



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

**A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on  
Monday, 26th September, 2022 at 1.00 pm**

**Contact: Hannah Williams - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385401954)**

**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 Thursday, 22 September 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](mailto:ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk)**

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

**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 Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 as an accurate record.

**(Pages 5 - 8)**

### **3. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication, which provides an update on 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.

**(Pages 9 - 30)**

### **4. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT (QUARTER 1)**

To receive the report of the Director of Finance and Digital Services, which provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30th June 2022).

**(Pages 31 - 58)**

### **5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE**

To receive the report of the Director of Finance and Digital Services, which provides Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2023/24 during the autumn.

**(Pages 59 - 112)**

### **6. PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RCT**

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which provides Cabinet with an update on our current special school provision following previous reports to Cabinet in February and October 2021 where Cabinet agreed to additional scoping work being undertaken to inform proposals for change in our special school provision; and seeks approval to submit a revised Strategic Outline Programme for Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme to increase the Council envelope of Band B investment programme of funding.

**(Pages 113 - 126)**

### **7. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL ACT IN RCT**

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which provides an update to Cabinet on the implementation of the ALNET (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal) Wales Act (2018) in Rhondda Cynon Taf, including the use of additional resources approved by the Council to enable the Access and Inclusion Service to fulfil its increased statutory duties in line with the requirements of the new ALNET (Wales) Act (2018) and ALN Code for Wales (2021) during Years 1 and 2 of the 3-year national ALN Implementation timetable. The report also identifies potential risks and the further possible additional resources needed to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory ALN duties at the end of the 3-year transitional period when the new ALN system will be fully implemented,

having replaced the outgoing Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.

**(Pages 127 - 150)**

**8. CWM TAF CARER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community and Children's Services, which seeks Cabinet approval for the submission of the 2021/22 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report to Welsh Government.

**(Pages 151 - 176)**

**9. CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

To receive the report of the Group Director of Community and Children's Services, which shares with Cabinet the Annual Report for 2021-2022 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

**(Pages 177 - 232)**

**10. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances is of the opinion should be considered at the Meeting as a matter of urgency.



**Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication**

**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



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF

### RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 6 September 2022 at 2.30 pm.

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

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor G Caple    Councillor A Crimmings  
Councillor R Lewis    Councillor M Norris  
Councillor B Harris

#### 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  
Mr L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources  
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development  
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates  
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services  
Mr A Critchlow, Parking Services and Streetworks Manager  
Mr S Williams, Head of Strategic Investments

#### 32    **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors M. Webber and C. Leyshon.

#### 33    **Declaration of Interest**

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language declared the following prejudicial interest in respect of the item: "A close family member would be a beneficiary of the support to lower paid Council staff." The Cabinet Member left the meeting whilst this item was discussed and voted upon.

#### 34    **Minutes**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

#### 35    **Local Cost of Living Support - Supplementary (Discretionary) Scheme**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with details of a local Supplementary (Discretionary) Cost of Living Support Scheme for consideration.

The Leader thanked the Director for the report and noted that the £75 payment would be distributed to approximately 22,000 families; and 5,800 Local Authority employees would be in receipt of the £125. The Leader advised that this would be in addition to approximately 40,000 payments made by the Local Authority through the Welsh Government Winter Fuel Support scheme. The scheme had since been widened to include further categories.

The Leader was pleased to note that the support was focused on families with children and noted that it would be difficult to administrate the funding to families with children not in school, due to records.

The Leader emphasised the importance of the Third Sector groups and how invaluable the foodbanks are for some of the community. The Leader advised that any significant funding would need to come from UK Government and hoped there would be an announcement in the near future regarding support in respect of the Energy Crisis and the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity acknowledged the struggles of the residents in RCT and noted that the challenges are most acute for families, and as such was pleased to note that specific report was being directed to them; and, to some of the lowest paid roles within the Local Authority.

The Cabinet Member echoed the comments of the Leader and urged the UK government to follow in support of the most vulnerable.

(**Note:** Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of this item, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language left the meeting whilst this item was discussed and voted upon.)

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and agree the detail of the proposed Local Cost of Living Support - Supplementary (Discretionary) Scheme; and
2. To note and agree the implementation arrangements and delegation to the Director of Finance and Digital Services as detailed at section 10.

## **36 Council Corporate Plan - Investment Priorities**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services set out the position regarding the opportunity for Cabinet to propose to Council to further invest in the Council's priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

The Leader noted that the release would target the areas of priority for investment, which were set out within the Council's Corporate Plan. The Leader advised that the proposals would be a positive continuation of the investment already confirmed by the Council. The Leader hoped that such investment reviews would continue over the year but stated that it would be dependent on the economic outlook.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that despite the current financial pressures, the Council continues to strive to invest and make improvements for the communities in RCT.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To propose the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in the report at Appendix A to Council at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

### **37 Introduction of a new Solar Panel Grant and the Extension of the Domestic Heating Grant**

The Director of Prosperity and Development sought approval from Cabinet to establish a new solar panel grant scheme for residents of RCT, which supports the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2019 – 2023 and the RCT 2022-25 Plan [‘Think Climate RCT’ - Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#); and to extend the current domestic heating grant scheme until 2025 for residents of RCT, in order to repair, replace or install a new heating system and energy efficiency measures in line with the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2019 – 2023 and the RCT 2022-25 Plan [‘Think Climate RCT’ - Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#).

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that the proposals would extend the current domestic heating grant scheme until 2025 for residents of RCT, at a time when energy costs are soaring to un-manageable levels. The Cabinet Member noted that the grants would support residents to repair, replace or install a new heating system and energy efficiency measures, which would play an important role in the current energy crisis and support the Council in delivering upon its climate change ambitions.

The Leader noted that the proposals were in line with manifesto commitments and commented that energy efficiency and the potential of self-generation had been a priority prior to the recent energy crisis. The Leader hoped that shared prosperity funding would be secured to fund the package.

The Leader advised that in September 2021, an Arbed scheme was targeted in the Penrhiwceiber area due to its high levels of fuel poverty. The scheme ended in November 2021 supporting 142 homes, delivering 570 energy measures. Of the 142 homes, 68% of these had Solar PV installed. It was noted that the extension to include solar panels would have many advantages for households.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the creation of a new solar panel grant up until 2025;  
and
2. To note the positive impact that the domestic heating grant has had on residents of RCT and agree for the grant to be extended until 2025.

### **38 Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) Transition Plan**

The Frontline Services Officer outlined the Council's plan to transition from an Internal Combustion Engine, (ICE), fleet to an Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles, (ULEV), fleet over the next 6 years. The scope, and primary focus of the report, relates to the Council's Light Goods Vehicle, (LGV), Fleet.

The Leader was in support of the proposals and spoke of the practicalities such

as the substantial cost and transfer of the fleet, which would need to fit in with the Fleet Renewal Programme. The Leader also noted that in certain instances, electrical vehicles would not be suitable but agreed that in the short term, the transfer of the smaller vehicles was the way forward.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that a great deal of research had been undertaken and several ULEV schemes had been piloted over recent years. The Cabinet Member felt that it was the appropriate time to transfer to ULEV with the establishment of the Regional EV Charging Network.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report and duly to resolve to support:
  - a) The procurement, either via lease-hire or outright purchase, of electric LGVs to replace existing ICE vehicles in accordance with the indicative timeline below in a phased approach.
  - b) The development and installation of associated Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure, (EVCI), to enable the successful delivery and implementation of the ULEV transition plan.
  - c) Trials of alternatively-fuelled vehicles, such as Hydrogen and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, (HVO), when and where available. (One such HVO trial is presently underway with respect to a selection of vehicles from the Council's Heavy Goods Vehicle, (HGV), fleet, with developments being closely monitored for signs of reductions in carbon emissions, which could potentially be used to inform future green fleet initiatives).
2. That Officers continue to pursue any and all opportunities to secure grants to assist with funding, either in part or in full, of any aspect of ULEV procurement or EVCI development.

### **39 Leader's Scheme of Delegation - 3A**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note the changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation as detailed by the Director.

**This meeting closed at 3.00 pm**

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**





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

### **CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

#### **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2022-23 MUNICIPAL YEAR.**

#### **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION 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, an update on 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 updated 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 updated 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 An updated 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.

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

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

**7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

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

**8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 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.

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

- 10.1 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.

**11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 An updated 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**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &  
COMMUNICATION 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)

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

	<b>YEPS: Overview of Additional Funding</b>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Community Wardens</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Cabinet Work Programme</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	
	<b>Armed Forces and War Memorials Commitment</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	
	<b>Leader's Scheme of Delegation and associated matters arising from the AGM</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	
	<b>The Pontypridd masterplan</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Tree and Hedgerow Strategy</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee

	<b>Proposed LUF Submission for the Cynon Valley</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
<b>July 2022</b>	<b>Council's Performance &amp; Resources Report</b>  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
	<b>Housing Support Grant Needs Assessment and Strategy</b>	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Residential Care and Day Services Development - Bronllwyn</b>  This report will provide on development proposals for the former Care Home site as agreed by Cabinet back in December 2020 – <i>Paul</i>	Paul Mee, Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Residential Care Services</b>  To provide an update position on the current in-house provision, including some proposed short term changes to current provision in order to meet current demand and staffing pressures.	Paul Mee, Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee



	<b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Family Engagement Officers</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	<b>RCT SACRE Annual Report</b>  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 Scrutiny Committee
<b>September 2022</b>	<b>Council's Performance Report</b>  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
	<b>Cost of Living Support – Follow Up (Discretionary) Scheme</b>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader of the Council		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan Update</b>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Update on the Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act in RCT</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	To update Members on the Access & Inclusion Service's self-evaluation and future areas for further development.				
	<b>Cwm Taf Carer's Annual Report</b> 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 Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report</b> To receive the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Report	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Cabinet Work Programme</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	<b>Council Corporate Plan - Investment Priorities</b> To consider the investment priorities	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Transition Plan</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Update on a proposal for a new special school in RCT</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	<b>Solar Panel Grant &amp; Domestic Heating Grant</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
<b>October 2022</b>	<b>Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Budget Consultation Report</b>  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
	<b>Public Services Ombudsman For Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2021-2022</b>	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Annual General Meeting</b>  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	
	<b>Council Tax Premiums – Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes</b>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader of the Council		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Director Social Services Annual Report (Draft)</b>  To provide Cabinet with the annual report on the delivery, performance, risks, and planned	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children’s Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	improvements to the Social Services function of the Council				
	<p><b>Social Services Annual Complaints Report</b></p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an overview of the operation &amp; 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 Committee
	<p><b>Leisure Strategy</b></p> <p>To provide Cabinet with the proposed Leisure Strategy</p>	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>LDP Annual Monitoring Report</b></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 Committee
	<p><b>Draft Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare</b></p> <p>To receive the draft Town Centre Strategy and initial delivery plan outlining funding sources such as the Levelling Up Fund</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Empty Homes Strategy 2022-2025</b></p> <p>To agree the Council's proposed approach to tackling empty homes which is set out in the Council's Empty Homes Strategy for the period 2022 -2025.</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee

	<b>Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report</b> 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 Scrutiny Committee
<b>November 2022</b>	<b>Proposal to improve the Education provision for a new special school in RCT</b>  To seek Cabinet approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for a new special school provision for RCT	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Proposal to improve education provision for a new WM school for Ysgol Cwm Rhondda</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Office Accommodation</b>	Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Budget Consultation Report</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Participation Strategy</b>	Christian Hanagan Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report</b>  To consider the Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

		Services and Communication Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services			
	<b>Council Tax Base 2022/23</b>  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		
	<b>Council's Performance &amp; Resources Report</b>  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
	<b>Local Housing Market Assessment</b>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Extra Care Developments</b>  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 Scrutiny Committee

	<b>Update on North West Cardiff – RCT Transport Corridor Study</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Update on Aberdare – Hirwaun Passenger Rail Services Study</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>December 2022</b>	<b>Cabinet Work Programme</b>	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	<b>Eisteddfod Update</b>  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 Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Day Services</b>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
<b>January 2023</b>	<b>National Adoption Annual Report</b>  To receive the National Adoption Annual Report	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Budget Report</b>  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 Committee

	<b>Digital Strategy</b> To receive an update in respect of the Council's digital strategy	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Irrecoverable Debts</b> To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of irrecoverable debts	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	
	<b>Corporate Asset Management Plan Interim Update</b> To provide Cabinet with a progress update in respect of the plan.	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>February 2023</b>	<b>Community Infrastructure Levy "CIL" Consultation Responses</b> To update Cabinet on the responses resulting from the Community Infrastructure Levy "CIL" consultation in respect of the Council's Regulation 123 List	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		
	<b>Budget Report</b> 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	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Council Fees and Charges</b>	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure		Overview and Scrutiny Committee



	The need to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Fees and Charges for the financial year 2023/24	and Digital Services	and Investment		
	<b>Capital Programme</b> 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 Committee
<b>March 2023</b>	<b>Regional Adoption Annual Report</b> To consider the Regional Adoption Annual Report	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Annual Equalities Report</b> 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 Committee
	<b>Council's Performance &amp; Resources Report</b> 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 Committee
	<b>Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Coal Tips</b>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure		Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

### Ongoing Updates

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

	<p><b>Highways Investment Scheme</b></p> <p>To receive regular updates in respect of the Highways Investment Scheme</p>	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Review of Mainstream School Transport Provision</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Porth Town Centre Strategy</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Taff Vale Update and Business Plan</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People – Consultation feedback</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>SS&amp;WB Board Development</b></p> <p>To consider any updates as appropriate in respect of the SS&amp;WB Board</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	<p><b>Regional Transformation Agenda</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Development of Community Hubs</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Extra Care Strategy</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Advocacy</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Social Services &amp; Wellbeing Act</b></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 Scrutiny Committee
	<p><b>Local Air Quality Management Reports</b></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 Scrutiny Committee

	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century School Transformation Programme</b>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal</b>  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 Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Staff Panel Report</b>  To receive details of the proposals put forward by the Council's Staff Panel in respect of efficiency savings and smarter ways of working	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	<b>Scrutiny Recommendations</b>  To receive recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.	Service Director Democratic Services and Communications			

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

### **CABINET**

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

#### **COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Quarter 1)**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

**AUTHOR: Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services (01443) 680609**

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

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Council’s performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the context of the Council’s Services managing the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and more recently the United Kingdom wide cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to increases in demand for many services and significant inflationary cost pressures.

##### **Revenue**

- 2.2 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary).

##### **Capital**

- 2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- 2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

## **Corporate Plan Priorities**

- 2.5 Note the Quarter 1 progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
- 2.6 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).

## **3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to enable elected Members and other stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of the Council.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 This report provides Members with the first update of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 4.2 The aim of the report is to bring together the Council's performance into an Executive Summary and make available more detailed information to the reader through electronic links. Information contained in the Executive Summary includes financial data, progress against our Corporate Plan priorities (with exceptions highlighted within the detailed sections to ensure that elected Members and other readers are able to quickly identify the key issues) and progress made to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events.
- 4.3 The report is set in the context of the on-going impact of Covid-19 and, more recently, the cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to significant increases in demand and cost pressures across a number of services. Members will note that the Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship Fund, that funded the majority of additional expenditure and income losses incurred as a result of the pandemic, ceased from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 with the requirement for local authorities to manage any on-going service and financial implications from within existing resources. Within this very challenging and changing environment, the Council is maintaining its focus on frontline service delivery, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, to help support the needs of residents and businesses.
- 4.4 Further information on the above position together with the proactive steps being taken by the Council are included within the Executive Summary.



## **5.0 QUARTER 1 REPORT**

5.1 The Quarter 1 report is attached and comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 1 (i.e. 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022).
- **Revenue Monitoring** – sections 2a – e setting out the detailed projected financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Monitoring** – sections 3a – e setting out capital spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and section 3f covering Prudential Indicators.
- **Organisational Health** – includes information on turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and Council strategic risks.
- **Corporate Plan Priorities** – three action plans (Sections 5a – c) setting out progress updates for the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.
- **Enhancing the Council’s response to extreme weather events** - Section 6 setting out progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on [18th December 2020](#).

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCI-ECONOMIC DUTY**

6.1 The Council’s Performance Report provides an update on financial and operational performance for the first 3 months of 2022/23; as a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Following consideration by Cabinet, this Report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny for review, challenge and where deemed required, the scrutiny of specific areas in line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

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

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

10.1 The Corporate Plan progress updates included within this report align with the priorities as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "[Making a Difference](#)". With regard to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), at the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 1 2022/23, that is, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

11.2 The Quarter 1 revenue budget position is projecting a £10.405M overspend. This full year projection, forecasted at June 2022, takes into account estimated increases in demand for services, particularly social care services; additional inflationary cost pressures, for example, home to school contract costs; and where less income is anticipated to be received by services due to reduced take-up, for example, Leisure Services. Work is underway as part of the Council's robust financial and service management arrangements to review all areas of expenditure and income, in parallel with on-going discussions with Welsh Government around additional funding requirements, to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end.

11.3 Capital investment as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 is £13.842M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the quarter to reflect changes in costs and updated delivery timescales, and also new external grant funding approvals received during quarter 1 being incorporated into the Capital Programme. The Capital Programme for the year ahead represents the continuation of a long-term programme of investment that is supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets across the County Borough.

11.4 With regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, positive progress overall has been made during the first three months of the year.

11.5 The progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows good progress overall, with key actions being taken forward to further strengthen the Council's arrangements.

**Other Information:-**  
**Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**26th September 2022**

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Quarter 1)**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN  
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

**Item: 4**

**Background Papers**

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
QUARTER 1 2022/23  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Contents**

**Section 1 – INTRODUCTION**

**Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET**

**Revenue Budget Performance** – more detailed breakdowns are included in the following sections:

- 2a Education and Inclusion Services;
- 2b Community and Children’s Services;
- 2c Chief Executive;
- 2d Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services; and
- 2e Authority Wide Budgets.

**Earmark reserve update** – Section 2f provides a breakdown of expenditure against service areas.

**Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**Capital programme budget** – more detailed breakdowns are included in the following sections:

- 3a Chief Executive;
- 3b Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services;
- 3c Education and Inclusion Services;
- 3d Community and Children’s Services; and
- 3e Capital Programme Funding.

**Prudential Indicators** – a detailed breakdown is included in Section 3f.

**Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH**

- Turnover;
- Sickness Absence;
- Organisation Health related investment areas; and
- Council Strategic Risks.

**Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN**

**Corporate Plan priority progress updates** – Quarter 1 position statements are included within the following sections:

- 5a – People,
- 5b – Places, and
- 5c – Prosperity.

**Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS**

**Progress update on the implementation of recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to enhance the Council’s response to extreme weather events.**

## Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Executive Summary brings together and summarises the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (quarter 1).

The quarter 1 update is set in the context of the Council's Services managing the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and more recently the United Kingdom wide cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to increases in demand for many services and significant inflationary cost pressures. Within this very challenging and changing environment, the Council is maintaining its focus on frontline service delivery, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, to help support the needs of residents and businesses.

Throughout the Executive Summary electronic links have been included that enable the reader to access more detailed information, as required.

## Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET

### Revenue Budget Performance

Service Area	2022/23 – as at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 (Quarter 1)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 1 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
<a href="#">Education &amp; Inclusion Services (2a)</a>	208.419	208.293	(0.126)
<a href="#">Community &amp; Children's Services (2b)</a>	182.177	189.854	7.677
<a href="#">Chief Executive (2c)</a>	35.822	35.714	(0.108)
<a href="#">Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services (2d)</a>	65.075	68.329	3.254
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>491.493</b>	<b>502.190</b>	<b>10.697</b>
<a href="#">Authority Wide Budgets (2e)</a>	75.299	75.007	(0.292)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>566.792</b>	<b>577.197</b>	<b>10.405</b>

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, is a £10.405M overspend. Within this forecasted position, the main factors and conditions that are driving significant budget pressures, over and above the additional resources built into the 2022/23 revenue budget, are as follows:

- Rising demand and cost of social care:

- Adult Services – for external residential / nursing placements (specialist placements) and Supported Living Schemes; and
- Children’s Services – for in-house and external residential placements.
- Inflationary cost pressures driven by higher energy prices, higher wages in the external market and demand for some products outweighing supply – this has impacted Home To School contract costs in particular as a result of rising fuel prices and levels of pay, with the Council also incurring higher levels of expenditure on fuel and food in the direct delivery of services.
- Lower levels of service take-up resulting in reduced levels of income received – a key contributory factor being the on-going effects of the pandemic where customer behaviour has not to date fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, this position impacting Leisure Services in particular.

Furthermore, a pay award offer has been made, in respect of the financial year 2022/23, by the national employers for all NJC employees at a flat rate increase of £1,925 per employee, irrespective of their Spinal Column Point / Grade. The Welsh Government, who have devolved responsibility for teachers pay, have also offered an increase of 5%. For this Council, these amount to an increase in the pay bill above budgeted levels of £10.5M. This is not factored into the above position.

Work is underway as part of the Council’s robust financial and service management arrangements to review all areas of expenditure and income to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end. This will include :

- an assessment of existing earmarked reserves that have been set aside to support, amongst other things, projects and future liabilities, and will need to provide one-off funding opportunities to support some of the in-year pressures we now face;
- a review of further external grant funding opportunities;
- targeted marketing activities to help support service take-up; and
- the identification and early delivery of efficiencies in the current year.

The outcomes from this programme of work will be reported as part of Performance Reports during the year.

Following on, revenue budget variances, projected at quarter 1, for each Service Group are set out below.

## **Revenue budget variances projected at Quarter 1**

### **1. Education & Inclusion Services**

#### **EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES**

- Additional Learning Needs (£0.206M underspend); and
- Education other than at School (£0.189M underspend).

## 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS

- Catering (£0.336M overspend).

## 2. Community and Children's Services

### ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.413M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£3.003M overspend);
- Provider Services (£2.002M overspend);
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.742M underspend), and
- Management, Safeguarding & Support Services (£0.194M overspend).

### CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£0.741M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.162M overspend);
- Intensive Intervention (£0.213M underspend); and
- Management & Support Services (£0.053M underspend).

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Public Protection (£0.054M overspend);
- Community Services (£0.067M underspend); and
- Leisure, Countryside and Cultural Services– (£2.216M overspend).

## 3. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

### PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT

- Prosperity & Development (£0.093M overspend).

### FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Highways Management (£0.059M overspend);
- Transportation (£3.159M overspend);
- Street Cleansing (£0.101M underspend); and
- Waste Services (£0.122M underspend).

## 4. Chief Executive

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Democratic Services & Communications (£0.082M underspend);
- Legal Services (£0.078M underspend);
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.089M underspend); and
- Corporate Estates (£0.105M overspend).

## 5. Authority Wide Budgets

- Miscellaneous (£0.292M underspend).

## Earmark Reserve Update

- A breakdown of full year expenditure against approved earmark reserves for Service Areas can be viewed at Section 2f by [clicking here](#).

## **Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

### **Capital Programme Budget**

Service Area	2022/23 - as at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
<a href="#">Chief Executive (3a)</a>	4.939	0.198
<a href="#">Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services (3b)</a>	76.269	7.833
<a href="#">Education &amp; Inclusion Services (3c)</a>	49.006	5.161
<a href="#">Community &amp; Children's Services (3d)</a>	18.234	0.650
<b>Total</b>	<b>148.448</b>	<b>13.842</b>

### **Key Capital Variances at Quarter 1**

- Re-profiling of a number of projects to reflect changes in the total cost of schemes and revised delivery timescales.
- Grant approvals introduced into the Capital Programme: Welsh Government (WG) Flying Start Grant (£0.126M); WG Community Focused Schools (£1.621M); WG VA Urgent Capital Repairs (£0.794M); WG PRS Lease Scheme (£2.345M); WG Resilient Roads Fund Grant (£0.400M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (£2.110M); WCVA Grant (£0.273M); and WG 20mph Grant (1.074M).

For information on how the Capital Programme is funded see section 3e by [clicking here](#).

### **Prudential Indicators**

For a detailed breakdown of Prudential Indicators, see section 3f by [clicking here](#).



## Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

- Turnover

Service Area	2022/23		2021/22			
	As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022		As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2021		As at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
<b>Turnover – Council Wide</b>	<b>10,898</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>10,897</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>11,079</b>	<b>11.30</b>
Community & Children’s Services <sup>1</sup>	2,873	5.85	2,941	2.62	2,976	12.70
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	775	0.77	907	4.74	945	11.22
Education & Inclusion Services	1,249	0.88	1,247	2.25	1,233	9.08
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,928</u>	<u>2.37</u>	<u>4,920</u>	<u>2.30</u>	<u>5,013</u>	<u>11.35</u>
Primary	3,092	2.26	3,077	2.37	3,238	9.51
Secondary	1,836	2.56	1,842	2.17	1,775	14.70
Chief Executive’s Division	1,073	2.52	882	1.59	912	9.54

- Sickness Absence

Service Area	2022/23	2021/22	
	As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 %	As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 %	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022 %
<b>% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide</b>	<b>5.52</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>5.40</b>
Community & Children’s Services <sup>1</sup>	7.64	6.13	7.46
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	5.24	5.26	5.62
Education & Inclusion Services	5.06	4.25	4.88
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4.91</u>	<u>3.28</u>	<u>4.61</u>
Primary	5.17	3.58	4.77
Secondary	4.49	2.78	4.31
Chief Executive’s Division	3.42	3.02	3.54

For a more detailed breakdown of 2022/23 staff turnover and sickness absence information, [click here](#).

<sup>1</sup> 2022/23 position reflects service area restructures

## **Organisation Health related investment areas**

There will be a continued focus on investing in organisational health related areas, for example, IT infrastructure and invest to save energy efficiency schemes, with projects being delivered operationally within services across the Council.

- **Council Strategic Risks**

The Council's Strategic Risk Register has been reviewed and updated to take account of the changing internal and external operating environment, including the on-going impact of Covid-19 and, more recently, the cost-of-living crisis. The review has also identified the need to incorporate 3 new strategic risks into the Register as follows:

- Strategic Risk Register Reference 27 – Accommodation needs for our most vulnerable people;
- Strategic Risk Register Reference 28 – Disengaged learners; and
- Strategic Risk Register Reference 29 – Counter Terrorism.

The Council's updated Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

## **Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN**

Corporate Plan priority action plans for People, Places and Prosperity have been compiled and continue to be action orientated to focus on the work Council Services are delivering to: support communities as they recover from Covid-19 and specific support measures to help families with the cost of living crisis; the on-going transformation and improvement of services; and the delivery of key projects that will have significant positive impacts across the County Borough.

The priority action plans are in draft form, subject to approval, with a summary of progress made across each of the three priorities as at 30th June 2022 (Quarter 1) set out in Sections 5a - c. For Members information, as part of the summaries of progress, electronic links have been included to each priority action plan, providing more detailed information on the progress during the first quarter of the year.

### **Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update**

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

#### **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

##### **Summary of progress to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

#### **Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life.**

We have continued our work to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life. Construction of the new extra care facility in Porth is progressing well and plans for a further three extra care facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale are being developed. The development of Extra Care homes offers an opportunity for older people to lead a more independent life and prevent unnecessary admissions to residential care. Extra Care also enables people to have more control and be more involved in decisions about their environment and the services they receive. All of the new Extra Care homes have also been designed to achieve 'BREEAM' excellence, the world's leading sustainability assessment.

We will open a supported accommodation scheme in Llanhari following a refurbishment of Elm Road accommodation. This work has been delayed during the year as a result of design queries and material supply issues but it is anticipated that the plan will be complete by the end of September 2022. The scheme will provide a safe, secure and high-quality environment for adults with learning disabilities. Assessments have been completed and places have been allocated ready for the completion of the project. A similar supported living scheme in Treorchy is also under construction in partnership with Cynon Taf Housing Association and is due to be completed in October 2022. A further scheme is also planned at the ['Big Shed' development](#) in Tonypany.

We are taking forward the Council's review on the future shape of residential care for older people to ensure we create the right model of service delivery to respond to increasing demand and changing needs in the long term. A report will be provided to Cabinet in October 2022 which will set out development proposals and options for modernisation of, and investment in, the Council's residential services.

We continue to invest in reablement services to prevent escalation of need increasing or enable recovery and independence. Commission Care & Repair have increased service capacity in order to reduce waiting times for minor adaptations and small and medium Disabled Facility Grants. It

## **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

was agreed that a new Intermediate Care Step Up and Step Down facility would be created to avoid hospital admission and support discharge. We are working with Health to open this new facility from October 2022.

We are also empowering people to be more independent at home by continuing to promote direct payments as a way of managing individual care needs. We have reviewed our existing direct payment policy and new guidance has been developed and shared with staff, service users and our commissioned direct payment support provider. The new policy and guidance will be introduced in September 2022.

We are also building on our engagement in 2021/22 and learning from the pandemic to inform the transformation of day services going forward so that people with a learning disability have access to meaningful activity and opportunities in their own communities, including employment to achieve their personal goals and live ordinary lives. The draft Day Services Strategy is currently being developed and employment is a specific element. We have developed a range of links with employers and pathways to employment are being developed with Elite. Volunteering opportunities continue to be developed with our partners and internally with community development officers. A range of co-production events are being held to inform writing of draft strategy.

### **Encouraging residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing.**

We continue to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing as we know that this is key to living a long and healthy life, and reducing the risk of long-term illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes. We continue to invest in our playgrounds and have agreed our programme of investment for 2022/23. We are also improving the fitness suite in Hawthorn Leisure Centre. We had hoped to complete this work in June 2022 but due to delays in the supply of equipment which will now be delivered in September 2022. A new 3G pitch in Baglan Field/Ynysfio Field, Treherbert will also be available for use by the public and sports clubs in September 2022. Once completed, it will mean that Rhondda Cynon Taf will be home to 14 3G facilities spread across the County Borough, and crucially means that the ambition to ensure that residents have access to such a facility within a 3-mile radius of wherever they live will be achieved.

The pandemic highlighted how important and valued our libraries are to our communities. We are enhancing the services available at our new libraries in Llys Cadwyn and the Treorchy Cultural Hub with a focus on community engagement and partnership. We have also involved communities in fourteen 'Community Conversations' sessions across RCT as part of the implementation of the National Lottery Heritage Fund ['Altered Images' project](#). Feedback from the sessions will inform the Year 2 Action Plan. The main aim of the Altered Images project is to help record and research memorials and monuments throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as capturing the diverse stories and memories of our neighbourhoods.

We continue to prioritise strengthening relationships with residents and community groups and finding out what is important to residents. This includes working to ensure that communities have access to information, advice and guidance both digitally and locally. Following the severe disruption of the pandemic, our Community Co-ordinators have now returned to working in community bases and our One4all services are also fully open including the re-introduction of a drop-in service at Pontyclun Library. We want to increase the opportunities for people to learn and use Welsh within their communities and we are working with Menter Iaith to look at the

## **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

delivery of Welsh courses and classes across Rhondda Cynon Taf and enhancing the provision at Garth Olwg Centre as well.

### **Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs.**

We continue to collaborate with our partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, prevent unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital more quickly when they are well enough. We are working with Health to explore options for the development of an integrated community health and social care locality model and have completed a review of options for an integrated community model. A working group is in place and a draft proposal for development of new integrated Health and Social Care model is progressing well including changes being made to Regional Partnership Board's governance structures in order to progress a new regional integrated health and social care system. We are also working together to improve patient experience and redesign the pathways for integrated primary and community based urgent care services and 'home first' discharge from hospital services. This includes working with Health to implement a review of the current health and social care system and implement the Welsh Government's [Discharge to Recover then Assess Model](#) (D2RA) pathways as part of the [6 goals for urgent and emergency care programme initiative](#).

Our work to review and redesign Community Mental Health Services with Health is ongoing. As part of this we will complete a review of current Community Mental Health Services and develop options to redesign our joint Service offer to meet current and future **long term** need and demand pressures. Redesign work has continued but completion has been delayed due to covid pressures and planned organisational restructures in the Health Board. A new work programme and timescales have been agreed with Health for 2022/23.

### **Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.**

We continue to improve access to timely information, advice and assistance to facilitate improved access to, and engagement in, early intervention and prevention services for children, young people and families. The new RCT Families website is currently in development and is due to be live in September 2022.

We continue to focus our services on early intervention and prevention to improve the life outcomes for children in RCT. We have appointed an additional Mental Health & Wellbeing Officer to increase capacity in YEPS to meet the increased demand. We are also revising existing Children and Communities Grant contracts with providers to support the delivery of integrated support pathways supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children, young people and families. This work has included establishing a 'lot' for Counselling on the Approved Providers list, which includes counselling services for children and adults. Feedback received from the Resilient Families Service team identified a need for counselling for couples so this has been one of the areas of focus. Family therapy was also added but no providers have identified an interest so the team have made contact with some therapists with the aim to achieve applications. Supporting children and families to stay together safely and to thrive and providing effective support for children who need to become looked after are two essential responsibilities and key aims of Children's Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). We are implementing a new pre-birth pathway and discreet service for very vulnerable (first time) parents. The new [MAGU Project delivery pathway](#) will improve pre-birth services and seek to reduce the number of children under one and children of parents who themselves are care leavers becoming looked after. A manager has been appointed and recruitment to the team has commenced to progress this new project.

## **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

We also want to make sure that those children that cannot remain with their families can be looked after closer to home. We are continuing to work with providers to develop placement sufficiency close to home which includes carrying out a feasibility study to consider rebalancing residential placement provision over the next 5 years. This study has commenced and will inform how we develop and monitor a commissioning mix and range of placements that support children looked after and care leavers to achieve positive long term outcomes. We are working with [Foster Wales](#) to increase the recruitment of foster carers in particular those who are able to support children with more complex needs. Enquiries are increasing but only small numbers of new foster carers are being approved to date. We are also developing a revised Housing Options model for care-leavers to whom the Council owes a corporate parenting duty in order that they can leave care placements in a safe, planned way which avoids homelessness wherever possible. Two dedicated Housing Solutions Officers have been appointed and a referral pathway document has been drafted.

We continue to strengthen participation of children and young people to promote engagement and involvement specifically with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure co-production and that the voice of children and young people are heard in service development and delivery. We have developed a Participation Strategy which incorporates different communication approaches when engaging with children and young people.

We are delivering the Early Years Transformation agenda in RCT in order to ensure early years services are universally available and specialist services are targeted by need and not geographical location. This will also improve early intervention and prevention outcomes across the County Borough. Health characteristics data transfer has been completed. An Early Years Vulnerability Project plan is in place and a full profile test underway. However, full information sharing protocols are yet to be agreed. This work is being led by Public Health Wales. We continue to pilot the new integrated Early Years delivery model and are currently leading on the external evaluation of the new delivery model in RCT on behalf of the region. All data is being reviewed quarterly and reported to Senior Managers in RCT and CTMUHB.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

<b>Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE</b>		
<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Investment Value<sup>2</sup> £M</b>	<b>Quarter 1 Update</b>
Extracare Housing	6.974	<p>This investment funding covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Porth - agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020. Progress to date includes: the vacation of the building; site surveys and demolition works completed; planning permission granted 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021; and contractor on site and progressing with early works (and noting that previous projects delivered in this area include: the former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site (Aberaman) and Pontypridd "Cwrt yr Orsaf" Extra Care Housing Scheme, opened in May 2020 and October 2021 respectively).</li> </ul> <p>Plans for a further three extra care facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale are being developed.</p>
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	<p>This investment funding is to help address areas where there are high levels of poverty (including fuel poverty) to increase the disposable income of households, for example, by supporting households to reduce energy bills, helping to overcome barriers to find employment. An application to the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund has been submitted and, if successful, the funding will be used for Heating Grants and Solar Panels in line with this existing priority area for the Council.</p>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.274</b>	

<sup>2</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

o **PLACES** (Section 5b)

**PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play**

**Summary of progress to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

We continue to promote good recycling practices through campaigns and education. The [Education Centre at Bryn Pica](#) has reopened this quarter and our campaigns have focussed on key recycling activity at [Easter](#) and the [Jubilee celebrations](#). The tonnage of recycled waste during quarter 1 is lower than the same period last year (20,970 tonnes compared to 23,110 tonnes in 2021/22) but our overall recycling percentage is better i.e. 64.78% compared to 62% at quarter 1 2021/22. Work is on-going with landlords, agents and residents to encourage good recycling practices that will reduce municipal waste and have a positive effect on the environment, and we continue to work with Caru Cymru (Keep Wales Tidy) to support community activity e.g. litter picks.

The Council's Enforcement Team has continued to monitor and act against fly-tippers with 843 recorded incidents this quarter (999 last year) and enforced off street parking restrictions and school keep clear zones to ensure the safe passage of both drivers and residents. We also continue to take appropriate action to enforce the PSPO for dog controls including taking [relevant court action](#).

We are progressing our climate change agenda through the trialling of alternative fuelled refuse vehicles and the development of a Draft ULEV Fleet Transition Plan. We have progressed plans for [EV charging facilities](#) across the County Borough and continue to explore areas where we can create renewable energy e.g. The Coed Ely Solar Farm, and potential hydro developments. We have also applied for WG grant funding to develop the Eco Park at Bryn Pica that include trials for recycling plastic and there is on-going focus on implementing procurement policies to reduce the use of single use plastic items.

Our highways investment programme activity continues across the County Borough, including progressing the [A4119 duelling scheme in Coed Ely](#), undertaking repairs at [Maerdy mountain](#) and commencing work at the [Imperial Bridge in Porth](#) and [White Bridge in Pontypridd](#). We also continue to progress the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and flood risk flood mitigation measures. An update on the recommendations contained in the review of the Council's response to Storm Dennis [Cabinet Report 18 December 2020](#) can be found in [Section 6](#) of this Executive Summary. This quarter Section 19 Flood Reports have been released for [Trehafod](#), [Cwmbach](#) and [Abercwmboi, Fernhill and Porth](#). We have also hosted a public exhibition on the [Tylorstown Landslip Project](#). We are also progressing active travel initiatives across Rhondda Cynon Taf including schemes: Treorchy to Treherbert, and those on the Cynon Trail at Cwmbach and Abercynon.

Our community cohesion work is being progressed and are providing opportunities to engage through our Community Hubs. A paper relating to [Food Resilience](#) was presented to Council's Cabinet in June highlighting the work offered to residents experiencing food poverty and this included the work being done to achieve bronze award status in [Sustainable Food Places](#). We are also working towards becoming a member of the [World Health Organisation's \(WHO\) Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities](#).

Our work to prevent anti-social behaviour in town centres continues in partnership with the Probation Service and Pobl, and includes the relocation of Mill Street Hostel. We are also [progressing](#) the appointment of [Community Wardens](#) to provide a high-profile presence in our town centres.



## PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play

The [Barod](#) Integrated Substance Misuse Service (now including Bridgend) commenced in April this year, and we continue to recruit resources to increase resilience in this area. We have improved booking arrangements for substance misuse training and have taken opportunities to share good practice wherever possible. We have also provided valuable 'Overdose Awareness' sessions to local hotel and hostel staff following a rise in local drug related deaths within supported accommodation. Additional 'Drop-in' centres have been developed at Penrhys, to nurture community relationships, and at Dare Valley Country Park for Ukraine evacuees to provide harm reduction support as required.

Our domestic abuse support provision has been improved with the recruitment of a Health IDVA at Royal Glamorgan Hospital, and despite some delays we are still progressing the Oasis Centre and Domestic Abuses Services joint working model. The 'Healthy Relationships' workshops will also inform early support for prevention and intervention of homeless families housed in temporary accommodation. The commissioning of a Regional Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) across the CTM region is being progressed with funding agreed and service model approved.

