rhondda Cynon Taf leisure facilities for currently serving personnel and free swimming to any person that has served in the UK Armed Forces.

5. CURRENT SUPPORT

- 5.1 In the past 18 months we have further strengthened our support to the Armed Forces community and the following outlines some of extensive work that has taken place.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as an Armed Forces Employer

- 5.2 In January 2022 we built on our commitment to raise awareness and advocate the Armed Forces Covenant externally through a new Guaranteed Interview Scheme for service leavers, veterans and reservists. We are committed to working with the

Career Transition Partnership and Forces Families Jobs to support ex-Forces' personnel into employment. All job advertisements now explicitly welcome applications from the ex-Forces' community. The Council recognises the valuable and transferable skills our veterans have gained through time in the Armed Forces and how beneficial these skills can be to us as a Council.

- 5.3 The Council brings together a range of organisations to support the Armed Forces community through the chairing and support of the Partnership Armed Forces Covenant Panel. The Panel brings together 34 statutory, non-statutory and third sector organisations, all with a role in supporting civilian and military communities.
- 5.4 Internally, we have a Cabinet Armed Forces Group, chaired by the Armed Forces Champion and an Armed Forces Staff Network, with staff from across Council Services. The group develops and advocates the services and support the Council provides.

Support to existing staff

- 5.5 The Armed Forces Team undertook the first annual Armed Forces Staff survey in March 2022 and established that there are at least 5 reservists, 31 veterans and 12 spouses/partners of the Armed Forces working within the Council. The team is now linking in with our staff and providing support where necessary. We are holding our first Reservist/Veteran Staff coffee morning on Reservist Day, 22nd June 2022.
- 5.6 The Council has a generous Reserves Policy, celebrates Reserves Day, has held a 'Wear Your Uniform to work' day and reservist recruitment days in the past. We also offer flexibility for CFAV (Cadet Force Adult Volunteers) employees to fit their work in with volunteering and are updating our Reservist Policy to include CFAVs.
- 5.7 All new staff, over 600 to date, undertake a mandatory Armed Forces Covenant briefing at induction.

Support for Veterans

- 5.8 As mentioned above in 4.2 the Council has an established Veterans Advice Service. In addition, the AFLO provides a point of contact to support veterans 24/7.
- 5.9 The Council has helped set up and continues to support and manage a number of Veterans Groups across Rhondda Cynon Taf. These breakfast clubs support over 150 Veterans and their families. The groups provide informal support from the council, charities and employment organisations. The groups also offer a range of activities including walking, allotments, and social trips.

Support for Armed Forces children

- 5.10 School teachers and Armed Forces children are supported by our Regional School Liaison officer who has been in post since September 2019. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council receives over £15,000 each year to support our Armed Forces children in schools. The funding has been used in the past to provide training, advice, and support to teachers and to deliver Forces Fitness Sessions for Service Children.

- 5.11 The Council takes part in Month of the Military child, which highlights the important role military children play in the Armed Forces community. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council continues to recognise this importance, as well as the role military children play in the communities in which they live. As part of the events, the Council hosted Armed Forces Family Fun Fitness Sessions at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park for families and children of Armed Forces personnel who live within the County Borough and neighbouring localities. The Council, along with SSCE Cymru (Supporting Service Children in Education Wales) worked with Forces Fitness to deliver a weekend of family fun.

Externally funded projects

- 5.12 The Council continues to be successful in obtaining funding from a variety of sources to enable us to deliver specific projects for veterans. This has included Covenant funding to deliver First Aid Mental health training to veterans, Armed Forces volunteers, charity staff and Council employees who work with the Armed Forces Community. We are continuing the work with the Andy's Man Club charity to provide mediation workshops to members of the Armed Forces Community who have a diagnoses of mental health conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, and anxiety.
- 5.13 In 2021, through a successful bid for Armed Forces Covenant funding, we launched our Veterans Connected project which enabled veterans to stay connected with family, friends, and to access online support services through digital technology with the aim of reducing social isolation. As part of the funding, 80 mobile tablets were purchased and have been distributed throughout the veteran community. Members of the local veteran groups, including Valley Veterans, Ton Pentre and Taff Ely, Rhydyfelin, and Cynon Valley are able hire the tablets at any time, free of charge, through the Council's Armed Forces Veterans Service.

Celebrating our Armed Forces

- 5.14 In 2021 during the Covid pandemic, the Council had a smaller than usual Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony at Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd. On June 18th 2022, Armed Forces Day will once again be back with capacity crowds, including a parade, service and family fun day.
- 5.15 In September 2021, for the first time, the Council was proud to show its support for National Merchant Navy Day, commemorating the 40,000 seafarers, many from our County Borough, who died whilst serving in the Merchant Navy during the Second World War. The Red Ensign, the official flag of the British Merchant Marine (or Fleet) was proudly flown at the Council's Llys Cadwyn building in Pontypridd.
- 5.16 In November 2021 the Council hosted the RAF's official 'Wales and the Battle of Britain Exhibition' in Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd and welcomed over 1500 visitors. The exhibition was officially opened by Councillor Maureen Webber and Air Commodore Wales, Adrian Williams OBE. The Wales and the Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary Exhibition told the story from a Welsh perspective for the first time.

6. WAR MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS

- 6.1 During the last 18 months the Armed Forces Team has worked closely with Councillors, local community groups and the Highways Dept. on a number of war memorial projects that have included a range of improvement works and maintenance. In addition, the team provided a range of support to the community in Cwmparc on the opening of their new war memorial.
- 6.2 The maintenance works have included the following:
- Penrhiwceiber Clock Tower - A major restoration project, that involved fixing the 4 clock faces and the memorial being restored to its former glory. The monument was cleaned along with the inscribed brass panels, commemorating the fallen from the village of Penrhiwceiber. To complement the restoration, commemorative street furniture was also installed in the vicinity.
 - Mountain Ash War Memorial – Improvement to the footpaths leading up to the war memorial, as well as installing a number of WW1 benches and litter bins
 - Ynysangharad Park War Memorial - Installation of WW1 street furniture.
 - Cynon War Memorial Gardens – The Council is supporting the installation of an information lectern on the site of the memorial garden, working with the Cynon Memorial Garden Committee.
- 6.3 The Armed Forces Team has delivered on the above improvement works, working closely with our highway colleagues, and has provided a key point of contact for all War Memorial queries over the last 18 months.
- 6.4 The Council has recently appointed a Heritage and Ancient Monuments Officer, who is in the process of cataloguing the condition of all ancient monuments, including War Memorials, in liaison with CADW.
- 6.5 The Armed Forces Team will now work closely with the new Officer, who will deliver the condition report of all the War Memorials across Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop a programme of investment and improvement over the next 5 years.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/ SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to this report.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no Welsh Language Implications with regards to this report.

9. CONSULTATION/ INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 The Council continually engages with Veterans, the Armed Forces community and a range of organisations that support them, as well as internally with staff. A dedicated project has been set up on Let's Talk – [Let's Talk Armed Forces](#).

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Resources of £100k to fund the 5 year programme of investment and improvement have already been identified and set aside.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report

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

- 12.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is proud to be one of the first Local Authorities in Wales to establish an Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Armed Forces Community based in the County Borough. The pledge recognises the dual respect between the Council, its partner agencies, its communities and our Armed Forces Personnel (serving and retired) and their families.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has invested significantly to provide a high level of support to our Armed Forces community and was proud to be one of the first Local Authorities in Wales to establish an Armed Forces Covenant. The Council holds a Defence Employer Recognition Gold Award and is well recognised as an organisation that supports the Armed forces and our Veterans.
- 13.2 This report has outlined some of the ongoing and wide-ranging support the Council provides to the Armed Forces Community in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Armed Forces Team would like to continue to build on the progress that has been made and further increase our support to the Armed Forces community, to show our gratitude for the sacrifices that are and have been made.
- 13.3 The Council's Commitment to the Armed Forces community can be enhanced by increasing investment over the next 5 years, and by working closely with the recently appointed Heritage and Ancient Monuments Officer who will provide a programme of investment and improvement to War Memorials, as well as providing a key point of contact for the community.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

PONTYPRIDD TOWN CENTRE PLACEMAKING PLAN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND PROJECT UPDATES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR MARK NORRIS)

Author: Andrea Virgo

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Set out the headline results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the early ideas for redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings;
- 1.2 In addition, this report seeks Cabinet to approve the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the proposed changes and also the further development and delivery of schemes as set out within the document.
- 1.3 Provide an update on the proposed procurement exercise to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on the site of the former Bingo Hall on High Street / Sardis Road.
- 1.4 Highlight progress made towards the demolition plans for the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the responses to the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Pontypridd Placemaking Plan and the early ideas for the redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons

buildings and determines whether any amendments are required to the proposals.

- 2.2 Approve the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan (subject to any changes as result of the consultation process) and the further development and delivery of schemes as set out within the document.
- 2.3 Note the progress made towards undertaking a procurement exercise to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on the site of the former Bingo Hall on High Street / Sardis Road.
- 2.4 Note progress made towards the demolition plans of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Significant investment is already underway in Pontypridd Town Centre and with continued investment and a co-ordinated approach it is envisaged that Pontypridd will become a key economic, social and cultural centre.
- 3.2 The draft Pontypridd Placemaking Plan illustrates the scale of opportunity that exists within the town and at a meeting of the Cabinet on 28th February 2022, it was agreed that consultation on the draft plan and on the early ideas for redevelopment of the former Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings should be undertaken.
- 3.3 Cabinet also agreed that formal procurement to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on the site of the former Bingo Hall on High Street/Sardis Road should be progressed.
- 3.4 It was also agreed by Cabinet that a funding application should be submitted to Welsh Government to demolish the vacant and dilapidated M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings and to commence the demolition process if and when funding and any necessary statutory consents are in place.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As with many town centres throughout the UK, Pontypridd town centre has faced significant challenges to its economic viability in recent years. Despite this, Pontypridd town centre has proven to be incredibly resilient and significant progress has been made in the delivery of major regeneration projects and initiatives over recent years.

- 4.2 Between 2017 and 2021, nearly £115m investment was made against the priorities of the Regeneration Framework '*Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth*' and the success of this framework was fundamental in the development of its successor '*Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan (Draft)*'.
- 4.3 The draft Placemaking Plan builds upon the foundations of what has already been delivered and provides a framework for delivering new development and investment to further improve the prosperity of Pontypridd, enhance the townscape and make it even more resilient to future change.
- 4.4 Following approval by Cabinet at its February meeting, a 4-week public consultation exercise on the draft Placemaking Plan, with a particular focus on the early ideas for the redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtens buildings was undertaken.

5. DRAFT PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN - SUMMARY

- 5.1 'Placemaking' is an overarching approach to improving how a place looks, functions and is experienced and the draft plan illustrates the scale of opportunity that exists in the town.
- 5.2 To guide future investment, the plan identifies the following core ambitions for the town centre:
- **A BUSINESS DESTINATION** with established development areas that provide striking gateways to the town and a series of flexible workspaces that combine to make Pontypridd an attractive place to invest and work.
 - **A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE** with a choice of high quality new homes, accessible jobs and a bespoke leisure offer delivered in an unique riverside setting.
 - **CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE** with excellent pedestrian connections between the town centre and the railway and bus stations and high-quality cycle infrastructure that establishes the town as base to explore the wider valleys landscape.
 - **A GREEN WATERSIDE TOWN** with a unique outlook over the River Taff and the historic Ynysangharad War Memorial Park that provide an unrivalled leisure and recreational setting and distinctive landscape.

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

5.3 The plan takes an overarching view of the key areas that make up the town centre and proposes a series of approaches that would strengthen the sense of place in each of the following five spatial areas that have been identified as areas of specific focus for development:

SOUTHERN GATEWAY - A redeveloped gateway to the town including the former Bingo Hall site and Marks and Spencer/Dorothy Perkins stores, enhanced links between the station and the high street and an improved public realm that opens the entrance to the town and establishes a riverside plaza.

TOWN CENTRE CORE - A reinforced core of refurbished buildings that will provide workspace, homes, retail and leisure uses, a riverside walkway and better pedestrian connections and spaces.

MARKET QUARTER - A bespoke Market Quarter within the Town Centre Core that includes a rejuvenated market building and a unique retail and leisure offer in an historic setting, creating a destination in its own right within the heart to the town centre.

NORTHERN GATEWAY - Continued regeneration of the northern gateway to the town that includes a rejuvenated bus station, explores the potential for a new train halt, further workspace and mixed-use development at Berw Road, enhanced art and culture and better pedestrian routes.

YNYSANGHARAD WAR MEMORIAL PARK - A heritage park that has a natural riverside setting, diverse sport and recreational offer, is a hub for cultural and social events and base from which to explore the Valleys Regional Park.

5.4 The plan also proposes a series of projects and interventions that collectively are aimed at transforming the town centre. In summary these projects will:

- Create distinctive and welcoming entrances into the town centre.
- Redevelop vacant or dilapidated sites and premises for new commercial uses.
- Deliver improved links between public transport services and high-quality cycle infrastructure.
- Restore traditional buildings with a range of new uses.
- Create new public spaces that link the town to the River Taf and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.
- Make the town centre more resilient to potential future flood events.
- Deliver more tree planting and green infrastructure.
- Provide better pedestrian routes and create spaces for social and cultural events that people can enjoy, and which businesses can use.
- Develop a stronger digital presence.

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Views on the draft Placemaking Plan and the Southern Gateway concept masterplan which contains redevelopment plans for the former Bingo Hall and Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings, were sought from a broad range of stakeholders via a 4 week consultation exercise. The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 1st March to 29th March 2022.
- 6.2 A range of engagement methods and tools were used including a dedicated 'Let's Talk Pontypridd' website, engagement events held in the town centre and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, visits to businesses and organisations in the town centre, an exhibition at Pontypridd Library, email notification to key stakeholders, a press release and regular social media posts.
- 6.3 In total, 164 survey responses were received, with a further 135 responses to the "Quick Poll" questions and 70 contributions to an open text "Ideas" function on the 'Let's Talk Pontypridd' website.
- 6.4 8 written responses via email were received, including responses from local businesses, Councillors, Pontypridd Town Council, Your

Pontypridd Business Improvement District (BID), staff and Friends of the Earth, Pontypridd.

- 6.5 The headline findings of the consultation exercise are summarised below in paragraphs 6.6 to 6.16 with the detailed analysis and range of comments received presented at Appendix 1.
- 6.6. **Core Ambitions** - The draft Placemaking Plan presents an exciting and ambitious vision based on the seven core ambitions as previously detailed in paragraph 5.2.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these ambitions, over 50% of the respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each of the ambitions:

- **A Business Destination** - 56.7% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **A Great Place to Live** - 74.4% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Connected and Accessible** - 76.7% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **A Green Waterside Town** - 62.9% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **A Unique Townscape** - 60.9% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **A Cultural and Social Destination** - 57.2% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **An Inclusive and Resilient Town** - 60.1% strongly agreed / agreed.

- 6.7 **Spatial Areas** - Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that investment in each of the five spatial areas, as described in paragraph 5.3, is important for the economic regeneration of the town centre.

A high majority of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the need for investment in each of the spatial areas:-

- **Southern Gateway** - 84.1% strongly agreed / agreed. **Town Centre Core** - 91.1% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Market Quarter** - 78.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Northern Gateway** - 73.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park** - 78.2% strongly agreed / agreed.

- 6.8 **Projects and Initiatives** - Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed / disagreed with the proposed projects and initiatives that collectively are aimed at transforming the town centre.

A high majority agreed with all proposals as shown below:-

- **Create distinctive and welcoming entrances into the town centre** – 81.4% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Redevelop vacant or dilapidated sites and premises for new commercial uses** – 94.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Deliver improved links between public transport services and high-quality cycle infrastructure** – 74.2% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Restore traditional buildings with a range of new uses** – 90.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Create new public spaces that link the town to the River Taf and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park** – 85.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Make the town centre more resilient to potential future flood events** – 92.3% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Deliver more tree planting and green infrastructure** – 79.6% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Provide better pedestrian routes and create spaces for social and cultural events that people can enjoy, and which businesses can use** – 90.1% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Develop a stronger digital presence** – 59.4% strongly agreed / agreed.

6.9 **Southern Gateway Masterplan** - This is the first area that people experience when entering the town from the south, including from Pontypridd Railway Station. Currently the area is not fulfilling its potential and there is the opportunity to deliver development on a major scale.

6.10 The concept masterplan proposes significant redevelopment of key prominent sites including the former Bingo Hall site and Marks and Spencer/Dorothy Perkins stores. It also proposes enhanced links between the station and the high street and an improved public realm that opens the entrance to the town and establishes a riverside plaza.

6.11 Redevelopment of this 'Southern Gateway' area will form Phase 1 of the implementation of the Placemaking Plan and respondents were asked to view the concept masterplan and indicate how much they agreed / disagreed that the proposed development of these sites will have a positive impact in kick-starting the transformation of the area.

6.12 A high majority agreed with the proposed development of all three sites as shown below:

- **Former Bingo Hall / Angharads Nightclub** - 88.4% strongly agreed / agreed.
- **Former Marks & Spencer Building** - 90.9% strongly agreed / agreed.

- **Former Dorothy Perkins/Burtons Buildings** - 89.7% strongly agreed / agreed.

6.13 In addition to seeking views on the content of the draft placemaking plan, respondents were asked how they currently view a number of key aspects of the town centre.

The results show that *access to services / cafes, restaurants, bars / ease of walking around the town centre and transport links* were seen mostly as positive with *car parking / cultural activities and events / physical appearance / lack of public conveniences and the retail offer* viewed mostly as negative.

6.14 The consultation survey concluded with respondents being asked whether they agreed that implementation of the placemaking plan would result in more people being attracted to Pontypridd as a place to work, live and visit and that the economy of the town centre and surrounding areas will significantly benefit from its implementation. Encouragingly, over 70% of respondents agreed with these statements.

6.15 Overall, the response to the consultation exercise has been very positive and clearly supports the implementation of the placemaking plan. Some valuable suggestions have also been received such as the need to strengthen the plan in respect of tackling climate change and integration of the Welsh Language. As such, the plan has been updated to reflect this feedback.

6.16 Where negative aspects in respect of the town centre have been highlighted such as anti-social behaviour, lack of public conveniences and overall cleanliness of the town, these issues will be fully considered moving forward.

7. PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE

7.1 As noted previously, implementation of the Southern Gateway Masterplan will form phase 1 of the implementation of the placemaking plan. Redevelopment of the key sites and premises detailed below will kickstart the transformation with further elements such as the riverside plaza to follow.

7.2 Former Bingo Hall / Angharads Nightclub

7.3 Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 28th February, that a formal procurement exercise to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on this site should be progressed over the next 6 months.

- 7.4 Significant work has since been underway to prepare the necessary tender documentation and it is anticipated that the formal procurement exercise will commence in July of this year.
- 7.5 In addition, to facilitate site mobilisation the Council acquired the properties at 13 - 17 Sardis Road and 103 - 110 Taff Street in March 2022 with financial support from Welsh Governments Transforming Towns Programme.
- 7.6 Ownership of these properties provides the opportunity for more space to undertake construction of the hotel development and officers are currently engaging with the business in these properties.
- 7.7 A further report will be presented following conclusion of the formal procurement exercise.
- 7.8 Former Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins / Burtons Buildings**
- 7.9 Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 28th February, that a funding application should be submitted to Welsh Government for the demolition of the vacant and dilapidated M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings and to commence the demolition process, if and when, funding and any necessary statutory consents are in place.
- 7.10 To date, the funding application to Welsh Government has not been able to progress as guidance is still awaited on their new 3-year funding programme and associated application requirements. However once received, a funding application can be quickly progressed.
- 7.11 In the meantime, preparatory work has continued, and a multi-disciplinary team led by Rhomco Consulting Limited has been appointed to progress the survey and demolition design works.
- 7.12 A detailed programme will be produced and reviewed over the coming weeks.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form was prepared prior to the consultation exercise being undertaken. The results of the consultation will be used to complete the full equality impact assessment and to determine any amendments to the Placemaking Plan.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The results of consultation will be used to complete the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and to determine any amendments that need to be made to the Placemaking Plan.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 Section 6 details the public consultation exercise that was undertaken during the period 1st March to 29th March 2022 in respect of the draft Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan. Further consultation and engagement will however be undertaken as project ideas are developed.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 There are no financial implications in respect of the development of the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan but as projects are developed, the financial implications will be fully assessed and reported as appropriate.
- 11.2 It is anticipated that funding for the proposed hotel led development will be provided by the procured Development Partner. Should any funding contribution be required from the Council, external funding opportunities will be explored and this will be subject to a future report.
- 11.3 As soon as funding guidance has been received from Welsh Government, a grant application for a 70% contribution towards demolition costs of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtens buildings and the cost of the multi-disciplinary team noted in paragraph 7.11 will be made. It is anticipated that the balance will be funded from existing Prosperity and Development budgets.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

- 13.1 The Placemaking Plan has been developed in accord with the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 'Making a Difference' which highlights that its town centres will be vibrant, thriving places where people wish to live, work and socialise and with Welsh Governments 'Town Centres First'

approach, aimed at putting the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the public sector, businesses and communities.

- 13.2 All proposed developments within the plan will contribute to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. In particular, the economic and environmental well-being of Wales, supporting the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

14. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 14.1 Successful implementation of the Placemaking Plan and its associated projects are of strategic significance to Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region.

15. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 15.1 Successful delivery of the placemaking plan will result in transformational change for Pontypridd town centre. However, to achieve this, a coordinated effort between the public, private and third sectors will be required to realise the scale of opportunity and to succeed in delivering a dynamic, diverse and sustainable town centre where people are proud to live, work and visit.
- 15.2 The results of the public consultation exercise are not only fundamental in determining any changes and finalising the Placemaking Plan but also in determining where further engagement on specific projects and initiatives is required. For example, two key areas that have been identified as requiring further attention in the plan, as highlighted in paragraph 6.15, is our approach to tackling climate change and integration of the Welsh Language. It is however encouraging to note that a high majority of respondents to the consultation exercise are supportive of the overarching plan and the proposed projects and initiatives.
- 15.3 The formal procurement exercise to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on the site of the former bingo hall on High Street / Sardis Road will commence in July and a further report outlining the results of the tender process will be presented.
- 15.4 Regular dialogue will continue with Welsh Government and an application to the Transforming Towns Programme for funding towards the demolition costs of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings will be submitted at the earliest opportunity.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: *Derek James 01443 281115*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(COUNCILLOR MARK NORRIS)**

Item:

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Derek James 01443 281115

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Dewch i siarad
Pontypridd
Let's talk
Pontypridd

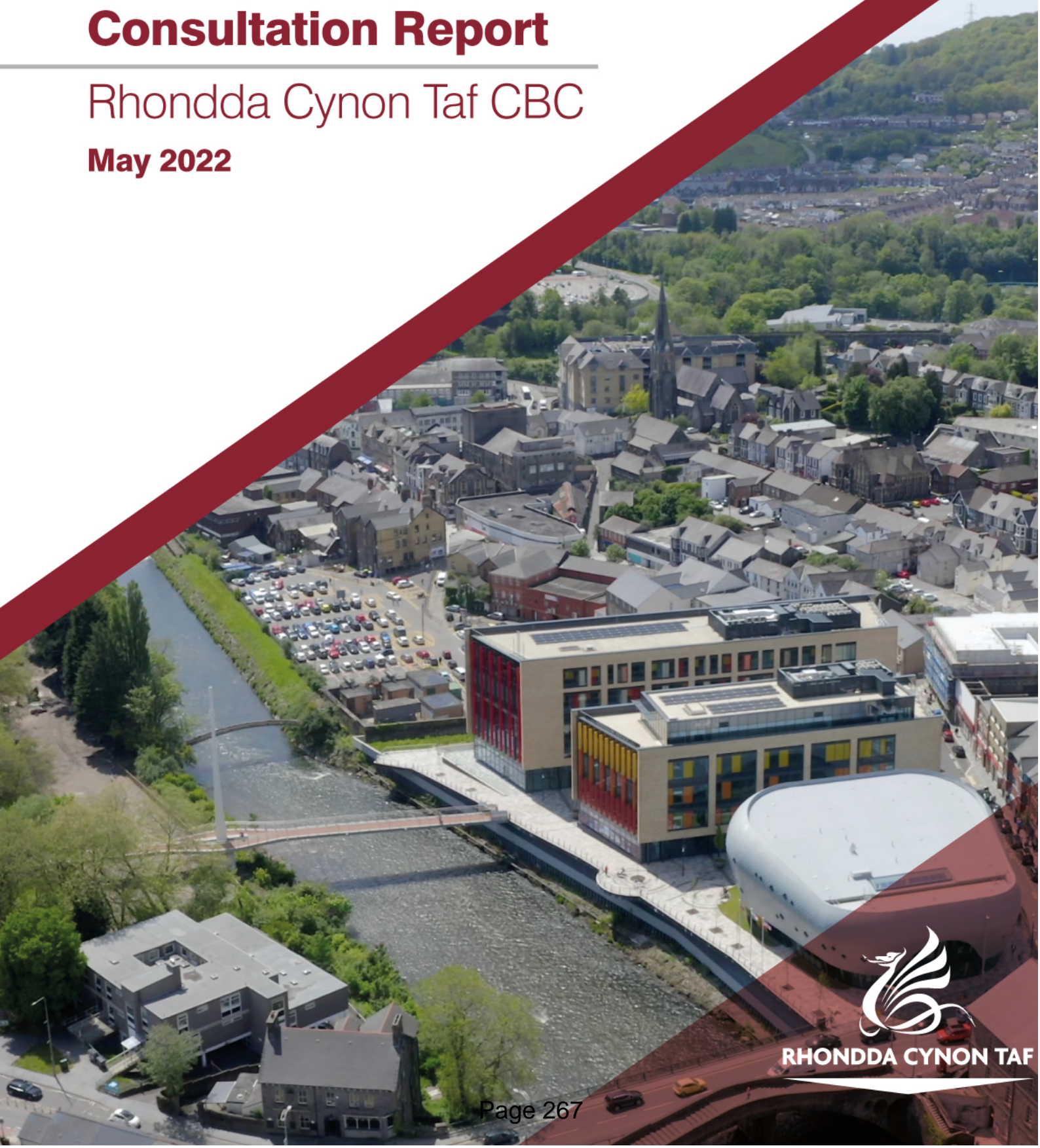


PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN 2022

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

May 2022



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Let's Talk Pontypridd – Pontypridd Placemaking Plan consultation carried out in 2022.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 1st March to 29th March 2022.
- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders: online survey and other engagement tools via the Let's Talk Pontypridd website, a series of outdoor events with paper versions of the online survey being handed out, officers visited businesses and organisations in the town centre to promote the consultation, an exhibition held at Pontypridd Library detailing the placemaking plan and more detailed plans for the southern gateway, social media posts, email invitations to take part. These are explained in Section 3, Methodology.
- 164 survey responses were received, with a further 135 responses to "Quick Poll" responses and 70 contributions to an open-text "Ideas" function on the website.
- 8 emails in relation to the consultation were received, including responses from local businesses, Councillors, Pontypridd Town Council, Your Pontypridd Business Improvement District (BID), staff and Friends of the Earth, Pontypridd.
- Over 300 people were engaged in this consultation.
- 70.8% of respondents said they lived in the area.
- 32.1% of respondents said they visited Pontypridd town centre more than once a week. 19.1% visited weekly and 19.8% visited daily.
- The following aspects were seen mostly as **positive** by respondents:
 1. *Access to services*
 2. *Cafe's, restaurants and bars*
 3. *Ease of walking around the town centre*
 4. *Transport links*
- Over 50% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each of the seven core ambitions.
- 91.1% agreed with investment in the Town Centre Core (Main retail / commercial streets).
- 84.1% agreed with investment in the Southern Gateway (Railway Station / High Street area).

- 94.3% agreed with the need to redevelop vacant or dilapidated sites.
- 92.3% agreed with the proposal to make the town centre more resilient to potential future flood events.
- A high majority (over 70%) of respondents agreed with each of the statements with regard to implementation of the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan.
- Over 88% of respondents agreed that Pontypridd needed a Placemaking Plan.
- 64.5% agreed that the Placemaking Plan would have a positive effect on Pontypridd.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Pontypridd – Pontypridd Placemaking Plan consultation 2022.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results from the consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Pontypridd website.

2. BACKGROUND

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

The draft placemaking plan identifies a framework to continue to deliver significant new investment to Pontypridd town centre that responds to the unique character of the town and the issues and opportunities that are present. The Placemaking plan will succeed the current Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd 2017 – 2022 'Pivotal Pontypridd – Delivering Growth'.

The successful delivery of the plan will result in transformational change for Pontypridd town centre. A coordinated effort between the public, private and third sectors will be required to realise the scale of opportunity in the town centre to ensure we can successfully deliver a dynamic, diverse and sustainable town centre where people are proud to live, work and visit.

