



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bydd cyfarfod hybrid y CABINET yn cael ei gynnal ar
Dydd Llun, 21ain Tachwedd, 2022 am 1.00 pm

Dolen gyswllt: Hannah Williams – Uned Busnes y Cyngor
(Rhif ffôn. 07385401954)

Os bydd cynghorwyr neu aelodau o'r cyhoedd yn dymuno cael cyfle i annerch y Cabinet am unrhyw fater ar yr agenda isod, rhaid iddyn nhw ofyn am gael gwneud hynny erbyn canol Dydd Iau, 17 Tachwedd 2022. Rhaid iddyn nhw hefyd gadarnhau ai yn y Gymraeg neu yn y Saesneg y byddan nhw'n annerch.

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

Bwriedir i'r cyfarfod yma gael ei weddarlledu'n fyw, mae rhagor o fanylion am hyn [yma](#)

MATERION I'W TRAFOD

1. DATGAN BUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr eitem mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, **rhaid** iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. COFNODION

Derbyn cofnodion o gyfarfod y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd ar 7 Tachwedd 2022 yn rhai cywir.

(Tudalennau 5 - 8)

**3. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL Y BWRDD RHIANTA CORFFORAETHOL
2021 I 2022**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu sy'n cyflwyno Adroddiad Blynyddol y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol ar gyfer Blwyddyn y Cyngor 2021 i 2022 i'r Cabinet.

(Tudalennau 9 - 38)

4. ADRODDIAD AR GYFLAWNIAD Y CYNGOR

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol sy'n rhoi crynodeb i'r aelodau am gyflawniad y Cyngor dros chwe mis cyntaf y flwyddyn ariannol hon (hyd at 30 Medi 2022), mewn perthynas â materion ariannol a gweithredol fel ei gilydd.

(Tudalennau 39 - 72)

5. TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R CYNNIG ISOD YN BENDERFYNIAD

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

**6. CYNLLUN RHEOLI ASED AU CORFFORAETHOL – DIWEDDARIAD
INTERIM 2018 I 2023**

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo'r Cyngor sy'n rhoi gwybod i'r Cabinet am y cynnydd yn erbyn themâu allweddol Cynllun Rheoli Asedau Corfforaethol 2018 i 2023.

(Tudalennau 73 - 214)

7. MATERION BRY S

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



Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

Cylchrediad:-

Y Cynghorwyr: Y Cynghorydd A Morgan (Cadeirydd)
Y Cynghorydd M Webber (Is-gadeirydd)
Y Cynghorydd G Caple
Y Cynghorydd A Crimmings
Y Cynghorydd R Lewis
Y Cynghorydd C Leyshon
Y Cynghorydd M Norris
Y Cynghorydd B Harris

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

tudalen wag

PWYLLGOR CABINET CYNGOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF CABINET

Cofnodion o gyfarfod y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd Dydd Llun, 7 Tachwedd 2022 am 2.00 pm.

Y Cyngorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol - Cabinet Aelodau oedd yn bresennol:-:-

Y Cyngorydd A Morgan (Cadeirydd)

Y Cyngorydd M Webber Y Cyngorydd G Caple
Y Cyngorydd A Crimmings Y Cyngorydd R Lewis
Y Cyngorydd C Leyshon Y Cyngorydd M Norris
Y Cyngorydd B Harris

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol

Mr C Bradshaw, Prif Weithredwr
Mr B Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Digidol
Ms G Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant
Mr R Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol
Mr C Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Mr P Mee, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant
Mr A Wilkins, Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol
Ms A Richards, Cyfarwyddwr Dros Dro – Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif a Materion Trawsnewid

67 Datgan Buddiant

Yn unol â Chod Ymddygiad y Cyngor, ni wnaethpwyd unrhyw ddatganiadau mewn perthynas â'r Agenda.

68 Cofnodion

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 17 Hydref 2022.

69 Rhaglen Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif: Llety Anghenion Sylfaenol - Ystafelloedd Dosbarth Ychwanegol yn Ysgol Gyfun Y Pant

Rhoddodd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif a Materion Trawsnewid yr wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Cabinet am ddarpariaeth ystafelloedd addysgu ychwanegol yn Ysgol Gyfun y Pant, yn dilyn yr adroddiad a gafodd ei gyflwyno i'r Cabinet ar 13 Rhagfyr 2021. Roedd yr adroddiad wedi tynnu sylw at y pwysau cynyddol ar niferoedd disgyblion yn ne'r Fwrdeistref Sirol.

Roedd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth wedi argymhell bod y Cabinet yn ystyried cymeradwyo gwaith adeiladu bloc addysgu deulawr yn Ysgol Gyfun y Pant. Yn rhan o'r rhaglen fesul cam, bydd y llawr cyntaf yn cael ei gwblhau yn y lle cyntaf, a'r llawr gwaelod ar ôl hynny yn ôl gofynion capasiti'r ysgol. Byddai'r cynnig yn caniatáu i'r Cyngor barhau i gyflawni ei ddyletswydd statudol i ddarparu'r nifer priodol o leoedd ysgol yn y lleoliadau cywir.

Nododd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Addysg, Cyfranogiad Pobl Ifainc a'r Gymraeg fod cwmpas y cynllun arfaethedig wedi newid sydd wedi effeithio ar gost y prosiect a'r rhaglen gyflawni.

Dywedodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet fod Ysgol Gyfun y Pant yn ysgol ddeniadol, ac yn fwy deniadol fyth ers iddi gael gwedd newydd yn dilyn buddsoddiad yn 2018. Nodwyd bod y dalgylch yn ardal lle mae twf sylweddol yn nifer y tai a'r boblogaeth. Rhagwelir cynnydd yn y galw am leoedd ysgol. Daeth yr Aelod o'r Cabinet i gasgliad trwy nodi bod y cynnig gerbron yr Aelodau yn effeithiol o ran cost, yn gynaliadwy ac y byddai'n helpu'r ysgol i fodloni'r galw presennol a'r galw yn y dyfodol am leoedd yn yr ysgol.

Siaradodd yr Arweinydd o blaid y cynigion a phwysigrwydd defnyddio adeiladau dros dro cyn lleied â phosibl pan fo cynnydd tymor byr yn nifer y disgyblion. Roedd yn hapus gyda mesurau diogelu'r ysgolion ar gyfer y dyfodol yn nhermaw twf a nododd fod y sefyllfa tymor hwy yn dangos bod tair ysgol gyfun yr ardal bron yn llawn, a hynny yn bennaf yn sgil y twf yn y boblogaeth yn ardal ddeheuol y Sir.

Adleisiodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd sylwadau blaenorol a nododd fod y twf sylweddol yn nifer y tai yn ne'r Fwrdeistref Sirol wedi arwain at alw mawr am leoedd ysgol.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:

1. Nodi'r newidiadau sy'n effeithio ar leoedd ysgol fel y nodir yn yr adroddiad.
2. Cymeradwyo'r newidiadau i gwmpas y prosiect.
3. Cymeradwyo'r cynnydd yn y buddsoddiad cyfalaf i adeiladu bloc addysgu deulawr newydd yn Ysgol Gyfun y Pant.

70 Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor 2023-2024

Cyflwynodd Pennaeth Refeniw a Budd-daliadau yr adroddiad i'r Cabinet, sy'n nodi Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor yn ffurfiol ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol 2023/24.

Dywedodd y swyddog mai £80,182.87 oedd y Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor a gyfrifwyd ar gyfer 2023/24 a chynigiodd y dylid amcangyfrif mai 97.25% yw'r gyfradd gasglu, sy'n arwain at Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor net o £77,977.84. Eglurwyd y byddai swm o £77,978 yn cael ei godi i fodloni gofynion cyllideb y Cyngor am bob £1 a gaiff ei godi mewn Treth y Cyngor y flwyddyn nesaf.

Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Hinsawdd a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol yn falch o gefnogi'r argymhellion yn yr adroddiad.

Nododd y Dirprwy Arweinydd fod yr adroddiad yn cynnwys gwybodaeth bwysig ar gyfer Cynghorau Cymuned wrth iddyn nhw bennu eu cyllidebau.

Rhoddodd yr Arweinydd ddiolch i'r swyddog am yr adroddiad a **PENDERFYNODD** y Cabinet:

1. Yn unol â Rheoliadau Awdurdodau Lleol (Cyfrifo Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor) (Cymru) 1995 fel y'i diwygiwyd, y swm sydd wedi'i gyfrifo gan y Cyngor fel ei sylfaen dreth net ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol 2023/24, fydd £77,977.84;
2. Bydd sylfaen dreth 2023/24 at ddibenion gosod Treth y Cyngor yn

cael ei nodi yn Atodiad 1 yr adroddiad, ar gyfer pob cymuned ddiffiniedig yn y Fwrdeistref Sirol.