To keep our communities safe, this quarter we have piloted a 'Young Friends' against scams (YFAS) awareness training event to children aged 8-12 years at Ysgol Nantgwyn which was positively received. We also continue to publish cases where rogue traders have been prosecuted on the Council's website including two cases relating to the sale of counterfeit goods at [Merthyr Tydfil](#) and [Mountain Ash](#). In addition, a case relating to [taxi licencing](#) was also published which demonstrates the Council's commitment to keeping residents safe.

To support the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Schemes (United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme and the Widening Dispersal Scheme, we are working with social landlords and tenants to prevent instances of homelessness through the provision of a new Virtual Tenancy Ready Classroom that provides information on what to expect when searching for and moving into a new home; tenant rights and responsibilities, and where to go for help and support. All information is translated to aid understanding. Newydd Housing are also submitting this project for consideration in the 'Welsh Housing Awards'.

We continue to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. Our [Playground Investment Programme](#) is also progressing to deliver planned improvements during 2022/23 and we continue to improve our digital platforms to provide a more accessible service to residents.

In June this year, the Council's [2022-2025 'Think Climate RCT' – Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#), Climate Change Strategy was agreed by [Cabinet](#) that provides a framework to support carbon reduction in both the Council and the County Borough. Linked to this is a Council Decarbonisation Plan that is also being progressed.

In support of this, work to establish natural carbon storage solutions continues with a commissioned peat bog study in Cwmparc scheduled shortly, and 3 other potential peatbog sites being explored. Connected to this, the [Draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy](#) is to be considered by Cabinet. This Strategy recognises the important carbon storing role that trees, vegetation and soils have in the 'carbon cycle'. The Strategy is currently out for consultation with residents and stakeholders, more information is available in the [accompanying press release](#).

New biodiversity signage celebrating biodiversity has been installed at Dare Valley Country Park, and we continue to encourage residents to report sightings of wildlife and flora, and take

## **PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play**

part in activities like 'Grab a Rake' on the Council's [Biodiversity webpages](#). We continue to work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales to support projects like '[Healthy Hillside](#)s' and '[Living Landscapes](#)'.

We continue to progress activity in support of the 2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales. More information will be available following the Eisteddfod public meeting later this year. [Visit Rhondda Cynon Taf](#) also supported [National Coach Week 2022](#).

During this quarter many events have been held in RCT including [– The Teddy Bear's Picnic](#) at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, A [Classic Car Show](#) at the Rhondda Heritage Park and the [Aberdare Festival](#). [Further events](#) are planned (including those supported by local businesses) during the year.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>3</sup> £M	Quarter 1 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	5.826	The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
Unadopted Roads	0.500	To support a programme of work to private streets that the Council has identified as requiring specific improvements. Following completion of the necessary works, the streets will be adopted as highways maintainable at public expense. Of the 18 streets which are included in the programme, 3 were completed as at the end of quarter 1 2022/23, contractors are on site for a further 4 schemes which are ongoing and the remaining 11 schemes are scheduled to be completed during the year.
Play Areas	0.804	There are 19 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23. As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022, 2 had been completed, 1 was under construction, 4 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 12 are to be designed.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.201	There are 3 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23 and will be progressed during the year.
Structures: Brook Street Footbridge	2.351	The contractor has commenced works on site including progressing piled foundations for a bridge ramp and utility diversions. The existing footbridge is programmed to be removed in quarter 2.
Structures	3.516	The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge Strengthening – the project is scheduled for completion in quarter 2</li> <li>• Major retaining wall refurbishments - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A4059 Taff's Well Wall - works completed in quarter 1 2022/23.</li> <li>○ Retaining walls at Brewery Terrace (Pontygwaith), Salem Terrace (Llwynypia) and Dinas Dept - scheduled to go out to tender in quarter 3 2022/23.</li> <li>○ Maerdy Mountain walls – works on site to coincide with a larger scheme that requires full road closure. Works due for completion August 2022.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Llanharan Railway Footbridge – demolition completed in January 2022, replacement footbridge has been procured</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>3</sup> £M	Quarter 1 Update
		<p>and currently awaiting a licence application to be completed prior to commencing build of the foundations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imperial Bridge – works commenced on site in April 2022 and are scheduled for completion in quarter 3.</li> <li>• Bodringallt Bridge Infilling – delays due to the need to consider drainage position.</li> <li>• Rhigos Rock Anchors – scheduled to go to tender in quarter 3.</li> <li>• Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.</li> </ul>
Parks Structures	0.730	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gelli Isaf – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – works have commenced on site for Phase 1 of the repairs.</li> <li>• Pentre Footbridge – Scheme awarded, site works scheduled to start in September 2022.</li> <li>• Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.</li> </ul>
Parks and Green Spaces	2.525	<p>This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The 2022/23 programme comprises of 72 schemes and as at quarter one 9 full schemes have been completed. The remaining schemes will be progressed during 2022/23 as part of an on-going programme of work.</p>
Llanharan Bypass	5.558	<p>This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology surveys. Pre-Planning Application Consultation (PAC) took place in 2021 and work is ongoing to prepare documentation in readiness for a full planning application expected later in 2022/23. This scheme is also subject to the Welsh Government’s Roads Review.</p>
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	7.035	<p>This investment funding is supporting the dualling of the highway between the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters roundabout and Coed Ely roundabout. Detail design work has been completed; tender document preparation for the construction phase is progressing; work is on-going to secure land required; and the associated Compulsory Purchase Order has been submitted. A contractor has been appointed with works programmed to start in quarter 2.</p>

<b>Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES</b>		
<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Investment Value<sup>3</sup> £M</b>	<b>Quarter 1 Update</b>
Community Hubs	0.458	This investment funding relates to supporting the Treorchy Community Hub (at Treorchy Library) - external works have been completed and internal Library works have also been completed. Works are being planned for the foyer area of the Park & Dare which forms part of The Hub and external funding opportunities are also being explored.
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.393	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Feasibility and a WeITAG stage 1 has been completed and is in the process of review to inform WeITAG stage 2.
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Bypass	1.551	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design, planning application and tender preparation for a bypass continuation from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of the Valleys road. Planning permission has been granted and the next stage is to procure a designer to progress detail design. This scheme is also subject to the Welsh Government's Roads Review.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.286	This investment funding is to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility. Discussions are on-going with Welsh Government in respect of funding opportunities.
Porth Interchange Metro + LTF	--	As set out in the Porth Regeneration Strategy, a new Transport Hub in the Town Centre is currently under construction, funded by UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, WG Local Transport Fund and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (total project costs £5.4M). During quarter 1 the steel frame was constructed and works commenced towards making the building watertight. The construction is due to complete in March 2023.
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.734</b>	

- **PROSPERITY** (Section 5c)

**PROSPERITY - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper**

**Summary of progress to 30th June 2022**

A range of support is available through the Council to support business growth and expansion in town centres, including the Enterprise Investment Fund and Town Centre Maintenance Grant. Given the current economic challenges these will be reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate mix of support is available to help businesses to navigate these challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities such as digital trading opportunities. Services continue to work closely with business representatives such as Business Improvement Districts to inform this work, and the development of a Business Engagement Strategy.

A new three year programme of funding for town centre property improvements has become available through the Welsh Government Transforming Towns fund and the identified pipeline of potential improvement projects in our town centres has been shared with Welsh Government officials as a basis for endorsement for funding. This will set the scene for our improvement programme over the next three years. Existing town centre projects continue to progress, including the Porth Transport Hub which is now well into the construction phase with the steelwork building framework erected. A study is currently underway to investigate potential active travel routes within Aberdare, Pontypridd and Porth Town centres, providing convenient access to key facilities including public transport.

Work continues to develop the visitor economy. A draft delivery action plan to deliver the RCT Tourism Strategy has been completed and is awaiting sign off, and will be delivered in partnership with business partners. Regular Tourism hub meetings are promoting partnership working, for example, a collaboration between Zipworld and Gravity Bike Park.

Working with Cardiff Capital Region, we continue to progress Housing viability gap funding to remediate contaminated land conditions across 3 brownfield sites at the former Cwm Coking works, former Aberdare hospital site and Heol y Wenallt. A planning application has been submitted for the Aberdare site and discussions are underway with the developer for the Cwm Coking works with a view to a planning application being submitted next spring.

Working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to increase the supply of energy efficient, low carbon homes. 17 schemes in the social housing grant programme development plan are categorised as 'new build – modern methods of construction'. Rhondda Housing Association Wales Skyline project has continued with progress. RHA Wales have made a Social Housing Grant submission during the reporting period for £145k. The sale of Porth Infants School to Cynon Taf Community Housing Group has now been complete. CTCHG have made a Social Housing Grant submission for £680k.

Work continues in partnership with Central South Consortium to regularly review the progress of all schools. The introduction of all school review meetings is helpfully contributing to this work and the information provided is being used to inform further action. Strategies being developed for the Curriculum for Wales are due to be operational from the next academic year, and CSC has ensured that its work programme will enable updates on progress for this area to be captured appropriately. The impact of covid-19 on learner progress continues to be a key area for Improvement partners to review and capture and local data is being collated by CSC. However, there is currently no agreed national approach to how schools are mapping learner progress. A report has been produced on the impact of Family Engagement Officers and an evaluation of Step 4 provision was produced in

**PROSPERITY - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper**

January, with proposals for tranche 3 underway. It is also planned to produce and share case studies from schools where good practice has been identified.

Work continues to ensure effective anti-bullying strategies in our schools. Presentations have been delivered to primary and secondary Headteachers meetings to raise awareness of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and guidance has been provided to all schools. An anti-racism plan has been completed in consultation with the RCT BAME working group and is now being implemented. Improvements have also been made to data collection systems to ensure all incidents of bullying are appropriately recorded.

Support continues for schools to implement new ALN legislation, including development of a professional learning programme for release in the autumn term and review and schools self-evaluation. An Early years ALN coordinator forum has been established and additional capacity will be in place for September to enhance transition from early years settings into schools for children with additional learning needs.

Investment in our school buildings continues. Band B project Business cases have been submitted to Welsh Government in accordance with the Strategic outline programme and works on site commenced to provide additional capacity at YG Rhydwaun and YGG Aberdar, with a number of other projects commencing over the summer holidays or autumn term for the Welsh medium Primary School, Rhydyfelin; Pontypridd High; Hawthorn High; Pontyclun Primary School; Penygawsi Primary School; Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School and Bryncelynog Comprehensive. All new build elements will be net zero carbon in operation.

Support for people seeking work continued through our Employment Support programmes. Council staff continue to engage with Welsh Government to review future priorities and national funding arrangements. Proposals for a new employment support grant to be confirmed in Quarter 3 but it is hoped that future funding levels will be confirmed in September. Links have been made between employment and youth services to provide support and training for identified young people leaving school with no destination for work, study or training through the WG Youth Guarantee Grant fund scheme. We also continue to provide more informal learning opportunities to engage people in learning and support wellbeing. A series of family learning engagement programmes is being developed in targeted communities and a pilot course ran at Penrhys Primary school, with two further courses planned at other schools in the autumn. Recruitment has been completed for 20 new graduate and 46 new apprenticeship opportunities, with induction for these new starters taking place in June and September.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>4</sup> £M	Quarter 1 Update
Empty Property Grant	2.213	67 valid applications received in 2022/23 are progressing through to survey (in addition to work-in-progress applications carried forward from 2021/22), and the survey programme is due to be completed by the end of September 2022. The Council's funding allocation is now fully committed and the on-line application process has closed.
Schools	3.103	<p>This investment funding is supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YGG Llyn Y Forwyn Primary (transferring the school to a new building on a new site) - site investigation surveys have been undertaken, land has been purchased, project / cost managers have been appointed to support delivery of the scheme and a Design and Build contractor was appointed in quarter 4 to undertake the land reclamation works and construct a new Primary school. A strategy is being developed for the reclamation works and the design development for the school is on-going.</li> <li>• Other works (as approved by Cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022) - toilet refurbishments (£0.300M), boiler replacements (£0.700M), roof renewals (£1.445M) and classroom upgrades (£0.126M) – the majority of works are scheduled to be undertaken during the 2022 summer holidays.</li> </ul>
Transport Infrastructure	2.118	<p>This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressing design work for pedestrian crossing enhancement projects at Tonyrefail, Groesfaen, Llanharan and Ty Nant (to improve road safety and promote active travel) – all projects are scheduled for construction in 2022/23.</li> <li>• A4059 / Bowls Club junction - feasibility study completed to investigate junction / traffic flow improvements along the A4059. The options will be considered and the preferred option taken forward to preliminary design.</li> <li>• A4059 Quarter Mile junction, feasibility proposals have been developed - the next steps will be preliminary design including ground investigation work.</li> </ul>
Park and Ride Programme	0.529	This investment funding is supporting the development work needed to create additional and formalised 'park and ride' car parking spaces with new and improved facilities such as Access

<sup>4</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.



Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>4</sup> £M	Quarter 1 Update
		for All, improved CCTV coverage and Electric Vehicle charging points at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pontyclun - feasibility design to improve an existing facility is ongoing in partnership with Network Rail and Transport for Wales.</li> <li>• Porth – phase 3 detailed design work has been completed.</li> </ul>
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robertstown – good progress continues to be made in quarter 1 with most of the units now complete and snagging works taking place. Works are continuing to the external areas.</li> <li>• Coed Ely – scheme completed and the tenant occupied the premises from July 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.163</b>	

**Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS**

The 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Cabinet meeting agreed a series of recommendations to enhance the Council’s short and long term response to extreme weather events and which limit the impact of flooding on those communities most at risk.

The progress made by Council Services to implement the recommendations can be [viewed here](#) and will be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2025/26**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION  
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON**

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

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

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2023/24 during the autumn.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- i. Note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process; and
  - ii. Note that the MTFP will be presented to Council in September and will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in line with their terms of reference alongside our budget consultation arrangements.

## **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The need to keep Members informed of the budget modelling work being undertaken as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements. This work is in advance of the Provisional Local Government Settlement, due from Welsh Government later this year.



#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Each year as part of the Council's robust financial management arrangements, an update on the Medium Term Financial Planning assumptions is provided to Members in advance of the detailed budget strategy work in the autumn.
- 4.2 The Public Sector has faced a sustained period of real term reductions in funding levels for a number of years and unprecedented challenges lie ahead for services across local government, not least as a result of the on-going national and international economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Brexit, increases in cost of living and the conflict in Ukraine. This position is also resulting in increased demand and costs associated with many services, in particular Social Care Services, and the need for us to support our residents, businesses and communities as they recover from the pandemic and deal with the impact of increasing energy and other costs.
- 4.3 Locally, this Council has demonstrated its ability and willingness to invest in services over a long term period, linked to our priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan "Making a Difference - 2020 – 2024", in order to meet the changing needs of our people and communities. The significant 'additional' investment already agreed by Members during recent years is providing real improvements across many areas including Schools, Town Centres, Roads and Parks and Play Areas.
- 4.4 Whilst investment through the use of one-off funds has been very positive, the Council recognises that it must still address projected base budget shortfalls and make difficult decisions to balance its ongoing revenue budget into the medium term. This report provides an updated view on the range and scale of the significant challenge faced and the arrangements being put in place to address the budget gap across the planning period.
- 4.5 Welsh Government, as part of its 2022/23 settlement, provided indicative all Wales settlement levels for the next 2 financial years, at 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25. Members will note the UK Government Budget is scheduled to be announced in autumn 2022 and will be a key driver and determinant of any additional funding being made available to devolved nations for 2023/24 and also the prospects for settlement levels over the medium term. The policy direction taken by the new Prime Minister will clearly be a key influencer.
- 4.6 The majority of additional costs and income losses we have incurred as a direct consequence of the pandemic were funded by Welsh Government up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, with the requirement for councils to manage the on-going implications from April 2022 through additional resources provided in the



2022/23 settlement. In this context, our medium term approach to financial and service planning will be even more critical.

## 5. **CURRENT MODELLING ASSUMPTIONS**

5.1 The detailed modelling assumptions are included as part of the updated 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26' and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The updated plan sets out the detailed basis of the medium term strategy with references to revenue spending, capital plans, income levels and reserves.

5.2 Key assumptions used in the construction of the revenue budget modelling to 2025/26 are shown below:

### 5.3 Income

- Local Government settlement levels have been modelled on a range of planning scenarios:

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26	3.5%, 2.4% and 2.4% annum	4.0% per annum	5.0% per annum

- Council Tax increases are currently being modelled at 2.00% per annum.
- Specific grant funding from Welsh Government assumed to continue in respect of the Social Care Workforce Grant (£3.668M for 2022/23).
- Fees and charges uplifted by medium term inflation only (other than where exceptions have already been agreed by Cabinet).

### 5.4 Expenditure

- Service area pressures reflected which arise from statutory requirements, demand led pressures (including the on-going impacts of Covid-19), demographics etc.
- Uplifts included for pay and non-pay inflation, including estimated additional costs for the 2022/23 pay award offers for teaching and non-teaching staff (noting the status of these being offers at this stage) and estimated energy cost increases.
- Authority wide requirements reflected including Capital Financing, Levies and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Schools budget is modelled to cover, in full, pay and non-pay inflation plus specific budget pressures (and in the context of the projected range of local government settlement levels).

## 6. CURRENT MODELLING OUTCOMES

6.1 The modelling uses a number of assumptions which are all subject to change and will be reviewed as part of the detailed budget strategy work underway. Due to current uncertainty at a UK Central Government level around public sector funding levels, paragraph 5.3 sets out a range of modelling assumptions for Welsh Government funding levels for financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26. The variability of the potential level of the Settlement from Welsh Government has a significant impact on the budget gap, at £4.4M per 1%, and Figure 1 illustrates the outcome of the range of modelling assumptions currently applied.

Figure 1 : Modelled Budget Gap 2023/24 to 2025/26

Budget Requirement	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Additional Budget Requirement</b>	<b>53,870</b>	<b>35,724</b>	<b>33,818</b>
<b>Additional Resources</b>			
Council Tax	2,907	2,977	3,049
Transition Funding	-963	0	0
WG Resource in line with WG indicative settlement for 2023/24 and 2024/25 (i.e. +3.5% for 2023/24 and +2.4% for 2024/25), with a Council assumption of a +2.4% settlement level for 2025/26	15,450	10,965	11,229
WG Resource at +4%	17,658	18,364	19,099
WG Resource at +5%	22,072	23,176	24,334

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels	3 Year Budget Gap			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
<b>+3.5% increase for 2023/24, +2.4% increase for 2024/25 and +2.4% increase for 2025/26</b>	<b>36,475</b>	<b>21,781</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>77,797</b>
<b>4% increase per year</b>	<b>34,268</b>	<b>14,383</b>	<b>11,670</b>	<b>60,321</b>
<b>5% increase per year</b>	<b>29,853</b>	<b>9,571</b>	<b>6,435</b>	<b>45,859</b>

**Note: a 2.00% Council Tax increase per year is assumed as part of the modelled gap**

6.2 As shown above, all of our planning assumptions result in a significant budget gap being faced by the Council. The extent of the impact on our services is clearly going to be largely and directly determined by the level of settlement we receive from Welsh Government and the outcome of 2022/23 and 2023/24



pay negotiations and funding arrangements, noting the constraints they have themselves.

- 6.3 It is clear that the indicative resource levels as announced in the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review and thereafter provided by Welsh Government, are now significantly out of line with inflationary and service pressures being faced across local government.

## **7. BALANCING THE BUDGET**

- 7.1 The Council continues to focus on the budget gap position over the medium term and has successfully implemented a strategy of early identification and delivery of base budget reducing measures in-year. This has enabled the Council to deliver financial savings early and to replenish the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve which has been used proactively as part of the budget strategy for a number of years.
- 7.2 Our priority and focus has continued to be ensuring our residents, communities and businesses are protected and supported.
- 7.3 However, as the above clearly demonstrates, in the absence of additional funding from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government, the Council faces a significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term. It is clear that indicative funding allocations in no way reflect the reality of today and that UK Government urgently needs to provide assurance to Welsh Government / Local Government that additional funding will be forthcoming. In the absence of such assurance, and to enable this Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24 by the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023, then all options to reduce council spend and generate income will need to be considered. This is at a time when residents are already facing a cost of living crisis with significant pressures on household budgets.
- 7.4 In this regard, we must now, in the absence of any indications of additional funding being provided to local government, embark on a review across all our services to urgently identify options which can be considered to close the budget gap being faced. Whilst our valued services and jobs will be safeguarded wherever possible, it is inevitable that there will be a need to make cuts in service levels and jobs in order to close the budget gap we face, unless or until we receive assurances as to likely more positive funding levels next year and into the medium term.
- 7.5 As part of our service and financial planning arrangements, opportunity must be taken to ensure we continue a programme of transformation and service delivery changes which we have made across many, if not all of our service



areas, in recent years. The Council continues to make step changes in our working arrangements and become more efficient in terms of maximising the use of digital solutions where appropriate, recognising that such delivery does not meet the needs of all of our residents. Work is progressing, in line with the Council's Digital Strategy 2022 – 2026, to ensure we maximise the opportunities afforded by technology and digital solutions.

- 7.6 In line with the above, the areas we will explore include the continued: maximisation of efficiency saving opportunities including on-going review of workforce requirements and resources; delivery of our Social Services Transformation Programme (including our significant commitment and investment in the provision of Extra Care facilities); review of our base budget requirements at both a service level and an authority wide level including our built assets; maximisation of opportunities to invest for the long term and collaboration with others and progress the delivery of our climate change ambitions; and a focus on the principles of Digitalisation, Commercialism, Early Intervention and Prevention, Independence and being an Efficient and Effective Organisation.
- 7.7 We have for many years sought to fully fund schools as part of our budget strategy, with additional resources provided for inflationary pressures (pay and non-pay), pupil number movements and other cost pressures being felt across our schools. In light of the aforementioned position however, schools also need to be prepared to contribute to closing the funding gap we face.
- 7.8 As work develops through the areas described in 7.6, this will be reported to Members as appropriate.
- 7.9 Greater certainty will be available on the level of savings required post the Provisional Local Government Settlement later in the year. The position will be reported to Members as soon as possible after the settlement publication and as referenced above, the continued focus across a medium term planning period is paramount.

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

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

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 There are no specific consultation requirements at this time.





## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The financial modelling assumptions and implications are set out in the detail of the report. At this stage, the Council or Cabinet is not being asked to make any new financial decisions in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

- 12.1 The report supports our Corporate Plan cross-cutting priority of 'Living within our Means'.
- 12.2 The Medium Term Financial Plan is a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its obligations to support wider partnership objectives.

## **13. CONCLUSIONS**

- 13.1 This report and the accompanying 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26' sets out the current position on the financial challenges facing the Council in the medium term. The report notes, that subject to the level of funding from Welsh Government, a significant budget gap is likely to be faced in 2023/24 and for the following two years.
- 13.2 The report also sets out that the current indicative funding allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 in no way reflect the demands and pressures facing local government. Consequently, in the absence of any assurances from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government of additional funding, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC must embark on a review across all its services to urgently identify options which can be considered to close the budget gap being faced and enable the Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24 by the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023.



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

- 13.3 To support this work, the Council will continue the proactive strategy it has adopted in recent years to identify a range of budget saving options for consideration and reporting to Members as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

**Other information**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2025/26**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION  
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR C LEYSHON)**

**Item:**

## **Background Papers**

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25  
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29996/Apendix.pdf?LLL=0>
- Council Performance Report (Quarter 4 (Year-end) 2021/22)  
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36110/Councils%20Performance%20and%20Resources%20Report.pdf?LLL=0>
- Budget Strategy 2022/23, Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25 and Council Tax Resolution 2022/23  
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=50003777&Ver=4&LLL=0>

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies

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**Rhondda Cynon Taf  
County Borough Council**

**Medium Term Financial Plan**

**2022/23 – 2025/26  
(updated September 2022)**

## **Medium Term Financial Plan - Contents**

Introduction and Purpose

- Section 1 Background and Context
- Section 2 Covid-19 and Cost of Living – Financial Implications
- Section 3 Local Government Settlement – Prospects
- Section 4 Council Tax
- Section 5 Individual Schools Budget
- Section 6 Fees and Charges
- Section 7 National and Local Pressures
- Section 8 Inflationary Pressures
- Section 9 Specific Grants
- Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability
- Section 11 Reserve Policy (General Fund Reserves and Earmarked Reserves)
- Section 12 Financial Planning and Balancing the Budget
- Section 13 Capital Programme
- Section 14 Consultation and Scrutiny
- Section 15 Other Relevant Documents
- Annex 1 Council Revenue Budget by Services Provided
- Annex 2 Council Revenue Budget by Priority Area
- Annex 3 Council Capital Programme by Priority Area
- Annex 4 Council Earmarked Reserves

## **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

Medium Term Financial and Service Planning is an essential component of the effective financial management of this Council. It is the cornerstone of good governance and an enabler of service delivery and service improvement within the constraints of available resources.

This Medium Term Financial Plan sets out, holistically, the financial context within which the Council is operating and forward projects the financial challenge facing the Council over a 3 year planning period.

It will also align and link our financial resources to our Corporate Plan Priorities and will enable us to track resource allocation in this way over future years.

The Strategy will be kept under on-going review to inform the actions to be taken by the Council to support effective service planning and prioritisation of resources, and at the same time, maintain financial resilience and stability over the medium term, a period that is forecasted to present significant challenges and uncertainty.

## Section 1 Background and Context

- 1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has a track record of strong and effective financial management. Medium Term Financial Planning is an essential part of these arrangements.
- 1.2 The austerity measures emanating from the actions of Central Government have impacted on the resources available to Welsh Government and consequently local government in Wales over a sustained period, recognising that for the last 3 financial years more positive local government settlements were received. At a national level, the overall local government settlement for Wales over the last 9 financial years is shown below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Financial Year	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.5%
2016/17	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.3%
2021/22	+3.8%
2022/23	+9.4%

- 1.3 For Rhondda Cynon Taf the real term reductions in funding over many years has translated into a need to make budgetary savings in excess of £100M over the last 10 years or so, equating to a reduction of approximately 19% of the Council’s net budget.
- 1.4 In March 2020, the Council agreed a new Corporate Plan ‘Making a Difference’ 2020 – 2024 that set the overall direction for the Council over the four-year period, describing its vision, purpose and ambition for the County Borough.
- 1.5 The Council’s vision is:
 

***“To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous”.***
- 1.6 The Council’s purpose and the reason why it exists is:
 

***“To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous”.***
- 1.7 The Council is focused on the following three priorities that have also been adopted as its Well-being objectives in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act:
  - Ensuring ***People: are independent, healthy and successful;***



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

1.8 The Corporate Plan is a key component of the Council's budgetary and business planning process, and it recognises that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and the wider public sector continue to face significant financial challenges. The Corporate Plan sets the context that despite significant reductions to Government spending since 2010 and a return to economic growth, the financial environment for the Council, the wider public sector and residents continues to be challenging, and was summarised in the Plan as follows:

- Despite the new UK Government increasing its spending commitment for public services, for the first time for many years, pay and pensions costs are rising quickly. This negates the majority of the benefit of the increase in public sector funding.
- It is likely that over the next three years further spending cuts will be required, as the UK budget deficit still stands at around £40 billion or 2% of national GDP meaning that some form of austerity will continue.
- Increasing pressure on services: increasing demand on services is driven by a changing population. Rhondda Cynon Taf's population is increasing but health and social services in particular are facing acute challenges due to the growth in older cohorts, as people live for longer.
- Wider financial pressure on households: from energy bills, housing costs, wage restraint, and benefit reforms.
- Increasing public expectations in terms of responding to climate change and the need to act, will require the Council to invest in ensuring its day to day activities become Carbon Neutral. This means that the Council must plan for the fact that this additional cost will not be met from simply doing more of what it is currently doing, but from making other difficult choices on what it does or does not provide.
- Knowing that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges in the years ahead, it has a responsibility to develop and agree a plan for meeting the challenge.

1.9 The above context still applies, albeit, the challenges faced have intensified, significantly, as a result of the on-going impact and legacy of the coronavirus pandemic and more recently the cost of living crisis. The Council has taken steps, via stakeholder consultation as part of its 2022/23 Revenue Budget Setting process, to test whether its Corporate Plan priorities remain relevant; the feedback from this process showed that 87.0% of respondents agreed with the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.

1.10 The Council has proved it has the capacity and capability to respond to unprecedented challenges in a systematic and planned way, and at the same time deliver essential public services, become a more efficient organisation, make significant additional investment in priority areas and work toward delivering climate change goals. The Corporate Plan ambitions seek to build upon this approach, including the

transformational changes made over recent years supported by digital technology, to help ensure local residents and businesses are sufficiently skilled, supported and resilient to respond to the opportunities and threats the global economy presents to us all.

- 1.11 To be able to achieve these ambitions in a period when the Council is forecasted to have less resources to spend, rising costs and increased demand for services, it will deliver targeted investment in priority areas and further modernisation of services, and, in parallel, accelerate the review of all services to plan and deliver budget savings required to ensure the strong financial health of the Council is maintained.
- 1.12 The Council's agreed Revenue Budget for 2022/23 amounts to £566.792M. Annex 1 sets out the Council budget for 2022/23 as allocated across services.
- 1.13 The budget has also been analysed across the 3 priority areas of People, Places and Prosperity as set out in the Corporate Plan (referenced in paragraph 1.7) in order to demonstrate the allocation of Council Revenue Budget resources to these priority areas. Whilst some allocation has been necessarily subject to a degree of 'best fit', this is still felt to be a helpful analysis and provides a basis to track resource allocation over time. This is attached at Annex 2. A similar analysis is also included for the 3-year capital programme at Annex 3.

## Section 2 Covid- 19 and Cost of Living – Financial Implications

- 2.1. The Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan has been prepared against the continuing backdrop of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently the cost of living crisis, both of which are requiring an unprecedented response both locally and nationally.

### Covid-19

- 2.2 From a Wales perspective, Welsh Government has funded a range of measures to support the economy (for example, grants and extended rate relief for businesses and self-isolation payments for individuals), and also provided direct support for local authorities, via the Covid-19 Hardship Fund, to enable additional expenditure and income losses incurred as a result of the pandemic to be reclaimed. The total funding provided by Welsh Government to local authorities during the pandemic, via the Covid-19 Hardship Fund, was over £1billion.
- 2.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council submitted claims to the Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship Fund on a monthly basis during the pandemic and through to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, and publicly reported quarterly updates as part of its Performance Reporting arrangements. A summary of additional expenditure and income losses incurred and recovered by Rhondda Cynon Taf as a direct result of the pandemic, are included in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Service Area	Actual Additional Costs / Income Loss Recovered (2020/21)	Actual Additional Costs / Income Loss Recovered (2021/22)
	£M	£M
Education & Inclusion Services	-14.720	-8.050
Community & Children's Services	-22.890	-16.111
Chief Executive	-1.922	-1.621
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	-6.156	-2.698
Authority Wide	-5.305	-1.600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-50.993</b>	<b>-30.080</b>

- 2.4 The majority of Welsh Government Covid-19 funding measures ceased from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, with the requirement for local authorities to manage any on-going service and financial implications within existing resources. A small number of targeted support measures remain in place for a limited period during 2022/23, these being in respect of self-isolation payments, the statutory sick pay enhancement scheme and free school meal payments in school holiday periods.

## **Cost of Living**

- 2.5 Since late 2021 there has been a sharp rise in the cost of living, with Covid-19, Brexit and the conflict in Ukraine exacerbating everyday living costs particularly food, fuel and energy costs. This position is having a significant impact on individuals, families and communities, with a resulting increased need for Council services such as social care and housing and also increasing costs in the delivery of services through wage pressures, specialist social care placements and also for services that are heavily reliant on fuel, for example, waste / recycling collection services and home to school transport contracts.
- 2.6 To help support households in Wales as they recover from the pandemic and deal with the impact of increasing energy and other costs, Welsh Government announced a package of measures in March 2022 that included £152M to provide a £150 cost-of-living payment to eligible households and £25M to provide discretionary support for other purposes related to living costs. The schemes were intended to provide immediate support and the Council determined its discretionary scheme and overall implementation arrangements on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and has subsequently made over 117,000 payments totalling £15.271M.
- 2.7 Since this time, the Council has developed and agreed a 'Local Cost of Living Support – Supplementary (Discretionary) Scheme' in September 2022 amounting to £2.89M to further support residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf with the ongoing and escalating cost of living crisis, with the scheme to be delivered between October and December 2022. In parallel, the Council will also deliver, on behalf of Welsh Government, a Fuel Support Scheme during autumn 2022.
- 2.8 Looking ahead, although the financial outlook is one of uncertainty and risk, this Medium Term Financial Plan aims to set out a robust position of the financial challenges and the programme of work planned to ensure the continued financial stability and resilience of the Council, and at the same time, reinforce the importance of the role to be played by both UK Government and the devolved Welsh Government in providing adequate and flexible funding to local government.

## Section 3 Local Government Settlement – Prospects

- 3.1 As referenced in Section 1, local government as a whole has received negative and below inflation settlements from Welsh Government in overall terms for 6 of the last 9 financial years. Whilst positive settlements have been received since 2017/18, for three of these years the levels have been some way below inflation, noting that the current year, 2022/23, the settlement was significantly above previous levels reflecting the intense funding pressures local authorities have and continue to operate under. For Rhondda Cynon Taf the level of settlements received, in comparison to the all Wales average, are shown below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Rhondda Cynon Taf Settlement Levels Compared To All Wales Settlement Levels

Financial Year	RCT Settlement Level	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.7%	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.7%	-3.5%
2016/17	-0.9%	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.4%	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.5%	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.8%	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.5%	+4.3%
2021/22	+3.8%	+3.85
2022/23	+8.4%	+9.4%

- 3.2 Welsh Government, as part of its 2022/23 settlement, provided indicative all Wales settlement levels for the next 2 financial years, at 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25, noting that the figures are dependent on Non-Domestic Rate income over the period and on the funding provided to Welsh Government by the UK Government. The lower indicative settlement levels for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is attributable to the profile of UK Government spending plans announced in October 2021 (Comprehensive Spending Review), which front-loaded most of the spending increases to aid with the immediate recovery from the pandemic. No firm spending plans are in place beyond 2024/25.
- 3.3 Nationally, the on-going impacts of Brexit, Covid-19, cost of living and conflict in Ukraine, alongside the UK Government’s next budget announcement expected in autumn 2022 will mean continued uncertainty over future expenditure pressures and public sector funding levels.
- 3.4 The level of Welsh Government funding is a key factor in the Council’s overall resource availability, accounting for 77.9% of our budget. Each 1% change in the level of Welsh Government funding amounts to approximately £4.4M of funding for this Council.
- 3.5 For planning purposes, this Council has modelled a range of scenarios based upon planning assumptions as summarised in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: RCT Planning Assumptions – Welsh Government Settlement

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2022/23, 2024/25 and 2025/26	3.5%, 2.4% and 2.4%	4.0% per annum	5.0% per annum

- 3.6 The provisional local government settlement for 2023/24 is anticipated to be received during the autumn 2022 (subject to any impact on timing as a result of the UK Central Government’s Budget Review, also scheduled to be announced in autumn 2022).

### **Longer Term Outlook**

- 3.7 The Wales Governance Centre (Wales Fiscal Analysis) published a paper on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 which outlined the prospects for local government in Wales (“Local Government and the Welsh Budget: Outlook and Challenges for the next Welsh Government”), this continuing to provide helpful context for the longer term outlook.
- 3.8 In this regard, there has been a marked change in the way local authorities in Wales are funded over the past decade: the value of government grants to local authorities fell by 16.8% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2019–20; Council Tax now accounts for a significantly larger share of the total tax take in Wales (5.4%) than in England (4.3%) and Scotland (3.8%); spending on local authority services fell by 6.0% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2019–20 (adjusting for population growth, spending per head is 9.4% lower than it was a decade ago); and more than £500 million was delivered to local authorities through the Single Hardship Fund during 2021–21 (in total, the value of Welsh Government support to aid local authorities’ response to the pandemic exceeds £1 billion).
- 3.9 The Bank of England Monetary Policy Report (August 2022) forecasts that Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is forecasted to rise to over 13% by the end of 2022 and remain at very elevated levels throughout much of 2023, before falling to the 2% target. Although the next five years will likely mark the first electoral term since 2004–08 when funding grows in each year, having adjusted for inflation, spending pressures are still forecasted to significantly exceed councils’ funding levels.
- 3.10 The Wales Fiscal Analysis forecast, as at July 2022, that even with annual council tax increases of 4%, maintaining services at their 2022/23 levels would leave councils facing a projected funding shortfall of £80m in 2023/24, £145m in 2024/25 and similar amounts thereafter, noting that this position will be subject to change in light of changing national and global economic conditions.
- 3.11 The 2022/23 council tax increases across Wales have been kept at their lowest level since 2012; given the budgetary outlook, it is likely that further increases will need to be considered in the medium term, strengthening the case for reforming the local tax system but will need to be considered against the backdrop of Real Household Disposable Incomes (RHDI) projected to fall by 1.75% in 2022 – the second largest amount since records began in 1964, with the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasting (as at March 2022) that RHDI only sustainably returning to its pre-pandemic level in 2024/25.

- 3.12 The squeeze on household incomes as communities recover from the pandemic and feel the impact of cost of living rises coupled with an increasing proportion of the population who are 65 years and over, is resulting in further demand for Council Services, particularly social services and schools; previous forecasts have indicated that costs in these areas will account for over 75% of all local authority spending pressures by 2025/26. This picture continues to be generally consistent with that modelled for Rhondda Cynon Taf where the areas of social services and schools represent the most significant areas of forecasted expenditure.
- 3.13 With specific regard to social care, an Expert Group has been established by Welsh Ministers to support the shared ambition identified as part of the Welsh Government's Co-operation Agreement to create a National Care Service. An implementation plan will be developed by the end of 2023 and the Welsh Government has already clarified that social care will remain the responsibility of local government.
- 3.14 Other policy changes and proposed reforms are being progressed, with the need for outcomes and financial implications to be robustly assessed on an on-going basis and over the long term. These include the agreed roll out of universal Free School Meals, expanding the free childcare offer for 3 to 4 year olds and increasing the maximum council tax charge councils can levy on second homes and long-term empty properties. With regard to proposed reforms, consultations are progressing on Council Tax, with the aim to create a fairer system, and Non-domestic Rates with plans to adopt a shorter, 3-year valuation cycle.
- 3.15 The next UK Government Budget, currently scheduled for autumn 2022, will be key in determining resource levels for 2023/24, and will be taken account of as part of the Council's on-going medium term financial planning arrangements. It is clear that indicative resource levels as announced in the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review are now significantly out of line with inflationary and service pressures being faced across local government.

## Section 4 Council Tax

- 4.1 Council Tax income accounts for 21.3% of the Council's net budget, generating £120.720M from local taxpayers in 2022/23.
- 4.2 The total yield from Council Tax is determined by a combination of the level of the tax base and the level at which Council Tax is set.
- 4.3 The Tax Base is the measure of the relative taxable capacity of different areas within the County Borough and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The Gross Tax Base is the number of chargeable dwellings in the area expressed as Band D equivalents after allowing for exemptions, disablement reductions and discounts. This is then adjusted for an assumed collection rate to give the Net Tax Base.
- 4.4 The Tax Base is provided to Welsh Government and is used as part of the distribution formula for the Local Government Settlement. The Tax Base is calculated for the County Borough as a whole and for those areas that have a Community Council.
- 4.5 The Tax Base movement over recent years is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Tax Base Movement

Financial Year	Gross Tax Base (£)	Collection Rate	Net Tax Base (£)
2014/15	75,189	96.50%	72,557
2015/16	75,565	97.00%	73,298
2016/17	76,207	97.50%	74,302
2017/18	76,901	97.50%	74,978
2018/19	77,608	97.50%	75,668
2019/20	78,844	97.50%	76,873
2020/21	79,317	97.50%	77,334
2021/22	79,381	97.25%	77,198
2022/23	79,904	97.25%	77,707

- 4.6 The level of any increase or decrease of Council Tax is considered each year as part of the annual budget consultation process, and subsequently determined by Council as part of the annual budget strategy. The formal resolution is also agreed by Council.
- 4.7 Council Tax levels over recent years are shown in Table 4.2.