- 2.2 Consultation and public engagement on the overarching Pontypridd Placemaking Plan was undertaken including engagement on early ideas for the former Marks & Spencer /Dorothy Perkins/Burtens area. This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Pontypridd – Pontypridd Placemaking Plan consultation 2022, where views were sought on:
 - Interest in Pontypridd
 - Number of visits to Pontypridd town centre
 - Method of travel into Pontypridd town centre
 - Positive and negative aspects of the town centre
 - Seven core ambitions aimed at transforming the town centre;
 - 1. *A Business Destination*

2. *A Great Place to Live*
 3. *Connected and Accessible*
 4. *A Green Waterside Town*
 5. *A Unique Townscape*
 6. *A Cultural and Social Destination*
 7. *An Inclusive and Resilient Town*
- Five spatial areas identified for future investment;
 8. *Southern Gateway (Railway Station/High Street area)*
 9. *Town Centre Core (Main retail / commercial streets)*
 10. *Market Quarter (Indoor Market and surrounding streets)*
 11. *Northern Gateway (Bus Station / Berw Road area)*
 12. *Ynysangharad War Memorial Park*
 - Future developments
 - A series of proposed projects
 - Draft Southern Gateway Masterplan;
 - Implementation of the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Let's Talk Pontypridd project was conducted in-house and the consultation ran from the 1st March to 29th March 2022. This report presents the results from the project run on the Let's Talk website. The aim of this report is to present the findings sought on the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan consultation that was made live on the website. This report will be presented to Cabinet and Officers to consider the feedback received.
- 3.2 The consultation approach used the new Let's Talk online engagement platform, which provides a user friendly and interactive form of engagement. The "Let's Talk Pontypridd" project provided key information, key dates, documents and graphics to outline the background to the Placemaking Plan, in addition to a number of engagement tools to allow feedback, which included online polls, a survey and an ideas tool.
- 3.3 Social media was used to communicate the key messages to residents and service users and encourage engagement and feedback regarding the Placemaking Plan, developments and investment areas.
- 3.4 An email was sent to a range of key stakeholders to promote the consultation.
- 3.5 A leaflet drop went out to all businesses and organisations in Pontypridd Town.
- 3.6 A press release went out on the Council's website, was shared on its Social Media platforms and was also picked up by local news outlets such as Wales online, Ponty Online and GTFM.

- 3.7 Your Pontypridd BID (Business Improvement District) sent out electronic newsletters and social media posts raising awareness of the consultation.
- 3.8 Outdoor face-to-face engagement events were held in Pontypridd. The Council's recycling trailer was used and Officers were on hand to outline the consultation approach, answer questions and collect views. Paper copies of the consultation were available to take away and post back to the Council's Freepost address. The following engagement events took place during the consultation;

Mill Street, Pontypridd	9 th March
Ynysangharad War memorial Park, Pontypridd	17 th March

- 3.9 Information boards were exhibited throughout the consultation at Pontypridd Library detailing the placemaking plan. Flyers, Placemaking Plan and paper copies of the consultation were available to take away and post back to the Council's Freepost address.
- 3.10 As with previous year's "digital by default approach" we continued to consider those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.
- A telephone Consultation option is now in place for all Council consultations, through the Council's Contact Centre. The option allows people to discuss their views or as a minimum to request consultation materials.
 - Individual call backs on request.
 - Consultation freepost address for postal responses.

4 Let's Talk Pontypridd

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the main consultation activities, including those carried out on the Let's Talk Pontypridd website.
- 4.2 There were three ways for page visitors to engage with the consultation. Firstly, the full survey, with questions provided by the Regeneration department of RCT. Secondly, a couple of "Quick Poll" questions, which were based on select questions from the main survey. Finally, there was an "Ideas" tool available, where respondents were invited to provide longer, free-text responses to a prompt.

Survey Results

- 4.3 A total of 164 completed surveys were received, including the results from a number of paper copies which were completed and handed in to RCT staff or posted back in. For the purposes of this report, any blank responses to individual questions have been discounted. Therefore, all percentages quoted are a percentage of the total responses for that individual question.

Interest and visits to Pontypridd

- 4.4 70.8% of respondents said they lived in the area.

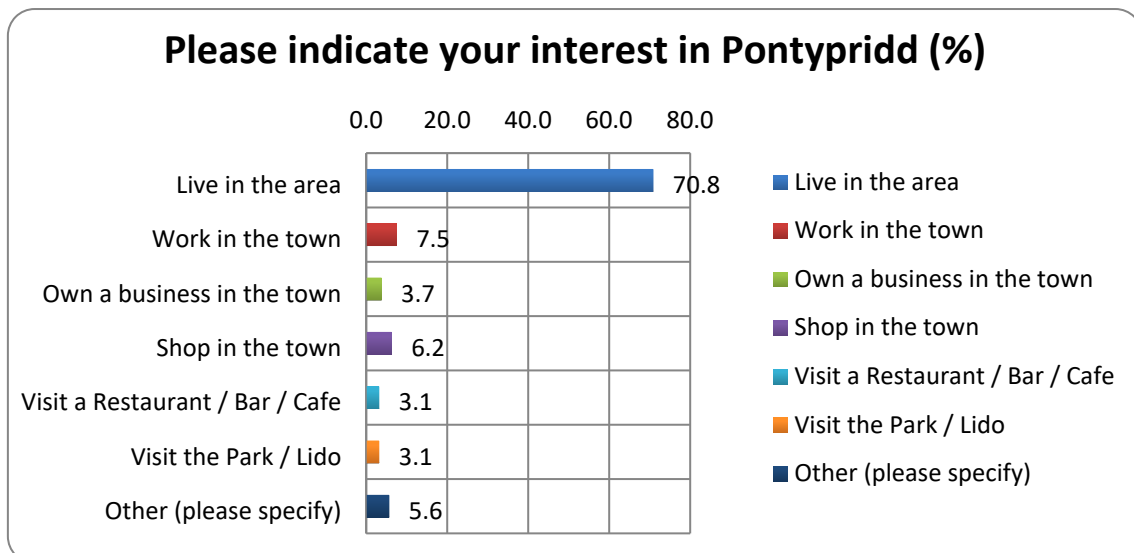


Figure 1 – Interest in Pontypridd

Other comments included:

- “Work in the town, live in the area”*
- “Visit restaurants, Lido, Park, sometimes shop there”*
- “Visit and sometimes work in Pontypridd”*
- “Live in Tonyrefail came to Ponty to walk along River Taff”*
- “Live and work in local area”*
- “Family lives in the area”*

4.5 The following map has been plotted with postcodes showing where respondents are from.

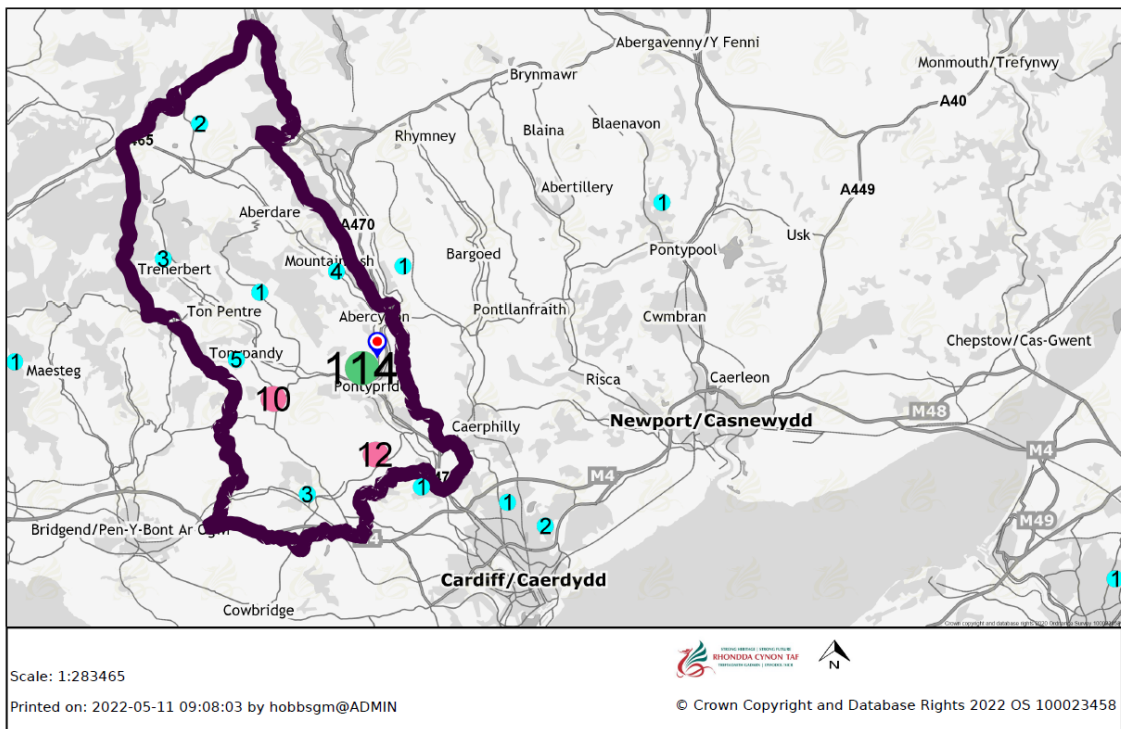


Figure 2 – Map of respondents' postcodes

4.6 32.1% of respondents said they visited Pontypridd town centre more than once a week. 19.1% visited weekly and 19.8% visited daily.

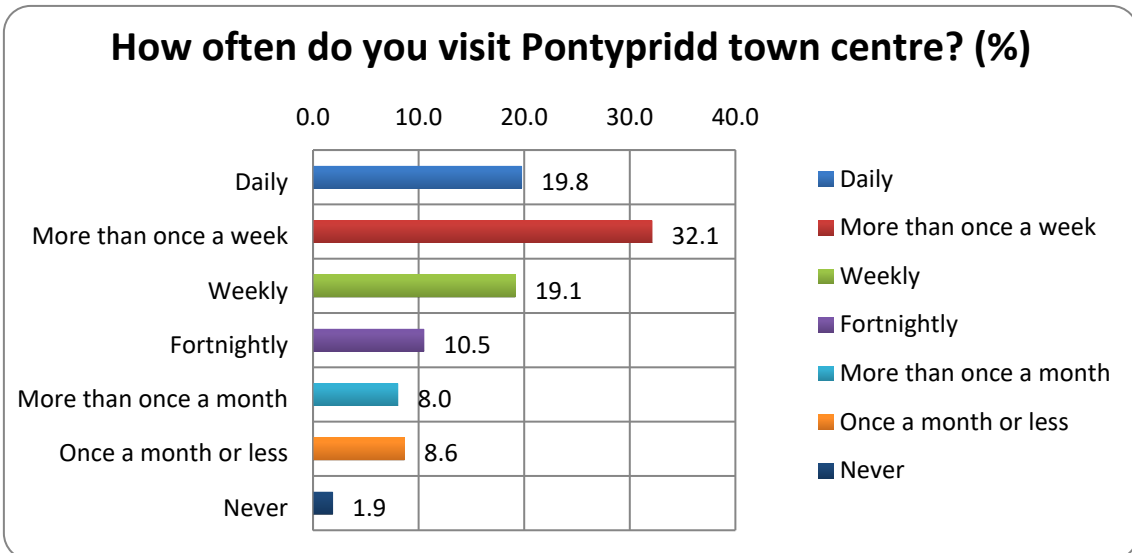


Figure 3 – Visits to Pontypridd town centre

Travel

4.7 47.2% of respondents travelled to Pontypridd town centre by car, whilst 42.2% walked. A much smaller percentage travelled by bus (7.5%) and train (3.1%).

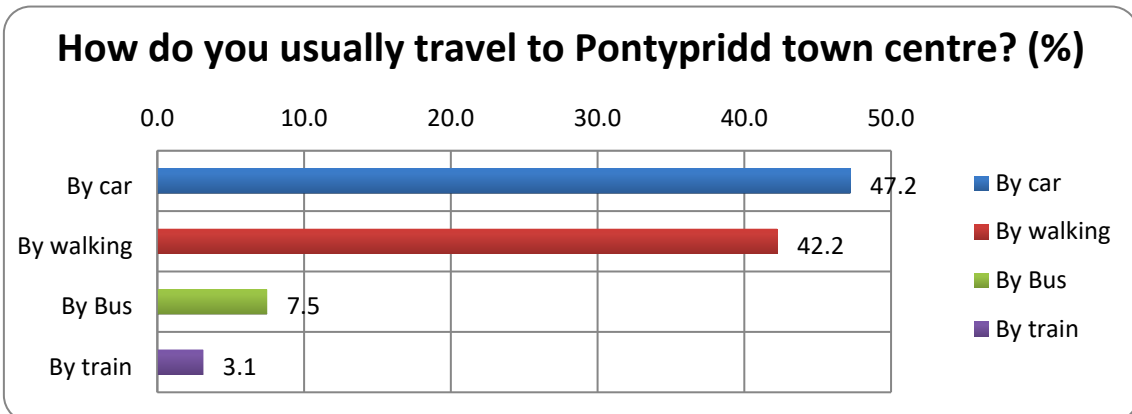


Figure 4 – Travel to Pontypridd town centre

About Pontypridd

4.8 Respondents were asked about some aspects of the town centre. Figure 5 shows whether the following aspects were seen as positive or negative to the respondent.

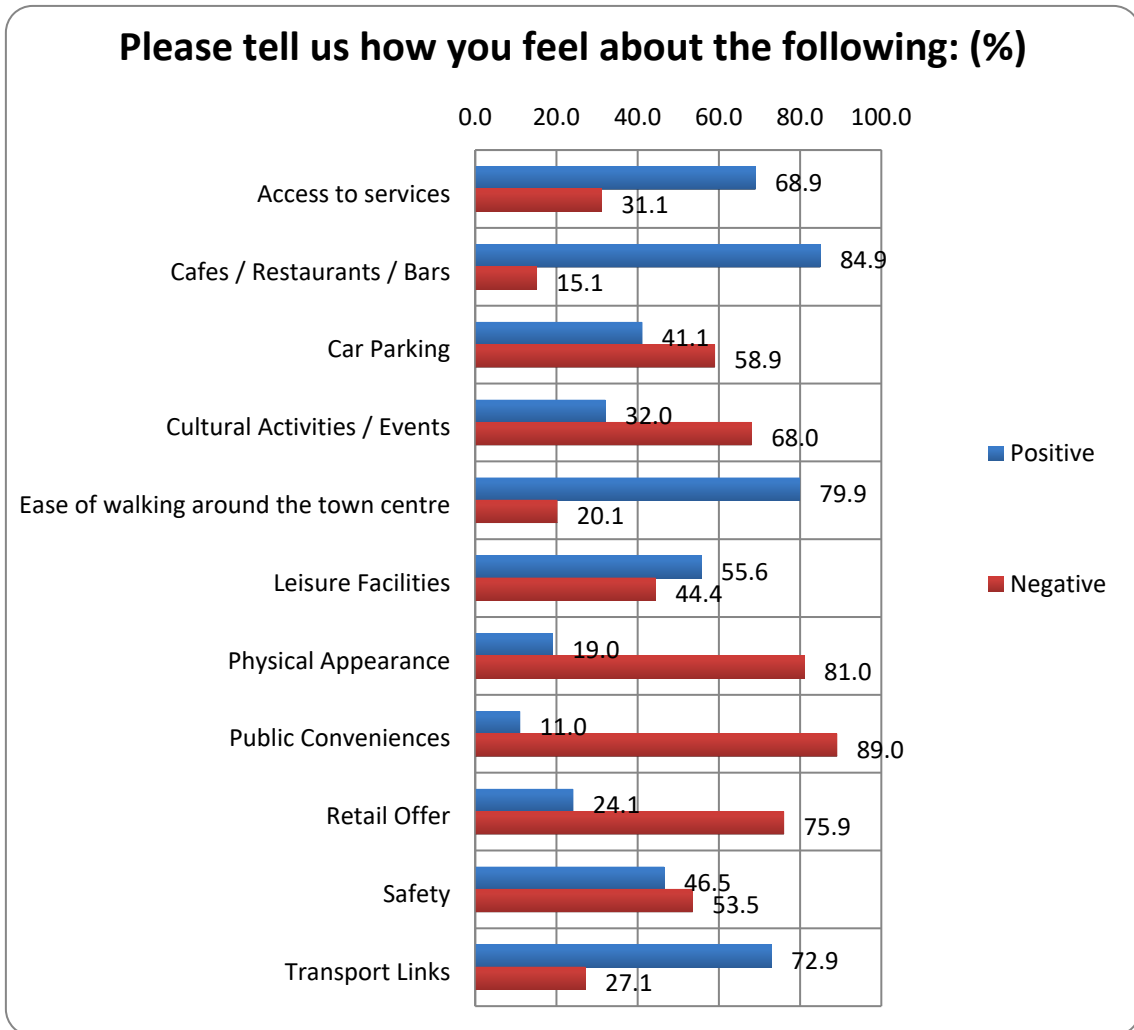


Figure 5 – Positive and negative aspects of Pontypridd town centre

4.9 The following aspects were seen mostly as **positive** by respondents:

- Access to services
- Café's, restaurants and bars
- Ease of walking around the town centre
- Transport links

The following aspects were seen as mostly **negative** by respondents:

- Car parking
- Cultural activities & events
- Physical appearance
- Public conveniences
- Retail offer

Leisure facilities and safety were seen as more neutral aspects of the town centre.

Other positive aspects

New businesses & re-development

“A lot of new business are appearing In Pontypridd which is a positive thing. It will be great to have a graphic road map that as flyer and stated the shop and service so people can know what the town can offer. Church street is the street that got missed”

“I am visiting Pontypridd town centre more regularly now as a result of the new development at the town entrance. The redevelopment of that area and the introduction of coffee shops and new gym is very appealing.”

“I think that real progress is being made to improve the town centre and there is a real momentum. We are a riverside town with huge potential and I thoroughly agree with the new plans.”

“The past couple of years have seen an increase in cafes/restaurants/bars popping up is a big positive”

“My favourite shop is the new artificial flower shop”

Park

“Beautiful park, weekly parkrun, lots of events in the summer. Lido is fantastic, leisure facilities in the centre of the town. Plenty of cafes, two in the park. Variety of shops, I don't shop there often. Impressed with my visits to the indoor market.”

“cultural activities & Leisure facilities are ok”

“Parkrun is positive”

River

“I think the investment and recent improvements have been very positive, I understand that this is an ongoing process but there are aspects of the town centre which don't reflect the progress made. For example river front, lack of retail.”

“The river is a hugely underused asset”

Other negative aspects

EV charging points

“lack of electric vehicle charge points”

Public conveniences

“Lack of public conveniences especially outside of typical office hours (that feel safe for older people to utilise). Any developments/regeneration must consider

needs of older people to ensure accessibility and to be age friendly (ageing population)."

"Public Conveniences in Market Sq should be better sign-posted. Taff St unsafe when open to parking. delineation between road / parking/pavement very unclear. onset of electric cars will make the road even more dangerous."

"There is a serious lack of toilets in the town, just one in the bus station. The only other one I am aware of is a paid one in the market."

Lack of shops

"Lack of shops such as high street shops e.g. M&S, Next, New Look etc they are all charity shops or vape shops! The only reason I go into town is either for Ynysangharad Park or to go to b&m"

"Poor quality retail outlets"

"Too many barbers and charity shops. Bars/pubs not catering for mature adults, Sunday parking/ access appalling, probations an eyesore"

Anti-social behaviour

"Lack of shops and lots of gangs of youths after 6pm anti social behaviour"

"Pontypridd unfortunately attracts some rather unsavoury characters and I have been witness not only to people using public places as a toilet, but also drug taking. drug overdoing, police involvement and fighting (poor impression / stays with you)"

"The anti-social behaviour and drug use in the town centre and park are a concern"

Policing

"The area is rough, to many mis-fits walking round, intimidating people. More police needed on patrol."

Parking

"Parking is terrible"

"Think free parking would help a few people complain that they catch local buses into bus station that arrive just as X4 etc are pulling out."

Run down

"Pigeon mess inside railway station and under railway bridge to the Graig"

“Shops could do with a face lift and the 99p store opposite Llys Cadwyn is an eyesore.”

“The bingo hall/cinema site, will in my opinion, be left fallow & an eyesore for maybe five years, please landscape the area in question so that the area does not suffer unnecessary”

“Town needs clean up. There are no public conveniences. River - untidy plastic/bollards, an ironing board and supermarket trolley needs to be cleared.”

Empty buildings

“Something needs to be done about empty buildings. Like old M&S, Burtons etc. Quite an eyes sore and a waste of good space for say a primark or wilko.”

“There are too many of the same shops and too many unoccupied shops. I visit the town centre regularly as I live close/within walking distance of town however I do not feel there is much to draw people to the town centre who live further away.”

“Too many empty shops/units”

Lack of heritage

“Pontypridd’s Victorian heritage is not highlighted in new developments. Victorian architecture is hidden either by new buildings or actually clad as in the station. The lido”

“We have some beautiful buildings that seem to be ignored. We have a lot of space above and behind shops that is wasted. We haven't got enough trees and plants in the town centre.”

Transport / accessibility

“Only when the bus or train turn up.”

“Poor arrival experience for pedestrians outside the station - just acres of tarmac and unfriendly crossings”

“There's very few buses from Church Village in the evening, mostly looks tacky,”

Neutral comments / suggestions

“I would like to see more benches to sit on especially for the elderly. Toilets needed top end of town by Tesco's again. Lido needs to be more accessible to local people. all booked up over internet too soon. I can't enjoy it.”

“It would be nice to have a cinema/theatre in the town like we had with the Muni and something for teenagers such as a skate park / BMX Park”

“Need to expand provisions for leisure activities - especially with surge on alternative sports such as roller skating and skateboarding, there needs to be more investment into leisure (not limited to football, rugby, bowls and tennis).”

“Retail and food offering is improving but I would like to see more”

“Retail offer is getting better but there are too many charity shops. Also need to sort out car parking when the barriers are down.”

“The new buildings like the Library and Transport for Wales are great. The negatives include appearance of town centre, lots of retail spaces empty and plenty of rubbish around”

“The Park is a great resource. Would like to see more businesses to replace the ones closed down. The bus station is not very welcoming. The pedestrianisation is neither one thing nor the other and not safe for disabled people and those with children.”

Seven core ambitions

4.10 The draft Placemaking Plan presents an exciting and ambitious vision that is based on seven core ambitions aimed at transforming Pontypridd town centre. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following ambitions.

Table 1: Core Ambitions

A Business Destination
A Great Place to Live
Connected and Accessible
A Green Waterside Town
A Unique Townscape
A Cultural and Social Destination
An Inclusive and Resilient Town

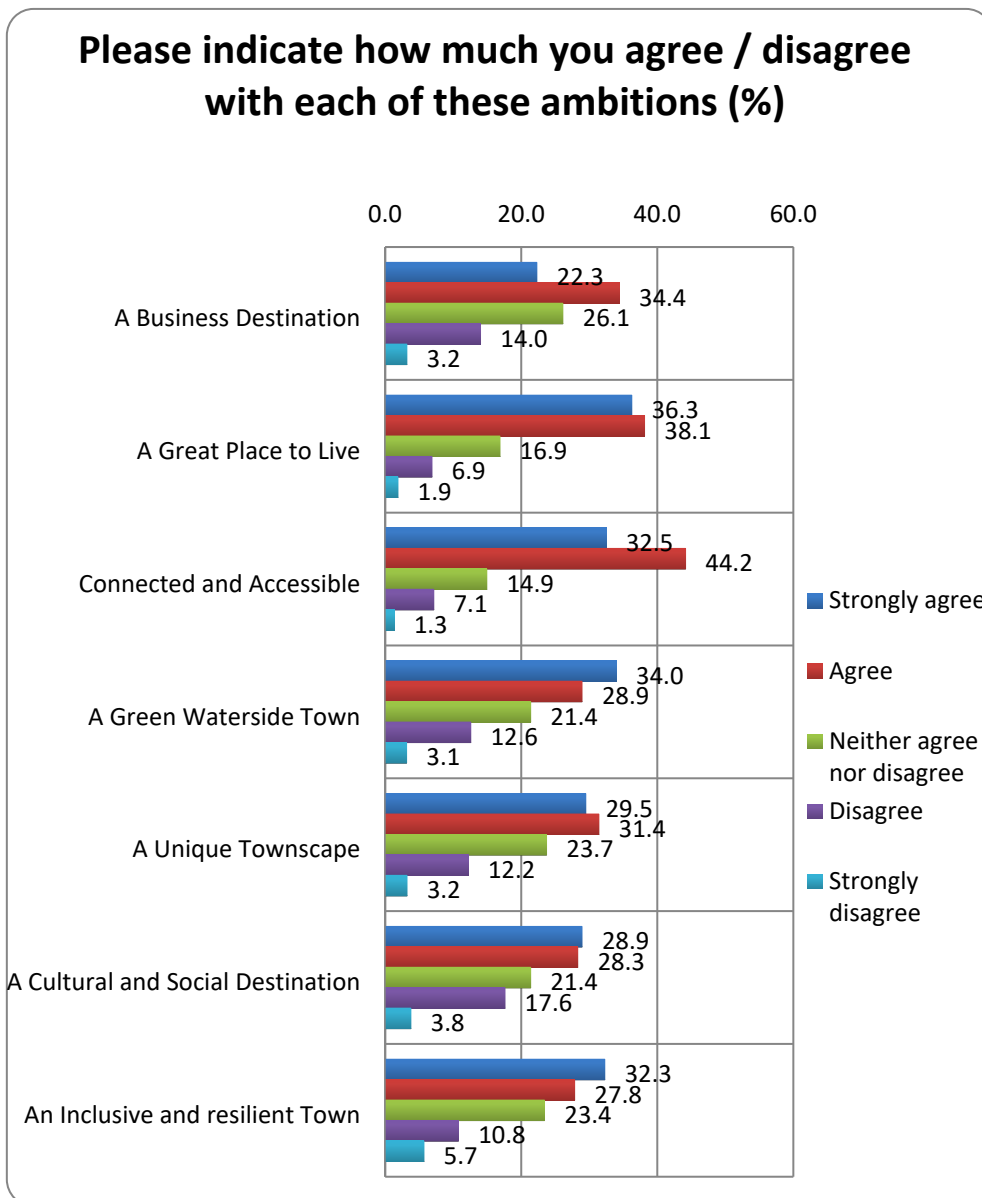


Figure 6 – Agreement with ambitions

4.11 Figure 6 shows that over 50% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with each of the ambitions. 74.4% of respondents agreed with ‘A great place to live’ and 76.7% agreed with ‘Connected and accessible’. There were low percentages indicating disagreement with the ambitions and between 16.9% and 26.1% of respondents said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the ambitions aimed at transforming Pontypridd town centre.

Focus for future investment

4.12 Five spatial areas have been identified in the town centre that will act as areas of specific focus for future investment. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that investment in each of these areas is important for the economic regeneration of the town centre.

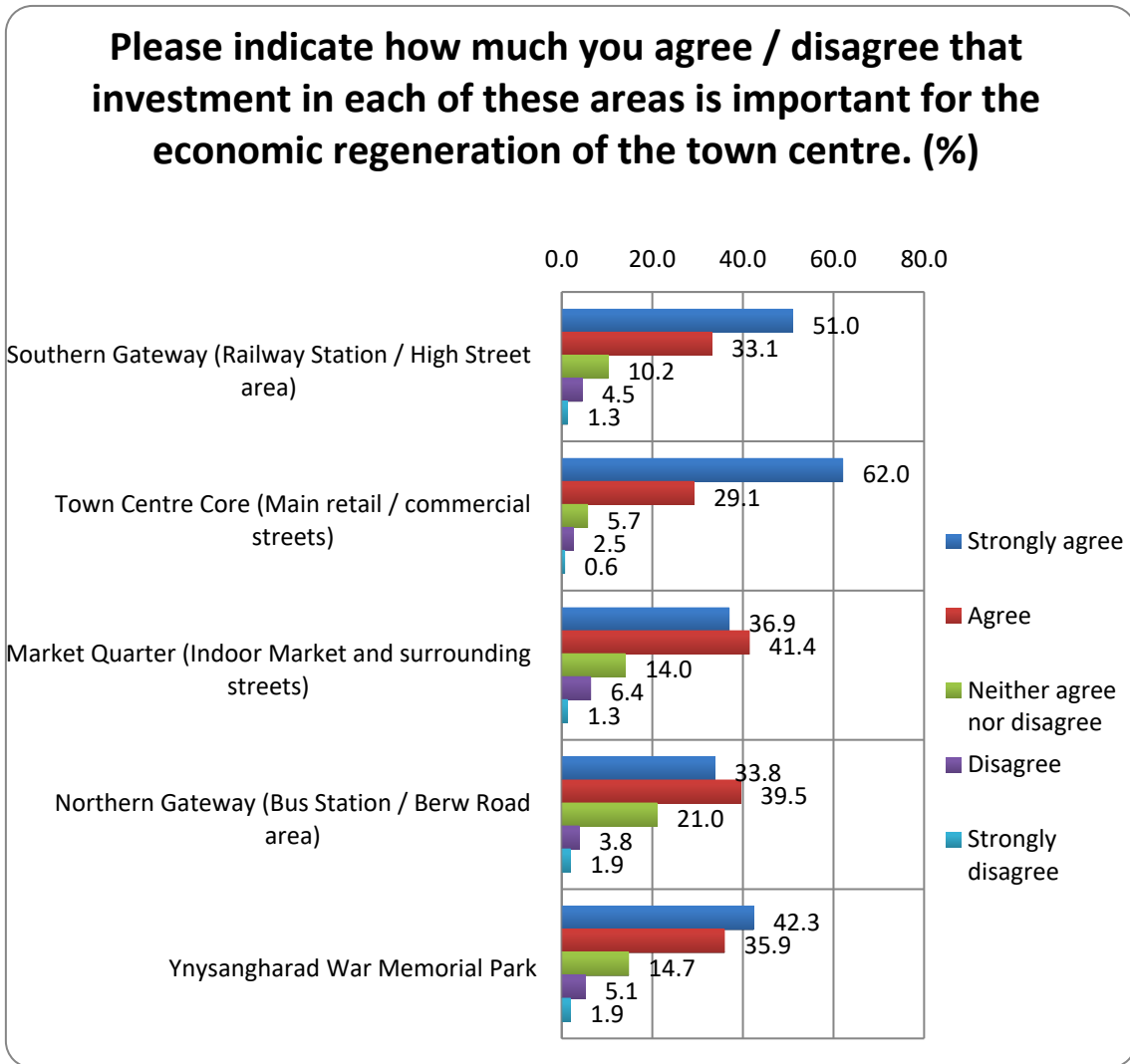


Figure 7 – Agreement with investment in 5 spatial areas

4.13 A high majority of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the investment in the 5 spatial areas mentioned in figure 7.