71 Cynllun Dirprwyo'r Arweinydd - 3A

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet nodi'r newidiadau i Gynllun Dirprwyo'r Arweinydd.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 2.15 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Cadeirydd.**

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21st NOVEMBER 2022

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

Author: Yula Kampouropoulou – Committee Support Officer- Democratic Services – 07747 485569

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with the draft Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Under the Leader's Scheme of Delegation (the 3A) the Corporate Parenting Board, comprising of a cross party membership was formed to take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parent's to children who are looked after and formulate Council policy in respect of children who are looked after and children in need.
- 3.2 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, the Board must report its work to the Cabinet and it has been agreed that this will take the form of an Annual Report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The first Annual Report for the Corporate Parenting Board was produced for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

4.2 The contents of the report acted as a useful basis for a number of upcoming topics which the Members felt needed particular attention in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

4.3 This is the seventh Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board, which seeks to provide a summary of the role and work of the Board undertaken during the 2021/22 Municipal Year and its ambitions going forward. The report is attached as Appendix 1.

5. THE WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD 2021-22

5.1 During the 2021-22 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board considered the following range of reports, which led to challenging discussions:

- Regulation 73 Reports
- Complaints & Compliments
- Advocacy
- Employment, Education and Training Programmes for CLA
- Independent Reviewing Officer Report
- RCT Forum
- Overview of the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service
- CLA Educational Outcomes Improvement Strategy
- Cwm Taf Regional Fostering Front Door Update
- Miskin Annual Report
- Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report
- Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Annual Report
- Fostering Service Quality of Care Report
- Housing Offer for Care Leavers
- One Child Practice Review

5.3 The Corporate Parenting Board has developed a robust and varied Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year, to continue good practice and to enhance transparency. Members can also raise any matters that they would like to add to the programme during the year.

5.4 In addition to its standard items, the following key elements of focus have been identified by the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2022-23 Municipal Year:

- The review of performance data
- Elected Member Training opportunities
- Education, Employment and Training Opportunities for CLA
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People who are Looked After and Care Leavers
- Strengthening the link with young people – invitations to meetings to be sent when appropriate

- Children Looked After Prevention Strategy
- Monitoring of Independent Sector Placements
- Frontline Visits/Virtual meetings for Members

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

6. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATION(S)

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

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's constitution.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

10.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

10.2 In respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the work of the Corporate Parenting Board meets the Five Ways of Working:

1. Working together with other partners to deliver objectives

The Corporate Parenting Board considers reports and presentations from various service areas of the Council. Members are aware that a number of partners and areas must contribute to tackle the range of different issues, which young people may experience, such as mental health, education and budgeting.

2. Involving those with an interest and seeking their views

The Corporate Parenting Board provide looked after young people and care leavers in RCT with the opportunity to attend meetings and have their voice heard. It allows them to promote their life experiences at a strategic, policy and legislative level and provides Members with the chance to hear first-hand experiences.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Corporate Parenting Board Annual report outlines the work undertaken in the 2021/22 Municipal Year and features the priority areas to consider moving forward, which will ensure that the Council provides continuous improvement to the services that it delivers for its children and young people within the Looked After System.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT
2021/2022



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



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FOREWORD



Councillor Christina Leyshon
Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board

It is with great pleasure, that I present to you the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report which provides a summary of the role and work undertaken by the Board in the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

The Corporate Parenting Board is comprised of elected Members, and Officers who meet regularly as critical friends to support, challenges and strive for stronger collaborative working. The Board creates a non-judgemental environment where Officers and Members can freely voice their opinions to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people who are looked after in RCT.

As a Board we have sought to understand the lived experiences of children growing up in the care of the Council and of care experienced young people to ensure they are safe, healthy, and leading happy and fulfilling lives. Feedback from Children and young people we receive from various means plays an integral part in RCT's improvement journey. Our children and young people's voices help us to keep focused at ground level and influence the development of services the right way.

As a Council it is vital that we take steps to be the best corporate parent and corporate family that we can be. I am committed to doing everything I can to support children and care leavers so they can benefit from the many opportunities our Borough has to offer.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board have, considered a plethora of reports, which were inclusive of various stories of success. Regular updates were more important than ever as the Corporate Parenting Board sought assurance that both staff and young people were provided with support. The continued concerns in relation to the Pandemic and emerging concerns linked to its persistence means that the emotional and physical welfare of all young people has been a key

priority for the Council. We have endeavoured to ensure the pandemic has not prevented the continuation of key services and we remain committed to ensuring that the children and young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe from harm and given the care and support that they deserve, regardless of numbers.

As such, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all Members of the Corporate Parenting Board, both new and longstanding; and, of course, to the Officers for their ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Leysha'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

WHAT IS THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD?

The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced in 1998 by the then Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson, who outlined the duties of members towards Children who are Looked After: *“For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children...you should do your utmost to make sure that those children in public care get a good start in life...”*

LEGISLATION

- Chapter 6 of the [WLGA’s Corporate Parenting Workbook](#) states:

You can make sure there is a dedicated group of Councillors who focus specially on these corporate parenting responsibilities. It might be called a Panel, or a Scrutiny subcommittee. Whatever it is called, it should:

- meet regularly and often enough to carry out the three central functions we identify here effectively
- bring all those who contribute to Corporate Parenting together and draw on their experience and wisdom
- talk with and listen to groups of our children, who are encouraged and helped to speak out - theirs are the most important voices
- interrogate all relevant performance and management information
- where possible, compare the Council’s performance with other similar authorities, and look at trends over time
- identify where things are not good enough, and ask for remedial action from officers, partner agencies, or the Council itself
- track that the action is taken and is effective, and escalate if not
- focus special attention on the most vulnerable children and young people, and seek to ensure their safety and well-being

- **The goals set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#): -**

1. A more Equal Wales - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances);

2. A Healthier Wales - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood; and
 3. A Wales of Cohesive Communities - Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected.
- **The Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' 2020-2024, which is guided by the Vision of making Rhondda Cynon Taf "the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous.**
1. PRIORITY: Ensuring **PEOPLE:** are independent, healthy, and successful - *Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.*

MEET THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD



*Councillor C Leyshon
(Chair)*



*Councillor G Caple
(Vice-Chair)*



Councillor E Griffiths



Councillor S Rees-Owen



Councillor J Bonetto



Councillor L Hooper



Councillor J Rosser



Councillor Geraint Hopkins



Councillor Sharon Rees

**Following the departure of Councillor J Rosser and Councillor Geraint Hopkins from Cabinet in 2021, Councillor G Caple and Councillor J Bonetto were appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board for remainder of the Municipal Year.*

“Councillors as Corporate Parents have an important role to play in ensuring that every child in their Council’s care receives the best care possible. They should be striving to provide the level of care they would be happy for their own children to receive.” (Sally Holland, Children’s Commissioner for Wales.)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parent to children who are looked after and formulate Council policy in respect of children who are looked after and children in need.
- To ensure that all Groups and divisions within the Council work together in order to promote best outcomes for children who are looked after and children in need.
- To promote effective relationships with key partner agencies in the best interests of children who are looked after and children in need.
- To monitor the implementation of the Action Plan arising from the Best Value Review of Services to children looked after, in addition to monitoring outcomes for children looked after and children in need.
- To consider the outcomes and promote positive learning practices following consideration of Child Practice Reviews.
- In accordance with HMIP to routinely review the offending rates of CLA by gender to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board understand patterns of offending by girls and are able to take actions to address where necessary.
- To consider the impact of relevant other systems/agencies (e.g., health, courts, schools) and see how these could be improved.
- To seek the views of children looked after - the advocacy service will be asked to facilitate.
- To invite representatives from other agencies to attend as appropriate.
- To report directly to Cabinet through an Annual report of the Board.

Vision of the Corporate Parenting Board

The role of the corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide support to the children it is responsible for looking after.

All Elected Members must be confident that the children who are looked after within RCT:

- Are safe and healthy;
- Have good homes in a secure and caring environment;
- Are placed within the local authority area, close to their homes and communities, as far as is possible;
- Have good experiences of education and can fulfill their potential;
- Are not being drawn into antisocial behavior;
- Are developing socially and emotionally;
- Are provided with help to cope with the problems they have in growing up;
- Are prepared for their transition to adulthood;
- Have ambitions for themselves and are supported to access leisure and hobbies;
- Are helped to achieve to the maximum of their ability;
- Have high aspirations and can show pride in their achievements; and
- Are provided with support when they need it.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Children Looked After remains a key priority and the Council continues to strive for a safe reduction in Children Looked After numbers and to deliver the best possible outcomes for the children and young people.