**Table 4.2 – Council Tax Levels**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Band D Council Tax £*</b>	<b>Increase over Previous Year</b>
2014/15	£1,248.00	4.50%
2015/16	£1,295.48	3.80%
2016/17	£1,331.17	2.75%
2017/18	£1,361.18	2.25%
2018/19	£1,406.17	3.30%
2019/20	£1,456.85	3.60%
2020/21	£1,498.44	2.85%
2021/22	£1,538.15	2.65%
2022/23	£1,553.53	1.00%

\* - Band D Council Tax - excludes the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales Precept and Community Council Precepts

- 4.8 The total amount raised through Council Tax is derived by multiplying the net tax base by the band D Council Tax charge, which for 2022/23 amounts to (77,707 x £1,553.53) £120.720M.
- 4.9 For modelling purposes in our medium-term calculations as part of this report, a Council Tax increase of 2.00% per annum is currently being used for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, noting of course that this is a key decision for Members to make as part of setting each year's budget. In terms of generating resources, a 1% increase in the level of Council Tax will raise an extra £951k<sup>1</sup> of additional income each year (this is net of the costs associated with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme described in more detail below).

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)**

- 4.10 During 2021/22 the Council paid CTRS to 24,082 eligible applicants at a net cost to the Council of £25.053M. For 2022/23 the Council has estimated the cost to be £25.587M, this representing a 1.00% uplift in line with the Council Tax increase for the current year. The Council is continuing its dialogue with Welsh Government to clarify the funding arrangement should demand continue above the level budgeted for, noting that the CTR Scheme in Wales is a national scheme developed by Welsh Government.

### **Tax Base**

- 4.11 On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017 Cabinet approved a policy which enabled the Council to reduce the Council Tax bill for Care Leavers up to the age of 25 who were resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf to zero. The policy has been operational during 2018/19.
- 4.12 During 2018/19 the Welsh Government introduced legislation, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, making all properties in Wales that are occupied by Care Leavers (up to the age of 25) exempt from paying Council Tax. This removed the requirement for the Council to have its own discretionary policy for this category of residents.
- 4.13 All awards of this new exemption type have been reflected in the Council Tax Base from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

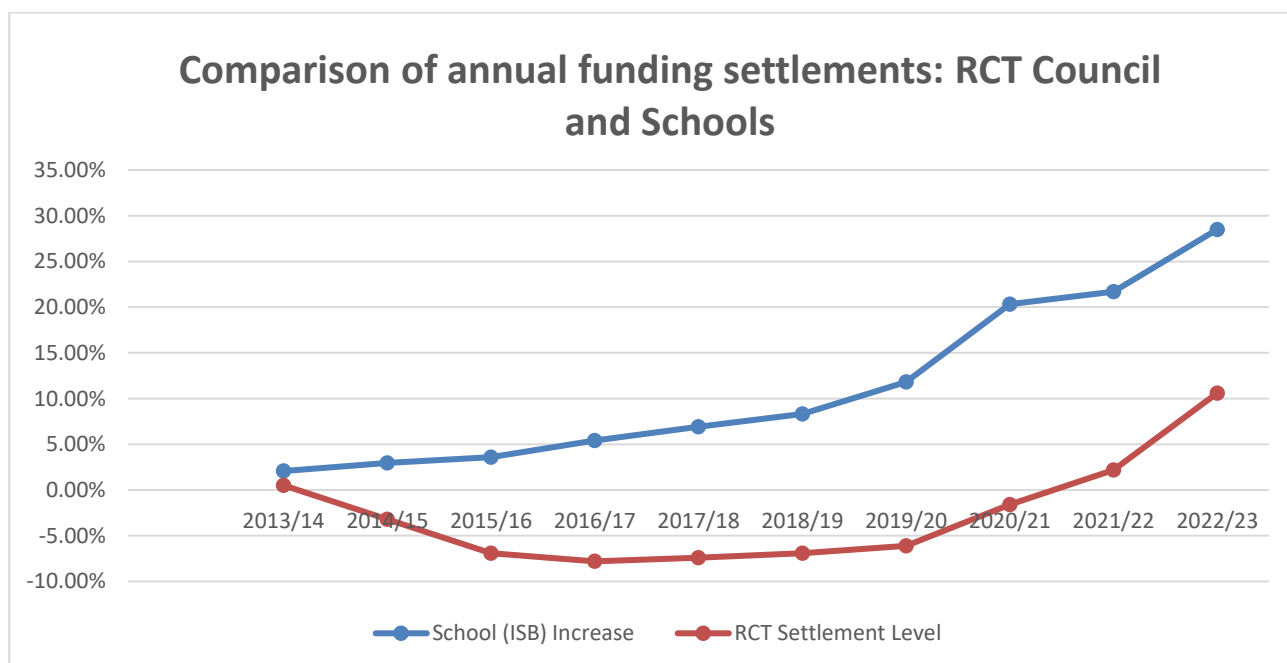
<sup>1</sup> Based on 2022/23 Council Tax Income

## Section 5 Individual Schools Budget (ISB)

- 5.1 The total Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for the Council in 2022/23 amounts to £174.966M and represents 31% of the Council's net budget.
- 5.2 Since 2013/14, the ISB has increased at a level above other Council services and above the level of the Council's own settlement from Welsh Government in all but 2 years, and, at the same time, recognising that there is still an expectation that schools will continue to make a positive contribution toward balancing the overall Council budget. The ISB has been subject to protection requirements by Welsh Government over this period which ended in 2016/17. The comparative ISB increases over the last ten years are shown in Table 5.1 and graphically below:

**Table 5.1 – School Budget Increases Compared to RCT Settlement Levels**

Year	School (ISB) Increase	RCT Settlement Level
2013/14	+2.08%	+0.5%
2014/15	+0.9%	-3.7%
2015/16	+0.6%	-3.7%
2016/17	+1.85%	-0.9%
2017/18	+1.5%	+0.4%
2018/19	+1.4%	+0.5%
2019/20	+3.5%	+0.8%
2020/21	+8.5%	+4.5%
2021/22	+1.37%	+3.8%
2022/23	+6.80%	+8.4%



- 5.3 Over the 10-year period shown in Table 5.1, the ISB has received an increase amounting to 28.50%, as opposed to the Council's remaining budgets having been increased by 10.60%. In monetary terms, applied to an ISB of £140M (2012/13 ISB), this amounts to an extra £25.1M being provided to schools over the period.

- 5.4 Pupil number forecasts are modelled across Primary, Secondary, All-Through and Special Schools sectors with the financial implications included in the Schools Budget requirement.
- 5.5 The levels of school reserves held as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 are shown in Table 5.2 below (draft, subject to audit). The 2021/22 year-end position has increased compared to the previous year primarily as a result of additional one-off Welsh Government funding received to support schools in their on-going recovery from the pandemic, for example, Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards / Additional Learning provision grant, Winter of Wellbeing grant and Revenue Maintenance grant, for which work has commenced by schools and will continue in 2022/23.

Table 5.2 – School Reserves

Type of School	31/03/2021	2021/22	31/03/2022
		Movement	
	£k	£k	£k
Primary	-7,654	-2,807	-10,461
Secondary	-2,546	-3,983	-6,529
Special	-760	-502	-1262
All Through Schools	-1,075	-1,234	-2,309
<b>Total</b>	<b>-12,035</b>	<b>-8,526</b>	<b>-20,561</b>

- 5.6 As part of ensuring sustainable levels of resources for schools over the medium term (to meet pay and non-pay pressures), it will be critical that on-going funding, via Welsh Government, continues to be included in core (RSG) settlements. In parallel, it will also be critical for Welsh Government to give key regard to funding requirements that will enable local authorities to deliver its long-term programme of education reform across Wales that includes, amongst other things, ensuring educational inequalities narrow and standards rise and also the financial impact of legislation changes in respect of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018.

## Section 6 Fees and Charges

- 6.1 The Council raises approximately £23M of income annually from fees and charges across services. The level of charges is reviewed annually.
- 6.2 Cabinet reviewed (28<sup>th</sup> February 2022) fees and charges levels with the objective to continue to provide a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices. The initial budget modelling for 2022/23 had assumed a 1.90% increase.
- 6.3 The outcome of Cabinet’s review was a 2.50% standard increase to fees and charges (allowing for rounding adjustments as appropriate), compared to the 12-month Consumer Prices Index to December 2021 of 5.4%, with the exception of a number of areas that would be subject to specific treatment. A summary of these exceptions are set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 – Summary of fees and charges not subject to the standard increase

<b>Area of Charge</b>	<b>Exception</b>
Leisure for Life – Membership	Freeze (in line with prior decision)
Meals on Wheels / Day Centre Meals	Freeze (in line with prior decision)
School Meals	Freeze (in line with prior decision)
Car Park Charges	Freeze
Summer and Winter Playing Fees (sports clubs)	Freeze
3G Pitch Hire	Freeze
Licenses (Hackney Carriage / Private Hire)	Freeze
Lido / Rhondda Heritage Park	Freeze
Pest Control Service Charges (Domestic / Public Health)	Freeze

- 6.4 The impact of the agreed changes set out in Table 6.1 reduces income by £45k in a full year (as compared to all fees and charges being increased by 1.9%).
- 6.5 In addition, a number of fees and charges decisions have previously been approved and accordingly have already been incorporated into the Council’s 2022/23 Budget Strategy. These are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 – Summary of decisions already approved

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

- 6.6 A pilot was approved at the [21st November 2019](#) Cabinet meeting to apply a reduced cremation fee for funeral directors offering a Direct / Simplicity cremation<sup>2</sup> service in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Following consideration of the results of the pilot at the [29th April 2021](#) Cabinet meeting, it was agreed that the provision of a Direct / Simplicity cremation service would continue in 2021/22 at the rate applied for the pilot scheme and, for 2022/23 onwards, the fee level would be determined as part of the annual fees and charges process.
- 6.7 For completeness, a full list of all 2022/23 fees and charges across all Council services can be accessed [here](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Direct / Simplicity Cremation - A “direct”, “simplicity” cremation or “cremation without ceremony” is where a funeral director arranges a service with no mourners and brings the deceased directly to the crematorium with no religious service or attendees. The fees and charges to the family of the deceased are significantly reduced making the service more affordable, particularly for those on low incomes.

## Section 7 National and Local Pressures

### 7.0 Authority Wide Budgets

7.1 Appropriate sums must be set aside to cover a number of Authority Wide costs. For modelling purposes for 2023/24 onwards these include the following:

#### Capital Financing

The projected level of capital charges are linked to the Council's Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy.

#### Levies

Levies are raised (against non-service specific budgets) by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the Coroner, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Glamorgan Archives (Joint Committee).

#### Council Tax Reduction Scheme

This demand led area of expenditure is in line with the Welsh Government national scheme introduced from financial year 2013/14.

#### Miscellaneous

The areas of expenditure held here include:

- Graduate and Apprenticeship programmes
- Trade Union Costs
- Local Government Elections
- Planning Appeals
- Former Authority Pension Costs
- Voluntary Termination Costs
- Local Government Pension Scheme including auto-enrolment
- Bank Charges
- Housing Benefit Subsidy Costs
- Energy / Invest to Save
- External Audit Fees
- Vehicle Replacement Funding
- City Deal Costs
- Insurance Costs
- Discretionary Non Domestic Rate Relief
- Apprenticeship Levy

7.2 A summary of the projected requirement for Authority Wide budgets from the current year (2022/23 budget) to 2025/26 is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 – Forecasted Authority Wide Budget Requirement

Authority Wide Budgets	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Current Budget	(Projected)	(Projected)	(Projected)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing	21,308	21,308	21,308	21,308
Levies	13,202	13,688	13,962	14,241
CTRS	25,587	26,099	26,621	27,153
Miscellaneous	15,008	14,499	16,536	16,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,105</b>	<b>75,594</b>	<b>78,427</b>	<b>79,275</b>
Change - Inc / (Dec)		489	2,832	848

The Council's 2021 Medium Term Financial Plan included a £0.5M per year contribution from Authority Wide Budgets, until 2023/24, to replenish General Reserve Balances to the minimum level following an approved allocation of £1.5M in 2019/20 to support the recovery arrangements from the exceptional Storm Dennis weather event. Since this time, the Council has reinstated the level of General Reserve Balances to the minimum level as part of its 2021/22 year-end closure of accounts arrangements through the utilisation of one-off additional funding received during the year (i.e. £10,292M as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, draft position, subject to audit) and has therefore removed the £0.5M contribution from Authority Wide Budgets from 2023/24.

### 7.3 Service Inescapable Pressures

7.4 There are areas of our budget which are exposed to more uncontrollable spending requirements each year and which might arise from demand led or demographic changes, legislative or regulatory change, the effect of external market forces (and prices) and the financial implications of policy and service planning decisions made by the Council. It is also recognised that the on-going effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising cost of living will impact, at varying degrees, on each of the above uncontrollable spending requirements. These are **inescapable pressures** and include the ongoing implications of inflation and Living Wage on our External Contracts; the cost of pay awards for our teaching and non-teaching (APT&C) workforce; changes in pupil number projections; demand led social care pressures for adult services, children's services and additional learning needs; energy, food and fuel inflationary increases; and assumptions around reductions in specific grants. Welsh Government and Local Authorities continue to work in partnership to understand current and future pressures and opportunities, with the aim of ensuring all available funding opportunities are maximised.

7.5 The amount included for Service Inescapable Pressures within the Budget Requirement is shown in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2 – Forecasted Inescapable Budget Pressures**

Forecasted Inescapable Budget Pressures	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools	1,462	657	171
Education and Inclusion Services	834	236	1,685
Community and Children's Services	9,186	3,383	2,883
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	5,984	300	125
Chief Executive's Division	1,258	27	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,725</b>	<b>4,603</b>	<b>4,891</b>
			<b>28,219</b>

## 7.6 Service Financial Risks

7.7 In addition to the above inescapable budget pressures, there are items of risk which have been identified and which are captured and estimated in financial terms (similar to inescapable budget pressures, the on-going effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living will also impact, to varying degrees, on each risk area). A view is then taken on the potential overall likelihood of the risk materialising and the quantum of it which should be included in the early modelling of the budget requirement. As time progresses the risks will either become inescapable or will fall away, possibly with a longer-term impact.

7.8 The amount included for Service Financial Risks within the Budget Requirement is shown below in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 – Forecasted Service Financial Risks**

Financial Risks	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Value of Risk Included	-	13,860	13,533

## 7.9 School (ISB) Requirements

7.10 Section 5 set out the context for school budgets noting their favourable treatment as compared to other Council services and the expectation that schools will continue to make a positive contribution toward balancing the overall Council budget. As part of modelling assumptions, pay and non-pay inflation pressures are fully funded together with estimated additional cost pressures associated with additional needs; this position is set within the current planning assumptions for Welsh Government settlement levels and recognising that there may still be a requirement for local efficiency saving planning at an individual school level. The modelled ISB budget increases are set out in Table 7.4 below.



Table 7.4 – School (ISB) Modelled Budget

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
<b>Schools (ISB) Modelled Budget</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Modelled Budget	189,411	195,747	201,495
Modelled Increase	14,666	6,336	5,749

## Section 8 Inflationary Pressures

### 8.1 Employee Inflation

8.2 For modelling purposes, initial estimates of employee inflation levels built into the medium term financial plan are:

- Teachers' (average) pay – in line with Welsh Government's pay offer (22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022) a forward planning assumption of an uplift of 3.5% for 2023/24, this being subject to review if there is a significant change in economic conditions compared with the current forecasts. For financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 modelled pay award uplifts of 3% per year
- Non-teaching – modelled pay award uplifts of 4% for 2023/24, and 3% per year for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

8.3 With regard to the 2022/23 financial year, a pay award offer has been made by the national employers for all NJC employees at a flat rate increase of £1,925 per employee, irrespective of their SCP / Grade. The Welsh Government, who have devolved responsibility for teachers pay, have also offered an increase of 5%. For this Council, these amount to an increase in the pay bill above budgeted levels of £10.5M. Discussions are on-going between Welsh Government and local authorities to determine funding options based on the pay proposals currently being negotiated.

8.4 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund triennial valuation (2022) is scheduled to be completed in autumn 2022, the results of which will be taken into account as part of future and on-going modelling. For current modelling purposes over the period of this medium term plan, no changes to employer pension contribution rates have been assumed.

### 8.5 Non-Employee Inflation

8.6 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee continues to set monetary policy to meet a 2% inflation target. For the MTFP, inflation is included across all expenditure and income heads in line with the 2% target for each of the three years, 2023/24 to 2025/26. A number of specific cost areas where inflation is known or anticipated to differ materially from these rates have more appropriate inflationary allowances applied as detailed below.

### 8.7 Specific Inflation

8.8 There are some budget heads which are particularly volatile and susceptible to variations in rates of inflation which are outliers to the central forecasts. More detailed analysis and procurement intelligence is applied to uplifts for the following expenditure heads:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Fuel (Diesel / Petrol)
- Food

8.9 The overall cost of inflation to the Council is summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 – Forecasted Cost Of Inflation

Inflation	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employee Related	24,513	10,946	10,991
Non-Employee	10,142	3,483	3,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,656</b>	<b>14,429</b>	<b>14,545</b>
			<b>63,630</b>

8.10 The above includes inflationary costs for schools.

## Section 9 Specific Grants

- 9.1 The Council is mindful of the opportunities that are likely to accrue by the Council attracting specific grants to supplement its base revenue budget. Whilst specific grants can dilute local accountability, the fact remains that in attracting such funding, it allows us to undertake projects that otherwise we may have had to defer or cancel.
- 9.2 By their nature, specific grants tend to be time-limited and involve an assessment process. It is important therefore, that any specific grant funded programme complements the Council's locally determined priorities. In addition, even if they are initially successful in attracting specific grants, authorities are restricted in their ability to confidently forward plan, as they have no guarantee of ongoing (specific grant) funding. Consequently, because specific grants are time limited it is vital to develop appropriate "exit strategies".
- 9.3 Whilst specific grants come from a number of sources, for 2022/23 the Welsh Government alone will provide over £1.1 Billion in total to Welsh Local Authorities. The allocation of specific grants remains a key feature of the Welsh Government's annual local government settlements, albeit, the Welsh Government is committed to reduce this form of hypothecation in the longer term. The Council also continues to proactively explore and secure external funding from other sources, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, for example, from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 9.4 Table 9.1 sets out the main areas of expenditure and services which are funded currently by specific revenue grants.

Table 9.1 – Specific Revenue Grants

Award Body	Purpose	2021/22 Amount £M	2022/23 Amount £M
<b><u>Community &amp; Children Services</u></b>			
Shaw Trust & Working Links	Subsidisation of Employment of Disabled Workers	0.278	0.278
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Subsidy Bed & Breakfast Scheme	0.122	0.437
Welsh Government	Children's and Community Grant	14.097	16.330
	Communities 4 Work	1.112	1.112
	Food Poverty Grant	0.000	0.030
	Inspire 2 Work	0.331	0.215
	Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme	0.556	0.556
	Substance Misuse Action Fund	3.810	4.865
	Community Learning Grant	0.257	0.442
	Youth Support Grant	0.712	0.712
	Child Burial and Cremation Grant	0.048	0.048

<b>Award Body</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>2021/22 Amount £M</b>	<b>2022/23 Amount £M</b>
Welsh Government (continued)	Child Development Fund	0.000	0.429
	Housing Support Grant	12.237	12.239
	Integrated Care Fund	3.680	3.125
	National Exercise Referral Scheme	0.168	0.168
	National Approach to Advocacy (Children's)	0.049	0.049
	Out of Court Grant	0.000	0.041
	Regional Facilitation Grant	0.066	0.066
	Regional Integration Fund	0.000	0.550
	Arts Portfolio Wales	0.150	0.150
Cwm Taf Health Board	Community Joint Care Programme	0.068	0.068
Heritage Lottery Fund	RCT's Sporting Heroes	0.032	0.000
Home Office	Police & Crime Commissioner	0.121	0.142
	Youth Justice Provision	0.438	0.732
Sport Wales	Disability Sport Wales Community Scheme	0.020	0.020
	Free Swimming	0.060	0.106
	Local Sport Plan	0.475	0.475
	60 plus Active Leisure Scheme	0.000	0.051
<b>Total Community &amp; Children's Services</b>		<b>38.887</b>	<b>43.436</b>
<b><u>Education &amp; Inclusion Services</u></b>			
Welsh Government	Post-16 Provision in Schools	10.322	10.704
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Delegated to Schools	9.030	9.030
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Admin	0.018	0.018
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Foundation Phase Non Maintained	0.160	0.160
	Pupil Deprivation Grant	0.000	8.195
	Pupil Development Grant Delegated to Schools (estimate)	7.292	0.000
	Pupil Development Grant Children Looked After	0.395	0.474
	Education Grant – PDG Access - Minority Ethnic Gypsy Roma Traveller (MERGT)	0.243	0.285
	PDGEY Non-Maintained	0.000	0.090

Award Body	Purpose	2021/22 Amount £M	2022/23 Amount £M
Welsh Government (continued)	PDG EOTAS	0.000	0.023
	Early Years Pupil Development Grant (estimate)	1.432	1.659
	Teachers Pay	0.000	0.216
	Seren Network	0.074	0.074
	Nursery Childcare Administration	0.279	0.279
	Nursery Childcare	2.309	2.864
	Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant (estimate)	0.753	0.099
	Additional Learning Needs (estimate)	0.000	0.519
	Period Dignity in Communities	0.017	0.000
	Period Dignity in School	0.186	0.000
	Period Dignity Grant (estimate)	0.000	0.209
	Reduction in Infant Class Sizes Grant	0.500	0.209
	Online Development Plan (estimate)	0.000	0.042
	Out of School Childcare Grant	0.083	0.083
	Welsh Medium Immersion	0.000	0.100
	Small and Rural Schools	0.128	0.000
	Professional Learning Grant (estimate)	0.955	0.957
	RRRS (estimate)	0.000	1.902
	RRRS Non-Maintained	0.000	0.280
	ICT Hwb in Schools Infrastructure Grant	1.246	0.830
	FP Nursery (estimate)	0.000	0.299
	NQT	0.000	0.303
	Virtual Schools	0.000	0.040
	Education Grant - Emotional Wellbeing	0.000	0.000
	Education Grant - PDG Access - School uniform grant	0.504	2.017
	Education Grant – Counselling	0.143	0.000
	Education Grant – Interventions	0.049	0.000
	Education Grant – Training	0.031	0.000
	Education Grant – Whole School Funding	0.000	0.347
	Summer Holiday Enrichment Programme (estimate)	0.065	0.170
	Elective Home Education	0.046	0.090
	Universal Free School Meals	0.000	0.094

Award Body	Purpose	2021/22 Amount £M	2022/23 Amount £M
Rural Payments Agency	Infant Milk (Estimate)	0.472	0.471
<b>Total Education &amp; Inclusion Services</b>		<b>36.732</b>	<b>43.132</b>
<b><u>Chief Executives</u></b>			
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Administration Grant	0.701	0.773
	Various Miscellaneous Grants	0.000	0.050
Welsh Government	NDR Admin Grant	0.394	0.394
<b>Total Chief Executives</b>		<b>1.095</b>	<b>1.217</b>
<b><u>Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services</u></b>			
Welsh Government	Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Grant	0.030	0.000
	Caru Cymru	0.000	0.030
	Sustainable Waste Management Grant	1.126	1.051
	Lead Local Flood Authority Grant	0.070	0.000
	Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management	0.000	0.070
	Concessionary Fares	6.839	6.839
	Road Safety	0.057	0.101
	Bus Emergency Scheme	0.000	0.028
	Bus Service Support	0.665	0.665
	Tomorrow's Valley Residual Waste*	1.189	0.000
Tomorrow's Valley Food Waste*	0.064	0.000	
<b>Total Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services</b>		<b>10.040</b>	<b>8.784</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIFIC REVENUE GRANTS</b>		<b>86.754</b>	<b>96.569</b>

\* 'Tomorrow's Valley Residual Waste' and 'Tomorrow's Valley Food Waste' – transferred into the Revenue Support Grant settlement from 2022/23.

9.5 Assumptions are made in the MTFP about future levels of specific grants, in particular where they are effectively funding core services (e.g. the Sustainable Waste Management Grant which provides funding for our Recycling services and the Social Care Workforce Grant) and it is important that we seek to ensure their continuation beyond 2022/23.

## Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability

10.1 The impact of the aforementioned modelling, including schools, is aggregated into Table 10.1 to show the forecast budget position over the next 3 years. The modelling shows a projected budget gap over the 3-year period which needs to be addressed and closed with actions during the period. Whilst modelled over a 3-year period, the Council must also be mindful of its legal responsibility to set a balanced budget annually and, for the forthcoming financial year, this has to be completed before the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Table 10.1 – Summary Of Expenditure Requirements and Resources Available**

Budget Requirement	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
<b><u>Additional Budget Requirement</u></b>			
Inflation	21,451	8,750	8,984
Inescapables	17,263	3,946	4,720
Risks	-	13,860	13,533
Schools (Uplift)	14,666	6,336	5,732
Authority Wide	489	2,832	848
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>53,870</b>	<b>35,724</b>	<b>33,818</b>
<b><u>Additional Resources</u></b>			
Council Tax	2,907	2,977	3,049
Transition Funding	-	963	
WG Resource in line with WG indicative settlement for 2023/24 and 2024/25 (i.e. +3.5% for 2023/24 and +2.4% for 2024/25) with a Council assumption of a +2.4% settlement level for 2025/26	15,450	10,965	11,229
WG Resource at +4%	17,658	18,364	19,099
WG Resource at +5%	22,072	23,176	24,334

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	3 Year Budget Gap
<b>+3.5% increase for 2023/24, +2.4% increase for 2024/25 and +2.4% increase for 2025/26</b>	<b>36,475</b>	<b>21,781</b>	<b>19,540</b>	<b>77,797</b>
<b>4% increase per year</b>	<b>34,268</b>	<b>14,383</b>	<b>11,670</b>	<b>60,321</b>
<b>5% increase per year</b>	<b>29,853</b>	<b>9,571</b>	<b>6,435</b>	<b>45,859</b>

10.2 Clearly a significant determinant on the budget gap is the level of funding which the Council receives from Welsh Government. Each 1% change in the level of settlement from Welsh Government equates to an approximate £4.4M change in resources available to the Council (based on 2022/23 settlement levels).

10.3 To further demonstrate the scale of our reliance on funding from Welsh Government, a cash flat level of settlement would result in a budget gap over each of the next 3 years as shown below.



	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>0% increase per year</b>	<b>51,926</b>	<b>32,747</b>	<b>30,769</b>

10.4 As the above clearly demonstrates, in the absence of additional funding from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government, the Council faces a significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term. It is clear, that indicative funding allocations in no way reflect the reality of today and that UK Government urgently needs to provide assurance to Welsh Government / Local Government that additional funding will be forthcoming. In the absence of such assurance, and to enable this Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24 by the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023, then all options to reduce council spend and generate income will need to be considered. This is at a time when residents are already facing a cost of living crisis with significant pressures on household budgets.

## Section 11 Reserves Policy (General Fund Reserves and Earmarked Reserves)

- 11.1 Reserves play an important part of the overall financial management and financial standing of the Council. The Council's General Reserve balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 were £8.505M and as set out at paragraph 7.2 General Reserve Balances were reinstated to the minimum level as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 (i.e. £10.292M draft, subject to audit). The level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review by the Council's Section 151 Officer and adjusted going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the overall quantum of the budget and the financial risks therein and facing the Council.
- 11.2 The Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which are sums set aside for specific purposes. The full schedule of reserves is attached at Annex 3 (as at the draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22).
- 11.3 All reserves are reviewed at least twice yearly, at budget setting stage and as part of the year end closure of accounts process. In between, changes in risk and potential liabilities are continuously monitored as part of the Council's financial management and budgetary control arrangements and changes in reserve levels are actioned, following elected Member approval, as appropriate.
- 11.4 The Council has used reserves prudently as part of supporting its annual budget strategy for a number of years. Whilst reserves can be used to balance the budget, this alone is not a sustainable strategy and more permanent changes / reductions to the base budget must be made. With regard to the budget gaps modelled in Section 10, to balance the budget, for example, based on a +4% per annum Welsh Government settlement level, for the next 3 years using reserves alone would require the use of over £143M of reserves and the Council would still have a need to reduce its base budget by over £60M.
- 11.5 The Council holds reserves for the following purposes:

### **Capital, Treasury and Insurance Reserves**

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Capital Developments</b>	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.
<b>Treasury Management Reserve</b>	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.
<b>Insurance Reserve</b>	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.

## Other Revenue Related Reserves

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23</b>	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2022/23 Budget Strategy.
<b>Joint Committee Reserve</b>	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.
<b>Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)</b>	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend – required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.
<b>Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management</b>	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.
<b>Infrastructure / Investment</b>	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough.
<b>Prior Year Commitments</b>	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.
<b>Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation</b>	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.
<b>Other Specific Reserves</b>	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.
<b>Invest to Save</b>	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.

## Section 12 Financial Planning and Balancing the Budget

- 12.1 Whilst the budget setting process is necessarily and statutorily an annual process, this Council has for a number of years moved away from the annual cycle for financial planning purposes and seeks to address the budget gap on an ongoing basis over the medium term period.
- 12.2 Part of this process is the early identification and delivery of base budget reducing measures in-year and therefore before the start of a financial year. This has enabled the Council to deliver financial savings early and to replenish our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve which we have used proactively as part of our budget strategy approach for a number of years.
- 12.3 Our priority and focus has continued to be ensuring that our residents, communities and businesses are protected and supported and at the same time maintaining our valued and critical services. However, the scenario set out at section 10 dictates that we must now, in the absence of any indications of additional funding being provided to local government, embark on a review across all our services to urgently identify options which can be considered to close the budget gap being faced. Whilst our valued services and jobs will be safeguarded wherever possible, it is inevitable that there will be a need to make cuts in service levels and jobs in order to close the budget gap we face, unless or until we receive any more positive assurances as to likely funding levels next year and into the medium term.

### **Financial Planning**

- 12.4 The Council recognises the importance of integrated financial and service planning to ensure resources are aligned to priority areas; enable robust forward projections of cost and funding levels; and inform proposed changes in service delivery. The arrangements entail the Senior Leadership Team, supported by senior Service and Finance Officers, developing proposals and shaping and delivering agreed strategies in line with the parameters set within the Medium Term Financial Plan. The key strategic areas are as follows and in many cases are interlinked, for example, putting in place digital solutions such as hybrid working is enabling more efficient and effective workforce arrangements are also reducing the Council's carbon footprint via the need for less car journeys.

### Climate Change

- 12.5 The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2025 sets out the ambition for the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 alongside a plan of the key areas that will be progressed to deliver the Strategy.
- 12.6 The Council has put in place a Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet for projects to be taken forward alongside the necessary additional funding, where required. The development stage of projects have direct links to medium term financial planning arrangements in the identification of funding options and affordability considerations, with the Council also approving additional core resources as part of annual budget setting as it forward plans the delivery of the Strategy.

- 12.7 Delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy is an organisation wide approach and is taken account of as part of service decision making as well as when considering the key areas below of workforce, buildings and digital.

#### Our Workforce

- 12.8 The Council's workforce is its most valuable asset, reflecting the wide range of important roles employees undertake, and a Workforce Plan 2017 – 2022 is in place that sets out the key areas for developing the workforce to meet the current and future needs of communities.
- 12.9 This work is aligned to medium term financial planning arrangements through an integrated Payroll and HR System that provides real time workforce information to project future year workforce costs; inform the modelling of cost implications of service transformation, investment / disinvestment and service restructure proposals; and provide insight into areas that could realise short and medium term efficiency savings, for example, recruitment and retention and targeted support to help improve attendance levels.
- 12.10 The Council's staffing costs account for over 60% of the net annual budget; the need for integrated workforce and financial planning is therefore a key component of overall planning arrangements to ensure the Council creates the right environment to optimise workforce performance, makes best use of all staffing resources and services are delivered as efficiently as possible.

#### Our Buildings

- 12.11 The Council has a varied asset base and keeps this under on-going review as part of its Corporate Asset Management Plan to inform the use of and investment in buildings to support the delivery of our priorities. The approach focusses on:
- rationalising the current asset base, including office accommodation, so we only retain assets that help us deliver our priorities;
  - maintaining the assets we do retain so that we can maximise their use, efficiency of operation and return, and provide the best possible services to our residents; and
  - identifying opportunities to acquire new assets / share assets where it helps us further achieve our priorities.
- 12.12 Work is currently on-going on a Built Asset Review that will review and refresh opportunities for the future use and optimisation of the Council's buildings.

#### Digital Driven Council

- 12.13 The Council's updated Digital Strategy 2022 – 2026 provides the framework for services to continue to use digital solutions to support future transformation change, recognising that such solutions do not meet the needs of all our residents.
- 12.14 A Digital Improvement Office is in place to support Services to fully exploit the opportunities provided by 'digital' to meet the changing needs of customers and support the on-going delivery of efficient and effective services.

## Balancing the Budget

12.15 The 2022/23 Budget Setting process identified £4.9M of efficiency savings without impacting on frontline services, following a detailed review of budget savings options during the year. This position is now being built upon, informed by the financial planning areas detailed above, and will form an on-going programme of work to assess further budget saving opportunities whilst ensuring service resilience is maintained. This includes:

- a. Efficiency – we have for many years delivered significant efficiency savings as part of our ongoing work and which have contributed to closing the budget gaps we have faced. Over the last 3 years we have delivered over £15M of efficiency savings. It is important that we maximise our efficiency more than ever as part of balancing next year's budget in order to ensure that we preserve, as far as is practicable, our critical services. This will include reviewing support service operations, school efficiency opportunities / requirements, non-pay expenditure areas, collaboration opportunities and the impact of on-going reductions in service demand.
- b. Workforce – our work will focus on reviewing workforce requirements, informed by service self-evaluation and service delivery planning arrangements; progressing service transformation and restructuring proposals; ensuring full cost recovery of service costs; and the on-going development of hybrid and remote working.
- c. Digitisation – our work will include supporting services to create digital solutions for business problems; further enhancing the availability of real time business intelligence to inform decision making and resource allocation; and increasing self-service / on-line options for customers alongside providing assisted digital support so that our residents and businesses are better equipped to access and use technology productively. This work will be underpinned by a secure and resilient infrastructure that will support customer needs and a modern mobile workforce.
- d. A Built Asset Review – a focus on sharing buildings to meet hybrid working arrangements across Council Services and also support the on-going development of community hubs that house multiple services, including partners, in accessible locations; an on-going programme of investment in energy saving measures to reduce building running costs and carbon emissions; and reviewing rental agreements to maximise income.
- e. Social Services Transformation Programme - including our significant on-going commitment and investment in the provision of Extra Care facilities. The financial impact of our ongoing preventative strategy will continue to be modelled alongside changes in demand for services linked to the demographic profile of the County Borough.
- f. Review of base budget requirements - at both a service level and an authority wide level, with ongoing modelling around key service pressures including inflationary requirements, contractual arrangements and capital charges.
- g. Invest to save – exploring options that will maximise opportunities to invest for the long term, benefiting residents and reducing our core ongoing spend requirements in doing so.

h. Service Reductions – reducing our service levels will always be a last resort, however we must now consider all options available to the Council to balance its budget in light of a potential significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term.

12.16 As part of progressing the above programme of work, the Council will collaborate and work with others where it is for the benefit of Rhondda Cynon Taf, with the overall approach aligned to the Council's strategy of maximising opportunities across the following areas: Digitalisation; Commercialism; Early Intervention and Prevention; Independence; and Efficient and Effective Organisation.

## Section 13 Capital Programme

- 13.1 The Council's 3-year capital programme, 2022/23 to 2024/25 was agreed by Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
- 13.2 The three-year Capital Programme is a key component of the overall Medium Term Financial Planning and Resources Strategy for this Council. Targeted capital investment can make a significant positive impact on service delivery and used effectively, is able to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, where relevant.
- 13.3 The three year programme amounted to £148M and includes further additional available funding of £14.471M for investment in priorities aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan (this comprising utilisation of £2.997M from the Council's Infrastructure Reserve, £2.158M through reprioritising existing resources, £1M of funding from the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy and £11.116M from additional external funding / General Capital Grant).
- 13.4 The rolling 3-year programme is reviewed and determined annually (in March of each year) and provides service managers with the opportunity to plan investment in our infrastructure and assets over the medium term.
- 13.5 A summary of the current 3-year programme is provided in Table 13.1.

**Table 13.1 : THREE YEAR SUMMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>		
	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>
<b>Community &amp; Children's Services</b>			
Adult & Children's Services	4.931	1.995	0.495
Public Health, Protection & Community Services	7.465	3.016	0.495
<b>Education &amp; Inclusion Services</b>			
Schools	17.898	0.692	0.390
Supplementary Capital Programme	8.230	3.875	3.875
<b>Chief Executive's Division</b>			
Finance & Digital Services	0.700	0.700	0.700
Corporate Estates	2.209	1.275	1.275
<b>Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services</b>			
Planning & Regeneration	6.983	1.539	0.600
Private Sector Housing	8.990	6.686	5.150



Highways Technical Services	11.203	1.805	1.805
Strategic Projects	15.162	7.172	5.884
Storm Dennis Flood Recovery	6.441	0.000	0.000
Waste Strategy	1.000	0.000	0.000
Fleet	2.573	2.573	2.573
Buildings	0.215	0.100	0.100
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET</b>	<b>94.000</b>	<b>31.428</b>	<b>23.342</b>

## Section 14 Consultation and Scrutiny

- 14.1 Following consideration of this MTFP by Cabinet, it is proposed that this document and the planning assumptions will be reported to full Council and thereafter be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of the consultation on the draft 2022/23 budget strategy.
- 14.2 The MTFP will be used as a basis of planning for our 2023/24 budget strategy consultation processes, updated as appropriate to reflect the implications of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be received in autumn 2022.