- 84.1% agreed with investment in the Southern Gateway (Railway Station / High Street area).
- 91.1% agreed with investment in the Town Centre Core (Main retail / commercial streets)
- 78.3% agreed with investment in Market Quarter (Indoor Market and surrounding streets)
- 73.3% agreed with investment in Northern Gateway (Bus Station / Berw Road area)
- 78.2% agreed with investment in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

4.14 Some comments were received in relation to the investment in these areas;

Southern Gateway (Railway Station/High Street area)

“Connect train / bus station. Market needs improving, not in private ownership which has 'strangled' that area. (Town Hall)”

“It's not a big town centre, all of these developments are key to the success of Pontypridd and will have interdependencies. The theme needs to be consistent and flow from the Train station right to Park View and the Bus station area.”

“Park & ride from goods yard / multistorey to train station can't park in Sardis Car Park and travel via train with late return due to gates being locked”

“The train halt at the bus station should be a push/pull between stops 'free' to make it easy to use”

“Train station desperately needs investment and regeneration to restore it to former glory”

Town Centre Core (Main retail / commercial streets)

“Fill all the shops with different things than already in Ponty. Knock down the old town hall & possible build something else. The Park is the jewel in the crown (No Car Parking in Park) Build skate park in park”

“It would be good to open up M&S to the river and provide nice areas away from traffic.”

“Not enough is being done to make retail space affordable and those that own the buildings have little or no interest in the physical appearance of the properties they own.”

“The main areas people use are the main throughfare from the new building down to the old M+S”

Market Quarter (Indoor Market and surrounding streets)

“Pontypridd is an old market town which should try to mimic the charm of Abergavenny. The old Bridge is the towns emblem and yet the bridge is hidden by the Victorian Bridge. The town should have Welsh flags plus "old styles street signs”.

“The landlord of the market is not keeping up the repairs on the market building so he should be forced to do this properly. There are broken windows and the stonework on church street is in poor repair.”

“The market is capable of looking after itself and will thrive if it allows itself to do so and removes it restrictive practices”

Northern Gateway (Bus Station / Berw Road area)

“An important partner in the Northern Gateway will be Pontypridd Town Council, who own and run the Museum, and whose civic offices are also located here.”

“Better bus links to certain areas of Ponty and also making it cost effective so people can afford this option / not use cars”

“The bus station does not require an update. This would in my opinion be deemed a waste of taxpayers money.”

“Why not have a central transport hub? why is the bus station the opposite end of town?”

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

“The Park needs a splash pad for the youngests Aberdare has one why not Pontypridd”

“The Park is very well kept and is an asset to Pontypridd”

“The Park is lovely, however it could benefit greatly from a skate park. There is ample space, especially on the Bridge Street side.”

“Increase Lido season - school Holidays in G.M.T and on weekends between holidays”

“I think any development in the park needs to be careful considered due to existing aesthetic. Also I think the park needs more events like it used to (eg. Car show, big Welsh bite, fireworks display etc.) With priority access for residents”

“Currently only the park, Lido and Llys Cadwn are visitor destinations. The rest of the town is run down and needs investment to bring it up to standard.”

“As you have mentioned the Park. I think you should spend some money to level the football pitch that is afforded to the cricket pitch. it is appalling and has been for years.”

“Add a musical water feature around the bandstand. I used to work in Bad Mergentheim, Germany which is similar in size to Ponty with a fantastic park and their musical water feature attracts many visitors. Look on you tube.”

Other comments included:

“As previous respondents have highlighted, the riverside are would also benefit from investment and re-instatement of the walkway at least.”

“Need integrated transport hub”

“I think parking should be free or a cheap rate to attract shoppers into the area”

“Please think outside the box, not just about profitability but quality of life. Using the space we have well, greening the space as much as possible, using the upper stories of shops etc fitting solar, wind etc, using our water well”

“Preserve heritage buildings so many have been lost int he town already, keep the old along with the new modern upcoming buildings! New and small business initiatives to help boast the town, bringing in new independent shops. Outdoor Bike track in park.”

Future Development

4.15 Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the need for future development in the following areas that have the potential to accommodate this.

- Railway Station and High Street in the Southern Gateway
- Sardis Road Car Park in the Southern Gateway
- Gas Road Car Park in the Town Centre Core
- Bus Station in the Northern Gateway

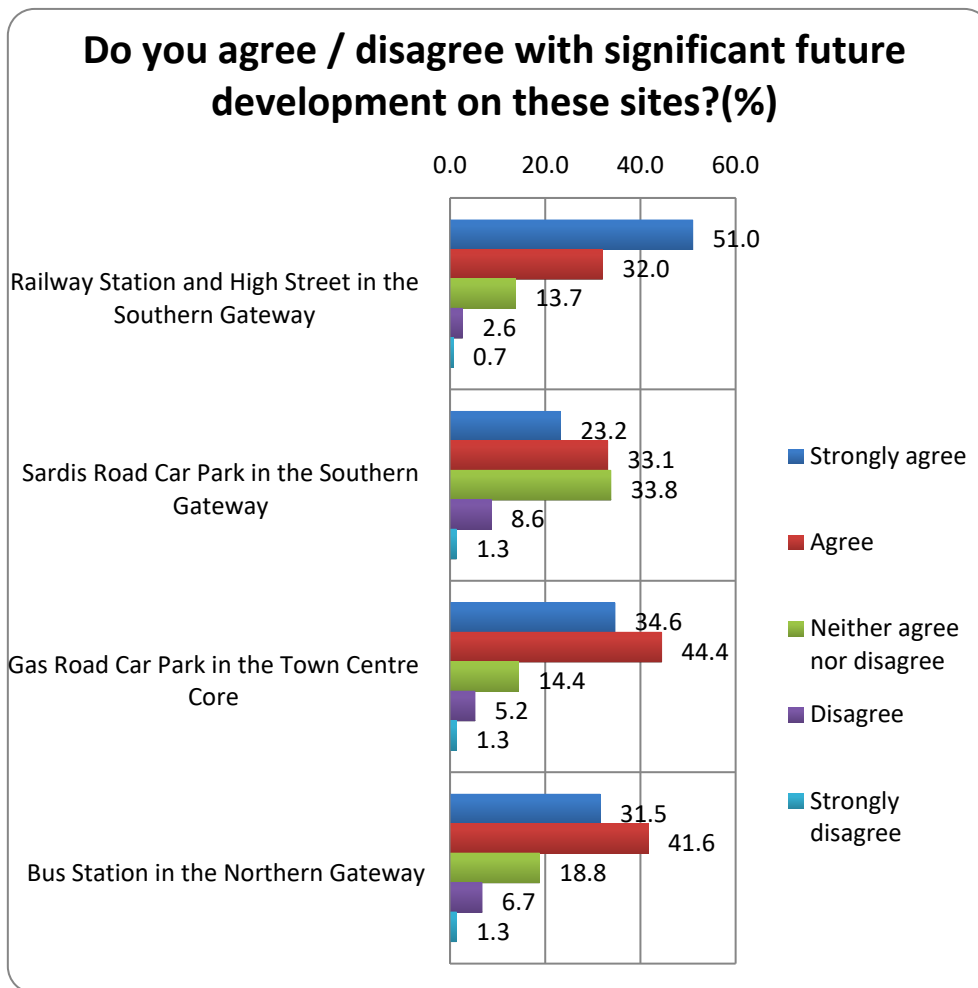


Figure 8 – Agreement of future development

4.16 83% of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with significant development in the Railway Station and High Street in the Southern Gateway, however a lower percentage of 56.3% of respondents agreed with development in Sardis Road Car Park in the Southern Gateway. 33.8% said they ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’. 79% of respondents agreed with developing the Gas Road Car Park in the Town Centre Core and 73.1% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with development in the Bus Station in the Northern Gateway.

4.17 Comments in relation to future development are as follows:

Railway Station and High Street in the Southern Gateway

“More diverse retail. Remove probation and other linked services including Mill Street Hostel. All year round Lido access”

“Needs a M&S food outlet in Pontypridd”

“Smarten up shop fronts, uniformity like Cotswold stone, with individual shop names, hanging baskets”

“The castle bingo site clearly needs to be redeveloped following its demolition. I disagree that a hotel should be built there. A train halt at the bus station should have been built at the same time as the bus station.”

“The Railway Station is the 'face' of Pontypridd to commuters entering the town by rail/road. Anything to improve the look of this area would be a plus, including the old bingo hall site which has been demolished (thankfully).”

Sardis Road Car Park in the Southern Gateway

“Depends what type of investment you intend - at minimum the car parks should accept credit cards”

“Don't put a car park in the park but develop car parking elsewhere. Free car Parking after 10am (for 3 hours)”

“Free parking should be introduced at the very least on certain days. Make rail and bus stations safer for women with better lighting and more police and community police presence.”

“Sardis Road car park is too far out of town”

Gas Road Car Park in the Town Centre Core

“Gas road car park needs to be linked to the river walk. The bus station needs to be more attractive with better crossing point, maybe widen the pavement on town side by narrowing each traffic lane a little. Better links from train station to bus station”

“Parking needs to be improved, there is a lack of it in the town centre unless you want to walk to the Goods Yard which isn't always ideal in winter/with a pushchair/for those with disabilities”

Bus Station in the Northern Gateway

“I use the bus station quite often and this area does need to be redeveloped”

“Needs a rail station next to the bus station...”

“Excellent to have 'Halt' by near bus station”

“The northern gateway into town needs updating, particularly the Maltsters pub, which could look beautiful if refurbished the old buildings are the best and should be preserved”

Other comments included:

“Already had money spent on them”

“Not sure about the elevated structure proposed the vandalism lot of detritus on both riverbanks not pleasant to look at whatsoever.”

“The more regeneration that can go on in the area the better”

“Transport hub”

“We have quite a few car parks. Better if they are free. For sustainability bus lanes and good bus and train services are crucial. If people want to visit for cultural reasons they usually don't wish to drive.”

“We need more shops not a hotel or more cafes. Car parking needs improving. Bus station has already been upgraded!”

Proposed projects

- 4.18 A series of proposed projects have been identified to collectively transform Pontypridd town centre. *Full detail can be found in the draft Placemaking Plan.* Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed / disagreed with each of these proposals.

Table 2: Proposed projects

Create distinctive and welcoming entrances into the town centre
Redevelop vacant or dilapidated sites and premises for new commercial uses
Deliver improved links between public transport services and high quality cycle infrastructure
Restore traditional buildings with a range of new uses
Create new public spaces that link the town to the River Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park
Make the town centre more resilient to potential future flood events
Deliver more tree planting and green infrastructure
Provide better pedestrian routes and create spaces for social and cultural events that people can enjoy, and which businesses can use
Develop a stronger digital presence

- 4.19 As can be seen in Figure 9, a high majority of respondents agreed with the proposals.

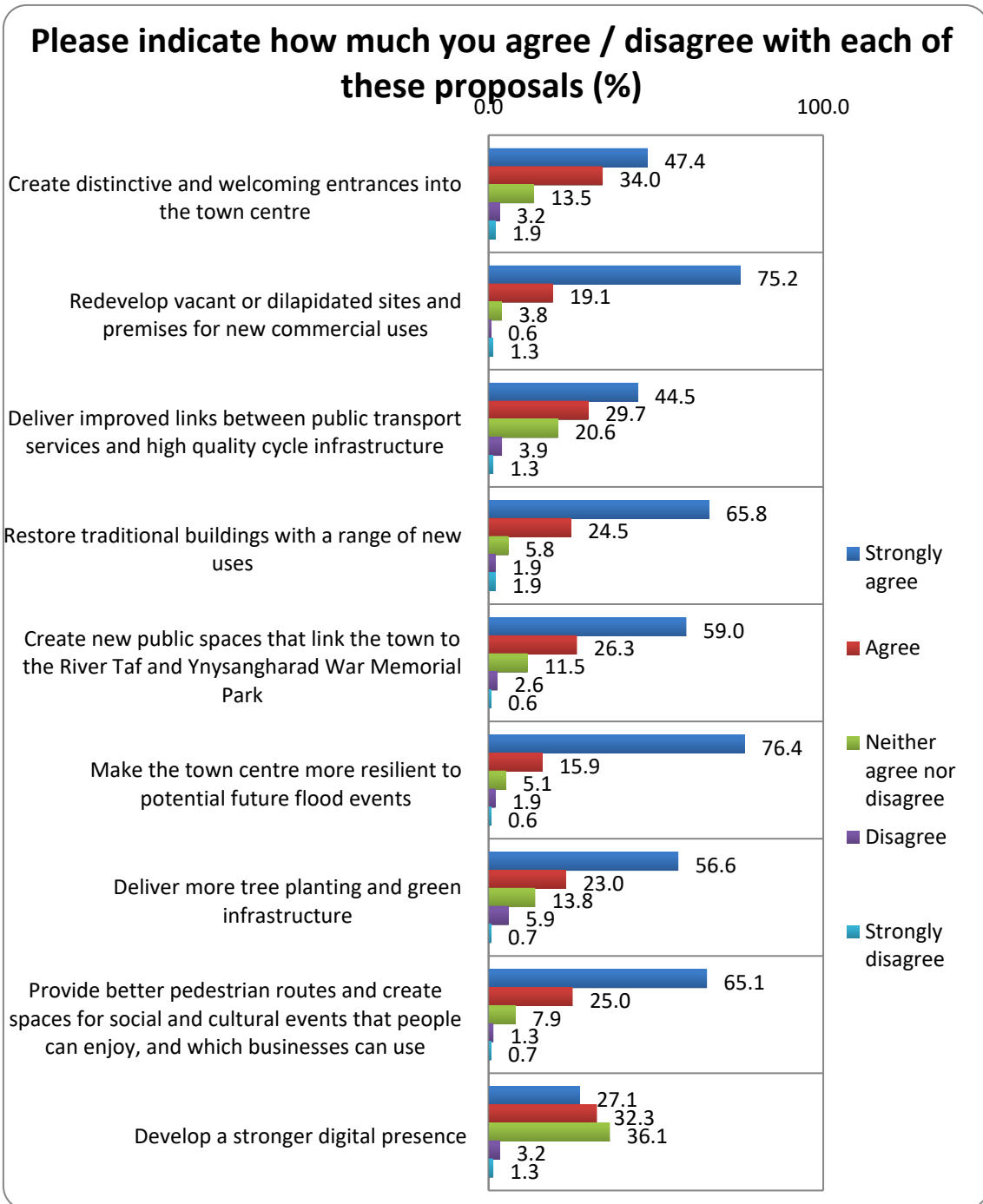


Figure 9 – Agreement with proposed projects

4.20 81.4% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the proposal to create distinctive and welcoming entrances into the town centre, 94.3% agreed to redevelop vacant or dilapidated sites and premises for new commercial uses and 74.2% ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that we should deliver improved links between public transport services and high quality cycle infrastructure. 90.3% agreed with restoring traditional buildings with a range of new uses, 85.3% were interested in creating new public spaces that link the town to the River Taff and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and 92.3% agreed with the proposal to make the town centre more resilient to potential future flood events.

79.6% were interested in delivering more tree planting and green infrastructure, 90.1% agreed to provide better pedestrian routes and create spaces for social and cultural events that people can enjoy, and which businesses can use, while a lower percentage of 59.4% agreed that we should develop a stronger digital presence (36.1% neither agreed or disagreed).

4.21 Some comments were received in relation to these proposed projects:

“We need a pedestrian bridge from where Broadway exits Trefforest, over to Ynysangharad park. Walking along the dual carriageway park of Broadway is unhealthy, I think this would help link the University community to the Town Centre”

“Better links to Taff Trail to bring in cyclists who stop off. Better use of buildings on Taff River for Cafes and Restaurants.”

“Culture is needed! More attractions are needed if you want people in the town. When people shop they don't just want to shop, they want to eat/drink/enjoy! Small cinemas, escape rooms, museums all needed to make a full day out!”

“Develop the river front”

“I would agree with all of the above proposals.”

“improve crossing point between museum and top end of town (Llys Cadwyn) lights are not obvious so pedestrians risk turn and signal. Also remove co2 by improving traffic rules - let us turn right at police station junction into town.”

“Pontypridd needs to showcase the Riverside. This in itself could attract people with a river walk and bars and restaurants overlooking it. Flooding defences need to be in place to prevent these new spaces being subject to flooding in the future.”

“The park has large open areas that can be used for more events that gets the community more involved maybe even food festivals. We also need more interactive areas for younger people such as a skating park or cleaner football pitch.”

The Southern Gateway

4.22 The Southern Gateway is the first area that people experience when entering the town from the south, including from Pontypridd Railway Station. Currently the area is not fulfilling its potential and there is the opportunity to deliver development on a major scale as illustrated in the Draft Southern Gateway Masterplan.

Respondents were asked to indicate how much you agreed / disagreed that development of the following vacant sites will have a positive impact in kick-starting the transformation of the Southern Gateway.

Table 3: Vacant sites for development

The former Bingo Hall site
The former Marks and Spencer store
The former Dorothy Perkins/Burtons store

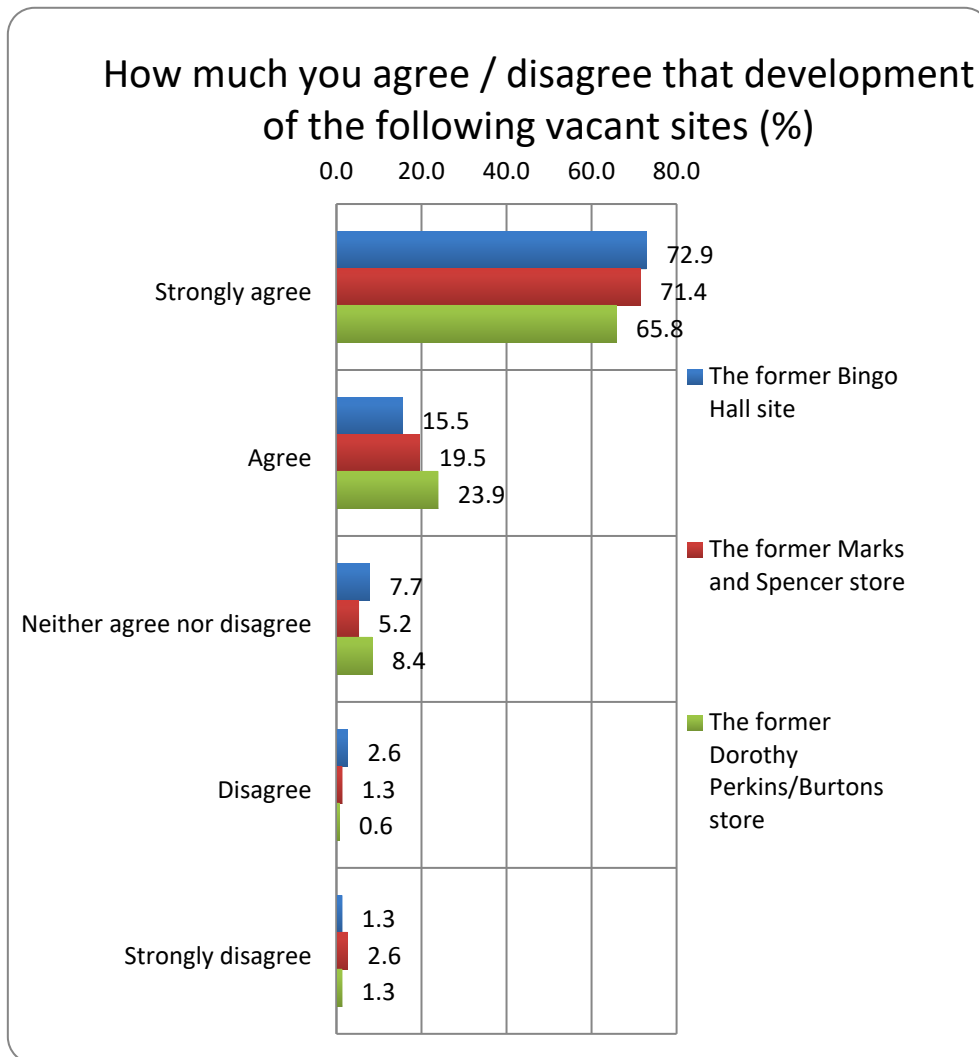


Figure 10 – Agreement with development on former sites

4.22 As can be seen in Figure 10, a high majority (over 65%) strongly agreed with the development of all former sites.

4.23 Some comments were received in relation to these proposed developments:

“All the back of these places can also be developed to enjoy the views of the river & Park. Pubs & restaurants etc.”

“Beside the opportunity to enjoy the view by overlooking the river. We need to be able to offer an indoor activity area that allow to draw people into the town in the cold or wet weather. We need to find a way to get people in town in the winter as well”

“Castle Bingo/ Cinema site redevelopment urgently needs redevelopment. I would recommend leaving a large part of it as public open space Station Square”

“I don't agree that the old bingo site should be built on. It is now open and bright with views rights through the town. Can it not be an open plaza for pop up businesses. However, the hotel in the plan looks less imposing than the old build so that's good.”

“The Dorothy Perkins site is more central to the Park and more accessible for use as drink/food relaxing”

“The prominence of the former bingo hall means revamping this site will have huge benefits for the overall visual impact upon entering the town from the south.”

Pontypridd Placemaking Plan implementation

4.24 Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed / disagreed that implementation of the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan will result in the following:

- More people will be attracted to Pontypridd as a place to **work**
- More people will be attracted to Pontypridd as a place to **live**
- More people will be attracted to Pontypridd as a place to **visit**
- The economy of the town centre and surrounding areas will significantly benefit

Figure 11 shows respondents' level of agreement.

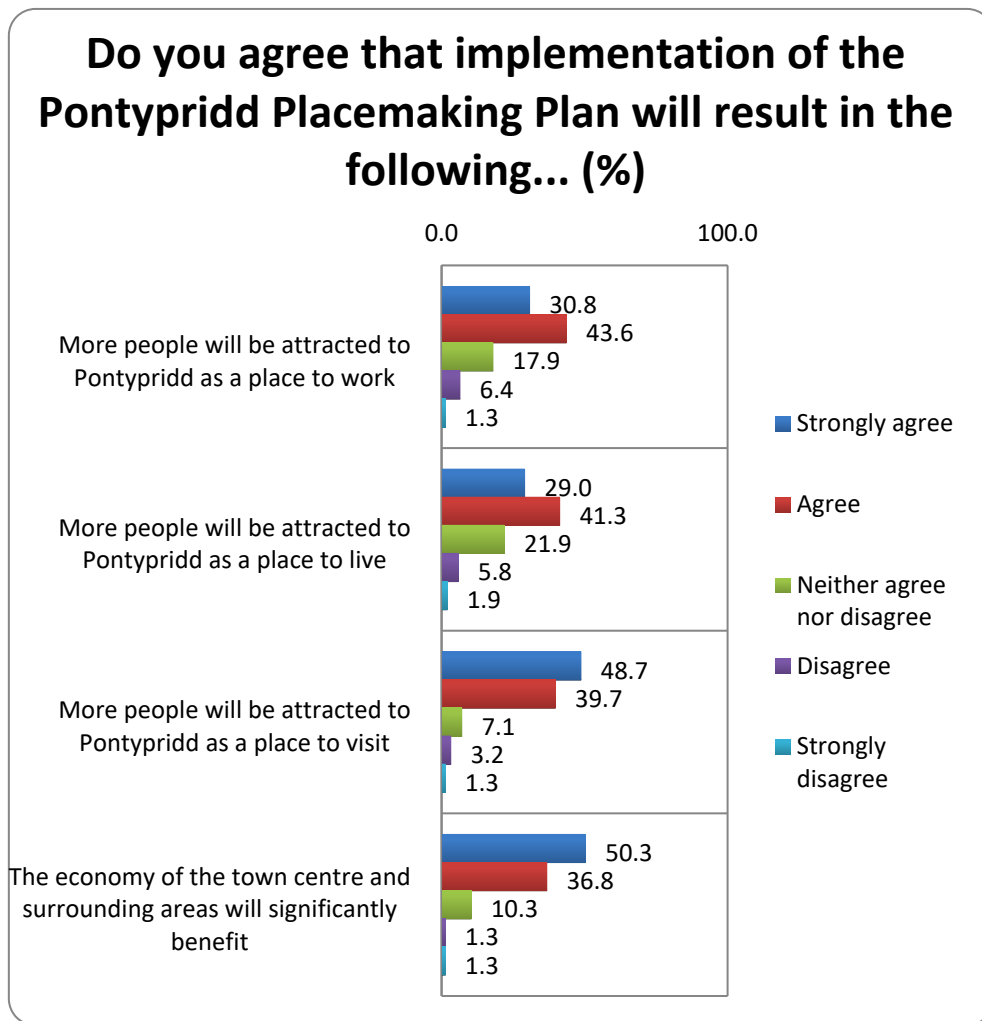


Figure 11 – Agreement with implementation of plan

- 4.25 A high majority (over 70%) of respondents agreed with each of the statements.
- 4.26 When asked if there were any other comments in relation to the Draft Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan, the following are some of the comments that were received:

“a feasibility study before developing a hotel complex. Also please ensure adequate resources are built in for graffiti removal and preventative youth crime measures.”

“Commercial rent prices are far too high. What can RCT do to bring these down?”

“If the upper floors of the older buildings are turned into apartments where will the owners be able to park their cars. Are parking spaces being considered? I could not live in one of the apartments without parking.”

“It is pleasing to know there is a plan and as a resident I can already see the improvements to the town centre which were long overdue.”

“It must be fortified with strong policing, street cleaning, dog wardens, all dogs should be on leads, especially in the park with exception of fenced off dog play area.”

“Links with the university are needed. We are a student town but it does not feel like it. We need to promote the welcoming of students.”

“Please consider the needs of an ageing population and ensure accessibility, transport links and sound provision of services to fulfil the needs of our older people, who form a large percentage of existing and future visitors to the town on a daily basis.”