As at the 31st March 2022, there were a total of 655 children and young people within the Local Authority's care. The demographic has been broken down and compared to that of the previous year in the tables below.

Children Looked After by Age Group

Age Band	Total as at 31/03/2022	Total as at 31/03/2021
0-3	99	124
4-7	111	121
8-11	166	170
12-14	130	144
15	49	41
16	46	47
17	54	47
Total	655	<u>694</u>

Figures show that the highest age band remains at 8 - 11 years.

Children Looked After by Gender

Gender	Total as at 31/ 03/ 2022	Total as at 31/03/21
Female	284	297
Male	371	397
Total	<u>655</u>	<u>694</u>

The Gender figures show that as at 31st March 2022, 86 more males than females remain within the Local Authority's care, which is less than the figures from March 2021, where there were 100 more males than females.

Children Looked After by Placement Type

CLA Placement Type	Total as at 31/03/2022	Total as at 31/03/2021
Independent Sector Foster Placement	119	139
RCT Foster Carers	153	167
RCT Relative Foster Carers	229	234
Placed for Adoption	17	16
Placed with Parents	66	73
Education Placement	2	2
Other Lodgings	6	1
Independent Sector Residential Sector	52	50
RCT Residential Care	10	11
Secure	1	1
Total	<u>655</u>	<u>694</u>

It is recognised that each young person's needs are unique and that the most suitable placement type is unique to the individual bearing in mind their background, wishes and circumstances .

The data shows that most children and young people within Rhondda Cynon Taf are placed in foster placements, and in particular, with Relative Foster Carers.

Where safe and possible to do so, children and young people are placed with their parents.

It is noted that a key priority of the Regional Adoption Collaboration is to increase its supply of adopters.

UPDATES TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

REGULATION 73 REPORTS

Regular updates are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in respect of the current position of the residential Children's Homes and respite service. The reports are exempt from the public to ensure that the Board receive a detailed picture of the goings on at each home, and are inclusive of case studies, which inform us of the everyday challenges faced by our hardworking staff, any areas of concern and, of course, the wellbeing of the children who occupy the homes.

Each of the reports received during the Municipal Year, provided the Corporate Parenting Board with honest and reliable feedback from the young people who occupy the homes and further insight into the challenges associated with looking after and trying to develop young people who have been disadvantaged.

SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Corporate Parenting Board receives quarterly updates in respect of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints and compliments procedure. At each meeting, Members monitor the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, along with noting those enquiries received from Elected Members, A.M's and M.P's.

The importance of feedback from those who use the services is invaluable to the Corporate Parenting Board. During the year, Members were provided with detailed and honest feedback in response to questions around the updates. It was pleasing to note that the service had been used by Elected Members and A.M and M.P colleagues, which builds upon the already strong relationship with officers.

ADVOCACY

Following the appointment of Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru as the Local Authority's advocacy service, the Corporate Parenting Board have received regular and informative updates at its meetings. The Board are provided with a detailed breakdown of issues by age, gender, referral source and type, along with information on the take up of the active offer. This information enables both TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

The Board Members were assured to hear during the November 2021 update, that a more streamlined approach to risk assessments were now being taken forward to reduce delays in accessing the advocacy service in the future. Members also heard of the complexities of the role of an advocate representing young people and officers reassured that the communication between the Authority and the advocacy service will continue to be built upon.

[More information on the services provided by Tros Gynnal Plant \(TGP\) Cymru can be found here.](#)

INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER UPDATES

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (referred to as the SSWB Act) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 and 16 (referred to as the CPPCR Regulations) provide legislation and guidance pertaining to the role and functions of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The Adoption and Children Act 2002 requires the Local Authority to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers to conduct reviews for Children who are Looked After and monitor the Local Authority's performance in relation to implementing the care plans for individual children. As such, regular reports are presented to the Board to monitor the activities of the IRO service.

RCT FORUM

The RCT Forum provides looked after young people and care leavers in RCT with opportunities to have their voice heard and to enable their life experiences to contribute at a strategic, policy and legislative level both locally and nationally.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the RCT Forum attended meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board to provide a summary of activities being undertaken. The Forum ran sessions to engage with new Members of the group; in addition to networking with several external organisations working with care leavers throughout the Local Authority. Key themes were identified which were impacting individuals within the RCT area. These included difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships, independent living, and overall feelings of isolation. During the next quarter the Forum the Board would like to receive further information.

The Board were reassured of the effectiveness of the services offered by RCT Forum through a young person representative who highlighted the positive experiences they have had as part of the group and the impact on their life. The young person spoke positively of the activities undertaken as part of the forum which provided access to community networks, independence, and the attainment of new skills. The young person also spoke of the positive role of the forum through the pandemic,

with the continued support to young people across RCT.

Receiving such feedback on the services provided by the Council for Children who are Looked After and care leavers to the Board is fundamental in helping the Board ensure that the provisions and support provided by the Council are adding benefit to the people that require them, and to ensure that the young people within the service are treated as equal to those young people outside of the service.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND RESILLIENCE SERVICE

In November 2017, the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) agreed to work with the Welsh Government to undertake a joint collaborative approach to redesigning Early Years arrangements across Cwm Taf. The aim of the work was to reconstruct the Early Years and Flying Start service, to create an integrated delivery model.

Receiving updates allows the Corporate Parenting Board to compare the annual data and to monitor the progress and impact of the service.

[More information on the Resilient Families Service can be accessed here.](#)

CWM TAF REGIONAL FOSTERING FRONT DOOR

The Corporate Parenting Board were informed of two significant developments which were made during the 2021/22 Municipal year. Due to challenges with the recruitment of mainstream foster carers, it was confirmed that Bridgend County Borough Council has joined the Regional Front Door to further expand on the collaboration and share resources and good practice. As of now 3 Local Authorities, RCT CBC, Merthyr Tydful CBC and Bridgend CBC have all confirmed dedication towards foster carer recruitment. The primary objective of the team is to achieve a net gain in approved mainstream foster carers.

The launch of Foster Wales was a huge accomplishment which was achieved through the collaboration of all 22 Local Authorities within Wales. The aim of the project is targeted towards attracting younger generation to become foster carers.

In order to monitor the progress of the service, the Corporate Parenting Board receive an analysis of key performance data and details on the future developments of the service.

[More information on the Cwm Taf Regional Fostering Front Door service can be accessed here.](#)

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER ACADEMIC DATA 2021-2022 DATA

It is noted that RCT has many Children Looked After, in comparison to other Local Authorities and that there are various risk factors which can adversely impact the educational outcomes of Children Looked After. Notwithstanding that, improving the educational attainment of Children Looked After remains a key focus of the Corporate Parenting Board and each year, Members receive performance data for the previous academic year.

Summary of Data for the academic year 2020-2021*

1. Incidents of Fixed Term (FT) Exclusions in Autumn and Spring term 2020/2021 involving RCT Children who are Looked After:

Cohort	Number of FT exclusions	% of students who received a FT exclusion	Cohort of pupils of statutory school age	% of statutory school aged pupils excluded
CLA	28	15	455	3.20%
Non CLA	887	614	33220	1.85%

Source: Plasc Jan 21 (33,708)

2. Attendance Levels of Children who are Looked between 02/09/2020 and 20/07/2021 compared with Non CLA:

Overall attendance in RCT schools	
CLA pupils	Non CLA pupils
89.9%	87%
Primary school attendance	
93.1%	91.1%
Secondary school attendance	
86.1%	85.4%

3. In response to the disrupted educational experience due to COVID -19, PDG LAC money provided an offer of online tuition in Maths or English for all Key Stage 4 pupils taking exams. Pupils who engaged with tuition in Years 10 and 11:

Year group	No of pupils participating
10	23 OUT OF 31 eligible pupils
11	16 out of 25 eligible pupils

**Note: Any overall data for the academic year 2020 – 2021 needs to be viewed with caution due to the impact of school closures in Summer Term 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which means that direct comparisons with previous academic years are not possible.*

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER WEBSITE ADVANCMENTS

the Corporate Parenting Board received an update on the advancements made on the Children Looked after 2Side Website. The website is now hosted by the Wicid.TV and has become more interactive and has been developed to be more targeted to children and young people's needs within RCT. A range of services have been introduced such as an online Consultation document which allows young people to post their reviews on aspects they are enjoying and areas for improvement. Receiving such feedback permits the team to make review services and attract more children and young people to the website.

[More information on the Children Looked After Website can be accessed here](#)

MISKIN

Miskin delivers intensive family focused evidence-based interventions, which aim to improve parenting capacity to enable families to care for their children with the minimum statutory intervention. Services are delivered through individual, family, group work and holiday programmes.