## Section 15 Other Relevant Documents

Below are links to other documents which are relevant to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **Budget Book**

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/Councilbudgets.aspx>

### **Statements of Account**

2019/20 Audited Statement of Accounts –

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/RelatedDocuments/StatementofAccounts/StatementofAccounts2019to2020.pdf>

2020/21 Audited Statement of Accounts -

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/RelatedDocuments/StatementofAccounts/StatementofAccounts202021.pdf>

### **2022/23 Capital Strategy Report incorporating Prudential Indicators**

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34291/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

### **2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy incorporating Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement**

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34286/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

### **Council Performance Reports**

Quarter 4 2020/21 –

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s29994/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

Quarter 4 2021/22 -

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36110/Councils%20Performance%20and%20Resources%20Report.pdf?LLL=0>

### **Corporate Plan (2020-2024)**

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/04/Reports/Agendatem6CouncilsDraftCorporatePlan20202024.pdf>

### **Council 3 Year Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25**

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34225/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE : SERVICES PROVIDED

2021/22 Budget		2022/23 Budget
<b>£M</b>		<b>£M</b>
	<b><u>Community &amp; Children's Services</u></b>	
94.877	Adult Services	103.528
54.466	Children's Services	58.852
2.618	Transformation	1.560
16.625	Public Health, Protection & Community Services	18.766
<b>168.586</b>		<b>182.706</b>
	<b><u>Education &amp; Inclusion Services</u></b>	
31.941	Education & Inclusion Services (Non Delegated)	33.674
163.784	Delegated Schools	174.745
<b>195.725</b>		<b>208.419</b>
	<b><u>Chief Executive</u></b>	
0.388	Chief Executive	0.405
2.948	Democratic Services & Communications	3.461
12.088	Human Resources	13.066
1.613	Legal Services	1.698
10.840	Finance & Digital Services	12.529
2.980	Corporate Estates	4.663
<b>30.857</b>		<b>35.822</b>
	<b><u>Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services</u></b>	
2.778	Prosperity & Development Services	3.062
57.594	Frontline Services	61.678
<b>60.372</b>		<b>64.740</b>
<b>455.540</b>	<b>Total Group Budgets</b>	<b>491.687</b>
	<b><u>Authority Wide Budgets</u></b>	
19.950	Capital Financing	21.308
12.874	Levies	13.202
13.780	Miscellaneous	14.583
0.425	NDR Relief	0.425
25.334	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	25.587
<b>72.363</b>	<b>Total Authority Wide Budgets</b>	<b>75.105</b>
<b>527.903</b>	<b>TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET</b>	<b>566.792</b>

**COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET BY PRIORITY AREA**

<b>Budget 2021/22 £'000</b>	<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Budget 2022/23 £'000</b>
	<b><u>PEOPLE</u></b>	
55,042	Children's Services	59,603
100,331	Adult Services	109,169
4,117	Leisure (including physical participation) / Heritage Sites	5,099
159,490		173,871
	<b><u>PLACES</u></b>	
7,271	Libraries / Parks / Play Areas	7,490
1,069	Crime Reduction (including hate crime) / Anti-Social Behaviour / Domestic Violence / Substance Misuse	1,503
5,279	Highway cleanliness	6,018
20,965	Waste / Recycling	24,400
9,931	Highways Infrastructure and Road Maintenance / Condition	10,267
44,515		49,678
	<b><u>PROSPERITY</u></b>	
27,394	Economically active people / Job Seekers Allowance Claimants / Job Creation / Adult Education / Town Centres	27,627
206,996	School Attainment	220,058
425	Town Centre Vacancy Rates (businesses)	425
1,298	Housing / Affordable Housing Delivered / Homelessness Prevention	1,461
236,113		249,571
	<b><u>LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS</u></b>	
1,513	Customer Care	1,384
5,781	Office Accommodation/Buildings	6,618
7,294		8,002
447,412	<b>TOTAL SPEND ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES</b>	481,122
5,799	REGULATORY PUBLIC SERVICES	6,577
2,290	OTHER SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC	2,399
46,604	AUTHORITY WIDE COSTS	49,093
25,798	CORE SUPPORT	27,601
527,903	<b>TOTAL COUNCIL BUDGET</b>	566,792

**COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME BY PRIORITY AREA**

Priority/Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2022 - 2025			
	2022/23 Budget	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£M	£M	£M	£M
<b>People</b>				
Adult Services	10.201	6.878	5.233	22.312
Children's Services	0.560	0.476	0.445	1.481
<b>Total - People</b>	<b>10.761</b>	<b>7.354</b>	<b>5.678</b>	<b>23.793</b>
<b>Places</b>				
Parks, Leisure, Libraries, Culture & Heritage, Open Spaces	7.819	2.732	0.632	11.183
Crime Reduction	0.097	0.155	0.050	0.302
Highways Cleanliness	0.182	0.171	-	0.353
Highways Infrastructure	38.807	11.557	8.112	58.476
Waste Strategy	2.163	0.061	1.096	3.320
<b>Total - Places</b>	<b>49.068</b>	<b>14.676</b>	<b>9.890</b>	<b>73.634</b>
<b>Prosperity</b>				
School Attainment	26.128	4.567	4.265	34.960
Business Support	0.363	0.200	0.200	0.763
Town Centres	1.185	0.835	0.400	2.420
Housing	3.300	1.536	-	4.836
<b>Total - Prosperity</b>	<b>30.976</b>	<b>7.138</b>	<b>4.865</b>	<b>42.979</b>
<b>Living Within Our Means</b>				
Management and rationalisation of service accommodation	2.259	1.325	1.537	5.121
<b>Total - Living Within Our Means</b>	<b>2.259</b>	<b>1.325</b>	<b>1.537</b>	<b>5.121</b>
<b>Total Capital Budget Allocated to Council Priorities</b>	<b>93.064</b>	<b>30.493</b>	<b>21.970</b>	<b>145.527</b>
Regulatory Public Services	0.192	0.235	0.672	1.099
Authority Wide Costs	0.044	-	-	0.044
Core ICT Systems Support	0.700	0.700	0.700	2.100
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>	<b>94.000</b>	<b>31.428</b>	<b>23.342</b>	<b>148.770</b>

**COUNCIL EARMARKED RESERVES\***

<b>Capital, Treasury and Insurance Reserves</b>					
Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/21	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/22
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Capital Developments</b>	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.	66,365	(12,629)	21,798	75,534
<b>Treasury Management Reserve</b>	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.	2,465	0	0	2,465
<b>Insurance Reserve</b>	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.	7,999	(61)	0	7,938
<b>Total</b>		<b>76,829</b>	<b>(12,690)</b>	<b>21,798</b>	<b>85,937</b>
<b>Other Revenue Related Reserves</b>					
Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/21	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/22
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Revenue Budget Strategy 2021/22</b>	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2021/22 budget.	711	(711)	0	0
<b>Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23</b>	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2022/23 budget.	0	0	963	963
<b>Joint Committee Reserve</b>	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.	669	(669)	2,247	2,247
<b>Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)</b>	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend - required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.	4,824	(4,824)	5,743	5,743
<b>Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management</b>	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.	31,641	(7,905)	12,321	36,057
<b>Investment / Infrastructure</b>	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough.	9,497	(6,697)	17,000	19,800
<b>Prior Year Commitments</b>	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.	18,636	(5,999)	22,139	34,776
<b>Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation</b>	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.	3,619	(963)	989	3,645
<b>Other Specific Reserves</b>	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.	3,158	(795)	1,859	4,222
<b>Invest to Save</b>	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.	1,036	(480)	4,413	4,969
<b>Total</b>		<b>73,791</b>	<b>(29,043)</b>	<b>67,674</b>	<b>112,422</b>
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>150,620</b>	<b>(41,733)</b>	<b>89,472</b>	<b>198,359</b>

\* Council Earmarked Reserves – draft position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, subject to audit.

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

#### PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

**AUTHOR(S):** Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and  
Transformation

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on our current special school provision following previous reports to Cabinet in February and October 2021 where Cabinet agreed to additional scoping work being undertaken to inform proposals for change in our special school provision.
- 1.2 Seek approval to submit a revised Strategic Outline Programme for Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme to increase the Council envelope of Band B investment programme of funding.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - i. Note the content of this report.
  - ii. Review the updated data which highlights the increasing pressure on our current special school provision.
  - iii. Agree to submit a variation to the approved Strategic Outline Programme to the Welsh Government, in accordance with the Sustainable Communities for Learning funding approval processes, to request an increase to the agreed capital funding envelope to deliver this much needed facility.
  - iv. Agree to receive a further report setting out feedback from WG, the conclusions of the site appraisal and a proposed consultation document for consideration.

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

- 3.1 To address the demand for additional capacity in special schools in the County Borough of RCT to accommodate the growth in learner numbers.
- 3.2 To acknowledge that the statutory duties placed upon the Council to deliver the obligations of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET Act), will compound the pressures placed on the special school sector and our capacity to make statutory provision for the learners that require it.
- 3.3 To secure appropriate provision for pupils with additional learning needs and avoid long-term budget pressures for the Council.
- 3.4 To enable us to progress with a proposal to establish a new special school.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As Cabinet will be aware, reports tabled in February and October last year highlighted the pressures faced by our special schools as the number of learners placed in these specialist provisions are increasing on an annual basis. Children's needs are becoming more complex and there is a need to meet demand for placements for some of our most vulnerable children and families living in our communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The data presented clearly showed that the demand on the Council's special school provision is significant and the trend data indicated that this pressure would continue to rise. Updated data is included at 4.5 to 4.15 of this report.
- 4.2 The previous reports also described the limitations of each school site, and the conclusion reached within the reports was that all opportunities to significantly extend and increase capacities have been explored and where possible, undertaken. Since the previous report in October 2021, works, funded by the Council's capital programme, to maximise the available space on our special schools has continued to be an ongoing priority. A new modular building has been placed at Ysgol Hen Felin increasing capacity; remodelling works at Ysgol Hen Felin, Park Lane and Ysgol Ty Coch have taken place over the last few months to maximise the space available at these schools; a new modular building has been placed on Buarth-y-Capel, increasing capacity at this important facility. The Council currently collaborates with Coleg y Cymoedd to provide much needed teaching space for our post-16 children in the Nantgarw, Llwynypia and Aberdare Campuses at a cost in region of £70k per annum. To enhance the capacity of this provision, further works have been undertaken in Coleg y Cymoedd's Llwynypia Campus over the summer period which will enable more year 12-14 pupils from Ysgol Hen Felin to attend college from September 2022. This will alleviate the pressure on the school site. Further lease requirements are in negotiation at present.
- 4.3 It was acknowledged that options and alternatives to expand the existing sites have been exhausted and the only feasible alternative is to build a brand-new provision on a new site, significantly growing the special school provision within the County Borough and increasing the number of special schools from four to five. Creating

a highly specialist 21st century special school environment will enable the Council to meet the needs of learners requiring access to highly specialist therapeutic facilities, equipment and resources required to meet all needs, including complex medical and health needs in the County Borough.

- 4.4 Given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of new legislation, the ALNET Act (2018), building a new special school, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will also ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations.

### **Current Position**

- 4.5 Currently there are 678 learners accessing education across four special schools in the County Borough of RCT, this is an increase of 78 learners since the last report was written less than a year ago. The Council currently has four special schools:

- Maesgwyn Special School, Cwmdare, Aberdare.
- Park Lane Special School, Trecynon, Aberdare.
- Ysgol Hen Felin, Ystrad, Rhondda.
- Ysgol Ty Coch, Tonteg, Pontypridd, which includes a satellite base in Buarth-y-Capel, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd.

- 4.6 The following data analysis is based on data derived from the latest Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) unless otherwise stated. This analysis gives an indication of the children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in the County Borough.

- 4.7 Table 1 outlines the total number of children and young people who accessed their education in one of the four special schools (including the Buarth-y-Capel satellite base) from the academic year 2013/2014 to 2021/2022. The data clearly shows the steady rise in learners accessing special school provision.

**Table 1: Total Special School Learner Numbers**

<b>Total Number of Children and Young People who Access their Education in Special Schools in the County Borough of RCT between the Academic Years 2013/2014 to 9/2022</b>										
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/2</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>Sept 22</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>678</b>

- 4.8 Table 2 outlines the total number of children and young people who accessed special schools broken down into each of the four special schools (including Buarth-y-Capel) from the academic year 2016/2017 to 2012/22.

**Table 2: Trend Data between Academic Year 2016/2017 and Sept 2022**

<b>Total Number of Children and Young People who Access their Education in Special Schools in the County Borough of RCT between the Academic Years 2016/2017 to 9/2022</b>							
<b>Special School</b>	<b>Academic Year</b>						
	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>Sept 22</b>
Maesgwyn School	132	130	127	130	119	125	126
Park Lane School	101	93	97	88	93	108	122
Ysgol Hen Felin	169	178	179	186	184	194	208
Ysgol Ty Coch	137	142	159	173	178	190	222
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>678</b>

- 4.9 The PLASC data comparison demonstrates that there has been a consistent increase in learner numbers in both Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch. The cumulative current numbers on roll as of September 2022, across the special schools in the County Borough of RCT, is 678 demonstrating another significant increase. Numbers of learners in Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch in September 2022 are 208 and 222 respectively and reflects the continued pressure on placements in our largest schools.
- 4.10 Based on the overall growth in number of learners requiring special school placements in the last 5 years, it seems inevitable that this trend will continue, and the number of learners will continue to increase. Whilst it has been possible to address these increasing numbers through remodelling and undertaking building works so far, this is becoming increasingly challenging and options for extending school sites are now exhausted.
- 4.11 As previously reported, it is not just the increase in the number of learners accessing our special schools that are causing the pressures, it is also the increase in the complexities of the learners' needs that attend these specialist provisions and the staffing numbers required to meet their needs.
- 4.12 For consistency, we have again used the staff ratio bandings to evidence the growing complexity of need in our special school provision. Utilising this data will highlight the changes in the staffing levels required to support each learner depending on presenting need over the last few years, further evidencing the change in need and the increased demand placed upon this sector.
- 4.13 The staff bandings according to learner need are detailed below in Table 3. For a class of 10 for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties requiring enhanced support (BAND 1+), there would be a requirement for 3 teaching staff and 4.5 learning support staff to meet need of this complexity – at total of 7.5 staff.

This illustrates the intensive support required for children with the most complex needs and does not include the intervention required from highly specialist health professionals, e.g., nurses, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists.

**Table 3: Staffing Based on Pupil Banding and Need**

Band	Band of Learning Difficulty	Number of Teachers per 10 FTE Learners	Number of Learning Support Assistants per 10 FTE Learners
1+	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (Enhanced)	3.0	4.5
1	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	2.0	3.0
2	Severe Communication Difficulties	1.8	1.8
3	Severe Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	1.5	1.5
4	Severe Development Difficulties	1.3	1.3
5+	Other Learning Difficulties (Enhanced)	1.15	0.9
5	Other Learning Difficulties	1.0	0.5

4.14 The special schools had the following learner numbers, which are broken down according to the corresponding staff banding categories detailed in Table 4. The data in Table 5 provides a comparison from 2016.

**Table 4: Data for PLASC 2022 based on Learner Numbers**

PLASC 2022	Band of Learning Difficulty							
	B1+	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5+	B5	TOTAL
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Post 16
Park Lane	5	18	19	20	44	0	2	108
Ysgol Hen Felin	14	29	31	51	66	0	3	194
Maesgwyn	11	8	5	19	50	2	30	125
Ysgol Ty Coch (inc. Buarth-y-Capel)	8	51	36	37	55	0	3	190
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>617</b>

**Table 5: Data for January 2016 Based on Learner Numbers**

January 2016	Band of Learning Difficulty						
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5+	B5	TOTAL
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Post 16
Park Lane	34	9	5	51	0	0	99
Ysgol Hen Felin	31	38	7	97	0	0	173
Maesgwyn	16	3	27	14	63	18	141
Ysgol Ty Coch (inc. Buarth-y-Capel)	48	7	6	52	0	0	113
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>526</b>

4.15 As can be seen from the tables above, the band B1+, which has the highest level of staff to learner ratio, was not a category in 2016. This new banding was

introduced in 2017 to provide the additional support required for learners with increasingly complex and profound needs. This data shows very clearly the increase in learners requiring the support of the higher staffing ratios as specified in categories B1+, B1, B2 and B3. This is especially the case in the two largest special schools, Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch, with the numbers rising from 76 and 61 in 2016, to 125 and 132 in 2022 respectively for these categories.

- 4.16 This data is important as it not only shows the change in the number of learners requiring additional support, but it also demonstrates the increase in the numbers of staff required to work in our special schools due to the enhanced complexity of need, which also has a detrimental impact on the physical space, further compounding the effects on capacity within our special school provision.
- 4.17 Table 6 that follow outlines the national curriculum year of the learners who access their education in each of the four special schools (five sites including Buarth-y-Capel). This data was correct as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and is not taken from the PLASC.

**Table 6: National Curriculum Year of Learners that Access their Education at Special School on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2022**

National Curriculum Year of Learners who Access their Education at Special School						
Key Stage	National Curriculum Year	School				Total
		Maesgwyn Special School	Park Lane Special School	Ysgol Hen Felin	Ysgol Ty Coch and Buarth-y-Capel Combined	
Foundation Phase	Nursery		7	7	6	20
	Reception		8	7	12	27
	1		8	16	9	33
	2		9	10	12	31
Key Stage Two	3		15	18	13	46
	4		9	12	9	30
	5		5	11	26	42
	6		6	16	15	37
Key Stage Three	7	18	10	21	18	67
	8	14	15	16	17	62
	9	14	2	18	10	44
Key Stage Four	10	22	5	11	19	57
	11	11	5	10	12	38
Key Stage Five	12	9	6	9	13	37
	13	21	4	10	22	57
	14	17	8	16	9	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>678</b>

The data indicates:

- The national curriculum year with the highest number of learners was year 7 with 67 learners.
- Key stage three was the key stage with the highest number of learners with 173 learners.

- However, it should be noted that figures are relatively consistent across all key stages.
- 4.18 It should be noted that all schools see significant admission into special school provision at secondary transition which accounts for the imbalance in numbers across phases. Often learners that attend primary learning support class provision require a more specialist provision at secondary level due to the more challenging learning environment at secondary level and the curriculum offer.

## **5. FUTURE PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The updated data endorses the previous recommendation that the only feasible option is to build a brand-new provision on a new site, growing the special school provision within the County Borough increasing the number of special schools from four to five. It is proposed that the new school will accommodate up to 200 learners who are all highly likely to require transportation to school. Transport links will need to be an important consideration so that the new school is readily accessible from a travel perspective.
- 5.2 The October 2021 report advised that the Council would undertake an appraisal of a number of potential sites to ascertain which, if any, would be suitable for a special school. Several sites were identified as potential candidate sites, these were then appraised against a number of critical delivery factors including size, ownership, and location. However, further scoping activities are now required to ensure that the best possible site is secured. The outcome of this process will be reported to Cabinet alongside feedback from WG and the consultation requirements per below.
- 5.3 The opening of a new special school will be subject to a statutory school organisation consultation and further work to develop the proposal will need to be undertaken. If permission to develop this proposal is granted, then in accordance with the School Organisation Code a consultation document will be written and brought to Cabinet to seek approval to commence the statutory consultation process in due course.
- 5.4 There are significant risks in not progressing with this proposal and these are detailed as follows:

### **Not meeting our statutory duties**

Local authorities must ensure that additional learning provision is kept under review and if pressures on the service arise then we must take reasonable steps to remedy the situation. It is evident that there are currently significant pressures on special school placements and doing nothing at this juncture will mean that we will be unable to meet our statutory duties in future. There is a clear duty placed on local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient provision in place to meet need.

### **Children not having their needs met**

Special schools provide highly specialist placements to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable learners. It is imperative that children who require special school placements access this provision at the earliest opportunity so that they can

benefit from early intervention and access to highly specialist teaching, equipment, resources, therapies and medical intervention that are available in special schools.

#### **Increased pressure on families**

Families of children with significant ALN often have to navigate complex processes and systems to ensure that their child accesses the right professional advice, support and educational provision. Timely access to specialist provision and the expertise that exists within these settings can often be a tremendous support not only for vulnerable children, but to their extended families.

#### **Increased ALN Educational Tribunals**

Concerns about the SEN or additional learning provision made for learners can be escalated to the Educational Tribunal for Wales. The Educational Tribunal for Wales can direct local authorities to place children in educational settings irrespective of capacity pressures. This can include provisions both within and outside of the County Borough. It is imperative that all learners who meet the threshold for a special school placement are able to access this at the earliest opportunity in their community.

#### **Increased out of county costs**

If there is insufficient provision within the County Borough, there will be a requirement to place outside of RCT. This will be significantly more expensive and will take children out of their communities. If it is not possible to secure an alternative placement close to home, then it is likely that both educational and residential costs will be incurred. A residential placement in a special school can cost, on average, in the region of £95k and £141k per annum for a 40- or 52-week placement respectively.

#### **Increased transport and environmental pressures**

If needs cannot be met within the County Borough, then excessive transport costs and the associated detrimental impact on the environment will be incurred. Extended periods of travel will also have a negative impact on these vulnerable children.

## **6. PARTNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 In recent months officers have been invited to collaborate with Children's and Adult Services, both services areas are developing transformation programmes to provide additional support to both children and young people with additional learning needs.
- 6.2 In the case of Children's Services, this is for children who are looked after who have complex learning needs. In the fullness of time that work will lead to meeting children's needs for care close to home and supplying services that are not for profit in line with Government's intention to legislate to remove profit from the provision of care.
- 6.3 At this early stage, it is evident that some of the children who will be pupils at the proposed specialist school will potentially also need either 52 weeks residential



care or respite care. These needs are currently met by providers in settings that are outside of the County Borough at considerable cost to the Council.

- 6.4 There is an opportunity to collaborate to provide those children and their families who need it with high quality integrated school and care provisions. Children’s Services’ Officers are in the process of concluding the evidence base of need, alongside cost impact, and will supply a prioritised and costed strategy in due course.
- 6.5 Funding streams to support this type of development work have been made available by Welsh Government linked to the Programme for Government and also via the Regional Partnership Board in association with its Re-balancing Social Care Fund.
- 6.6 Similarly, Adult Services are delivering The Learning Disability Transformation Programme which focuses upon improving its offer for opportunities for young people with additional learning needs once their statutory education ends. The intention is to work collaboratively with adult social care to improve and support its development but also to support young people approaching adulthood in achieving their goals by supporting them to develop their outcomes through a variety of ways, including daytime provision as well as residential care.
- 6.7 As a result of this synergy, collaboration between service areas will continue as we explore opportunities to establish where Education and Inclusion Services and Adult Social Care can mutually support these young people going forward with integrated and fit for purpose provisions.

**7. LEARNER TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 As part of this proposal, consideration will need to be given to transport costs and provision, including transport links to any potential site and traffic impact considerations on communities, which will all included as part of the detailed consultation report and risk assessments. Clearly, there are cost implications and transport requirements which have to be taken into consideration and these are summarised in Table 8:

**Table 8: A summary of current transport requirements and costs in special schools**

	<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Daily Cost</b>	<b>Parental Payments</b>
<b>Maesgwyn Special</b>	18	106	£2,568.41	4
<b>Ysgol Hen Felin</b>	22	143	£2,842.79	8
<b>Ysgol Ty Coch (Tonteg)</b>	29	132	£3,883.90	20
<b>Ysgol Ty Coch (Buarth-y-Capel)</b>	9	24	£1,114.08	0
<b>Park Lane Special</b>	15	93	£1,926.96	9

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

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 If approval is granted, then at the appropriate time Equality and Community Impact Assessments will be 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").

## **9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 If approval is granted, then at the appropriate time a Welsh Impact Assessment will be 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).

## **10. CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 If approval is granted, the consultation process in respect of the proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's Statutory Code – School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018).

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Without significant investment, there is future financial risk to the Council arising from the pressures on special school places. Where need cannot be met within the County Borough, additional out of County Borough placements would have to be sourced. The resulting costs of securing independent special school placements outside of the County Borough would put a significant financial burden on the Council.
- 11.2 As Cabinet will be aware, the Council has successfully made a bid to Welsh Government to include a new special school provision within its overall funding envelope of the Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, noting the preferential rates afforded to special school projects, with a Welsh Government intervention rate of 75%.
- 11.3 Cabinet will also be aware that since approval of the SOP there have been several factors that have had a significant impact upon our Band B project costs. Construction material costs nationally continue to escalate reaching a 40 year high, increased global demand in the construction sector, the multiple and complex impacts of the COVID pandemic and logistic issues, and the invasion of Ukraine have all played a role in placing extreme pressure on supply chains that are already under strain. This has created an increasingly volatile market within the

construction industry where demand has outstripped supply, giving rise to longer lead times and inevitably material and labour price increases.

- 11.4 As a result of these challenges and the resulting cost increases of a number of our Band B projects, cost estimates to deliver this project exceed the remaining funding available within our Band B envelope . Costs for this project have increased from an estimated £35M to an estimated £53.3M. In order to accommodate this the overall increases across our Band B projects, including this project, permission is sought to request an increase in our SOP by submitting a variation to Welsh Government to increase our investment envelope. Based on current construction costs, and with inflation applied, current estimates indicate we need to increase the capital element of our SOP by £32.3M, increasing our overall investment programme to £284.5M. As previously noted, if this increase is approved, the Welsh Government will be responsible for contributing up to 75% towards this additional funding.
- 11.5 It is also important to note that revenue costs will increase with the expansion of special school provision in the local authority. The 2022/23 revenue cost (formula funding) of special schools is summarised in the following table:

**Table 9: Current revenue costs in special school settings**

	<b>Total School Formula Allocation £</b>	<b>Average cost per pupil £</b>
<b>Park Lane School</b>	1,829,503	16,940
<b>Ysgol Hen Felin</b>	3,295,547	16,987
<b>Maesgwyn School</b>	1,842,114	14,737
<b>Ysgol Ty Coch</b>	2,949,459	16,854
<b>Buarth-y-Capel</b>	525,270	35,018
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,441,896</b>	

- 11.6 Please note that Buarth-y-Capel is a highly specialist satellite setting for Ysgol Ty Coch, and young adults with high end complex learning needs and autistic spectrum disorders.
- 11.7 The new school will house up to 200 pupils (similar level to Ysgol Hen Felin) and if approved, revenue costs in the region of £3.3M (2022/23 values) will need to be incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) arrangements as pupil numbers grow over time. Funding for growth in special school pupil numbers is already routinely factored into the MTFP. Consideration will also need to be given to a potential growth in transport costs.
- 11.8 It is noted that at this stage, permission is being sought only to submit a request to WG to consider increasing our Band B capital envelope and that we are not, at this stage, contractually committing the Council. Subject to feedback from WG, a further report will be presented to Cabinet along with details of the consultation process and the outcome of the site appraisal.

11.9 Any revenue and capital costs that are accrued in preparing the financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

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

12.1 Section 316 of the Education Act 1996<sup>1</sup> specifies that children and young people with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational provision that their learning difficulty calls for, the efficient education of other children and young people and the efficient use of resources.

12.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires local authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. Sections 1:20 and 1:21 of The Code of Practice also requires local authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of school funding arrangements in supporting and raising the achievements of children and young people with SEN.

12.3 [Section 63](#) of the ALNET Act (2018) highlights the Duty on local authorities to keep under review the arrangements that they and the governing bodies of maintained schools in their area make for children and young people with ALN. This includes considering the extent to which the arrangements are sufficient to meet the ALN of the children and young people for whom they are responsible. Local authorities must have regard to the ALP that may reasonably be arranged by other bodies (such as health bodies). It also requires local authorities to consider the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh and the size and capability of the workforce available. If a local authority considers that the arrangements are not sufficient in any way, it must take all reasonable steps to remedy the matter. Local authorities must consult any persons that they consider appropriate in order to inform the consideration and review, and at times which they consider appropriate.

## **13. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015**

13.1 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.

13.2 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

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<sup>1</sup> [Education Act 1996](#)

- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 13.3 Due regard will be given to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, during project development.
- 13.4 The proposal will ensure that some of the Council's most vulnerable learners will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes. The proposal will ensure more efficient and effective use of resources which promotes the development of social inclusion and positive outcomes for learners. This will also have a beneficial impact on transport costs and on carbon emissions.

#### **14. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

- 14.1 Given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of new legislation, the ALNET Act (2018), building a new special school, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will also ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations, and as such is a strategic proposal relevant to all wards.

#### **15. CONCLUSION**

- 15.1 The Welsh Government and legislation requires local authorities to regularly review arrangements for supporting learners with ALN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities.
- 15.2 The priority for the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and early years settings, and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. The Directorate's mission of 'Equity and Excellence in Education and Enhanced Wellbeing' applies to all learners, and it is imperative that we have sufficient high-quality provision to meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners.
- 15.3 Given the increase in the numbers of learners accessing our special schools, the restrictions of the existing school sites, and the implementation of the new ALNET Act (2018), there is a need to increase our special school provision to ensure that it will meet the needs of our most vulnerable pupils and support our families and residents. Without expanding the capacity of provision in the County Borough of RCT there is a risk that we will be unable to meet any future increase in demand for special school placements.
- 15.5 It is recommended that Cabinet recognise the opportunities presented by the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning, and as such agree to submit a request to the Welsh Government to increase the investment available. Future development of the proposal would be carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, and Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning statutory approval processes.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

**Item: PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Background Papers**

**REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF CABINET - 25TH FEBRUARY 2021 and 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES**

**AUTHORS OF FEBRUARY 2021 REPORT:**

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

### UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL ACT 2018 IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

**AUTHOR:** Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

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

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide an update to Cabinet on the implementation of the ALNET (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal) Wales Act (2018) in Rhondda Cynon Taf, including the use of additional resources approved by the Council to enable the Access and Inclusion Service to fulfil its increased statutory duties in line with the requirements of the new ALNET (Wales) Act (2018) and ALN Code for Wales (2021) during Years 1 and 2 of the 3-year national ALN Implementation timetable.
- Identify potential risks and the further possible additional resources needed to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its statutory ALN duties at the end of the 3-year transitional period when the new ALN system will be fully implemented, having replaced the outgoing Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- I. Note the content of this report.
- II. Note the actions undertaken to date by the Access & Inclusion Service to implement the ALN reforms.
- III. Note risks to the Council that are highlighted in the report and approve any actions recommended in section 8 to address these risks during Phase Two and Three of the national ALN Implementation timetable from 2022 to 2024.
- IV. Note that funding for the financial implications as outlined in Section 11 continues to be transitioned into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

alongside the use of one-off resources and maximising grant funding opportunities wherever possible.

V. Agree to receive a further report on ALNET (Wales) Act implementation at a later date if necessary.

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

3.1 To ensure that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) has sufficient resources and expertise to continue to meet its **new** statutory responsibilities for learners with ALN throughout the national Welsh Government 3-year ALN Implementation period and beyond, thus ensuring that all children and young people aged 0-25 with ALN in the county borough receive high quality additional learning provision (ALP).

### **4. BACKGROUND/WIDER CONTEXT**

4.1 The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Wales Act (2018) came into force in September 2021 in year one of a three-year phased implementation plan that extends from September 2021 to August 2024 by which time the ALNET Act will be fully enacted having replaced the current outgoing Special Educational Needs (SEN) system. The Act is supported by the implementation of a new statutory ALN Code.

4.2 Under the new legislation all children and young people with ALN regardless of the severity or complexity of their learning difficulty or disability will be entitled to a statutory support plan called an 'Individual Development Plan' (IDP). Children and young people with ALN will receive support called additional learning provision (ALP) which will be set out in their IDP.

4.3 The transformed system is intended to:

- ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential;
- improve the planning and delivery of support for learners from 0 to 25 with ALN, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process; and
- focus on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes.

4.4 The new Act is underpinned by 3 overarching objectives and 11 core aims. Reference will be made to the above throughout the body of the report.

4.5 Since 2018 the Welsh Government funded an ALN Transformation Lead for each consortium to support local authorities on a regional basis to prepare and implement the new ALN system. The ALN Transformation Lead had responsibility for the delivery of a strategic regional ALN Implementation plan that was supported by local ALN Implementation Plan that reflected the immediate strategic and operational priorities of the local authority to ensure compliance with the new legislation. The action plans were funded by Welsh



Government via the ALN Transformation Grant, part of the overall transitional financial support for local authorities to implement the reforms.

4.6 For financial year 2022/23 RCT has received ALN transformation grant funding of £102.5k to fund an Interim ALN National Implementation lead until September 2022 (RCT CBC is the host for employing the Lead Officer) to support the implementation timetable and moving forward there is an expectation that local authorities will take ownership for implementing the new ALN system through their own individual and regional arrangements. Welsh Government will be introducing 2 new posts to support the ALN implementation timetable and provide a high-level steer to local authorities on a national basis.

4.7 Welsh Government has continued to provide grant funding to local authorities to support the initial implementation of the new ALN system. Allocations to Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC since 2020/21 are detailed below:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
ALN	593,285	591,495	
ALN COVID (Learner Provision in 22/23)	727,495	744,029	755,355
New System funding		597,380	456,648
ALN special schools & units		356,654	
	1,320,780	2,289,558	1,212,003

4.8 The various grants above have been issued by Welsh Government to assist continuation of high-quality support to learners whilst preparing for the new ALN system, addressing pressures arising from the Covid pandemic and for the preparation of the new system. Please note that the above table does not include ALN Transformation Grant which was allocated in line with the regional education consortia footprint.

4.9 In its 2022/23 settlement released 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022, Welsh Government published indicative grant values up until 2024/25 financial year. The indication suggests that ALN funding will continue at 2022/23 levels until 2024/25. Grant funding is currently being used for a range of activities, including additional training and resources for schools in relation to supporting learners with social, emotional and behavioural needs, person centred approaches, and to fund additional temporary posts that are key to providing additional capacity to Access and Inclusion Services in implementing the 3-year implementation plan. This has included the appointment of temporary ALP Co-ordinator to support the transfer of statements of SEN to IDPs, a part-time project manager to support the introduction of a quality assurance process for IDPs and a part-time Further Education (FE) project manager to support the LA to work collaboratively with the FE Transformation lead and local and regional FE colleges to develop agreed practices and protocols in readiness for the new statutory 19-25 ALN duties.

4.10 Since the outset, the steadfast view of the Welsh Government has been that the implementation of the new ALN transformation agenda would be cost neutral. This is not a view that is shared by local authorities. To this end, a report

was presented to Cabinet in [February 2021](#) that highlighted the additional statutory duties that would be placed upon local authorities by the new legislation. The report also provided an overview of the significant financial and resource implications incurred by local authorities in England due to the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms since 2014.

4.11 Following approval from Cabinet a scoping exercise was undertaken to identify the additional resources required by the Access and Inclusion Service to enable Rhondda Cynon Taf to comply with its enhanced statutory duties as set out in the ALNET (Wales) Act 2018 and in line with the requirements of year 1 of the 3-year Welsh Government ALN implementation timetable to move from the outgoing SEN system to the new ALN system.

4.12 As a result of the scoping exercise a delegated operational decision was made by the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services in December 2021 to approve the deployment of additional funding of £500,000 to the Access and Inclusion Service from existing financial resources that the Council had set aside in anticipation of the need for enhanced resources.

4.13 The implementation phases are summarised below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Implementation Phases of the ALNET Transformation Programme**

Implementation Phases	Transfer to ALN System for learners currently at School Action/School Action Plus (mandated year groups)	Transfer to ALN system for learners with statements of SEN (mandated year groups)
Year 1 2021/2022	Nursery, Y1, Y3, Y5, Y7, Y10	N/A
Year 2 2022/2023	Nursery, Y2, Y4, Y6, Y8, Y10, Y11	Nursery, Reception, Y6, Y10, Y11
Year 3 2023/2024	Nursery, Y2, Y4, Y6, Y8, Y10	Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y8, Y9, Y10

4.14 Due to the new ALN system currently being implemented, it is acknowledged that there is significant uncertainty regarding the long-term impact and implications of the reforms. However, this report will attempt to summarise potential pressures that are likely to emerge over the next two years of the ALNET Transformation Programme.

## **5. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION – YEAR 1, 2021-2022**

5.1 In line with the delegated decision (paragraph 4.12) to create additional capacity for the Access and Inclusion Service the following posts were created:

- 3 x Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Co-ordinators
- 1 x Early Years ALN Specialist Teacher

- 1 x Educational Psychologist (EP)
- 1 x Complex Case Manager
- 1 x Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

The Service has been successful in recruiting to all of the above posts and all posts, apart from the 3 ALP Co-ordinator roles, become operational at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2022, and therefore it is not yet possible to comment on the impact of these new roles. The new posts have been established to create enhanced capacity and resources for areas of high risk that identified in the previous Cabinet report for Phase One of ALN implementation, primarily supporting those core aims in the Act that relate to:

- new statutory ALP for children aged 0-3
- the introduction of a unified statutory plan
- increased participation of children and young people
- increased collaboration
- avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution.

## 5.2. **Impact of the ALP Co-ordinator posts**

Due to the availability of the Welsh Government ALN Grant over the last two financial years the Access and Inclusion Service was able to introduce three additional temporary ALP Co-ordinator posts to its structure to support immediate service capacity priorities during the initial transitional period. Following approval to make the posts permanent, a successful recruitment process enabled the post holders to continue seamlessly in their posts. A key element of the ALP Co-ordinator role is to support schools and the local authority meet their statutory requirements in relation to the IDP process and to build the capacity of schools to deliver high quality universal and additional learning provision (ALP). Key activities undertaken by the ALP Coordinators include:

- IDP training for all ALNCoS, Learning Support Class teachers and central staff
- Weekly IDP cluster Quality Assurance and Support sessions
- Drop-in Light Bite Training sessions on a range of person-centred approaches
- Twice-termly ALNCo forums
- Four times weekly support sessions for schools, parents, professionals on ALN systems, Universal and Additional Learning Provision, provision mapping, IDPs etc
- Attendance at 41 school based Person-Centred IDP meetings as supportive mechanism
- Bespoke face-to-face school support on identified areas for development
- Development of agreed universal and additional learning provision for learners accessing EOTAS
- Development of RCT IDP processes for CLA and Youth Offending Service
- Drafting of all LA maintained IDPs.

- 5.3 A recent ALN Readiness Survey was completed by schools at the request of the regional ALN Transformation Lead whereby schools were required to RAG rate a series of questions relating to their readiness to implement the new ALN system. It was encouraging to note that green and yellow ratings combined recorded a response between 94.6 and 100%. When comparing responses on a regional basis, RCT ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for the majority of questions within the combined green and yellow categories.
- 5.4 Due to the enhanced statutory duties imposed by the new ALN legislation whereby all ALP made by mainstream schools is now statutory and subject to legal challenge by parents/carers, the ALP Coordinators also play a crucial role in mitigating the risk to the local authority of increased ALN tribunal appeals and disability discrimination claims. This work will be further enhanced by the new Complex Case Manager and Family Liaison Officer (FLO) roles when they take up post from September 2022.
- 5.5 During Year 1 of ALN Transition, Access and Inclusion has issued 118 LA maintained IDPs in line with the new shorter statutory timescales of 7 and 12 weeks. Robust quality assurance processes have been put in place to mitigate against the risk of an increase in costly tribunal appeals against the local authority.

## 6. **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION – YEAR 2, 2022-2023**

- 6.1 A range of key priorities and actions have been identified in order to implement year 2 and to ensure appropriate forward planning for year 3 of the 3-year national implementation timetable. Key actions include:

### 6.2 **Transfer to the new ALN System:**

- ***Transfer from statements of SEN to IDPs for pupils in the mandated years for 2022/23:*** a clear protocol has been put in place to ensure that schools understand the respective responsibilities of schools and Access and Inclusion Services in relation to transferring pupils from statements to IDPs. Schools will be supported by the ALP Co-ordinators through a range of support mechanisms, including ALNCo forums, weekly drop-in sessions, training/workshop activities and direct consultation and attendance at multi-agency IDP meetings where necessary.
- ***Transfer from School Action/School Action Plus for pupils in the mandated years for 2022/23:*** Schools will continue to be supported to transfer pupils at school action/plus to the new ALN system in line with the protocols and the support mechanisms that have been in place since September 2021.

- 6.3 **Provision Mapping universal learning provision (ULP) and additional learning provision (ALP):** a range of structured activities have been put in place to ensure that we develop a shared understanding within our schools of the local authority's expectations in relation to high quality differentiated teaching for all pupils before considering whether a learner needs additional

learning provision (ALP). These include training on provision mapping for schools, cluster sessions for ULP/ALP support and moderation, collaboration with school improvement partners regarding support for schools regarding high quality universal teaching and learning.

6.4 **Quality Assurance (QA) processes:** the introduction of QA processes in relation to person-centred practices, drafting IDPs, provision mapping and the effective implementation of evidence based ALN interventions in schools.