“We need to promote the town as miniature city. Ponty could be the destination for daily shopping. The children and elder facility need to be more organized to allow people to shop in town without no restrictions and friendly”

About you

4.27 Respondents were asked to provide some information about themselves.

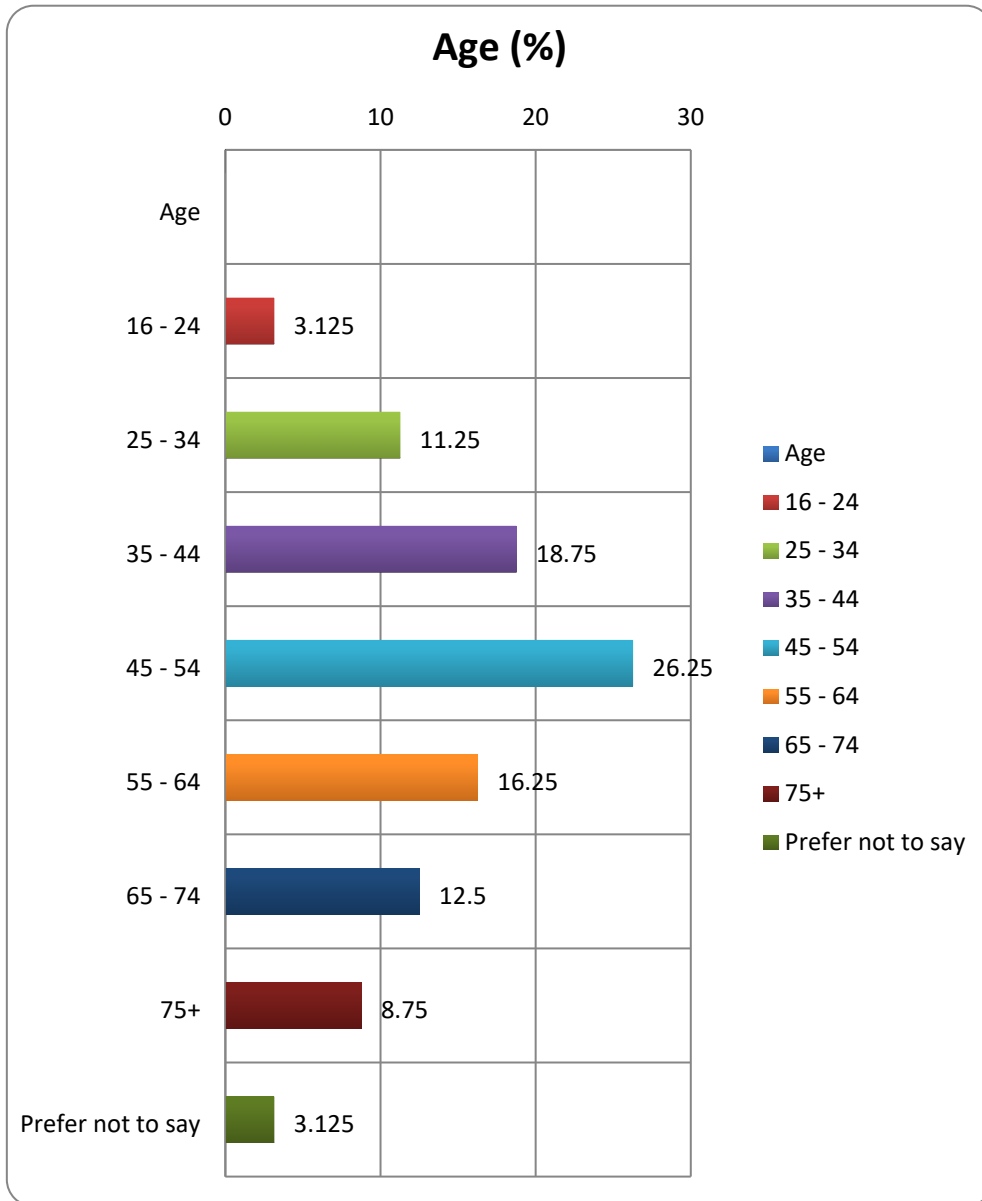


Figure 12 – Age of respondents

4.28 Figure 12 shows the age of respondents taking part in the survey.

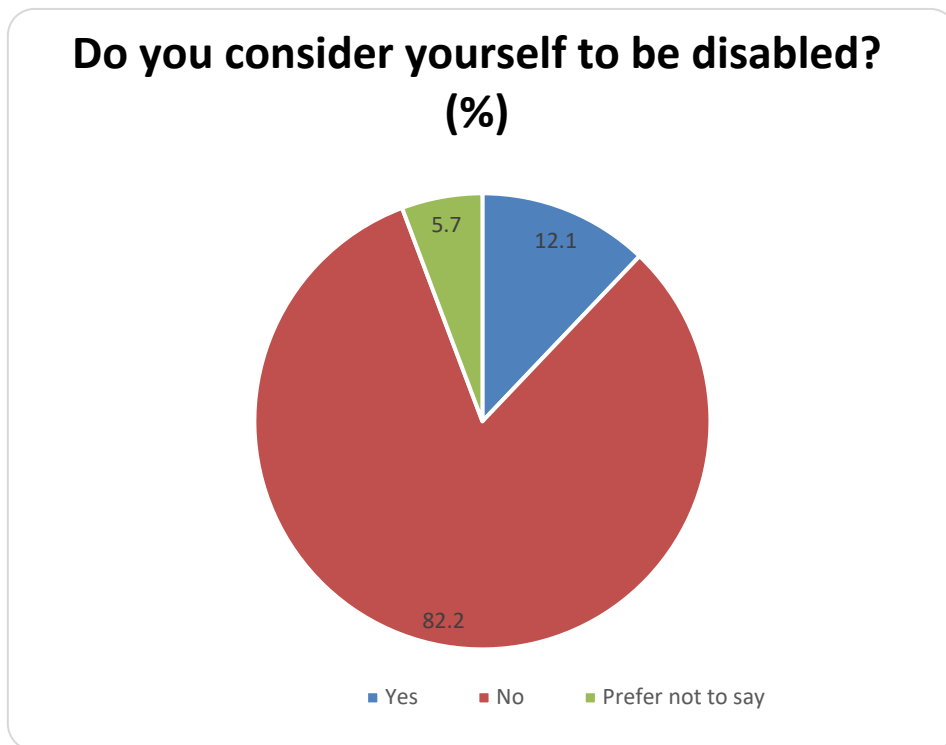


Figure 13 – Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

4.29 12.1% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled.

Poll Results

4.30 Two questions were available to respondents in the “Quick Poll” tool. In total there were 135 responses to these questions.

Do you think Pontypridd needs a Placemaking Plan?

Yes

No

Don't know

[View Results](#)

SUBMIT

Figure 14 - Quick Poll 1: Do you think Pontypridd needs a Placemaking Plan?

4.31 Over 88% of respondents agreed that Pontypridd needed a Placemaking Plan.

Yes
 No
 Don't know

View Results

SUBMIT

Figure 15 - Quick Poll 2: Do you think the Placemaking Plan will have a positive effect on Pontypridd?

4.32 64.5% agreed that the Placemaking Plan would have a positive effect on Pontypridd, 20.8% said 'No' and 14.5% didn't know.

“Ideas” Tool Results

4.33 70 contributions were made to the Ideas tool on the Let's Talk Pontypridd website, with the prompt *“What are your views on the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan?”*. The responses varied in length and topic, with some common themes.

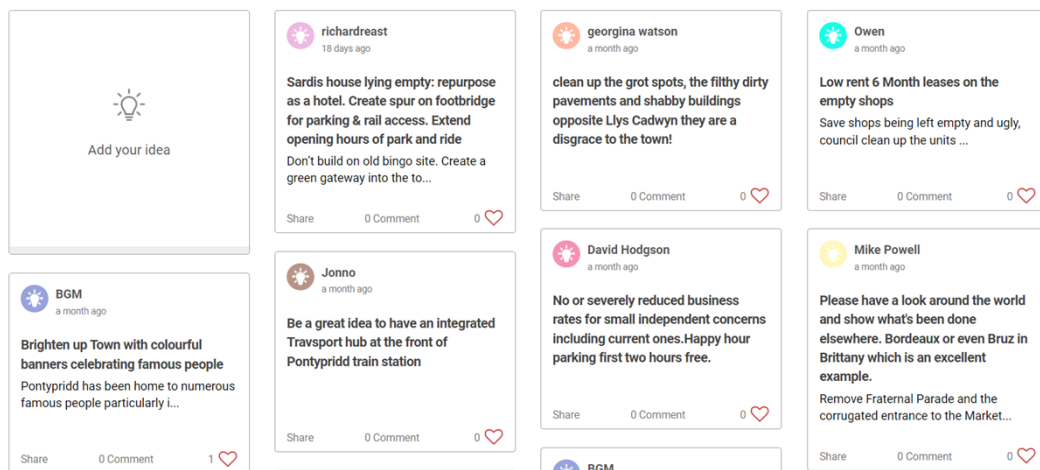


Figure 16 – Examples of Ideas received on Let's Talk Pontypridd website

4.34 Common themes included in the “Ideas” tool:

Better usage of riverside

“More riverside restaurants to attract people in. More shops like wilkos, primark, home bargains, to draw people in. Improved traffic at both”

“The Rivers Taff and Rhondda should be the focal point - a celebration of recovery, now that salmon, otters and other wildlife has returned.”

Car parking

“- better use of space in gas road car park as the new layout wastes a massive amount of usable parking space. Wider spaces within the police station car park - I am unable to open doors wide enough to get my young children in and out of their car seats, better located parking for families with young children.”

“It looks like the Gas Road car park is going to be reduced in size. If this goes ahead then this car park should be wholly reserved for short stay with a high proportion of disabled bays. One of the worst things about the town centre traffic is people queueing for this car park when other car parks are available (but more expensive to park in) as it causes traffic jams. Need to also make the other car parks more accessible to pedestrians (there is no pavement on either the entry or exit ramp to Goods Yard car park, could also provide steps down by municipal offices to make journey shorter for those who are walking).

Antisocial parking in the town centre also needs targeted enforcement as people park in the loading bays and bus stops by the new Llys Cadwyn development, blocking them from use by delivery vehicles and buses which also causes traffic jams when those vehicles load or unload elsewhere.”

Better use of empty properties / encourage businesses to occupy them

“More shops to attract people to the area - a blend of popular stores as well as boutiques- a push to lease out the new buildings that remain half empty”

“Save shops being left empty and ugly, council clean up the units and have interchangeable sign put above the door. Allow upcoming businesses to try out for 6 months with an option to extend twice on a low affordable rent. After you've extended the lease twice you would then be subject to standard rent. It takes around 18 months for a business to become established so if not by the end of the 3rd renewal then they make way for the next business. Keeps the shops in Ponty fresh and exciting and allows for small start-ups to have a chance.”

EV Charging

“Somewhere to charge electric vehicles would be good as well as better cycle tracks and somewhere to lock your bike up. Opening up the river from the town side with more views, a walkway, more trees. A sculpture in the river where the Rhondda meets the Taff would provide a focal point. Maybe a trout swimming upstream?”

Park and ride

“Use the old goods yard and depot building for Park and Ride”

“Park and Ride from Goods Yard and improve Disabled Parking”

Pedestrianisation

“I always like to cycle into my office from the station. It's the quickest way to get to work. It's dangerous on the main roads and I have been almost hit a couple of times. There are no obvious legal ways to get to the high-street from the station on a bike.....”

Transport links

“For true connectivity a new railway Halt should be installed at the bus station. Most of the infrastructure is already there from a previous halt years ago. This would do away with the silly situation of people jumping off the train at one end of town, walking through town to catch a bus. They could alight at the bus station instead. This is a quick easy win.”

“Be a great idea to have an integrated Transport hub at the front of Pontypridd train station”

More / better shops / retail outlets

“More retail shops please , ponty is full of barbers, charity and phone shops. A primark is needed, better parking and restaurants”

“We need to get more shops in the area. Primark the nearest one is Cardiff that would bring more people to Pontypridd. And maybe the shop.”

“Ambitious Retail Strategy Needed/ Opportunity to Develop Showpiece National Rugby Museum for Wales”

Regeneration / Restoration / general tidy up

“Restoration of older buildings”

“Add a musical waterfall around the bandstand. There is one in a park in Bad Mergentheim which attracts many visitors and it's gorgeous”

“Invest in intensive river clean up and on-going trash management. Create social spaces & strategies because retail will continue to decline.”

Renewable / sustainable energy sources

“At Radyr they have installed a micro hydroelectric power plant on the weir, providing 100% green electricity 24/7, 365 days of the year. A similar thing could be done at Treforest weir and other parts of the rivers around Pontypridd to help provide cheap green electricity to the town. It's a wonderful natural resource which is currently completely underutilised.”

“There is no mention in the plan of any improvements to the river itself. Aside from keeping the river clean, how about installing a Water Wheel? As well as generating electricity for council buildings, it would be a visitor attraction, and a focal point to raise awareness of renewable energy.”



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

DRAFT RCT TREE, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSION WITH CLLR CHRISTINA LEYSHON THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE & CORPORATE SERVICES

Author: Simon Gale

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is:

- 1.1 For Cabinet to consider the contents of a new, draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy and agree that the draft is used as the basis on which to engage the public and other relevant stakeholders in an eight week consultation to ascertain a wider range of views.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy for consultation with the public and other relevant stakeholders

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Trees have featured prominently in climate change considerations in global, UK and Welsh Government policy. We are also recognising that trees, vegetation and soils have an important carbon storing role in the 'carbon cycle'.
- 3.2 A tree strategy is necessary to ensure that we value, promote and protect the significant extent of existing woodlands in Rhondda Cynon Taf (about a third of the County Borough), recognising the importance

of our semi-natural woodland habitats and especially our ancient woodlands. It is also important that a strategy is in place that recognises the importance of protecting semi-natural habitats and undisturbed soils from inappropriate tree planting.

- 3.3 A tree strategy will also provide the foundation of the Council's ambition to deliver RCT's largest tree planting programme in a generation and will promote the principles of 'right tree – right place'.
- 3.4 Finally a tree strategy will provide a robust framework for all tree related decisions and activity in RCT over the next 10 years.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In November 2019 Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council (RCTCBC) established a Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group to address the climate emergency and subsequently the nature emergency, declared by Welsh Government. As a Council we are committed to investing in our green spaces and to delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses.
- 4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf is one of the very few heavily wooded areas in the UK and probably the only Local Authority area with such a large population of both people and trees. The County Borough is about a third wooded and about a third urban, with a population of 241,873 (2020 est). Even within our main urban areas an average of 18.5% of the area is tree covered.
- 4.3 Our trees, hedgerows, and woodlands are an integral part of nature, supporting a wide range of insects, animals, birds and plant life. Looking after the trees, hedges and woodlands in our local environment is essential for the future health of nature and of people. Trees can improve the environmental quality of our urban areas, delivering physical, social and economic benefits as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity, visual amenity and more. In considering trees and planning for the future.
- 4.4 Our climate is changing which has implications on how our trees, woodlands and wildlife react to it and the levels of management required. Globalisation increases the threat from pests and diseases and although not new, these are a growing concern. Currently, Ash dieback is a major challenge, but others have significant impact on our native tree stock (Dutch elm, *Phytophthora*, *Chalara*, processionary oak moth etc.).

- 4.5 The value of trees to the Council and the residents of RCT is significant, from the well-established aesthetic and landscape benefits, to local air quality, water cycling and shade etc. Other habitats are also important and conserving these has benefits for residents, climate and nature. The Nature's Assets report previously considered by Cabinet, identified the importance of our semi-natural biodiversity rich habitats and of conserving existing soil carbon sequestration. It also identified the on-going natural processes of native woodland regeneration and colonisation taking place across the County Borough.
- 4.6 Trees fall within the remit of numerous departments of the Council, from Planning, Legal and Environmental Health to Corporate Estates, Education, Cemeteries, Parks and Countryside, Streetcare, Drainage and Highways. Trees cannot be considered in isolation. They form a major part of our Green Infrastructure and how we manage them should complement other works carried out by the Council in terms of climate change measures. A Tree Strategy will provide a unified direction for all Council services in respect of our tree activity and provide a framework to consider the organisational and resource requirements needed to address the current challenges and the opportunities highlighted by the broader scope of the climate change and biodiversity emergencies

5. DRAFT RCT TREE, WOODLAND AND HEDGEROW STRATEGY

- 5.1 The focus of this strategy is to actively protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees, woodlands and hedgerows that all benefit our environment so significantly. The strategy looks at the next ten years specifically but with an eye on the longer-term.
- 5.2 To achieve our Climate and Nature ambitions, how we manage trees must be integrated with wider environmental concerns to protect and manage all the important habitats in our urban areas and in the surrounding countryside. It must also be integrated with other Council policies such as the Review Local Development Plan, the Flood Risk Management Plan, Environmental Health and Community engagement.
- 5.3 The strategy will provide a mechanism to enhance the provision and care of woodlands in RCT; ensure that decisions and activities undertaken in relation to trees are made in a structured and consistent way; and, establish a series of policies, action plans and monitoring for the management and enhancement of RCT's trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
- 5.4 The strategy sets out a robust framework with the over-arching aims of:
- Protect, regenerate and care for RCT's existing trees and woodlands

- Encouraging new tree and hedgerow planting in appropriate areas to benefit well-being, pollution, climate change and local pride in our surroundings
 - Maintaining the extent of urban tree cover and to extend the canopy cover in urban areas where there is less than 10%
 - Encouraging appropriate natural regeneration of woodland to increase canopy cover, whilst protecting open habitats of biodiversity value
 - To provide a framework for decision making and establishing a prioritised action plan for 2022 -2032
- 5.5 The strategy is ambitious in its aims of valuing, protecting and enhancing our extensive portfolio of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows whilst at the same time seeking to undertake an accelerated tree planting programme that will be the largest seen in RCT in decades.
- 5.6 Resources will clearly be needed to meet this ambition both in terms of staff, capital for new tree planting and revenue for ongoing maintenance, management and enhancement of new and existing trees. There is already a strong commitment in the Council's 2022/23 revenue budget strategy to resourcing this type of activity and it is proposed to recruit additional tree officers (one strategic and two operational) from the current £500K allocated to Climate Change and Carbon Reduction activity.
- 5.7 At an operational level, the strategy will guide how we risk assess and manage trees on the Council's land and also how we respond to dangerous trees in private ownership. It seeks to strengthen our enforcement and Tree Preservation Order processes and how we respond to development and planning related consultations. The strategy will also provide a framework for ensuring all relevant staff across the Council have access to training and awareness opportunities around the subject of trees and hedgerows.
- 5.8 Alongside the strategy, officers are developing a tree planting programme that will seek to maximise the opportunities to plant new trees in our parks, schools and public spaces. The programme will also explore opportunities to plant new trees in town centres and on highways, balancing the benefits of new planting in these built up areas against the potential disruption and impact on infrastructure.
- 5.9 It is recognised that there are community groups and individuals that are keen to undertake their own tree planting projects and officers are currently working on a toolkit to support organisations in RCT to identify the right land, right form of planting and funding opportunities to ensure a successful outcome. A communications plan for this activity is being developed to ensure that local members and their residents are informed and engaged with, new tree planting activity in their

community and to maximise the number of community projects and private landowners that come forward with appropriate proposals.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 None as a direct result of this strategy.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 Full public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken if this report is approved

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 None directly related to this strategy but there will be additional staff, capital and revenue impacts as plans under the strategy area develop.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The enhancement of trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the County Borough is directly related to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. The Council also has specific responsibilities in terms of tree/public safety and Tree Preservation Orders.

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

11.1 The proposed Tree Strategy contributes to the Council's priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. Specifically, it contributes to 'People' by creating more natural communities that promote and maintain mental wellbeing and to 'Places' by Getting the best out of our environment by looking after and investing in our greenspaces and specifically delivering natural carbon storage solutions across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses. It also reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Sustainable management is based on

long-term considerations and is focused on preventative and precautionary action. The strategy aims to involve all the relevant stakeholders and to integrate tree activity into the wider operations of the Council. It will contribute specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility goals of the Act, but in the longer term it could have implications for all the goals

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 Successful implementation of the draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy are of strategic significance to Rhondda Cynon Taf.

13. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 13.1 If implemented the new draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy will be used to engage the public and other relevant stakeholders in an eight week consultation to ascertain a wider range of views.
- 13.2 The results of the consultation and engagement exercise are not only fundamental in determining a wider range of views it will provide a robust framework for all tree related decisions and activity in RCT over the next 10 years.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: *Simon Gale 01443 281114*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA LEYSHON)**

Item:

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: *Simon Gale 01443 281114*

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DRAFT TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY

2022 - 2032



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

In November 2019 Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council (RCTCBC) established a Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group to address the climate emergency and subsequently the nature emergency, declared by Welsh Government. In November 2020 the Steering Group received a report on ‘Natures’ Assets’ which set out the Council’s natural environment priorities with regard to addressing the climate and nature crises.

Essentially, Rhondda Cynon Taf is putting Climate Change at the centre of what we do. As a Council we are committed to investing in our green spaces and to delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses.

Rhondda Cynon Taff is one of the very few heavily wooded areas in the UK which also has a large population (see UK map below). The County Borough is about a third wooded and about a third urban, with a population of 241,873 (2020 est) and a population density of 570 persons per square km (2020 mid-year estimates from the ONS). Even within the main urban areas an average of 18.5% is tree covered.



The importance of this resource has been highlighted by the Climate and Nature Emergencies and this strategy will strengthen the Council’s commitment to managing

this resource and to maximise the benefits to local residents, to biodiversity, and to climate adaptation and mitigation.

Trees, hedgerows, and woodlands are an integral part of nature, supporting a wide range of insects, animals, birds and plant life. Looking after the trees, hedges and woodlands in our local environment is essential for the future health of nature and of people. Trees can improve the environmental quality of our urban areas, delivering physical, social and economic benefits as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity, visual amenity and more. In considering trees and planning for the future, we need a fundamental shift in attitude and perspective - to recognise trees as public assets, rather than just liabilities.

The focus of this strategy is to actively protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's Urban Forest – the green infrastructure of parks, gardens, woods, trees in streets, footpaths, green spaces, trees and hedges that all benefit our environment so significantly. The strategy looks at the next ten years specifically but with an eye on the longer-term of 50 plus years. To achieve our Climate and Nature ambitions, it must be integrated with wider environmental concerns to protect and manage all the important habitats in our urban areas and in the surrounding countryside. It must also be integrated with other Council policies such as the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP), the Flood Risk Management Plan, Environmental Health and Community engagement.

The Strategy will be subject to an eight-week period of public consultation.

Vision Statement

In the ten-year span of this strategy the Council will:

- Undertake the largest tree planting programme in a generation and implement a holistic approach to the RCT landscape which integrates consideration of landscape, culture, biodiversity, natural flood management, green infrastructure and carbon storage.
- We will adopt the principle of “the right tree for the right place” in order to ensure the most resilient tree population possible.
- Promote and value the significant extent of existing woodlands in Rhondda Cynon Taf (about a third of the County Borough), recognising the importance of our semi-natural woodland habitats and especially our ancient woodlands.
- Protect important semi-natural habitats and undisturbed soils from inappropriate tree planting.
- Recognise, quantify and monitor the contribution of natural regeneration to woodland expansion across RCT
- Work with Natural Resources Wales to maximise the benefits of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate to local residents and visitors.
- Commit to the management and maintenance of the existing extent of urban tree coverage.
- Work constructively with individuals and groups to deliver this vision.
- Aim to increase the urban tree canopy cover in those urban areas with less than 10% cover.
- Promote the benefits and value of urban trees within our communities.

The Purpose of the Strategy

Providing a mechanism to improve the provision and care of trees and woodlands

Ensuring that decisions and activities undertaken in relation to trees are made in a structured and consistent way; and Monitoring the action plan(s) and policies for the care, management and enhancement of Rhondda Cynon Taf 's trees and woodlands.

Overarching Aims of the Strategy

1. To protect, regenerate and care for Rhondda Cynon Taf's existing trees and woodlands
2. To encourage the natural regeneration and colonisation of trees as the most sustainable way of increasing canopy cover.
3. Encourage new tree and hedgerow planting in appropriate areas to benefit well-being, pollution, climate change and pride in our surroundings
4. Where urban tree cover is below 10% to plant more trees on the principle of the 'right tree in the right place'
5. To recognise the ancient hedgerow heritage of RCT, to restore and maintain the valuable ecological and historic asset, and where new hedges are planted ensure they do not compromise this heritage
6. To provide a framework for decision making and establishing a prioritised action plan for 2023 - 2033

Action Plan:

Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council will:

1. Create a cross-disciplinary working group to: monitor the implementation of the strategy; develop an initial tree planting programme; ensure risks and benefits are addressed; operational and regulatory matters; integration with broader land management considerations (flood, biodiversity, carbon storage etc); and integration with policy (Revised Local Development Plan, Flood Risk Management Plan, Action for Nature, Air Quality, sales/leases etc.).
2. Support a condition survey of all the trees for which RCT has management responsibility to form a single data base.
3. Review the extent of woodland across the County Borough, including ancient woodland and naturally regenerating woodland. Establish how Council policy can assist in its protection and management, its relationship to other habitats of biodiversity value and the sustainable management of natural resources.
4. Review and monitor the extent and condition of woodland on Council owned land and in particular, monitor the area of naturally regenerating woodland on the Council's estate, with priority for the sites in excess of 10ha which feature in the Council's carbon calculation submissions to Welsh Government.
5. Ensure that new policies for the protection and enhancement of trees and hedgerows are embedded in the Revised Local Development Plan where

- appropriate and supported by evidence and integrated into the Green Infrastructure Assessment where appropriate.
6. Support a comprehensive review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conservation areas to reassess historical orders and potentially implement new orders to protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees.
 7. Review, strengthen, resource and consistently implement enforcement policies, to ensure protection of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
 8. Establish the overall value of Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees, to show what condition and size they are, and how much they benefit the environment and the ecosystem services they provide.
 9. Establish a cycle of tree risk assessment and update management and action plans.
 10. Deliver a training program for staff within the affected service areas on the value of trees, TPOs, and the tree strategy's vision and operational matters
 11. Develop and adopt a Tree Risk Assessment Management tool for making decisions about tree felling, pollarding, pruning and coppicing
 12. Develop an effective biosecurity policy to reduce the risk of introduced pests and diseases that may threaten native woodland cover as well as planted and new trees.
 13. Develop an effective strategy for ash-dieback, that deals with the risks, allows unaffected trees to be retained and addresses canopy cover.
 14. Establish a robust partnership and community engagement programme. Improve communication and understanding between the Council, Community Councils and residents relating to: local issues and concerns; tree strategy and detailed policy; the value of trees, woodlands and other natural habitats; and operational matters such essential works.
 15. Establish a working partnership with NRW private, community and charitable owners of land, businesses and local developers in the management of trees, hedgerows and woodlands, contributing to maintaining and where appropriate increasing canopy cover across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
 16. Set objectives that clearly define what future success looks like and the specific benefits the urban forest is expected to deliver together with milestones for progress during the life of the strategy.
 17. Establish monitoring standards that can identify how much of the expected benefits of tree, woodland and hedgerow planting have been achieved.
 18. Ensure integration of the tree strategy objectives and outcomes with local biodiversity priorities and objectives to ensure complementary delivery of action.
 19. In urban settings develop opportunities to plant long-lived trees and hedgerows to support wildlife, provide Green Infrastructure services and public amenity value, with a focus on urban areas with tree cover below 10%.
 20. Outside settlement boundaries protect existing woodlands and rely primarily on natural woodland regeneration for woodland expansion.
 21. Create cross council working practices to implement and inform this Strategy, building an informed and expert work force that supports the care and management of trees and woodlands across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
 22. Monitor and review the Strategy, in partnership with the cross-disciplinary working group, every 3 years.
 23. Produce detailed policy and guidance notes to be followed by RCTCBC, contractors and other partners in following this strategy.

24. Where possible encourage plans for new building or development to make provision for retaining existing trees, space for natural regeneration and, where appropriate, increasing the canopy cover.
25. Support local tree nurseries to provide future tree stock with appropriate biosecurity, that will be climate resilient and offer appropriate planting for Rhondda Cynon Taf's environment and local biodiversity context. This will include schools, community groups and volunteers collecting seeds and cuttings of suitable trees and growing them on.

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Part 1: Introduction

Trees are vital for our environment and for humanity and, together with our soils and other vegetation, will be key in tackling climate change. Via photosynthesis trees capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood and other growth. This carbon is therefore sequestered, locked up out of the atmosphere. Rhondda Cynon Taf is putting Climate Change at the centre of what we do and this is therefore a key driver in the need for Rhondda Cynon Taf to develop this strategy and have a 'joined-up' vision for trees across the Borough.

Trees, soils and other vegetation are part of our natural 'armour' against climate change. Trees, hedgerows and woodlands are an integral part of nature, supporting a wide range of insects, animals, birds and plant life. Having trees, hedges and woodlands in our local environment is essential for the future health of nature and of people. Trees provide one of the most cost-effective ways to improve the environmental quality of our urban areas, delivering physical, social and economic well-being as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity and visual amenity to name but a few (Appendix 1).

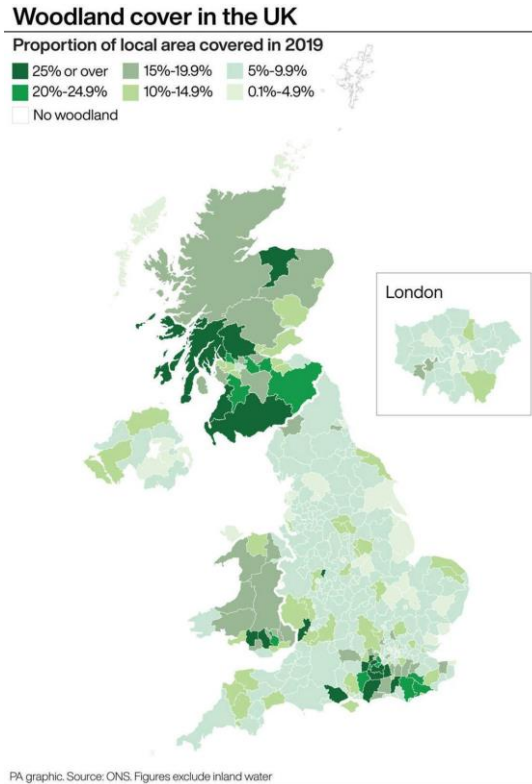
Trees matter to us all for a wide variety of reasons and in developing a Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf, focused on trees, hedgerows and woodlands, Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council will engage with the broad range of issues that inform our thinking about our environment and set out an effective programme of activity that will help all residents meet future climate and environmental challenges. In doing so a fundamental shift in attitude and perspective is required - to one that views and thinks about trees as public assets, rather than liabilities. A ten-year strategy is a starting point, and from the process of developing and implementing policies and plans based on protecting and expanding our tree cover, our strategy can grow, change and develop to meet future challenges.