The focus of the Service includes:

- High level of need, and if intensive supports are not provided the child/children are at risk of being accommodated;
- Family need an intensive period of support for child/children to return to their care;
- High level of assessed need for a child looked after, risk of placement breakdown without intensive support; and
- Child looked after requires support to return from an out of county placement to either home or a more local placement.

The Corporate Parenting Board receive annual updates in respect of the Miskin service, to monitor the effectiveness of the service, particularly at a time when demand exceeds capacity.

THERAPEUTIC FAMILIES TEAM

The Therapeutic Families Team (TFT) is a multidisciplinary team, created to offer consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions to children and families in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Team works with:

- Families assessed as high need where support from the Families Therapeutic Team would add value to the Resilient Families Service intervention;
- Family receiving a service from statutory Children's Services and child/ren assessed as being at risk of becoming Children Looked After (CLA); Children Looked After whose placement has been assessed as being at risk of breakdown where therapeutic support could promote placement stability;
- Children Looked After who require therapeutic support to assist in a return home to live with parents/family/friends or live independently;
- Children Looked After placed out of county who require therapeutic support to assist in moving to local placements; and
- Families assessed as high need where support from the Families Therapeutic Team would add value to the statutory Children's Services intervention.

The Corporate Parenting Board received the second annual report of the Therapeutic Families Team which provided a detail breakdown of the services provided to families such as consultations, therapeutic assessments and interventions for children and families in RCT. The Board was reassured of the Therapeutic Families Team improvements since its inaugural year by supporting and engaging with families and producing positive outcomes.

VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. VVC is one of the five regional Collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). All adoption services are required to provide an annual review of their service as set out in Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007.

The Board were supplied with the sixth VCC annual report which covers the periods 1st April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The supply of adopters remains a challenge for Local Authorities and as such, receiving the annual data and strategies for improvement of the Regional Adoption Service is vital to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The report was also considered in depth by the Council's [Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee](#).

FOSTERING SERVICE QUALITY OF CARE ANNUAL REPORT

The Fostering Service Quality of Care Annual Report is compiled as required under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. Regulation 52 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018 also requires the Local Authority Manager to put suitable arrangements in place to establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of service.

The Corporate Parenting Board monitored the progress in relation to carer support and consultation, education, establishing the Regional Front Door Service and the priorities for the year ahead.

[More information on the Fostering Service Quality of Care Annual Report can be found here](#)

YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Young Carers Service now sits within the wider all-age Carers Support Project following a review and restructure carried out towards the end of 2018/2019. The review identified a need for a strategic lead for carers within the authority and the Service Manager for Carers now has responsibility for all carer issues, including young carers, young adult carers and adult carers. The restructure resulted in changes to the support provided to young carers. The service still has a dedicated Young Carer Assessor who now sits within the wider Information, Advice and Assistance function of Children's Services. This is to ensure that statutory obligations are met in terms of assessment and monitoring of young carers.

The support services 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.

The Young Carers Annual Report summarises the support provided to young carers (aged 0-17) and young adults (aged 18-25) during a turbulent year and recognises the key developments achieved despite extreme challenging circumstances, specifically from the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

REGISTERED CHILDCARE PROVISION 2020-21

The Corporate Parenting Board received updates on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered childcare provision settings overseen by the Community, Wellbeing and Resilience Service (CWRS).

Since updates received during May 2019, significant service developments have taken place in respect of childcare provision across Rhondda Cynon Taf. During this Municipal Year, a new purpose-built Flying Start childcare setting has been established on the Llwynypia campus of Coleg Y Cymoedd. This has replaced the historical Flying Start provision in the previous Ynsycynon Primary School site.

HOUSING OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Housing Offer for Care leavers report is compiled based on Section 78 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which imposes a duty upon the Local Authority to safeguard and promote the well-being of each child it looks after. Under section 104-118, a Local Authority has similar duties to promote the well-being of care leavers. During this Municipal year, the Corporate Parenting Board were provided with information about how 16+ looked after young people and care leavers are provided with move on accommodation and support.

The Corporate Parenting Board was reassured on the duty of care of the team to ensure young people are housed in accommodation fit for purpose where they feel safe and supported.

CHILD PRACTICE REVIEW

A Child Practice Review is conducted in line with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board's duties under Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 3) which is issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The process is focussed on positive outcomes for children and young people through learning lessons to improve multi agency safeguarding practice. It includes different types of reviews; concise and extended as well as multi agency practitioner forums.

The report was exempt from the public to ensure that the Board receive a detailed overview of the recommendations of 2 Concise Child Practice Reviews (CPR's) conducted by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board (CTMSB) and the measures Children Services had taken to embed and evaluate review learning in response.

THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – MOVING FORWARD

In the 2022/23 Municipal Year, key areas of focus of the Corporate Parenting Board will include:

REGULAR PERFORMANCE DATA

It is essential that the Corporate Parenting Board regularly receive the qualitative data and statutory updates. The monitoring of regular performance data allows the Corporate Parenting Board to effectively analyse key areas and determine ways to further improve and enhance the services the Council provides. The updates will include:

- Regulation 73 Reports
- Social Services Complaints & Compliments
- Advocacy Updates
- CIW Inspections reports of the Children's Homes
- Child Practice Review
- Performance (IRO)
- Accommodation
- Care to Work
- Adoption
- Education

The Corporate Parenting Board will receive annual updates from the following services to continue to monitor the progress, achievements, and future aspirations:

- Miskin
- Therapeutic Families Team
- Resilient Families Service
- Youth Offending Service
- Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Service
- Fostering Services Quality of Care
- Registered Childcare Provision
- Young Carers
- RCT Forum

INTERACTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The Corporate Parenting Board welcome the attendance of looked after young people and care leavers at its meetings and recognise that their voice must be at the centre of all discussions. The Board receive reports containing data and statistics, but the opportunity to hearing the first-hand experiences of the young person is invaluable. Encouraging their participation will be key moving forward as it provides Members with further insight into the areas where improvements need to be made.

During the Municipal Year, it was reported that the RCT Forum would aim to establish a cohort of group members to develop and further understand the issues Children and young people face in order to create a clear implementation plan. The Corporate Parenting Board welcome an update on this going forward.

In 2018, RCT Children Services supported children who were looked after to complete the Your Life, Your Care Survey. The survey had been developed through the Bright Spots Programme to measure the well-being of children looked after.

Following the survey, the following areas of improvement were identified:

‘Social workers need to:

- *Ensure that children and young people understand who they are.*
- *Work with children and young people to involve them in decisions.*
- *Explain to every child why they are in care and regularly review this with them to establish if they would like more information.*
- *Continue to communicate with schools to identify and help children who feel bullied at school and those who feel that they do not have a good friend.*
- *Give carers further training in therapeutic parenting.*
- *Consider not just organised activities but contact with nature when reviewing opportunities to have fun/hobbies*
- *Regularly review contact plans taking into account children and young people’s wishes and feelings*
- *Be aware of gender difference and give opportunities to young people (11-18 years) to build self-esteem and a positive self-image.’*

The Corporate Parenting Board wishes to continue to monitor the implementation of the areas identified to ensure that they have been incorporated into improvement plans; and welcome further updates from future surveys, which would be conducted on a two-year basis.

INDEPENDENT SECTOR PLACEMENTS

The Corporate Parenting Board recognise the importance of effective placements and continual support for children and young people in RCT.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the Board did not receive any updates in respect of the independent sector placements and therefore, feel it is necessary that an update is provided in the next Municipal Year. This will allow new Board Members to have a greater understanding of the supporting services and channels offered to looked after young people.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Corporate Parenting Board recognise the educational disadvantages often experienced by young people who are looked after, which can have an adverse effect on opportunities moving into higher education and into adulthood.

The Corporate Parenting Board wishes to receive further updates in respect of Post-16 employment, education and training programmes offered by the Council and its uptake by the young people.

During the next Municipal Year, the Board wishes to extend an invitation to the Central South Consortium to update Members on the Pupil Deprivation Grant and the Cluster Based Model.

The Board would also like to receive an interim update in respect of the Virtual Schools Model, following the paper commissioned by Welsh Government - An integrated approach to improving educational outcomes for looked after children in Wales written by Sir Alasdair Macdonald. The paper looked at integrated local authority approaches to supporting Children Looked After, with a particular focus upon how the Virtual School model in England and Scotland could be used as a basis for local authorities in Wales to promote the educational achievement of CLA.

The Board will continue to receive education attainment data.

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Corporate Parenting Board wish to review the Looked After Children Prevention Strategy which will outline the services being developed to enhance the offer to families and resources. As part of the role of the Corporate Parenting Board it's to continue the work of safely supporting families to stay together.

ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

It is recognised that the role of the Corporate Parent is a collective duty of the Council as a whole and as such, refresher training is welcomed to Board Members and to all Elected Members of the Council to further enhance knowledge and to strengthen the Council's commitment to the children and young people within our care. This will be particularly beneficial for new Members.

THE WORK OF WELSH GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXTEND CORPORATE PARENTING

The Programme for Government, [Taking Wales Forward](#), commits to “examine ways of ensuring looked after children enjoy the same life chances as other children and if necessary reform the way they are looked after”. As part of its focus, Welsh Government policy intent is to strengthen corporate parenting across all departments within the local authority, which will enable better partnership between services to enhance the outcomes for Children Looked After.

The Corporate Parenting Board welcome future updates in relation to the work and the opportunity to consider any amendments to its Terms of Reference.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND YOUNG CARERS

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Corporate Parenting Board appreciate that issues with mental health and wellbeing are likely to have risen and therefore, would like to receive an update on what support is available to young people.

FRONTLINE MEETINGS

During the 2021/22 Municipal year, the Corporate Parenting Board had the opportunity to meet virtually with staff working in Children Services in order to better understand the work undertaken to safeguard the health and wellbeing of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly those in corporate care, their various needs and the means of understanding the needs of staff.

The Board aimed to understand the challenges faced by staff, particularly during the Pandemic relating to staff turnover, retention, and wellbeing.

The feedback received from the meetings was invaluable for the Corporate Parenting Board as it strengthens service strategy implementation for the overall support for staff and the children, and young people who are looked after in RCT.

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023

A 2022-23 work programme for the Corporate Parenting Board is set out below. The work programme is a fluid document, which can be amended by Members at any given point to accommodate a change in priorities. The programme is based on factors highlighted within the Board's Annual Report and does not include the statutory updates presented to the Board.

REPORT	DATE
Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme	July, 2022
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23	July 2022
Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care	July 2022
Scrutiny Healthy Lives Report	July 2022
Children Looked After Prevention Strategy Update	July 2022
Registered Childcare Provision Annual Update 2021-22	September 2022
Youth Offending Service Annual Report 2021-22 & reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults	September 2022
RCT Forum	September 2022
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Update	September 2022
Children Looked After Website Advancement Update	September 2022
Young Carers Annual Report 2021-22	November 2022
Miskin Annual Report and Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report 2021-22	November 2022
Vale, Valley & Cardiff Regional Adoption annual report 2021-22	November 2022
Housing Offer to Care Leavers	November 2022
Fostering Quality of Care Annual Report	January 2023
RCT Forum	January 2023
Children Looked After Education Data and Improvement Strategy Update	January 2023

Young Carers Annual Report 2022-23

March 2023

Employment, Education and Training Programmes for Children
Looked After

March 2023

Virtual School Model pilot – Interim Evaluation of Year 1

March 2023

Frontline Visits

March 2023

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The report seeks to highlight the scope of work undertaken during the past year and the Council's ongoing commitment to improving the outcomes for the children and young people who are looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board will ensure that a full and varied work programme is set, which will focus on the above-mentioned reports, as well as any other topical or urgent business which may arise.

In summary, the Corporate Parenting Board will continue to benefit from strong membership with positive relationships between Councillors and Officers who will meet regularly throughout the year.

We will continue to seek the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in our care. Despite uncertain times and the national rise in the number of children who are becoming looked after, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Council as a whole are committed to its safeguarding duties.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21st November 2022

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2)

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 six-months of this financial year (to the 30th September 2022).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the context of the Council’s Services continuing to manage the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and 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 30th September 2022 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary).

Capital

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

Corporate Plan Priorities

- 2.5 Note the Quarter 2 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).
- 2.7 Note the progress update in respect of the Council's response to tackling Climate Change (Section 7 of the Executive Summary).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 30th September 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 second update of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31st 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 updates in respect of enhancing the Council's response to extreme weather events and to tackle climate change.
- 4.3 The report is set in the context of the on-going impact of Covid-19 and 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 1st 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 2 REPORT

5.1 The Quarter 2 report is attached and comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 2 (i.e. 30th September 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](#).
- **Tackling Climate Change** – Section 7 setting out the work being progressed across services to support the delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy ‘Think Climate RCT’.

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 6-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 4th March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 2 2022/23, that is, 30th September 2022.

11.2 The Quarter 2 revenue budget position is projecting a £10.277M overspend, this excludes the cost implications of the 2022/23 pay award for NJC employees, agreed on 1st November 2022, and the 2022/23 teachers pay award offer made by Welsh Government, these equating to an increase in the pay bill of £10.5M for the current year, and results in an overall projected overspend of almost £21M.

11.3 With specific regard to the full year projection, forecasted as at September 2022, is showing significant budget pressures continuing to be present and is in line with that reported within the first quarter Performance Report: 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 continuing 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. In parallel, the Council is working closely with Welsh Government to set out the unprecedented financial challenges facing the Council, like all local authorities in Wales, and to reinforce the urgent case for additional funding to be made available by the UK Government to support the continued delivery of the range of vital services provided by local government in Wales.

- 11.4 Capital investment as at 30th September 2022 is £45.485M, representing significant on-going capital investment in the Council's assets and infrastructure across the County Borough.
- 11.5 The second quarter progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity demonstrate good progress overall in supporting the delivery of improved outcomes for residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 11.6 The progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows positive progress at the mid-point of the year, with key actions being progress to support the Council's arrangements.
- 11.7 A new section has been incorporated within the report, Section 7 Tackling Climate Change, and provides a progress update on the work being progressed across services to support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT'.

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

21 November 2022

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2)

**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 2 2022/23
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Executive Summary brings together and summarises the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2).

The Quarter 2 update, in line with that reported at quarter 1, is set in the context of the Council's Services managing the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and 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

	2022/23 – as at 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2)		
Service Area	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 2 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	207.776	207.558	(0.218)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	181.078	188.638	7.560
Chief Executive (2c)	35.478	35.393	(0.085)
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (2d)	64.352	67.438	3.086
Sub Total	488.684	499.027	10.343
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	78.108	78.042	(0.066)
Grand Total	566.792	577.069	10.277

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 30th September 2022, is a £10.277M overspend. Whilst this forecasted position represents a marginal improvement compared to the quarter 1 projection (i.e. £10.405M projected overspend), the same factors and conditions are driving significant budget pressures, over and above the additional resources built into the 2022/23 revenue budget. These are continued:

- High 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, for example, Leisure Services, and noting that for this service area income levels are showing an improved position compared to quarter 1.

In respect of the 2022/23 pay award offer made by national employers for all NJC employees, notification of acceptance of the offer was received on 1st November 2022 (i.e. a flat rate increase of £1,925 per employee, irrespective of their Spinal Column Point / Grade). With regard to the 2022/23 teachers pay award offer made by Welsh Government of 5%, who have devolved responsibility for teachers pay, negotiations and consultation are currently on-going as is the case for other negotiating bodies. 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 and increases the overall projected overspend for 2022/23 to almost £21M.

Work is on-going to review cost reduction options across all service areas, for example, energy usage reduction actions, enhanced recruitment control arrangements and early delivery of efficiency savings, to bring the position closer in line with budget by year-end as well as assessing earmarked reserves to provide one-off funding opportunities in 2022/23. With regard to earmarked reserves, a risk assessment has resulted in a number having been identified to be ringfenced with a view to being redirected to support the in-year pressure.

There will be a continued focus on the above programme of work during the last half of the financial year to address the in-year financial position and updates will be reported as part of quarterly Performance Reporting arrangements.

Following on, revenue budget variances, projected at Quarter 2, for each Service Group are set out below.

Revenue budget variances projected at Quarter 2

1. Education & Inclusion Services

EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES

- Additional Learning Needs (£0.277M underspend); and

- Education other than at School (£0.273M underspend).

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS

- Catering (£0.354M overspend).

2. Community and Children's Services

ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.382M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£4.716M overspend);
- Provider Services (£1.315M overspend);
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.949M underspend), and
- Management, Safeguarding & Support Services (£0.182M overspend).

CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£1.280M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.101M overspend); and
- Intensive Intervention (£0.374M underspend).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Public Protection (£0.348M underspend);
- Community Services (£0.086M underspend);
- Communities & Wellbeing (£0.055M underspend); and
- Leisure, Countryside and Cultural Services (£1.409M overspend).

3. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT

- Prosperity & Development (£0.077M underspend).

FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Highways Management (£0.054M overspend);
- Transportation (£3.320M overspend);
- Street Cleansing (£0.059M overspend);
- Waste Services (£0.173M underspend); and
- Parks Services (£0.090M underspend).