6.5 **19-25 age range:** Workstreams identified to prepare for the introduction of the LA's new duties in relation to post-compulsory school-aged learners with ALN at FE colleges include:

- Scoping of numbers of learners who express a clear preference to progress to FE during academic year 2023/24
- Establishment of a multi-agency post16/19 ALN steering group with representation from LA services, Health and FE colleges.
- Undertaking a post-16 enhanced transition pilot for learners with ALN in mainstream and specialist settings
- Working group to develop a collaborative graduated response for supporting FE learners in terms of universal and additional learning provision and thresholds for implementing college based and LA funded IDPs.

6.6 **Review of Learning Support Class Provision:** Due to the increase in the number of pupils being issued statutory plans (statements and IDPs) and the increase in the number of pupils accessing specialist provision over the past 5 years, a full review will be undertaken of the capacity of our learning support class provision with a view to making recommendations for changes/enhancement to the provision as necessary in order to meet the growing complexity of need within the county borough.

6.7 **Implementation of new posts within Access and Inclusion:** following agreement by Cabinet to introduce new posts to the structure of Access and Inclusion, the following posts will become operational in Autumn Term 2022:

- **0-3 age range (Early Years):** Early Years Advisory Teacher and full time equivalent Educational Psychologist. The posts will bring additional capacity to support early years settings to make effective provision for children with emerging needs and ALN and to assist in the early identification of needs of individual learners.
- **Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution:** Complex Case Manager and Family Liaison Officer. The two posts will be key to ensuring more effective liaison and collaboration with families, parents/carers. This work will be undertaken both systemically, via a Family Engagement Plan, to engage parents/carers and families through a range of planned activities and also, on an individual case management basis in response to disagreements that arise via panel processes regarding the IDP process. This will be key mitigating the anticipated increase in the number of tribunal appeals and claims

brought against the LA under the new ALN system as indicated in paragraph 5.4.

## **7. LOCAL CONTEXT AND IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES**

- 7.1 Following the initial scoping exercise undertaken in December 2021 that identified Phase One risks and priorities, a further scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify risks for the Council during Phases Two and Three (i.e., years 2 and 3) of the ALN implementation plan.
- 7.2 This section raises awareness for Cabinet Members of main risks and significant challenges identified and, where appropriate, proposed actions to mitigate these risks and to address the identified priorities. It also makes reference to a recent review of the impact and implications of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms in England since its implementation in 2014 which has many similarities with the ALN reforms in Wales.
- 7.3 It is important to stress that the highlighted risks relate to the new statutory duties placed upon the Council by the new ALN legislation and, as such, are non-negotiable in terms of ensuring compliance.
- 7.4 **Increased statutory duties across an enhanced age range 0-25 years:** Historically, under the outgoing SEN system, Access and Inclusion services have worked predominantly with learners of statutory school age. The new Act imposes new duties upon local authorities at both ends of the new statutory age range.
- 7.5 Over the past 3 years there has been an increase in the number of referrals made by schools to the Access and Inclusion Service as illustrated in the table below:

**Table 1: Number of referrals to Access and Inclusion Services**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
<b>Number of referrals</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>1465</b>	<b>1659</b>

This trend is likely to increase during the next two years of the implementation timetable.

### **7.6 PRIORITY 1: Meeting enhanced responsibilities and potential costs in the early years**

**0–3 age range:** In line with the national 3-year implementation plan whereby the new legislation was enacted for children aged 0-3 in September 2021, immediate capacity concerns highlighted in the Phase One review have been addressed through the establishment of additional posts within the Access and Inclusion structure as referenced in Section 5 and through the introduction of

the statutory Early Years ALN Lead Officer (EYALNLO) role. However, following Year 1 implementation,

- **Growth in Early Years Forum referrals:** during the first year of implementation, the Early Years Forum has received 179 referrals of which 38 referrals have resulted in the completion of local authority maintained IDPs. In addition, a further high number of the children referred to the Forum who did not receive an IDP during academic year 2021/22 (approximately 60 children) have been identified as having emerging needs that will likely meet the criteria for an IDP to be put in place whilst they are still within the pre-school 0 - 3 age range. This is in contrast to the previous 3-year data which shows that during academic years 2018/19 to 2020/21 only 46, 32 and 36 children respectively received statutory SEN provision funded by the local authority via a Statement of SEN. IDPs for children aged 0-3 must be maintained by the local authority and a significant increase in the number of early years IDPs will have a clear impact upon the workload and capacity of the current ALP Team and ALP Co-ordinators. There is evidence of children with increasingly complex needs being considered in panel, many of whom attend non-maintained settings, including childcare and registered educational providers. There is a need to ensure that we have sufficient specialist staff to support non-maintained settings to meet need. We have approximately 200 childcare settings in RCT which includes 33 registered educational providers and 45 commissioned flying start settings. **This is a significant pressure point that requires close monitoring.**
- **Enhanced Capacity Funding (ECF):** Additional learning provision (ALP) identified in IDPs for children 0-3 must be funded by the local authority. At the end of Year 1 of ALN implementation (2021/22 academic year), the local authority has funded ALP for 16 learners at a cost of £25k. The anticipated increase in the number of children aged 0-3 having IDPs over the next two years of ALN implementation will in turn result in an increased demand to provide ECF to support identified ALP. **Provision will have to be made for a potential growth in ECF for 0–3-year-olds on a year-by-year basis.**
- **Early Years specialist provision:** due to an increased number of children aged 0-3 being identified as having ALN it is a reasonable assumption that there will be an increase in the number of requests for specialist placements for this age cohort. As at the time of writing (August 2022) data indicates that there has been a 133.3% increase in the number of pre-school children placed in special schools over the past two academic years and the equivalent number of pupils have been placed in Early Years Learning Support Classes at the beginning of academic year 2022/23 as were placed throughout the whole academic year 2021/22. The proposal to increase special school provision in RCT is being considered under another Cabinet report, but consideration will also need to be given to enhancing Early Years Learning Support Classes in RCT. At present we have 3 Early Years provisions. It is proposed that consideration is given to consulting over the opening of an

additional Early Years Learning Support Class in 2023-2024 (year 3 of the implementation plan).

#### 7.7 **PRIORITY 2: Meeting enhanced responsibilities and potential costs in the 19-25 age range**

**19-25 age range:** Under the revised national ALN implementation plan, the new statutory duties relating to ALN learners aged 19-25 begin to be enacted in September 2022 for a small cohort of learners (those dually registered). From this point in time, local authorities will have a legal responsibility to ensure that young people aged 19-25 who have a determined 'reasonable need' for education have the right to access further education (FE) at a FE college setting. Additionally, it is anticipated that from September 2024 (year 4), Welsh Government will transfer the responsibility for funding post-16 specialist placements for young people at ISPIs (Independent Specialist Post-16 Institutions). Although it is not yet possible to gain a full and accurate picture of the implications of the new statutory duties placed upon the local authority until the legislation comes into force for this new age range, initial scoping has taken place that has identified clear challenges and risks. To address these new duties, it is proposed that a **new post-16 ALP Co-ordinator post is created in year 3 (2023-24)**. This post will be important in ensuring that a proactive approach is adopted to meeting the needs of learners in county where at all possible, and not in an Independent Specialist Post-16 Institution.

- **Statutory IDPs for 19-25:** from academic year 2022/23 young people with ALN will fall within the remit of the new legislation in relation to accessing further education. Under the Act, young people with less complex ALN will be supported by the FE college via a college based IDP where the cost and provision of the majority of ALP would be implemented from college resources. Those young people with more significant and complex needs, however, will require a LA maintained IDP. This will need to be coordinated and funded by the LA. It is impossible at this point in time to have definitive numbers of pupils who will want to exercise their right to access FE. However, currently in RCT there are 170 pupils attending specialist provisions in Years 10 & 11, the first full academic year cohorts to access FE under the ALN system in 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively, who would require LA maintained IDPs to access FE opportunities. Due to the high-level status and the significant awareness raising given to the ALN reforms by Welsh Government and the requirement to promote understanding of the new legislation on a local basis, it is reasonable to anticipate that many young people with ALN and their parents/carers will opt to access FE. This will have a significant impact upon the LA's capacity to meet its new statutory duties for FE, particularly as there has been no previous requirement to undertake this work.
- **Enhanced Capacity Funding (ECF):** All ALP identified for young people aged 19-25 who will have a local authority maintained IDP will need to be funded by the local authority from 2022/23 and not by the FE college. It is not possible to estimate the additional cost to the Council until we have clearer indicative figures of learners with significant and complex



needs who express a clear desire to access FE during the next two academic years. A scoping exercise will be undertaken in **2022/23 as part of multi-agency enhanced transition processes and a budget to support ALP for learners in FE settings will be necessary from 2023/24.**

- **Post-16 Independent Specialist Placement Institutions (ISPIs):** Historically, there has been a low number of young people with significant and complex ALN from RCT accessing these highly specialist provisions, although these numbers have doubled from 7 young people in 2019/20 to 14 and 13 respectively in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Current total costs equate to £1.252M per annum. Of the £1.252M, Community Services currently contributes £399k but the responsibility for meeting the costs currently funded by Health Boards and Welsh Government will also transfer to the Council. Despite the numbers appearing low, it is important to recognise that the costs associated with accessing placements at ISPIs are significant. Information provided by the Welsh Government FE ALN Implementation Lead suggests that the average cost of a placement at an ISPI over the past 4 years has been £83,849 for all costs and £52,217 per annum for the educational element. Welsh Government will transfer responsibility and funding for ISPI placements to local authorities. This will have implications for the capacity of Access and Inclusion Services in assessing and reviewing applications for ISPI placements, in terms of additional quality assurance processes. It is concerning that local authorities have not yet been informed how the Welsh Government will determine the level of funding delegated to individual local authorities. With the increased awareness of the new statutory 19-25 age range within the Act, it is possible that there will be an increase in the number of young people and their families expressing a preference to attend an ISPI, particularly in incidences where the FE colleges are of the view that they cannot meet the complex needs of some young people. **Whilst funding will transfer from Welsh Government, this is a potential financial risk for the Council, particularly if there is growth in demand and funding models are based on historical trend data.**
- **Impact upon Access and Inclusion Services:** Currently Access and Inclusion Services do not have any involvement in supporting FE colleges to make provision for students with ALN. It is anticipated that the introduction of the new statutory 19-25 duties will have an impact upon the capacity of all service areas:
  - ALP Team – coordination of the IDP process for students who require local authority maintained IDPs, attendance at Person Centred Meetings and IDP reviews and quality assurance of additional learning provision.
  - Educational Psychology – a statutory requirement to ensure that the ALN of students are understood through a range of activities, including consultation and assessment and systemic work.

- Learner Support Service – direct and indirect support for individual students in line with identified ALP, systemic advice on providing high quality ALP.

The effective engagement of Access and Inclusion Services with FE colleges will be essential to ensure that the local authority meets its new 19-25 statutory duties and to ensure that the college is able to provide high quality ALP for an increasingly complex clientele so that they can have their needs met within their community without the need to access significantly more costly independent specialist post-16/19 institutions. However, due to the current demands upon the capacity of the Access and Inclusion services there will be insufficient capacity to undertake the above additional statutory duties. **It is likely that there will be a need to appoint to an ALP Co-ordinator for Post-16 Education and a Specialist Post-16 Educational Psychology post as a minimum once legislation becomes enacted in 2023/24.**

Currently Access and Inclusion has used grant funding to employ a part-time temporary FE ALN Project Lead to work collaboratively with local FE colleges and on a regional and national basis with the Welsh Government FE ALN Transformation Lead to set up new processes and protocols to ensure that the LA is well placed to implement its new statutory 19-25 ALN duties in line with the national implementation timetable.

7.8 **PRIORITY 3: Replacement of the statutory assessment process with a single statutory plan**

All pupils with an ALN will now have a statutory IDP unlike the outgoing SEN system whereby only a minority with the most significant SEN have a statutory Statement of SEN. The majority of IDPs will be school based, where schools provide the ALP identified in their pupils' IDPs themselves through a combination of their overall school budget and their ECF allocation. However, over the past 5 years, there has been an overall 32.68% increase in the number of statements/IDPs (i.e., statutory plans) maintained for pupils in RCT.

**Table 2: Number of Statements/IDPs maintained over 5 years**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Number of statements /IDPs maintained</b>	1074	1165	1220	1306	1425

If the number of pupils identified as having an ALN continue to increase in RCT, there will be clear implications in relation the demand upon central Access and Inclusion services, in relation to the funding required by schools to meet the ALN of an increasing number of pupils who have an entitlement to statutory ALP, and in respect of the demand for placement in specialist placements.

In September 2019, the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care commissioned a **SEND review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time** as a response to widespread criticism that

the new SEN system was failing to meet the needs of its learners with SEN in England. The review identified that there had been an overall increase of 1.6 % in the numbers of learners identified as having SEN since 2016 (2 years after the implementation of the reforms).

Due to the high number of statements that will need to be transferred to IDPs during years 2 and 3 of the implementation timetable, the number of pupils at school action and school action plus who will need to be transferred to the new ALN system, together with the anticipated overall continuous increase in the number of pupils identified as having an ALN, Access and Inclusion has appointed an additional temporary ALP Coordinator to ensure that schools and the LA can meet their statutory ALN duties during the 3 year transition. **However, due to the enhanced aged range of 0-25 and the anticipated increase in the number of IDPs compared to the current number of statements, it is proposed that the additional ALP Coordinator post is made permanent.**

#### 7.9 **PRIORITY 4: Ensuring Sufficient Enhanced Capacity Funding to Meet Need**

**Enhanced Capacity Funding:** There has been a 13% average per annum increase in ECF funding in Individual School Budgets since 2018/19. This is likely to be an increased budget pressure moving forward in light of the enhanced statutory duties.

In support of the transition from statutory statements to IDPs, school funding changed from Additional Needs Funding (ANF) whereby funding was based upon recommended support (GR3 hours) defined in the statutory statement to an alternative method badged as Enhanced Capacity Funding (ECF).

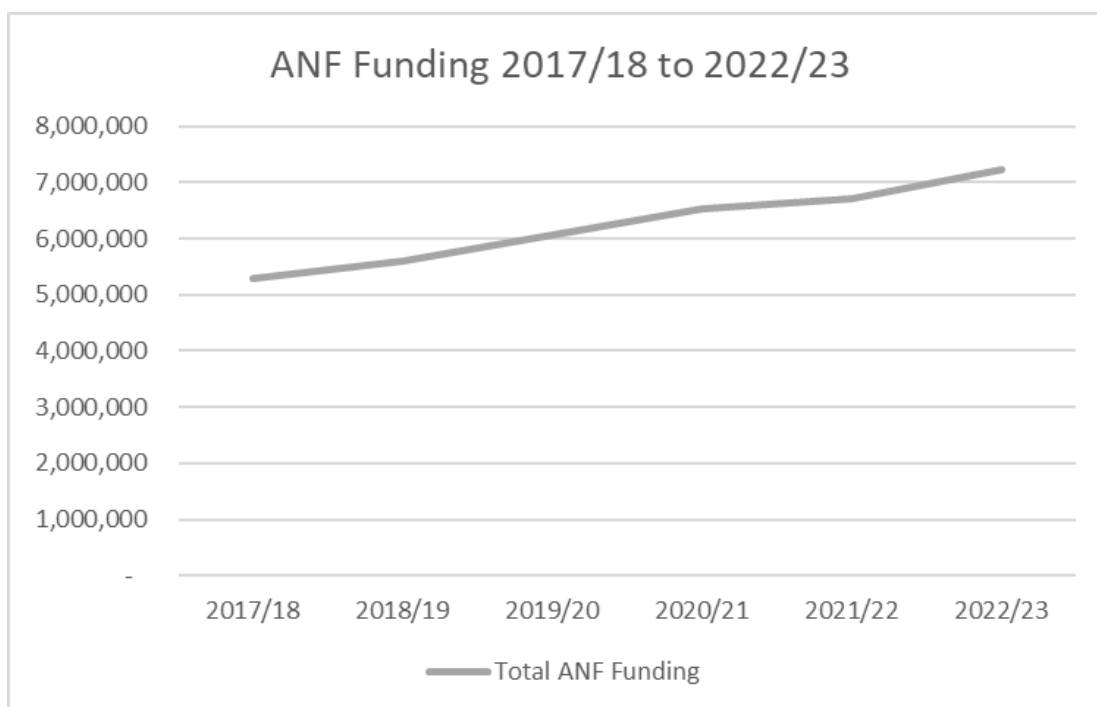
As hours of support are not defined in IDPs, an alternative method of funding schools was discussed with headteachers and at School Budget Forum and a consultation put forward.

The consultation resulted in the following:

- **Primary sector:** *Funding is top sliced to allow the LA to maintain a contingency fund for medical/physical needs prior to delegation. Remaining funding is allocated using pupil numbers double weighted towards early years pupils (nursery – reception FTE pupils) (50% weighted) and WIMD (50%) and includes floor funding of values equivalent of a 0.5 LSA.*
- **Secondary/All through sectors:** *No top slice – all funding is delegated to schools. Funding is allocated using pupil numbers (50% weighted) and WIMD (50%) and includes a floor funding of values equivalent of a 0.5 LSA.*

As seen in Graph 1, ECF was increased in 22/23 school budgets to reflect the growing trend of demand.

**Graph 1: Delegated additional needs funding for schools (ANF/ECF)**



However, there are concerns that the delegated funding is not sufficient to meet the increasingly complex needs of learners in mainstream settings. It is helpful to consider the impact of SEND reforms in England, where it has been noted that the national high needs budget in England has risen by more than 40% over three years with forecasts showing that total high needs spending will continue to increase year on year and recognising that *'local government spending is outstripping funding and the system is financially unsustainable'*.

If parallels are to be drawn between the SEND reforms in England and the ALN reform in Wales, and in light of the consistent declarations by Welsh Government that the ALN reforms will be cost-neutral, it is reasonable to assume that there will be increased financial pressure upon schools and, subsequently, the Council to meet the needs of its learners with ALN.

This, in addition to the enhanced age range to include children from birth to aged 25 will increase the local authority's statutory duties to provide statutory ALP and will enable all children/young people and their parents who have an ALN with the right to challenge their statutory entitlement via Education Tribunal Wales. **It is proposed that a growth in ECF budget is made available to reflect the complexity of need in mainstream education and to reduce the pressure on specialist placements.**

**7.10 PRIORITY 5: Ensuring that we have sufficient specialist provision to meet need, including Welsh medium provision**

RCT spends in the region of £4.7M annually on the provision of LSCs. There are currently approximately 400 pupils accessing the 44 LSC provisions within RCT across a range of needs. Table 3 outlines the range of mainstream LSCs currently available in RCT:

**Table 3: The range of mainstream LSCs in RCT**

ALN Learning Support Classes	Foundation Phase (FP) or Key Stage (KS)	Number of classes	Percentage of Overall LSCs
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	FP	5	39%
	KS 2	6	
	KS 3/4	6	
Complex Learning Difficulties	FP	3	27%
	KS 2	6	
	KS 3/4	3	
Hearing Impairment	FP/KS 2	1	2%
Observation & Assessment	FP	1	7%
Early Years Assessment and Intervention	FP	2	
Nurture	FP	2	18%
Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties	KS 2	4	
	KS 3/4	2	
Speech and Language Difficulties	FP/KS 2	2	7%
	KS 3/4	1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

A new Welsh medium LSC is due to open in academic year 2022/23.

Table 4 highlights the growth in the number of learners accessing learning support class provision over the past 4 academic years:

**Table 4: Numbers of Learning Accessing Learning Support Class Provision**

Academic Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 <i>(as at August 2022)</i>
<b>Number of learners accessing LSC provision</b>	314	366	368	400

This year on year increase, coupled with the year on year increase in demand for special school placements is a significant potential risk to RCT. The SEND Review 2022 in England suggests that a growth of 19% in the number of pupils accessing specialist placements has been evident between 2016 and 2021. In addition, the SEND Review also highlights that the above increase has, in turn, had a significant impact on local authority budgets in England since 2014/15, with spending on independent and non-maintained special school places increasing by 126%, other special school provision increasing by 38% and a greater number of children being placed in alternative provision with an 18% increase in spending.

Pressures on special school placement in RCT are well documented and are being considered as part of a proposal to establish a new special school in RCT.

Reports have been presented to Cabinet in February 2021, October 2021 and September 2022 on this matter.

It is proposed that a full review of the LA's LSC provision will be undertaken to determine whether there will continue to be sufficient capacity to meet the needs of learners with a range of ALN who require LSC provision. However, **initial data analysis indicates that there will be a need to enhance LSC provision for learners with ASD/social communication difficulties in Key Stage 3/4.**

We currently have only one Welsh medium LSC provision. As part of the Council's strategy to work towards one of the core aims of the new ALN legislation to develop a fully bilingual system there is a commitment to consult on establishing Welsh medium LSC provision in the new school which will replace Heol-Y-Celyn in September 2024. **The consultation will commence in January 2023 with a view to establishing provisions in September 2024, subject to the consultation outcomes. If approved, the additional costs associated with these new provisions will equate to approximately £240k.**

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

8.1 Given the pressures and priorities highlighted the key actions that will be taken over the next 3 years are summarised below and, where possible, potential costs identified:

### **8.2 PRIORITY 1: Meeting enhanced responsibilities and costs in the Early Years**

- Due to the increase in the number of children aged 0-3 being referred to the Early Years Forum with an identified ALN or with emerging needs, and the statutory duty upon the LA to provide ALP to an anticipated higher number of pre-school aged children in early years settings under the new ALN system, provision will need to be made for a potential growth in ECF for 0–3-year-olds on a year-by-year basis. The extent of the anticipated growth is yet unknown but will become clearer as we move forwards through the 3-year implementation timetable.
- In light of the significant increase in the number of children aged 0-3 being placed in special schools and LSCs, it is proposed that consideration is given to enhancing early years specialist provision as part of a wider LSC provision review. The creation of additional early years LSC provision would also alleviate immediate capacity issues within the special school sector in RCT as highlighted under a separate report to consult on the opening of a new special school in RCT.

### **8.3 PRIORITY 2: Meeting enhanced responsibilities and costs in the 19-25 age range**

- Ensuring that learners with ALN in the 19-25 age range are supported to access Further Education where appropriate will place new statutory duties upon the LA that have not been undertaken previously. As such,

additional capacity will be required by Access and Inclusion to undertake these duties on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it is proposed that an additional ALP Coordinator post is created within the Access and Inclusion Service. It is also proposed to introduce an additional full time Educational Psychologist post to the Educational psychology Service to ensure that FE colleges are supported on both a systemic and individual learner basis to be able to provide high quality ALP to their learners.

- Young people accessing further education with more complex ALN will require the local authority to maintain their IDPs and, therefore, fund any identified ALP to meet their educational needs. As it is not yet possible to quantify the number of young people who will take up the opportunity to access further education, we are unable to quantify the amount of ECF that will be necessary to support learners aged 19-25. It is proposed that a scoping exercise is undertaken over the next 2 academic years to better determine the number and the nature of the ALN of the young people likely to access further education in 2024/25 so that a realistic ECF budget can be set aside. This will, however, need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis as further education for learners with ALN aged 19-25 becomes more established and likely to be more in demand.
- During year 3 of the implementation timetable a scoping exercise will need to be undertaken to determine the potential impact of the introduction of the 19-25 cohort upon the capacity of learner support services. This will include a review of sensory services on a sub-regional basis to deal with the enhanced demand to support learners with visual and hearing impairments.

#### **8.4 PRIORITY 3: Replacement of the statutory assessment process with a single statutory plan:**

- By the end of the 3-year implementation plan, all statements will be replaced by IDPs, and any learners newly identified as having an ALN will require an IDP. The process required to draft IDPs is significantly different from the outgoing process of drafting statements and requires officers who have an educational background in ALN to undertake key duties on behalf of the LA both in relation to coordinating LA maintained IDPs and supporting schools and FE colleges to draft school/college-based IDPs. This has had implications for the staffing structure of the Access and Inclusion Service Administrative Service which has undergone a restructure whereby the two Statementing and Liaison Officer posts (SALO) within the ALNAS (Additional Learning Needs Administration Service) who currently undertake an administrative role in drafting statements are due to be deleted from the structure during academic year 2022/23. It is proposed that the SALO posts are replaced by an additional ALP Coordinator as referred to above under section 8.3. The deletion of the two SALOs will offset the cost of the new ALP Coordinator post.

#### **8.5 PRIORITY 4: Ensuring Enhanced Capacity Funding to Meet Need:** due to the Enhanced age range that falls under the new ALN legislation and the

anticipated increase in the number of learners requiring an IDP, it is proposed that:

- An ECF budget for early years is earmarked and reviewed annually to ensure that sufficient budget is set aside.
- Access and Inclusion Services and Finance Department undertake a joint scoping exercise to estimate the need for ECF during the first two years of 19-25 implementation. This will also need to be reviewed annually until the new system is fully embedded.
- Review the ECF currently delegated to mainstream schools in line with the number of pupils identified as having an ALN and in the context of wider school budget allocations and make recommendations for an increase in ECF if appropriate.

8.5.1 In addition, Access and Inclusion contributes approximately £50k per annum to Vision Products, a pooled fund between LA education and social services and Health within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg footprint. This arrangement is a cost-effective mechanism for education to provide children with specialist prescribed health-based equipment, such as specialist seating, that enables them to access their learning. Currently, the earmarked funding, which is based annually on level of usage, does not cater for the extended age range within the new Act. Therefore, it is proposed to:

- Undertake a scoping exercise to estimate the potential increase in the contribution to the pooled funding for both the 0-3 and 19-25 age range during 2022/23. This will need to be undertaken annually until the new ALN system is fully embedded.

8.6 **PRIORITY 5: Ensuring sufficient specialist provision to meet need, including Welsh medium:** Due to both the current and anticipated further increase in the number of pupils accessing specialist provision, it is proposed that:

- Access and Inclusion Services undertake a review of the LA's LSC provision with a view to seeking Cabinet approval to consult on any recommendations for an enhancement or reconfiguration of current LSC provision. Delays in the establishment of a special school will place enhanced pressures on mainstream provisions and some interim measures may well be necessary during this period.
- Access and Inclusion Services consult on establishing Welsh medium LSC provision in the new school that will replace the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

## 9. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Welsh Language, Equality, and Community Impact Assessments are not required for the purpose of this report.

## 10. **CONSULTATION**



- 10.1 If approval is granted to progress with the proposals to restructure the Access and Inclusion Service to provide additional capacity support will be sought from Human Resources and Finance in line with the Council's policies and procedures as appropriate.
- 10.2 If approval is granted to progress with the proposal to undertake a review of the LA's LSC provision, a consultation process will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's Statutory Code – School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018).

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 To ensure the Council is able to comply with its enhanced statutory duties under the new ALN legislation Cabinet approval is sought to increase the capacity of the Access and Inclusion Service by reconfiguring its services, and to secure additional resources to ensure sufficient high-quality ALP is available for learners with ALN within the county borough.
- 11.2 Due to the phased 3-year implementation it is not possible to provide definitive costs for all of the proposals and risks identified within the report. A breakdown of costs has been provided where possible. Where terms and conditions allow, grant funding will be utilised to reduce the pressure upon Council budgets.
- 11.3 Restructure of Access and Inclusion Services:  
Post creations:
- 1 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Coordinator - £72k (academic year 2023/24)
  - 1 Educational Psychologist - £75k (academic year 2023/24).
- 11.4 Review of LSC provision:
- Additional early years LSC - £120k (academic year 2023/24)
  - 2 x Welsh Medium LSCs - £240k (academic year 2024/25)
  - Wider review and proposals for change to be undertaken in 2023/24 and presented to Cabinet for consideration. It is likely that an additional Key stage 3/4 provision for ASD will be required in academic year 2023/24.
- 11.5 Enhanced Capacity Funding:
- Early Years – to be reviewed annually - £25k per annum minimum
  - 19-25 age range – scoping to be undertaken in 2022/23 to inform implementation from 2023/24. It would be very difficult to predict at this juncture what the potential costs will be.
  - School based ECF – annual review of mainstream needs to be undertaken but a projected growth of at least 13% per annum based on trend data.

- Undertake a scoping exercise during 2022/23 to project increased costs for specialist equipment.

**Table 5: Projected Inescapable Budget Pressures from 23/24-25/26**

	Para. Ref.	Additional Financial Investment to 22/23 £,000	Budget pressures 23/24 £,000	Budget pressures 24/25 £,000	Budget pressures 25/26 £,000
<b>Central Inclusion Services Resources</b>					
3 Additional Learning Provision Co-ordinators		217			
Education Psychologist		73			
Complex Case Manager		67			
Family Liaison Officer		36			
Statutory IDPs for Home tuition (no requirement at present)					
2 GR6 Wellbeing Support for Home and Group Tuition (currently funded by grant)					
Sensory & Medical may require an additional teacher - demand for service					
<b>Additional School Funding</b>					
2 Welsh Medium Learning Support classes from Sept 24	7.10			140	100
Learning Support Class - ASD / social communication	7.10		70	50	0
ANF / ECF in mainstream schools - based upon previous growth @ 13%	7.9	507	570	642	
SEBD Nurture - additional Learning Support Assistants in Learning Support classes		140			
Early Years Learning Support Class from Sept 23	7.6		70	50	
<b>New responsibilities for Further Education learners</b>					
ECF for learners in FE from Sept 23.	7.7		TBA		
Additional Equipment from Vision Products for FE learners			TBA		
Additional Educational Psychologist for FE learners from Sept 23	7.7		44	31	
ALP co-ordinator for FE - Sept 23	7.7		42	30	
Post 16 Independent Specialist Placement Institutions - assume funding passes to LAs from WG. No agreed timescale but assumed Sept 24.				498	355
Anticipated funding transferring from WG				-498	-355
<b>New responsibilities for Pre- school learners</b>					
ECF in Early Years settings	7.6		25	TBA	
Early Years Lead Officer (new statutory post)		70			
Early Years ALN specialist teacher		63			
		<b>1,173</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>100</b>

11.6 Funding for the above costs has already been identified and/or included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan alongside maximising available grant funding opportunities.

## 12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 Section 316 of the Education Act 1996<sup>1</sup> specifies that children and young people with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational provision that

<sup>1</sup> [Education Act 1996](#)

their learning difficulty calls for, the efficient education of other children and young people and the efficient use of resources.

- 12.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires Local Authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. The statutory ALN Code (Wales) 2021, places a statutory duty upon the local authority to keep under review the overall additional learning provision available in its area and supporting arrangements, to ensure provision is sufficient to meet the overall needs of its population of learners with additional learning needs.

### **13. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015**

- 13.1 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 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families

- 13.2 The proposals will ensure that two of RCTCBC's three key priorities will be met. These include:

- Economy: Building a strong economy.
- People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.

- 13.3 The proposals will ensure that some of RCTCBC's most vulnerable learners will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes. The proposals will ensure that the local authority is able to meet its statutory duties in relation to ALN provision during years 2 and 3 of the national 3-year ALN implementation timetable.

- 13.4 Organising services so that they are focussed on early intervention and prevention is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015<sup>2</sup> and a key element of RCTCBC's Corporate Plan.

### **14. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

- 14.1 Given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of the ALNET Act (2018) and the ALN Code (2021) the above proposals to secure additional capacity and resources will ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations, and as such is a strategic proposal relevant to all wards.

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<sup>2</sup> [Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015](#)

## **15. CONCLUSION**

- 15.1 From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 Rhondda Cynon Taf has been under a statutory duty to implement year 1 of the national three-year ALN implementation programme. Additional resources provided by Cabinet as the result of a Phase One review of additional capacity and resources have enabled the Access and Inclusion Service to realign and ensure that it was well placed to implement its new statutory duties in Year 1 and 2 of the national ALN implementation timetable. The Access and Inclusion Service has made effective use of Welsh Government ALN grant funding to create additional temporary posts that have been key to enabling the local authority to meet its immediate additional statutory duties under the new ALN legislation.
- 15.2 The above report provides an overview of further risks in terms of additional capacity and resources required by Access and Inclusion and their potential associated costs that are considered necessary to ensure that RCT will be able to fulfil its increasing statutory ALN responsibilities as we progress through years 2 and 3 of the implementation timetable and beyond.
- 15.3 Based on the evidence above it is recommended that approval is given to progress with the above Phase Two and Three proposals during years 2 and 3 of the ALN implementation timetable. This will ensure that the Access and Inclusion Service has sufficient resources to enable the LA to provide high quality ALP to all of its children and young people with ALN aged 0-25. It is also recommended that approval is given for Cabinet to receive a further report on the implementation of the new ALN legislation and any recommendations for future investment at a later stage of the three-year implementation timetable.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

**Item: FURTHER UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL ACT 2018 IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Background Papers**

None

**Officer to contact:** Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

#### CWM TAF MORGANNWG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

#### REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE

**AUTHOR:** Cathrine Silver, Interim Service Manager for Carers, Direct Payments, and Service User Engagement

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve for submission to Welsh Government the 2021/22 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

Approves the 2021/22 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report (Appendix 1).

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Welsh Government provided transitional funding of £1million per annum for Wales in 2021/22 (£161,000 for Cwm Taf Morgannwg) to protect and build on progress to date and to support the expansion of Carers rights under the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act 2014 (SSWB).
- 3.2 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg annual report details how the funding was spent across the region during the year. The full report is attached, but key areas of work across the region have included:
  - The full amount of funding was allocated to local authorities, the health boards and third sector organisations through an application process.

- Support to encourage GP surgeries to develop carer related services including Carer Awareness training, Carers Champions in each surgery, a Carers noticeboard and access to information to enable swift signposting of carers to carer services in the area.
- Improvements to the hospital discharge process for unpaid carers.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 RCT has supported the work across the region and has maintained many of the carer support services that were offered throughout the pandemic, whilst developing a hybrid model and delivering face to face services where appropriate.

Developments during the year for RCT include:

#### 4.2 **Carer Conversations:**

We continue to use the Carer Conversation approach to Carer Assessments, which appears to be positive for our carers. During 2021-22 a total of 485 were completed, (Adult Carers) which is an increase of 129% on the previous year. For Young Carers, the number of assessments completed in 2021-22 was 98, an increase of 111% on the previous year.

#### 4.3 **Contingency and emergency planning:**

Advice and guidance relating to contingency and emergency planning has been written and is now available to all staff. The guidance has been developed in a format relevant to the whole of adult social care, including carers, and is becoming embedded in practice.

#### 4.4 **Young Carers and Sibling Carers**

- Siblings took part in the Young Carers Card promotion film.
- The Sibling Pilot was designed, delivered, and completed, following funding from Welsh Government. The project is based on a six-week period of intensive support to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience, followed with opportunities to take part in a range of activities throughout the year. (See Appendix 3)
- The current contract with Action for Children is due to end in December 2022, and a retender process for the Young Carers Support will be initiated in the Summer.



- For full details on the Young Carer support provided during the pandemic, attached as Appendix 2 is the Report to Corporate Parenting Board March 2022.

#### 4.5 **Young Adult Carers (YACs)**

- A new YAC worker was recruited and in post as of January 2022 and Families First funding has been secured for 22/23.
- The YAC programme of events continues to focus on emotional wellbeing and building resilience, however in line with the needs of the young people, support is shifting towards a more individualised/bespoke approach.
- Young Carers and YAC recognition event took place.

#### 4.6 **RCT Carers Support Project:**

- Happy@home Grants have been coordinated with 198 successful applications, totalling excess of £53,000.
- The new Carers Hub in Pontypridd has been established and is now open. ICF funding has enabled the development of the new home for all-age carer support services. This allows for increased collaboration and facilitation of groups and face to face activities and consultations.
- Staff are delivering support on a hybrid model, continuing to offer the online services that were considered successful during the pandemic.
- Coordination and allocating of caravan breaks for parent carers has been delivered.
- Online booking forms and essential Carer Support paperwork has been developed and are now live.

#### 4.7 **Engagement work**

- Consultations with carers on the newly developed Direct Payments factsheet and Contingency Guidance have been undertaken.
- A Community of Enquiry regarding what makes carers feel supported in terms of respite and short breaks has been completed.
- A new graduate has been recruited and in post as of March 2022.

#### 4.8 **Working Carers**

- Working Carers Guidance to support Council staff who are also unpaid carers has been developed. We are working toward achieving the Carer Friendly Employer accreditation offered by Carers Trust.

### 5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no foreseen equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

### 6. **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no immediate Welsh Language implications relating to the proposals within this report. The Council will ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards if a consultation process is initiated in relation to the proposals outlined within this report. All recommended proposals if implemented will comply with Welsh Government's "More Than Just Words" Strategic Framework in Health and Social Care".

### 7. **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The multi-agency Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Partnership has led the implementation and monitoring of the Statement of Intent and the Welsh Government national priorities for carers. It has representatives from the Health Board, all three Local Authorities, Third Sector organisations and Carers. The work also involves a range of other partners including Department of Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus. (See CTM End of Year Report, within background papers for more information).

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

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Partnership oversees the use of the Welsh Government transitional funding, reporting to the SSWB Transformation Leadership Group and the SSWB Partnership Board. For the financial year 2324 the carers grant will become part of the Regional Integration Fund, the implications of this will be considered next year.

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

- 9.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and is intended to transform the way services are delivered. It repeals the majority of community care legislation including the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.
- 9.2 [Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers](#) was introduced in April 2021 and represents a renewed commitment to improving the

recognition of, and support to, unpaid carers in Wales. It sets out Welsh Government's revised national priorities for unpaid carers, including the addition of a new priority on education and employment. The four priorities are:

- To identify unpaid carers and support them and value them
- To give unpaid carers information, help and advice
- To support the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers
- To support education, training, and work for unpaid carers.

9.3 The newly published [Strategy for Unpaid Carers Delivery Plan 2021](#) will begin to inform Unpaid Carer work in RCT, in terms of developing strategies and delivering support to carers going forward.

## **10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN & OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

10.1 The work to implement the Statement of Intent for Carers and the Welsh Government national priorities for carers has complemented the Council's priorities to: "Promote independence and positive lives for everyone", including Carers of all ages.

### **Other Information:**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**CWM TAF MORGANNWG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE**

**Background Papers:**

Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers:  
<https://gov.wales/strategy-unpaid-carers>

**Officer to contact:**

Mari Ropstad, Interim Head of Service – Access, Carers and Support@Home



## Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers End of Year Report 2021 – 2022

Eligible activity includes:

- 1) **Supporting Carers in general practice** - working with your partners, through the primary care clusters, to implement a scheme that supports health professionals working in primary care and community care to develop their carer awareness and understanding of how to identify carers, the issues that carers face and ways of working to better support carers; and
- 2) **Discharge from hospital planning** - taking steps to support and engage carers in the patient's discharge planning, for example better information, advice and assistance (IAA) provided to all carers when the person they care for is discharged from hospital.

### 1) Supporting carers in general practice

What action/ activity have you undertaken to work with partners to support health professionals working in primary care and community care to develop their carer awareness and understanding of:

- how to identify carers,
- the issues that carers face and,
- ways of working to better support carers.

#### Action taken

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, 2021/22 has continued to be challenging. In order for services to continue to meet the need of Carers across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) region, organisations have adapted their working practices. Bridgend County Borough Council (Bridgend CBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC), Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) continue to work collaboratively in improving support, information and recognition of Carers, whilst making best use of a wide range of knowledge, expertise and support services.

Services for Carers in CTM are provided by a range of organisations in the statutory and Third Sector. As well as accessing general services, like GP Surgeries, there are also specific services to support Carers, including young Carers and young adult Carers. These include:

- In RCT, a Carers Support project run by the Local Authority.
- Services commissioned from the Third Sector including Action for Children, Barnardos and Age Connects Morgannwg.
- A network of Carers Champions in settings across the health sector.
- In Merthyr, services to support Carers were commissioned from third sector organisations and MTCBC have appointed a Carers Coordinator.
- Across Bridgend, Carers Trust South East Wales provide Information and Advice to Carers.
- A Carers Hospital Discharge project across the CTM Region.