Why does Rhondda Cynon Taf need a Trees and Woodland Strategy?

Local authorities have significant responsibilities with regard to trees. In Rhondda Cynon Taf about a third of the area is wooded and there is an unusually high level of tree cover in our urban areas (av 18.5%), and on land owned or managed by the Council. This means that the Council is responsible for the management of an extensive tree stock.

Trees are a significant asset to the County Borough. Trees are of landscape significance and legislation relating to Tree Preservation Orders and the Hedgerow Regulations reflect this. Biodiversity considerations relating to trees have become more important and recently the role of trees and woodland as 'Green Infrastructure' has come to the fore.

The Strategy seeks to address these issues and to identify the costs and benefits of an investment in trees.



Challenges and Opportunities in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The age of our tree stock is significant as most of our streets and parks were planted during Victorian or Edwardian times. This strategy recognises the value of this inheritance and seeks to prevent irregular tree planting programmes, poor maintenance, unnecessary felling of trees over which otherwise will have both short and longer term implications on our landscape.

The Urban Tree surveys by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) show a continuing decline in urban tree cover in RCT from 19% in 2009 to 18.5% in 2013. Unfortunately, this included 728 large, well established trees lost from our urban areas. “Overall Rhondda Cynon Taf lost 30 hectares (of urban trees) between 2009 and 2013 with 13 of the 16 towns showing canopy loss.” - (Town Tree Cover in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough (cyfoethnaturiol.cymru)).

Public open space, which accounts for 26% of our urban land hosts about 60% of our urban tree cover (Wales 53%), with private gardens only 14% (Wales 20%)

In a well-wooded County like RCT, retaining existing mature trees can be a challenge as they can come under pressure from much needed new development and infrastructure

Our climate is changing which has implications on how our trees, woodlands and wildlife react to it and the levels of management required. Drought, storms and floods present specific hazards but gradual changes in CO2 in the atmosphere, rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns will also have long term impacts. Globalisation increases the threat from pests and diseases and, although not new,

these are a growing concern. Currently ash dieback is a major challenge, as ash is a frequent roadside tree, but others have significant impact on our native tree stock (Dutch elm, Phytophthora, Chalara, processionary oak moth etc.).

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) has been updated to reflect the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment Act amongst other changes in legislation. New iterations of PPW have placed an important emphasis on sustainability and have embedded the concept of placemaking at the heart of decision making. PPW 11 also places a new focus on green infrastructure, its role in Placemaking and vital contribution to future living conditions.

PPW 11 includes the need to undertake Green Infrastructure Assessments (GIA) as part of the Revised Local Development Plan evidence base. The Revised LDP will need to carefully consider the role that green infrastructure will play within it, this includes the consideration of trees.

Successfully retaining existing trees and establishing new planting within housing can be difficult due to pressures to maximise developable space. The RLDP will need to address and balance the requirements for housing and other development with the impact on the local landscape, climate change and biodiversity amongst other things. The Council will also need to consider the long-term management of any green infrastructure provided by the developer and how its function can be assured for the lifetime of the development.

Sustainable drainage requirements, which are now mandatory for developments in RCT ([Sustainable Drainage - An Overview | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)), also have implications for the design and long-term management of developments and may also impact on existing trees.

Despite the many benefits offered by trees such as reduced pollution, shade, regulation of temperature, drainage etc, there are still some who regard trees as a nuisance not an asset. Dealing efficiently with cross departmental enquiries is a particular challenge. It is right and proper that public concerns are addressed, clear information provided and the scope for community involvement developed. This strategy will seek to ensure we have consistently applied policies relating to routine concerns such as leaf fall, television reception and tree safety. Positive communications about the benefits of trees and the contributions of citizens and businesses will also be critical to raise the profile of trees and woodland in RCT.

Trees cannot be considered in isolation. They form a major part of our green infrastructure and their operational management should complement other works carried out by the Council. This strategy seeks to ensure that the value of trees to the Council and the residents of RCT is set out clearly, from the well-established aesthetic and landscape benefits, to contributions to local air quality, water cycling and shade etc.

The strategy recognises that other habitats are also important, and conserving these also has benefits for residents, climate and nature. The strategy recognises the importance of our semi-natural biodiversity rich habitats (including woodlands) and the importance of undisturbed soils for carbon sequestration. The carbon stored in soils

greatly exceeds that stored in trees. World-wide soils store twice as much carbon as all vegetation including trees. (prof Peter Smith) It also recognises the on-going natural processes of native woodland regeneration and colonisation taking place across the County Borough. This will inform our plans for tree planting, which will typically be focused in urban areas, parks etc where it is of most benefit to people and causes least damage to undisturbed soils and our existing wildlife rich mosaic of semi-natural habitats.

Integrating consideration for trees and woodland with other aspects of Council land management such as drainage, air quality, carbon accounting and biodiversity will ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation measures achieve the greatest benefits for local people and the wider environment.

In addition to our already extensive tree coverage, there will still be opportunities for the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Our parks, school grounds, open spaces and towns can all benefit from the addition of new planting all within the mantra of right tree – right place for the right reason

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Existing Tree Cover and Habitat

National Forest Inventory data from NRW shows that about a third of RCT is woodland. This is unusually high in the UK and Welsh context and brings particular responsibilities to the Council. NRW 2013 data on the tree canopy in selected urban areas, which include all trees, whether in gardens, fields, parks, woodland, urban spaces, along roads or streets, averages 18.5%. Again, as the Council is responsible for managing much of this urban woodland. More details regarding urban trees is given in Part 3.

As such, whilst the strategy seeks to facilitate the area's largest tree planting programme in a generation there will also be a major focus on actively protecting and increasing Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

From a biodiversity perspective we need to ensure the native distribution of trees and woodlands in RCT is respected. RCT has a complex topography and geology and very particular and valuable natural and native distributions of tree and shrub species. Outside towns, the preservation of the natural distributions of species is a fundamental component of nature conservation. Local distinctiveness and variation across the County Borough is a key part of the extraordinary natural diversity in RCT.

Planting species that are not native to local area is a damaging activity. Introducing species can lead to gross and damaging impacts on valuable habitats and a de-valuing of biodiversity. It is the complexity of the mosaic of local habitats and species diversity that makes RCT so biodiverse and that needs to be recognised within the Tree Strategy.

Similarly, where hedgerows are a feature of the County Borough those are ancient artifacts, often dating back hundreds or thousands of years to the first farming activities. The species richness provides a clear and invaluable picture of historic and cultural land use continuity. Planting new 'species rich' hedgerows compromises this landscape asset and current RCT ecological advice for new hedges in countryside

locations is to require simple hazel or hawthorn hedgerows. Adding diversity into natural habitats is most effectively achieved through management.

Figure 2
National Forest Inventory Woodland Coverage in RCT from www.lle.gov.wales

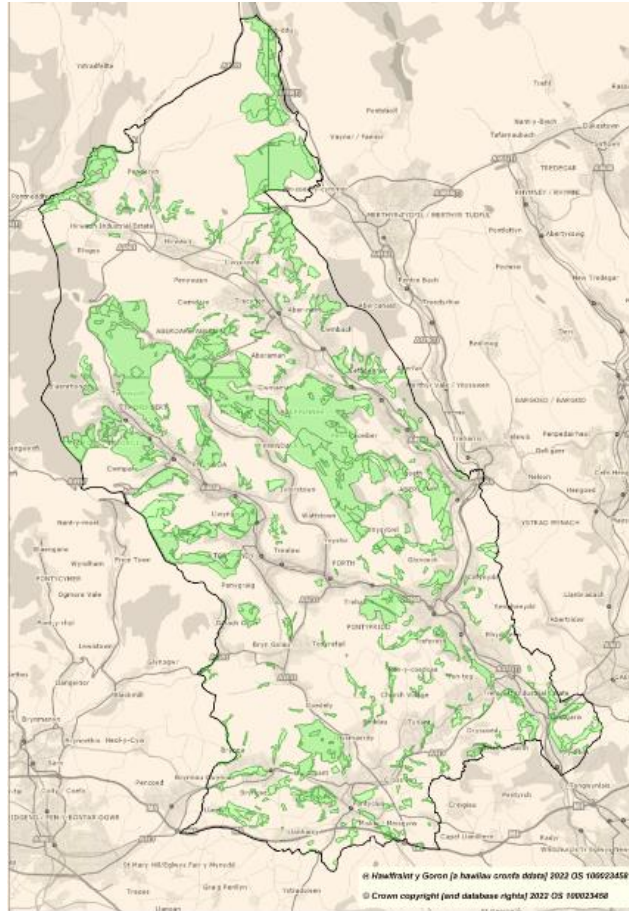
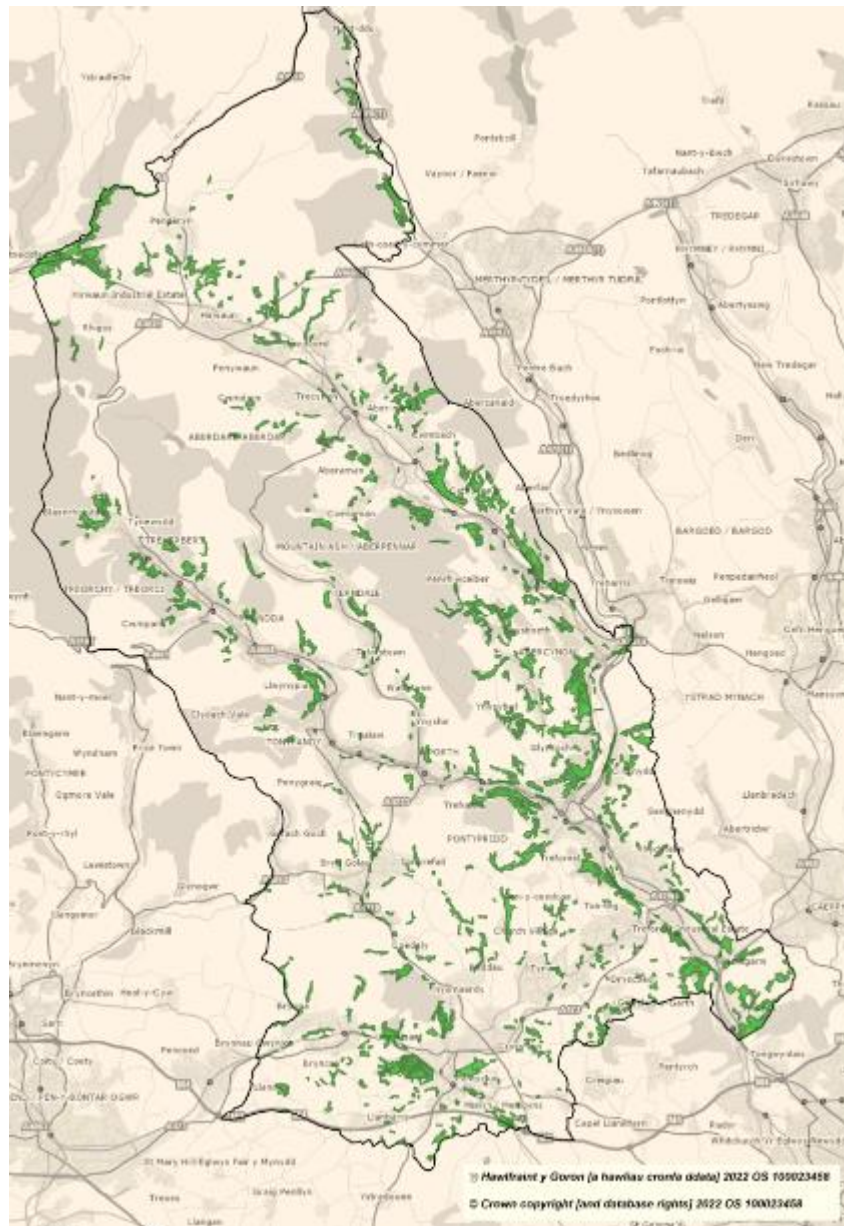


Figure 3
Ancient Woodland Coverage in RCT from www.lle.gov.wales



Scope of the Strategy and Vision Statement

Our overall vision is to deliver a Tree Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf which recognises the importance of the extensive existing woodlands in the County Borough and providing a robust framework for the delivery of new tree planting projects, our own operational responsibilities for trees and woodlands and embedding this activity within climate change and biodiversity considerations. The aim is to ensure we are not only looking after our trees and woodlands for now but also for future generations.

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to deliver the overarching **aims**, using the **general principles** to undertake the **key activities** the Council is responsible for by:

- Providing a mechanism to improve the provision and care of trees and woodlands.
- Ensuring that decisions and activities undertaken in relation to trees are made in a structured and consistent way; and
- Monitoring the action plan(s) and policies for the care, management and enhancement of Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees and woodlands.

The resulting Strategy Actions are listed below.

Overarching Aims of the Strategy

1. To protect and care for Rhondda Cynon Taf's existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands.
2. To encourage the natural regeneration and colonisation of trees as the main and most sustainable way of increasing canopy cover.
3. Encourage new tree and hedgerow planting in appropriate areas to benefit well-being, pollution, climate change and pride in our surroundings
4. Where urban tree cover is below 10%, to plant more trees on the principle of the 'right tree for the right place'
5. To recognise the ancient hedgerow heritage of RCT, to restore and maintain that valuable ecological and historical asset, and where new hedges are planted ensure they do not compromise this heritage.
6. To provide a framework for decision making and establishing a prioritised action plan for 2023-2033.

General Principles

The following general principles will apply:

- Trees are viewed as an asset with multiple benefits
- All decisions and tree activity must have regard to current legislation and best practice
- Tree management should focus on tree health and seek to maximise benefits for current and future generations
- Tree planting must have regard for; existing soil and habitat, space to mature (below and above ground), future maintenance and management
- Tree works should be evidence-based and undertaken by suitably trained or qualified personnel

Key Activities

The following are the key activities the Council should undertake:

- identifying the tree/woodland resource in RCT and the risk inspection regime
- Undertaking operational works as required by the risk inspection regime (including arrangements for out of hours)
- Administer the dangerous trees on private land requirements
- Operation of the Tree Preservation Order system in conjunction with Planning Services (including updating the GIS mapping, creation and removal of TPO, administration of applications to prune/fell etc. Observations of planning applications affecting TPO trees, TPO on Council owned land prior to sale/lease, enforcement)

- Operation of other tree related legislation such as the Hedgerow Regulations and the High Hedges (Anti-social Behaviour legislation)
- Strategic review of trees in Council management to include amenity, carbon storage, tree health, biodiversity value and other benefits in addition to the risks identified above.
- Undertaking operational works as required on the Council estate
- Long-term planning for replacement planting, remedial works and future challenges
- Advice to schools and other lease holders on the management and planting of trees
- Advice to other departments: for example air quality and trees, SUDS and trees, Carbon storage and trees
- Engaging with, responding to and advising local residents in relations to trees

Strategy Action Plan

- Create a cross-disciplinary working group to: monitor the implementation of the strategy; develop an initial tree planting programme; ensure risks and benefits are addressed; operational and regulatory matters; integration with broader land management considerations (flood, biodiversity, carbon storage etc); and integration with policy (Revised Local Development Plan, Flood Risk Management Plan, Action for Nature, Air Quality, sales/leases etc.).
- Support a condition survey of all the trees for which RCT has management responsibility to form a single data base.
- Review the extent of woodland across the County Borough, including ancient woodland and naturally regenerating woodland. Establish how Council policy can assist in its protection and management, its relationship to other habitats of biodiversity value and the sustainable management of natural resources.
- Review and monitor the extent and condition of woodland on Council owned land and in particular, monitor the area of naturally regenerating woodland on the Council's estate, with priority for the sites in excess of 10ha which feature in the Council's carbon calculation submissions to Welsh Government.
- Ensure that new policies for the protection and enhancement of trees and hedgerows are embedded in the Revised Local Development Plan where appropriate and supported by evidence and integrated into the Green Infrastructure Assessment where appropriate. Ensure policies are adequately enforced for the lifetime of the development
- Support a comprehensive review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conservation areas to reassess historical orders and potentially implement new orders to protect Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees. Review, strengthen, resource and consistently implement enforcement policies, to ensure protection of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
- Establish the overall value of Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees, to show what condition and size they are, and how much they benefit the environment and the ecosystem services they provide.
- Establish a cycle of tree risk assessment and update management and action plans.
- Deliver a training program for staff within the affected service areas on the value of trees, TPOs, and the tree strategy's vision and operational matters

- Develop and adopt a Tree Risk Assessment Management tool for making decisions about tree felling, pollarding, pruning and coppicing
- Develop an effective biosecurity policy to reduce the risk of introduced pests and diseases that may threaten native woodland cover as well as planted and new trees.
- Develop an effective strategy for ash-dieback, that deals with the risks, allows unaffected trees to be retained and addresses canopy cover.
- Establish a robust partnership and community engagement programme. Improve communication and understanding between the Council, Community Councils and residents relating to: local issues and concerns; tree strategy and detailed policy; the value of trees, woodlands and other natural habitats; and operational matters such essential works.
- Establish a working partnership with NRW private, community and charitable owners of land, businesses and local developers in the management of trees, hedgerows and woodlands, contributing to maintaining and where appropriate increasing canopy cover across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Set objectives that clearly define what future success looks like and the specific benefits the urban forest is expected to deliver together with milestones for progress during the life of the strategy.
- Establish monitoring standards that can identify how much of the expected benefits of tree, woodland and hedgerow planting have been achieved.
- Ensure integration of the tree strategy objectives and outcomes with local biodiversity prioritise and objectives to ensure complementary delivery of action.
- In urban settings develop opportunities to plant long-lived trees and hedgerows to support wildlife, provide Green Infrastructure services and public amenity value, with a focus on urban areas with tree cover below 10%.
- Outside settlement boundaries protect existing woodlands and rely primarily on natural woodland regeneration for woodland expansion.
- Create cross council working practices to implement and inform this Strategy, building an informed and expert work force that supports the care and management of trees and woodlands across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Monitor and review the Strategy, in partnership with the cross-disciplinary working group, every 3 years.
- Produce detailed policy and guidance notes to be followed by RCTCBC, contractors and other partners in following this strategy.
- Where possible encourage plans for new building or development to make provision for retaining existing trees, space for natural regeneration and, where appropriate, increasing the canopy cover.
- Support local tree nurseries to provide future tree stock with appropriate biosecurity, that will be climate resilient and offer appropriate planting for Rhondda Cynon Taf's environment and local biodiversity context. This will include schools, community groups and volunteers collecting seeds and cuttings of suitable trees and growing them on.

Communications and Public Engagement

This is an area of work which is increasingly important due to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. It is important both to communicate the Council's policies and also to understand and address public concerns.

A wide range of individuals and groups have important roles and interests in the Borough's trees and RCT knows it cannot achieve the vision of this strategy alone. In developing and delivering this strategy RCT wants to bring people along with it. Working with Natural Resources Wales and other woodland managers in RCT will be an important part of this. A programme of consultation and engagement with residents, businesses, specialist and community organisations is proposed as part of the development of the Strategy.

Governance

It is important that this strategy remains a live document and is continuously used, updated and referred to. RCT propose that the Rhondda Cynon Taf Tree Strategy is governed by a regular and robust review process between the Council and stakeholders. Taking account of the Council's emerging statutory development plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy, and Local Nature Plan this would cover:

- Performance of the strategy
- The relevance of the strategy in relation to local and national policy
- The need for any updated or amended content in the strategy as necessary
- A published report every three years

Statutory Duties

As the Local Authority for the Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, have a wide variety of statutory duties which RCT are required to perform by law. These are detailed in Appendix 2.

PART 2
TREE AND WOODLAND
MANAGEMENT

Part 2: Tree and Woodland Management

Protection and maintenance of existing trees, hedges and woodland

Data collection will be required to identify existing trees, hedges and woodland in RCT. This will be a major task given the extent of woodland in RCT. The priority for RCT should be those trees and woodlands in urban areas and in particular those which are the primary responsibility of the Council (such as on Council owned land, adjacent to the highway or in housing developments).

The mapping may require specific software, (such i-Tree/CAVAT used by Wirral, or Tree Plotter Inventory used by Birmingham). The type of software used can provide an assessment of the benefits/value of the resource, as well as risk assessment reviews, management schedules etc. The quality of the existing stock, including tree health, age, size, species, tree risk assessment, status (e.g. TPO/ Conservation Area, Green Infrastructure) the identification of ancient woodland, veteran and notable trees should be recorded. This database should include links to detailed surveys undertaken (for example for specific diseases, risk assessment or bat surveys).

As a result of the strategy, we will consider the resources required to robustly enforce legal measures to protect existing tree stock this will require additional resources.

To ensure Rhondda Cynon Taf's trees are protected, The Council will carry out a review of existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conservation areas across the borough and consider implementing additional orders and more extensive enforcement where appropriate.

RCTCBC is committed to a single strategy and related policy implementation whereby all relevant departments build, maintain and use one resource/database.

Location of Trees:

It is important to know how many trees we have and where. We will create such a record by using effective tools, like i-Tree [Tree Benefits! | i-Tree \(itreetools.org\)](http://www.itreetools.org) or Tree Plotter Inventory [TreePlotter INVENTORY - Tree Inventory Software - PlanIt Geo](#). This takes a scientifically- determined sample to give a standardised calculation of the effectiveness of trees in lowering temperature, pollutants, greenhouse–effect gases or in increasing the benefits for our quality of life.

It is also important that we don't just rely on the number of trees as a measure of their benefit to climate change, as a two-foot high sapling and a 300 year-old oak coming into its prime, each count as one tree, but they don't make the same difference to our environment.

National Forest Inventory data from NRW shows that about a third of RCT is woodland. NRW 2013 data on the tree canopy in selected urban areas, which include all trees, whether in gardens, fields, parks woodland, urban spaces or streets. The map and table from the 2013 report is included in Part 3 on page 22.

Measuring the tree canopy still does not provide a basis for calculating the full benefits of trees in the same way as the intended 'i-tree' eco programme can, which can take

into account the type, condition, size, age, health and other vital statistics of trees. Rhondda Cynon Taf will therefore create a baseline through i- tree Eco as a starting point for establishing realistic targets for management budgets, tree retention and replacement and increasing canopy cover in tree-deprived areas.

Trees in RCT are affected by a number of pathogens, typically imported with diseased tree stock. Ash die-back is of particular concern to the Council as it adversely affects highway trees. Further work is required to address the risk, protect disease free or recovering trees and monitor natural regeneration.

There is a maze of legislation around planning, development, sustainability, climate change and nature conservation to take into consideration. Local policies and existing plans need to be considered, updated, and new approaches may need to be added to the strategy. Some of these are considered in Appendix 2

Whilst there is a UK and Wales wide priority to increase canopy cover, this strategy recognises that RCT already exceeds the UK and Wales targets. We also have to respect the international and Wales biodiversity targets and recognise the important contribution that the unique carbon-rich (organic) and undisturbed soils and semi-natural vegetation of much of RCT to carbon capture and storage. The Natures Assets report to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in Nov 2020 ([Cabinet Report MTSP One4aLL LG \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)) sets out the Council's priorities in this regard.

This means that RCT will **not** encourage tree planting in the following areas:

- SSSI and SAC sites
- S7 Priority Habitats
- Species-rich grassland, permanent pastures important for grassland fungi, marshy grasslands, heaths, bogs, ffridd (bracken slopes), natural floodplains, species rich colliery spoil and within existing semi-natural woodlands
- SINC
- Pollinator habitats
- Sites where natural carbon soil store would be compromised by planting.

These habitats are valuable in their own right and are increasingly rare in Wales, across the UK and globally. The need for maintenance, removal or regeneration of existing trees on these sites may be considered, being mindful of the characteristics of the site and following best practice.

In urban areas, tree planting locations require careful consideration. Trees should not be planted in locations where the tree does not have space to grow, both above and below ground. This can contribute to poor tree health, high maintenance costs and removal before the green infrastructure, aesthetic and carbon storage benefits are realised. Where-ever possible Green Infrastructure should be planned in an integrated way for longevity and to maximise benefits for the public. It should always be one of the first and most important decisions when considering space allocation in the urban environment. Maintenance must be considered from the outset.

Obtaining professional advice and the consent of the Council's tree officer (for planting on public land) is essential. The advice of an arboricultural consultant, for planting on private land, is also recommended, similarly for planting proposals by community

groups. Planning matters relating to trees, including TPOs, will need to be informed by professional advice.

Quality of existing stock

Tree risk assessment

The risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is extremely low (in the order of one in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use). However, the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident. (Health and Safety Executive (reviewed 2014).

Public safety aspects will be addressed by RCTCBC as part of their approach to managing tree health. A sensible approach will ensure the maintenance of a healthy tree stock, the sound management of the environment and will satisfy health and safety requirements. RCT will develop a Risk Management tool to assist in decision-making around works to trees.

RCT will determine an inspection and recording regime with relevant control measures, following current industry standards and best practice. Individual tree inspection may only be necessary in specific circumstances, for example, where a particular tree:

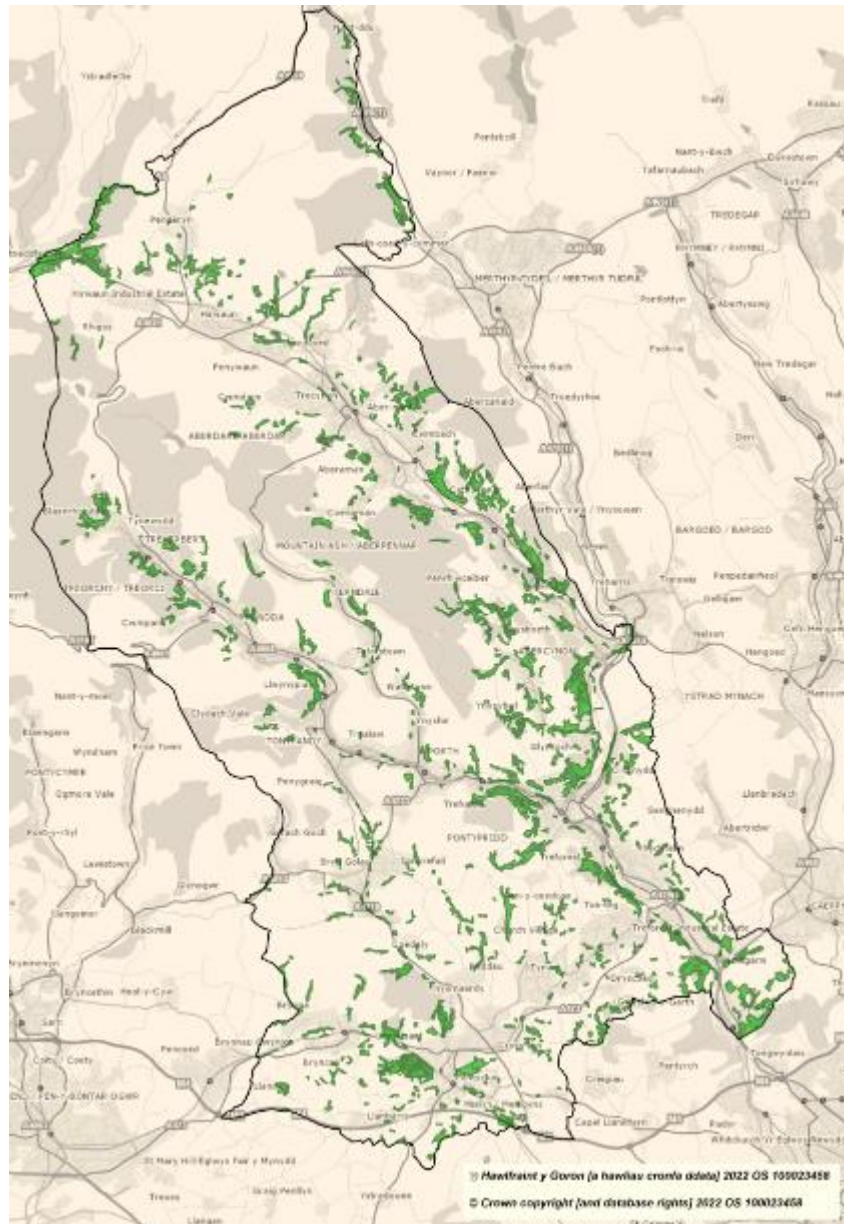
- is in a place frequently visited by the public; and
- has been identified as having structural faults that are likely to make it unstable; and
- has been identified for regular monitoring after a decision has been made to retain it with these faults.

Any planned work on trees or woodland on council land will take account of biodiversity issues e.g. bird nesting, bats roosting. At initial assessment, before any work on trees is undertaken, the local ecology will be assessed by a competent and experienced person and decisions regarding work on trees will take the expert's conclusions into consideration. Biodiversity considerations will be prioritised when providing advice, guidance and planning around tree risk management and all recommendations provided to private landowners.

Ancient Woodland, Veteran Trees and Notable Trees

Ancient woods, defined as those continuously wooded since 1600CE, are home to more threatened species than any other habitat in the UK. They are the closest we have to natural woodland in the UK and an irreplaceable part of our heritage.