4. Chief Executive

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Democratic Services & Communications (£0.053M underspend);
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.125M underspend); and
- Corporate Estates (£0.084M overspend).

5. Authority Wide Budgets

- Miscellaneous (£0.108M 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 30th September 2022	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	5.389	0.709
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (3b)	83.425	26.566
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	69.378	17.549
Community & Children's Services (3d)	13.928	0.661
Total	172.120	45.485

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 2

- 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) Additional Learning Needs Grant (£1.621M); WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant (£31.797M); WG Bus Infrastructure Fund Grant (£0.440M); WG Universal Primary Free School Meal Grant (£2.837M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (£1.474M); and WG Coal Tips Safety Grant (£4.470M).

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 th September 2022		As at 30 th September 2021		As at 31 st March 2022	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	10,880	7.12	10,979	6.71	11,079	11.30
Community & Children’s Services ¹	2,776	9.11	2,939	6.46	2,976	12.70
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	773	4.66	921	7.60	945	11.22
Education & Inclusion Services	1,268	3.08	1,244	5.06	1,233	9.08
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,957</u>	<u>8.01</u>	<u>4,976</u>	<u>7.60</u>	<u>5,013</u>	<u>11.35</u>
Primary	3,112	6.33	3,108	6.34	3,238	9.51
Secondary	1,845	10.84	1,868	9.69	1,775	14.70
Chief Executive’s Division	1,106	4.52	899	4.00	912	9.54

- Sickness Absence

Service Area	2022/23	2021/22	
	As at 30 th September 2022 %	As at 30 th September 2021 %	As at 31 st March 2022 %
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	5.17	4.30	5.40
Community & Children’s Services ¹	7.66	6.80	7.46
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	5.29	5.47	5.62
Education & Inclusion Services	4.37	3.70	4.88
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4.36</u>	<u>2.94</u>	<u>4.61</u>
Primary	4.76	3.12	4.77
Secondary	3.70	2.63	4.31
Chief Executive’s Division	3.32	3.27	3.54

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

¹ 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 is reviewed on an on-going basis to take account of the changing internal and external operating environment, including the on-going impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. The quarter 2 review has identified the need to revise the risk rating for two strategic risks:

- Risk 14 (i.e. If individual school budgets are not appropriately managed, then schools will be required to deliver budget recovery plans and efficiencies at a time when investment and support should be at the forefront of planning) – Risk Score revised from 12 to 16, reflecting the very challenging environment schools are operating within, both in the current financial year and also the future outlook for the Council as a whole as per the updated Medium Term Financial Plan reported to Cabinet on 26th September 2022; and
- Risk 25 (i.e. If the planning arrangements to support the on-going recovery from Covid-19 are not joined up and delivered with partners, then then the capability of the Council to support the required improvements to the health and economic well-being of the County Borough will be diminished / fragmented) – Risk Score revised from 25 to 16, reflecting the on-going transition of Covid-19 from pandemic to endemic status in line with Welsh Government guidance and the arrangements the Council has in place, with partners, to ensure there continues to be an holistic focus on testing, incidents, outbreaks and contact tracing.

The Council's updated Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by [clicking here](#). The Strategic Risk Register will be kept under on-gong review and further updates will be reported during the last half of the financial year as part of quarterly Performance Reporting arrangements.

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan priority action plans are in place and cover the three priorities of People, Places and Prosperity. For quarter 2, each action plan includes a number of performance measures to accompany key actions, their re-introduction reflecting services' on-going recovery from the pandemic and aim to provide Members with a full as picture as possible of the Council's performance. For Members information, the reintroduction of in-year reporting of performance measures, the first time since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, will be an on-going process and be subject to revision / refinement to ensure they help measure the difference the Council's work is having on residents and communities.

A summary of progress made across each of the three priorities as at 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2) is set out in Sections 5a - c. Members will note that 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 second quarter of the year.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Summary of progress to 30th September 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.

Working with [Trivallis](#), we opened a [supported accommodation scheme](#) in Llanhari following a refurbishment of Elm Road accommodation. This scheme provides a safe, secure and high-quality environment for adults with learning disabilities. Assessments have been completed and individuals have started to move into their accommodation. 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 Spring 2023, slightly later than planned. A further scheme is also planned at the ['Big Shed' development](#) in Tonypany. Proposals for the [former Bronllwyn Care Home in Gelli](#) were approved by [Cabinet](#) in July 2022. The development will provide new specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities as part of the wider modernisation of Council residential care provision.

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 quarter 3 which will set out development proposals and options for modernisation of, and investment in, the Council's residential services.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

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 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 has been completed but implementation has been delayed until December 2022 so that guidance can be updated for medication administration for personal assistants. We have also commissioned [Community Catalyst](#) to support people and local partners to develop small enterprises and ventures that can provide real choice and increase the number and range of homecare and support options for local people.

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 and volunteering are a specific element; a range of co-production events are being held to inform writing of draft strategy and will be reported to Cabinet in due course. 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.

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 work has begun on our programme of investment for 2022/23, with 5 projects completed so far. We have also improved the fitness suite in [Hawthorn Leisure Centre](#), which is now open to the public. A new 3G pitch in Baglan Field/Ynysfio Field, Treherbert is also available for use by the public and sports clubs. This means that Rhondda Cynon Taf now has 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 has been 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 seventeen 'Community Conversations' sessions, engaging 275 individuals 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

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

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 ensure older people feel safe and welcome in their communities by working in partnership with the Older People's Advisory Group to develop a plan to achieve Age Friendly Wales status. Progress is being made with local developments noted within Gilfach Goch Community Venue.

We want to increase the opportunities for people to learn and use Welsh within their communities and we are working with Menter Iaith to deliver Welsh courses and classes across Rhondda Cynon Taf and enhancing the provision at [Garth Olwg Centre](#) as part of this.

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 draft Integrated Community Services Model has been completed and shared with the Health Board and regional local authority partners for agreement by the [Regional Partnership Board](#) in October 2022. 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](#). Implementation is planned for December 2022.

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.

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 complete however the launch has been delayed due to difficulties with the website host. We are currently reviewing the capacity and ability to develop multi-use areas and evaluate building capacity within our Children and Family centres to support the development of an access plan for community groups, during day time, evenings and weekends going forward.

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

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and families. This work has included establishing a 'lot' for Counselling on the Approved Providers list, which includes counselling services for children and adults. We are embedding a suite of 16+ Support projects that are being offered to young people leaving education with a destination including the Becoming Independent Project and Reducing Risk of Youth Homelessness Project. Youth Homelessness interventions are all underway via a combination of short and long term projects led by the Youth Homelessness Officer and the Youth Homeless Education Officer.

We 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. A Residential Children's Services Strategy and action plan for the next 5 years is being drafted. The draft strategy will be pre-scrutinised in November 2022. 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. The data continues to be reviewed and reported on a regular basis to Senior Managers in RCT and CTMUHB. There has been a significant improvement in the number of Schedule of Growing Skills assessments (SOGS) and ante natal visits undertaken by Health Visitors during the last quarter.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	Investment Value² £M	Quarter 2 Update
Extracare Housing	6.974	<p>This investment funding covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Porth - agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3rd December 2020. Progress to date includes: the vacation of the building; site surveys and demolition works completed; planning permission granted 16th December 2021; and contractor on site and progressing with 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). <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>
Total	7.274	

² 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 30th September 2022

Keeping RCT clean through efficient street cleaning services, minimising the amount of waste we send to landfill, achieving our recycling targets through weekly recycling and regular refuse collections, and reducing our carbon footprint

We continue to promote good recycling practices through campaigns and education. The [Education Centre at Bryn Pica](#) has reopened offering schools to take part in face to face visits which will run alongside our online sessions. Our campaigns have focussed on key recycling activity at [Easter](#) and the [Jubilee celebrations](#). Winners of our [Schools Easter Egg Recycling Challenge](#) were announced in August. We also continue to promote seasonal recycling competitions in schools e.g. in July schools were invited to take part in our School Uniform Recycling Competition. This quarter we have also promoted '[Zero Waste Week](#)' during September.

The tonnage of recycled waste during Quarter 2 is lower than the same period last year (39,847 tonnes compared to 46,788 tonnes in 2021/22) and our overall recycling percentage is also lower i.e. 66.74% compared to 69.78% at Quarter 2 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 961 recorded incidents this quarter (2,945 last year) and the [outcomes](#) of [enforcement activity](#) have been published on the Council's Website. In addition, the enforcement off street parking restrictions and school keep clear zones continues to ensure the safe passage of both drivers and residents. Appropriate enforcement action to ensure that the Public Spaces Protection Order for dog controls is complied with continues and includes taking [relevant court action](#) and [publicising](#) the outcomes.