In CTM to enable GP surgeries to identify Carers, we ensure each surgery has a Carers Champion, a Carers noticeboard that is updated regularly and dissemination of relevant and timely Carer related information to enable swift signposting of Carers to Carers services in their area.

In addition, CTM deliver Agored Carer Awareness training, this accredited course assists learners to identify and support unpaid Carers. Due to current coronavirus restrictions the training has been adapted to be delivered online with participants from community mental health and GP practices. With the recent easing of covid-19 restrictions CTMUHB are driving the Agored training forward and are seeing a positive response from health, GP practices and third sector organisations.

The transitional funding to support Carers provided by Welsh Government (WG) since 2016/17 to support the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 (which came into force April 2016), is very welcome in maintaining the momentum of the Carer related work achieved to date.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Carers Partnership Group works to prevent any negative impact on Carers services and support. The CTM Carers Partnership Group ensures the continued development and raising awareness of Carers throughout the region, meeting the increased responsibilities for partners under the Social Services Well Being Act.

CTM continue to have representation at the COLIN (Carers Officer Learning and Improvement Network) meetings with representatives from Local Authorities and CTMUHB attending.

During 2021/22 CTMUHB, Bridgend CBC, MTCBC and RCTCBC have sustained the success of the previous year and continued to work collaboratively in improving support, information and recognition of Carers. This CTM end of year report highlights the key areas of work and provides examples of the progress made.

Following discussion with colleagues from Bridgend CBC, MTCBC, RCTCBC, Bridgend Association Voluntary Organisation (BAVO), Interlink Rhondda Cynon Taf, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT), the CTM Regional Planning Board (RPB) and CTMUHB – recommendations were made to the CTM Carers Partnership Group and then approved by the RPB’s Transformation Leadership Group in the allocation of the 2021/22 Welsh Government’s Carers Grant.

£161,000.00 of the WG Carers funding was allocated through an application process. Organisations were able to bid up to £50,000 of projects to engage with Carers of all ages. The successful projects are listed below:

Name of organisation	Project Name	Outline of project/Areas included	Duration	Funding Received
CTMUHB	Carers Co-ordinator	The Carers Co-ordinator will work across the region with GP practices, hospitals etc. and engage with Local Authorities and Third Sector organisation assisting them to identify Carers in the community.	1 year	50,000
Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil (CAMT)	CAB4Carers	CAMT will deliver a bespoke service focussing on Carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital Discharge</li> <li>• Ongoing support in the community</li> </ul> This will be delivered across the region.	1 year	43,744
Action for Children RCT Young Carers Project	School Delivery Works	Action for Children will work in schools throughout RCT to raise awareness of young Carers and share their stories. This funding is to add additional hours to the current provision.	1 year	5,000

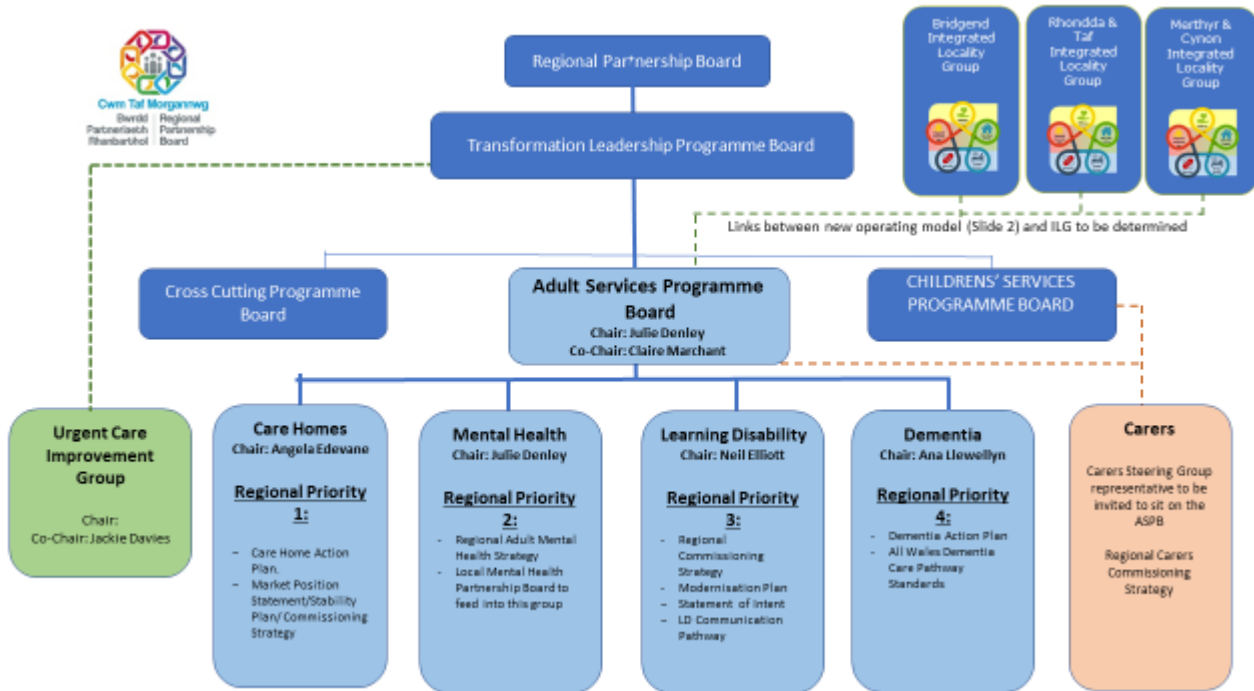
CASE (Care & Support Each Other)	CASE YACS	CASE have proposed a calendar with a series of Learning and skills events that reflect the theme of culture, education, physical and mental wellbeing alongside resilience in RCT.	1 year	1,875
ASD Rainbows	Rainbows families	This project will employ a Family Outreach Worker to work across CTM. They will carry out community work with families offering the individualised support needed to enable families to access community activities/support. They will also run a parent and child group for a year.	1 year	27,691
MTCBC	Barnardos	MTCBC with Barnardos supports opportunities for Young Carers to socialise with other Young Carers outside of school and offers opportunities to be active and go on holidays without the people they care for.	1 year	5,000
Taf Memory Assessment Service, CTMUHB	Support Projects	This funding will be distributed between a number of projects that will assist Carers and also individuals living with Dementia. Accessing professional and peer support for not only their own health and wellbeing, but also in giving them the tools to be able to help maintain the health and wellbeing of the individuals they are caring for. This will be in the Taf area.	1 year	2,324
RCTCBC	Carers Support Project	A bespoke counselling service to support young Carers during the Covid-19 pandemic	1 year	5,000
Bridgend County Borough Council	Bridgend County Borough Council	Aims to set up a young Carer network in Bridgend giving young Carers a voice and delivery of service	1 year	5,000
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	Carer activity sessions	1 year	5,000
Trinity Care & Support	Trinity Care & Support	Providing respite for Carers and their families	1 year	10,000
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB	Dementia services	Providing activity and craft resources for dementia Carer group	1 year	366

Please explain:

How you have **worked with partners** to implement and deliver improved support for carers?

### The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Partnership Group

The CTM Carers Partnership Group was established in 2019 and oversees the CTM Carers Statement of Intent. The governance of the partnership has been reviewed by the CTM RPB. The CTM Carers Partnership will report to the Adults Services Programme Board that sits underneath the RPB's Transformation Leadership Programme Board.



The CTM Carers Partnership Group has met during 2021-22. Currently membership consists of: Bridgend CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, RCT CBC, VAMT, BAVO, Interlink, Citizen Advice Bureau RCT, Merthyr and Valleys MIND, a Carer representative and CTMUHB.

### Statement of Intent for Carers

Following the end of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019, CTMUHB, in partnership with BCBC, RCTCBC and MTCBC produced a Statement of Intent for Carers.



Statement of Intent Carers.docx

The CTM Carers Partnership Group await guidance from WG on their proposed Action Plan and the Ministerial Advisory Group as to whether there will be a requirement to produce a regional Carers Strategy or a regional Action Plan to implement WG proposals.

[CTM Carers A-Z Guide](#)



Throughout the pandemic, CTMUHB has sustained the delivery of A-Z Carer Guides across our region. This resource is available online or hard copy and has proven to be a valuable resource for organisations and Carers living in the CTM region. Copies have been sent to GP practices and outpatient departments on all Acute General Hospital sites.

Partner organisations across the region have also received a supply, including the Community Coordinators who are based across the RCT and Merthyr Tydfil region. Age Connects Morgannwg distributed these across the Bridgend region.



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## **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

### **Carers Counselling Service**

The existing contract for Carers Counselling was increased using the £5,000 grant, plus an additional £2,000 from our core budget, to provide increased counselling sessions throughout 2021/2022. This has allowed for an additional 3 sessions per week on top of the 6 covered by the basic contract. This has allowed a reduction in the waiting list from 6 months at the start of the year to 4 months at present. The demand for the service has remained high throughout the year, with more than 50 unpaid carers currently on the waiting list.

### **Young Adult Carers (YAC) Service**

The YAC service had a new support worker in January and have had a busy end to the year. They have utilised the grant money to fund a pizza and quiz night in January to meet the new worker and plan their activities and priorities for the coming year. In February they enjoyed a trip to Escape Rooms in Cardiff, focusing on building their teamwork and social interaction skills. In March they visited the White Water Rafting centre in Cardiff. This event was extremely positively received with every attendee scoring the event 5/5 overall. As for measurable outcomes, some YAC's reported back it was "just what they needed" as a break from their intense caring role at home, just to have fun and relax with their peer group.

## **Bridgend County Borough Council**

## **Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council**

### Unpaid carers experience day grant update

Merthyr Tydfil CBC carers project applied for funding from Cwm Taf UHB for unpaid carers experience days, within our application we put forward that if funding was awarded carers would be able to attend coach trips to access days out, outdoor activity days and Bike Park Wales experience days. I approached our carers from our carer database and carers within third sector groups to then be able to organise experience days but unfortunately I was met with no interest from carers to attend any of the above.

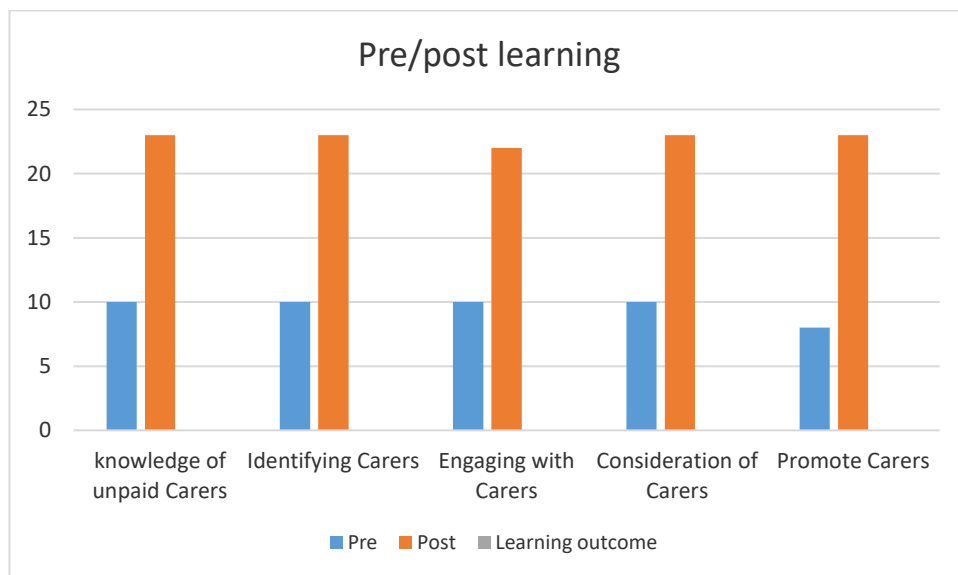
I feel that as we were awarded Welsh Government grant funding for carers innovative respite that carers took the opportunity to have a break away from their caring role in a different form of respite. From this we have learnt to coproduce with carers to see what respite would look like for them before applying for funding.

How you have **measured success** using qualitative and quantitative data, (including the number of General Practices registered/compliant)

Using course feedback forms we have been able to evidence the benefit of the Agored training in GP surgeries (graph 1)

There is a stark difference in the pre and post course knowledge which demonstrates GP surgeries who have undertaken training are more knowledgeable in recognising, identifying and supporting unpaid Carers.

Graph 1



## Annual Action Plans

The CTM Carers Action Plan is not a fixed and final plan, but a framework which sets out work to be taken forward over 2021/22. The Action plan is developed with detailed key actions, lead responsibilities, timescales, resource implications and performance measures, which will focus on the outcomes we (the partners) want to achieve.

During 2021-22, due to the impact of the pandemic on the working process, we were not able to update the action plan. Work is currently underway to update the action plan for 2022-23



Action plan  
2021.docx

## Outcomes we want to achieve and monitoring progress

The success of this Action Plan and the benefits it delivers will be reviewed regularly. It will be a partnership plan and a variety of staff within a wide range of sectors will be responsible for working in collaboration to implement it effectively.

An annual report on progress of the action plan will be reported to the CTM Transformation Leadership Programme Board, as well as the individual organisations i.e. the three Local Authorities, CTMUHB and WG.

## Feedback from carers who have accessed and used these services.

We received this case study from the Citizen Advice Bureau Merthyr Tydfil's Carers Hospital Discharge Project called "CAB4Carers":

Susan is an unpaid carer for her brother, Colin. Her brother has been in hospital for many weeks. She has been referred to CAB4Carers for help with issues she is currently facing.

Susan's nephew has been helping her to prepare for Colin's discharge from hospital. Her nephew did not understand how many issues Susan was suffering herself until he started to help her prepare for Colin's discharge.

Susan was currently classed as 'Jobseeker' and was claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This was her only income. She was receiving help paying her rent through Housing Benefit. She was also receiving Council Tax reduction. As Colin was living with her, the Housing Benefit was being reduced as he was a non-dependant.

The CAB4Carer adviser, Jack looked at both her and her brother's income. Jack was able to secure £73 a week for Colin through State Pension Credit. This now meant that she was no longer a non-dependent. Susan's Housing Benefit increased to cover all the rent. We also helped Susan and her own health. We signposted her to her Housing Association for an assessment for aids and adaptations. We have also advised her on support she could get from her Local Authority, including a carers assessments. Susan was advised about other services for carers available to support her well-being. At present felt she was happy now that her money worries were being alleviated.

## Specific questions to be addressed:

What awareness raising has been undertaken with practice staff (all professions) on the needs of carers, including young carers?

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Co-ordinator**

In CTMUHB, there is a Carers Co-ordinator who:

- Attends public and virtual events such as the Health & Wellbeing forum
- Delivers Agored training to health and third sector organisations.
- Produces promotional materials and merchandise.
- Attends Senior Nurse meetings to promote the role of a Carer.
- Organises the annual Carers conference
- Attends Nurse Induction sessions for all new nurses joining CTMUHB.
- Uses social media as an information sharing platform

The CTM Carers Co-ordinator has continued to send Carers Champions based in the GP practices information to inform them of any relevant and timely Carers information.

### **Carers Conference**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic there was no Carers conference in 2021-22. This is an event we hope to achieve in 2023.

### **Awareness Sessions**

During the pandemic CTMUHB and partners have continued to make progress in raising the awareness of Carers of all ages. This has been done through social media and press releases.

### **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Intranet/internet page**

CTMUHB have a designated Carers page in the intranet for internal staff to access the latest information, advice and support. We recognise an organisation of our multitude have a high number of Carers and promote the CTMUHB Staff Carers Policy.

CTMUHB also played an integral part in raising awareness of the Covid Vaccine for Carers across our region through information on webpages, social media and fielding telephone calls from Carers.

### **GP Support Officers (GPSO)**

Merthyr Tydfil Primary Care Cluster have GP Support Officers (GPSO's) who engage, signpost, offer advice and work with patients to influence cultural and behavioural change for service users within a Primary Care setting. They advise/assess service users and address social issues and offer support. They promote independence and enable service users to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. GPSO's support the reduction of attendance within general practice for non-medical intervention and will make referrals to Merthyr Tydfil CBC and the Third Sector.

GPSO's, during consultations, have often identified Carers who have not identified themselves as a Carers (they are a family member that feel it is their duty to look after their relatives). This cohort of service users were not claiming carers allowance or receiving any support from any groups, such as Alzheimer's or Stroke Society.

GPSO's have been able to support these Carers by identifying what is causing stress and putting some extra support and ensuring the correct financial assistance are put in place. They also ensure links with the relevant agencies and particularly ensuring the required adaptations are made at home.

How many General Practices / health centres have implemented Investors in Carers, something similar, or are planning to implement this accredited scheme?

**AGORED Cymru**

The CTM Carers Co-ordinator encourages GP practices to enrol on the Carer Awareness AGORED Cymru training course. The course is a tool which GP practices can access to develop their awareness of Carers and how they can be supported within the community.

There are currently 19 learners registered for the Agored training and 4 have completed. Learners are from health, GP and third sector organisations.

During the pandemic, and for the safety of staff and visitors the Carers Co-ordinator was unable to visit GP practices and continue training. New ways of working were identified and training is now being delivered virtually.

Regular updates are posted on social media and internally to inform Carers what is available to them, there is also a designated Carers page in the internet which provides information for staff who are Carers. This also promotes and encourages Carer champions to be identified throughout clinical settings, we currently have 61 Carer Champions registered who are sent regular bulletins on carer events and information which they can promote in their area of work.

The CTM Carers Co-ordinator will continue to reinvigorate and recruit Carers Champions in 2021/22.

How and what specific support are General Practice staff providing to carers?

### **GP Leaflets**

The Carers Co-ordinator has designed and distributed Carer booklets to GP Practices which has a registration form enabling a Carer to complete and hand to their Carer Champion. This has encouraged Carers to self-identify and engage with their GP surgery. These are available to all GP surgeries across the region.

### **Carer Notice Boards**

Each surgery signed up to the Agored training is given a Carers Notice Board that is updated by the Carers Champion monthly. There is also a Carers Champion poster to notify patients who their Carers Champion is. Relevant information has continued to be disseminated throughout the pandemic.

### **Carers Champion Badges**

Each Carers Champion wears a badge so they are easily recognisable to patients.

### **Primary Care Communications Lead**

The Carers Co-ordinator has liaised with key personal in Primary Care to promote good practice by using case studies of the Carer related work being undertaken in GP surgeries across CTM.

What are the tangible outcomes for carers?

All of the positive outcomes as previously mentioned throughout the report.

What signposting arrangements are in place within the General Practice to enable carers to access other support where needed e.g. third sector helplines, websites or local carers services?

Each GP surgery has a designated Carer Champion who has been issued with a Carers notice board. This is regularly updated by the Carer Champion with information on what events or services are being held in their locality. They also have posters displaying who their Carer Champion is for their surgery.

The CTMUHB Carer's Co-ordinator also sends timely and relevant information they may find beneficial. If there is a specific request that Carer Champions may not know where to signpost, they

are able to contact the CTMUHB Carer Co-ordinator for advice. There are also community coordinators in each GP surgery which Carer Champions are able to signpost Carers for further information and advice. GP surgeries also use their television monitors to inform patients of Carer services.

## 2) **Discharge from hospital planning**

What action/ activity have you undertaken to support and engage carers in the patient's discharge planning? For example: better information, advice and assistance (IAA) provided to all carers when the person they care for is discharged from hospital.

### **Action taken**

#### **Carers Hospital Discharge Project**

During the pandemic resources were utilised to support the pressures faced by the NHS. The CTMUHB Carers Co-ordinator has built strong working relationships within the acute general hospitals offering advice, support and information to Carers who could be staff members and signposting to support organisations. Links with Carer Champions were upheld informing them of any Carer related announcements.

Building on the success of the Carers Hospital Project run by Citizen Advice Merthyr Tydfil (CAB) in 2019-20, plans were put in place to further our engagement on hospital wards. Meeting with the Head of Nursing at Prince Charles Hospital, it was agreed CAB would have weekly access to two hospital wards. This would enable Carers to be identified on admission and identify barriers that would threaten a timely discharge.

The pandemic has for now halted this project but we continue to work with CAB in readiness to resume once safe to do so.

Please explain:

How you have **worked with partners** to implement and deliver improved support for carers

By increasing our engagement network we have been able to establish good working partnerships with more departments within Local Authorities and other third sector organisations.

For young Carers we have sustained our partnership with Barnardos, Merthyr Tydfil. During lockdown CTMUHB was able to provide photocopying facilities which enabled Barnardos to deliver activity packs. CTMUHB also purchased 30 copies of a children's book written by young Carers which will be distributed throughout our children's wards.

On Carers Rights Day we raised awareness of Carers of all ages on our social media platforms. This was in place of the information stands in each of our general hospitals with third sector organisations that would have normally been held. These information stalls enable our partners to promote their services to Carers.

How you have **measured success** using qualitative and quantitative data, (including the number of General Practices registered/compliant)

Throughout Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend there is a total of 80 General Practitioners. All were sent letters inviting them to nominate a Carer champion and the opportunity to undertake the AGORED training. We had an initial response from 18 requesting more information. From these, 10 practices enrolled staff to undertake the training, in total 13 staff (with some practices putting two through training). To date we have successfully certificated 8 learners (2019-20) and the remainder are continuing with the AGORED course. No members of staff completed the training course in 2020-21 but have continued the course so will complete in the coming months. We use an in-house spreadsheet that is regularly updated to track the learner's progress. In addition we send letters to all 80 General Practitioners, dentists, pharmacies and opticians on a regular basis to try to engage them further and increase nominations for this course.

Feedback from learners indicates the learning has given them the confidence to approach a "What matters" conversation with Carers and they feel more confident identifying Carers. Largely due to the training course they are able to signpost Carers for additional support and advice.

**Specific questions to be addressed:**

Have hospital procedures regarding patient discharge been adapted, or introduced, to improve staff awareness of, and input from carers?

CTMUHB are currently delivering Agored Carer Awareness training to the Mental Health services. This training is scheduled until June 2022 ensuring all staff are captured. Early feedback from learners is positive and are identifying ways in which they can adapt services to increase Carer support.

How are carers being proactively involved in the hospital discharge/discharge plans for the patient?

If Carers are identified by clinical staff, they can be referred to our hospital discharge project. This will give the Carer the opportunity to raise any concerns they have regarding the service user being discharged.

It may be they require additional support or home adaptations. If identified these issues could be addressed before discharge, therefore giving the Carer more confidence to continue with their caring role at home and possibly reduce the need for re-admission.

We continue to make the links with other projects being run from the hospital setting, such as Care & Repair and Age Connects Morgannwg.

Are carers being pro-actively signposted to third sector support or local authority social services for information, support, or to obtain a carers needs assessment (as appropriate), as part of the patient's discharge process?

Since April 2021 Cab4Carers have identified and signposted 168 Carers for further support.

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

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**MARCH 2022**

#### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES: YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS REPORT**

**Author(s): Mari Ropstad, Service Manager – Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments**

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

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with an update on the work with young carers in RCT during 2021/2022.

##### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

Acknowledge the information contained within the report.

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

3.1 This is an information report.

##### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1 The support service for young carers (aged 5-17) continues to be provided on a commissioned basis by Action for Children. Specific support is available via an externally funded post for Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25). Sibling carers (children whose sibling has additional needs) receive limited support via the Carers Support Project.

4.2 The assessment function for young carers remains within the Information, Assistance and Advice Service for Children's Services.

4.3 The all-age carers hub in Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, is now operational, with the Carers Support Project, the Young Carers Services, the Young Adult Carers Project and the Sibling Project all under the same roof.

4.4 The full report for RCT Young Carers and Young Adult Carers 2021/2022 (to date) is attached in Appendix 1. Members may wish to note the below key details:

- There has consistently been a higher than average rate of referrals for young carer assessments throughout the year.
- Similar to last year, a higher level of one-to-one sessions were provided to young carers this year to mitigate the continued restrictions on group work. Face-to-face group sessions were held when possible to provide young carers with a break from caring, including trips in the summer and Christmas parties.
- There are indications that the pandemic has significantly affected the health and wellbeing of young carers, and that it has increased the caring responsibilities for many.
- A pilot project has trialled a bespoke service for sibling carers. The project is based on a six-week period of intensive support to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience, followed with opportunities to take part in a range of activities throughout the year. This pilot will be evaluated at the end of the year to determine a way forward.
- The Young Adult Carers Services has had limited staffing during the year, but a new worker is now in post. Most support has been provided online and there is a need to deliver more face-to-face activities for this group of young people.
- There are various other pieces of work worth noting throughout the year, including the further development of the Young Carer Card, the Carers Covid film and the Young Carers Schools Award.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This is an information report.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

6.1 This is an information report.

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

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

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

8.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and is intended to transform the way services

are delivered. It repeals the majority of community care legislation including the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.

8.2 The National Plan for Unpaid Carers published in early 2021 will become increasingly important for developing strategies and delivering support to carers of all ages going forward.

## **9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

9.1 The business covered in this report contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

## **10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 Young carers were significantly affected by the pandemic and support services going forward will need to focus on dealing with the ongoing consequences.

10.2 Work to adopt an all-age cohesive service approach to unpaid carers will continue, with the commissioned young carers service due to co-locate with the Carers Support Project from September 2021.

10.3 The new National Plan for Unpaid Carers will inform regional and local carers strategies and priorities.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

### **AS AMENDED BY**

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

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

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**MARCH 2022**

## **APPENDICIES**

Appendix 1 – RCT Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Annual Report 2021/2022.

## **SIBLING CARERS PILOT PROGRAMME Welsh Government Grant Report**

### **The Definition of a Sibling Carer**

Sibling Carers are those who help to care for a sibling with additional needs, or who are impacted socially/economically by growing up with a sibling, who has additional needs.

### **The Background**

Through our ongoing work with Young Carers in RCT, it became increasingly apparent that there were many children, who although were not Young Carers, were impacted negatively by the additional needs of their sibling. As a result of this identification of need, Sibling Carers received a limited level of support service, via the Carers Support Project (CSP). It is important to note, this support was limited due to a lack of dedicated funding for Sibling Carers, in relation to both staff and resources. It was felt that an opportunity to deliver a pilot programme, exploring the demand and needs of Sibling Carers, would benefit service delivery moving forward.

### **The Grant**

Funding was secured from the Carers Respite Grant during 2021/2022 (October 21), to carry out a pilot model of service delivery for Sibling Carers, that would look at resilience and wellbeing of the Sibling Carer known to CSP.

### **The Stats**

At the time of the pilot, there were 79 young people registered to receive Sibling Carer support.

There have been 39 sibling referrals made in the year 21/22, with 18 of these being made since October when WG funding was awarded. (Last year 20/21, there were 22 siblings referred in total so there has been a definite increase this year).

### **The Pathway & Specific Programme**

Once a young person is assessed by the Young Carers Assessment Worker, and identified as a Sibling Carer, they are offered the opportunity to engage in a 6-week programme, focusing on the social and emotional aspects of being a Sibling Carer.

The key themes of the programme are:

- Raising self-esteem,
- Exploring the feelings (positive and negative) associated with being a sibling carer, coping strategies (to support them in their role as a sibling carer)
- Opportunity to spend time with other young people who understand and are experiencing similar things.

### **Additional Support Provided**

In addition to the specific themes of the 6-week programme, Sibling Carers have been offered the following:

**ASD Workshops** - a large proportion of the sibling carers registered with the service have brothers/sisters with ASD, so this workshop gave them an opportunity to gain

more knowledge of ASD, and to understand why their siblings present certain behaviours, thus empowering them and increasing their understanding of their sibling's additional needs.

**ZAP Workshops** - Research has shown that young carers (including sibling carers), are more likely to be bullied\* [\\*Carers Trust, Protecting Young Carers from Bullying](#) RCT Carers Support Project made links with the bullying charity Kidscape, who offered a ZAP workshop to Sibling Carers with the idea that this workshop would help Sibling Carers raise self-esteem, identify bullying and bullying roles, increase assertiveness, identify the impact of positive body language and explore cyber bullying.

**Parent/child Activities** - an important area of need identified as part of our sibling support, is the lack of opportunity for Sibling Carers to spend quality time with a parent/carer. As part of the WG grant, and with additional funds from a Winter of Well-being Grant, Sibling Carers and their parents were given the opportunity to do a joint cooking workshop and attend Zip World Towers.

**Respite** - as an escape for Sibling Carers, and a chance to have new experiences, shared with like-minded individuals the programme offered a bushcraft session, ice skating at Winter Wonderland, a cookery workshop, boxing, Mindfulness sessions, a Virtual Escape Room, and a Photography session.

**Therapeutic Activities** - there was a four-week pottery project called 'expression through art', which gave Sibling Carers an opportunity to express feelings and emotions by creating a piece of artwork with clay.

As a contingency during the pandemic and the difficulties of delivering face to face activities, Sibling Carers have also been given the opportunity to have packs delivered to their home. This included craft packs, outdoor/indoor play packs and cooking packs.

**'Sibs Grant'** - The 'Sibs Grant' was another support element made possible by the Welsh Government grant during the pilot, and has provided sibling carers an opportunity to apply for something up to the value of £50 which benefits one of the following things:

- Health and wellbeing (e.g., fitness equipment/clothing, membership, beauty treatments),
- Education (e.g., books, stationary, membership schemes),
- Family relationships (e.g., family activities),
- Social isolation (e.g., club membership, transport),
- Respite from caring role (e.g., activity vouchers).

(46 Sibling Carers accessed this element of the funding)

### **Sibs Fest**

The culmination of the grant will be seen during the Easter holidays, as RCT Carers Support Project are hosting an event specifically aimed at celebrating Sibling Carers.

Sibling carers often describe themselves as feeling invisible, and that they don't like making a fuss as they feel that those close to them have enough to deal with without them and their problems. 'Sibs Fest' is aimed at putting sibling carers in the spotlight, making them mini-VIPs for the day. A mini festival taking place at Dare Valley Country Park, Sibling Carers and their families can take part in a number of things from circus workshops, live music, sports taster sessions, live fire breathing shows and fairground stalls. but also have access to information and advice from a range of organisations such as Papyrus, Kidscape, Meic, Challenging behaviour support, Resilient families service and much more. Through advertising this event, there has been an increased interest in the Sibling support service, with schools and agencies making enquiries about how to refer to the service for support.

With the remaining funding from the grant, there was a trip organised during the Easter holidays.

### **The Future**

The Welsh Government Grant has been instrumental in allowing us to increase the support we offer Sibling Carers in RCT. Support prior to the grant being awarded was quite limited, and the offer to Sibling Carers had been basic in its provision. This, as mentioned above, was owing to a lack of resources and staffing dedicated specifically to Sibling Carers.

Sibling Carers are often placed in the same category as Young Carers, however, we feel that this often does them a disservice, as their needs are very different. The main concerns, now the grant has come to an end, is that support will return to the limited level offered prior to the grant award.

What this pilot has shown is that with a small increased grant, (a total of £15,000 combining WG and YEPS funding) has enabled additional dedicated staffing hours and our Sibling Carers were offered a broader, more holistic, and targeted support. Not only were we able to offer support that was a better fit for their needs, but we were also able to increase the number of Sibling Carers we worked with.

Owing to the feedback from parents, and the increased working with partner agencies, there has been an increased interest regarding the Sibling Support Service, with referrals increasing since October 2021 (when the grant was awarded). Providing a targeted support Service, ensures these young people are provided with the support needed in order for them to feel listened to, valued and for them to thrive as young people. It would be a fantastic opportunity if we could continue to support Sibling Carers in RCT and continue with the momentum this grant has started.

### **Feedback/Evaluation**

#### ***Feedback from parents:***

*"Thank you so much Axx really enjoyed the experience, and we were blown away by the cooking bundle! Such a positive experience, we are very lucky"*

*"Thank you he really enjoyed it, he loved the boxing"*

*“BXXX (sibling carer) really has a problem with talking about Jxxx (sibling with additional needs) behaviour. I think he feels that he is going to get Jxxx in trouble or something. So it was so good for him to hear others talking about their siblings. He kept saying to me ‘that’s just like Jxxx’. I think it really helped him so thank you”.*

*“We had lots of fun. Thank you again so much.”*

*“Thank you very much for the opportunity to do the zip wire, we both really enjoyed”*

*“Thank you so much for this day, it was amazing, we are going to go back and do the roller coaster so our other son can join us, thank you xxx”*

**Feedback from young people:**

*“The cooking zoom was lovely, thank you for the opportunity to do it”.*

*“This is the first time I have ever been to the fair as my brother doesn’t like the noise and lights” (sibling carer aged 15)*

*“We loved it, such an amazing experience to share thank you so much and getting over the grief of my gran passing away the scream while sliding down a mountain was the perfect release”*

**Feedback from ‘Sibs Grants’ (and uses)**

*“I would like it (the grant) to pay for a family activity, giving me a chance to make memories with everyone outside the house. I would like it for cantref farm park as I love animals and so do all my family it will be a great shared enjoyment. It would give me a chance to be a child and not just a sibling carer and to spend time with all my family at one time”*

*“I would like to go for afternoon tea with my mam. We would like to have the traditional afternoon tea. It would be really lovely to spend time on my own with my mam because she spends a lot of time looking after my sister”*

*“Items for my bedroom, cushions, photo frames, throw for bed etc. “X’s home has been adapted for her brother and she has moved into a different bedroom. FXXX is asking for items for her bedroom to decorate it and make it her own.*

*“I would like a pair of football boots from sports direct. I want to play football on the grass with my daddy while my mammy looks after my brother. I play for a local team and I can practise with daddy on the field by our house so we are not too far away in-case mammy needs us”*





## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

### CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

#### REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE

Author: Nikki Kingham

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with Cabinet the Annual Report for 2021-2022 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. See Appendix 1.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2021-2022.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report on 31st July each year, to demonstrate its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Annual Report is twofold; it is a tool of accountability and a tool for evaluation. Accountability has three components:
- accountability to the public;
  - accountability to the statutory partner agencies of the Board; and

- accountability to the inspectorate bodies.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.
- 4.2 The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub-Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

#### **4.3 Summary of Key Achievements for 2021-2022**

- 4.4 The Board published an Annual Plan on 31 March 2021, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults. Full details can be found in the report attached but a summary of the progress made against priorities is provided below:

#### **Ensure an Effective Response to the Impact of the COVID19 Pandemic**

- 4.5 This year, the Board continued to maximise opportunities to use virtual platforms to hold meetings and deliver training. Three virtual Learning Events were held to support Practice Reviews.
- 4.6 The Board ensured that outstanding actions from the previous year, which were delayed due to the pandemic, were completed. This included completing outstanding audits and protocols that were in development.
- 4.7 The Board wanted to ensure that those most at risk were able to re-engage with services. Agencies maximised virtual platforms and a variety of communication methods to facilitate this. Innovative approaches, such as facilitating family time in outside areas, were adopted.
- 4.8 The Board wanted to ensure that people living in Care Homes continued to be safeguarded as lockdowns eased. COVID cases continued to fall throughout the year and arrangements for safe face-to-face visits for family members of residents were put in place.

- 4.9 The pandemic brought significant challenges to the workforce, with changes to working arrangements, shifts in priorities and staff sickness/isolation being key features of working practice. The Board sought assurances from partner agencies that staff were supported, and their wellbeing prioritised.
- 4.10 Board partner agencies operated an adapted 'business as usual' approach throughout 2021-22 and responded flexibly to an increased demand and ever-changing situation across the health and social care system. Agencies have provided the Board with consistent performance data to monitor activity and identify changes in demand. Data demonstrated increasing demands in all areas, and quality assurance work was undertaken where a greater understanding on the reasons for this were required.

#### **Strengthen Safeguarding Links to other Partnerships in the Region**

- 4.11 At an executive level, this has involved working with the Regional Partnership Board and its supporting governance structure. Good links have been maintained with the Community Safety Partnership at both a strategic and operational level. There are good collaborative working arrangements with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Prevent/Channel Panel, Licensing and Domestic Abuse Services that sit within the Community Safety Partnership. A Regional Prevent Delivery Group has been established and partner agencies have been involved in the testing of a new Prevent e-learning platform, designed to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

#### **Improve our Approach to Public Protection Concerns**

- 4.12 The primary focus this year was on Exploitation, an increasingly prevalent issue in the region. Structures were already in place in relation to child sexual exploitation but there was a need to expand the focus to consider the impact of additional areas of concern, including criminal exploitation, on-line abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking and radicalisation. The concept of contextual safeguarding has been a key feature in the development of a strategy to address these areas of concern.

At the end of 2021-2022, a draft strategy was in place and work is ongoing to develop a supporting toolkit and referral pathways. A Regional Steering Group and a Task and Finish Group was set up with participation from key stakeholders in the development. The initial Strategy will be for children and young people transitioning in adulthood with a view to progressing the strategy to all adults in 2022-2023.

## **Other Key Achievements**

### 4.13 Self-Neglect

A regional approach to managing cases of self-neglect in adults was introduced in October 2021. A Self Neglect Protocol and Guidance document were approved by the Board in June 2021. Three Self-Neglect Partnership Panels were set up, led by each local authority with multi-agency representation.

### 4.14 Learning Framework

A regional Learning and Improvement Framework was approved by the Board early in 2022. This demonstrates how learning will be identified, disseminated and implemented in practice within a multi-agency context in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults within Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Framework enables, not only a rigorous assessment of the quality of multiagency safeguarding arrangements, but also how we learn from this to drive forward improvements to safeguarding and in turn, outcomes for children and adults at risk.

### 4.15 Monitoring Group

This year, to manage the increasing number of Practice Reviews being carried out by the Board, and in line with the new Learning and Improvement Framework, a dedicated multi-agency Monitoring Group was set up. The group meets bi-monthly and has the responsibility for monitoring action plans and ensuring that recommendations are completed in a timely manner.

### 4.16 Suicide Prevention

The Board has continued to collaborate with other partnerships and agencies to tackle the prevention of suicide and self-harm agenda. A multi-agency Suicide Review Group was established this year. The group receives information held by the Board in respect of suspected completed suicides managed under the Immediate Response protocol, which allows us to identify themes, demographics and triggers that can support us in tackling this very important agenda.

### 4.17 Protocols and Procedures

The following Board protocols and guidance documents were reviewed and updated during 2021-2022:

- [Complaints Procedure](#)

- [Baby and Infant Safe Sleeping Guidance](#)
- [Bruising and Injuries in Children Not Independently Mobile](#)

The following protocols and guidance in relation to Child Protection Conferences were updated and regionalised this year:

- [Child Protection Register Enquiry Protocol](#)
- [Child Protection Conference Protocol for Practitioners](#)
- [Core Group Guidance and Resolution Process](#)

### **Additional Focus**

- 4.18 In October 2021 the Safeguarding Board commissioned the National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales) to carry out an independent rapid review into multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Bridgend. This followed five unexpected child deaths, which were all unrelated.
- 4.19 The independent review was completed separately to any forthcoming Child Practice Reviews, audits, or individual reviews in relation to the five cases.
- 4.20 The overall outcome was to provide assurances to the Board that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were effective in Bridgend. Other outcomes/benefits included:
- The identification of any areas for improvement that could be actioned immediately.
  - The identification of any immediate learning from a local and/or regional perspective.
  - An assurance that relevant staff were supported appropriately, both during the pandemic and in light of the recent deaths.
- 4.21 A final report was presented to the Board in December 2021, which contained a series of recommendations which have since been monitored via an Executive Group of the Board. This work continues into the current year.

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

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A Welsh version of the Annual Report will be available on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board website.

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 The Annual Report has been developed in conjunction with all statutory partners of the Safeguarding Board. It has been approved by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and shared with the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

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

- 8.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

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

- 9.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities and the functions of the Regional Safeguarding Boards, which includes the publication of an Annual Report on the 31<sup>st</sup> July each year.