Figure 3
Ancient Woodland Coverage in RCT from www.lle.gov.wales



RCTCBC will identify resources to protect and enhance its ancient woodland holdings, which are extensive and include Craig Pont Rhondda SSSI and Local Nature Reserve, Craig Yr Hesg Local Nature Reserve and all ancient woodland Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). This will include resources to help people to appreciate the value of these woods and use them without harming the wildlife. RCT will work with the Local Nature Partnership, local communities and interested groups to achieve this.

The Woodland Trust has produced a guide to help people recognise trees that have special interest and to help justify why a tree (or group of trees) stands out from others of the same species. Sometimes it is important that their specific qualities can be clearly recognised, so they can be properly protected and managed.

RCT will take into account the value of existing mature trees and invest in a greater range of options whereby trees can be retained safely. We need to keep existing 'old' trees to ensure future veteran trees!

Tree Felling

Sometimes it may be necessary to fell trees at a site after risk assessment has been undertaken. RCT will only fell trees when they are dangerous and there is a risk of people being injured, or disease would have adverse impact on the remaining stock. A tree is considered dangerous if it is in very poor condition, for example because of a significant or notifiable disease or if it is structurally unsound. Taking the decision to remove or cutback a tree is always the absolute last resort and one the Council makes when there is no other option. For every tree the Council fells on public land, replacement will be required. The number of replacement trees planted will be determined in relation to the size of the original tree felled.

Entire deadwood, if safe, can provide a hugely important contribution to naturally succeeding woodland habitat. By leaving more deadwood in place, where it is possible and safe to do so, habitats may be established for a wide variety of invertebrates and other organisms.

RCT tree risk assessment will always seek all alternative options to felling trees or removing hedgerows:

- Keep dead and dying trees wherever possible, as they provide important habitats for wildlife
- When looking at a dying tree, consider managed retrenchment or turn retained standing trunks into a feature or sculpture
- Leave cut or fallen branches as complete as possible. Leave them where they fall or move them closer to the tree to decay naturally and even artistically
 - decaying wood is too valuable to be burnt or chipped
- Stumps are important reservoirs of biodiversity and provide an historical record of a tree. Leave them to decay naturally
- Where health and safety concerns exist, felling is not the only option. Changing public access routes so they are kept away from the tree or reducing the extent of the tree canopy are often amongst acceptable alternative strategies.

The gradual incremental tree loss due to poor quality tree work and unnecessary felling is one of the biggest threats to the privately owned urban and suburban tree-scape. RCT commits to working with its partners to improve standards of tree surgery on Rhondda Cynon Taf and better inform the public in best practice in tree care.

Protection and enforcement of legal measures to protect existing tree stock

There is extensive legislation and policy in Wales that supports environmental best practice. In relation to trees, the key policies are:

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

TPOs are administered by the Council and are made to protect trees that bring significant amenity benefit to the local area. This protection is particularly important where trees are under threat. All types of tree but not bushes or shrubs, can be

protected, and a TPO can protect anything from a single tree to all trees within a defined area or woodland. Any species can be protected, but no species is automatically protected by a Tree Preservation Order. 'Amenity' is not defined in law, so authorities need to exercise judgment when deciding whether it is within their powers to make an Order. Orders should be used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Before authorities make or confirm an order they should be able to show that protection would bring a reasonable degree of public benefit in the present or future, thereby evidencing that it is expedient to serve a TPO.

Conservation Areas have protection to ensure permission is required to work on trees and some hedges and time is allowed to apply TPO protection where appropriate. Before authorities make or confirm an order they should be able to show that protection would bring a reasonable degree of public benefit in the present or future. It may be expedient to make a TPO if we believe there is a risk of trees being cut down or pruned in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area.

Conservation Areas protect trees by requiring that anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a conservation area must give six weeks' prior notice. The purpose of this requirement is to give the council time to consider making an order on the trees. A Conservation area notice is not an application for consent under an Order. Instead, it is used to protect trees in Conservation Areas which are not protected by TPOs. RCTCBC commits to vigorously enforce all infringements of TPO's and Conservation Area protections.

TPO's do not normally cover trees on Council owned land because it is assumed the same level of protection will be given by the Council to its own tree stock. This position should be clarified in policy and applied in all Council leases. Consideration should always be given to TPO protection for trees on land the Council proposes to sell.

Legislation, policy and guidelines

All landowners have a common duty of care under the Occupier's Liability Acts (1957) and (1984) and statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974).

All public bodies in Wales are subject to the "biodiversity duty" contained in The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 s.6. This states that public bodies, including Local Authorities: "...must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions". The Council must report on the S.6 Duty every three years to Welsh Government (next due end 2022).

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the key Wales, UK, regional and local legislation, policy and guidance relevant to this Strategy. The range is extensive and the success of the Strategy will depend on integrating the various concern into a coherent whole. This should reflect the specific landscape, culture and aspirations of Rhondda Cynon Taf and its constituent communities. For example; the RCT Climate Change Strategy sets out the ambition 'to protect and enhance our wild spaces and work with nature to tackle both the Climate and Nature Emergencies and benefit our communities'. The

Vision for this Tree Policy is built upon this ambition and is underpinned by a series of related commitments set out within the Climate Change Strategy.

There is an extensive literature available for Local Authorities and landowners/homeowners on the management of trees, hedgerows and woodlands. RCTCBC will take into account 'best practice' when implementing this strategy. These include relevant British Standards that provide clear, best practice guidance and recommendations on many issues. Two key standards are BS3998: 2010 Recommendations for Tree Work and BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations.

There is a range of legislation that protects biodiversity and urban green spaces by regulating planning, contamination and conservation. Legislation relevant in Wales is listed in Appendix 2.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) (6.4.24-26)

Trees, woodlands, copses and hedgerows are of great importance for biodiversity. They are important connecting habitats for resilient ecological networks and make valuable wider contribution to landscape character, sense of place, air quality, recreation and local climate moderation. They also play a vital role in tackling the climate emergency by locking up carbon, and can provide shade and shelter, a sustainable energy source and building materials. The particular role, siting and design requirements of urban trees in providing health and well-being benefits to communities, now and in the future should be promoted as part of plan making and decision taking

Planning authorities should protect trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland where they have ecological value, contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality, or perform a beneficial and identified green infrastructure function. Planning authorities should consider the importance of native woodland and valued trees, and should have regard, where appropriate, to local authority tree strategies or SPG. Permanent removal of woodland should only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where woodland or trees are removed as part of a proposed scheme, developers will be expected to provide compensatory planting.

Ancient woodland and semi-natural woodlands and individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees and woodlands should be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deterioration unless there are significant and clearly defined public benefits; this protection should prevent potentially damaging operations and their unnecessary loss.

Trees and Planning:

As part of the preparation of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) all the existing policies in the adopted Local Development Plan will be reviewed. The current LDP provides some policy guidance regarding trees. Core policies CS1 and CS2 make reference to 'protecting the cultural identity of the Strategy Area by protecting historic built heritage and the natural environment'.

Policies relating to the environment are also included in the Area Wide section, for example AW4 Community Infrastructure and Planning Obligations refers to Environmental and Landscape improvements, AW5 supports proposals which where appropriate, existing site features of built and natural environment value would be retained, and AW6 Design and Placemaking includes landscaping and planting, and protecting and enhancing the landscape and biodiversity.

Policy AW8 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment is the main policy relating to biodiversity and is supported by specific Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Nature Conservation. This contains two paragraphs (below) in relation to trees on development sites. ([Nature conservation \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/nature-conservation))

'4.1.16 Where a planning application affects trees, woodlands or hedges on or adjacent to the development site, applicants will be expected to provide information about these and the impact of their proposals on them, both in respect of their nature conservation and amenity value. Where important features are affected, the Council will require a tree report as specified in the British Standards Institutes, BS 5837: Trees in relation to construction.

4.1.17 This report should be based on a survey by an appropriately qualified arboriculturalist, categorise the trees and set out the arboricultural implications of the proposed development. For trees etc. that are to be retained, or areas to be planted, an Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan should be provided and Construction Exclusion Zones identified on the site layout plan. Any specified works to trees etc. should conform to BS 3998: Recommendations for Tree work.'

The Nature conservation SPG also makes multiple references to trees, woodlands, hedges and Tree Preservation Orders.

The council also has a number of policy statements regarding trees on its website

- TPO [Tree Preservation Order | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/tree-preservation-order)
- Conservation areas [Conservation areas | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/conservation-areas)
- Dangerous trees [Dangerous Trees | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dangerous-trees)
- Reporting overgrowth etc,

Trees and Development

Proposals for development and other land use changes will need to consider how trees, woodland and hedges will be successfully integrated with the overall scheme.

To avoid future conflict, the following must be carefully considered:

- appropriate space for retained and new trees to allow for future growth and spread;
- how to avoid damage due to compaction of soil, severing roots or branches; and
- the need for infrastructure and service installation as well as the presence of pre-existing utility provision to be mindful of trees.

In exceptional circumstances where the loss of existing trees and hedgerows can be fully justified through a site specific arboricultural assessment, provision will be required for replacement plantings in a suitable location. Developers should use the Council's pre-application service to obtain expert advice on the matters that will need to be addressed, before a formal planning application is made. Any Supplementary Planning Guidance must be followed. ([Nature conservation \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](http://rctcbc.gov.uk) contains the current requirements)

Highway Works and Utility Services

Street trees can be vulnerable to damage from work associated with installation and repair of utility services. This can result in loss of vigour and at worst, death, both of which may take several years to become evident. It also poses a health and safety risk if trees are made unstable (severing of major roots) and work just covered over. Utility services should be aware of and work to the current best practice guidelines. Guidelines on the planning, installation, and maintenance of utility apparatus in proximity to trees.

RCTCBC commits to holding discussions and agreeing terms of best practice with any company or organisation that has permitted development rights.

Deliberate Damage and Vandalism

Damage to trees, both deliberate and through ignorance, is sadly common. Criminal damage includes cutting down, lopping or topping trees, snapping saplings, setting fires beneath trees and various other attempts to kill trees.

Accidental or careless damage to trees includes vehicle impact, damage from strimming and mowing around trees and compaction from parking on grass verges etc.

Damage may also be related to highway use and maintenance by the installation of driveways, infrastructure and signage or through contamination from salt in grit or hydrocarbons etc.

RCTCBC will apply suitable planning conditions to protect new and existing trees and enforce them.

Most damage to trees is through ignorance and will be addressed by Information and education campaigns but cases of deliberate or wilful accidental damage will be prosecuted.

Viewing trees as public assets, rather than liabilities will allow the Council to make better and more consistent decisions about Rhondda Cynon Taf's tree stock in all areas of conflicting interests and damage. This will also facilitate responses where the value of a single tree in monetary terms enables quantifiable and justifiable decision making.

PART 3

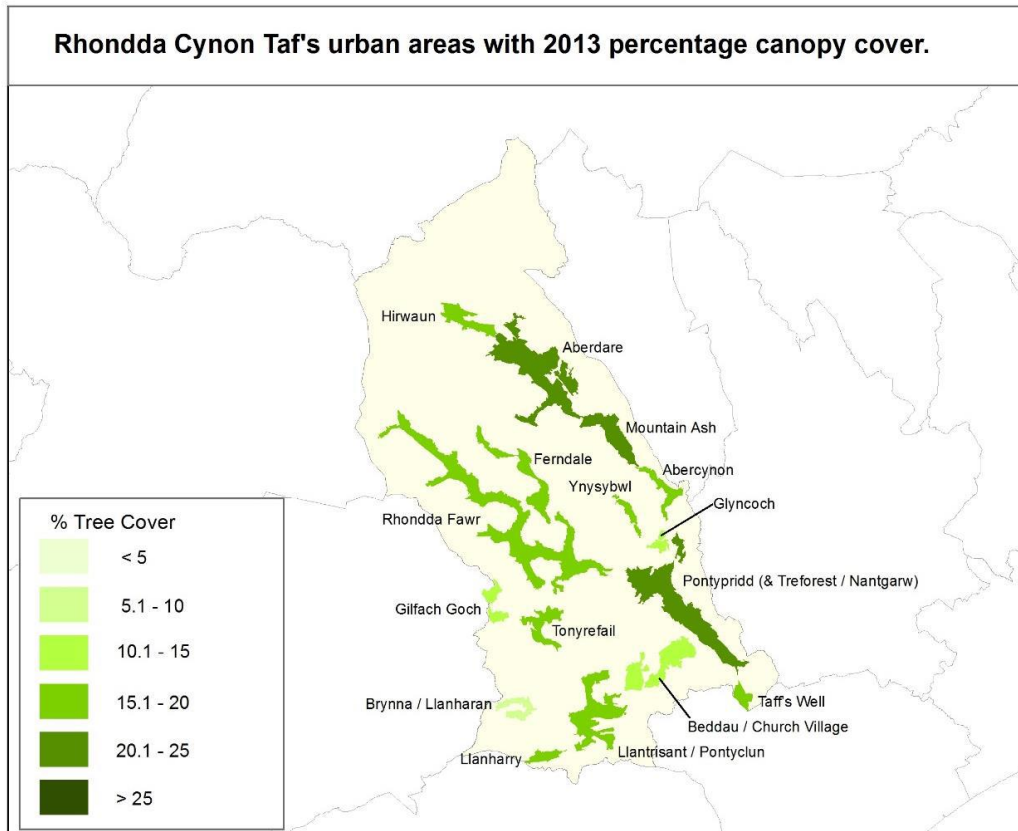
URBAN TREE STOCK

Part 3: Urban Tree Stock

What we have

Rhondda Cynon Taf has extensive canopy cover in urban areas, but unfortunately the most recent NRW survey indicates that we are losing large mature trees which contribute so much to our townscape, biodiversity and amenity.

The urban areas surveyed by NRW are illustrated below.



The table below summarises the results of the 2013 survey. Eleven of the 16 urban areas have cover greater than the Wales national average with Aberdare, Pontypridd and Mountain Ash exceeding 20%.

Only Brynna / Llanharan (9.8%), Beddau / Church Village (11.7%), Gilfach Goch (12.2%) and Glyncoch (12.4%) fall below 15% cover. NRW also considered former Communities First areas and none showed a serious under provision of canopy. The Valleys are unusual in this regard; 'leafy suburbs' are typically associated with richer neighbourhoods but in RCT almost all communities benefit from extensive tree cover. NRW note that much of this cover in RCT is in woodlands, which need to be well managed and accessible for the public to gain full benefit.

Urban Area	Landscape Character Zone	Population ONS 2011 Census	Urban Area (ha)	Total Cover '13 (ha)	Total Cover '13 (%)
Rhondda Fawr	H. of Valleys	58,904	1538	278	18.1%
Aberdare	H. of Valleys	29,748	1026	224	21.9%
Pontypridd (& Treforest / Nantgarw)	S. Valleys	30,457	1004	215	21.4%
Llantrisant / Pontyclun	S. Valleys	14,422	605	103	17.0%
Beddau / Church Village	S. Valleys	8,236	470	55	11.7%
Ferndale (& Maerdy)	H. of Valleys	7,338	351	68	19.3%
Mountain Ash	H. of Valleys	11,230	332	78	23.4%
Hirwaun	H. of Valleys	7,247	229	40	17.3%
Tonyrefail	S. Valleys	9,317	224	35	15.8%
Abercynon	S. Valleys	5,983	158	30	18.9%
Brynna / Llanharan	S. Valleys	6,686	141	14	9.8%
Gilfach Goch	S. Valleys	4,395	132	16	12.2%
Llanharry	S. Valleys	3,035	92	16	17.2%
Taff's Well	S. Valleys	5,567	91	17	18.2%
Ynysybwl	S. Valleys	3,503	84	15	17.5%
Glyncoch	S. Valleys	4,020	71	9	12.4%

Rhondda Cynon Taf's existing urban tree stock contains a mixture of native and non-native species of different ages in our streets, parks, river and rail corridors and in private gardens. While the existing urban trees were often originally planted, in RCT trees from the pre-development landscape have survived and flourished. The proximity to native woodlands in the surrounding countryside means that even urban locations can be colonised by natural regeneration from the natural seedbank.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Tree Legacy

Mature, larger trees are particularly important for our legacy, for their ecological value and for the ecosystem services they provide (such as carbon stored from the atmosphere). Ensuring that maintenance and management of the urban tree stock is particularly important for the long-term development of large and mature trees. Efforts must be increased to protect them and reduce the premature loss of these important trees. The Council will also work with all landowners to promote best practice in trees, woodland and hedgerows management on their land

Natural regeneration, which is an extremely robust and strong process in RCT, with no attendant carbon footprint and minimal risk of spreading tree disease, should be encouraged in and around woodlands where this doesn't compromise other priority habitats or important landscape or cultural features.

Where planting is considered, this should be on the basis of the right tree for the right place, and with a clear understanding of the existing biodiversity value of the site.

Trees should be chosen that are appropriate to each individual site and have the space, both above and below ground, to grow to maturity. Wherever appropriate, RCT will plant locally grown and propagated trees. The nature conservation benefits of planting and encouraging characteristic native trees will be recognised.

Climate change means that the range and distribution of trees will change over time, also the range of tree pests and diseases. For native trees that sexual reproduce there is likely to be considerable natural adaptation and natural resilience to a changing climate. The major native trees of RCT also occur much further south in Europe where they have proven capacity to adapt to different climatic conditions.

Increasing temperatures may also allow non-native trees to survive with the potential for new invasive species effecting a wider area, and the potential for attendant biodiversity loss. An example of this is the invasive Cherry Laurel, a plant native to the Azores that benefits from higher temperatures and the damp conditions and threatens to overwhelm the natural flora within RCT woodlands. In urban centres where concrete and buildings may cause significant localised hot spots the use of heat-tolerant species may be required.

This also presents challenges for how the Council manages existing trees in urban areas.

- Consideration of the future climatic suitability of new trees as the climate in Rhondda Cynon Taf changes, especially given the long life span of many trees
- Consideration of how our existing tree stocks may be affected by changing climatic conditions and potentially greater frequency of extreme weather events
- Consideration of the future biodiversity impacts of introducing non-native tree species into areas of high biodiversity importance.

There are many factors which need to be considered when planting urban trees, woodland trees and hedgerows, involving both species selection and the actual growing and living conditions for the trees in the future. (See Appendix 4: The Right Tree in the Right Place – Deciding What to Plant)

Whilst trees will be affected by climate change, they are also part of the solution to Climate mitigation and adaptation. We need a variety of tree species, and trees of varying age in order to create a legacy for the future, and we need to work with natural process where those can realise the best results.

Specification, Planting and Maintenance

Many trees in urban areas are compromised by ground conditions, proximity to buildings and roads, disturbance to roots from utilities and loss of canopy spread through management pressures. It is therefore particularly important in urban situations to plant the right tree for the right place. Non-native species, which are not ecological problematic or invasive, may be considered in these situations. It is however important to recognise that non-native species will not support the range and diversity of native wildlife.

Maintenance of urban trees is also important, for promoting tree health, prolonging life, managing risk and maintaining the space for the tree to develop.

Where planting is undertaken RCT will ensure that all tree plantings follow best practice. This includes ensuring water in periods of high temperature and/or drought, and that all appropriate protections are made.

Collaboration with local communities will be vital to success when planting urban trees across the County Borough. Vandalism of planted trees is a continuing problem and urban trees often generate comment. Overhanging branches, leaf litter, satellite reception, loss of view, parking obstructions, uneven pavements etc. are frequent complaints. At the same time, pruning, other works and tree removal may also be unpopular.

Species Diversity Selection

In urban situations a wider choice of planted trees may reduce the risk of pests, diseases, and climate change. Retention is always better than planting. There must be trees in varying age classes to replace the mature trees as they decline and die. It is important to allow for loss in all age classes due to damage, past poor maintenance, or disease. The urban environment is often difficult for trees and therefore the choice of tree species must be appropriate to the location to gain maximum benefit. Trees lost or made vulnerable through climate change and disease may need to be replaced with more resilient species. For example, the choice of urban replacements for diseased ash, so as to gain the greatest benefit to wildlife and people. In ash woodlands particular value will be placed on both the natural reaction of ash to selection pressure of ash die back, and the development of naturally resistant trees, and also to the reaction of other native trees species to the gaps and spaces created by dying trees. It is, for instance, anticipated that oak, sycamore and beech will naturally seed into and take advantage of such opportunities in RCT.

Imported diseases and pests are a major threat to our trees, so all trees bought by RCTCBC will be certified as grown and propagated in Wales. We will support local communities and groups in setting up tree nurseries using locally collected seed, to access a wider genetic pool than is available commercially. Where it does not compromise other priority habitats, natural regeneration, which comes disease free, from the local seedbank, and with no attendant carbon footprint will be facilitated where possible.

Replacement Planting

In urban areas replacement planting will be essential to ensure continuity of the tree stock. A single young tree will take many years to achieve the size and scale of a large mature 'one and one' for one replacement does not give the same benefit. If it is found necessary to remove trees the Council will ensure that appropriate replacement based on a site related arboricultural assessment takes places. Trees will generally be replaced in the same location but in some circumstances a nearby location may be more practical and appropriate.

Woodland

Where there is scope to expand an existing urban woodland, natural growth will be prioritised as the best means to increase woodland cover. Planted trees have an inherent carbon footprint based on the whole process of their propagation and raising in nurseries, transportation, plastic tubes and cane provision when planted, and

aftercare. The disturbance of soils to form planting pits releases soil carbons. These are inherent problems with woodland planting which need to be considered in all cases. In comparison natural regeneration of woodland involves no human derived carbon footprint, and minimal aftercare. The process leads to natural diversification, and the trees that establish are much less prone to drought or competition.

In general, established woodlands benefit from having a range of tree ages, densities and species for the benefit of biodiversity and continuity of crown cover. However, woodlands are long term habitats that take hundreds of years to fully develop, and which will go through continued adaptation and change as they do so. There are natural processes within woodlands which lead to structural changes over time, competition between adjacent trees, wind throw, and disease can all interact to influence structural diversification.

Trees in Hard Landscapes

It is a priority to plant trees in areas within hard surfacing such as car parks, streets and pedestrianised areas. It is better to design open planting areas, but where this is not possible, special planting techniques are available which ensure adequate soil volumes to ensure the trees reach their full potential. The publication by TDAG, 'Trees in hard landscapes - a guide for delivery' considers practical challenges and solutions to allow integration of trees in our streets, civic spaces and surface car parks.

These areas are the most challenging urban environments for growing trees but are also the areas that benefit most from their inclusion. The Council commits to best practice in the use of modern planting techniques which have been researched and developed to enable successful tree establishment and growth in these areas.

Existing Trees in the Highway

The 2013 NRW survey of trees in urban areas of RCT identified transport routes (including verges and pavements) as an important component of the urban tree resource. In RCT they comprise 18% of the urban land and include 9% of the urban tree cover. (the figures for Wales' urban areas for comparison is 16% of Wales' urban land and 9% of cover). They also note that motorised traffic causes much of the urban air and surface water pollution, which trees have the ability to remove. (Town Tree Cover in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough (cyfoethnaturiol.cymru)).

Urban air quality is most affected by road traffic emissions producing nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. Commercial food cooking and wood- fuel stoves are also significant sources of particulate matter in some areas. Trees absorb some nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter by acting as a 'filter'. The simplest and best way to improve air quality is to plan urban places to reduce sources of pollution. Green infrastructure can help reduce pollution by providing welcoming spaces through which people will prefer to walk or cycle rather than drive. Improvements can be made from modifications to the urban environment, including the number, size, and position of urban trees and hedges e.g. around school playgrounds, health centres, shopping areas.

Trees add considerably to our streetscape and parking areas however streets offer a very unnatural environment for trees and so they need special care and protection. In

residential areas verges have often been resurfaced with tarmac and used for parking and where tree roots could previously access adjacent gardens, these have now been paved. Highway trees are not only located within the carriageway and footways but also within verges and small areas of green space. These areas need to be retained and protected as they provide a better growing space than fully hard surfaced areas and opportunities should be taken wherever possible to reinstate this soft landscaping. Because it is difficult to get replacement trees established in the existing highway, the removal of street trees will only be considered as a last resort where all other solutions have been considered. RCTCBC will set best practice for urban tree pit use maintaining and improving existing tree plantings where possible.

Trees in Parks and Cemeteries

Rhondda Cynon Taf has x parks and green spaces, of which 4 Council and 9 community sites have Green Flag accreditation.

According to the NRW survey of urban areas in RCT referred to earlier, public open space hosts as much as 60% of urban tree cover in Rhondda Cynon Taf, whilst public open space accounts for 26% of urban land. (For Wales the figures are 53% of all tree cover in our Welsh communities in public open space which makes up only 22% of urban land).

Parks are very important contributors to the overall environment and landscape character of the area. Parks include some key heritage designed landscapes, where the overall design and the treescape must be maintained in future management and restoration plans. In other parks tree cover will be increased in line with site specific, design led management plans that seek to maximise the aesthetic, social, health and ecological benefit of our parks. Parks could provide a clear exemplar of planning for the future and best practice in tree care, maintenance and planting. The principle should be that retention is better than replanting.

Ecologically rich areas, especially with trees, have been shown to help reduce people's stress levels and improve general mental health and well-being. Wildlife continues to decline nationally. Parks have an important role to play in supporting wildlife and will be managed to encourage this.

It is important that whenever trees are lost in our parks they are replaced. This strategy seeks to develop management plans that anticipate future climate and tree problems. RCT will commit to working constructively with Friends Groups and other stakeholders to review park management plans in light of both climate change and biodiversity plans and this Strategy.

The table below shows if Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands are located in cemeteries managed by RCT.

CEMETERY	TREES	HEDGEROWS	WOODLAND
Abercynon Cemetery	X		
Aberdare Cemetery	X	X	X
Aberffrwd Cemetery (Old Mountain Ash)	X		X
Bryn y Gaer Cemetery (Hirwaun)	X	X	
Cefn y Parc Cemetery(Talbot Green)	X		X

Ferndale Cemetery	X	X	X
Glyntaff Cemetery and Crematorium	X	X	X
Llanharan Cemetery	X		
Llwydcoed Crematorium	X	X	X
Maes yr Arian Cemetery (New Mountain Ash)	X	X	
Penrhys Cemetery	X	X	X
Trealaw Cemetery	X	X	
Treorchy Cemetery	X	X	
Ty Rhiw Cemetery(Taffs Well)	X	X	
Ynysybwl Cemetery	X		
Abercynon Cemetery	X		
Aberdare Cemetery	X	X	X
Aberffrwd Cemetery(Old Mountain Ash)	X		X
Bryn y Gaer Cemetery(Hirwaun)	X	X	
Cefn y Parc Cemetery(Talbot Green)	X		X
Ferndale Cemetery	X	X	X
Glyntaff Cemetery and Crematorium	X	X	X
Llanharan Cemetery	X		
Llwydcoed Crematorium	X	X	X
Maes yr Arian Cemetery(New Mountain Ash)	X	X	
Penrhys Cemetery	X	X	X
Trealaw Cemetery	X	X	
Treorchy Cemetery	X	X	
Ty Rhiw Cemetery(Taffs Well)	X	X	
Ynysybwl Cemetery	X		

School grounds

There are 117 school premises in RCT, the majority of which have some green space and many have trees, hedges and woodlands within their grounds. As with other urban spaces, some of these are survivals from the pre-development landscape (and probably including some ancient woodland) but many were planted, either when the school was built or more recently. The management of school grounds is typically the responsibility of the school governing body and head teacher. Some schools have extensive woodlands, planted decades ago, where these areas require specialist advice to maintain them in a safe condition for pupils to use these valuable external areas for the curriculum. There is an urgent need to review the support and advice available to schools for planting and maintaining tree species, grounds management, to maximise the benefits for amenity, climate change, biodiversity and to allow schools to take full advantage of much needed external teaching and learning spaces to assist in delivering the 'New Curriculum for Wales'.

Trees in Private Gardens

Private residential gardens provide only 14% of urban tree cover in RCT despite taking up about 35% of the urban area. In Wales' urban areas, private gardens cover about

the same area but provide 20% of all Wales' town tree cover. This is probably due to the dense population and settlement pattern in Rhondda Cynon Taf, but it emphasises the importance of the tree canopy in Council ownership or management to local amenity. - (Town Tree Cover in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough (cyfoethnaturiol.cymru)).

Green Infrastructure

The provision of green infrastructure in and around urban areas is now widely recognised as contributing towards creating places where people want to live and work. Planning Policy Wales, green infrastructure has been defined as:

“the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places”. Green Infrastructure can function at a range of different scales; from entire ecosystems such as wetlands and rivers to parks, fields and gardens at the local scale and street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls at the micro scale. (PPW 11, paragraph 6.2.1).

RCTCBC will undertake a Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) for the Revised Local Development Plan. This will include sites and corridors that contribute to the green and blue elements of our urban infrastructure. An example of Green Infrastructure relevant to this strategy could be visual and auditory barriers to separate housing from other uses, busy roads and railways and other residential areas. Trees and hedgerows, especially in urban areas, can help provide visual barriers as well as barriers to pollution, noise and wind.