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 also continue to engage with Welsh Government in respect of grant funding to develop an Eco Park at Bryn Pica, that includes trials for recycling plastic, and there is on-going focus on implementing procurement policies to reduce the use of single use plastic items.

We also opened the [new re-use shop](#) on Aberdare High Street during the quarter which is the third in the County Borough and now means that there is a '[Shed](#)' in every area of Rhondda, Cynon and Taf for residents to visit and enjoy.

Keeping the County Borough moving, including improvements to roads and pavements and public transport, whilst also improving air quality

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 completing work at [Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge scheme](#) in Treorchy and progressing work on the [Brook Street footbridge](#) at Ystrad Rhondda Railway Station. We also continue to progress the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and flood risk

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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 year Section 19 Flood Reports have been released for [Trehafod](#), [Cwmbach](#), [Abercwmboi](#), [Fernhill and Porth](#), [Aberdare and Aberaman](#) and [Rhydyfelin and Hawthorn](#). We have also commenced flood alleviation work in [Treorchy](#), [local drainage improvements at Tanycoed Terrace in Abercwmboi](#), two [resilient road schemes in Treherbert](#) and completed [major culvert upgrades on the A4061 Rhigos Road](#). A public exhibition has also been held on the [Tylorstown Landslip Project](#),

We are also progressing active travel initiatives across Rhondda Cynon Taf including Treorchy to Treherbert and those on the Cynon Trail at Cwmbach and Abercynon. We are also identifying improvements in crossing facilities adjacent to schools, which in the long term will increase the percentage of pupils walking to school, with the consequential improvement in health and well-being, and help to prevent accidents and reduce traffic movements and vehicle emissions. Maes Y Bryn Safe Routes in Communities works have commenced with lighting upgrades on the Public Right of Way on approach to the school and the upgrade of the Pelican crossing to a puffin crossing on Llantrisant Road. We are also consulting on improvements on Crown Hill to improve safety.

Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe

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 the 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 establishing a community focussed café in Garth Olwg; Menter Iaith have been granted a lease and will be operating the café in the new year.

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. Three Community Wardens and two Senior Community Wardens are in post and the remaining Community Wardens will be in place in quarter 3.

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 for Ukraine nationals 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 that have been developed 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. The pilot is now up and running and an evaluation will be completed by the end of 2022/23.

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

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 the provision of a new Virtual Tenancy Ready Classroom that proves 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'. A concert was also held to [welcome Ukrainian people](#) residing in the County Borough.

Getting the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces

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 with 5 projects completed so far and we continue to improve our digital platforms to provide a more accessible service to residents. A '[Tracks and Trails](#)' Project has been completed at Dare Valley Country Park. We have supported the [Keep Britain Tidy](#) - '[Love Parks Week](#)' campaign, and celebrated retaining [Green Flag Awards](#) at Dare Valley Country Park, Aberdare; Taff's Well Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd, in recognition of their excellent visitor facilities, high environmental standards, and commitment to delivering great quality green spaces.

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](#) with the strategy providing a framework to support carbon reduction across both the Council and the County Borough. An associated Decarbonisation Plan to reduce specific carbon reduction elements that inform the Council's Carbon Footprint and meet Welsh Government reporting requirements, is in development.

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](#) was approved by Cabinet in June 2022. This Strategy recognises the important carbon storing role that trees, vegetation and soils have in the 'carbon cycle'. The Strategy is out for consultation until the end of October with residents and stakeholders, more information is available in the [accompanying press release](#).

We have promoted our grass cutting schedules and the importance of protecting our designated [Biodiversity Areas](#) to encourage the growth of wildflowers and attract pollinators. New biodiversity signage celebrating biodiversity has been installed at Dare Valley Country Park and a signage strategy at Cwm Clydach Country Park is also being developed, and we continue to encourage residents to report sightings of wildlife and flora, and take part in activities like 'Grab a Rake' on the Council's [Biodiversity webpages](#). Work has also commenced to increase the capacity and improve biodiversity at [Clydach Vale Lake](#).

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

Our work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales continues in support of projects like '[Healthy Hillside](#)s' which includes working with South Wales Fire and Rescue on [Operation Dawns Glaw](#), a taskforce set up to reduce the number of grass fires.

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 Big Welsh Bite](#) at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park in August and a variety of free sporting, cultural and play-based activities and events as part of the [Summer of Fun](#) for young people across the County Borough. We have also began promotion of our winter activities including the return of [Nos Galan 2022](#) and [Santa's Toy Mine](#) at the Rhondda Heritage Park.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value ³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	6.826	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	0.600	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 21 streets which are included in the programme, 6 were completed as at the end of quarter 2 2022/23, contractors are on site for 1 scheme which is ongoing and the remaining 14 schemes are scheduled to be completed during the year.
Play Areas	0.814	There are 19 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23. As at 30th September 2022, 5 had been completed, 2 were under construction, 3 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 9 are to be designed.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.391	There are 3 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23 and will be progressed during the year. £200k additional investment has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the 'Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities' report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Structures: Brook Street Footbridge	2.351	This funding is supporting the replacement of the footbridge. Construction works are progressing well and on programme. The old bridge sections have been removed and the new bridge sections are due to be lifted in to place in quarter 3.
Structures	3.516	The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge Strengthening – works complete. • Major retaining wall refurbishments - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retaining walls at Brewery Terrace (Pontygwaith), Salem Terrace (Llwynypia) and Dinas Road (Dinas) - scheduled to go out to tender in quarter 3 2022/23. ○ Maerdy Mountain walls – works complete. ○ High Street Wall, Llantrisant – works being undertaken by the Council due to the risk of collapse of the wall.

³ 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 ³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Harcourt Terrace Wall, Penrhiwceiber - works being completed by Transport for Wales as part of a jointly funded project with the Council. ● Llanharan Railway Footbridge - works recommenced on site following licence / Natural Resources Wales approvals and piling is scheduled to commence in quarter 3. ● Imperial Bridge – works commenced on site in April 2022 and are scheduled for completion in quarter 3. ● Bodringallt Bridge Infilling – delays due to the need to consider drainage position. ● Rhigos Rock Anchors – scheduled to go to tender in quarter 3. ● Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
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"> ● Gelli Isaf – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – works have commenced on site for Phase 1 of the repairs. ● Pentre Footbridge - works complete. ● Rhondda Heritage Park Wall - scheduled to go to tender in quarter 3. ● Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks and Green Spaces	2.755	<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 2, 24 full schemes have been completed. The remaining schemes will be progressed during 2022/23 as part of an on-going programme of work. An additional £230k has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28th September 2022).</p>
Llanharan Link Road	5.558	<p>This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology surveys. Following the Pre-Planning Application Consultation (PAC) which took place in 2021, work is progressing to prepare all documentation in readiness for a full planning application which is to be submitted in the last half of the financial year. This scheme is also subject to the Welsh Government’s Roads Review.</p>

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	7.035	This investment funding is supporting the dualling of the highway between the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters roundabout and Coed Ely roundabout. Following on from advanced works, the appointed contractor commenced the main construction works in August setting up the traffic management arrangements and has carried out site clearance works.
Community Hubs	0.190	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 WelTAG stage 1 has been completed and is in the process of review to inform WelTAG stage 2.
Cynon Gateway (North)	1.551	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design, planning application and tender preparation for a link road from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of the Valleys road. Following receipt of planning permission, work is ongoing to procure a designer for the detailed design stage of the project. 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.
Streetcare (New scheme)	0.020	This investment funding is to be used across the County Borough to replace worn/damaged bins (mainly dog bins). The bins will be ordered in quarter 3 and will be installed as necessary before the end of the financial year. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the 'Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities' report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
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 2, the roofing panels were installed and works continued in line with the construction schedule. The construction is due to complete in March 2023.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Leisure – Darran Park 3G Pitch (New scheme)	0.175	This investment funding is to develop the Astro Turf Pitch in Darran Park (Ferndale) into a 3G pitch. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Total	34.191	

- 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 September 2022

Investing in our town centres, bringing jobs and homes into our town centres to create vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise

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. Work is also continuing to improve the accessibility of Council tenders to local Small and Medium Sized Enterprises through improved communication and consideration of lotting structures.

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. An application for a programme of project delivery has been made and a decision is expected in quarter 3. Existing town centre projects are continue to progress, including the Porth Transport Hub, and work is now underway at the Pontypridd Southern Gateway where property acquisition for redevelopment has taken place at the Bingo Hall and former M&S sites. A package of town centre improvement projects for Aberdare is currently being developed to form part of the draft regeneration strategy for engagement and consultation. Rhondda Housing Association Wales are delivering [13 affordable apartments in Tonypandy town centre](#) to regenerate a town centre site where the previous building was damaged by fire, following the Council providing funding through Welsh Government's Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme for demolition work at the site.