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

- 10.1 The Board contributes to elements of the work of the Public Service Board by reporting on safeguarding activity.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The Board has responded to a number of serious and tragic incidents during the past year. The death of Logan Mwangi and the prosecution of those responsible has focussed attention on the vital importance of safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities. The Board is committed to learning from the circumstances leading to Logan's death and will fully implement any recommendations from the Child Practice Review when it reports later in 2022.

- 11.2 As we move into 2022-2023, our services will continue to respond to the pressure of increasing demand, complexity and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. The Board's Annual Plan for 2022-2023 was published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and priorities within will be reported back to a future meeting.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE**

**Background Papers**

None

Officer to contact: Nikki Kingham

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Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
**Bwrdd Diogelu**  
**Safeguarding Board**



# Annual Report

## 2021/2022



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board



**BAVO**

Gwasanaeth  
Prawf  
Probation  
Service



**interLink**  
Rhondda Cynon Taf



VOLUNTARY ACTION  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
GWEITHREDU GWIRFODDOL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL

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# 1. Introduction and Foreword - Chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board

## Welcome to the 2021-2022 Annual Report for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In March 2021, the Board published a [Plan](#) setting out its priorities for the coming year. At that time, the COVID19 pandemic was continuing to impact our partner agencies, on their ability to deliver high quality services during unprecedented demand and staffing pressures. This has continued throughout 2021-2022 but despite this, we have been able to make significant progress in many aspects of our work, including our ongoing work to tackle exploitation across the region, the prevention of suicides, and support to those who self-neglect.

The Board has responded to a number of serious and tragic incidents during the past year. The death of Logan Mwangi and the prosecution of those responsible has focussed attention on the vital importance of safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities. The Board is committed to learning from the circumstances leading to Logan's death and will fully implement any recommendations from the Child Practice Review when it reports later in 2022.

As we move into 2022-2023, our services will continue to respond to the pressure of increasing demand, complexity and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. These are challenging circumstances and I would like to thank each and every person working for and on behalf of our partner agencies, in hospitals, care homes, in the community and on the front line of service delivery, for their hard work and commitment to safeguarding the people of Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board please contact our Business Unit by e-mailing: [ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk)



Paul Mee  
Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board



## 2. Safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

**The region of Cwm Taf Morgannwg covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a population of approximately 428,000<sup>1</sup>**

The **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board** is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board's Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives of **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It has an overall responsibility for challenging relevant agencies so that:

- There are effective measures in place to protect children and adults at risk who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- There is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

### Safeguarding Children

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Statutory Guidance define a 'child' as a person who is aged under 18.

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a child at risk as a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

### **What do we mean by Harm?**

Harm is defined as:

- ill treatment - this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse
- the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Census 2011

- the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

## Types of Harm

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of harm, abuse and neglect included in vol 5 Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk:

- **physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be:
  - not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or
  - complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

## Safeguarding Adults

S126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.



**Abuse** can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money) and can take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.

**Neglect** describes a failure to meet a person's basic needs physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health). It can take place in a range of settings, such as a private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

## Reporting Concerns

In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, all safeguarding concerns are reported to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). For the relevant contact details please refer to the information at the end of this report.

The **Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** sits within the structure of the Safeguarding Board and acts as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns across Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The MASH has been fully operational since May 2015, having been set up to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together to receive all safeguarding referrals and share relevant agency information to make joint decisions. The Cwm Taf MASH partners are: South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Children and Adult Safeguarding Teams, Education, and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

### **MASH activity comprises:**

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Adults at Risk Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

### **The key aims of the MASH relate to the following themes:**

- Improved co-ordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a safeguarding report is raised
- Improved response times leading to earlier interventions
- Reduction of repeat referrals

Cwm Taf MASH procedures ensure that professionals act quickly to gather and process information, and new virtual meeting platforms have further enhanced this since 2020. The MASH continues to be well placed to make correct, appropriate, and proportionate decisions in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

During 2021-2022 the Cwm Taf MASH has continued to ensure that the main focus is to respond to all safeguarding concerns promptly in a multi-agency setting. Partners have operated on both a virtual and physical platform with a combination of both office based and remote working within Covid risk-assessed parameters.

The **Bridgend Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** has been operational since July 2018. The Bridgend MASH partners are South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service and Bridgend County Borough Council (Adult Safeguarding Team, Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) (Children and young people), Early Help, Education, Housing and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

### **The key aims of the Bridgend MASH are:**

- Streamlined decision making through enhanced intelligence
- Risk is collectively addressed

- Opportunity for early intervention and prevention of repeat referrals
- Demand being created but repeat referrals can be effectively reduced

Bridgend MASH is governed by the Bridgend MASH Operational Board and Bridgend MASH Executive Management Board with both boards including representation from all partners. These Boards and Groups have continued to meet throughout the year to guide Bridgend MASH on an operational and strategic level.

Bridgend MASH has continued to operate on a physical and virtual platform since 2020 to ensure individuals in Bridgend continue to be supported wherever there are safeguarding concerns. A comprehensive risk assessment was completed that has enabled people to work in a safe environment. Partners work on a rota basis within their agencies to ensure social distancing is maintained

**The collaboration of both Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs** is a key focus of the Board to streamline multi-agency safeguarding across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

### 3. Members of the Safeguarding Board

The Lead Partner for the Board is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the membership complies with the statutory guidance issued under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014.

A list of members is attached as Appendix 1.

### 4. What did the Board do in 2021-2022 to meet its Outcomes?

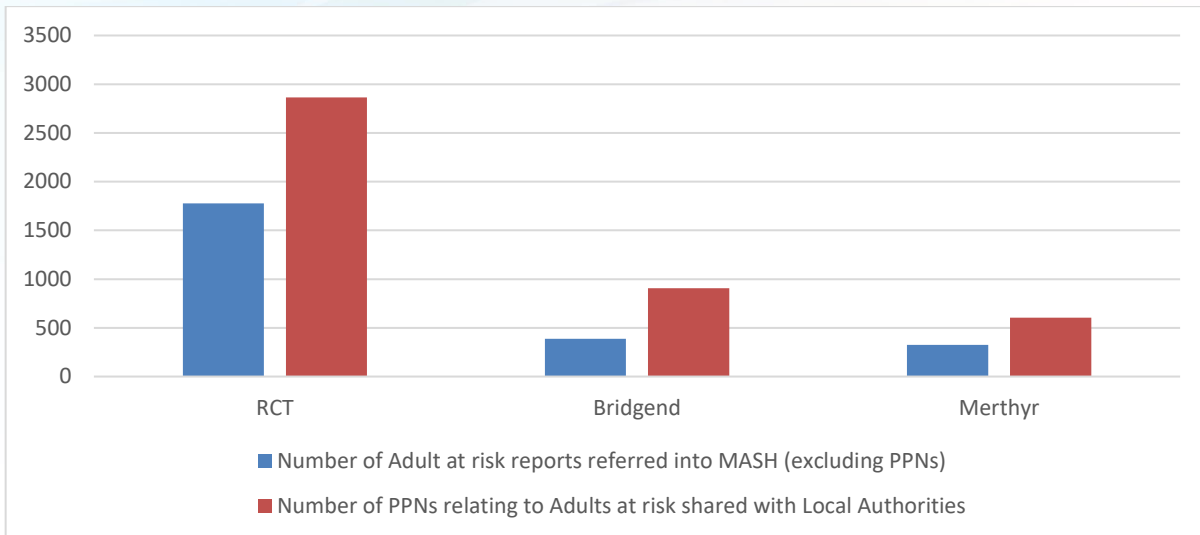
#### Governance

The Safeguarding Board has a robust governance structure in place (Appendix 2) that enables it to carry out its functions and achieve positive outcomes for children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

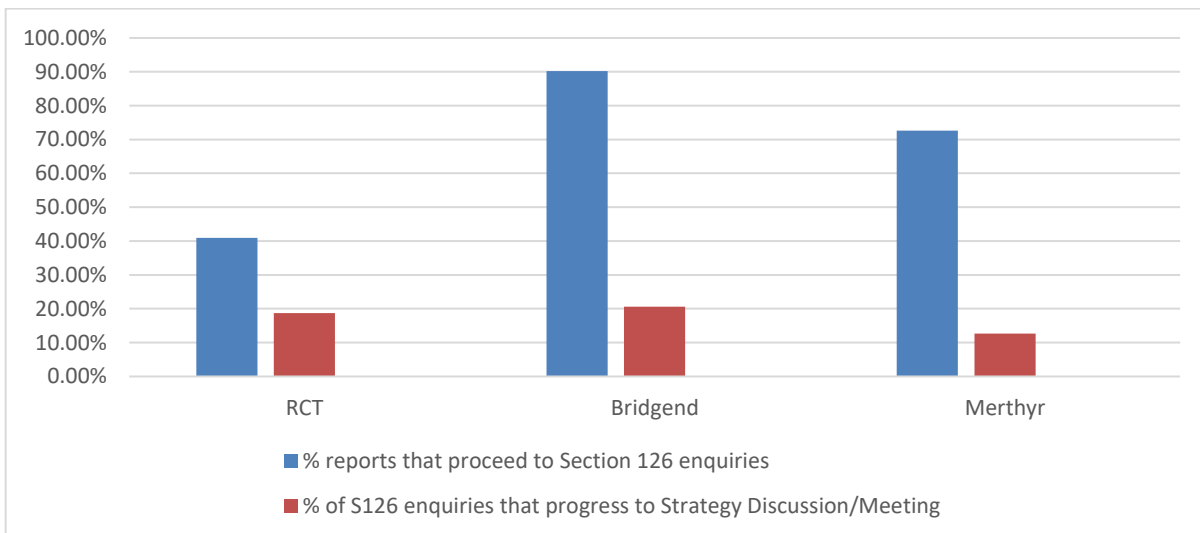
#### Performance

The Board has a performance framework in place to capture multi-agency safeguarding data.

The **volume of reports in relation to adults at risk** is presented in the table below:



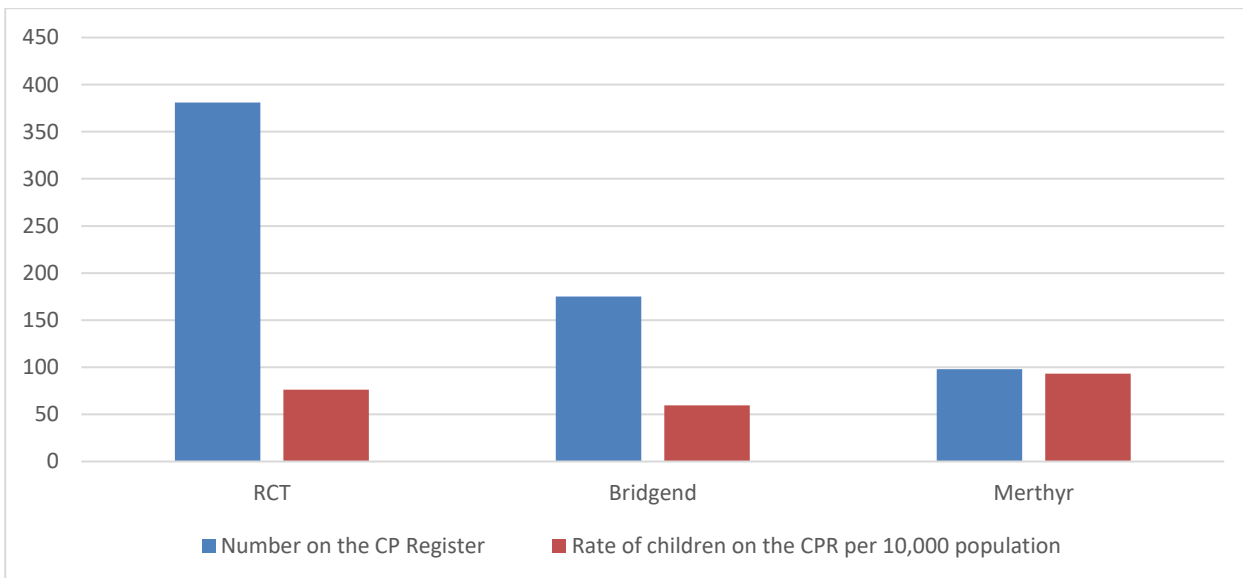
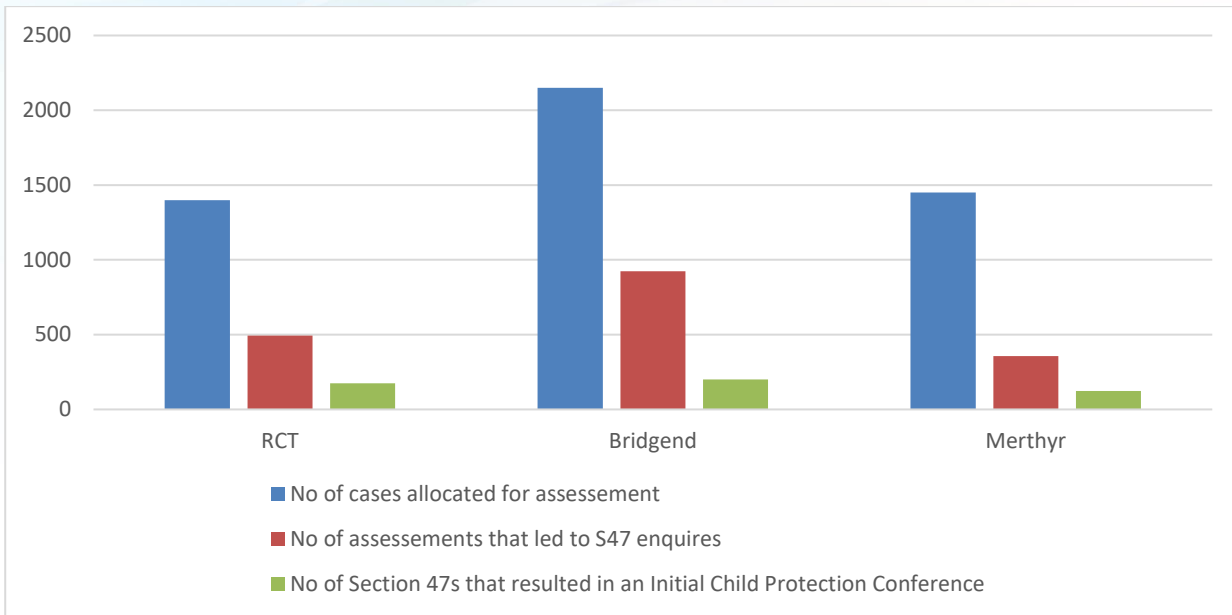
Of these reports, the outcomes were:



The differences in the percentages across the local authorities can be attributed to differences in reporting data.

Data relating to **child protection** is as follows:





## Challenge and Scrutiny

The Board co-ordinates the safeguarding activities of each of its partner agencies through effective monitoring and challenge. This is carried out via Board and Sub Group meetings, reviews, inspection reports and audit activity. This year, we reintroduced the **Partner Agency Section 135 Compliance Audit** to scrutinise local arrangements and assess whether partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations in respect of safeguarding. Each agency completed a self evaluation of their compliance in relation to:

- Governance
- Safeguarding Effectiveness
- Policies and Procedures
- Communications and Engagement
- Learning Culture
- Collaboration

It was pleasing to note that most agencies rated themselves as having good or excellent compliance and overall progress has improved since the last audit which was completed in 2019-2020. The outcomes of the audit were reported to the Board Development Day, held in January 2022 and the results informed the priorities for the Board for the forthcoming year.

Good practice identified included:

- Safe Recruitment
- Representation on Board and Sub Groups
- Training
- QA Tools
- Methods of sharing protocols and policies
- Effective communications with staff
- Sharing of Learning from audits and reviews
- Strong collaboration

Areas for improvement included:

- Improvements to safeguarding effectiveness needed to cope with increased demand and impact of pandemic
- Plans for staff training and supervision
- Measuring the impact of protocols and policies
- Communications with the public
- Sharing of learning
- The availability of independent Chairs and Reviewers to carry out Practice Reviews
- Support/training for staff attending PRUDICs and IRGs

This year, the three local authorities and HMP Parc all presented their inspection outcome reports to the Safeguarding Board, outlining specific improvement actions relating to safeguarding.

## Professional Disagreements

The Board's Concerns Regarding Interagency Safeguarding Practice (CRISP) protocol supports practitioners in finding a resolution when they have a professional disagreement or concern in relation to another agency's safeguarding practice.

Before using the protocol the practitioner should attempt to resolve the disagreement or concern with their counterpart in the agency involved. Professionals must ensure that resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible with the safety of the child or adult at risk being a priority.

If a disagreement can't be resolved the practitioner should speak to their manager or their organisation's safeguarding lead. The manager/safeguarding lead should discuss with their counterpart in the other organisation and attempt to resolve within 5 working days.

If the matter is not resolved at this stage then it can be escalated to the Safeguarding Board Business Unit to co-ordinate a response and this is reported to the relevant Quality Assurance Sub Group.

In 2021-2022, the number of cases escalated to the Board were as follows:

Rhondda Cynon Taf – 11  
Merthyr Tydfil – 4  
Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil (joint escalation) – 1  
Bridgend - 0

### **Case Study**

Following on from a Part 5, professional concerns strategy meeting, where it was identified that a bank member of staff had been employed without adequate checks being made, It was not clear what process was in place for the Health Board to undertake checks and whose responsibility it was to make a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referral when concerns were substantiated. In this case, the local authority's Safeguarding Lead Coordinator made the referral. A CRISP was raised by the local authority and, as a result, a review was undertaken by the Health Board of current practice and policy. As a result, changes have been made that ensure safe recruiting of bank staff.

### **Business Management and Support**

The Board is supported by the Safeguarding Business Unit which provides management, co-ordination and administrative support. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC host the Board's Business Unit and holds a pooled budget for the Board.

## **5. How did we implement our Annual Plan and what were our key achievements?**

The Board published an Annual Plan on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults in 2021/22.

The Annual Plan for 2021/22 can be accessed at: [www.ctmsb.co.uk](http://www.ctmsb.co.uk)

### **Key Achievements**

#### **Self Neglect**

A regional approach to managing cases of self neglect in adults was introduced in October 2021. A Self Neglect Protocol and Guidance document were approved by the Board in June 2021. Three Self-Neglect Partnership Panels were set up, led by each local authority Adult Services department, with multi-agency representation.

Awareness raising sessions were delivered to 400 people across the region.

In the first 6 months, 31 referrals were submitted, with 15 being discussed at Panel. Early indications are that the Panels are making a real difference to outcomes for relevant citizens.

### Case Study - Self-Neglect

Mr B, a middle-aged single man, lives alone in a one-bedroom Housing Association flat. He was referred to the Self-Neglect Partnership Panel by his Housing Support Worker, who was concerned at his recent weight loss and his level of daily alcohol consumption.

He presents with Autistic Spectrum Disorder traits but has no formal diagnosis. His living conditions are poor with accumulated rubbish; the floor cannot be seen in any room in the flat because of papers, cans and food covering it. He was 'knee-deep' in rubbish in his bedroom, keeps rotting food in his fridge and does not bath or shower as the bath is full of dirty clothes. He wasn't using the washing machine and was always wearing soiled clothes.

Housing Support have been involved for 18 months and the situation has deteriorated in that time. A referral was made to Adult Services, but Mr B would not engage with them. There is an action plan in place to improve the conditions in the property as he is in breach of his tenancy, but nothing has changed.

Mr B's case met the criteria for the Panel and his case was presented by the referrer. The Adult Services representative on the Panel agreed to allocate Mr B's case again to a social worker who could work closely with the Housing Support worker to try to secure access to Mr B in the first instance and then try to build trust and rapport to undertake an assessment of his needs.

This was a successful strategy and the social worker has worked hard to maintain contact and agree goals and priority actions with him, working alongside him to reduce and clear the rubbish in his flat. The Council's Facilities Team cleared the unusable bed, bedding and soiled carpets and the social worker assisted Mr B to purchase replacements.

The Social Worker has also managed to agree a Care and Support Plan with Mr B, to motivate him to see his GP with support and he has accepted a referral to alcohol services. He is working now on obtaining a direct payment so that Mr B can continue to have support to care for himself and maintain the improvements in his living conditions. Whilst the challenge will be to maintain progress, early indications are good and Mr B's quality of life is significantly improved.

### Learning Framework

A regional Learning and Improvement Framework was approved by the Board early in 2022. This demonstrates how learning will be identified, disseminated and implemented in practice within a multi-agency context in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults within Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Framework enables, not only a rigorous assessment of the quality of multiagency safeguarding arrangements, but also how we learn from this to drive forward improvements to safeguarding and in turn, outcomes for children and adults at risk.

As part of the development of the Learning Framework, a Learning Themes Database has been developed to record learning from Reviews and Audits. Going forward, this database will be presented to the Board's Training and Learning group on a quarterly basis to enable the Board to identify actions to address emerging and prevalent themes and issues. Common themes emerging include:

- Lack of communication and information sharing

- Disguised compliance
- Record keeping and accuracy of recording
- Efficiency of the assessment process
- Effectiveness of the reporting and referral process
- The transition from childhood to adulthood

Individual Learning Frameworks have been adopted in some partner agencies. For example, RCT Children Services' Learning Framework focuses on Embedding Learning and an Evaluation of Learning Impact.

## Monitoring Group

This year, to manage the increasing number of Practice Reviews being carried out by the Board, and in line with the new Learning and Improvement Framework, a dedicated multi-agency Monitoring Group was set up. The group meets bi-monthly and has the responsibility for monitoring the action plans and ensuring that recommendations are completed in a timely manner.

## Suicide Prevention

The Board has continued to collaborate with other partnerships and agencies to tackle the prevention of suicide and self harm agenda. A multi-agency Suicide Review Group was established this year. The group receives information held by the Board in respect of suspected completed suicides managed under the Immediate Response protocol, which allows us to identify themes, demographics and triggers that can support us in tackling this very important agenda. The key themes identified during 2021-2022 with regards contributory factors included:

- **Known to mental health services** – 52% were known to mental health services. This is consistent with the the latest National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health report that states that in all suicides in the last 10 years, 50% were known to mental health services. Should a person complete suicide within a year of being open to mental health services it will be considered as a local or national reportable incident and will be investigated by the Health Board to identify learning.
- **Relationship breakdown** – this was a factor in 41% of suspected completed suicides. Further work is planned to identify ways to address this.
- **Previous attempts** – 37% of the cases had previous attempts. This has prompted us to consider looking at significant near misses in the future.
- **Substance misuse** – 33% were recorded as having abused substances. The relationship between drug and alcohol misuse and mental health is one of concern as it was highlighted that often those people under the influence of drugs or alcohol are refused a mental health assessment. Therefore, they may not receive timely support and advice in respect of their mental health.
- **Criminal charges** – this was a factor in 28% of the cases. The criminal charges varied to include domestic abuse related crimes, possession of child images and child sex abuse. Further discussion has included those being released from prison. It was suggested that any case related to child abuse could benefit from a risk assessment to understand what has been done to pre-dispose a suicide.

It has been acknowledged by the group, that from reviewing the themes and trends over a one year period, recommendations for interventions and preventative work may reduce

the risk of some people-reaching crisis. However, it will require services throughout Cwm Taf Morgannwg to engage and adopt practices that will support those at risk of suicidal ideation. Signposting to support services is important, although, requires the practitioner to ensure it is accessible and meets the individual needs. With so many identified contributory factors, the group will need to decide in what order to prioritise training, education and resources to have a maximum impact.

## Protocols and Procedures

The following Board protocols and guidance documents were reviewed and updated during 2021-2022:

- [Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Baby and Infant Safe Sleeping Guidance](#)
- [Bruising and Injuries in Children Not Independently Mobile](#)

The following protocols and guidance in relation to Child Protection Conferences were updated and regionalised this year:

- [Child Protection Register Enquiry Protocol](#)
- [Child Protection Conference Protocol for Practitioners](#)
- [Core Group Guidance and Resolution Process](#)

## Partner Agency Achievements

- In Bridgend, the Safeguarding and Secure Estate Manager worked closely with HMP Parc to ensure our safeguarding responsibilities were met for the adults and young people serving a custodial sentence. There have been a number of challenging cases that required a multi-agency approach from people employed by G4S and the Local Authority.
- The Child Protection Medical Hub has enhanced safeguarding practice and collaborative working. Through feedback from agencies, families and children there has been a reported improvement in the experience of Child Protection medicals, with them being more timely and coordinated, ensuring the process remains child focused and causes less anxieties for all of those involved.
- Children Services commissioned a Multi-Agency Permanence Support Service (MAPSS) to provide a specialist therapeutic Intervention service for care experienced children, those with historic placement breakdowns and those with plans for and post adoption. It is available across the region for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs, and works with childhood aggression, self-harm, absconding, suicidal ideation, and experiences of sexual abuse, defiance, depression and many more.
- The change to more face-to-face activity in Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service has reduced the number of disengagements. Where possible, YOS has resumed the practice of seeing children in schools and this works but is still using virtual visits.
- HMP Parc appointed a new Safeguarding Lead in June 2021.
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC continued to strengthen its Early Help Hubs with Health and

Police staff being collocated within the Hub. During 2021-2022 there was a significant raise in those accessing Early Help within the Local Authority and 149 sessions have been held with partner agencies to increase their awareness of the Early Help Hub. This includes Education, Health, Twyn Community Hub, Local Authority Councillors, Mental Health Support Services, Women's Aid, and Change Step Military Veteran.

- South Wales Police continue to work closely with partners to make sure that safeguarding, community safety and neighbourhood policing are fully joined up to provide a better response to safeguarding concerns including preventative policing. This has been supported by a realignment of internal functions such as the neighbourhood policing teams to Safeguarding Superintendents portfolio

*In relation to the Board's Strategic Priorities, a summary of the work carried out is below.*

## **Strategic Priority 1: Ensure an Effective Response to the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **Learning Lessons to Improve Multi Agency Safeguarding**

This year, the Board continued to maximise opportunities to use virtual platforms to hold meetings and deliver training. Three virtual Learning Events were held to support Practice Reviews.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) were maintained throughout the pandemic. The Cwm Taf MASH operated virtually throughout the year and in Bridgend, a comprehensive MASH risk assessment was completed to ensure partner agencies within MASH worked in an environment which was safe and compliant with Welsh Government Guidance.

Cwm Taf MASH and Bridgend MASH reviewed their existing governance arrangements in order to reduce duplication and share good practice across the regions. This includes the collaborative information sharing system review and joined up audit performance work which is ongoing in 2022-2023.

Multi-agency practitioner workshops were held in July/August 2021 to review processes and scope out detailed requirements for a replacement safeguarding information sharing system. The outcome of this was a specification document which outlined the safeguarding requirements for a new platform. Various options were evaluated, including the possibility of developing functions in WCCIS, and a proposal to utilise Microsoft Office 365 technology is currently being considered.

### **Finalising the Outstanding Actions from 2020-2021**

We ensured that outstanding actions from the previous year, which were delayed due to the pandemic, were completed. This included completing outstanding audits and protocols that were in development.

A multi-agency Domestic Abuse audit across both children and adult safeguarding was finalised. The learning themes identified and acted upon where appropriate, and included:

- Domestic Abuse agencies did not always attend conferences and/or core groups, even when they had been the referring agency
- Fathers (perpetrators) not always included in conferences and/or core groups
- Delays in sharing information
- Incidents responded to in a timely manner
- Unavailability of interperator to support mother
- Good evidence of children being spoken to alone
- Effective joint visits
- Timescales needing to be attached to action points

The learning from the audit was fed back into individual agencies quality assurance frameworks and appropriate improvement actions made.

In addition, a re-audit of a case from 2018 was carried out to evaluate the impact on practice. It was identified that good progress and a number of improvements to practice and policies had been made in the time since the original report was concluded.

## **Giving People their Voices Back**

We wanted to ensure that those most at risk were able to re-engage with services. Agencies maximised virtual platforms and a variety of communication methods to facilitate this. Innovative approaches, such as facilitating family time in outside areas, were adopted.

A review of Child Protection Conferences was carried out with a focus on strengthening them as a positive vehicle for change. The new format will have an increased focus on coproduction of child protection plans with families and wider agencies. The review included partners and families sharing their views and experiences to inform positive change.

Agencies working to safeguard adults supported care providers through the administration of a hardship fund to ensure that services continue to be delivered to adults at risk.

### **Case Study - Bridgend County Borough Council**

A social worker within the Information, Advice and Assistance team developed and trialed an approach aimed at reducing the level of anxiety a child may have when meeting a social worker for the first time.

This involved producing a simple profile of the social worker listing their hobbies, likes and dislikes and containing their photograph. This approach proved to have had a positive impact and has been rolled out across the team.

## **Safeguarding People Living in Care Homes**

Following the devastating impact of the pandemic, we wanted to ensure that we continued to safeguard people living in Care Homes as lockdowns eased. COVID cases continued to fall throughout the year and arrangements for safe face-to-face visits for family members of residents were put in place.

The number of providers, including care homes, in escalating concerns was regularly reported to the Adults Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Group. The total reported during 2021-2022 was:



Rhondda Cynon Taf – 9

Merthyr Tydfil – 1

Bridgend - 0

Agencies working to safeguard adults jointly developed a safe discharge policy for those discharged into care homes.

## The Wellbeing of the Workforce

The pandemic brought significant challenges to the workforce, with changes to working arrangements, shifts in priorities and staff sickness/isolation being key features of working practice. We wanted to ensure that staff are supported and their wellbeing prioritised.

Agencies were requested to report to the Board on the arrangements that were in place to support staff wellbeing. This included managers briefings, well-being surveys and tools and dedicated well-being officers to provide counselling and coaching. Bespoke training was provided for staff for example: considering the impact of Covid 19 and the experience of loss and bereavement on the workforce.

## Managing Demand

Board partner agencies have operated an adapted 'business as usual' approach throughout 2021-22 and have responded flexibly to an increased demand and ever-changing situation across the health and social care system. Agencies have provided the Board with consistent performance data to monitor activity and identify changes in demand. Data demonstrated increasing demands in all areas, and quality assurance work was undertaken where a greater understanding on the reasons for this were required.

Recruitment and retention issues were reported, particularly in the Local Authorities, and this has been continually monitored by the Board, with Risk Management Plans shared. One of the greatest risk areas has been in maintaining business continuity in relation to hospital supporting admission and discharge and in domiciliary and residential care, where staffing shortages have been so acute at times as to threaten services' capacity to meet need.

## Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen Safeguarding Links to other Partnerships in the Region

In the past year, the Board and its partner agencies continued the drive to align and strengthen links with a range of other partnerships across the region.

At an executive level, this has involved working with the Regional Partnership Board and its supporting governance structure.

Good links have been maintained with the Community Safety Partnership at both a strategic and operational level. There are good collaborative working arrangements with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Prevent/Channel Panel, Licensing and Domestic Abuse Services that sit within the Community Safety Partnership. A Regional Prevent Delivery Group has been established and partner agencies have been involved in the testing of a new Prevent e-learning platform, designed to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

Board partner agencies also have representation on the Regional Serious and Organised Crime Board, the MAPPA Strategic and Operational Groups, and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Steering Groups.

The link between the Board's Immediate Response Group structure, Suicide Review Group and the Suicide Prevention Steering Group, has created a structural connection between the Board and Mental Health Services.

There have been efforts this year to strengthen the relationship between Children Services and CAMHS and work is ongoing to improve the health provision within the Youth Offending Services.

A high level scoping exercise of partnerships was undertaken to support the regional exploitation agenda and this work will continue into 2022-2023.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Improve our Approach to Public Protection Concerns**

The work of the Safeguarding Board increasingly crosses over to the realms of Public Protection which has a wider focus on protecting and improving the health, safety and well-being of the general population of the region.

Our primary focus this year has been on Exploitation, an increasingly prevalent issue in the region. Structures were already in place in relation to child sexual exploitation but there was a need to expand our focus to consider the impact of additional areas of concern, including criminal exploitation, on-line abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking and radicalisation. The concept of contextual safeguarding has been a key feature in the development of our strategy to address these areas of concern.

At the end of 2021-2022, a draft strategy was in place and work is ongoing to develop a supporting toolkit and referral pathways. A Regional Steering Group and a Task and Finish Group was set up with participation from key stakeholders in the development. The Initial Strategy will be for children and young people transitioning in adulthood with a view to progressing the strategy to all adults in 2022-2023.

The Cwm Taf Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Group and the Bridgend CSE Task Force strategically managed cases of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) across the region. A pattern of diminishing CSE cases and increasing CCE cases has been emerging and this has and will inform the ongoing development of the Board's Exploitation Strategy and Toolkit. Professionals involved in these meetings are conscious to maintain a focus on CSE, believing that it has not in real terms reduced in volume or risk, but has become more of a hidden harm than ever e.g. increased online exploitation. This continues to be analysed. Data was collected for the RCT and Merthyr Tydfil local authorities in 2021-2022 and is summarised below. This will be extended to include Bridgend in 2022-2023.

Total number of high risk Child Exploitation cases discussed – 45

Number of perpetrators identified – 15

Number of hot spots identified - 44

Themes identified – rail travel, missing, peer abuse, social media/online abuse, fake IDs, drug and alcohol use.

In 2019, the Welsh Government published its [National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse](#). As part of the implementation of this plan, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, along with other safeguarding boards in Wales, has been disseminating information and resources to professionals, parents/carers and children and young people on child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and online abuse.

## **Additional Focus: Independent Rapid Review**

In October 2021 the Safeguarding Board commissioned the National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales) to carry out an independent rapid review into multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Bridgend. This followed five unexpected child deaths, which were all unrelated.

The independent review was completed separately to any forthcoming Child Practice Reviews, audits, or individual reviews in relation to the five cases. To achieve this, clear lines of responsibility and scope were agreed.

The overall outcome was to provide assurances to the Board that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were effective in Bridgend. Other outcomes/benefits included:

- The identification of any areas for improvement that can be actioned immediately.
- The identification of any immediate learning from a local and/or regional perspective.
- An assurance that relevant staff have been supported appropriately, both during the pandemic and in light of the recent deaths.

A final report was presented to the Board in December 2021, which contained a series of recommendations which have since been monitored via an Executive Group of the Board. Appropriate actions have been taken to improve multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

## **Additional Focus: Winter Pressures**

The Board ensures that it receives updates from partner agencies in relation to winter pressures, with 2021-2022 being a particularly challenging time. Concerns around COVID 19 persisted and partner agencies worked closely together to address areas of critical concern, including staff wellbeing, improving the capacity of services, and the increased demand in the community.

## 6. Safeguarding Themes

### Audit Activity

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems, and practice is a core function of the Board. Audit work is carried out via task and finish groups set up by the Quality and Performance Sub Groups. Any recommendations made by case audits are monitored by these groups to identify how practice is adapted to reflect any learning. The key learning themes from two completed audits are summarised below:

AUDIT ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED
<p><b>Cases where Advocacy needed to be used or the involvement of family members (adults)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The importance of advocacy services needs to be considered by all, and this is not just the responsibility of the lead coordinator when a safeguarding concern is raised</li> <li>▪ Case conferences are not always the preferred engagement outcome, and often the AAR/representative is satisfied with the communication via a number of different forms</li> <li>▪ Recording is not always detailed enough, and rationales need to be clearly recorded and explicitly state why something has been done or not done</li> <li>▪ If the allegation relates to a professional, feedback relating to the alleged abuse can be difficult to provide and what action was taken.</li> <li>▪ If there is a lengthy police investigation, often lead coordinators have a case open for a significant amount of time with little engagement with the AAR/family during that period. This is often due to the investigation ongoing, or the case listed for court. Again, in this period updates should be provided to the AAR/representative/advocate</li> <li>▪ Advocacy needs to be highlighted within the formal strategy discussion process, but also at the start of the process and not just following the strategy discussion.</li> <li>▪ Consider implementing the service user/representative/advocate feedback process (Good practice of a clear advocacy strategy at the start of the safeguarding process)</li> <li>▪ Being creative with available family and professional advocacy when the circumstances mean this can be effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Authority Audit in relation to Proportionate Assessments (children)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disagreements about the role of agencies and responsibility for actions</li> <li>▪ Agency representation in strategy meetings</li> <li>▪ Concern regarding another LA's response to a cross border case</li> <li>▪ Difficulties in getting agreement for child protection medicals to be completed in non physical abuse cases</li> <li>▪ Quality of the narrative in the assessment varied</li> </ul>

### **Multi Agency Practitioner Forum – Child N**

- The need to robustly challenge parents
- The need to see the unspoken & hear the spoken voice of the child
- A Procedure for the Management of Fabricated Illness would have supported this case
- The need for strategy meetings and ICPCs to be held in accordance with statutory timescales
- Professional Curiosity needs to be embedded into everyday business
- Verbal referrals need to be captured in a C1 written referral
- Professional meetings should include all agencies who are likely to be involved with the child
- Health agency needs to review the manner they record information in letters to other agencies
- Over-reliance on information on family instead of the professionals involved
- Initial CP Conferences should be effectively managed in line with statutory guidance

Cwm Taf MASH undertook an Adult Protection audit to understand the discrepancy between RCT & Merthyr local authorities (in relation to the rate of determination that further action to protect is necessary as an outcome of Section 126 enquiries). It was noted that Merthyr Tydfil Adults Services were taking considerably more cases to Section 126 enquiry than RCT, and the purpose of the audit was to see if there were threshold differences.

The audit highlighted effective practice from a selection of cases, with all using the 126 enquiry to collect comprehensive information from a number of sources. There was mostly agreement around the 126 enquiry where there was little discrepancy, which is positive compared to a previous audit that took place. There was also evidence that in most cases the views and wishes of the adult at risk were considered in reaching outcomes.

The audit suggested improvement required with regards to the quality of the recording tool, which has since been addressed to improve consistency across RCT and Merthyr areas. As an outcome of the audit a learning event for the respective adult protection teams took place also.

## **Adult Practice Reviews and Child Practice Reviews**

The Board published 2 Adult Practice Reviews and 2 Child Practice Reviews during the year and these are available on the Board's website via the following links.

[CPR CTSB 02 - 2018](#)

[APR CTMSB 02 - 2019](#)

[CPR CTMSB 03 - 2019](#)

[APR CTMSB 01 - 2021](#)

The Board also worked in collaboration with the Community Safety Partnership and published 2 Domestic Homicide Reviews which can also be found on the Board's website.

[DHR 03 - 2018](#)

[DAPR 02-2018](#)

Partner agencies report a variety of methods of sharing published reviews and sharing the learning, including:

- Reports and '7 Minute Briefings' disseminated to all staff, managers, designated safeguarding leads and teams
- Discussions in peer groups, team meetings/briefings, action learning events, communication workshops and evaluation/risk management sessions
- Included in Quality Assurance Frameworks
- Disseminating learning via Corporate Safeguarding web pages and Bulletins
- Learning from reviews is incorporated into relevant training
- Integrated our review learning priorities into our annual Training Needs Analysis.

The learning themes arising from each of the reviews published this year, along with a description of how Board partner agencies implemented the learning, is described below.:

### **CTSB 02-2018**

Learning themes from this Child Practice Review included:

#### The Child Protection Referral process

Practitioners could have given more significance to an adult's long history of domestic violence.

#### Assessments

Important information was not recorded and a lack of sound judgment in making decisions regarding risk was evident.

#### Social Worker Management

The assessing social worker was inexperienced and did not have the confidence to ask for advice.

#### Domestic Abuse & Child Protection

Midwifery did not follow their own policy in respect of routine enquiry regarding domestic abuse.