The GIA will need to

- **Identify** where existing green infrastructure can currently be found and where there may be opportunities for improvement, such as through the provision of new green infrastructure, or the enhancement of existing green infrastructure;
- **Consider** what improvements can be made to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, as well as consider the needs of local communities and society as a whole and how these can be met through green infrastructure;
- **Be applicable** at a range of different levels, from helping to inform the planning of green infrastructure at a development site level, to the more strategic level planning needed to inform, for example, strategies for growth (6.2.9) or to identify suitable locations for off-site compensation (6.4.21).
- **Be regularly reviewed**, to ensure that the information contained within them is up to date and appropriate for use as an evidence base, to inform development management decisions and assists with relevant reporting requirements (6.2.12)

It is worth highlighting that in addition to Planning Policy Wales, there are other drivers for the delivery of green infrastructure, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. (NRW guidance note 042 June 2021)

Orchards

RCT has very little in the way of traditional orchards. There is however potential within Parks, School Grounds and urban community green spaces to plant orchards. However, to be successful fruit trees do require annual aftercare pruning involving skill and knowledge of what needs doing. There is therefore a long-term commitment required.

Sale of Council Land

Where Council land is sold or leased there may be an increased risk of tree loss and failure to replace them. Valuable trees will be identified and protected prior to sale or transfer of the land to retain the County Borough's asset for the benefit of the wider population. The Council will expect the new landowners or lease holders to work within the guidelines of this Tree Strategy and where appropriate will ask for annual data from them regarding the future condition on felling and planting to feed into our figures for monitoring progress.

Nurseries

Sourcing local provenance, disease free trees will be difficult. Importation of trees played a part in the rapid spread of Ash dieback and further importation runs the risk of importing more pests or diseases. Commercial stock often comes from a limited genetic base and is therefore vulnerable when new disease strikes. The Council will actively engage with volunteer-assisted nurseries that can collect local seed and grow up until large enough to plant out. This will provide a variety of local genotypes and trees that are likely to be adapted to local conditions.

While this should not be the only source of trees for Rhondda Cynon Taf, it can play an important part and increase community involvement in new trees while at the same time managing biosecurity i.e. the prevention of the introduction and spread of harmful organisms.

The primary driver for including biosecurity in procurement policy is to prevent the transmission of pests and diseases due to transportation of tree stock, specifically transportation without adequate oversight or an effective audit trail attributing ownership and a chain of custody from seed to planted tree at its final destination.

Planting for Resilience

This strategy will contribute to Rhondda Cynon Taf's emerging strategy on climate change. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, sets the context for resilience and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) in Wales. It also introduces a requirement for NRW to produce Area Statements and the South Central Wales Area Statement gives a framework for both policy and resilience. The two 'cornerstone' themes 'Building Resilient Ecosystems' and 'Connecting People with Nature' are relevant as are the three specific issues or challenges: Working with Water, Improving Health and Improving Air Quality. Green Infrastructure is a recurring feature of the Areas Statement.

Seven ecosystem profiles are being developed and will provide an evidence base for policy making. The ecosystems are peatlands, freshwater, woodlands, grasslands, valleys and urban (plus coastal).

Environmental Goals for Tree Resilience:

Ecosystem resilience underpins the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. The Environment Act defines the as four elements that contribute to adaptability. In their guide [Natural Resources Wales / Ecosystem resilience field guide](#) NRW define these as

- Diversity - at a variety of different levels and scales, including genetic diversity, species diversity, diversity within and between ecosystems and structural diversity for example.
- Extent - where its area is sufficiently large to sustain populations, support ecological processes and cope with negative edge effects like predation.
- Condition - where the impacts of pressures and demands are positively managed so that the physical environment can support a comprehensive range of organisms and healthy populations.
- Connectivity - where organisms can move within and between different ecosystems, from foraging or migration of individuals, through dispersal of seeds and genes, to the major shifts of species' populations to adjust to a changing climate.
- Ecosystem resilience comes about as a result of an interplay between these aspects, allowing ecosystems to adapt, recover and resist pressures and demands more readily. It is important to note that this applies to all ecosystems in RCT, not just trees and woodlands.

Tree Pests and Diseases

Trees, like all plants, can be attacked by a wide variety of diseases and pests. Dutch Elm Disease in 1970's severely reduced the elm population. Part of the role of the tree risk management programme which will be developed through this strategy will consider the threat of diseases to trees.

Chalara Ash - dieback is of particular importance to the Council as it has become established in parts of the County Borough and can pose a particular threat to trees in the highway corridor. The Council will develop a protocol for dealing with Ash- dieback issues in RCT.

There are opportunities to harvest seed from Rhondda Cynon Taf's own existing tree stock. Mature trees which have naturally seeded in Rhondda Cynon Taf are likely to be best suited to Rhondda Cynon Taf's climate and growing conditions and may be disease resistant. For example, certain mature Wych Elms (*Ulmus glabra*) in Rhondda Cynon Taf appear to show resistance to Dutch Elm Disease, and ash trees are also showing natural resistance to ash dieback.

Following good biosecurity practices is critical for preventing the introduction of pests and diseases.

Trees and Development of Land

Planning applications will need to demonstrate that there will be enough room for the future growth of new and retained trees to ensure long term retention and avoid pressure from future occupiers to top, lop, or fell healthy trees due to safety concerns or effects on living conditions in order to obtain reasonable sunlight and unshaded

external amenity space. Planning applications will need to provide sufficient information to enable proper consideration of trees on and around the development site with tree survey and planting scheme with appropriate root protection zones undertaken to the latest British Standard. The selection of new species to be planted will use the “right tree for right place” approach.

Tree Management Plans

Trees and woodlands need long term management to ensure their current and future value. Opportunities will be taken on both Council and private land to achieve this long-term management. This will be done through funding applications, working with communities, partner landholders and land managers and, within developments, through planning conditions and any appropriate and necessary obligations as set out in the forthcoming Revised Local Development Plan.

Staff Skills and Training

Arboricultural inspections and works are carried out to the relevant British Standards and following current industry best practice guidance. All staff dealing with trees whether in a planning, landscape, design, highway, safety or operational context will hold the relevant skills, experience and qualifications to undertake their particular roles. Rhondda Cynon Taf's Ranger Service includes several staff with excellent woodland management skills. These skills will be recognised and used, including training other staff. Rangers will be kept informed of all plans and contribute to initiatives about the sites they manage.

Arboriculture is a skilled profession, and for good reason as arboricultural work done improperly can be dangerous and pose risks both to people, property and trees. In the UK, two accreditation schemes exist which provide assurance of the competence and skill of contractors:

- Arboricultural Association
- International Association of Arborists

Council contractors will be held to arboricultural association standards and relevant British Standards for all work, and to set best practice in managing its own tree estate.

Community and Voluntary Engagement

Community support and voluntary engagement will be vital to the successful implementation of this strategy. RCTCBC commits to building a good communication strategy to attract support, advice and help from across local communities.

- A wealth of knowledge and experience exists in Rhondda Cynon Taf's communities around trees and woodland.
- Members of the public on the ground are in the best position to spot signs of tree disease, vandalism etc. or other woodland issues in their local areas.
- Community involvement with trees, woodland and other habitat management, whether it be the council's planting proposals or those of community or private sector interests will create a sense of ownership for new and expanded trees and woodlands. A sense of community pride will protect new trees and woodlands from vandalism.
- The Council will use its interactive 'Lets Talk' platform to engage with communities and develop Let's Talk Trees.

‘Trees are key to sense of place, identity and pride in local communities’

The Council will develop effective communication channels using both online and paper-based platforms as well as face-to-face local meetings to support the strategy and effectively communicate about the occurrence of and reasoning for planned works. We will share this information more widely with interested groups, individuals and the general public and will encourage residents to get involved with local tree planting and woodland and biodiversity management initiatives, and to engage with them to ensure they are part of the long-term delivery of tree, woodland and wider habitat and biodiversity delivery across the County Borough.

PART 4
RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S
HEDGEROW STRATEGY

Part 4: Rhondda Cynon Taf's Hedgerow Strategy

Definition of a Hedgerow

A hedgerow or hedge is a line of woody plants, at least 20m long and up to 5m wide, usually one which is or was a boundary. (Hedgerow Regulations 1997). In Rhondda Cynon Taf hedgerows are important habitat and cultural/landscape feature. Within RCT hedgerows are particularly a feature of the lowland parts of the Cynon Valley and the Taff Ely area, where they are part of ancient pastoral landscapes created when land was first farmed. In many cases our hedgerows are hundreds and possibly thousands of years old. They are linear strips of original ancient woodland, retained and managed as field boundaries by the earliest farmers. As such in their species-richness they are of enormous biodiversity and cultural landscape value.

In the more upland parts of the County Borough, traditional field boundaries typically comprise stone walls. Both types of boundary are of landscape significant in Rhondda Cynon Taf, contributing to the connectivity of habitats across the countryside.

The main threats to traditional boundaries in Rhondda Cynon Taf are from management neglect and from development. The Council has opportunities to improve hedgerow management practices, especially in relation to road verges and to protect hedges in development through the planning system.

Some initiatives to increase hedgerow length to combat climate change are not always appropriate in RCT due to the nature of the historical boundaries, their importance in illustrating landscape history and their locally characteristic fauna and flora.

Value of Hedges

Hedges and stone wall boundaries have great benefits for wildlife and make important and regionally distinct contributions to the landscape of the valleys.

- They act as refuges, food sources, shelter and corridors for movement of wildlife. In RCT their continuity is of particular importance for a number of s. 7 species including dormice and bats.
- The presence of some taller trees adds to their wildlife value, as song-posts, perching posts and shelter.
- Hedges benefit people by filtering pollutants from the air, lessening noise and providing screening, all at human height. They are of particular benefit in urban areas and around key sites such as schools and hospitals and along roads.
- Hedges can be valuable where height or width is restricted so larger trees are inappropriate.
- Hedges need to be maintained to keep their value, being best when growing densely without gaps. Hedge-laying styles vary between the north and south of the County Borough.
- In RCT species-rich hedgerows are features of cultural and historic landscape value. Their species composition and the hedge construction varies between different parts of the County Borough and the diversity of species can be a guide to the age of the hedge.
- Valuable hedges, e.g. species-rich hedges or ones of historical importance can be protected by The Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Sites of Importance for

Nature Conservation (SINC) may include ancient and species rich hedgerows in RCT.

Hedgerows, hedge banks and stone walls are acknowledged as an important part of green infrastructure and the Council will seek to protect and manage existing hedges and where appropriate, new planting of simple hawthorn or hazel hedges.

Hedgerows are an undervalued resource. They are important for biodiversity and provide a range of benefits to people. In the past, hedges were used as larders of healthy seasonal food – apples, berries and nuts were collected as a healthy tasty supplement to the diet. Today, we need them as wildlife corridors and because of the large numbers of animals from songbirds to pollinating insects that they support. Existing urban hedges are often clipped, sterile habitats. By changing peoples' perception of what a hedge should be, from a neat 'box' to a more natural and 'wild' hedge, we can improve many urban edges for both biodiversity and for food.

Council Hedges

Hedges will be retained on Council land wherever possible. Young hedgerows will be managed to ensure that they develop into healthy mature hedges in accordance with good practice. Staff training in the management of hedges will be required.

In certain urban locations hedges of exotic or ornamental species may be more suitable and will still contribute to amenity and wildlife. Leyland Cypress hybrids and invasive non-natives such as cherry laurel, will not be specified for use as hedging on Council property. The use of thorny species in house estates or schools should be avoided, unless the hedgerows are being used for security reasons.

Hedges in house gardens are the responsibility of individual owners/tenants and the Council will provide advice and guidance to encourage their retention and sustainable management.

Hedges on Private Land

Although most hedges cannot be protected by a TPO, many, ancient countryside hedgerows in RCT do qualify as 'important' under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and can have some protection through that process. In some cases, hedgerows also form parts of Sites of Importance for Conservation (SINC) and will have the appropriate planning policy considerations if affected by planning applications. For hedges on development sites the Council will seek protection, improvement, replacement and when appropriate the planting of new hedges. New hedges will also be sought where appropriate to act as boundary features. Generally speaking, new hedges will typically be simple in composition (hazel or hawthorn) and of the construction style typical of the locality. Stone walls or hedge banks may be more appropriate in some areas or RCT.

Enforcement

RCTCBC will ensure that existing hedgerow legislation is properly enforced. The Council will prosecute offenders who damage or destroy hedges in contravention of the law. Where an offence has been committed the Council will take appropriate enforcement action which may include prosecution proceedings. Note this will require increased resources.

All requests for works to hedges on private land will be assessed in accordance with statutory requirements by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether an application is needed under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and any other subsequent legislation. The Local Planning Authority is required to determine a Hedgerow Removal Notice including an assessment as to whether the hedge can be classed as “important” under the Hedgerow Regulations.

Requests for work to hedges on Council property will be assessed and authorised by RCTCBC with reference to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and best practice guidance.

High Hedge Legislation

Complaints relating to evergreen hedges over 2m in height will be considered in the context of the High Hedges legislation as set out in Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 which gives local authorities powers to adjudicate in unresolved disputes over high evergreen hedges: the complainant must first try to resolve the issue through negotiation with the hedge owner.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-05/high-hedge-appeals-guidance.pdf>



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

UK GOVERNMENT LEVELLING UP FUND – OPPORTUNITIES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)

Author: Derek James, Head of Prosperity and Development

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a summary of the UK Government Leveling Up Fund (Round 2) and the proposed project application for the Former Chicken Factory, Trecynon for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the content of the report and agrees to progress the development of a project application for submission to the UK Levelling Up Fund Round 2, as set out in section 5 of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council takes advantage of the resources available for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency from Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, which has a deadline of 6th July 2022.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The overall £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund (LUF) package will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

- 4.2 The Levelling Up Fund is a capital only fund, administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Department for Transport (DfT) and HM Treasury (HMT). References to the 'Secretary of State' in the Fund guidance are to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- 4.3 The UK Government has identified the following priority areas for investment:
- **Transport investment** - including (but not limited to) public transport, active travel, bridge repairs, bus priority lanes, local road improvements and major structural maintenance, and accessibility improvements. The Fund is requesting proposals for high-impact small, medium and by exception larger local transport schemes to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, cut congestion, support economic growth and improve the experience of transport users.
 - **Regeneration and town centres investment** - to upgrade eyesore buildings and dated infrastructure, acquire and regenerate brownfield sites for business use, invest in secure community infrastructure and crime reduction, and bring public services and safe community spaces into town and city centres.
 - **Cultural investment** - maintaining, regenerating, or creatively repurposing museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green spaces) and heritage assets as well as creating new community-owned spaces to support the arts and serve as cultural spaces.
- 4.4 Local authorities will lead the bids for their areas and can submit a number of bids determined by the number of parliamentary constituencies wholly within the local authority boundary.
- 4.5 In July 2021, a total of **four bids** were submitted from Rhondda Cynon Taf, representing the Rhondda, Cynon and Pontypridd Constituencies. These included a bid for Porth Transport Hub, The Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd, The Former Mayhew Chicken Factory development, Trecynon and an additional transport based bid for the A4119 dualling. Three of the four Round 1 bids were successful and are now being delivered with LUF support in place. The Former Mayhew Chicken Factory bid for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency was unsuccessful.
- 4.6 For Round 2 of the fund, Rhondda Cynon Taf continues to be categorised as a Priority 1 of three priority categories which will give an advantage as part of the assessment process. Consultation and

support from the MPs whose constituencies will be hosting bids is required, as well as appropriate consultation with the public and other organisations.

- 4.7 The level of detail and evidence required to complete the application process is significant and is based on the HM Treasury guidance on completing project business cases. This Five Case Model requires evidence for detailed assessment that will include – Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases. The assessment and prioritisation of projects will be on a competition/scored basis.
- 4.8 There will be a three staged approach to assessment and decision making:
- Stage 1 Gateway: The first stage is a pass/fail gateway criterion, where bids will be assessed against whether they can deliver some LUF expenditure in 2022/23.
 - Stage 2 Assessment and Shortlisting Bids: Bids will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Prospectus to deliver a shortlist of the strongest bids.
 - Stage 3 Decision Making: Once bid assessment and moderation has concluded, and the shortlist is drawn up, Ministers will make funding decisions.
- 4.9 UK Government intend to announce the outcome following the three-stage assessment process during the Autumn of 2022.

5.0 PROPOSED PROJECT – FORMER MAYHEW CHICKEN FACTORY SITE, TRECYNON

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Council resubmit the Former Mayhew Chicken Factory Site at Trecynon, Aberdare as the LUF Round 2 submission for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency. As outlined above, the level of detail required on projects for them to be successful is significant. A relatively well developed project will therefore have a greater chance of success in a competitive selection process than a new project which is starting from scratch. The Fund guidance also requires that all relevant statutory procedures and a physical site start of works should be achieved in the current financial year.
- 5.2 As the Council was unsuccessful in its project bid for the Cynon Valley constituency in Round 1, the Council has another opportunity to submit a funding bid, solely for this area, as part of Round 2 of the fund.

- 5.3 Detailed feedback has been received from UK Government officials on the strengths and weaknesses of the former Mayhew Chicken Factory site bid, and with further development taking place on the proposals since the Round 1 submission, it is now considered that a stronger bid can be submitted for Round 2 which will stand a greater chance of success.
- 5.4 The former Mayhew Chicken Factory site at Trecynon, Aberdare has been purchased by the Council as a key redevelopment opportunity. The currently derelict site is in a key location readily accessible from the A4059 and close to the A465 which is currently being upgraded to a dual carriageway in the Hirwaun area. The proposal for the redevelopment of the site in Trecynon, Aberdare will provide a mixed-use development comprising of modern light industrial units, and park and ride facility as preparation for the future extension of the passenger rail line beyond Aberdare as part of the Metro developments. It will also include EV charging facilities and an active travel bridge providing new access to the redeveloped site.
- 5.5 The proposed development will provide 18 modern, high quality Grade A business units providing 2100 square metres of new business accommodation. As a pilot, three of the units are being designed to net zero carbon standards in their construction and use. A site plan of the proposals is shown at **Appendix 1**.
- 5.6 Independent commercial advice has been sought which shows that there is a growing demand for Grade A business accommodation in the Valleys area. Our experience of providing modern business accommodation at Coedely and Robertstown reinforces this advice, with strong demand and enquiries for both being received. The proposed business units have the potential to accommodate 18 new or growing local small businesses and create more than 50 new jobs for local people.
- 5.7 To gain further evidence of the demand for these proposals, a four-week public consultation will commence on the 6th June. This consultation exercise is key in supporting the Council's LUF application business case, which was something UK Government said was lacking in the first funding application.
- 5.8 The total estimated cost of the redevelopment proposal for the Round 1 submission in June 2021 was £15.984M which would bring £14.386M LUF at 90% of eligible costs. These costs are currently being updated and refined to meet the July 6th Round 2 deadline, but are likely to have increased significantly due to the current level of price inflation for construction projects.
- 5.9 This proposal will serve to reverse the loss of a large employment site

and build a modern light industrial business park, creating quality jobs in a regionally important strategic area, addressing the lack of modern industrial units in the region to support SME growth through improved productivity. In addition to this, the proposals set out above offer an opportunity for a more robust Mayhew Chicken Factory site application to be submitted by the 6th July 2022 LUF Round 2 deadline, which will have a greater chance of success.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment or Socio-Economic Analysis for the purposes of this report but on a project basis the requirement for assessment will be met at the appropriate stages of project development.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is no requirement for a Welsh Language Impact Assessment with this report although on a project basis Welsh Language Impact Assessments will take place as part of the project development process.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 There is no requirement for a consultation associated with this report although on a project specific basis a four-week public consultation will take place commencing on June 6th. This will help to provide evidence from the public and stakeholders for the further design of the redevelopment and the LUF business case.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 As reference in paragraph 5.8 cost are current being updated, however there is a requirement for a minimum of 10% match funding for each bid, this can come from Local Authorities and/or third parties. At this stage, submitting the application does not commit the Council to any additional match funding requirement. If successful, full funding packages will be developed in line with the due diligence of reviewing the terms of any offer from UK Government.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 No legislation has been considered in relation to this report. It should be noted that the bidding process itself must take account of the Lead Authority's legal obligations including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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

- 11.1 The successful delivery of the project will make a significant positive contribution to all of the priorities of our Community Plan. The **People, Places and Prosperity** priorities will be very well served by the mix of modern business premises, public transport and active travel facilities that will be provided as a result of the delivery of the proposal for the Levelling Up Fund application.

The successful delivery of the investment proposals will also directly contribute to the goals of the Well- Being of Future Generations Act. In particular the economic and environmental well-being of Wales, supporting the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 If successful, the UK Levelling Up (Round 2) development bid would be relevant to the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency.

13. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 13.1 This report has provided a summary of the UK Government Levelling Up Fund (Round 2) and proposes to submit an application for the Former Chicken Factory, Trecynon for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency, which will create quality jobs for local people in a regionally important area and address the lack of modern industrial units in the region to support SME growth through improved productivity.
- 13.2 The proposal will serve to reverse the loss of a large employment site and build a modern light industrial business park, creating quality jobs in a regionally important strategic area, addressing the lack of modern industrial units in the region to support SME growth through improved productivity.
- 13.3 In addition to this, the proposals set out in this report offer an opportunity for a more robust Mayhew Chicken Factory site application to be submitted by the 6th July 2022 LUF Round 2 deadline, which will have a greater chance of success.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: *Derek James 01443 281115*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 JUNE 2022

**REPORT OF PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

Item:

Background Papers

- Levelling Up Fund: Prospectus
- Levelling Up Fund: Technical Note

Officer to contact: Derek James 01443 281115

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Rev.	Date	Description
A	30.11.21	Final Issue

- KEY**
- Existing Foul Drain
 - Easement Zone (7% assumed)
 - EV Parking (2.5 m spaces)
 - Wheelchair Accessible Parking (3 m spaces)
 - River Attenuation

PARKING

PARK & RIDE

Standard parking bays	246
Total parking bays (including EV and wheelchair accessible spaces (2.5m-3m))	282
Total bicycle spaces	23

COMMERCIAL

Standard parking bays	50
-----------------------	----

Area Schedule

Unit	GIA (sq m)	GIA (sq ft)
01	133 m ²	1427 ft ²
02	130 m ²	1403 ft ²
03	130 m ²	1403 ft ²
04	130 m ²	1403 ft ²
05	133 m ²	1427 ft ²
06	133 m ²	1429 ft ²
07	130 m ²	1405 ft ²
08	362 m ²	3899 ft ²
09	71 m ²	764 ft ²
10	70 m ²	748 ft ²
11	70 m ²	748 ft ²
12	70 m ²	748 ft ²
13	70 m ²	748 ft ²
14	70 m ²	748 ft ²
15	70 m ²	748 ft ²
16	70 m ²	748 ft ²
17	89 m ²	948 ft ²
18	144 m ²	1545 ft ²
	2052 m ²	22090 ft ²

Roberts Limbrick
ARCHITECTS

PROJECT
Park & Ride and Commercial Development Trecynon Aberdare

CLIENT
Rhonda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

DRAWING
Proposed Site Plan (OPTION B)

STATUS
WORK IN PROGRESS

ROBERTS LIMBRICK LTD

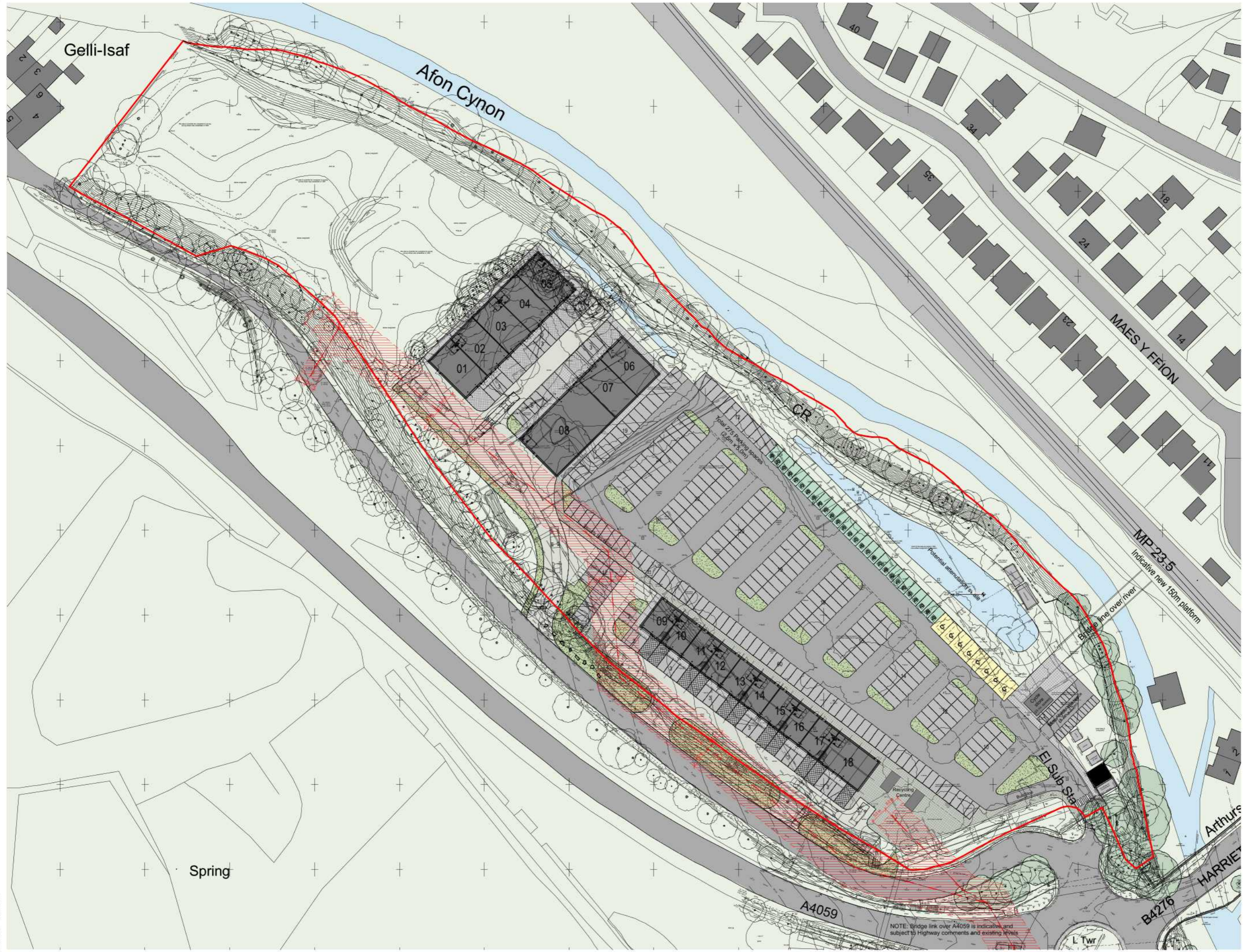
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SCALE	ORIGINATOR NO
1:500@A1	10192
DATE	AUTHOR
12.11.2021	RH
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
TRECYN-RLA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0010	A



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SECTION 3A – LEADER’S SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

1. Cabinet Terms of Reference

- 1.1 To act as the main focus of day-to-day political leadership and decision making, as well as democratic accountability, at a corporate level.
- 1.2 To carry out all the Local Authority’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Local Authority, whether by law or under the Constitution.
- 1.3 To propose to the Council:
 - 1.3.1 the key policies, and associated resource strategies, which comprise the Council’s policy framework, as well as changes to that framework, including:
 - The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan and the Corporate Plan;
 - The Council’s Annual Revenue and Capital Budgets, and levels of Council Tax; and

(Taking advice from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, interested agencies or groups, the local community, and others through the Council’s Consultation process, as appropriate).
 - 1.3.2 any matter relating to any of the Council’s powers and functions.
- 1.4 To guide Executive Councillors and Chief Officers on:
 - 1.4.1 policy development, co-ordination and implementation;
 - 1.4.2 determination of relative priorities for action; and
 - 1.4.3 the effective and efficient operation of the Council, and of its various services.
- 1.5 To ensure effective implementation of the Council’s strategies and plans, including monitoring and reviewing performance, and considering the need for major changes in delivery or new developments to improve service standards and quality.
- 1.6 To receive reports from appropriate Officers of the Council, and/or Executive Councillors, on significant matters requiring consideration/ decision, and on proposals for new or amended policies and their implementation.
- 1.7 To receive on a quarterly basis information in respect of the Council’s Performance and Resources, including details as outlined below (This Information will also be provided to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny and monitoring): -

- To receive regular performance monitoring information in respect of each of the capital schemes/projects in the Authority's three year rolling capital programme.
 - To monitor overall progress being made with the delivery of the three-year rolling capital programme and to report to the Council on any remedial action required, where necessary.
 - To agree any re-phasing of the agreed three year rolling capital programme as a result of scheme slippage and / or any other urgent matter.
 - To monitor overall progress being made with the delivery of the annual revenue budget strategy and to report to the Council on any remedial action required, where necessary.
 - To receive information in respect of any virements enacted in accordance with the Council's "Financial Procedure Rules".
 - To monitor progress being made to deliver Corporate Plan priorities, including updates on performance indicators and targets, actions, and strategic risks.
- 1.8 To advise the Council on the level of capital resources likely to be available to fund the Authority's three year rolling capital programme and to advise the Council on capital spending priorities and on individual projects or developments requiring funding.
- 1.9 To advise the Council on the level of revenue resources likely to be available to support its revenue budget in the current and forthcoming financial years, and to advise the Council on revenue spending priorities and on the allocation of resources to each Service Group.
- 1.10 To have discretion to seek the advice or comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the local community through consultation and other relevant bodies, in relation to significant matters before making a decision.
- 1.11 To determine the response to reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Committees, following any recommendations received in respect of service delivery, service improvement or policy changes.
- 1.12 To establish Standing Cabinet Committees, where appropriate, as a means of transacting more efficiently discrete aspects of the work of the Cabinet.
- 1.13 To appoint (on a working group basis) ad hoc working groups to assist in key aspects of policy development (working with the relevant Executive Councillors and Senior Officers from the Senior Leadership Team).
- 1.14 To establish topic forums to promote dialogue with, and partnership working on, matters of significance to the Council, the community, and other key local organisations which work closely with the Council.
- 1.15 To fully engage with the Wales Programme for Improvement initiative by receiving and validating reports.