Delivering major regeneration and transportation schemes, maximising the impact of the South Wales Metro, to create better places to live and work, whilst protecting and enhancing the County Borough

Preparation continues for the revised Local Development Plan, which will contain strategic level policies on land use and protection including carbon reduction and climate change. A second [call for candidate sites](#) was undertaken to identify locations suitable for potential development and further engagement with key stakeholders and analysis of detailed evidence has also taken place.

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 an application is due to be submitted for Heol y Wenallt shortly; decisions on these adjoining sites are likely to be considered simultaneously. An £8 million package is close to being agreed with a housing developer and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to remediate the site at Cwm Coking.

Following a public exhibition, work began onsite to deliver the [A4119 Coed Ely dualling scheme](#) which will also provide a separate community route. A planning application for the Llanharan bypass is due

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

to be submitted in quarter 4. Tender documents have also been prepared for the Cynon Gateway North scheme, but this will be impacted by the Welsh Government Roads Review decision.

Work continues with broadband suppliers and Welsh Government to improve connectivity within the County Borough, although there are some delays to planned timescales due to Welsh Government tenders.

Work continues to develop the visitor economy, with considerable marketing and promotional activity this autumn. Zip World Tower have been supported in their new [Tower Climber](#) project and work continues to support the organisation of the [National Eisteddford of Wales 2024](#). Work is ongoing to progress opportunities for cross promotion at our Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateway sites.

Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great Education

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. A Team Around the School protocol has been agreed for schools requiring co-ordinated LA/CSC support and will be piloted in the autumn term. 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 January, with proposals for tranche 3 underway. Final reporting on Step 4 projects will be undertaken in the autumn term, with schools required to present impact of the work undertaken. A good practice conference for Step 4 also took place in the summer term.

The Writing Project, a commissioned literacy project aimed at improving standards of writing in primary and secondary schools, has been rolled out and a CSC report produced outlining the impact of the project to date.

Work continues to ensure effective anti-bullying strategies in our schools. Presentations have been delivered to primary and secondary Headteacher meetings to raise awareness of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and guidance has been provided to all schools. Improvements have been made to data collection systems to ensure all incidents of bullying are appropriately recorded; however, due to concerns raised over low rates of reporting by incidents, a bullying survey has been piloted and will be undertaken in all secondary schools in November to gather data directly from pupils. An anti-racism plan has been completed in consultation with the RCT BAME working group and is now being implemented.

Support continues for schools to implement new ALN legislation, including development of a professional learning programme for release in the autumn term, and review of schools self-evaluation. An Early years ALN coordinator forum has been established and met in September. Work has commenced between the Council, schools and early years settings to enhance transition from early years settings into schools for children with additional learning needs. Following agreement of a protocol of roles and responsibilities, a pilot is being undertaken. A pilot is also underway to evaluate an enhanced post-16 transition protocol for learners with additional learning needs. An [update on implementation of the ALNET Act](#) was presented to Cabinet in September.

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

An Early Years Strategic Plan has been produced to ensure all learners have access to the right support. Engagement and consultation on the strategy and supporting action plan will be undertaken in the second half of the autumn term.

Investment in our school buildings continues. Band B project Business cases have been submitted to Welsh Government in accordance with the Strategic outline programme. Works on site are close to completion to provide additional capacity at [YG Rhydwaun](#) and [YGG Aberdar](#), with minor snagging only remaining. A number of other projects commenced over the summer holidays and 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. An [update on current special school provision](#) was reported to Cabinet on 26th September 2022.

Increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents

The Council is 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 following the Social Housing Grant submission. The sale of Porth Infants School to Cynon Taf Community Housing Group has now been complete. Cynon Taf Community Housing Group have made a Social Housing Grant submission and a planning application has been submitted.

The Council worked with Rhondda Housing Association to deliver [redevelopment of Abertonllwyd House](#) in Treherbert which was previously empty for several years into supported accommodation.

Following research into best practice, the allocation of extra care provision via the social housing allocation policy has been approved and information is being updated to inform homefinder applicants about the extra care offer.

The [rapid rehousing plan](#), which develops a housing led approach for rehousing people who have experienced homelessness, where possible reducing or removing the need for temporary accommodation, was approved by Cabinet on 18th July. Work continues to develop the new Empty Homes Strategy and a Private Rented Sector strategy, which will both be presented to Cabinet later in this financial year.

There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

Support for people seeking work continued through our Employment Support programmes. Between April and September 2022, over 20% of those supported into work through the Communities for Work Plus scheme had work limiting health conditions and disabilities, the highest proportion to date. 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. 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 Welsh Government Youth Guarantee Grant fund scheme, with an increase in the numbers of young people engaged on the scheme. As part of the expansion of employment routes for 16 – 24 year olds, planning has taken place for the 'Black sheep' programme, a construction skills course aimed at young people with a variety of learning needs.

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

20 new graduate and 45 new apprentices have started their careers at the Council. 4 people with learning disabilities commenced Gateway to employment placements in September and 7 young people are currently engaged on Access to Employment, a 12 month programme for young people with barriers to employment who have been identified as having high potential. The Council and partner organisations also held a [careers fair](#) with over 50 organisations taking part, showcasing opportunities at the Council, partners and a range of RCT businesses and with careers advice and guidance available from a range of training and education providers.

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, with courses in Penrhys and Pontygwaith primary schools starting at the end of September.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value ⁴ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Empty Property Grant	2.213	79 applications received, 56 surveyed, 25 approved and 14 completed. 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"> • 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 has been appointed 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. Welsh Government have approved the Outline Business Case and the scheme can now progress to Full Business Case. • Other works (as approved by Cabinet 21st March 2022) - toilet refurbishments (£0.300M), boiler replacements (£0.700M), roof renewals (£1.445M) and classroom upgrades (£0.126M) – the majority of works were completed during the 2022 summer holidays and the remainder will be programmed for 2023/24.
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"> • Progressing design work for pedestrian crossing enhancement projects at Groesfaen, Llanharan and Ty Nant (to improve road safety and promote active travel) – all projects are scheduled for construction in quarter 4 2022/23. Tonyrefail crossing was installed in Quarter 2. • 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. • A4059 Quarter Mile junction, feasibility proposals have been developed - the next steps will be preliminary design including ground investigation work.
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

⁴ 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 ⁴ £M	Quarter 2 Update
		<p>for All, improved CCTV coverage and Electric Vehicle charging points at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontyclun - feasibility design to improve an existing facility is ongoing in partnership with Network Rail and Transport for Wales. • Porth – phase 3 detailed design work has been completed.
Drainage (New Scheme)	1.000	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works. The ongoing programme includes: design and business case developments at 3 locations; design and works construction at 5 locations; and delivering, as match funding contributions, 21 Welsh Government grant funded schemes across the County Borough. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robertstown – good progress continues to be made in Quarter 2 with most of the units now complete and snagging works taking place. Works are continuing to the external areas. • Coed Ely – scheme completed and the tenant occupied the premises from July 2021.
Total	13.163	

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

The [18th 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.

Section 7 –The Council’s response to tackling Climate Change

On 22nd June 2022, following engagement with residents and communities, [Cabinet agreed](#) its response to tackling Climate Change in a wide-ranging Climate Change Strategy – ‘Think Climate RCT’. Cabinet also agreed that the monitoring of the Strategy is included in the Council’s quarterly Performance Reports and thereafter scrutinised by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

[The Climate Change Strategy](#) contains a series of actions which are being developed to mitigate and adapt to the impact of Climate Change and to take steps that will reduce our Carbon Footprint and enable the Council to meet its ambitious targets by 2030, i.e.:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will be a Carbon Neutral Council;
- Rhondda Cynon Taf will be as close to Carbon Neutral as possible; and
- Rhondda Cynon Taf will have contributed to the Welsh Government's ambition of a Net Zero Public Sector.

Detailed plans that affect all services across the Council, structured around the Corporate Plan priorities, and a Decarbonisation Plan to support the reduction of the Council's Carbon Footprint are in development. Key updates include:

- On 29 September 2022, the [Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee](#) considered reports on the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Implementation Plan and Green Waste Collections; and
- The [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee](#) at its meeting on 3 October 2022 received reports on the Council's Carbon Footprint Dashboard; Proposed Solar Farm; Energy Projects progress including Electric Charging; the Local Nature Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf; and Peatlands in RCT.

This will be an on-going programme of work and progress updates will be incorporated within quarterly Performance Reports.

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