### **What have Agencies done as a result of this learning?**

- Increased awareness and understanding of best practice in relation to working with children and families and the importance of timely information sharing.
- Routine Enquiry audits undertaken and subsequent recommendations completed. Midwifery audits have seen a significant increase in Routine Enquiry following training and education within the service from the Named Midwife for Safeguarding.
- Ask & Act training delivered as a standalone training through a virtual platform.
- The Health Board has seen improved practice in the identification of those suffering domestic abuse, and the appointment of a Health MARAC Coordinator has allowed for continued learning.
- The Health Visiting service has developed a standard operating procedure to guide practitioners in their management of identified domestic abuse.
- Monthly samples of decision making on referrals into MASH and Early Help. This work has demonstrated that thresholds are sound, decisions are made promptly, and relevant agencies have been consulted.

- Dip samples of assessments have demonstrated that all relevant agencies are consulted as part of strategy discussions.
- The development of a Home Conditions Assessment Tool
- Reviewing the Protocol for working with people who are resistant to the safeguarding process
- Agency audit of a sample of core group minutes to consider how well we manage resistance in the safeguarding process. This audit found many examples of good practice but also recognised that further support and training is required for staff. In response we have established a process for holding multi agency reflective sessions for cases where children have been on the CPR for more than 12 months. Work resulting from this is also ongoing in relation to holding workshops for the management team and staff, aimed at enhancing our person focused planning
- Further actions from audits have included establishing a task and finish group of practitioners to consider how we work with resistance and feigned compliance.

## **CTMSB 02-2019**

Learning themes from this Adult Practice Review included:

### Family Relationships

Recognising the caring role of family members and the need to offer carers assessments periodically.

### Professional Curiosity & Assessment & risk assessments

When practitioners are responding to allegations of abuse and neglect, professional curiosity should be exercised as this may have led to the insight of the need and levels of family support being provided, which subsequently may have led to an earlier assessment.

### Communication & Recording

Evidence of the adult's deterioration was not recorded and clear evidence of a safeguarding concern was not escalated to the line manager and the MASH.

## **What have Agencies done as a result of this learning?**

- There have been changes implemented in relation to carers' assessments that have resulted in improved take-up.
- Increased awareness and consideration related to professional curiosity. Increased training has been provided.
- Professional Curiosity and the importance of clear documentation is discussed at length throughout training.
- Mental Capacity Act training has been reviewed to ensure the learning is included.
- Ensuring that where information came to light that the individual had involvement with an agency, that enquiries with that agency should be considered to obtain a holistic picture of events.

## **CTMSB 03-2019**

Learning themes from this Child Practice Review included:

### Pre birth Assessments

Information about fathers should be actively sought by health and social work professionals in all assessments of pregnant women and children's well-being. Professionals should make

every effort to involve and engage fathers in assessments and should seek collateral information when risks are identified. ACEs and their potential impact on both parents and their parenting should be identified.

### Record Keeping

Whilst there was evidence of regular antenatal care being given, there is only one record of the 'routine enquiry' regarding domestic abuse and, likewise, one record of 'routine enquiry' by the health visitor post-natally.

### Sharing of Information

Recordings made by the midwifery and health visiting service were not detailed: there were gaps and it seems that the PPN referral form shared by police was not contained within their records.

### **What have Agencies done as a result of this learning?**

- Audit of a sample of cases that have progressed to Section 47 enquiries which demonstrated that all relevant agencies have been consulted in S47 enquiries
- Audit of a sample of core group minutes to consider the level of professional curiosity and corroboration of information provided by parents. The audit found that there was a good level of professional curiosity and corroboration in most cases but a need for support for staff to maintain this.
- Establishing a task and finish group of practitioners to consider how we work with resistance and feigned compliance.
- Communication sessions in relation to the engagement of males in the safeguarding process and a pre birth pathway has been designed with the engagement of males in mind.
- Adding identification of fathers/males into monthly audits
- The auditing of assessments will continue to include examining whether all relevant agencies have been consulted as well as all relevant family members
- Training on professional curiosity has been commissioned & delivered in relation to the adult services context.
- Emphasis on the importance of being aware of unconscious bias has been made in further training sessions to schools.
- Electronic sharing of information forms by Health Visitors and Midwifery, which has allowed for timely information sharing between the two professions.

### **CTMSB 01-2021**

Learning themes from this Adult Practice Review included:

#### Trauma informed practice:

Would have been helpful in understanding this in relation to the person's mental health and polysubstance misuse.

#### Connecting with the wider family:

The challenge for professionals is how to work in partnership with families, who may be sources of support, whilst respecting the individual's right to confidentiality.

#### Working with someone who is difficult to engage with:



It is important to distinguish between contact and real engagement. This adult was difficult to engage with, and professionals felt they were always reacting to crises rather than working with clear and positive plans.

#### Domestic violence and coercive control:

It is insidious, powerful, far-reaching and difficult to challenge. Victims of coercive control often do not realise they are victims even when there is clear evidence. In this situation the adult described her abuser as a carer.

#### Professional curiosity

Agencies should ensure that their staff are aware of the psychology of unconscious bias

### **What have Agencies done as a result of this learning?**

- There has been a renewed focus on the active offer of advocacy and the requirements of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Trauma informed practice research carried out to look at personal disorder pathway and provision of psychological therapies in the Health Board.
- Mental Health services have encouraged all staff to attend Ask & Act training. We have subsequently seen improvement in the recognition and response to Domestic Abuse. In addition, there have been excellent examples of collaborative working to safeguard victims of domestic violence.
- An increase in the contacts from Mental Health services to MARAC. Work is ongoing to ensure effective coordination of appropriate representation from Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol services at MARAC meetings.
- Additional Domestic Abuse Matters training which has been disseminated to front line staff.
- Shared with Training department to reinforce the need for trauma informed training to be included within the current training programme.

#### **Good Practice – South Wales Police**

There was a case where an external reviewer had let a MAPF panel down and SWP stepped in to chair and author the review, identifying the learning for agencies and allowing the review to be completed in a timely manner. This demonstrated the resilience of the organisation, being prepared to step up when required.

## **Complaints**

The Board's [Complaints Procedure](#) provides families with the opportunity to make a complaint with regards to the multi-agency child protection conference process and procedures, and the multi-agency adult protection meetings process and procedures.

In 2021-2022, there were no complaints escalated to the Board in relation to adult protection processes and procedures.

There were 2 complaints received in relation to the child protection process. Neither complaint was upheld by the Board's Independent Complaints Panel.

## 7. Information Training and Learning

The Board is required to review the training needs of practitioners in the area and ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding training, taking into account themes and learning arising from the delivery of the Board's functions. This work is monitored by the Board's Training and Learning Sub Group.

Cwm Taf training continued Safeguarding training during the course of 2021-22. On-line learning training was increased to reduce the impact of restrictions, although the situation remained challenging and courses were cancelled. There were limited face to face opportunities where it was identified this would be the best forum for learning.

167 courses were planned and 20 courses were cancelled during this period, due to covid related issues, however 1992 people attended training during this period.

The range of agencies accessing the training besides internal social care staff included Education, Health, Police, Voluntary sector, foster carers and housing

Bridgend saw that the pandemic significantly changed how training and learning were undertaken. The rapid shift to remote and digital learning has been challenging but successful. Investment has been made in developing on-line resources and virtual classroom learning. Also, in the purchase of hardware (iPads and laptop computers) to loan out to staff who do not have access to ICT equipment, and in supporting staff to develop digital literacy skills.

Bridgend maintained a programme of face-to-face essential training to ensure that care and support was provided safely both for the social care worker and the person cared for, for example manual handling, medication, infection control.

Adults and Childrens' core safeguarding training (single and multi-agency) has been facilitated on-line.

Covid response and recovery. To promote resilience and support recovery Bridgend mainstreamed a range of focussed courses which aimed to respond to supporting staff during and post Covid in a positive and practical way. For example, managing stress effectively, including a better understanding of vicarious trauma /moral injury and burnout and workshops on Loss and Bereavement

Over the year, 3838 learning activities were undertaken by staff, this figure includes attendances at face-to-face training and on-line events. Data is down compared to periods pre-covid. This is attributed to restrictions being placed on the number of people attending in-person events, and it not being possible to record data for some external on-line and e-learning events.

### National Training Framework on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Since the commencement of the National Training Framework, **20,253** staff from Bridgend, Merthyr, and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authorities, and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, have

completed group 1 training. These figures have been adjusted this year to only account for staff who have been trained and are still employed by the organisation. Figures are not available locally for Welsh Ambulance Service Trust or the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service as they report directly to Welsh Government.

The table below outlines Cwm Taf Morgannwg's progress regarding the VAWDASV NTF in 2021-2022

Group	Numbers completed
1	1457(LA data only)
2	234
3	33
4	25 (93 specialist staff also attended additional specialist training)
5	7

It should be noted that during this period all locally delivered training in relation to the NTF was delivered online.

### Welsh Government Training Grant

The Board receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government to support additional safeguarding training activities. This year the grant enabled us to support the following:

- An exploitation workshop which was delivered to 53 members of staff from a variety of agencies.
- Three sessions on staff wellbeing, delivered by Strongminds Resiliency Training Limited, took place online, with 35 people attending.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences training was held for 4 people who chair these conferences.
- Four training sessions on Professional Curiosity and Disguised Compliance were arranged for staff throughout the region.
- A face to face Staff Wellbeing Workshop was held for staff in Bridgend County Borough Council.
- Grassroots delivered Suicide First Aid Training which was attended by 6 people.

### Multi Agency Practitioner Events (MAPF)

During 2021-22, several multi-agency practitioner events took place.

- A feedback event took place based on two adult practice reviews ([CTSB 1/2018](#) and [CTMSB 1/2019](#)), involving assaults by an elderly resident in care settings. The two reviews were linked to each other and the findings and learning themes were of a similar nature. This feedback event took place online, with 40 people attending.
- A feedback event took place based on two child practice reviews ([CTSB 2/2018](#) and [CTMSB 2/2019](#)). This event took place online, with 36 people attending.
- In October 2021, the Safeguarding Board launched its [Protocol for the Management of Cases of Serious Self-Neglect](#), which sits alongside the [Multi-Agency Staff](#)

[Guidance for Working with People who Self-Neglect](#). Five online awareness raising sessions took place, with a total number of 385 people attending.

- During Safeguarding Week 2021, two online workshops took place on Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention. The workshops highlighted and showcased some of the work happening nationally and locally to prevent suicide and self-harm, and also provided an opportunity for attendees to network and discuss opportunities for prevention. Over both sessions, 55 people attended.

## Other Safeguarding Training

- The Disclosure and Barring Service held [two workshops](#) for the Safeguarding Board – one on disclosure which was aimed at managers and people involved in the recruitment process, and one on barring which was aimed at managers and anyone with a responsibility for making DBS referrals and those involved in professional concerns.
- Training for Child and Adult Practice Review Chairs and Reviewers was carried out for participants to understand the review process and feel confident and equipped to undertake these roles.
- Two Coercive Control training sessions took place which were delivered by the Domestic Abuse Resource Team at Safer Merthyr Tydfil and RCT Domestic Abuse Services, with 114 people attending.
- The Wales Safeguarding Procedures were launched in 2019 to help ensure that those working in the public and voluntary sectors fully understood how and when they should take action to protect those at risk of harm or neglect. The e-learning module for the Procedures was released in November 2021.



This module contains 13 sections and includes scenario questions to help users build a practical understanding of safeguarding and what action to take if they think someone may be at risk.



Trefniadau Diogelu Cymru  
Wales Safeguarding Procedures

- Two Child Sexual Exploitation training workshops for practitioners within Cwm Taf Morgannwg were delivered online by Sophie Hallett, with 78 people signing up to take part.
- A workshop for practitioners on Child Sexual Abuse, was held in March by the 'Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse'.
- The Welsh Government's conference - 'The Right to be Safe - preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and exploitation in Wales' – which took place during Safeguarding Week 2021, was promoted withn Cwm Taf Morgannwg to encourage

practitioners to join. 25 people signed up to attend this. (There was cap on how many people could attend this session).

- As part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board's activities programme for Safeguarding Week, Stop it Now! delivered a session online to practitioners on Child Sexual Exploitation.
- During Safeguarding Week, New Pathways delivered a session for practitioners on 'Dealing with Disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse' which 23 people signed up to

## 8. How have we collaborated with others?

Working in partnership with other agencies is integral to the work of the Board. We do this in a number of ways, with individuals, agencies, partnerships and organisations both within and external to Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

### Community Safety Partnerships

Representatives from the Community Safety Partnerships sit on Safeguarding Board Sub Groups and joint work on Suicide Prevention and Domestic Abuse continues. See Section 5 for further details.

### Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board

Representatives of the Board have continued to engage and participate in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, led by Cardiff and the Vale Safeguarding Board. A theme has emerged with the implementation of Section 5: Safeguarding Allegations/Concerns about Practitioners and Those in Positions of Trust (Professional Concerns). Discussions are ongoing, with a view to achieving consistency and delivering training across Wales.

### Welsh Government

The Chairs and Business Managers from all six Regional Safeguarding Boards across Wales meet on a regular basis with Welsh Government to provide updates on emerging safeguarding issues across Wales.

The Board has also worked collaboratively with the Welsh Government Suicide Prevention lead and the Regional Co-ordinator to take forward actions to prevent suicide and self harm, both regionally and across Wales.

Representatives from Cwm Taf Morgannwg have continued to contribute to the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review, due to be implemented later in 2022.

The Board contributed to various groups, consultations and discussions in the development of the new legislation around Ending Physical Punishment in Wales. This was implemented on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

In February 2022, a member of the Welsh Government Safeguarding and Advocacy Team attended a Board meeting to present their position on Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation. This has informed the Board's work on Tackling Exploitation across the region.

## **National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB)**

The NISB representative for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region attended Board meetings during 2021-2022. They have also provided the Board with ongoing advice and support throughout the year.

A Thematic Review of Adult Practice Reviews, commissioned by the NISB, was presented to the Safeguarding Board in September 2021. Five key themes were shared:

- Safeguarding capacity and the duty to report
- Commissioning and inspection
- Transition
- The voice of vulnerable people
- Communication and family as carers

## **Other Regional Safeguarding Boards**

The Board Chair and the Board Business Manager have continued regular contact with their counterparts across Wales to share good practice and resolve any common issues/barriers.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Business Manager collaborated with their counterparts from Gwent and Cardiff and the Vale to deliver additional Adult and Child Practice Review training to increase our pool of independent chairs and reviewers.

## **Social Care Wales**

Representatives from Cwm Taf Morgannwg were involved in the development of a Wales Safeguarding Procedures e-learning module developed by Social Care Wales. This was launched during Safeguarding Week in November 2021.

# **9. PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVING**

Children, young people or adults who are affected by the exercise of the Safeguarding Board's functions should be given the opportunity to participate in the work of the Board.

The information below highlights some of the work that has been carried out during 2021-22.

### **Bridgend Community Safety Partnership**

- 690 engagements with young people on the street in twelve hotspot areas for Anti-Social Behaviour through Bridgend Youth Matters detached youth work.
- The detached Youth Team supported young people at local events including Elvis Festival.
- Four multi-agency operations on Youth annoyance, vehicle ASB, Grass fires, off road bikes.
- Review of Community Safety Partnerships aims to understand and map the existing meeting and partnership landscape for the Bridgend CSP and Cwm Taf CSPs

respectively. Ensure the current relationship with the CTM Safeguarding Board structures are strengthened. Review will be completed during 2022 to 2023.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence**

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service worked with partners in South Wales Police, Victim Focus and Court Services to establish a [remote evidence suite](#). This enables victims of domestic violence to give evidence at a safe site, fully supported by a Court Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), without having to attend court.

[This video](#) explains more on this.

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service helped to create and deliver the 'Snip it in the Bud' Campaign where hairdressers and barbers across Cwm Taf Morgannwg were supported to help them identify any potential warning signs and signpost to local services in the event of any disclosures.



### **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Children's Services**

RCTCBC's Children's Services have achieved the following:

- Introduced Family Group Conferencing.
- Developed the 2Sides website for Children Looked After (CLA), with technical support from Wicid TV – the co-produced and interactive information, learning and support platform developed by the YEPS for young people aged 11+ in RCT.
- Revised the CLA consultation form for Children and Young People (CYP) which is now called My Voice - My Review. The planned proposal to gain CYP feedback on its accessibility and relevance will shape the document moving forward. The Independent Reviewing Officer Team Manager has also met with foster carers to encourage their active support to CYP to utilise this to maximise the Voice of child being heard at all reviews. This is due to go live imminently.
- A Participation Strategy has been developed, which is rooted in children's rights, and this will:
  - Listen to the public's experience of our services and systematically use this intelligence to drive improvement.
  - Prioritise people's rights
  - Re-engage with Voices from Care
  - Follow up Parent Advocacy
  - Set a pattern for involving service experienced people in our service developments and evaluation
- An RCT school has approached safeguarding regarding a group of pupils who have been participating in a school project linked to community safety, and further work with these pupils is going to explore their participation in the development of the exploitation strategy.

## Wales Ambulance Service Trust

The Wales Ambulance Service Trust carried out several online sessions, with presentations and a question and answer section with the WAST panel. These sessions included:

- A Mental Health and Wellbeing session for the public, which included signposting people on where to find excellent sources of help in the community and online, without a GP referral. The Panel included the Mental Health and PEGI Team.
- Health & Safety, preparedness carers to make themselves known and keep themselves safe physically and in terms of wellbeing, signposting to services.
- 111 Website awareness session for older people, which included a live demonstration of different aspects of the NHS 111 Wales Website to help people know how to navigate help and information, accessibility with the 'Recite Me' tool and symptom checkers online.

## Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Camau Babi, the Local Authority's pre-birth pathway, developed stronger links with Health to reduce safeguarding risks to newborn babies. Examples of service user feedback include:

- "It was a pleasure working with her and without her help I do not know whether the child would still be in my care".
- "Felt listened to and supported to make the changes needed to improve family life".
- "Brilliant workers who also listened to what I said".
- "This service has been a lifeline in such a difficult time".

### Case Study - MTCBC Child Protection Conference – Parental Advocacy Pilot

With the support of grant funding from Welsh Government, MTCBC Children's Services commissioned a pilot of parental advocacy. This included an issues-based parental advocacy offer, along with a standard offer of parental advocacy for all parents attending Child Protection Conferences.

The initial pilot phase considered a control group which did not access parental advocacy, and a cohort that accessed parental advocacy, and analysed their experiences of attending a Child Protection Conference. The methodology of evaluation included:

- Consultation with all stakeholders
- Analysis of conference minutes from conferences involving parents who were offered an advocate and those who were not, in the same timeframe.

The feedback from all involved in the project, including parents/carers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Social Workers, was positive and the findings were that:

80% of parents reported that they found the service 'helpful'. 80% of parents said the service made a difference to their situation. 50% of parents said they knew more about their rights.



The evidence suggested that the parents who had advocates were more meaningfully engaged in the meeting and demonstrated better understanding of the concerns that instigated the conference meeting, in comparison to the cohort of parents who were not offered a parent advocate.

Feedback and analysis of conference minutes in this small scale project overwhelmingly indicated that having a parent advocate has enabled parents to engage with the conference process and to feel more confident in sharing their views, wishes and feelings. Their understanding of the process also appears to have improved as a result.

Based on the positive feedback, funding was identified for a 12 month project of parental advocacy where there is a standard offer of parental advocacy for all parents and people with parental responsibility for initial and Review Child Protection Conferences.

## Dissemination of Information

As part of developing a positive culture of learning, the Board has disseminated best practice and learning within the workforce via Multi-Agency Practitioner Forums (see page 23), information within the Board's e-bulletin, and updating the website with reports and learning outcomes from Adult/Child Practice Reviews and audits.

Two bulletins were produced in 2021-22 and circulated amongst the Board and its partners. The information included:

- Ending physical punishment in Wales
- Working together to prevent child abuse
- All Wales Safeguarding Procedures training
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence training
- Published policies and protocols
- Published practice reviews
- Suicide prevention

The e-bulletins can be accessed by selecting the links below:

- [Spring 2021](#)
- [Spring 2022](#)

## Social Media

Throughout the year, information on a range of safeguarding issues for both the public and professionals was shared on the Board's Facebook page and its Twitter account, and posts from other organisations were also shared and retweeted, providing information and signposting to various support services.

The Safeguarding Board supported a number of awareness days, including:

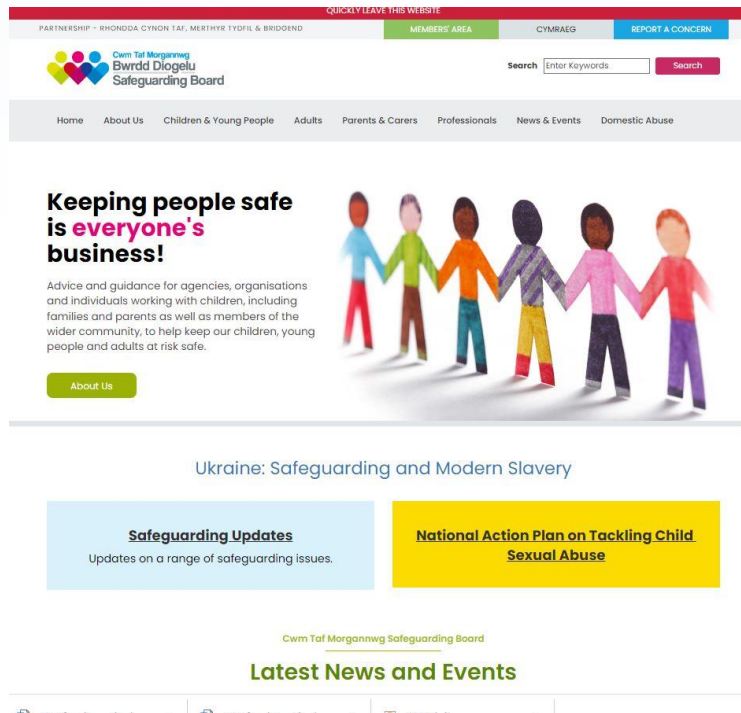
- Stalking Awareness week
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Carers' Week

- World Elder Abuse Day
- Men’s Health Week

## Website

Information on a range of safeguarding issues was uploaded to the website throughout the year.

A section was created on the Safeguarding Board’s website to contain information on various safeguarding related matters. Information from this section – [Safeguarding Updates](#) - was regularly sent out to members of the Safeguarding Board and its partners.



## Campaigns

The Safeguarding Board and its partners have supported the following campaigns by sharing the information and resources for these internally, on websites, social media channels and with face to face events..

- [Ending Physical Punishment in Wales](#)
- [White Ribbon Day](#)
- [Live Fear Free](#)
- [Hate Hates Wales](#)
- Intra-familial Abuse
- [‘Call Out Only’](#)

## Safeguarding Week

Safeguarding Week 2021 took place between 15th and 19th November. The theme for Cwm Taf Morgannwg was ‘Safeguarding Our Communities’. This provided the Safeguarding Board, its partners and agencies within the region, with the flexibility to arrange events and activities on safeguarding issues pertinent to the services they provide, their service users and their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [events programme](#) included training and awareness raising sessions on a range of safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation, mental health, suicide and self-harm prevention, adult and child practice reviews, domestic abuse and child criminal exploitation. These were targeted at the general public, young people, parents/carers and professionals.

## National Exploitation Awareness Day 2022

National Child Exploitation Awareness Day 2022 took place on 18<sup>th</sup> March. A multi-agency task and finish group was set up to discuss ways in which this could be promoted throughout Cwm Taf Morgannwg.



Online resources, such as social media posts, graphics and posters were shared, along with hard copy posters and leaflets on safeguarding and exploitation, providing information on the various types of exploitation, what the signs are if someone is being exploited, and what to do and how to report suspected cases of exploitation.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board merchandise such as notepads, pens and trolley coins, were also shared with partners for use in promotional activities to help raise awareness of the Board and to provide details on its website and social media channels.

Several activities took place for National Exploitation Awareness Day, including:

- The Health and Well-Being Team in Bridgend visited secondary schools during the week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> March, with a staffed information table during the lunch time period, to raise awareness of both Sexual and Criminal exploitation to students. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March, upon request by the Pupil Referral Unit, the Health and Well-Being Team were present all day, linking in with an event that the Unit already had in place.
- Cwm Taf YOS ran a campaign to raise awareness and provide information on exploitation for young people, particularly those in the NEET category, using the Outreach Service as a way of conveying the messages.
- A Child Exploitation Practitioners' event took place on 18<sup>th</sup> March, which was delivered via Microsoft Teams by members of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Group and Barnardos' Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service.
- Several partners, including Cwm Taf YOS, Barnardos, South Wales Police and the Wales Ambulance Service Trust took part in an event at Coleg Y Cymoedd (Nantgarw Campus), to speak to students and to raise awareness of exploitation.



Students engaging with partners of the Safeguarding Board for National Exploitation Awareness Day.

## 10. Contributions of Board Members

**Each Safeguarding Board partner has a responsibility to ensure that the Board is operating effectively. There are clearly defined Terms of Reference as well as role profiles for Board members.**

The Board continues to review the effectiveness of measures taken by partners and other bodies in relation to safeguarding via quality assurance, audits, and performance management. All the required statutory partner agencies in Cwm Taf Morgannwg are represented on the Board, Operational Committees, and Sub Groups, and attendance is monitored at these meetings.

Attendance at the Board and Joint Operational Committee meetings is presented in the table below:



<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE AT BOARD (4 meetings)</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE AT OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE (4 meetings)</b>
Director (RCT)	4	Not applicable
Director (MT)	3	
Director (BCBC)	4	
<b>RCT Children Services</b>	4	2
<b>RCT Adult Services</b>	4	4
<b>RCT Public Protection</b>	2	1
<b>RCT Education</b>	4	3
<b>MT Children Services</b>	4	4
<b>MT Adult Services</b>	3	4
<b>MT Public Protection</b>	0	0
<b>MT Education</b>	1	0
<b>Bridgend Children Services</b>	2	4
<b>Bridgend Adult Services</b>	2	4
<b>Bridgend Public Protection</b>	0	0
<b>Bridgend Education</b>	2	1
<b>Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board</b>	4	4
<b>South Wales Police</b>	4	4
<b>National Probation Service</b>	3	4
<b>Parc Prison</b>	3	2

Partner agencies also provide the Board with an annual report demonstrating their contribution and commitment to safeguarding. This is summarised below.

## Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)

MTCBC is represented on the Safeguarding Board by colleagues from Children's Services, Adult Services and Education. MTCBC also provides representatives to all Board Sub Groups and various task and finish groups held throughout the year.

MTCBC also contributes to the work of the Board in the following ways:

- Vice Chair of the Safeguarding Board
- Chairing of the Protocols & Procedures Group
- Leading on and co-producing regional guidance, e.g. Core Group Guidance
- Vice Chair of the Adult Quality Assurance & Performance Group
- Chairing and Reviewing Practice Reviews and MAPFs
- Supported the development of the Suicide Review Group
- Contributing to Immediate Response Groups and PRUDIC meetings

MTCBC provides performance data and contributes to audit work and sub-group activity as required. MTCBC also contributes to the facilitating of safeguarding training across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

## Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

- The Director of Social Services and Wellbeing for Bridgend is the senior lead officer who holds the corporate responsibility for Safeguarding. The Director and Heads of Service for Adult and Children Social Care sit on the Safeguarding Board. The Director operates as vice chair.
- The Director and officers of the Council are active participants on Board Sub Groups and have chairing responsibilities.
- The Council has an identified senior manager who holds responsibility for Safeguarding across the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.
- Representatives from the Directorate have attended organised workshops, planning days and team meetings which have contributed to the setting of actions to meet the Board's priorities.
- BCBC utilises the regional Concerns Regarding Interagency Safeguarding Concerns protocol (CRISP) to escalate matters of a safeguarding nature.
- Safeguarding performance data is shared with the Quality Assurance and Performance Groups which is further scrutinised at the Safeguarding Board through highlight reports.
- Any independent safeguarding activity is also shared with the Safeguarding Board where appropriate and proportionate,
- The BCBC Education and Family Support Directorate has been well represented at all meetings across the regional Safeguarding Board over the course of 2021-2022. A review of representation has been taken to ensure that the right members of staff are present at the relevant meetings. This has assisted in ensuring a level of consistency in attendance and dissemination from those meetings.
- The Directorate has provided information related to Immediate Response Groups as and when requested. It has also contributed fully to meetings in terms of data and information. There have been occasions where this has been delayed but an improvement compare to previous years.
- BCBC has contributed fully to participation in Child and Adult Practice Reviews, learning events, and provided panel members where required.

### Case Study - Bridgend Education

In 2021-2022, the Education Directorate created a new post (Group Manager) to ensure safeguarding responsibilities were being discharged effectively and consistently within schools and across the Directorate.

This post has a key responsibility in promoting and ensuring that all schools and services were fully informed of their safeguarding duties. This led to safeguarding audits being undertaken of all 60 schools in Bridgend. Schools will continue to review their audits on a termly basis and monitor their own progress against the audit tool.

Findings from the initial audits are as follows:

- 52 schools rated themselves as green.
- 3 schools rated themselves as amber
- 1 school was rated as red.

There was good reference to partner agencies supporting schools in relation to safeguarding issues and good evidence of schools undertaking surveys and consultations with learners or their parents. This has assisted schools in considering type of support required linked to safeguarding and wellbeing. There was strong evidence of schools having a wide range of support in place for learners.

Areas for improvement included the need to develop the robustness of their safeguarding approach and how effectively they communicate their safeguarding policies and procedures to staff, governing bodies, children, parents and carers. There is evidence in audits that governing bodies need to be clearer on their roles and responsibilities linked to safeguarding within their schools. The majority of schools highlighted that training for governors was a gap and needed to be addressed.

The one school rated as red related to the leadership of the school, in particular around implementation of safeguarding process, procedures and behaviour management. This school has been supported closely by the local authority and continues to be at this time and significant improvements are being noted since intervention.

The local authority will review each school's audit on an annual basis in their role as a "critical friend" providing challenge, questions and queries linked to schools response. The findings from the audits will be shared with schools to consider how they respond to this in preparation for their next annual review.

### Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

RCT Adult and Children Services have maintained their commitment to the relevant Sub Groups of the Safeguarding Board. There is an excellent track record in attendance at meetings, and they make a significant and consistent contribution to the work of the Board, including the provision of Panel members, Reviewers and Chairs for Practice Reviews and MAPFs.

In 2021-2022, RCTCBC has:

- Chaired the Joint Operational Committee, Adults and Children Quality & Performance Sub-Groups and the RCT Self-Neglect Partnership Panel
- Vice-chaired the Cwm Taf MASH Quality & Performance Sub-Group, the Multi Agency CSE Group and the Engagement, Participation & Communication Sub-Group
- Been a member of all other Sub Groups of the Board and contributed to the Exploitation & SUSR Task & Finish Groups
- Attended and contributed to Immediate Response Groups
- Chaired one new Adult Practice Review, acted as a Reviewer in one Child Practice Review, provided Panel members to 4 Adult Practice Reviews and chaired 2 MAPFs.
- Increased our numbers of staff interested in Practice Review training in the last year

In addition, RCT Adult Services has:

- Worked with regional partners to develop and implement new case management documentation in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.
- Made a significant contribution to the Welsh Government's Single Unified Safeguarding Review project.
- Made a significant contribution to the Welsh Government Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) workstreams and has led a regional project to prepare for the implementation of the LPS.
- Continued to play a leading role with agency partners in the delivery of Level 3 Adult Safeguarding training during 2021-22 and have also delivered feedback events on behalf of the Safeguarding Board.

## South Wales Police

SWP continue to remain an effective and contributing partner to the Board and its sub-boards. The DCI in particular has been instrumental in shaping the Board's response to the recovery phase of the pandemic as well as shaping the multi-agency response in the wake of several high profile child deaths in order to drive swift improvements to service provision.

SWP has significantly supported the Board's Practice Review processes during this period by agreeing to Chair a number of Panels, which has enabled the reviews to be completed in a timely manner.

SWP has representatives on the Board and its Sub Groups and has contributed to the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review and the potential impact on work of the Board.

South Wales Police has been a key contributor to the MASH change programme in information sharing to develop a new information sharing platform via Microsoft Teams as a more sustainable solution.

## Her Majesty's Prison and Young Offenders Institute Parc

- Regular attendance to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and relevant Sub Groups



- The Safeguarding Lead attended the Adult and Child Practice Review Training.
- Engagement in a Multi Agency Safeguarding Audit.
- The Safeguarding Team recognised the need to review Safeguarding Training for employees. Local Safeguarding Training has been developed and has been rolled out. All employees have been encouraged to complete the Safeguarding training on the CTM Safeguarding Website.

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

- Reviewers and panel members for Practice Reviews and MAPFs
- Chair Suicide Review Group and MASH Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Group, providing relevant upward reports
- Attend and participate in all CTMSB meetings and sub groups.
- Members of task and finish groups to develop policies, improve practice and enhance performance framework.
- Contribute to the development of action plans and audit work.
- Facilitate learning events, ensure learning is widespread from Practice Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews throughout the UHB.
- Active participation during Safeguarding week to promote the priorities of the Board.
- Attend Training and Learning groups to ensure consistency in training packages and delivery of training across the region
- Attend and participate in the development of a regional Exploitation strategy.
- Ensure the priorities of the board are central to improvement plans within the UHB.

## 11. Managing our Resources

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

This is calculated as follows:

Agency	% Split	% Split
Rhondda-Cynon-Taf CBC	60%	55%
Bridgend CBC		32%
Merthyr Tydfil CBC		13%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB		25%
South Wales Police		10%
Probation Service		5%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>100%</b>

In 2021-2022 expenditure was as follows:

<b>Staff</b>	£277,015
<b>Premises</b>	£7,440
<b>Other</b>	£6,381

Training costs are not included as this sits outside the Board budget.

## Other Board Activities

### Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs)

Adult Protection and Support Orders have been available since the 2016 implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 but have been used rarely.

During the year, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC became the third Welsh Local Authority to utilise the Order in order to be able to gain access to a suspected adult at risk, where it had not been possible to gain such access in other ways.

In this case, a young adult was reported to the Adult Safeguarding Team by the GP for not receiving any treatment for underlying health conditions. The efforts of the GP proved fruitless, a social worker was allocated to undertake S126 enquiries but attempts to make contact failed. A police welfare check confirmed that the person was safe, a strategy meeting took place, where it was agreed that the Authorised Officer would make an application to the Court for an APSO. The Order was successfully obtained and successfully served and the young adult was seen on two occasions by the Authorised Officer. There was no evidence of significant neglect or abuse, but it was likely, on the balance of probability, that they would not have mental capacity to make complex decisions about their health care needs.

### Guidance and Advice received from the Welsh Ministers and/or the National Board

The Board continues to work closely with Welsh Government and the National Board and responds promptly to requests for information. A good relationship has been established with the NISB member for the region, and support has been provided on a number of occasions when seeking to commission independent reviewers or to influence national processes and guidance.

### Section 137 requests for information

Section 137(1) of the Act provides a Safeguarding Board with the power to request specified information from a qualifying person or body provided that the purpose of the request is to enable or assist the Board to perform its functions under the Act.

In 2021-2022 the Board did not use its Section 137 powers to access information.

## Are You Concerned About Someone?

If you suspect that a **child or young person** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

**In Rhondda Cynon Taf:** 01443 425006  
**In Merthyr Tydfil:** 01685 725000  
**In Bridgend:** 01656 642320

**Opening Hours:**

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you suspect that an **adult** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about vulnerable adults at risk are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

**In Rhondda Cynon Taf:** 01443 425003  
**In Merthyr Tydfil:** 01685 725000  
**In Bridgend:** 01656 642477

**Opening Hours:**

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

To contact Children or Adults Services outside office hours, at weekends and bank holidays, call:

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team on 01443 743665.**

**If you suspect that a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police.**

If you would like to report a non-urgent incident, or have a problem or general query, you can call 101, the 24 hour non-emergency number for the police. **Use 101 when the incident is less urgent than 999.**

## APPENDIX 1 - BOARD MEMBERSHIP

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY
Paul Mee (Chair)	Director of Community and Children's Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Lisa Curtis-Jones (Vice Chair)	Director of Social Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Claire Marchant (Vice Chair)	Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cheryl Emery	Head of Public Protection	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jackie Neale	Adult Safeguarding Service Manager	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Neil Elliot	Service Director, Adult Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Julie Clark	Head of Safeguarding and Support (Children)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Gaynor Davies	Director of Education and Lifelong Learning	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Annabel Lloyd	Service Director, Children Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cara Miles	Head of Legal - Community Care and Children	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jon Eyre	Safeguarding Principal Manager	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Alyn Owen	Chief Officer, Community Regeneration	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Susan Walker	Chief Officer, Education	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Taryn Stephens	Head of Children Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Angela Edevane	Head of Adult Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Carys Kennedy	Head of Legal and Governance	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Jacqueline Davies	Head of Adult Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education and Family Services	Bridgend County Borough Council
Greg Dix	Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Services	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Louise Mann	Assistant Director for Quality and Safety	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Mark Attwell	Superintendent, Mid Glamorgan BCU	South Wales Police
Sue Hurley	Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager	South Wales Police
Emma Richards	Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Sharon Richards	Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Maria James	Third Sector Representative, Merthyr Tydfil	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Lyndon Lewis	Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Virginia Hewitt	Designated Nurse	Public Health Wales
Lin Slater	NISB Representative	National Independent Safeguarding Board
Nikki Harvey	Assistant Director Quality, Safety & Patient Experience	Welsh Ambulance Service Trust
Jason Evans	Head of Young Person's Unit	HM Prison & Young Offenders Institute, Parc
Ian Coles	Interim Deputy Director	HM Prison & Young Offenders Institute, Parc

## Glossary of Terms

### **Adult Practice Review**

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission an Adult Practice Review in cases where an adult at risk has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

### **Child Practice Review**

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission a Child Practice Review in cases where a child has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

### **Children Looked After**

A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

Statutory partnership to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.

### **Domestic Homicide Review**

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a locally conducted multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by: a person to whom he or she was related, or with whom he or she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or, a member of the same household as himself or herself.

## **Exploitation**

Exploitation is a type of abuse. Exploitation involves being groomed, forced or coerced into doing something that you don't want to do for someone else's gain.

## **Immediate Response Groups (IRG)**

A group which is convened to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences of a critical incidents, such as the unexpected death of an adult and is led by the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy).

## **MARAC**

A weekly risk management meeting where professionals share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan.

## **Modern Slavery**

The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

## **Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF)**

Multi-agency professional forums are a mechanism for producing organisational learning, improving the quality of work with families and strengthening the ability of services to keep children safe. They utilise case information, findings from child protection audits, inspections and reviews to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board's future audit and training priorities.

## **Public Protection Notice (PPN)**

The forms have two main purposes. One is for police officers to make referrals to partner agencies when they have concerns about vulnerable people. The PPN is also used as a risk assessment tool for victims of domestic abuse and stalking and harassment (DASH).

## **Prevent**

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation

## **PRUDiC**

This procedure sets a minimum standard for a response to unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood. It describes the process of communication, collaborative action and information sharing following the unexpected death of a child.

## **Quality Assurance and Performance Groups**

Two separate groups for adults and children whose objectives are to monitor the effectiveness of agencies' practice within the processes of safeguarding and encourage high standards of practice by all those involved in safeguarding work, promoting agency and individual accountability through the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

## **Self Neglect**

Self-neglect is a general term used to describe a vulnerable adult living in a way that puts his or her health, safety, or well-being at risk.

## **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is the law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

## **Strategy Discussion/Meeting**

A meeting for social workers and other professionals to plan what they are going to do next about a case.

## **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 focusses on the prevention of these issues, the protection of victims and support for those affected by such issues.