- 1.16 To work together with partner organisations and communities to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This includes considering the long-term impact of decisions, involving a diversity of people in decisions that affect them, taking an integrated approach with our partners to service planning and provision, working collaboratively and seeking to intervene early and prevent problems from occurring in the first instance.
- 1.17 Any meeting of the Cabinet conducted will be convened in accordance with the Council's Constitution "Access to Information Procedure Rules".
- 1.18 The Cabinet shall produce a Work Programme at the start of each Municipal Year, which will be made publicly available through the Council's website.
- 1.19 The quorum for a meeting of the Cabinet shall be 4 and the quorum for a Committee of the Cabinet or Cabinet Steering Group shall be 3, unless otherwise stated within the Groups Terms of Reference.

2. The Cabinet 2022-23

The names of the eight Cabinet Members Appointed by the Leader and their respective Portfolio Titles and Responsibilities are outlined below: -

- 2.1 The Cabinet will take decisions collectively as a group, (although individual Cabinet Members may take decisions individually in an emergency, as set out in paragraph 3 below), and may express dissent from Cabinet decisions which expressions may be formally recorded, if the Cabinet Members so indicates.
- 2.2 The individual Cabinet Members listed below are allocated personal portfolios of responsibility, to act as corporate "champions" in pursuing major cross-cutting development themes across all Council services and areas of activity. (These individual portfolios may be changed by the Leader at any time). The individual Cabinet Members will each work closely with, and take professional advice from the responsible Senior Leadership Team Officers (as indicated below) and other appropriate Senior Officers within the Authority, as appropriate to their particular responsibilities as a Corporate/Community Champion, with the ability to convene meetings of such staff as needed. Each portfolio holder also will liaise with, consult, and inform other Cabinet Members on individual matters likely to affect their portfolios.
- 2.3 Arrangements will be made to provide dedicated administrative support to Cabinet Members in the execution of their responsibilities.
- 2.4 Lead Cabinet Members will also act as the known point of reference and response for issues or complaints (relevant to their responsibilities) received from Elected Members, local Senedd Members, local Members of Parliament, and other political bodies or representatives at regional and national levels. (When dealing with formal complaints involving the delivery of Council Services, the Lead Cabinet Member will first ensure that the benefit of the Council's Complaints Policy has been fully utilised.

In their role as “ombudsman” or arbitrator, the Lead Cabinet Member may choose to intervene in complaints against local service providers external to the Council).

County Borough Councillor Andrew Morgan

Portfolio: **Leader of the Council, Chair of the Cabinet**

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment

Responsible SLT Officer – Chris Bradshaw, Barrie Davies, Roger Waters and Christian Hanagan

Responsibility areas of policy:

- Strategy Policy
- Finance and Budget Setting
- Manifesto delivery
- Key infrastructure and Capital Programme
- Partnership and Joint Working
- Government Relations
- Council wide Safeguarding
- Emergency Planning & Civil Contingency
- Highways Maintenance & Traffic Management

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County Borough Councillor Maureen Webber

Portfolio: **Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Council Business**

Responsible SLT Officer – Andy Wilkins, Christian Hanagan, Richard Evans and Simon Gale

Responsible Directorates – Legal Services / Democratic Services and Human Resources.

Responsible areas of policy:

- Council Business
 - Employee & Trade Union Relations
 - Communications and Engagement (including digital communications)
 - Legal Services
 - Democratic Services
 - Strategic Events
 - Armed Forces Covenant
 - Human Resources
-

County Borough Councillor Gareth Caple
Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care**

Responsible SLT Officer – Paul Mee

Responsible Directorates – Community and Children’s Services

Responsible areas of policy:

- Adult Social Care (including Residential, in-house & external)
- Care management Mental Health
- Care management Learning Disabilities
- Day Care Services
- Adult & Children’s Safeguarding
- Children’s Services
- Foster Care & Adoption
- Family Support services
- Corporate Parenting Lead
- Resilient Families



County Borough Councillor Rhys Lewis
Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language**

Responsible SLT Officer – Gaynor Davies and Louise Davies

Responsible Directorates – Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language

Responsible areas of policy:

- Secondary, Primary, Nursery, Welsh Medium, dual language and Special Needs Education
- Liaison with further and higher education
- Schools and Community
- Learning Access, Engagement, and Inclusion
- Governor Support
- Education other than at school
- Childcare
- Welsh Language
- Early Years Education including Flying Start
- Youth Engagement and Participation Service



County Borough Councillor Robert Harris
Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities**

Responsible SLT Officer – Paul Mee and Louise Davies

Responsible Directorates – Public Health and Protection

- Public Health & Protection
- Licensing & Registrars
- Cemeteries & Crematoria
- Community support and RCT Together
- Libraries & Adult Education
- RCT Together & support for the voluntary sector
- Affordable & Supported Housing
- Asylum response
- Community Safety & Youth Offending
- Domestic Abuse & Victim Support'
- Domestic Abuse Champion
- Cultural Services

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County Borough Councillor Mark Norris
Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development**

Responsible SLT Officer – Simon Gale

Responsible Directorates – Prosperity and Development.

Responsible areas of policy:

- Inward Investment
- Enterprise & Economic Regeneration Funding
- Town Centres
- Business Support
- Planning and Development
- Planning Strategy
- Building Control
- Housing Strategy & Policy
- Tourism

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County Borough Councillor Ann Crimmings
Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure**

Responsible SLT Officer – Roger Waters and Louise Davies

Responsible Directorates – Frontline Services, Transportation and Heritage Services.

Responsible areas of policy:

- Leisure
- Sport RCT
- Environment, Street Cleansing, Waste & Recycling
- Transportation, Parking & Fleet
- Public rights of Way
- Parks & Countryside
- Home to School Transport
- Heritage Service & Visitor Attractions
- Leisure Services

County Borough Councillor Christina Leyshon

Portfolio: **Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services**

Responsible SLT Officer – Barrie Davies, Richard Evans and Dave Powell

Responsible Directorates – Corporate Services

- Accountancy Services
- Operational Finance
- Performance & Resources
- ICT Operational Services
- Customer Care (One4all & Contact Centres)
- Corporate Estates
- Carbon Reduction Commitment
- Internal Audit
- Digitalisation Strategy
- Procurement & Transitional Services

County Borough Councillor Julie Barton

Role: **Climate Change Champion** (Vice Chair of Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee & invited to attend Cabinet on matters relating to Climate Change)

Responsible SLT Officer – Chris Bradshaw and Dave Powell

Responsible areas of policy:

- Cross cutting responsibility for challenging and championing Climate Change

Chief Officer Membership

Mr Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive

Mr Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services (Section 151)

Mr Paul Mee, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director, Community and Children's Services

Mr Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)

Mr Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources

Mr Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication. (Head of Democratic Services)

Ms Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services

Mr Roger Waters, Director, Frontline Services

Mrs Gaynor Davies – Director, Education and Inclusion Services

Mr Dave Powell, Director of Corporate Estates

Mr Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development

3. Delegations of Executive Functions to Cabinet Members

Normally, decisions will be taken collectively by the Cabinet, but individual Cabinet Members can take decisions within their portfolios which they consider to be urgent to protect the interest of the Council, subject to prior consultation with the appropriate Senior Leadership Team Officer(s) and, where necessary, other Cabinet Members. If there is uncertainty as to whether a matter falls within a particular portfolio, the Leader will make a determination as to which is the relevant Cabinet Member. The Leader can take urgent decisions in the absence of the appropriate portfolio holder.

4. Cabinet Committees Appointed by the Leader, their Membership and Terms of Reference

The four under-mentioned Cabinet Sub-Committees will be constituted at the present time. Council will be informed promptly of any additional Cabinet Committees that may be appointed by the Cabinet in the future.
Those highlighted * will be reported to Council 6th July

4.1 **Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Cabinet Sub-Committee**

Membership: (4 representatives)

Names of Members: Cabinet Members: M Webber (Chair), A Crimmings (Vice Chair and Portfolio Holder)

Other County Borough Councillors: S Powderhill and C Leyshon

Terms of Reference: (a) To act on behalf of the Executive as a Corporate Trustee of the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and, in that capacity, to consider all matters in connection with the future use and development of the Park and the preservation of the objectives of the Trust so instituted.

(b) To consider all proposals and representations from and on behalf of the Council or any third party, in connection with the use and ownership of the facility.

(c) To secure all necessary advice and assistance, including, where necessary, external advice and assistance, to ensure that the Trustees' interests are preserved.

(No Member of this Committee may take part in any other Cabinet or Council or Committee discussion or decision on any policy or development or any issue which may affect the park and must declare an interest and leave when any such matter is raised).

The Quorum for this Committee will be 3 Members.

4.2 **Rhondda Cynon Taf Charity for the Visually Impaired Cabinet Sub-Committee**

Membership: (4 representatives)

Names of Members: County Borough Councillors: G Caple (Chair), M Norris (Vice Chair), R Lewis and M Webber

Terms of Reference: To oversee the administration of the charity

4.3 **Welsh Language Cabinet Sub-Committee***

Membership: (5 representatives)

Names of Members: County Borough Councillors: R Lewis (Chair), C Leyshon (Vice Chair), M Webber, M Norris and G Caple.

Terms of Reference:

In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure, two principles underpin the terms of reference of the Welsh Language Working Group:

- in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language
- persons in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should be able to live their lives through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.
- To enable the Council to deliver upon the policy objectives set by Welsh Government Ministers.

Purpose of the Sub-Committee:

The Sub Committee has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach in the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011 Measure, specifically the Statutory Standards relating to the Welsh Language / Statutory Welsh Language Scheme. Its membership will provide strategic direction in the implementation of the aforementioned legislation / policies and any local policies regarding the Welsh language and support the Welsh Language Services Unit in carrying out its duties. Its membership will consider how it can support access to services in the medium of Welsh

Membership:

The Welsh Language Sub Committee membership includes Cabinet Member representation (as shown above- These Members will have voting rights to determine a matter), Director Representation (currently Director, Education & Inclusion Services, Director Public Health & Protection & Service Director Democratic Services & Communications), officer representation and external Welsh medium representation. The Cabinet Member will Chair the Sub committee and will also be the Welsh Language Member Champion.

The Sub Committee will also include Head of Welsh Language Services Unit, Welsh Language Officer and Head of Service (currently Head of Community Learning)

External Representation:

Menter Iaith is also invited to attend the Sub Committee. This enables both Menter Iaith and the Welsh Language Services Unit to discuss issues that affect Welsh medium service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes for clients.

Non-Cabinet Member Representation:

Representatives from political groups which do not form part of a political group forming part of the executive, will be invited to attend meetings, but will not be able to vote upon matters of business.

Frequency:

Meetings will be every six months unless otherwise agreed by the Sub-Committee. Urgent meetings can be convened if felt appropriate by the Chair.

4.4 Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee*

Membership: (5 representatives)

Voting Members: County Borough Councillors: C Leyshon (Chair), A Crimmings (Vice Chair), M Norris, and R Lewis

Non-Voting Members: Cllr J Barton

Terms of Reference: To support the implementation and delivery of the priorities identified within the Council's Corporate Plan, this Cabinet Sub Committee will:

- Development of specific actions and policies which support the reduction of the Council's Carbon Footprint and respond to 'Net Zero' – The report of the Committee on Climate Change and the Welsh Government's report Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales;
- Deliver upon the Council's commitment to match the ambitions of the UK 100 Agreement by becoming a Clean Energy

organisation.

- To develop these commitments and in doing so, become more ambitious through resetting targets and challenging how the Council operates and approaches challenges in the future to become a 'Net Zero' Council by 2050.
- Provide the opportunity for persons, interested parties, and groups who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council the ability to engage in the wider response of the community to climate change.
- Consider the long term trends that will affect Rhondda Cynon Taf and what steps can be taken locally to contribute to their mitigation.
- Consider how the Council can work with others both locally and nationally to consider joint solutions.

Purpose of the Sub Committee:

The Cabinet Sub Committee has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach to issues of climate change and the Council becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. Its membership will provide strategic direction and will consider and agree any local policies regarding climate change and associated matters. Where appropriate, or where determined, matters may be referred to Cabinet for further consideration. Its membership will consider how the Council can support changes in residents' behaviour, to deliver the necessary actions to respond proactively to climate change and in doing so, support business, communities and residents to reduce their own environmental impact.

This Cabinet Sub Committee will provide the opportunity to proactively discuss progress and delivery of actions, which emanate from the Corporate Plan, which aims to meet climate change challenges and reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Membership:

The Cabinet Sub Committee membership includes Cabinet Member representation (as shown above – These members have voting rights to determine a matter).

Senior Leadership Team Representation (Chief Executive, Director of Frontline Services, Director of Prosperity & Development; Director of Corporate Estates; Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services; and the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication), service officer representation – Council's Performance Manager where appropriate and external representation when required.

Officers and External representatives will provide strategic direction and will consider any local policies regarding climate change and associated matters and any other business as appropriate, however voting rights are conveyed to the cabinet Members and County Borough Councillors determined by the Leader only.

The Climate Change Champion role will raise the profile of any relevant legislation and policies at Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team level as well as supporting and developing the response of the Council. The roles are integral to the future development of policies in this area and each champion will be tasked with championing these matters at all levels of decision making within the Council.

External Representation:

Local interest groups will be invited to attend the Cabinet Sub Committee in order to ensure that residents and communities are fully and directly involved in shaping its work.

This will enable both groups and individuals to contribute and influence to the development of policies for consideration by the Council, although no voting rights will be attributed to such external positions.

The Cabinet Sub Committee will also provide the opportunity for its members to hear from

services and discuss issues that affect service delivery relating to climate change, both at a community and strategic level. The Cabinet Sub Committee will have the ability to work in partnership with communities to provide improved outcomes for.

A process will be undertaken to select appropriate external representation to inform members decisions

Non-Cabinet Member Representation:

Representatives from political groups which do not form part of a political group forming part of the executive, will be invited to attend meetings, **but will not be able to vote upon matters of business.**

Frequency:

Meetings will be held when necessary. Urgent meetings of the group can be convened if felt appropriate by the Chair.

5. Joint Arrangements

5.1 In respect of the nine under-mentioned joint arrangements, I propose:

- The Council enters into each joint arrangement on the terms currently in place, and pursuant to Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other enabling powers, and delegates to the Joint Committee those functions of the Executive as are set out in those agreements.
- That the joint agreements be reconstituted to provide that each constituent Council may be represented by an Executive or Non-Executive Member(s). Where one Member only is nominated to represent a Council that Member can exercise the Council's vote which shall be the same number as that previously exercised by the Council.
- It is noted that Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has established an Executive Board and that their representatives on the Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee may or may not be Board Members.
- That every Joint Committee be authorised to establish, if it deems it appropriate, an advisory panel, which may comprise both Executive and Non Executive Members of the constituent Authorities who have sat on the Joint Committees, so that their expertise and commitment is not lost to the work of the Joint Committee. (This will be a matter for each Joint Committee to determine).

Joint Committee	Function	Name of Cabinet or Non Executive Member(s) Allocated

Capita	Provision of Engineering Services with Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.	M Ashford A Crimmings M Norris S Bradwick J Brencher G Holmes
Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee	Provision of Archive Services with five other Authorities.	W Lewis B Harris G Jones B Stephens
Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee	Provision of Crematorium Services with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.	J Elliot A Crimmings A Fox G Jones K Morgan
Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee	Provision of Crematorium Service with Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan County Councils.	G Hopkins B Stephens
Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee	Provision of Curriculum Advice, Inspection and Support to Schools and LEAs jointly with Bridgend, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils	R Lewis
The Regional Adoption Joint Committee (The Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative Joint Committee)	Provision of Adoption Services in collaboration with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.	G Caple

ArtsConnect	Provision of high quality and cost effective arts and creative industry experiences in collaboration with Bridgend County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough council, Merthyr Leisure Trust, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council	B Harris
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6. Delegation of Executive Functions to Officers

6.1 These are delegated to Chief Officers, under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2000, functions within their responsibility, in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of this part of the Constitution.

- Recording of Officer Decisions

In line with the amendments agreed by the Council at its AGM on the 25th May 2016, 'Key Decisions' taken by Officers of the Senior Leadership Team under delegated authority will be open to scrutiny. This process will improve transparency and accountability and will ensure a consistent and robust approach in respect of implementing decisions.

Key Decisions taken by Delegated Decisions will need to be published with immediate effect and no later than 2 clear working days following the decision being taken. (Prior to publication the Decision Notice will be checked for accuracy by a Chief Officer, and will be published accordingly. This will be the same process in respect of Cabinet decision notices). Once published, the Decision(s) will be subject to the same process in respect of 'Call In' as any Cabinet Committee Decision i.e., the decision will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of three clear working days after the publication of the decision, unless the decision is called for review by scrutiny.

(N.B as agreed by the Council at its AGM on the 23rd May 2018 the Scrutiny Call In procedure timeframe has been reduced to three working days from the previous five).

In respect of operational or day to day management decisions taken forward through Officer delegated decisions, these will be recorded by the Service and a record of the decisions maintained.

7. Appointments to Bodies undertaking or advising upon Executive Functions.

The following bodies or steering groups are constituted to consider and advise the executive. Such committees do not make decisions, and can only comment or make recommendations relating to their respective remits.

Members will be appointed to the following bodies: -

7.1 School Budget Forum Steering Group

Membership: (6 representatives)

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: R Lewis (Chair), C Leyshon (Vice Chair), A Morgan, M Webber, G Caple, and M Norris.

Terms of reference:

The Membership of the Forum will include Elected Members, School Head Teachers (from primary, secondary, and special needs schools) as well as appropriate union representation, totalling a membership of at least 15.

Section 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1999, as inserted by the Education Act 2002, requires every local authority in Wales to establish, in accordance with regulations, a body to be known as schools forum. The school's forum must represent governing bodies and Headteachers of schools maintained by the authority. If the authority so determines the school's forum can also include non-school members.

Schools Budget Forums are the key to developing informed and confident dialogue between local authorities and their schools and budgetary issues including schools' funding levels for the coming year, pressures on future years' budgets, changes to local funding formula and reviewing contracts/service level agreements for services to schools.

The terms of reference have been compiled in accordance with the Schools Forums (Wales) Regulations 2003 which came into force on 13th November 2003.

7.2 Pupil Referral Unit – Management Committee

Membership: (2 representatives)

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: R Lewis and G Caple

7.3 Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Membership: (5 representatives)

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: J Elliott, A Crimmings, S Rees, TBC IND GROUP and G HopkinsS

7.4 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Steering Group

Membership: (2 representatives)

Name of Member: County Borough Councillors: R Lewis and C Leyshon

7.5 Pontypridd BID Board

Membership: (1 representative)

Name of Member: County Borough Councillor M Norris

Terms of Reference:

The Board will provide the strategic oversight and direction of the 'Your Pontypridd BID Company'- the legal entity that manages the BID - and is responsible for ensuring that the BID levy funds are properly invested in accordance with the agreed BID business plan as voted for by Pontypridd businesses. The Boards purpose is to oversee the delivery of the business plan, projects, and the efficient running of the company as well as the general promotion of the Pontypridd BID Company and Pontypridd to support the Company's principal activity.

7.6 Armed Forces Steering Group

Membership: (5 representatives)

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: M Webber (Chair), C Middle (Vice Chair), S Bradwick, D Parkin and C Preedy.

Terms of Reference:

To provide strategic guidance to ensure the needs of Armed Forces personal living in Rhondda Cynon Taff are delivered by the Council and its partners in the public and third sector.

7.7 Rhondda Cynon Taf Twinning Association Steering Group

Membership:

The Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Council Business (Chair), alongside appropriate elected members.

The Steering Group shall appoint a Twinning Convenor to assist in the work taken forward. To enhance the work of the steering Group representatives from Town & Community Councils of Rhondda Cynon Taf are also part of the Group's membership.

The Steering Group shall have power to co-opt non-voting members to represent schools, local organisations, and individuals and to delegate any of its functions to Cabinet Members and officers.

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: M Webber (Chair), T Leyshon, R Lewis and G Jones.
Community Councillor: S Presse
Other Independent Members: Mr A Davies; Ms R Bosanko, Mr J Fish, and Mr C Roberts (**THE CONVENOR**)

Terms of Reference:

To promote and maintain international and town twinning links.

To broaden the mutual understanding of the cultural, recreational, educational, and commercial activities of the linked towns

To promote opportunities for personal development through cultural exchange.

To assist financially or otherwise for schools, local organisations, and individuals in forming new links with the schools, organisations and individuals in towns which have twinned with this authority to maintain existing links and to establish new links.

To monitor the activities of new and established twinning links.

7.8 Major Incident Recovery Board

Membership: (4 representatives)

Names of Members: Cabinet Members: A Morgan (Chair), M Webber (Vice Chair) A Crimmings, M Norris and the relevant Cabinet Member related to the 'incident' to be considered, if not already part of the Membership.

The Quorum for this Committee will be 3 Members.

The Steering Group will also comprise representation as advised by the Leader of the Council to engage the appropriate Council and external expertise as appropriate. This may also include representatives from local and town centre businesses impacted by any incident.

Purpose of the Steering Group:

The Steering Group has been established to ensure an Authority-wide approach in the delivery of services and the prioritisation of resources in relation to any major incident, causing detrimental effect to the communities of the County Borough. The Board will lead business continuity planning in the immediate period following such an event and will continue to monitor the progress of associated action(s) agreed as part of the recovery plan determined by the Board.

Terms of Reference:

- (a) To consider the Council's response and recovery plans following any severe incident which may occur and impact the County Borough.
- (b) To consider all proposals and response plans, including recommendations from officers in relation to the allocation of resources and the prioritisation of services, assets and infrastructure.
- (c) To secure all necessary advice and assistance, including, where necessary, external advice and to support the Council community leadership and civil contingency role in responding to the impact of this major incident.
- (d) To agree the Council's immediate recovery plan and associated actions moving forward.
- (e) Act as an advisory board to the Leader of the Council, should urgent executive decisions (as outlined in the Leader's scheme of delegation) be required to be taken in relation to matters connected with the Council's response to an incident.
- (f) Where appropriate, report or make recommendations to Council on these matters.

7.9 **Corporate Parenting Board**

Membership: (8 representatives)

Names of Members: County Borough Councillors: G Caple (Chair), R Lewis (Vice Chair), C Leyshon, J Bonetto, T Burnell, S Evans, S Rees, and S Trask.

Terms of Reference:

To take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parent to children who are looked after and formulate Council policy in respect of children who are looked after and children in need.

To ensure that all Groups and divisions within the Council work together in order to promote best outcomes for children who are looked after and children in need.

To promote effective relationships with key partner agencies in the best interests of children who are looked after and children in need.

To monitor the implementation of the Action Plan arising from the Best Value Review of Services to children looked after, in addition to monitoring outcomes for children looked after and children in need.

To consider the outcomes and promote positive learning practices following consideration of Child Practice Reviews

In accordance with HMIP to routinely review the offending rates of LAC by gender to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board understand patterns of offending by girls and are able to take actions to address where necessary.

To consider the impact of relevant other systems/agencies (e.g. health, courts, schools) and see how these could be improved.

To seek the views of children looked after - the advocacy service will be asked to facilitate.

To invite representatives from other agencies to attend as appropriate.

To report directly to Cabinet through an Annual report of the Board.

Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru is also invited to attend the meetings. This enables both TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

7.10 Central Adoption Panel

Membership: (1 representative)

Name of Member: County Borough Councillor: S Rees

Terms of Reference:

To make recommendations in respect of the following:

- a) Whether (in cases of relinquished children) the child should be placed for adoption;
- b) Whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child; and
- c) Whether the child should be placed with a particular prospective adopter.

7.11 Foster Care Panel

Membership: (1 representative)

Name of Member: County Borough Councillor S Rees

Terms of Reference:

To make recommendations in respect of the following to the Group Director for Community and Children’s Services: -

- (1) to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster parent;
- (2) where it recommends approval of an application to recommend the terms on which the approval is given, for example, as to the numbers and ages of children, or whether the approval relates to any particular named child, or to any particular type of placement;
- (3) to recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to act as a foster parent, and whether or not the terms of his approval remains appropriate;
 - (i) on the first review
 - (ii) on the occasion of any other review when requested to do so by the fostering service provider

7.12 Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group

Membership: (5 Representatives)

Name of Members: County Borough Councillors: B. Harris (Chair), A. Crimmings (Vice-Chair), J. Brencher and A MEMBER OF THE PLAID GROUP R. Lewis

The membership will also include: -

- Arts Council Wales (ACW) representative – M Dunning.

- An independent representative – C Coppock.

The Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group consists of a cross-party Membership with representation from Cabinet Members, Elected Members, Director and officers, the Arts Council Wales and an Independent Member. The roles are integral in terms of the breadth of artistic knowledge, which will allow the Steering Group to discuss issues that affect the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

Terms of Reference:

The aim of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group is to provide guidance and advice on matters relating to the strategic context in which the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Arts Service operates. In particular, to advise on items affecting the resilience of RCT Theatres and the long term sustainability of the Arts Service in general. The Steering Group will focus on matters such as audience development, income generation, and engagement and participation in the region. The topics of each meeting will be considered on a thematic basis.

The Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group will support the Council’s delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 through supporting the development of:

- A skilled population;
- A resilient economy;
- Healthier residents
- Equality of opportunity;
- Cohesive Communities;
- Opportunities for its residents to be creatively active through English and Welsh and;
- A positive contribution to global well-being.

Frequency of Meetings:

The Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group will meet on a quarterly basis. Further meetings can be convened at the request of the Chair.

Meeting Locations:

To allow the Steering Group to fully appreciate the work undertaken within the strategic Arts and Culture services within RCT, it is suggested that meetings are held (when possible) in appropriate venues suitable to the service area.

PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

7.13 **Cwm Taf Public Services Board**

Membership: (1 representative)

Name of Members: The Leader, County Borough Councillor A
Morgan (Nominate Deputy M Webber)

Background:

In line with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, statutory bodies called Public Services Boards (PSBs) came into effect from the 1st April, 2016 (taking over from Authorities previous non statutory Boards - Local Service Boards (LSB) PSBs will be established for each local authority area in Wales and the public bodies that make up the Boards will need to demonstrate their collective contribution to the wellbeing of the area and their contribution towards the national wellbeing goals.

Terms of Reference:

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) is a merged Public Services Board, covering the areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and was formed on the 12th May, 2016.

The PSB aims to act as the principal strategic leadership forum for the planning, commissioning and delivery of public services across organisational boundaries to achieve better outcomes for the people of Cwm Taf. It will seek to understand the major issues faced by each partner organisation, to become a more transparent Board through publishing data and performance; and will assist in transforming public services move from a reactive to a preventative agenda.

Membership:

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outlines requirements for membership of each PSB setting out a clear structure. Cwm Taf PSB must have statutory partners consisting:

- (a) The Councillors elected as Executive Leaders of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and RCT County Borough Council (the local authority) or the elected Mayors;
- (b) The Head of the Authorities' paid service designated under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- (c) Either the Chair, Chief Executive or both for Cwm Taf University Health Board (the Local Health Board for the area which falls within the local authority areas)
- (d) Either the Chief Officer, Chairman or both for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service; and
- (e) The Chief Executive for the Natural Resources Body for Wales.

The individuals referred to above may designate another individual to represent the organisation on their behalf. All members (formally designated or otherwise) must be present for a meeting of the PSB to be quorate.

A PSB for a local authority area must invite the following persons to participate in the activity of the board. These invited members must include:

- (a) the Welsh Ministers;
- (b) the Chief Constable of the police force for a police area any part of which falls within the local authority area;
- (c) the Police and Crime Commissioner for a police area any part of which falls within the local authority area;
- (d) a person required by arrangements under section 3(2) of the Offender Management Act 2007 (c.21) to provide probation services in relation to the local authority area; and
- (e) at least one body representing relevant voluntary organisations (whether or not the body is known as a County Voluntary Council).

Each Board may issue additional invitations to other partners to participate in the activity of the PSB.

Scrutiny:

In order to ensure democratic accountability with the Public Services Board, there is a requirement for a designated local government Scrutiny Committee of the relevant local authority to scrutinise the work of the PSB.

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee was formed in 2017 and further details can be found on the Council website.

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